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**Independent Living Research Utilization**

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# IL-NET

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## Disability, Diversity, and Intersectionality (DDI): Creating Supportive Organizational Culture and Infrastructure

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*Presenters:*

Daisy Feidt

Stan Holbrook

Reyma McDeid

IL-NET is a project of Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) in partnership with the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL), and Utah State University Center for Persons with Disabilities (USU-CPD)

# Contact Information

- Daisy Feidt – [dfeidt@accessliving.org](mailto:dfeidt@accessliving.org)
- Stanley Holbrook – [sholbrook4@verizon.net](mailto:sholbrook4@verizon.net)
- Reyma McDeid – [reyma@CICIL.org](mailto:reyma@CICIL.org)

Visit the ILRU Disability, Diversity, and Intersectionality in CILs website at [CIL-diversity.org](http://CIL-diversity.org) to find the nine CIL case studies and other information gathered from this project.

# Disability, Diversity and Intersectionality (DDI) Project



Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) in collaboration with Public Research and Evaluation Services (PRES)

- Conducted a three-phase research study entitled, Disability, Diversity, and Intersectionality (DDI) project.
- To determine how CILs are designing and improving services, programs, and outreach for racially/ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse groups.

# DDI Project: Definitions Used

- **Diversity**: Differences in culture, ethnic or racial classification, self-identification, tribal or clan affiliation, nationality, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, education, religion, spirituality, physical and intellectual abilities, personal appearance and other factors that distinguish one group or individual from another.  
(Adapted from Goode & Jackson, 2009)
- **Intersectionality**: The multiple social group memberships and identities that expose an individual to different types of discrimination and disadvantage.  
(Sue, Rasheed and Rasheed, 2016)

# Sites Selected for Case Studies



- **Access Living** (Chicago, Illinois) – Marca Bristo
- **Center for Independence of the Disabled in New York** (Manhattan, New York) – Susan Dooha
- **Central Coast Center for Independent Living** (Salinas, California) – Elsa Quezada
- **Central Iowa Center for Independent Living** (Des Moines, Iowa) – Reyma McDeid
- **Community Resources for Independent Living** (Hayward, California) – Ron Halog
- **disABILITY Link** (Atlanta, Georgia) – Kim Gibson
- **Illinois/Iowa Independent Living Center** (Illinois/Iowa: Rock Island, Illinois) – Liz Sherwin
- **IndependenceFirst** (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) – Lee Schulz
- **Metropolitan Center for Independent Living** (St. Paul, Minnesota) – Jesse Gomez

# What You Will Learn Today...

- The importance of organizational infrastructure as a necessary framework in achieving DDI.
- Steps involved in developing and/or revising mission/vision statements, and policies/ procedures that reflect commitment to cultural competence, disability, and intersectionality.
- Steps to engage the Board in supporting diversity, disability, and intersectionality.
- Strategies for recruiting, hiring, and supporting staff that are culturally and linguistically diverse.
- Steps for achieving organizational culture change that reflect the shift to intersectionality.

# Background – Access Living

- Established in 1980
- Service area is City of Chicago
- 60 staff
- Reach approximately 1800 consumers annually
- Budget is approx. 6 million



# Access Living

- Started tackling the intersection between race and disability in a very intentional way in 2008.
- Two race-related incidents occurred at Access Living.
- These incidents caused issues that were bubbling below the surface to spill over in a big way.
- Developed a plan to take organization through a **process** of learning and (we hoped😊) growth.

# Access Living – Process

- Immediate staff discussion on incidents with facilitator.
- Trainings for staff on race and disability intersection.
  - Consulting for management with D&I (Diversity and Inclusion) consultant.
  - Setting up a staff led racial justice council that included all levels of staff from all departments to discuss issues and create an action plan for improved cultural competency on race.
  - Staff retreat in which one of the main topics was what racial justice looks like in the context of Access Living.

# Organizational Infrastructure – CICIL

- Formed in 1990.
- Serves Des Moines, IA, and surrounding areas.
- Most diverse racial demographics in IA.
- Historically, staff and board has been 100% white.

# Organizational Infrastructure – CICIL, cont'd.



- 2008 - RSA recommends that CICIL set an infrastructure that allows support of diverse client base.
- 2014 - RSA reiterates 2008 recommendations.
- 2015 - Leadership Transition.
- Should CICIL close or restructure?
- Original ED retired, current ED hired.
- Major board transitions
- Staff resignations

# Organizational Infrastructure – CICIL Rebuilt



- “Clean slate” at CICIL
- CICIL is rebuilt with intersectionality as its focus.
- 2018 – CICIL awarded with the Organization of the Year Award from the Des Moines Civil and Human Rights Commission.

# Mission/Vision Statements – CICIL

- Original mission: *To empower people with disabilities to lead barrier-free lives.*
- Updated mission: *To empower people with disabilities to be accountable in controlling their own lives.*
- Statement was revised to recognize the reality that *no one* truly leads a barrier-free life, so a mission as such would be unrealistic.
- Statement reflects feedback from CICIL clients, many of whom indicated that the more “layers” of diversity they experience, the less likely they felt society recognized the feasibility of their autonomy & personhood.

## Mission/Vision Statements – CICIL, cont'd.

- Original vision: Prior to 2015, CICIL lacked an articulated vision statement.
- Current vision statement: *A community that is inclusive of people with disabilities at every level, including leadership.*
- Vision statement crafted as the result of overwhelming feedback regarding the “tokenization” of people with disabilities in society being seen as inclusion.

