SILC Needs Assessment Survey: A Discussion on Current Approaches and Practices in Needs Assessment in SILCs

Presented by Valerie Barnum-Yarger, Deb Cook, Susan Fager, Jeff Sheen, Larry Wanger and Brad Williams on November 21, 2013  
  
  
>> TIM FUCHS: Good afternoon. I'm Tim Fuchs   
with the national coin sill on independent living   
here in Washington D.C. I want to welcome you all   
to SILC-NET's newest webinar SILC needs assessment   
survey: A discussion on current approaches and   
practices and needs assessment at Centers for   
Independent Living. Excuse me. Statewide   
independent living councils. What a way to start   
a call. Today's webinar is being presented by the   
the SILC-NET, a program of the IL NET training and   
technical assistance project for CILs and SILCs   
around the IL NET is operated through a   
partnership among ILRU, NCIL and APRIL with   
support provided by RSA at the U.S. Department of   
Education.   
So we are recording today's call so we can awr   
Clive it on ILRU's website and we're going to have   
a different format today. For those of you that   
posh dissipate in these calls from time to time   
you know it's typically kind of a lecture-based   
program with Q&A but we really do want today's   
call to be an open discussion. We're going to   
start off with a presentation. But after we   
listen to Jeff Sheen's presentation we're going to   
open the call up, have some panel questions from   
our speakers today, and then take your comments   
and questions to lead the discussion. So the   
second half of the call is really intended to be   
very interactive. We're going to open the line up   
and hear from all of you, too.   
So I'll give you some instructions about that when   
we get there. Until that time your lines are   
muted. When we open up the line I will ask you to   
individually mute your lines so we don't have a   
lot of background noise. I'll walk you through   
that when we get there, about halfway through the   
call.   
Before we start I want to ask you to please fill   
out the evaluation form for today's call. Despite   
the fact it's a little less formal than some of   
our other calls we still need to know what you   
thought of it and if it was helpful for you in   
your role with the SILC. And it only takes a few   
moments to complete. It's very easy. We really   
would appreciate your thoughts. That will be   
included on the final slide of the webinar if   
you're on the webinar today. If you're listening   
on the phone you can access that link in the   
confirmation email that was sent to you.   
We do have a short PowerPoint today. If you are   
on the webinar it's going to display automatically   
but for those of you that have just called, which   
is fine, you'll want to open up that PowerPoint   
that was sent to you in the confirmation email.   
If you don't have that in front of you, you can   
email me. I'm at Tim@NCIL.org. Thanks.   
That's as much housekeeping as I had to handle   
today. I just want to introduce some of our   
speakers before we begin. First and foremost I   
want to thank Jeff Sheen for all of his work   
organizing this call. Jeff is with us from Utah   
State University's center for people with   
disabilities, and Utah state is also an integral   
part of the IL NET project, and Jeff has done a   
lot of work putting together this SILC survey,   
analyzing the results from many of you that   
responded. So thank you for that. And helped us   
put together our presenters for today that I'll   
walk through now. And I want to thank all of   
them, too, for responding to the survey. Jeff was   
instrumental in helping us identify states that   
really had some promising practices, and I'm   
pleased to say that all five of the states that we   
reached out to agreed to participate today. We're   
excited -- were excited to participate today.   
It's wonderful. Really, I think, it is a   
testament to the peer support that happens in IL   
on a macrolevel as well as on a service level at   
centers. So thanks in advance to all of you.   
With us from the Michigan SILC we have Valerie   
Barnum-Yarger. From the Washington SILC Deb Cook.   
From the DSU in Colorado, Susan Fager. From the   
Arizona SILC we have Larry Wanger. And from the   
New York SILC we have Brad Williams.   
We had a call the other day to prepare and just a   
wonderful discussion, and I know we'll repeat that   
today. Thanks to all of you for being with us.   
In the meantime I'm going to turn it over to Jeff   
to get us started with the presentation. Jeff?   
>> JEFF SHEEN: Thank you, Tim. Good afternoon,   
everyone. It's nice to be here with you this   
afternoon. I'm going to take just a few minutes   
and go over some of the -- give you an overview of   
the survey that we conducted and some of the key   
findings that informed the recommendations that we   
have come up with based on conducting this survey.   
So to give you a sense, the overall purpose of   
this survey was just to get a better understanding   
of how the statewide independent living councils   
are currently going about conducting their needs   
assessment activities. In particular in relation   
to their state plan development. So that the   
folks at the IL NET project could get a better   
sense of how we might shape training and technical   
assistance efforts in the future to help the SILCs   
do a job that they're comfortable with as far as   
conducting needs assessments, can really help them   
move forward in productive and comprehensive ways.   
The basics of the survey, we developed a   
23-question telephone survey that many of you   
participated in. That was developed by staff here   
at the center for persons with disabilities as   
well as staff at ILRU, and we conducted these   
surveys between July and August. The thing I'm   
most excited about, we had 54 out of the 56 SILCs   
that compleaptd this survey. So we almost had   
100% response rate. That is fantastic. So we're   
really pleased that so many of your colleagues and   
yourselves participated when we called and helped   
us complete this important survey.   
As far as who we talked to when we reached the   
Statewide Independent Living Councils, 39 of the   
respondents were executive directors, six were the   
designated states units liaisons and eight of the   
surveys were completed by current SILC chairs or   
vice chairs.   
Just a little bit of demographic information, the   
median number of years with the SILC was six. So   
half of the people that we talked to had been at   
the Statewide Independent Living Council for more   
than six years and half had been there just under   
six years. We had three that had been with the   
SILC for less than a year and so you can imagine   
this was a new experience for them. And then we   
had three who have been with their Statewide   
Independent Living Council essentially since the   
inception, over 20 years ago. So kind of a broad   
cross section of folks that we talked to.   
I want to go into a few of the key findings from   
this survey, and the ones that we selected to   
present today are really because they tie into   
some of the primary recommendations that we have   
moving forward for how we can address these   
issues.   
So the first two bullet points on this shrined   
this slide is dealing with key findings around   
methods, methodology of conducting needs   
assessments. Over half of the folks we talked to   
use some form of survey to collect data, a mail   
based survey, a web-based survey or telephone   
survey. But only 5% of these folks knew actually   
how many surveys were distributed. That's one of   
the issues we have with web surveys. We send out   
a link, and we ask people in our network to send   
that link out to their network and then to their   
network, and so it's really difficult to know how   
many surveys actually get distributed or how many   
people actually get the link to a -- in particular   
to a web-based survey. That has some implications   
for methodology as far as sample size that I'll   
talk about in a minute.   
The majority of the respondents didn't on the   
other side have a good sense of how many responses   
they ultimately received from not just their   
surveys but other data collection activities which   
often include focus groups or public hearings.   
Part of that is because we caught people on the   
phone and we were kind of asking how many   
responses, and they might not have had the exact   
number in front of them at the time. But most of   
the folks we talked to had essentially an educated   
guess but weren't certain really how many   
responses their data collection efforts had led   
to.   
