IL Partnership with Disability Advisory Councils, Boards and Commissions

Presented by Luke Byram and Todd Holloway

September 10, 2019

>> TIM FUCHS: All right. Welcome, everybody.

I want to thank you for joining us this afternoon. I'm Tim Fuchs with the National Council On Independent Living. I want to welcome you all to today's webinar IL Partnership with Disability Advisory Councils, Boards and Commissions. It's brought to you by the IL‑NET for CILs and SILCs and IL‑Net is operated through a partnership among ILRU in Houston, Texas, NCIL here in Washington, D.C., and APRIL in North Little Rock, Arkansas. Support is provided for Administration of Community Living at the Department of Health and Human Services. We are recording today's call so that you or your colleagues can access it on ILRU's website after the fact.

We are in presentation mode right now. So all of your lines are muted, but we have got two Q&A breaks today, one about halfway through presentation and another at the end. And there's a few ways that you can ask questions. So I will just detail that quickly. You should see a Q&A option on your Zoom menu bar. If you don't see that menu bar, you might wave your cursor over the bottom of your screen, depending on your settings it will sometimes auto hide and waving your cursor at the bottom of your screen should bring it up. So that's where we want to direct you all for questions. But if you submit them somewhere else, I'm sure we will find them. So you can also use the chat feature today to talk with folks. That's great for comments or if you want to alert us to technical issues. You can use the chat.

If you want to ask questions and you cannot see or cannot use the Q&A tab for any reason, there are a couple of options that you have. First, you can always email me questions at Tim@NCIL.org. That's t‑i‑m@n‑c‑i‑l.org. Or you can go to the chat on the captioning screen.

We are offering closed captioning, of course, on today's call. If you didn't notice that yet, you can click the closed caption option on your Zoom menu bar. If you don't see that, you can probably find it under more. Again, that depends on your screen size and settings.

You can manipulate the size of the closed captioning by clicking the upward facing arrow in the captioning box. That will make the captioning box larger, but if you want to manipulate the size, font, contrast, or anything else related to the caption text, I would recommend using the full screen captioning at streamtext.net. That link is a little too long to read out on the live call, but we will put it in the chat box, the Zoom chat. It was also sent to you in the confirmation email. So hopefully you all, if you needed it, you have had it for a few days now.

So as I said a minute ago, that full screen CART captioning also includes a chat feature. And I'm logged in there. So you can enter your comments or questions in that CART chat all the same, and I will voice them for you during our Q&A break.

Okay. There's only one other house keep thing I wanted to mention and that's just our evaluation forms. So we do use an evaluation form to gather your thoughts and feedbacks about these presentations. We take your feedback very seriously, and it helps us as we look to see how we did and most importantly, I think, make improvements in the future.

So please do save a minute after today's call to fill out that evaluation form. When we close the webinar today, at 4:30 eastern, it will literally come up on your screen. So you will see that evaluation come up on your screen when I close the webinar and you can tell us how we did.

If you don't have time to fill it out today, the link to that evaluation form is also included in that confirmation email that you received with the connection instructions.

All right. I want to introduce our presenters today, and thank them for putting together this presentation for us. We have with us Luke Byram and Todd Holloway, both from Washington state. Luke serves on the board of directors of the center for independence in Lakewood, Washington. Luke is also a member of the Tacoma Area Commission On Disabilities. Todd Holloway has worked at the Center for Independence in Lakewood for 15 years and he's chair of the Tacoma Area Commission On Disabilities and the cochair of another advisory council.

So Luke and Todd brought this idea to us and we loved it. They have got a lot of experience with this work in their own communities and they are hoping that it will motivate some of you to join or even start councils like this in your areas.

I will go ahead to slide 3 and just cover our objectives quickly before I turn it over to Luke and Todd. So first, we'll learn today the types, classification, and definitions of these sorts of advisory bodies. Second, the benefits associated with using advisory boards. Next, strategies to locate, recruit and engage a diverse pool of candidates for the advisory body, and finally, tools and strategies for developing partnerships with advisory boards and committees that include goal development and strategic planning.

All right. So thanks. I'm going to go ahead to slide 4, and turn it over to Luke to kick things off. Luke?

>> LUKE BYRAM: So there are lots of reasons why us as citizens would want to volunteer on advisory boards. The reasons that I want to is to meet other people, fulfilling a civic duty, and helping to shape policy. And as you can see on the screen, there is endless reasons why one would want to join. Those are just some of the reasons why I would want to contribute to my community.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: And this is Todd. And the fact that everyone, especially in the IL community are subject matter experts, this brings that to the table as well.

Luke?

Did we lose Luke?

>> LUKE BYRAM: I'm on.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Oh, okay.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Next ‑‑ oh, thanks, Tim.

There's several benefits to advisory boards, like Todd highlighted. In the independent living community, there's many subject matter experts that can provide expertise and experience around disability issues. And you can assist in resolution of conflicts and there's just, again, lots of benefits to being on an advisory board.

Next slide.

So there's two types of advisory boards. There's boards and commissions designated by statute, which is the most common administrative boards and advisory boards. I think as I said, the most common is through statute, is how one is designated.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: And we'll go into more detail about how the Tacoma Area Commission operates. The Pierce County advisory council operates a little bit differently, and Luke will talk a bit more about how that ‑‑ that differs from community to community, the municipalities have their own ways about doing things and you can help to drive that as well.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Next slide, please. There are three different methods to form the advisory boards, the resolution, ordinance and motion. The most common, resolution and ordinance.

Next slide, please.

