SILC Member Recruitment & Orientation

Presented by Liz Pazdral and Brad Williams

May 25, 2017

Transcript

>> Automated voice: Hello and welcome to today's teleconference. At this time we are currently waiting for all the participants to arrive. Thank you for your patience and please continue to hold.

>> Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to today's call, SILC recruitment and orientation. I'm Tim Fuchs and I want to thank you for joining us today. This webinar is presented by the SILC technical assistance and assistance center. We are operated in cooperation with NCIL at the U.S. Department of Human Services.

We are regarding the call so you can access it on IL-NET website. It's up in 24 hours or sooner than that. We are going to break for questions on today's call. I realized this morning that the PowerPoint you all received in your inbox didn't include the slides. Anyway, I just want to give you a heads-up. I don't think it's a big deal, but we're going to break on slide 14 and after Brad's presentation and then again at the end.

So just want to give you a heads-up, if some of the numbers don't match up.

Most of you, though, are on the webinar today. In fact, I think all of you are, which is great.

And so that slide deck has the Q&A slides and you'll see those in there and that's when we'll break. So anyway, just wanted to give you a heads-up about that.

Okay. Also, we have been -- we here at NCIL has been switching our phone and Internet service, which some may have seen or experienced and we've had a couple speed bumps in the transition. One of those things is our new hardware. So I've had some issues with my phone and I hope you all can hear me okay today.

We're continuing to trouble shoot this. Hopefully will have it taken care of soon. But anyway, if my audio is breaking up a little bit, I hope it's minor and that you can hear me okay. But I didn't want you to think it was the webinar system or your computer. I wanted to give you a warning about that too.

Speaking of questions, for those that have questions, you can press \*#if you're on the phone, or you can type your question in the chat box and you can type it out in the text box underneath the list of participants and hit enter. You can enter your comments or questions any time during the call. We are going to wait for our Q&A breaks to address them, though.

Also, those that are on the phone that hit \*#, there's a temptation to hit it again, you know, to make sure it went through. If you hit it twice, it's like a toggle, so it will take you out of the queue. If you hit \*# because you have a question on the phone, just know we have seen you and we'll take the questions in the order we receive them.

And finally, also logged in on the full-screen CART. So, of course, there's captioning in the webinar system, but some of you prefer the full screen CART/captioning. That URL was sent in the confirmation email. So I'm logged in there. There's a chat feature and you can enter questions there and I'll be happy to voice them during the Q&A breaks.

Okay. I think that's it for the Q&A piece. I'm going to remind you all of each of those instructions each time we take a Q&A break.

Hey, if you would, please feel out the eval when we end today. There's actually a live link at the end of the slide deck and I'll point that out to you when we get there. It was also sent to you in the same confirmation email. But those that do the calls frequently, you know the evals are short and we take your feedback seriously if you'll provide us with that.

All right. I think that's it. Oh, the other thing was, the PowerPoint will display automatically on the webinar, but if you're only on the phone today, you want to make sure to have a copy in front of you so you can follow along.

Okay, with that I want to go ahead to slide 3 and just walk through our objectives for today.

So today's webinar, we've done these council recruitment and orientation presentations in the past. Today we have two new presenters to feature. But our objectives remain essentially the same. We are hoping that you will learn effective strategies to strengthen SILC member recruitment processes that will result in engaged councilments while reducing turnover. Elements of highly effective member orientation sessions that result in greater knowledge of the IL field and higher comfort level among members as they begin their new roles.

And effective best practice tools and techniques for improving the ongoing support and development of SILC members.

And I want to thank our two presenters, Liz Pazdral and Brad Williams for being willing to share the process that they have in their states for putting together the materials for the presentation and for being with us today. They've put quite a bit of work into putting these materials together to share with you and developing their presentations and I really appreciate it.

I think that you all -- I'm sure you saw the announcement and Liz and Brad hardly need introductions in the SILC and IL world, but Liz of course is the Executive Director of the California statewide Independent Living Council and Brad is Executive Director of the New York Independent Living Council.

So with that I'm going to go to slide 4 and turn it over to Brad to get us started today. Brad.

>> BRAD WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you, Tim. And I'm going to be presenting on kind of titled "Lessons Learned from New York."

So next panel. This is like our recruitment overview.

So the SILC developed an annual process to consistently address its recruitment needs. And let's just say right upfront, everyone, every SILC, has recruitment need. And it's a cycle. And it never ends. So an effective annual recruitment process is needed because SILC members are public officers and full participation of all members is needed to ensure a quorum and take action on business. That's what it comes down to. We need to take care of our business. And that's for us as defined in a state attorney general opinion.