That third bullet point, we only had three   
respondents we talked to out of the 54 that had   
actually established a predetermined response rate   
for data collection. So they had looked at the   
demographics of their state, and they had decided   
that in order for their data collection to be   
complete they needed to reach a certain number of   
people, and that varied across respondents. But   
most folks were simply using a cut-off date. The   
surveys were open. Focus groups were held until a   
certain point in the year, and then at that point,   
whatever data had been collected was the data that   
was going to be used. And so that has some   
implications again, like I said earlier. Sample   
size is -- having a Good Sam pull size when   
you're -- a good sample size is important giving   
confidence that you have a representative   
understanding, a good representation of the   
different opinions and thoughts and things that   
are going on among the population that you're   
trying to survey. So if we're not clear on how   
many surveys we're not sending out, we're not   
clear on how many we're getting back and we're not   
establishing kind of ahead of time a number of   
folks that we need to get to to get a   
representative sample, it kind of makes our   
methodology a little less rigorous, which can have   
some implications for essentially how many   
confidence we can place in the we're getting the   
best information that we can. And so that's kind   
of an interesting finding. And I'll come back to   
a recommendation around that in just a minute.   
As far as satisfaction, we asked respondents how   
satisfied they were with the needs assessment   
process and results of their most current needs   
assessment, and if you look at this graph, we had   
a small number that was not very satisfied with   
the process. We had almost a third that were   
somewhat satisfied. We had slightly higher,   
another third, that was satisfied, 31%. And we   
had 30% of our respondents that were very   
satisfied. So the nice thing is two-thirds   
essentially of our respondents were either   
satisfied or very satisfied with the needs   
assessment process and results. The group that is   
the somewhat satisfied, you know, that's   
essentially folks that have a recognition that   
they would like to do things differently. They   
maybe would like to tighten some things up or do a   
better job of data collection, or something about   
what they did this last round wasn't up to their   
satisfaction. Those that were satisfied are more   
in the group -- they felt like they did an   
adequate job but realized there could still be   
some things they could improve.   
The next slide talks about some miscellaneous   
findings but some things that I think are   
important as far as how they relate to our   
recommendations. We did have 33 respondents,   
which is 61% of our sample, that indicated they   
use center-level consumer satisfaction data as   
part of the needs assessment. Just over half of   
those, which is 18 respondents, indicated that the   
center consumer satisfaction data is actually   
standardized. And I'm going to come back to that.   
So there's a number of centers, over half of the   
SILCs, excuse me, are using consumer satisfaction   
data, which we think is a good thing. But the   
data they're getting is maybe not standardized   
across the centers in their state. So that's an   
issue that we'll try to address in the future.   
The next bullet point, and this was really an   
important one that we'll come back to as far as   
promising practices and we'll talk about this in   
our discussion... 20 respondents reported they   
used the results of their needs assessment for   
purposes beyond the state plan development. They   
have invest add lot of time and resources in   
completing the needs assessment and they have   
proactively kind of found ways that they can use   
that information for multiple purposes beyond   
creating a nice state plan.   
Finally, on this slide 14 respondents indicated   
that members of the SILC had not received training   
on how to conduct an effective needs assessment   
and there was an additional 13 that were unsure.   
If anybody on the council had actually received   
training specific to needs assessment. So we had   
just over half of our respondents that either did   
not have any training or weren't sure if anybody   
on the council had received training. So that   
obviously gives us some information that we can   
use to develop some additional targeted training   
around this topic.   
Got a handful of slides left and then I'll go   
ahead and take questions regarding any of this   
information.   
When we looked a little bit closer at the data   
from the survey, there was some interesting   
relationships that we found, or correlations. We   
found that the longer somebody had been with the   
council, the greater chance that they had a higher   
level of satisfaction with the needs assessment   
process. There was a higher likelihood that they   
had used CIL data as part of the needs assessment.   
And they were more likely to have used the   
information they collected for purposes beyond   
developing the state plan. So that kind of tells   
us the longer somebody has been around, they've   
kind of figured out some things that increase   
their satisfaction. They figured out that the CIL   
data is good to pull in and they found some   
additional ways to use all of the information that   
they're gathering for purposes beyond developing   
the state plan. So we felt that was a fairly   
important relationship.   
The next relationship we found was between folks   
that expressed a higher level of satisfaction.   
These folks were typically more likely to use   
data -- collect data from sources beyond the   
typical sources, such as VR data or CIL data.   
They were a little bit more comprehensive in who   
they worked with to get information about the   
needs for people with disabilities in their state.   
And these folks that had high levels of   
satisfaction were also more likely to use -- again   
to use their data for purposes beyond the state   
plan. They essentially found a way to get more   
bang for the buck. If you're going to already   
conduct a needs assessment and put the time and   
effort into it, the more you can leverage that   
information, the more efficient that is for you   
and your council.   
So from these kind of key findings and results, a   
couple of key recommendations. The first one is   
based on the methods slide where we found out a   
lot of folks didn't have a really solid sample   
size in mind. They weren't sure how many surveys   
had been distributed or returned. To work with   
the councils to develop and provide training on   
the fundamentals of really effective needs   
assessment in order to improve the rigor of the   
methods that are being used and the idea behind   
that is to improve the quality of data that   
ultimately is collected, and the reason we spend   
this kind of time trying to collect good data is   
we need good quality data and information to make   
good strategic plans and decisions going forward.   
So that's an issue that we think that we can   
address in the future. The second piece is really   
going back to the CIL consumer satisfaction data.   
Where we don't have standardized data across the   
centers in a state, and it's certainly not across   
the country, we'd like to explore the pros and   
cons of working towards that, that at least the   
data is standardized at the state level. Whether   
it makes sense to standardize that across the   
country is a discussion to be had, but it does   
make sense that at least at the state level there   
would be some pros, there would be some benefit to   
standardizing how the centers are collecting   
consumer satisfaction data. That may be my bias   
coming from a relatively small state that has six   
centers. That may be a different discussion in   
states that have many more.   
The third recommendation is to encourage the   
statewide independent living councils to really   
broaden the sources of data they're pulling in,   
and these are existing data sources. So figuring   
out who in the community is gathering data that   
could really help us get a more complete picture   
of the service needs and the resources that are   
available in our communities around   
disability-related issues.   
Fourth, finally, really shifting the mindset   
beyond conducting needs assessments just to comply   
and to develop the, you know, required state plan,   
but really help folks connect. The power that's   
behind a really well done needs assessment, the   
opportunity to use that information for a number   
of very strategic purposes, a number of day-to-day   
activities that support the overall goals of not   
just the council but the centers and the work that   
they're doing with individuals, and that's rreally -- when we shift into discussion mode,   
that's a topic we're going to cover in some   
detail. I think for us as we looked at the   
survey, it comes down to if we can help folks use   
this information in more ways more effectively,   
their satisfaction is going to go up and the   
quality of what we are going to do is going to go   
up.   