So the definition and classification advisory boards can be a little confusing, but the main point is that the definitions the differ among jurisdictions and there's little uniformity to the terms and classifications between the municipalities and they are often interchangeably used.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: And I would go so far as to say that as your ‑‑ if you are in the process of creating one, you can have some influence on that. If you are trying to join an advisory board, there may be policies already in place, but keep in mind, again, as a subject matter and expert and as somebody who is coming into this as a person with a disability, and likely working for an Independent Living Center or involved with an Independent Living Center, you can bring your expertise into that, to actually make changes in those policies.

>> LUKE BYRAM: So for the city of Tacoma, we have a committee board and commission, which is on the next slide, Tim.

And a task force. The Tacoma Area Commission On Disabilities is clearly a commission. A task force is one that is of limited jurisdiction and with a finite amount of time dedicated to the task at hand, and once that task is completed, the task force is decommissioned, or disbanded; whereas, a commission is formed to tackle more longstanding issues on an extended basis.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Yes, and systems advocacy, this is where you can get to the heart of systems advocacy. This long‑term relationship built between IL, the disability community, and your municipalities is where good work gets done in the community. It's where changes can be made. It is often where task forces are born, and having people who are well‑versed in the disability community, disability etiquette and the other things that make that relationship a bit more diplomatic creates a real avenue for everyone to be able to ‑‑ to have a long‑term not only goal setting but goals achievable.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Next slide, please.

>> TIM FUCHS: Before we go on, Luke, I would mind just going over the committee and board on slide 9?

>> LUKE BYRAM: Sure. So the main difference is at least in the city of Tacoma, is that a committee is formed by resolution and a board is established by way of city charter or ordinance.

And the main difference is the committee is formed to investigate or take action on a matter, and a board has managerial or supervisory or investigative powers.

So they are slightly different, but quite similar too.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Thank you.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: In a perfect world, they will work well together.

>> LUKE BYRAM: So the main point is that the city does ‑‑ or the municipality's role is to recruit for these boards and commissions. They often do it via the municipality's website, and share vacancies, but one way to increase the recruitment and the diversity among the body is to encourage commissioners such as myself and Todd to actually do our own recruitment and ask people that we know in our network to apply and share the vacancies to join the body.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: And that one‑on‑one recruitment method is very, very important because we're bringing, again, our knowledge of what we're looking for in a body like this, and we ‑‑ we usually have some insight to the people we are working with in the community to get a bit broader, some of the things that we have done is Luke has been part of a television ‑‑ or TV Tacoma television program promoting as a public service announcement the commission and the things that we are doing on it.

The other things we pushed for and have received are RAP cards and with take part in events all throughout the city to help inform people about what the commission does.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Next slide, please.

>> TIM FUCHS: So we are at our first Q&A break.

So, again, you can ask questions by typing them in the Q&A tab. Or if you are on the chat screen, you can type them in ‑‑ or excuse me on the CART screen, you can type them in the chat feature there.

While we wait for our first question to come in, I was wondering if we could look slide 7. We talked about this kind of quickly, but would you all mind just talking about the methods used to form advisory boards, the differences in resolution, ordinance and motion? Maybe some of the pros and cons or personal experience that you all have had with this in the Tacoma area?

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: One thing, Tim, that I would point out is that when it comes to funding for this, if that is an issue, our county advisory commission on accessible communities, that funding came about originally through a help America vote act. There were funds in place and an icon in our community, in the disability community, Dan Eberly was on that commission, or ‑‑ with the Help America Vote Act and he talked to the county about creating this advisory commission or advisory council, pardon me.

And he was able to leverage funds through the governor's committee on disability and employment. So this is the funding that is made available and how that came about, I have never really gotten a clear answer whether it was a resolution or an ordinance. I did find that the county was talking with Toby Olson at the time, with the governor's committee on disability employment, and found that there was funding for that. So we have been pushing this throughout counties, throughout Washington state, but the Tacoma area commission totally different circumstances.

Luke, do you want to talk at all about that?

>> LUKE BYRAM: I think you covered it well. So I don't have anything else to add.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Yeah, I think on the ‑‑ for the Tacoma commission, one of the things that I think really brought it to the forefront was some ‑‑ some press that was involved after the ADA transition. There was ‑‑ this was a lot of public attention brought to the fact that one of the trails that was built in the Tacoma area was not accessible. The grade was not accessible, and that prompted a whole discussion about how the ADA coordinator would get information and input from the community.

And that really started the wheels turning in the commission in Tacoma.

>> TIM FUCHS: All right. Good. Thanks for the background. That's helpful. Sam is wondering, what are RAP cards?

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: RAP cards are basically brochures that are one page, you get a front and back that is the size of a brochure and they ‑‑ they come with the rack or they can be put into racks in places where people would grab information.

Here at the center for independence, we have a space for the Tacoma area commission and the Pierce County advisory board, or ‑‑ pardon me. Advisor ‑‑ accessible advisory county. Rack cards are in one spot. So they are easy to take with you whenever you are going to do events and trying to promote anything. Similar to what you would have at Independent Living Center.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Thanks.

All right. We have plenty of time for the Q&A.

If you want to answer your question, you can type it in the Q&A box or you can type it in the chat feature on the CART screen.

We have about 20 seconds to see if any more questions come in before we move on.

So, again, we will have another Q&A session at the end of our presentation. So we'll move ahead now to slide 13. But we'll take a Q&A break at the end of the call. All right.