Interestly enough we have two AG opinions, but the bottom line is they said the same things.

We have to have that quorum, we have public officers and, you know, we have to be able to, you know, have our business and our actions kind of agreed to. And it's not Robert's Rules, you know. We are just like a town or, you know, a village, and, you know, these things are important and you need members in order to do that.

So it is best to ensure a seamless succession of members without gaps. While we do not experience the same, you know, typical gubernatorial delays of other SILCs, we still have to ensure an orderly process with our appointment authority. And for us it's the New York State Regents.

Next panel. Continued.

So it comes down to, you know, a lack of planning for your recruitment needs will result in a council that is not diverse, lacks expertise, and has members who aren't active and engaged. Kind of like what I said. We've all been there. The most important thing is to realize when it's time to change. And then you have to do it.

Next panel.

So we have this annual recruitment process. Now I'm going to talk about a council tracking chart. This is a lot to take in and somehow you have to be on top of this information. So the Council uses an Excel spreadsheet to track significant information about its current members. For each member it tracks employed by. You know, we have to be up on someone from the state, from CIL or neither, appointment category, term start/end dates, are they a voting/non-voting member? Do they have a disability? Race/ethnicity, gender. What part of the state are they from? And then other pertinent information. You know, youth, senior, expertise as well. Sometimes it's affiliations. You know, you want to know what other affiliations they have as potential stakeholders. When a member's term off or leave, it identifies upcoming vacancies and members who need to be reappointment. Because remember a person -- a member has a three-year term and then a potential second three-year term.

Next panel. Continued. And it also calculates percentages of total council members with a disability and total voting members with a disability, and this is extremely important if you're going to be good with the regulation and, you know, we're going to have our assurances as well. We have to be on top of this. You know, this is in our state plan as well, and we actually had a cycle where even when we're managing this, we had to improve upon this item. So next panel.

So we work through this with a recruitment committee. The committee typically consists of the Executive Director, and we have our secretary, you know, the officer, and a DSE liaison, and other interested members.

And the committee confirms the upcoming vacancies and needs of the council, solicits individuals for vacancies, reviews the candidate's materials, conducts group telephone interviews and then recommends individuals for appointment to the councils, and also the reappointments.

And this can take place during a span of time between April through August.

Next panel.

Continued. And through a longer period of time, with the executive committee, the recruitment committee will support the orientation of new members later on in the year in March. And that's the day before the first full council meeting.

Next panel.

Let's talk a little bit about new member solicitation. Now, after the recruitment committee meets and confirms the vacancy and needs of the council, the information is used in a notice to encourage individuals to apply. This solicitation provides basic background information about the council, people need to know who you are and what you do, along with expectations. Very important. You can put that out there, but you're going to be asking people to volunteer for you and they need to know, you know, what it is you're going to require from them in terms of time commitment and other things.

It requests applicants respond by a deadline date with a resume and an application form.

Contact information, and have them respond to three questions and provide two references. And that is usually between May to June, and, in fact, we just sent it out and it was posted.

Next panel.

Continued.

And we send the solicitation and send it out and distribute it, a variety of lists. So it goes out email. And social networks, posted on the website. And then encourage people to distribute it wider. So we get as much of a response as possible. And that's important, because, for instance, if, you know, in our case we're looking to fill five vacancies, you don't want to have five people apply. You want 15 people to apply. I mean, you want to create a candidate pool of individuals to apply. You know, if you can get more, that's even better. Current council members then take the solicitation notice each year, and it's part of their responsibility to send it out to individuals they know, okay? And encourage them to apply, all right? They're going to, you know, get into discussions about expectations and inform potential members this is a competitive process. This is not -- I am a council member and I'm going to give you some advantage on the process. No, no, no. This is part of a process and this is competitive, and I can inform you about the process and I think this might be a good match for you. So they're helping, you know, as part of -- if you can think of any not-for-profit organization helping to perpetuate the board, it's actually a responsibility, okay?

So they assist with the process, and we have added a link for council expectations in the solicitation notice to facilitate the process, but having the board assist with the process certainly helps. I mean, it gives them a duty as well. So that has actually worked out.

Next panel.

Remember solicitation continued. It's important to send correspondence to all individuals throughout the process to keep them informed. You can't just respond to the individuals you're actively interested in. You need to keep everyone in the loop, informed through messaging, communications. It's just extremely important.