There were some limitations of this study. This   
is kind of a snapshot of current practices. We   
didn't have the opportunity to have long, in-depth   
conversations with everybody that we talked to.   
We didn't have the opportunity to talk to multiple   
members of each council in each state. You know,   
in talking to different people we essentially have   
a perspective of a council member on how this process has been working. There may be other   
members that could have other perspectives that   
could add additional detail. So this is a   
snapshot, and that's why we kind of discussed the   
title of this. It's the current approaches of   
what's happening in one point and time. So there   
are a few limitations like that to take into   
consideration as you digest the results of this   
survey and as we've looked through these.   
I want to end with two of the promising practices   
that we kind of identified as a group as we went   
through the survey results. Practices that we   
really -- that kind of helped some folks stand out   
when we talked to them. And the first -- and   
you'll see this is a pattern that's come through   
the results through the recommendations to now   
promising practices -- those folks that were   
really using data from other sources, whether it   
was their aging councils or developmental   
disability down silings or census data, working   
with local governments, we had folks getting data   
from their parks and recreation department and   
their brain injury associations and just a really   
diverse set of local and state agencies that they   
were pulling information from to help them as part   
of their needs assessment. That is just something   
that we think stands out as a promising practice,   
that more folks could do a better job of those   
kinds of things.   
The second promising practice we identified, and   
I've said this a number of times now, but it   
really comes back to figuring out ways to use the   
results of this needs assessment for purposes   
beyond the state plan. For example, we have   
respondents indicate, this is a big piece of how   
they develop their media plan, what to put on   
their website, what to put out to the newspapers.   
Using these results for legislative advocacy.   
Building partnerships with other related agencies   
and not duplicating services. Using the   
information to evaluate how well existing programs   
are doing and making decisions on whether to   
expand or contract those programs or perhaps   
retool them. Use thatting the data to really   
provide more coordinated services across these   
diverse needs and working with those partners, and   
going back to that correlation, those that are   
doing this typically have a higher level of   
satisfaction with what they are doing as far as   
needs assessments.   
So those are two promising practices that when we   
have a -- the panel discussion we'll hit on in   
some more detail.   
Before I turn this back over to Tim and the panel,   
though, we would be willing to take any questions   
specifically related to the slides that I've just   
gone through with you. Is there any questions   
from the audience?   
>> TIM FUCHS: If you have any questions for Jeff   
regarding the initial presentation, you can press   
star pound if you're on the telephone. And if you   
are on the webinar you can type your question in   
the chat below the list of attendees.   
>> JEFF SHEEN: And certainly my contact   
information will be at the end of this, and I'm   
happy to address questions off the call if that's   
more timely for folks.   
>> TIM FUCHS: Patricia, any questions on the   
phone before I move on?   
>> OPERATOR: Not at the moment.   
>> TIM FUCHS: Okay.   
>> JEFF SHEEN: Tim, it's all yours.   
>> TIM FUCHS: We're going to hear from our   
panelists for a bit to add some real-life   
experience to the presentation Jeff just gave and   
then we'll open the call up for all of you. First   
things first, I want to start sort of the ground   
level here and we will walk through some nuts and   
bolts with our panelists and with you all today.   
But I know that for a lot of states one of the   
challenges is figuring out where to get started   
and seeing the value in doing this. So I'd like   
to hear from a couple of our panelists about how   
you got started and what the benefits you've seen   
for people with disabilities in your state, and   
I'm going to ask Brad if he could -- to share from   
New York's experience about the value of doing the   
needs assessment and ways that you all have used   
the data both for the state plan and beyond it, as   
Jeff alluded to. Brad?   
>> BRAD WILLIAMS: Sure. Thank you, Tim.   
I just want to also mention a plug in terms of   
Jeff. I notice he said something about the need   
for training. You know, we started off having to   
learn ourselves, and we participated on an IL NET   
training, a six-week course, which that's how we   
learned. That's how we learned how to pull   
together a needs assessment committee, a NAC, and   
I would hily recommend that, first of all, if   
that's the point where anyone is at. And   
hopefully that will cycle back around, or if it's   
archived, maybe that's something someone can get   
into. But that's where we began in our conactual   
opportunity participated on that as well. And it   
brought us along the way.   
But we then engaged a NAC and we went through the   
process to create a needs assessment. I also   
believe firmly not to recreate the wheel. We saw   
the California SILC needs assessment, which was   
fantastic, and we looked at different segments of   
that, and what we thought was great, and we   
utilized portions of their needs assessment, and I   
would suggest that our colleagues do the same   
thing. Look at other SILCs needs assessments and   
see what lends well for their state.   
But then what we did was, again, what's good for   
our duties. You do your needs assessments, and   
then what applies to our duties. It plugs into   
our state plan in terms of 1.2B for   
[indiscernible] populations, 2.1B, unserved,   
underserved geographic area, 3.1 in terms of the   
network for the -- you know, what could possible   
ea be for competition if something takes place.   
But then our consultant Alan Krieger always says   
to us, he goes, so what? You want to build this   
needs assessment. You want to have the   
information. This useful information. If you get   
to that point. But then it's just information.   
Unless you do something with it. Unless you make   
it actionable. So at least in the state plan   
hopefully you make it into an objective or two,   
you make it actionable in the objective section in   
your state plan. But then there's more. Okay?   
Alan Krieger, he then says, so what? You know,   
let's hope you get it -- something in your state   
plan that you've identified this need and it's in   
your state plan and you're doing something within   
your state plan. But your state plan, of course,   
only has so much in terms of resources. Or maybe   
you're in a state that doesn't have significant   
Part B resources. What do you do, too in terms of   
all this need? Well, we were able to identify   
some significant items, and we had like three   
particular things that we've been able to follow   
through on. One of the first things is when you   
think in terms of census data, it is the civilian   
population. It's not the institutionalized   
population. So in New York, they have not done   
anything in terms of identifying the   
institutionalized population. So we had to for   
this needs assessment go through and all except   
for one state agency FOIA all our state agencies   
to get that data. We created what is probably the   
best first attempt at identifying our state's   
institutionalized population in our needs   
assessment. We then turned that around and we had   
Olmstead hearings going into the fall, used that   
during testimony to kind of put the pressure back   
to them for this Olmstead plan coming out and   
saying you need to do this. In fact, you should   
have every state agency like the office of mental   
health put all this information online and   
populate it for people shifting between settings   
and try to make them accountable, and it's   
utilizing this information which is a chart in the   
needs assessment. So by county you can know how   
many people there are in institutional settings   
and be able to maybe start this process of getting   
people in the most integrated setting. It's that   
same information that then allowed us through our   
emergency preparedness committee to start taking a   
hard look at individuals impacted by Hurricane   
Sandy. We had people on the ground down in   
New York City who are communicating to us and   
saying, you know, we're a little bit concerned   
about people -- people have to go and be   
relocated. We're beginning to hear about   
potentially -- individuals going into like maybe a   
nursing home or assisted living setting, which   
temporarily, I suppose if that's what -- not   
necessarily a nursing home, but you know, people   
are going to have to go where they're going to   
have to go, but we also got some long-term care   
information where they were saying their   
absenteeism rates were evaporating and we got   
concerned. We started writing letters to   
department of health trying to make the process   
transparent, what's this information we're   
hearing. This is based on the needs assessment,   
you know, data that we FOIAed because it was   
three, four, five months pre-Sandy and we got no   
response after two letters until finally on one   
year anniversary of Sandy we got a letter back   
that said we know of no individual, in other   
words, the response is, zero individuals, who have   
been even temporarily housed, for which we were   
like, oh, that's not a good response. So, you   
know, we teamed up with the local disability law   
clinic. They're looking into it. They have   
FOIAed six months, one year, all the data and we   
know for a fact and they're following through on   
it there is like one individual that has already   
been identified and they're making contact with an   
individual on Long Island who has been in a   
nursing home in Long Island for one year who has   
been there, relocated because of Sandy. But this   
comes from the needs assessment.   