Luke, over to you for slide 13, joining advisory boards.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Joining advisory boards is fairly simple process. You would first have to be a resident of the jurisdiction, for which you want to serve. You would first contact the municipality ‑‑ the municipality being the state, county, city, for which you live in, which the opportunities will be found on the websites. It often includes an application interview for appointment process. For example, for the city of Tacoma, we have to fill out an application and we interview in front of a committee of the city council, which then puts forth a recommendation to the full city council for appointment to the commission.

If you are able to bring your experience, expertise and questions and advice to the city council, one might think that they don't really have any expertise on experience, but quite frankly, we all have questions about the accessibility of where we live. And so you can bring those questions to be explored during a commission meeting.

Some jurisdictions encourage youth involvement, including Tacoma. I started my service on the commission as the first and only youth representative on the commission. And have set a high bar for those who follow me. And most importantly, involving the board of directors for CILs and system change staff, like Todd at the Center for Independence.

Todd, do you have something to add?

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Oh, just real quick. I wanted to toot your horn for you. A lot of the nuts and bolts behind how these processes go and the actual in the trenches work that has been done by Luke has set a standard for our other commissioners to actually take part in more of the council meetings and be more involved with what's happening, and what I believe has come out of that, is that we have councilmembers that know to reach to us more often and have started to do that so that they can initiate some accessibility issues for the city themselves. And then use us as the conduit for getting it done.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Next slide, Tim.

So who makes the appointment to the advisory boards? Well, it would depend upon the municipality, whether it would be city council, the mayor, county council or governor. For example, in Tacoma, that would be the city council. And for a state council that would be the governor. Like, the Washington state SILC, for instance, that would be the governor who would be appointing and then for the San Francisco's mayor on disability advisory body, that would be the mayor would be making that appointment, for example. So it would just depend upon the municipality.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: And I would add that in the ‑‑ in a situation where the mayor's office is actually making that suggestion or the final decision, they usually have a staff that goes along with that. We really like that model, when Luke and I investigate and did some research behind it, but it was a little bit too much of a big, broad leap to try and talk Tacoma into following their suit. So we are working with what we have and in most of your cases, in your communities, you may have to do the same thing. But, again, using diplomacy and your expertise, you are going to be able to make things happen the way you want it to. It's just you will learn what the boundaries are.

>> TIM FUCHS: Great. So Todd, like in the Pierce County, the county council or the county executive that would make those appointments there?

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Yes, it is. We have a body, every accessible communities advisory council has a body within the county government that is staff liaisons to the council. So ‑‑ or the advisory body. So when they ‑‑ when they seek guidance, they do go to the county council. When ‑‑ there is one area that I'm not 100% sure of and that is with the governor's commission on disability and employment, the governor's committee on disability employment, I believe they have some governor intervention with that as well, but I'm not 100% sure.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Thanks. That's helpful.

I'm on slide 15.

>> LUKE BYRAM: So as a volunteer advisory board member, are we a public officer? And most members of boards and commissions are legally treated as public officers and the laws around open public meetings act and open records act do apply and so as a member, you would receive training around those laws. So you would know how to respond to those circumstances should a member of the public seek records concerning the advisory body.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: I would go so far as to say that depending on the body that you work with and the community that you are in, that this is taken seriously, but it's not something that you need to be concerned about from a litigious standpoint. Things that you want to pay close attention to is not crossing over boundaries, for instance, Luke works as a board member in my Center for Independent Living. So our conversations usually end with our commission meetings that have to do with commission business.

Open public meetings are usually considered something that you need to advertise if you have a quorum or more. So a lot of our work groups sometimes are less than four members to get work done and not necessarily have to go through the process of letting the community know before we're ‑‑ we report out to them.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Good points, Todd. Next slide, please, Tim.

So the size of the advisory boards. There is no recommended number of advisory boards for a community. There could be three or there could be 15. There is no recommended number. So some have lots and some only have a few. The number of board members depends on the duties, responsibilities and membership requirements. For example, the Tacoma Commission On Disabilities, when we are at full capacity, has 11 commission members.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: We just went through the process of reinstating two members that are going to do another three‑year term and we just added three new members that we will be welcoming to the commission in Tacoma this coming Friday. The terms ‑‑ Luke will talk a little bit more about, but in a lot of cases if you are working in a task force and the work is not done, a lot of times people want to extend. And then people do sometimes have circumstances in which they need to leave their position and it's advisable that you make sure that they have some backup folks in the queue ready to go if they were not chosen during the initial round of selection.

>> LUKE BYRAM: We had also asked our city council committee to have a selection of backups available from the applicant pool, and this last go around they selected two backups should a commissioner have to unexpectedly leave the commission for whatever circumstances. So that was very helpful to us, and we appreciate the city council listening to our concern there, and making sure our commission functions in a more effective manner.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: One good example I would like to point out on our commission is one of our members who is still a commissioner, but is also running for Congress. So at some point, her schedule may get a bit too full to be able to fully participate with our commission. So at that point, we do have somebody who could step in in her place and we'll keep her in the loop as far as what the city of Tacoma is doing.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Next slide, Tim.

So as Todd referenced, there are various term lengths. The term lengths vary by municipality, that as you can see that is a theme throughout this presentation that it ‑‑ most of the time the answer depends on the municipality. Reappointment options are available until your term limit is out, and, for example, the city of Tacoma term limit for the commission on disabilities is three years.

I always like to reapply to the commission, which is the reappointment process, because oftentimes in a three‑year span of time, that is not enough time to effectively address the ‑‑ the number of issues that the commission has in front of them to accomplish.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Another thing I would point out is to avoid having any anxiety‑ridden emails from your county or city liaison, when it comes to reup at your appointment, try and stay on top of that. They get a little bit nervous when the deadline is coming, and you haven't filled out those applications. It's ‑‑ it's ‑‑ you know, it's natural that a lot of that is going to happen, because everyone is very busy, but when they have the city council convened, they like to be able to present to the council everybody who is going to be reapplying as well.