And so I have some links here to some materials. Here is the solicitation notice and the application form, and I do need to apologize. We transitioned our IT and web vendors, and I'm not an IT expert, but along with that came who is in charge of the domain. And I guess they're all connected, and it's created issues for us. And I hope that everything will be reconnected over the next week or so because it is kind of intermittent and it has included an enhancement to our website, which is wreaking some havoc with some of our content on our website. So these links, they will hopefully be accessible to the content and, you know, hopefully you'll be able to be able to access them. Soon. If not now, sometime soon, and you'll be able to take advantage of them. If you can't, you certainly will get my email at the end of this presentation and if you're interested in anything, I could turn around and get you the materials.

So next panel.

And here we are at the first Q&A. Again, if you have a question on the phone, you can press \*# and if you have a question on the computer, you can type it in the chat or on the full-screen CART.

I'll give you about 30 seconds to see if there are any questions here.

Still fairly early, so if we don't have questions yet, that's fine. But I want to make sure we give a chance to do that.

Okay. Looks like we have a question on the phone. Caller you can go ahead.

>> Hi, I'm just wondering if you could quickly go through that time line again of, you know, during the months -- during certain months, solicitation, could you do that one more time, please?

>> BRAD WILLIAMS: Sure, no problem. And what is even fortunate is that we are actively engaged in it right now. And it does help to write down the process in a timeline and then have it available, so you can always reference it. But we typically meet in, like, April, mid-April, to convene the recruitment committee so that we can then go to our Excel spreadsheet. That's usually my job first, so I can identify the vacancies and the appointment categories and look where our diversity needs are going to be and have all that identified, so that we can start having the discussion. And that's mid-April. And then that then feeds into what should we put in the solicitation notice. And then it's like, okay, even though we kind of know that we want to put the solicitation notice out for about six weeks, it tends to be near the end of May through all of June. And that's when that goes out and we distribute it just as I had mentioned, so that we then have our deadline and then I'll get into all this, but I'll give it real quick. We then convene as a committee in mid-July because we have all the applications. We review the applications and we then identify who we want for a telephone interview and then we invite everyone to a telephone interview in early August and then hopefully if we're good with everyone who we want to recommend we do so and we then recommend to the executive committee the appointments. But I'll get into more detail about this process. Does that answer your question?

>> Yes, appreciate that. By way, this is Barbie from Maryland.

>> Great. Nice to meet you.

>> Thanks, Lori, thanks, Brad.

Next question, Brad, comes from Gillette. Have you had problems with complaints about the fairness of the decisions made on applicant selection?

Do you keep former applicants on your list?

>> BRAD WILLIAMS: That is an excellent question and the answer is yes, definitely. And what we try to do, that's why it's always important to have -- to communicate to everyone all through the process, because if you only communicate to the people that you're actively interested in, okay, it does not inform the people that you're not interested in, and I have created communications for people throughout the process that tell them, you know, that when -- that certain key juncture, that we appreciated their participation, et cetera, and other ways to plug into the process. It's often the individual who hears nothing and then four or five months at the end gets a "thank you for your consideration," and that's it. They are the ones who are most disgruntled with the unfairness of the process as opposed to maybe two other emails during other critical junctures in the process that that's when that's important.

The other thing -- because the other time is you also explain to people that it's a very competitive process and there's expectations of individuals. And what those expectations are. And when they realize how competitive it is, then when other people are selected, then they can understand that, you know, there were other people vying for the opportunity as well. And then you also give the opportunity -- the chance for anyone to contact you at any time if they have any questions about the process. And when I've had individuals who had questions or felt it was unfair, it gave me certainly the opportunity to explain to them in more detail about the process or any questions that they had and then explains what it might be -- what they could do in the future if they were still interested, or other ways they can get involved with the Council if they were still interested.

Does that answer the question?

>> TIM FUCHS: All right, Kathy and Denise, we have someone waiting on the phone, so I'm going to go there next.

Caller, you can go ahead.

>> Okay. This is Lori from Maryland again. I'll make it quick. Do you ever find yourself in a situation where there are actually people that you interviewed that you were interested in but you can only have so many members at a time, so you ask them to participate as an ex officio member? How do you deal with that situation?

>> BRAD WILLIAMS: Well... and I think what we've had is we've had to say "no." And tell me if this is similar. I don't think I've had that exact situation, but because we often have more candidates than we have open positions, we've had to say "no" to some very highly qualified individuals who we would have loved to have had on our council. And that's a tough one. And is that somewhat similar to what you're saying?