Then finally, the last example is employment. We   
all know employment is like one of the big issues,   
but often we don't get to the issue of employment,   
but they came out like the number one issue   
because of the needs assessment. Well, because of   
the national governors association, we then   
facilitated a session at our September meeting.   
We made it a priority. Sent a letter to the   
governor. It's like hot now. We've got a   
petition going. You know, you're able to actually   
take this data and do something with it. So these   
are just some examples.   
>> TIM FUCHS: Thanks, Brad. That's great.   
I'm turning my attention now to Debbie in   
Washington, and, Debbie, I know when we spoke on   
Monday, you talked a lot about taking the needs   
assessment in Washington and using it to tell a   
story, and I know that that's a really powerful   
tool, whether it be with legislators or any   
stakeholders in the state. Can you talk a bit   
about that process in Washington and how you've   
been able to use the data you've collected?   
>> DEB COOK: Sure, I would be glad to do that.   
So basically in Washington state needs assessment   
is fairly new to our SILC, and in the past we   
really have used our community forums and our   
anecdotal data primarily to deal with needs   
assessment. So it's not been very concrete, and I   
don't want to say it's accurate or inaccurate. I   
think it's as accurate as anyone knows the total   
picture, but we all know that our own individual   
abilities to know the total picture is always   
pretty challenging. So data is a pretty   
formidable tool and can be used to tell your story   
in a variety of ways.   
So we collected quite a wide variety of data   
because this was our first time out. We did not   
collect all of the data that we might have been   
able to collect and that we should collect in the   
future as we move through this process. But we   
did do significantly more than we had ever done,   
and we learned a number of things from our data   
collection, and some of them corroborated the   
story that we'd been telling. Some of them   
said -- some of the data we had said, yep, that's   
the story you have been telling with the an   
extotal dot ayou have and community data you have   
from the limited number of people who attend   
public forums, and that data is supported by other   
data that is specifically factual data that we can   
use. And then we learned that some of the other   
data that we had kind of been sharing around might   
not be so readily substantiated. So then we were   
able to spend some time looking at, well, does   
that invalidate what we think is true? Not less.   
But it might put a different spin on it. Or it   
might mean that if we do still think it's true   
that we need to think about how we're going to   
sell that because data doesn't support it but our   
experience does. So how do we go about that?   
So I think that a powerful thing that we've been   
able to do with the data is to discuss in a much   
more concrete and reasonable way both the   
strengths and the limitations of the IL service   
delivery system in our state but also the   
strengths and limitations of some of the other   
systems in our state that become part of that data   
collection and how those mesh with the IL system.   
One of the things that was very, very interesting   
for me as kind of a data collector by nature is   
that we've been collecting data, of course, in the   
DSUs for years. They're very good at it. And   
actually in the older blind program we had been   
collecting quite a bit of good data over time. So   
it was very interesting to compare the center data   
with some of that other data and, you know, not   
too surprising to me, there was a great deal of   
the same findings, which meant that we had some   
real commonalities across some of the major   
programs that serve people with disabilities in   
our state. And so now that is impacting across   
all of those programs what we do for our outreach   
strategy, how we prioritize, where we focus even   
the priority of some of our other initiatives in   
the plan. It actually changed our priorities in   
the network for what the SILC believes needs to   
happen if ever new federal money should come down   
the system. We have a different set of priorities   
and some data to back that up. Now, that doesn't   
mean it won't change again, and we have to   
continue to visit that and see whether some of our   
other efforts have had an impact on that, but we   
now have established a baseline and very   
significantly a story that we can use and that we   
can back up to a variety of different audiences   
about what the needs are and about the reality of   
some of those with some fairly hard data in most   
cases backed up in many cases with some supportive   
anecdotal data like we've been collecting for   
years.   
>> TIM FUCHS: That's great. That's really good.   
Thank you, Debbie.   
I'm about to switch gears to talk about some more   
nuts and bolts. Would any of the other states,   
any other panelists like to share some of the   
benefits that they've seen in their state since   
they've started assessing needs statewide or ways   
that you all have been able to use this beyond the   
SPIL?   
>> LARRY WANGER: This is Larry in Arizona. I   
think one thing I would say is that this can be --   
we've kind of said this already -- the data we   
collect through this needs analysis is very useful   
to the individual centers, but as you look at   
doing needs analysis and implementing or improving   
the program you have in your state, you know, one   
experience we had here as part of the process was   
trying to help a couple of the centers understand   
the value in the data that we collect and   
specifically part of what we do is, really quickly   
here, is incorporate -- survey the consumers who   
receive services from the individual centers and   
that sort of thing, as we've talked about, and   
there can be some degree of resistance sometimes   
for centers to provide the information so you can   
do that, and so one of the aspects of this is   
certainly educating the centers individually about   
the value of this information and how they can use   
it to improve their services in their local   
community, and we've been successful at that, and   
I just throw that out there as something to think   
about, that that's something that states might run   
into as they teak to improve their efforts in this   
area.   
>> TIM FUCHS: Good point. Thanks, Larry. Okay.   
Go ahead, Valerie.   
>> VALERIE BARNUM-YARGER: This is Valerie from   
Michigan.   
One of the things that has been very valuable to   
us is our comprehensive need assessment is done in   
partnership with both of our DSUs as well as the   
state rehab council, believing there's power in   
numbers. We're also collaboratively using   
Michigan State University's Project Excellence to   
be a third party collector of the information, and   
that has -- with the legislature -- provided all   
involved with an unbiased, accepted way to move   
our data forward so they're not questioning is it   
different for one department versus another. It   
helps give us consistency also at the state level   
when looking at the total needs of individuals,   
and then we can turn that around and support it   
with what the DD council has -- what the   
commission on aging has. So we're able to tie it   
all in and show a larger need instead of just one   
small program at a time.   