>> LUKE BYRAM: This is an option, at least for Tacoma, that if you are not able to physically go in front of the council committee for the interview, you are able to do it telephonically, or you are able to respond in writing to the questions that ‑‑ that they have at the interview for which the councilmembers will review in advance of the meeting.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: And so that is an option available should that be necessary.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Yes, that is definitely considered a reasonable accommodation. Something that we would push very hard for. The other thing that we would point out is that a lot of times the people who are applying are people that we know. And we try and enforce the qualities that we are looking for and give them an equal playing field in the application process.

Next slide, please, Tim. So getting the advisory board organized is the most important thing that you can help to get accomplished. The first being is attending orientation. Us as commissioners, we don't necessarily know the ins and outs of city or state or whatever municipality policies are in play, and so that orientation surrounding the orientation of being on the commission or council is very important. Establishing bylaws is very important. And attendance policy and the committee structure within the commission, there's a few ways that you can go about it. One is just a traditional committee structure within the commission, with a variety of a few committees that are covering a few topics, like for instance, transportation or closed captioning or accessible taxi, for instance.

And then there might reporting requirements or other tasks connected to your commission.

So the big ones that I want to stress are the orientation, the bylaws, the committee structure and attendance policy because if you don't have those, your committee will be very loosely organized and it won't be as effective as it could be.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Luke is spot on with that. One of the things that we find that really is ‑‑ prompts people to lose interest in their representation is when the meetings are not well attended. I think that when it comes to requirements in reporting, as well as sharing information with boards and commissions and governing bodies along those lines, you want to be clear about what the policies and the procedures are. If you are sharing stuff with the chair, you should be also likely sharing that same information with the liaison to the city or the county government. And at the same time, when you are doing disability awareness through your commission, you want to be sure that the message that you are sending out is clear and concise and that it ‑‑ that it falls within the requirements of the policies that you set up.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Next slide, please, Tim.

So as I emphasized open the previous slide, policies and procedures are incredibly important. Jurisdictions should adopt policies and procedures for advisory boards and commissions and be covered in the document that creates each body. So that would be their bylaws. Check with the municipality if you already have policies and procedures. It's likely that you might already have policies and procedures in place within your municipality.

They would most likely include a set of expectations for commissioners and board members, and to reduce conflict of interest or to ‑‑ to help alleviate capacity issues, time capacity issues, they would oftentimes limit you to only serve on one advisory body at a time. But you would want to double collect with your municipality regarding that specific question.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: And since I do serve on more than one board, I would ‑‑ I would highly recommend that you try and limit yourself because of the number of issues that you will likely bring to the ‑‑ to each individual body.

However, you may be in a position where you want to try and get a new advisory board up off the ground and going, and in those cases, the more IL experience that you can bring to an advisory, is very much needed and it's something that in my opinion will help to drive the advisory boards, not just the best practices, but the way they communicate and the way they have a relationship with the city or the county themselves.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Next slide, Tim, please.

So one way that we are able to ‑‑ to invite the community to our work is ‑‑ is through one of our committees, we did a commission welcome video, where we explained what the commission does, the role and the function of what we do, and we welcome the community to join us in our work and in an effort to reach out to the Deaf community, we put together a signed ASL video that describes what we do as a commission.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: And that is available as a public service announcement on Tacoma TV. We're working on something similar with pierce County, and this is a free area for IL and disability‑related organizations to get involved with awareness and education for your community. Our commissions and advisory boards, I believe, really should take advantage of this, because it ‑‑ even if the audience is not primarily people with disabilities, all of you know that this will have an impact and filter over into the disability community from the rest of the community. It's a whole community concept and it's a great way to get your message out.

>> LUKE BYRAM: So this is the most important slide, I think, in my opinion of this presentation, because there is no need for a formal partnership between the city of Tacoma, and the ‑‑ and the center for independence, for instance as an example with our commission. Some of the things that we have been able to achieve with the partnership between CNI and the commission is that campaign to education closed captioning in all public establishments and an ongoing effort to create a taxi service for people with disabilities, and the ‑‑ the potential for center for independence to act as a subcontractor with the city in regards to taxi services, when the service is established are just some of the ways that we have been able to partner with the city and the ‑‑ and the center for independence.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: And I would elaborate on this to say ‑‑ and this is very important ‑‑ just because we don't necessarily have a formal partnership or an MOU with the city of Tacoma, that doesn't mean that that can't happen and the relationship and the partnership between the Tacoma area commission can't continue. One thing that I want to make very clear is that sometimes the cities will see an opportunity to ‑‑ to partner with a nonprofit agency, as Luke mentioned, as a subcontractor. And that is an opportunity to put direct funds from the city or from an initiative within the city directly into the IL system, which as all of you know, we do more with a nickel than most other organizations do with a dollar. So when they find out that that is what our capacity is and what we can do, it opens the door to other possibilities and funding and other resources are concerned.

Luke ‑‑

>> LUKE BYRAM: Please?

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Luke, did you want me to touch on the accessible taxi initiative, its advancement right now, or I can wait until Q&A, if you would like.

>> LUKE BYRAM: You can elaborate now.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Okay. So ‑‑ and, again, if you have questions during the Q&A time, I'm happy to talk about this, but one of the things that has come out of this initiative in trying to ‑‑ trying to launch an accessible taxi program within Tacoma and Pierce County in general, is ‑‑ we have established a relationship with Cindy Laws who is instrumental in some transportation ‑‑ public transportation issues within the Americans with Disabilities Act. She's been active with that for a long time. She works with wheelchair‑accessible taxis in King County in Seattle and the Sea‑Tac Airport at the Seattle airport and she's instrumental in working with the state on trying to get a law in place that would be able to help the ‑‑ any community within the state of Washington do this.