>> Well, would you not take them -- if they were so highly qualified, would you not want them as a member because you had too many already or is there some reason you didn't want them?

>> BRAD WILLIAMS: Here is the thing. Because we have a certain number of total members, you know, or else we would have had to increase -- we're at 24-25, we would have to agree to expand the number of council members, and we have certain categories, okay? And so we have to choose between certain individuals for the categories, and sometimes certain individuals just -- we have to make that decision and other individuals, they just don't get selected because of those circumstances, and yes, what we say to people at the end, it's because of the process and the competitiveness of our process and we ask if people would still be interested, you know, to be in the candidate pool going forward into next year's cycle. And what happens is some people say yes and some people say, well, I'll have to see next year because I don't know where I will be next year, but, you know, I'll let you know. It's difficult.

>> Okay. As we know, most of the work of a council occurs at the committee -- in the committee. So for those people that didn't get selected to be members work on the committee and that kind of lets you know, hey, this person might be a really good member, you know, and show what they want to do.

>> BRAD WILLIAMS: And that's what we've done. And what happens is that some people non-council members on a committee. And what is interesting is some people agree to that and then other people do not. So it's very interesting to see who does accept that. And it's in our correspondence that we have, where we make the offer. And other people don't. But you do make the offer, and then you see. And then you're right, I think it does allow someone to prove how much of an interest they do have. Go ahead.

>> Because, also, I mean, the only thing that person can't do is vote and, you know, for voting matters, and get -- you know, get the transportation to in-person meetings paid for, but they can certainly do all the work of the council on a committee level if they want to. And they can certainly influence the vote in the committee. So...

>> BRAD WILLIAMS: They can participate in many ways, and a lot of times they may not necessarily come to the council meeting or they might participate in other ways or they might come to one or two. It depends on where they live in the state, you know, right? But you're right, this is a great way to get an idea of someone's real interest in abilities and abilities to work with the Council on issues.

>> TIM FUCHS: Good ideas. Thanks, Lori. Thanks, Brad. Brad, next question comes from Kathy. And she's wondering, why do you wait until July to determine -- our terms end June 30th, so we get them in April so hopefully get the new appointments by July 1.

How is that different in New York?

>> BRAD WILLIAMS: I think it's just our annual cycles for this process are different. So our terms start in -- I'll get into this January 1st. So we start that process when we do in mid April, so that it gets before our DSU -- or not DSU, excuse me, DSE, in late September and I'll get into it. It then gets into before the regents for regents item in late fall and then everything starts the term starting January 1st. We are one of the two states that are not connected to our governor, you know, these are nongubernatorial appointments. I think our cycles are different time frames.

>> TIM FUCHS: Great. I got an earlier question from Denise about whether or not you were on an annual ongoing basis. It seems clear you're on an annual basis, everybody goes through the same process once a year, is that right?

>> BRAD WILLIAMS: Yes.

>> TIM FUCHS: And Denise also asks, a qualification for potential SILC member that they should have knowledge of the centers, but that knowledge is subjective. Would you agree?

>> BRAD WILLIAMS: Yeah. So what happens is we definitely want to know -- it's kind of like in our questions, and we ask about people's -- especially when we get to the telephone interview process, but if someone has a really good sense -- and we start talk about IL philosophy. That's where the questions start. And then we ask them about their familiarity with the IL Network and Independent Living Center and someone might say in the interview, have you ever been to an Independent Living Center? You know, do you have an Independent Living Center in your community? You know, we basically see what their familiarity is with Independent Living and let them answer the question.

But, you know, if someone is really a top-notch candidate and, you know, we see where they are competitively, you know, we can always work with an individual, and if they are the best candidate, we can work to improve, you know, their connection to -- I mean, if they have the philosophy, right, and if they have the ability to improve that connection, because we're always trying to improve our diversity in our connections, you know, for who we are.

So, you know, these are discussions to have, you know, as you're making your selections. Because it's just who we are. We believe in the IL philosophy. So it's something to consider. That's who -- you know, each council is going to be different how they approach it, I guess. But that's how we do it.

>> TIM FUCHS: Good. Thanks. You got a thanks from Denise too.

Thanks, Brad. That's all the questions we go. Again, we'll have two more Q&A breaks. Feel free to type your comments and questions in the chat. For now I'm going to turn it back to Brad and go to slide 15.