>> TIM FUCHS: That's great. A good tip. And   
that's a nice transition, too.   
I know, Valerie, you're not the only one who has   
found success using a third party. Brad alluded   
to their consultant. And, Larry, I believe you   
all in Arizona have an agreement with Arizona   
State University just down the road from you to   
help conduct the needs assessment, is that right?   
>> LARRY WANGER: Yes, that's correct.   
>> TIM FUCHS: And, Brad, you all have found and   
individual consultant to help you do that work, is   
that right?   
>> BRAD WILLIAMS: Right. I mean, it sounds like   
Valerie has like this amazing partnership. I   
mean, that's -- I mean, I can't imagine getting to   
that level of a partnership. We've started with   
just a consultant, someone who can, since we were   
just starting up with this, who was really good   
with outcomes. He is actually our SPIL evaluator,   
someone we developed an excellent relationship   
with who now understands our state plan and   
understood how to work with needs assessment and   
these types of tools. So that's someone who we   
felt comfortable with.   
>> TIM FUCHS: Good. Good. I think for those of   
you that are on the phone, and we'll hear from you   
in a moment, you might think about who you have in   
your community or in your state, I should say,   
that may be able to full ill that role for you. but   
if you think it's best to do it yourselves you   
might consider what Colorado has done. Sue, can   
you talk about how you all have done your needs   
assessment on your own, so to speak?   
>> SUSAN FAGER: Yes, we are the do it   
yourselfers in Colorado. For our last SPIL, not   
the one we just completed, but the previous one,   
the SILC actually worked very closely, very long   
and very hard with the local university on   
developing a needs assessment, and the results of   
the needs assessment were pretty disappointing.   
So, Jeff, as you folks are thinking about what   
would be helpful for other SILCs across the   
country, maybe some helpful hints on how to work   
with a contractor or a university and just lessons   
learned from other people. Or other SILCs. So   
based on the results of that needs assessment for   
this round of our SPIL, we decided -- the SILC   
decided it was going to do it ourselves. So we   
did a three-pronged approach. The first and the   
one that we put the most energy into was designing   
Survey Monkey that could go out into the networks   
of all of the SILC members, the -- as we -- we   
sent it out to the SRC. We put it on voc. rehab's   
website. And as Jeff was saying earlier, when you   
do that, you don't really know how many people are   
actually getting the survey, but for Colorado we   
got a pretty good return on that investment. I   
think we had 74 people respond to it, and a nice   
mixture of service providers, consumers,   
independent living center staff. So that was   
pretty good. We also provide add $250 stipend to   
independent live young centers in the state --   
living centers in the state so they could conduct   
their own focus groups. That had mixed results.   
Some of the centers chose to do it. Some of the   
centers chose not to. And the third thing we did   
was to tack public forums onto SILC meetings. In   
that Colorado the SILC goes around the state. It   
doesn't just stay in the front range, in the big   
cities. But, again, not a lot of folks came to   
those meetings. So the biggest bang for our buck   
in Colorado was the Survey Monkey. With the   
understanding that particularly in a state like   
Colorado in which the majority of the counties are   
rural and frontier and some counties don't yet   
have anything more than dial-up, some counties   
don't have Internet service at your home, and   
understanding that computer access isn't a reality   
for all consumers with disabilities in this state,   
we also worked with some techy folks to make sure   
our survey was accessible to folks who used screen   
readers and came up with some different options   
for people who couldn't access it online via the   
Survey Monkey, including a phone number of someone   
to call who could read the survey to you and   
record your answers.   
But I just want to say, Tim, I know you didn't ask   
this question yet, but one of the biggest things I   
feel like the SILC in Colorado has learned, both   
from the previous needs assessment and this   
current needs assessment, is that we're still   
struggling with how do you do a needs assessment   
and struggling with the results that we've gotten   
from both two needs assessments so much that we've   
written a goal into our current state plan to   
conduct additional needs assessments around the   
state to just go out where folks are and figure   
out who are you and what services do you need and   
how is your center doing providing services?   
Teuksz that's a critical part of getting started   
to determine what yes to be done. So I'm glad you   
mentioned that. Good.   
Well, I have another couple questions that I   
wanted to get into, however, I think I'm going to   
save them for our larger discussion. I've been   
promising we would open up the line and I'm eager   
to hear from all of you. One of the other things   
I wanted to walk through were some of the   
challenges that states have had in starting out   
and, of course, the goal there is to talk about   
solutions to that. So I want to go ahead and open   
up the lines with that question. I want to hear   
from some of you. Those of you that when you   
responded to the survey you said that you weren't   
currently doing this, and I want to know what the   
barriers are, whether it's that you didn't know   
where to get started, or you weren't sure of the   
value in doing it, and then let's talk about some   
ways to get beyond that.   
In opening up the lines we're going to unmute your   
lines. That means we'll be able to hear all of   
you whether it's papers in the background or   
whatnot, typing on keyboards. So if you could, if   
you have a mute feature on your phone and you're   
not actively commenting or asking a question, if   
you could press your mute feature now. If you   
don't have a mute feature on your phone, that's   
fine, you can press star-pound and that will mute   
your line and then it's a toggle. So if you would   
like to unmute and ask a question you can press   
star-pound. For those of you on the webinar,   
again your comments and questions can go into the   
chat underneath the list of attendees and I'll   
voice those as we walk through the discussion in   
the order they're received.   
Okay. Patricia our operator is telling me all our   
lines are now unmuted. Please don't be shy. Jump   
right in. Who of you have had big problems doing   
this and let's walk through some solutions.   
  
  
so   
everyone that's sign up for this has had just a   
fantastic experience doing needs assessment in   
their state. Don't worry, it's a small call. We   
can be honest with each other here.   
>> DEB COOK: This is Debbie. I was on the panel   
but I have a big problem I would like to bring to   
the group. I believe it was Larry who mentioned   
it. That is bringing the centers on board to feel   
safe with this process and to embrace the data and   
the process, because in our state it's been very   
challenging. Centers are reluctant to really   
share data with the SILC. They don't really have   
consistent data collection. We don't have a   
consistent satisfaction process, consumer   
satisfaction process. I would be a huge advocate   
for having that for a variety of data reasons.   
And so it was very, very challenging for our   
centers when the SILC began to ask me how can we   
get more data on the statements we're making   
around here or the things we say are needs in our   
plan are, et cetera. So it was a really hard --   
it was a hard thing for organizations who are   
sometimes a little bit afraid of data and think   
that data has been used against them at times,   
which was not our intent, of course, but how have   
people brought centers on board?   
>> TIM FUCHS: That's a great question and great   
place to start. Larry, you alluded to that. Can   
you share some of the ways you found success with   
getting centers to buy in in ArArizona?   