# Policies & Procedures – CICIL

- No policies/procedures existed prior to 2015.
- Bylaws, prior to 2016, had not been revised since 2008.
- CICIL recruited an HR executive to join the board and assist in drafting policies/procedures.
- Personnel policies drafted to include nondiscrimination, anti-harassment, and EEOC terminology.
- Client policies drafted to include, in addition to the above, policies on capturing LGBTQ+ specific data (on a voluntary basis) and commitment to meeting the peer support needs of a diverse service population.



- Bylaws drafted to include provision of a commitment ensuring a diverse board, above and beyond the federal mandate regarding disability representation.
- Board application, code of conduct, nondisclosure form, conflict of interest statement, and goals/expectations agreement drafted to streamline the board member recruitment/selection process.

## Policies & Procedures – CICIL, cont'd. 2

- All CICIL staff have been certified to provide Customized Employment (CE) to job seeking clients (Supported Employment – job development, job coaching, job retention – is the primary service currently offered at CICIL).
- CE currently doesn't offer specific guidance on customizing supports in a culturally competent manner; CICIL has, as a result, formulated procedures and guidelines to ensure that supports take into account a client's race, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, and/or any other factor that is important in a client's life.

# Mission and Vision – Access Living

- Mission statement has stayed the same for over 20 years.
- We revised value statements during strategic planning to include Diversity and Inclusion in 2009.

# Policies & Procedures – Access Living

- Had non-discrimination policy since the 90's.
- Staff-led racial justice council looked at Human Resource policies through a racial justice lens.
- Most significant change was to wage and salary determinations. More emphasis on experience, less ability for job candidates to negotiate salary.

# Questions & Discussion

# Engaging Board and Staff Strategic Planning



- Strategic planning can move everyone toward important goals related to diversity and inclusion. Can be an important first step in engaging board and staff.
- It gives key people in your organization permission to focus on D&I + accountability measures.
- Helps change the dynamic from something people in your organization think of as important, but is somewhat tangential to your key goals, to something that becomes part and parcel of the work you are doing.
- Can also create an opportunity to refresh values, vision and mission.

# Engaging Board and Staff Strategic Planning, cont'd.



Strategic plan goals can include things like:

- Increasing board diversity to match service area.
- Increased outreach to underserved community (e.g. Latinx).
- Create strategic partnerships with organizations who serve specific underserved constituencies.
- Become model employer to attract a diverse workforce.

# Strategic Plan Goals

Strategic plan goals around diversity and specific goals in Access Living's strategic plans have led to:

- Latinx's with disabilities project that is currently focused on immigration issues
- Racial justice organizer
- Much more racially diverse board



## Staff Engagement

- Train staff on intersections of disability and race.
- Change recruitment practices – ask local companies for help.
- Change onboarding process to reflect importance and set tone from the beginning.
- Ask questions in interviews with prospective staff to let them know this is important and to make sure the fit is right.
- Respond to race-related events that are occurring in the world.

## Staff Engagement, cont'd.

- Consider creating internal committee to address issues, especially if you have people of color as non-managers and very few managers of color.
- Create actionable goals with accountability mechanism.

### Sample goals:

- 1) Increase racial diversity of the staff to reflect demographics of CIL location.
- 2) Conduct town halls on the intersection of disability and race.

## Getting the Board on board:

- One of the action items the staff-led racial justice council set was to increase the racial diversity of our board. This also became a strategic plan goal.
- We set a targets for race diversity to match the make up of the City of Chicago.
- We attended trainings, with key board members, on how to increase board diversity.
- Nominating committee chair developed nomination guidelines that made clear our intention to focus on increasing the diversity of our board. Guidelines were approved by full board.

## Getting the Board on board, cont'd.

Strategies for success:

- Set targets.
- Ensure board is trained on importance and the "how."
- Use available resources – some areas have services to address this need.
- Consider hiring consultant.
- Create unifying vision statement.
- If needed, garner support from key board members first so they can help the entire board to understand importance.

# Getting the Board on board – Lessons Learned



- Can't lose focus on the goal, even when goal is reached.
- Constant networking is required.
- Gets easier once you have critical mass.
- While recruiting, need to be explicit about what you are looking for and why.

# Achieving Organizational Culture Change

- Change make up of staff/board.
- Leadership must model shift in mindset of organization.
- Expect resistance and have a plan to address.
- Intentionally hire people who will keep organization accountable.
- Must have mind set that intersectional issues *are* disability issues.
- Must be open to doing the work. Will likely be surprised at how much there is to do. I know we were/are.

# Engaging the Board – CICIL

- CICIL's board experienced 100% transition between 2015-2017.
- Several members left due to desire to pursue other projects, two retired, one resigned, and one was unanimously voted off of the board.
- CICIL was able to recruit members who had skill sets that aligned with CICIL's evolving needs and who presented facets of diversity that mirrored the organization's demographics.

# Questions & Discussion



# Preview of Upcoming Webinars

- Making New Friends and Playing Well with Others
  - September 11, 2018
  - Presenters: Ron Halog, Elsa Quezada, Stan Holbrook
- Creating a Welcoming and Supportive CIL for Diverse Populations
  - September 25, 2018
  - Presenters: Kim Gibson, Lee Schulz, Stan Holbrook
- Data Mining and Community Mapping to Support DDI
  - TBD

# Final Questions and Evaluation Survey

Any final questions?

Directly following the webinar, you will see a short evaluation survey to complete on your screen. We appreciate your feedback!

[https://usu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_1zzR0SKswE3tF7n](https://usu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1zzR0SKswE3tF7n)

# CIL-NET Attribution

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