>> BRAD WILLIAMS: Okay. So in terms of the candidate review process, you know, after the deadline, the SILC office compiles complete applications and schedules the next committee meeting. And the recruitment committee members review the materials and identify the top candidates, giving consideration to the vacancy and diversity needs of the council.

And I had mentioned this. Typically mid July. And after that meeting we identify the top candidates and they are invited to participate in telephone interviews in early August. So if I use our current example, there are five vacancies, the committee might select for the top candidates, like maybe eight. Or, you know, it's fluid. It could be nine to interview by telephone.

Next panel.

And depending on the number of candidates, it could take a couple days, couple half-days. Usually we schedule half-hour for like 15 or 20 minutes for these interviews are scheduled with each candidate, and that's early August. And the committee goes through the set of questions and also goes over expectations, but then gives time for the individual to ask us questions, and we attempt to reach consensus on appointment recommendations at the end of the last interview. If it's needed a follow-up interview can be used to reach that consensus, and the committee must vote and agree on a slate of new member appointments and reappointments to recommend to the executive committee. And that could take place anywhere from early to mid August.

Next panel.

Continued.

You know, so just to mention this, that's the normal process, if things go smoothly. There is a caveat that if the committee is not satisfied with a candidate based on this process, they can go back to the candidate pool and interview another candidate or a couple candidates until they find a replacement.

And is SILC office creates a document based on the committee recommendations for the executive committee. So, you know, let's call it the one committee recommends to the executive committee, and the executive committee considers the recommendation at their next meeting. Which could be late August to early September, and they formally accept the recommendations, and it just -- and that should just be mentioned, that the executive committee themselves, if it came down to it, for whatever reason, you know, they had a question or objected to a recommendation, they could actually vote "no." But chances are they are going to accept the due diligence of that Recruitment Committee, because they have worked very hard.

Next panel.

Continued. The executive committee reviews, discusses, approves the recommendations of the Recruitment Committee. That's by mid September. The SILC office creates a full appointment packet and sets up a meeting to review it with the DSE, and that's usually by the end of September. And I mentioned the executive committee could object to an appointee. The DSE could as well when we get to this late September meeting. It only has happened once in the 18 years I've been here. But then that's something that has to be back-channeled and worked through, but, you know, we have a process and we have to work through it. But typically the cycle works through -- and people, again, respect the work that has been done by the Recruitment Committee. And then it goes on to the next part of the process, which is on the next panel.

DSE takes the information from the packet and converts it into a regents item. And these appointments and reappointments are scheduled for a Regents meeting near the end of the year, sometime in November or December. And by the time it gets to the Regents, they review it and kind of in a very standard way approve it. So they accept for the most part whatever, in this case, vocational rehabilitation presents to them.

Letters are then sent out by the DSE to confirm the appointments by the Regents, and in this case the DSE does it for them. And new members start as of January 1st. And I mentioned this, the orientation of new members takes place the afternoon before the first full Council meeting, which is in March.

We start -- we continue with the communication to keep everyone informed of the process. We make sure they're part of the communication of the Council members a little bit before they start and then certainly as they start. Next panel.

And I had referenced more materials. There's a telephone interview materials and sample correspondence. Any of these items I think work out very well. You know, we all have different methods and if any of these can assist, great. They're there for, you know, reference.

Next panel.

New member orientation. You know, we've worked hard over the past -- I would say at least seven or more years, building on our orientation manual. We hold this in March for the first full Council meeting. It's at the hotel where the Council meeting takes place. It's sent out in advance, so new members have a chance to review the material. Which is important, because it's so much information. It's just something that can't be reviewed page-by-page. It has to be absorbed a month ahead of time. And the Executive Director runs the orientation with the assistance of Executive Committee and some Recruitment Committee members, and it's designed to be a small group session.

Next panel.

And if you look at the orientation manual, there's some of these items that are actually in the manual, but we reference them and we summarize them and we have different people discuss them so it's not just one person talking all the time on each subject, and we ask questions about them and really facilitate a dialogue. So we're not going page-by-page over each section because that would be a horrible thing to do to anybody, and we then have discussions about -- and some of these things are not in the manual, but they're very pertinent things, like, you know, we talk about the importance of quorum. We talk about -- we review the agenda but we talk about how the agenda is set up and why it's set up the way it is, and then we talk about how the meaning is run. Which some of these things are very important. Because if you didn't talk about those kind of things and you had to go into a meeting and you had to kind of make sense of these things yourself, boy, that would be a hard thing to kind of get used to.