>> LARRY WANGER: Yeah, absolutely. So I think,   
just as background really quickly, we don't -- we   
conduct the survey of consumers and what we're   
requesting from the centers is statistically valid   
number of consumers. So if you served "X" number   
of people, we need "X" number of consumers' phone   
numbers, because they do it by phone. And there   
was some -- and then we do the survey. So -- and   
there was some hesitancy and the way we overcame   
that was how we went about reporting the data when   
it came time to send it out and begin using it.   
So one of the things you need to do is make the   
centers feel safe in participating in this effort.   
And the best way to do that, really, is to say --   
take an approach that says in the larger picture   
your data will be incorporated with all of the   
other data, but you as a center will receive   
specifically the results for the surveys that were   
done on your consumers, but only you, center, no   
other center will see your individualized data.   
So we took that approach, you know, so that each   
center individually sees their survey results.   
And that, in turn, does help them. I think that's   
the biggest thing we were able to do to help them   
to feel more comfortable. But beyond that, it's   
sort of like the context of this call, helping   
them to understand why we want this information,   
the value of it, that they will in turn be able to   
use this data in their advocacy with legislators   
and out in the community and potentially even when   
seeking funding and that kind of thing. So   
helping them to understand the all-purpose uses,   
if you will, of the data that comes back is hugely   
important and I think once you work and have a   
process in place that's working and you're getting   
meaningful data, that's a big selling point as   
well.   
>> TIM FUCHS: Great. Good tips.   
Anyone else had resistance, not just from centers,   
but any other groups and found ways to overcome   
that?   
>> PARTICIPANT: This is pat Stewart in Indiana.   
I'm a center director here. One of the -- let me   
just explain a little bit about our particular   
area that we serve. There's a lot of poverty.   
One of the problems is when you tell me telephone   
numbers, I really get squeamish. Many of our   
consumers use disposable phones. So,   
consequently, they don't have the same number many   
time. They also in an effort to keep in front of   
the utility bills tend to move quite often.   
Another difficulty. Now, this has only come up   
lately because our state is trying to do a needs   
assessment or come up with a way to do a needs   
assessment most effectively and, of course, the   
obvious answer is a telephone survey. Not that I   
have any others that are any better either for the   
same reasons. So I guess our problem is,   
especially if you're talking about getting   
research research or results from centers in   
various areas, there's going to be some   
significant problems for various reasons where the   
different centers are.   
>> LARRY WANGER: I'll tell you, Pat, I'll tell   
you, you'll get a significant number of -- and we   
do in the approach we use with this phone survey,   
we do get a significant number of consumers that   
we can't reach. And precisely, I believe, because   
of that very issue, that people move and people   
change phone numbers constantly. It is a problem.   
>> PARTICIPANT: I'm glad to hear you say that   
because our state people don't seem to understand   
that.   
>> DEB COOK: This is Debbie. Maybe it would   
work well to provide the -- ask the centers to   
provide the surveys to a certain percentage of   
individuals when they exit services, when they   
complete their service plan, and do it that way,   
and then somebody mentioned giving the centers a   
stipend to kind of support doing that, which I   
thought was a great incentive. That seems to   
help. And -- because I do appreciate the   
telephone problem. And what you don't want to do   
is -- one answer could be find other consumers.   
If we don't reach those consumers, we'll find   
others, but if we really want to capture a   
cross-section of the consumers, then that group of   
people who might be homeless or who might be in   
pretty dire straits in some other way do represent   
a pretty significant number of people served by   
centers. So maybe an exit survey would be easier   
than a telephone survey in those areas.   
>> PARTICIPANT: This is Pat again. That's   
exactly what we have developed for our own center   
to get satisfaction, is basically after they --   
when they've completed their plan or after they've   
succeeded in attaining a goal, we do a   
satisfaction survey then, and, you know, when   
they're either absolutely delighted and proud --   
pleased with themselves, and they're more apt to   
respond. And that is a very successful approach   
for us.   
>> TIM FUCHS: That's great. Good. Good   
solution.   
>> SUSAN FAGER: Tim, this is sue in Colorado,   
before we move on, one thing that the SILC has   
done to address concerns of directors of centers   
in the state that the SPIL was being developed   
without their input was to open up and invite onto   
the SPIL subcommittee of the SILC as many center   
directors as wish to participate. So I think   
there were seven members of that committee and   
three of them were center directors. So maybe if   
a state -- or if a SILC was going to have a needs   
assessment committee, it could ensure that the --   
than there was adequate representation of center   
directors on that committee.   
>> TIM FUCHS: That's great. I would imagine   
that would be fairly essential and a good chance   
to walk through solutions for problems like Pat   
just brought up as well. More input, more problem   
solving and better buy-in. So...   
good. Good idea. >> PARTICIPANT: This is Linda from California.   
I'm with the SILC. I have a question regarding   
along the lines of diversity. California is a   
very diverse state. Many different languages.   
People with disabilities who are homeless. And   
other studies conducted apart from the SILC, which   
I either participated in or supported in my   
communities, these challenges entered into the   
construction of the way in which we surveyed   
people to gather information, and I'm wondering if   
you could please or someone could comment along   
the lines of what you tried, how did this work.   
I'm concerned about using too much technology when   
we might have people who can't afford it or access   
it, may not know how to use it. So comment would   
be appreciated. Thank you.   
>> TIM FUCHS: Sure. So from our panelists and   
from the whole audience, anyone that has ideas   
about reaching out to diverse communities, whether   
it be reaching out as some of you indicated to   
people that may not have Internet access, or   
whether we're talking about non-native English   
speakers. Anyone had success there?   
>> BRAD WILLIAMS: This is Brad. I can try my   
best to explain how we approach that subject   
through our committee. In New York we actually   
address it two different ways. First of all, we   
have a needs assessment committee, which kind of   
addresses the overarching issues. Then we have a   
consumer satisfaction survey committee, which   
addresses the consumer satisfaction issues. I   
think some of these recent questions, in New York   
we would look at them as the consumer satisfaction   
survey. So even though they do tend to -- even   
though they are two separate items, sometimes   
people approach them similarly, and certainly the   
surveying aspects of them definitely overlap.   
But if I'm going to take like the consumer   
satisfaction aspect of this, you know, we have a   
committee, and we have a committee much like it's   
been recommended, you know, of SILC members, SILC   
members who are diverse and also come from the   
center network, but also of other members. They   
might be front line staff at centers, which makes   
sense, because they're the people who have the   
direct contact with a lot of the consumers. And   
you need some of those key individuals because   
they have the practical contact in advice of, you   
know, this isn't going to work, you know, in terms   
of implementing a survey. Nice idea. But, you   
know, this just isn't going to happen, and this   
isn't going to work, not at my center. Okay? And   
so you need that, you know, presence on the   
committee. Along with other folks who have been   
doing it for a while. And then in terms of what   
you're talking about, New York, just like   
California, is just -- is diverse -- it's diverse   
in pockets. Okay? Which means we have to be very   
situational or functional because there are   
certain places where you have to provide for it   
but you may not need it as much. And then there's   
other places where you absolutely need it, like,   
for instance, Amsterdam in Fulton County has a   
very large Hispanic community, but it's in a very   
rural setting and you wouldn't know it otherwise.   