So this was another opportunity where what our piece was, what our goals were in the city of Tacoma have branched out and now are involved with other initiatives throughout the state of Washington. So it's a great opportunity to be able to work with some of your disability rights networks and experts and actually get legislation and laws changed.

And I'm open to any questions that you would have at the end of this.

>> LUKE BYRAM: And then finally increased electronic access to websites. For the city, we have the fortune of having a blind advocate on the commission, who does a lot of work on this issue and we partner with our blind community locally to ‑‑ in our efforts to increase access to websites and other city media platforms for people with disabilities, particularly those who are low vision or blind.

And also supporting the celebration of people with disabilities, such as the City of Destiny Awards which is our city's voluntary recognition ceremony, where we are able to recognize people with disabilities or those who don't, but who support people with disabilities in furthering the lives of those with disabilities. We did have the recognition just in front of city council, and then we were able to work with another committee that the city has that plans the City of Destiny Awards and were able to merge our awards with the existing awards of the City of Destiny Awards and that was a great partnership between the ‑‑ the City of Destiny Award committee, award recognition committee pane our commission.

Finally, Todd can elaborate further on this, strengthening access to emergency networks at city, county and state level. And Todd works extensively on this issue for CFI, since he's the chair of the NCIL's emergency preparedness committee.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: That is right. And as many of you right now, we are looking at hurricane season. We just were involved with the partnership in inclusive disaster strategies and our emergency planning subcommittee stepped up and were involved with giving advice to the states that were affected and we have formed a group through the partnership right now who are looking at supporting people with disabilities in the Bahamas which is going to be some heavy lifting.

Again, this is an area where having a good relationship with your local emergency ‑‑ emergency management division or department in your city, county and state, is key. We have a very strong relationship with our county. We have a very strong relationship with the city. We're working on the state, but we also have a very strong relationship with our Region 10, FEMA disability ‑‑ regional disability integration specialist, which is key to moving some of these things and sharing information throughout our region here in Region 10, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Next slide, Tim, please.

To goal development and strategic planning is absolutely essential to the work of a commission or a body. It's how we set our goals and our benchmarks for the year.

It's absolutely essential to include people with disabilities that are affected by the decisions in the goal setting itself, and participate in strategic planning meetings. An effective way to develop goals is through the common way of the smart goal, which is a common way to develop goals. And the important part is to be goal‑oriented in the planning process, as it's the most effective and productive as you are working towards a shared vision in a partnership with the commission and the city.

And if IL is not at the table, at the advisory level, as we all know, the decisions will be made without the consultation of IL or the disability community, which is unfortunate, but that is what would happen.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: And does far too often. This is the area where systemic advocacy and ‑‑ and systemic change take place. This is having us at the table is nothing about us without us. And when we see that that's not happening, we are sure to let them know that ‑‑ that there is a lot going on, a lot about us that is happening without us. And that is very important. The IL community does the best job of that, of any disability organization I have worked with nationwide.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Next slide, Tim, please.

So this was a retreat planning exercise that we did when we presented live at the NCIL conference in D.C. And so these are just areas of ‑‑ and topics that a commission could work on and so this was just a way for those in attendance to be able to begin to articulate, perhaps, some goals that might be effective within their own local community to work on as a commission once you either join a commission or advisory body or you start one yourself if one is not already created.

So Tim, if we are good on time‑wise, I'm thinking those could maybe just ‑‑ maybe think of one of these topics and there's another slide on the next slide, with more. And they could maybe type in and practice typing in a goal and we could share a few of those?

>> TIM FUCHS: That's great. Would you mind reading through these for folks, Luke.

>> LUKE BYRAM: The retreat planning exercise, the topics are community education, legislation, accessibility, next slide, please, employment, transportation, and economics.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Tim, did you want the brief definitions underneath those topics?

>> TIM FUCHS: Oops, sorry. Yes, I think that that would be good.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Increasing awareness of disability issues and resources, developing laws and ordinances affecting citizens with disabilities and their rights. Assuring that all facilities and programs are totally accessible to citizens with disabilities.

Next slide.

Promoting more employment opportunities for citizens with disabilities, acquiring a totally accessible public transportation system, promoting opportunities for economic independence for citizens with disabilities.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Yes, this was an area in the ‑‑ in our presentation where we broke people into groups and it was quite amazing. People obviously had issues with all of these subjects, but they picked one and then they reported back to us. So I think that's a brilliant idea by Luke to offer that up.

>> LUKE BYRAM: One thing I would like to share at this time is that one of the attendees at the conference thought to invite the mayor and the city council to the commission itself and obviously those elected officials obviously have very demanding and busy schedules. So that's clearly not what you should do, but you should invite the disability experts from the deaf community, the blind community, the independent living community and so forth on to the commission, and then have those people advise the city council or the county council or the state as far as disability policy and so that's what ‑‑ what you all should consider to do.

I thought it was a little funny, actually. She was recommending to have the mayor join the commission.

(Laughter).

But we do want to have a strong partnership with those people, because at the end of the day, those are the ones who are making those final decisions.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: That type of relationship building is key, and that doesn't happen in one meeting or two meetings. You want an ongoing relationship built, usually with a liaison to the city and then having regular access to the decision makers within your city, county or other municipality.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Okay. Great. Let's see if there are any questions and then we can talk ‑‑

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Great. Let's see if there are any questions and then we can talk about the issues. You can enter the questions in the Q&A pod on Zoom, or chat in CART. If you are not using the webinar features for any reason or if you are on the phone, you can email me at Tim@NCIL.org. That is Tim@NCIL.org.