So, you know, along with the other things, which are a little more formalized, like open meetings law and the Rehabilitation Act and the organizational structure and policies, conflict of interest, et cetera, you know, it really provides a really great opportunity to discuss things.

And it takes anywhere from three to four hours, especially when you have a dialogue and you have an exchange of questions and answers, and we also have certain forms that we have to trade back and forth, you know, conflict of interest, right? And we have expectations, too, that we have members sign.

Next panel.

Continued.

And I do want to say... and I certainly appreciate and respect councils that have a mentoring program, or anyone who has a mentoring program. Who knows, at some point maybe we will have a mentoring program. But we kind of do more of a soft approach. So like at the orientation, after we're done, we have a dinner that we just order and have it delivered, and it provides an opportunity to just socialize and get to know each other. And then we welcome everyone at the new members at the next meeting and then we just -- like at lunch we take time to socialize and get members to get to know each other, and we make sure, you know, that we pull in our new members, and we do it in an indirect way and get them to network with each other.

So it's informal. And we certainly encourage new members to participate in any educational opportunities that we know, you know, will enhance their knowledge.

Next panel.

The last item referenced is the orientation manual, which there's a link for.

Next panel.

>> TIM FUCHS: All right. Thanks, Brad. That brings us to our next Q&A, as you can see. So if you're on the phone you can press \*# and if you're on the webinar, you can type your questions out now. I'll give about 30 seconds to see if there are any questions for Brad.

Again, that's \*# on the phone or you can type them in the chat.

I haven't seen any activity on the CART screen, but I am watching if you're on there.

While we're waiting for questions to come in, too, let me give a little plug. Next week -- you don't have it yet, but next week you'll see an announcement for our next activity in the -- well, our next webinar activity anyway, for the SILC TNA center, we're going to have virtual Town Hall on the new SPIL instrument and instructions. So that is currently considered for revisions, and there is a work group convened for those recommendations. We're holding the town hall on June 15th to gather input from the SILCs and we're asking you all to invite your partners. We'll market to them but it will help if it comes from you all to join that call together and give us input.

So we'll have a facilitated conversation. Again, that's June 15th, you'll see the announcement next week.

I don't see any questions. I'm going to give ten more seconds to make sure we're not missing anybody.

All right.

Well, hey, thanks so much, Brad. That was really helpful to see how you all have outlined the process and I appreciate your time. Of course, I'll still be on the phone.

We'll go ahead now to slide 26 and hear from Liz about the process in California and then we will have a final Q&A at the end of the call. All right, I'm on slide 27, Liz.

>> LIZ PAZDRAL: Thanks, Tim. And I want to thank Tim. I'm always honored to get to participate in this kind of conversation because all of you are doing this work and I know that you have your own successes and triumphs that I can learn from. Certainly I've gotten ideas from Brad and just listening to him today gave me some inspiration for working with my council. Our membership is down right now and we need to recruit some new members. And so ideas are welcome.

Our Council wanted to work hard at being diverse, at building inclusiveness so that they were representative. California is a really diverse state and a very large state and so how -- you know, with a Council, our Council has 18 members. How do you represent a state as large and as diverse as ours?

So an author I like, Katherine Pease suggests there are some questions you can ask yourself as an organization when you're trying to build inclusiveness.

Are people comfortable? And people from all strides, all walks of life, are they comfortable on the SILC? Does the SILC consider relations for all when it makes decisions for the organization?

What could the SILC do differently to become more inclusive and welcoming?

And what could the SILC do differently to address the needs of different communities?

And we always come up with some interesting answers when we ask ourselves these questions. Ideas for publishing our materials in other languages, ideas for places to recruit. Because our goal is to be representative.

Next slide.

So there are a lot of different ways that you can make your SILC inclusive. Agreeing on what kind of criteria you're looking for is a first step. In terms of communities that are under-represented or under-served, you want to make sure have a voice on the SILC. Maybe the skills that you need your SILC members to have, you know, the more skilled our SILC members are, the more capacity we have as an organization and as a body, because we don't have a big budget and we don't have a big staff, but we have big dreams.

There are lots of good resources out there for finding what is called a board inventory, right? Where you look at the characteristics and qualities of your current Board and identify -- do a gaps analysis. The good ones also have spaces for you to write in things. I find that often when I'm trying to modify an existing non-profit board tool for Independent Living, you know, they're not going to have questions about disability, but certainly one of the things that is important to the California SILC is to have diverse representation from different disability communities.