But you need to be able to provide for this. And   
so you do need translation. You need translation   
services. And translation services other than   
going online and having that kind of translation,   
because for someone who actually reads that,   
that's not really fluent, and that actually can   
offend the community. So you actually have to   
invest and have someone who knows the language be   
able to convert your documents. So you ever to   
make a call based on your population. At a   
minimum, you know, based on your state, you have   
to know that, well, there's a large Hispanic   
community and that we have to convert our   
documents into Spanish. Is it Spanish -- Puerto   
Rican or Spanish Mexican? And then you have to   
say, well, we also have mandarin Chinese. We also   
have Russian. You know, there's also many other   
populations when you get down near New York City   
that you might have to consider, but, I mean, you   
have to make a call in terms of what you might   
need in terms of translation for your physical   
materials. Online might allow you some   
conversion, but you have to think of those types   
of -- those types of things.   
Also, if you're in a really concentrated situation   
and you're going to do like phone survey, you need   
that translation because you might -- much like   
you would have the phone contact for an individual   
in English, you would probably be doing outreach,   
right? So to that -- to that community. So you   
would want someone to voice translate in that   
language. I mean, these are all things we kind of   
think about and we provide about. I can go on and   
on. I understand exactly what you're talking   
about, and we try to provide for these   
situation -- we try to provide for the resources   
and these types of things. We're actually going   
through this right now. Our consumer satisfaction   
survey was just let out, and we're in the   
preparation phase, and it's -- it starts in   
January 2014, but, yes, there's many things that   
you have to consider along the lines you're   
talking about.   
>> TIM FUCHS: Thanks, Brad.   
>> VALERIE BARNUM-YARGER: This is Valerie from   
Michigan. I want to tell you I I support   
everything Brad just said and we do some of that,   
but one of the things that we've taken a step   
farther to do, and, again, part of it is because   
of limited resources that we have, most of the   
special interest groups or special populations,   
where they're located has some type of a   
association for their membership in their own   
respective areas. So the council makes a   
conscientious effort to develop linkages with each   
one of those communities, be it the CALDEAN,   
Vietnamese, so that when they're out in their   
community and they're surveying their own needs we   
volunteer to participate with them, to support   
their activities and ask them to expand their   
survey to also include disability issues, and   
that's worked twofold for us as far as giving us   
an economical way to get into different   
populations around the state, but it's also been   
an excellent tool at educating those populations   
regarding some of the special needs that their own   
community has that they might not routinely think   
of.   
>> TIM FUCHS: That's a great point.   
>> DEB COOK: This is Debbie. I was just going   
to very quickly say that one of the items from our   
story that we learned was that we had two   
non-English or perhaps less English speaking populations that our state was probably   
underserving, and, again, was very consistent with   
all of the other service delivery. And so we have   
some efforts in place in collaboration with them   
to increase that everywhere, but it means that   
right now clients satisfaction or customer   
satisfaction is not really much of an issue for   
the language issue because we're not serving them   
yet -- or not enough significantly to matter.   
We're only serving the ones who have English. But   
what we also did was some very targeted focus   
groups and kind of a different aspect of what   
Valerie talked about where we actually went and   
met in those communities, and in those particular   
meetings we arranged for whatever interpreting and   
et cetera he would be needed to facilitate that to   
make sure people had an opportunity to participate   
and share and be understood and accurately have   
their communication expressed and ours expressed,   
too. So we thought that that was really helpful   
for us not only in terms of getting that input but   
also really making an effort to reach out and being well received for having made that extra   
effort. And it wasn't terribly expensive. We   
just don't have ways to spend a lot of money on   
this because we don't have any money, and so we   
really did try to use the community resources to   
conduct some additional focus group activities.   
>> BRAD WILLIAMS: I also wanted to add that one   
of our front line members recommended that we need   
to take all our materials at the end and convert   
them all to an 8th grade reading level, which I   
thought was a very practical recommendation, which   
we hadn't considered for a while, and I thought it   
was great, and -- and we initiated.   
>> TIM FUCHS: Right. Good. Good. All good   
tips and a reason why when you think about   
planning for this you really need a broad   
definition of inclusivity. That's great.   
Good tips. We've been talking a lot about the   
reaching out to consumers and consumer   
satisfaction aspect of this. One thing I want to   
talk about is the method of using what you have   
available to you. We alluded to this earlier, but   
is to get a little more detail on using the data   
that already exists and complementing that, and   
I'm going to ask Debbie first to expand a little   
bit on what you touched on earlier, Debbie, about   
the variety of data that you all have pulled from   
and what you found when you looked at that data   
that was available to you in Washington.   
>> DEB COOK: Well, we started with looking at   
some census data and looking at some specific data   
that Cornell and others have gathered about   
disability populations and numbers, and we also   
looked at our 704 data across the state in an   
aggregate. So every center had their own data,   
but they had never done any analysis about what   
that data really looks like. So they knew they   
served this many people and this many of them had   
this characteristic or this particular disability   
or ethnicity but didn't really know what that   
meant in terms of the population. So we looked at   
that to see what populations in a different -- in   
a variety ways, somewhat driven by the 704,   
because it only collects certain kinds of data,   
and so we used that, we said that those are the   
data that we can readily get from this particular   
data set. There may be other data sets we can   
use. But this is the data set that's easy. So we   
looked at the trending across the state and then   
we compared that to census data and other data to   
see how we were performing in lieu of the entire   
population. So I don't want to use the term   
overserve and underserve. We all like overserve   
was we don't like to think of overserving because   
we don't overserve anywhere but we do sometimes   
disproportion lit provide services to a population   
or part of a state, and that doesn't mean we   
should start but it means maybe that's not the   
target for our outreach. So we established some   
new outreach priorities and some other new kinds   
of things.   
Then -- that were part of our state plan and   
really our data collection infuses every single   
part of our state plan. There's almost not an   
item in our state plan that doesn't have some   
relationship to our data collection.   
Then we've also been able to use that data in some   
other ways to work collaboratively on activities   
with some of our other partners and notably the   
SRCs and the DSUs in our state to try to look at   
service delivery across state because, as I said,   
we found a variety of things that were in common.   
In addition to all the census data and that kind   
of general population data that we used, we also   
looked at the service delivery data of other   
organizations who had data that we could easily   
capture and move into our demographic. So we   
looked at some of the data that transportation   
agencies had. We looked at some of the data that   
was available to us about housing. And we looked   
at some of the data that was available to us from   
some aging and disability services and from a   
variety of other agencies to see whether that data   
was consistent with the data that we had or   
whether they, in fact, had some things going for   
them in terms of the populations they were able to   
reach and the ways they were able to reach them   
that might be useful to us to tag on to. So we   
made some recommendations to centers based on that   
and then in terms of our own SILC outreach and   
activity we also developed a variety of   
strategies.   