I will start with you, Todd, because you are on two of these groups. The Tacoma area commission on disability and the Pierce county accessibility advisory council. How is recruitment and participation on those groups? Do you have more people than you need, waiting lists or are they fully constituted? Are you looking for more people? What has that experience been like?

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Pretty much on both ‑‑ the Tacoma area commission has been around longer, and I believe it's ‑‑ it's better established in that regard.

So we have a regular ‑‑ right now, as Luke pointed out, we are looking at having subordinate applicants be available in the event that somebody drops off. So we have the ‑‑ our board or our commission filled at Tacoma.

Pierce County on the other hand is a little bit newer and we are trying to increase the membership there, but it has begun to increase as of approximately a year ago. We are starting to see more and more people, even people who sometimes ‑‑ or had been commissioners with the city of Tacoma in the past. So we cross pollenate a lot in that regard. We try to share information and ideas and we actually have been involved with some of the same projects.

So yeah, the ‑‑ the recruitment part is very important and where you go to do that recruitment is key. An IL center is a fabulous place to start, but then look at the other disability‑related organizations, your aging and long‑term care, your ‑‑ which are more than likely your ADRCs, your Aging and Disability Resource Centers in your community. These are key places to go to let them know that you have openings.

>> TIM FUCHS: Great. Thanks. The next question is from Sam. Sam asks: Could you talk a little bit about preparing for the meeting or interview to join an advisory board? Luke, do you want to start tips for ‑‑ specific tips for preparing for that interview if you are joining an established board?

>> LUKE BYRAM: What I would encourage is when I first joined, I consulted with a member of our community who was a business owner who was running for city council, and unfortunately didn't make it, but I consulted with her and she helped me to prepare my responses to those questions that they were goes to ask. And then they are also able to ask you additional questions if they have any at the interview. And so making sure to get help if you need to in answering those questions would be the most effective way to start. I would encourage you to write down your responses, even if you might know what you want to say in your head. It's always helpful, at least for me to be writing down the answers to those questions. And that way I can practice those and so it ‑‑ it comes off more effective when the interview comes.

So that would be my advice for when you are about to interview. And you only have a few minutes. For the city of Tacoma, they allow you three minutes to answer those questions. You have to be very concise and concrete in your answers to those.

>> TIM FUCHS: Todd, you chair a couple of these groups. What is your perspective? What are you looking for and that you would recommend to CIL staff and consumers that are trying to join a board?

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Well, from my perspective right now, I would say consider succession as well. Don't leave a board and leave an opportunity for a board to get ‑‑ or a commission to get filled and not have your center be involved. You want to be able to have as much involvement with your boards and commissions as you can. Outside of that, I want you to all be looking for folks to fill these positions and people that you know, people that you can build a relationship with, professionally and personally, in some cases. So that the education and the awareness has more of a universal message when you are sharing that with ‑‑ with other community members.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Great. Thanks. Sam asks, would you recommend joining an existing board before trying to start a new one? Obviously, you might not have one in your county to join, but Todd, any tips there for Sam? Is that something you would recommend to join before trying to create one.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Personally, I would recommend that you join one simply to see what's happening in that.

So, for instance, if your city has one and your county doesn't, you might want to start by getting a feel for how the process works, see what that municipality is doing and then if your county doesn't have one, consider finding the routes, the people that you need to talk to, to get one started in the county or another municipality that you are not involved with, but getting in the experience versus a really good idea and not to mention the fact that you can help to drive that commission.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Thanks. Amy is wondering if we can share some tips about rural issues. Can you talk about particular challenges facing rural areas in terms of getting boards or commissions started or make sure that they meet regularly if they exist by resolution, et cetera.

>> LUKE BYRAM: I think going to that point. I think one thing that you need to pay attention to is most of the time these commissions and boards meet at the actual municipality itself, like at city hall, for instance, and making sure that especially for those who have transportation issues as a person with a disability, to make sure that ‑‑ that where you decide to meet, you have available public transit that runs on a regular basis would be a concern that I would want to make sure to address, because that would impact the attendance of the meeting.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Definitely. And one thing I would add, Tim, we have organizations that are affiliated with the ILRU and NCIL and Billy Atum would be happy to help you address some of the boards and commissions in rural outreach.

I think it's real important to network with the community of people that are experts in this, and to work with them, but absolutely. We need more boards. We need more commissioners. We need more representation in rural communities.

>> TIM FUCHS: I know that this is not something that would work in every community, in fact there might be rules around county commissions or boards that would impact this, but one thing that I have been intrigued by the last few years is the success that ‑‑ bear with me here, but I think it's the Montana SILC in running virtual meetings.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Yes.

>> TIM FUCHS: Really high quality, but not too high cost technology that allows some people as needed to participate virtually. We fully did a webinar a few years ago with them. So I think it was in 2017, Amy, and that's on ILRU's website. I will try to post the link in a minute, but you and anyone else that is struggling with that issue might want to check that out for the specifics in how they achieved that. It was groundbreaking but it was nice to see that they didn't ‑‑ they didn't have to spend as much money as you might think to pull it off. Really great.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: And that is key too, Tim. The cost reduction and getting together is important. The University of Montana is very easy to reach out to as well. They are happy to share information and they do a tremendous amount of research. So that is another area I would turn to, when it comes to looking at independent living and disability subject matter and information from a rural perspective, absolutely.