So you have a committee that is designated to work on this with you, so that it's a collective process and this collective wisdom going into it. Your committee determines the criteria that the Council needs -- that the Council has, that the Council needs, that the Council doesn't have. Identify the gaps.

Use one of these recruitment audits or board inventories to help you identify your gap.

Next page.

Here are some more tools. Again, these are links. So if you are looking at a different version of this, the link is going to be spelled out in your version so that you can access and check out these documents. Next slide.

The recruitment strategies. One of the things that the SILC -- you know, in trying to build consensus around what characteristics and identities we want SILC members to bring to the table, one of the things that the SILC did was a diversity plan. And this was led by one of our standing committees, and one of the standing committees primarily deals with external affairs. And they call themselves the Communications and Collaborations Committee, but they wrote our diversity plan and every couple of years they review it and update it and we have it on our website. And the Diversity Plan talks about what our priorities are for who we want to reach.

Champions. You already have council members who represent multiple demographic groups. Engaging them in the social justice strategy of building leadership, you know, certainly a lot of constituencies feel unheard and they don't have enough of a voice. And so talking about serving on the SILC as a way to access greater social justice for that constituency can be a real selling point.

Targeted recruitment. Having individual SILC members create what I like to call a hot list, which is maybe their top three prospects, people they think are really likely candidates, not necessarily likely candidates to serve on the SILC but possibly candidates who will know candidates around the SILC, just good connections for the SILC to build upon.

Organizations can help you as targeted recruitment. In California we have the Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders with Disabilities and I just reached out to that chapter of AARP to work on setting up a meeting trying to identify candidates, and I said to them, you know, not only are we looking to increase representation and build inclusiveness, but I'd also be interested in knowing about ideas you have for people in southern California. Because it tends to be easier for us to recruit from the northern part of the state

Sometimes we need to do outreach to missing demographic groups, people who aren't participating but we want them and we know that they're not there. So, for example, one of our last outreach pushes back between 2013-2014, we did targeted emails to traumatic brain injury services listserv. And we got a candidate. We had someone interested who was a really good addition to the Council.

Next slide.

Other recruitment strategies. Attending events, meeting people, talking with them one-on-one and networking and being parts of other organizations.

Again, Brad spoke about the importance of having your board members do this work. Because there are so few to have, if there are any staff on most SILCs. And people are going to stay engaged if they know people on the Council and they are interested and enjoy working with them. So your colleagues and your friends are good people to include. Looking at people who are active in the community. There's a gentleman in San Francisco who worked in the veterans community who is not a veteran with a disability but knows everybody who works in veterans services in San Francisco, so he is someone that I have approached about recruiting a veteran with a disability.

Lots of opportunities to put the word out there, and having a solid screening process, like the one that Brad described can help you if you get a real deluge.

Next slide.

So a way to build group identity and build a diverse SILC is to try and ensure that it is the kind of organization that is more open, that more people can express their identities within. We want your leadership structure to be fairly flat and accessible, lots of opportunities for people to take on leadership roles. You want all group members to be considered equal to one another, and that's something that takes discussing. It's an environment that you need to create because it's not one -- it's not the natural one that comes from government or from Robert's Rules or parliamentary procedure.

A lot of the things that the California SILC does, it's the SILC members who bring the ideas to me and say that this is what we want. They're not ideas that I had.

So icebreakers were very important to the California SILC, and they insist on having an icebreaker at the beginning of every meeting.

Team building opportunities. You know, they don't want to sit around and have their meetings be listening to a bunch of reports. They want to -- making things and doing things and being interactive, interaction that is intimate and individualized, non-stereotypical and interdependent. So people are talking about how they're different but how the causes are the same.

People talk about their disability. People talk about their constituency that they're representing. It gives them an opportunity to bring those things into their leadership.

The SILC members created their own peer mentoring program. I really had very little to do with it, and so I definitely don't want to take any credit for it... [chuckles]... but they do a breakfast. We have a two-day meeting. They do a breakfast on the morning of the second day and they schedule it so that half of it they do sort of by themselves and half of it they do as part of the official meeting with staff present.

They've identified members who have been on longer to pair up with members who have served for less time, and to help bring them into the culture. They called it a Piece of P. I. E. ." Prepare, inform, and engage. And they have a calendar of monthly topics that the mentor and the mentee are supposed to make sure they have. The mentor -- there's the mentor's breakfast, but also independently the mentor and mentee are supposed to have a meal together when they're at the SILC meeting, and then they're supposed to talk once a month on the phone. And they're supposed to try to visit. One of the ways they match up the mentors is geographically. And so, you know, then we check in about it at every meeting. How are things going with your mentor? What did you guys do? And they bring stuff back to us that they have questions about. So it's a good activity and, again, it gives the council members the feeling they are more in control of the Council and what it does.