The most recent thing that we were able to do with   
our data that was just kind of a side piece and   
not planned for was that a variety of disability   
organizations decided to take on a major   
transportation initiative, the legislature was   
going to have a special session to deal with   
transportation, public transportation, because   
they wanted to capture a big contract from Boeing,   
and they might not capture it, but, anyway, they   
wanted to do this, and so they decided that   
transportation was a key piece to that. So a   
variety of disability consumer organizations who   
were in a better position to lobby than we were   
were able to get on the bandwagon and join this   
effort, but behind the scenes we were able to join   
the effort by providing quite a bit of really   
useful data about how the transportation systems   
in our state worked and what we had and didn't   
have and whether people use them and a variety of   
things we were able to learn from parts of our   
needs assessment.   
We also saw some gaps in the needs assessment in   
the course of doing that,nd we already knew we   
had a bunch of gaps, but we saw some particular   
ones. So, fortunately, we were able to give them   
enough data along with the other data they had to   
be fairly successful with the effort, but we know   
we can gear up better.   
This was really good, too, in our sort of public   
relations with our centers because they actually   
saw us use the data for something that made us   
very powerful in a way that we would not have   
otherwise been and that people hadn't expected   
from us.   
>> TIM FUCHS: Great. Thank you, Debbie.   
Anybody else want to share data that's been useful   
for them? Or issues that they've identified   
outside of the traditional process? Okay.   
We're at 4:15. I wonder if any of you on the   
phone have any questions for our panelists or for   
each other as we begin to wrap up here? Again,   
this is a small group and we really want it to be   
interactive, so please don't be shy.   
>> SUSAN FAGER: This is sue in Colorado. I have   
a whole bunch of questions but I'll restrain   
myself.   
One question that I have for Jeff, when you   
interviewed everybody, was one of the questions   
included in your interview, because I don't   
remember, you and I talked, does your SILC have   
paid staff or does your SILC consist primarily of   
volunteers? Because I think about the really big   
efforts that my fellow colleagues on this call   
have done around needs assessments but in Colorado   
there really aren't any paid staff, and that could   
be a pretty huge undertaking. So I would be   
interested, Jeff, to hear what you learned, and   
then also from folks who are on the call if your   
SILC doesn't have any paid staff how do they go   
about doing a really comprehensive needs   
assessment?   
>> JEFF SHEEN: Sue, this is Jeff in response.   
We did not ask that question, so I'm not able,   
unfortunately, to give you any feedback. We did   
not ask whether -- we asked whether the SILCs were   
few of 01C3s, but we did not ask the question   
about paid staff. That could be a great follow-up   
question for our next round, though.   
>> TIM FUCHS: I would love to hear from folks on   
the phone. I know that a lot of you don't have   
paid staff. So how are you able to do this?   
>> PARTICIPANT: We're not going to tell you, Tim   
if that.   
>> DEB COOK: This is Debbie. I'm only 40% with   
the SILC and right now I am their only staff.   
They're supposed to have one full-time FTE. I'm   
in the position interim. In fact, I will be done   
at the end of December. So that's kind of my   
world and looking for work. But, anyway,   
basically I'm 40% with the SILC, and it's not just   
doing this. It's kind of doing everything, and I   
would say the key to this is, of course, firing up   
your SILC members to actually take on some of the   
tasks, and then the second piece is actually   
really developing a strategic plan for doing the   
strategic plan, if you will. So sitting down and   
really figuring out what do you have the resources   
to do, what is the best way to get it done, what   
will it take, and is that realistic for me right   
now. And there were a lot of things we wanted to   
do. Remember I said earlier that this was our   
first time out to do anything, and we did actually   
quite a bit. There's a whole lot of other stuff   
I'd like to do, but that requires either a little   
more staff or a little more savvy volunteers or a   
little more time or a little more upfront   
planning. You know, it requires some change in   
the resource. So I think one of the most helpful   
things that a consultant can probably do for   
someone if I don't have' never done any of this at   
all is to help you figure out the plan for the   
plan, as I call it, because that, for us, was the   
challenging part, was to figure out, and what will   
we do by when, and what will do if we can't?   
Because our plan was really going to hinge on some   
of this being in place, and we had a check-off and   
a tick-off, and basically had to do that. But I   
don't can actually -- if you do put that in place   
with whatever assistance it takes to get that in   
order and you stick to it and you're very   
unswerving, you definitely can do an amazing   
amount in a short amount of time.   
>> TIM FUCHS: That's great. Thank you, Debbie.   
Okay. Well, we're at 4:20 here. I'm going to   
begin to wrap up the call. I really hope this has   
been helpful. I've enjoyed our discussion today.   
Look, this isn't the end of it, either. We were   
really intrigued by the results that we saw on the   
needs assessment, and, again, we invited these   
five states because of some of the diversity of   
their approaches. Some were new. Some had been   
doing it for longer. But many of you had really   
stepped into this as well, and that's admirable.   
So let us know how we can support you, in addition   
to doing these webinars, we're always working on   
technical assistance to SILCs, and we would love   
to hear from you. So if you want to follow up on   
any of this, and whether it be with any of our   
presenters or from us, please let us know.   
I know that Brad alluded to the training that he   
did with IL NET and a lot of those resources are   
online. So you can access them on the IL NET   
Wiki, on ILRU's archives, and in fact Brad   
mentioned that he learned from an IL NET training,   
but Brad also did an outstanding training on needs   
assessment himself last year. Let us know if you   
need a hand finding any of the resources so that   
we can help you as you move along. Speaking of   
which, our presenters have been generous enough to   
provide their contact information that's on this   
next slide here. And I'll offer my own as well.   
So if you need help finding any of those training   
resources, please don't hesitate to reach me at   
Tim@NCIL.org. You can find my phone number on the   
NCIL website.   
Finally, here on the last slide is our evaluation   
form. Please let us know what you thought of   
today's discussion. You can click on this link.   
This is a live link and it will take you to the   
evaluation form. It's easy to complete. If you   
participated in a small group today, that's   
fantastic, but please fill it out as an   
individual. We want to know what each of you   
thinks. If you're not on the webinar, you're just   
oat phone, that's fine, you can find this link in   
the confirmation email sent to you ahead of the   
call. Please take a minute to fill it out.   
Before we break, I want to thank Jeff Sheen, Brad   
Williams, Debbie, Valerie, Larry and Sue for   
taking the time to be with us. I really   
appreciate your willingness to dive in and to be   
on this call today. And I want to thank all of   
you for signing up as well. So let us know how we   
can support you going forward. Hope you have a   
wonderful afternoon. Bye-bye.