>> TIM FUCHS: Thanks. Yes, I just found the link. Just one second and I will post this in the chat. You guys can collect this out, just like today's meeting. This is actually from 2016. So just about three years ago.

And the link that I'm going to post has the presentation from that ‑‑ the PowerPoint from that presentation along with the video that you could launch, including captioning.

Okay. Sam says does anyone have advice for affordably making virtual meetings a more accessible? I can say from NCIL's perspective that we do almost all of our meetings virtually, our committees, subcommittees, caucuses, task forces and typically, we find that through a combination of teleconference and captioning, that that works pretty well. The nice thing about remote captioning is you can set it up anywhere in the country. Now this does assume that people would have access to the web, to view that and I realize that's not something that's available in every area. But CART captioning is not ‑‑ not that expensive to set up for a single meeting and you typically pay by hour. I would be happy to provide more specifics if you want to reach out, Sam.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: And that brings up another good issue too, Tim. And that is the city of Tacoma ‑‑ and Luke, you can speak to this as well. In seeing what we have done with captioning and having, for instance, the Tacoma City of Destiny Awards captioned, counselor Uska has put forward a proposal to have all of their meetings captioned. As far as, though, the remote meetings go, I think NCIL has a fine standard. You have somebody you can immediately go to, to make sure that your meetings are not only easy to operate but also completely accessible for everybody. So I recommend that you do that and never hesitate to reach out to me either.

June Kailes has done some wonderful work nationally on making meetings and conferences accessible and she's more than willing to share her information with people.

>> TIM FUCHS: Yes. And virtual participation is also an accommodation for some people. So that can be really important to consider and to advocate for if it's not the norm in your area.

The other thing I would mention too, if you are considering doing virtual meetings or if you are considering accessibility, don't forget it's a two‑way street, right, that if you provide someone with captioning to be able to access everyone else's comments, that's great, but you have got to have a way for them to comment themselves. So you would need to have someone that could voice their comments, say, in a live meeting, that was somehow communicating with them or provide a way for them to type their own comments, type or submit their own comments live and in realtime so they can be an active participant in the meeting. Again, happy to provide specifics, but just some things to keep in mind.

All right.

I want to ‑‑ I know you wanted to go back ‑‑ I will go back to slide 24. And Luke, you wanted folks on the call to look at these areas.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Mm‑hmm.

>> TIM FUCHS: Accessibility, employment, transportation, and economics, and community education, and legislation. You were hoping that people would submit in the chat some sample goals that they would like to see in their communities; is that right?

>> LUKE BYRAM: Yes.

>> TIM FUCHS: So goals to create a board or for a board or commission to work on?

>> LUKE BYRAM: Once you have an advisory board established, then that's when you would want to implement retreat planning and that's when you would be working on drafting these goals that you would work on for a ‑‑ a period of time.

Usually about one year, but it could be longer, if necessary.

Many of the goals that us as a commission have worked on have taken years and years to do. I think the accessible taxi project that we have been working on has taken, like, 10 plus years to try to move along, and I think finally, there's some traction to that project.

So ‑‑ and the closed captioning, it took us a few years as well. So most of these projects are very long‑term goals, but not every goal needs to be long term.

Something that you can achieve in a more reasonable time period.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: And one of the reasons that I believe that the accessible taxi or the WATs in Washington, the wheelchair accessible taxis initiative, one of the things that we ran into that really pushed the envelope for us was the ‑‑ the Lyft and Uber, the ride share companies, the ride share companies added a new wrinkle to the entire public transportation piece that had to be taken into consideration with this, and that's something that ‑‑ that has made this a longer process and something that if you are ever considering in your community, please feel free to contact us and we'll help you with that.

>> TIM FUCHS: Great.

>> LUKE BYRAM: One thing to add too, as a disabled commissioner, it is the responsibility of that municipality to ensure accommodations, whatever those accommodations might be, whether those are ‑‑

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: That's right.

>> LUKE BYRAM: The ASL interpreters, CART, or any other accommodation which could include remote access to those meetings, if you can't physically attend those. So that was squarely the responsibility of the municipality to ensure the accommodations, whatever those accommodations that you would need to work ‑‑ whichever accommodations you would need to ensure access to those meetings.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Great. Folks can have someone with that if you want to enter some goals in the chat. There are some other questions coming in too. As I address those questions, I will also voice any of the goals and thoughts that we get in that regard.

And I don't know why the power point keeps dropping. I apologize. I will keep sharing it.

But I ‑‑ I'm losing the share. So I apologize.

So I hope you all can still see it.

I have a couple of other questions that came in. Let me click over to those now.

Oh, this one is a comment, Tiba says that today's webinar was extremely helpful. They are new to disability activism, and today's information really clarified so many aspects. Well, thanks, Tiba. Glad that you are here and that you liked it. Zully says what can we do when IL in our region has a negative image and alienates people? That's a real challenge because we all love independent living, and we have leadership or issues in the community that keep people having a positive image.

Anything in regards to today's content around the advisory boards or commissions that can help to improve the image of IL where that's a challenge. Todd, do you want to take a first crack at that?

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Absolutely. I think Zully, this is a platform right here. The ILRU, IL‑NET, APRIL and the National Council for Independent Living are perfect places for you to go and try to get some information on how to increase or to improve that image.

You have people all over the country who have dealt with this and there may somebody solutions that already being effective in other communities that you can use. I ‑‑ I highly recommend that you reach out to and create a network of independent living champions that can ‑‑ that can address just that ‑‑ just that issue, image is very important and you definitely want to have a strong IL community with the right message and a universal message going out.

>> TIM FUCHS: Good. Okay. Thanks.

So I'm wondering, Todd, what would you recommend as a first step for folks on the phone today? How can you find out if there's already a group like this in your community? And if not, what are some first steps you would recommend towards creating one?

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Well, for finding out if there's anything like that, you can go directly to your county or your city and ask them, just point‑blank.

Again, the relationships that you have with your network, your local community is going to be very helpful, because likely, you are going to find those ‑‑ or answer those questions by simply talking to the partners and the peers that you have in the IL community, through the other disability organizations, whether they be government or not.

When it comes to the point of actually wanting to create one, you may go as high up as the state to see if there's any initiatives or if there's any push or support that you can get from the state or your local county to ‑‑ to create not only the commissions and boards, but also have advisories and other areas, including built design and some of the other key areas that larger cities have to deal with on a regular basis.

So definitely, you want to build that relationship with your local government and you definitely want to have a buy‑in from the peer organizations that you are working with.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Good. Good tip.

Yeah, you were actually able to find some funding, right, in Washington state? So when you did the research, you found out this was actually money to do some of this, right?

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Absolutely. And this is another area I'm hoping to elaborate more on and maybe have a webinar in the future and that is to leverage some of the fines that are taken in, in your community for violations against ADA and parking violations are one of the biggest. The governor's committee actually leverages at least 50% of the parking violation fines in the state of Washington to create accessible communities.

So, again, I'm more than willing to help. I have ‑‑ I have folks that I talk to all across the country that do this kind of work, and they have all different ideas and since state governments and local governments all operate a little bit differently, there's some really good ideas out there that may be just waiting for you to identify and bring back to your community.

>> TIM FUCHS: Excellent. All right.

And Luke, from your perspective, joining the board, how did you become aware of it? How did you first find out about it?

>> LUKE BYRAM: I first found out about it on my city's website that there was some vacancies and then I learned when I first joined, I was still in high school. And so I learned about the opportunity as a youth member to join. And I filled out the application, interviewed and the rest is history.

>> TIM FUCHS: Very cool. Well, cool. That's very instructive in how we market this and how people find it.

All right. Well, we have got plenty of time left. We have got a couple more just closing slides to go through, but if we have any other questions, I want to make sure to take time to take them. So let me just give kind of a last call again, you know the drill by now and you can enter the question in the Q&A and you can email them to me at NCIL, Tim@NCIL.org or enter them in the CART chat.

I will give it just about 15 seconds to make sure that there are no final questions before we close.

And while I do that, let me just mention too, that we did share that link to that past training, and I wanted to take' minute to plug all the archived trainings at ILRU.org and as I mentioned and most of you know, the ILRU is a collaborative run among our organizations but as the lead on the IL ILRU houses all of their material on our website and there is a lot!

So take a look at that on demand page. You can find recorded webinars going back several years with just, I mean, thousands of hours of content, live trainings webinars, PowerPoint presentations, resource guides. So take advantage of that. And then along the same lines, we are here to help you. So if you have follow‑up questions, or you want more information, you can always reach out to any of us on the IL‑NET project at NCIL, the ILRU or APRIL. Sharon Finney posted the main page for the on‑demand trainings.

>> LUKE BYRAM: Tim, real quickly in preparing for this presentation, I was able to find a guide for municipalities to start their own commissions. I think this was primarily geared for municipalities but certainly as one who is eager to start one, you can find that information real helpful and if you could contact me, I would be happy to share that document with everyone. It goes through pretty much everything you could possibly think of to start one yourself. So ‑‑

>> TIM FUCHS: Great.

All right. And Zully asked that we acknowledge the loss of Marca Bristo. She was such a great leader. I'm sure most of you heard of her passing. She was the CEO of Access Living in Chicago and nationally as well and someone that we were all lucky to know and powerhouse in our movement. So it's a sad time. Thank you, Zully for acknowledging that.

>> TODD HOLLOWAY: Absolutely. Thank you, Zully.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. I'm going to move to slide 27. This is actually not a live link. Meaning you don't need to click on this evaluation. But when I close the webinar today in a few minutes here, the evaluation form will actually pop up on your screen and I will just ask as a favor that you take a few moments to fill that out. We really do want your individual feedback and suggestions for our webinars.

Here on slide 28, Luke and Todd have been generous enough to provide their contact information. And I really appreciate they have done that. And Todd, you kind of just mentioned this, you alluded to this, but I know you wanted to make an appeal to offer yourselves as a contact person for people to reach out to, that want to do this work, especially if you are thinking about starting a board or commission. So I think that that's fantastic that Todd and Luke are willing to use their experience to share with all of you.

And I ‑‑ you know, please contact me as well. My email like I said is very simple, Tim@NCIL.org. And if I can't answer a question for you, I certainly will point you in the right direction and make sure you get an answer. Please do use our contact information. Please do let us know whether it's in, you know, six hours or six months. We would love to hear from you. Whether it's a question or whether it's a success that you have had in doing this kind of work, getting elected to a board, starting your own commission in your city or state. We would love to hear from you. So take advantage of that.

And with that, I don't see any further questions. So I will go ahead and close today's call. I want to thank you, Todd and Luke. Thank you so much for sharing your expertise and your path in Washington state to join and start these groups and to put this ‑‑ do this kind of encore presentation for us from the NCIL conference. And to all of you, thanks for joining us this afternoon and taking a few minutes.

Like I said, if you have questions or if we can be of help in anyway, please reach out and let us know. I hope you have a wonderful afternoon. We'll talk to you soon. Bye.