Next slide.

This is more information about the Peer Mentoring Program.

But, you know, I don't know if any of you have listened to the statistic when you're in college they teach you about memory and how much you remember. You remember what you hear if you hear it and you write it, you remember it more, and what helps you to retain information the most is if you have to teach it to someone else. And so I think that some of these mentoring questions about Independent Living Philosophy or Independent Living history or other information that the mentees might have, the mentors research it in order to be prepared to have the conversation, and that makes them more knowledgeable as well.

Next slide.

I already gave you this information. So I jumped ahead of myself. Next slide.

Engagement through representation. If you are recruiting people based on strategic planning, which hopefully that is part of your process, is that you've done a strategic plan, like you would for the SPIL, but one for the SILC itself, or you've done the work together, so that your SPIL is also a strategic plan for your SILC. But you've identified members that need to be better represented in your state Independent Living network. The SPIL also probably includes projects that new members could join that would benefit their group, right?

For example, the California SILC is one of many supporters within the IL network of the California Youth Leadership Forum. So when we have youth members who feel strongly about Independent Living services to young people, there's a project they can get involved with to help them get to fill that need in their life, that gap in their daily work. We had -- when the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects came through, the SILC members had the opportunity to help shape projects, and so projects went to some specific communities, including Native Americans that might not otherwise have gotten the ARRA funds through the IL network. We did a white paper in 2013 about gaps in services for people who are deaf in the California IL Network.

So a lot of times the work that the SILC is doing anyways, and that the IL Network is doing as part of the SPIL is work that lets potential members live their passion and feel like -- feel engaged with the SILC.

Next slide.

Does anybody have any questions?

>> TIM FUCHS: All right, thanks, Liz. Questions, \*# on the phone or you can type in the chat.

>> LIZ PAZDRAL: I see example of an icebreaker or a team building project. And usually I try to choose them based on what we're going to be working on for that meeting. You know, usually we have things we need to accomplish. Like we need to come to some agreement on some SPIL language. This past meeting we had just done the first battery of legislative visits we've done in a long time. We haven't done it in a couple years. And so, you know, it was purely voluntary, but for the SILC members who did participate from previous work, I've learned that my SILC members like an activity called "fish bowl." I don't know if any of you are familiar with that sort of modality, fish bowl, where you have maybe like four principal -- four key informants that sit in the middle of the room in a circle and everybody else sits in a circle around them and the people on the outside -- the people in the fish bowl are in a fish bowl and they get to talk about their experiences with a particular topic.

So for this meeting we did a fish bowl where the people who had done legislative visits responded to questions and inquiries from the people who had not. But it can be hard when you look through -- I've downloaded some books on icebreakers and team building activities, and, you know, it can be tricky to come up with ones that are accessible.

We have a diverse range of disabilities on our SILC, and so, you know, something needs to work for everybody. And there might be a component to the activity that doesn't. So that's something that I literally have to think about ahead of time

>> TIM FUCHS: Good examples. Thanks. Looks like we have a caller on the phone. We'll go there now. Go ahead.

>> The last question just inspired another question for me. This is Lori from Maryland. And in the fish bowl example, the people in the fish bowl each have a question to address an who picks those questions?

>> LIZ PAZDRAL: I'm sorry, Lori, are you done?

So you identify a facilitator. The facilitator chooses the question. The questions are going to be on a particular subject. Each person in the fish bowl is going to get asked the same question.

>> Ohhh.

>> LIZ PAZDRAL: And then people sitting outside the fish bowl can also add questions, and the moderator or the facilitator, if the question -- if for some reason it doesn't quite work for the people in the fish bowl, the facilitator can help massage that so it's a question that works for the people in the fish bowl.

>> So, now, the four people in the fish bowl, would they necessarily give any answers to the question?

>> LIZ PAZDRAL: They may or may not. If the question is, what was your favorite thing that you did during leg visits...

>> Okay, okay.

>> LIZ PAZDRAL: Somebody said might say, get in the ice cream bar at the cafeteria.

>> Okay, good, thank you.

>> TIM FUCHS: Great. Thanks. Okay, Liz. The folks from the Nevada SILC are wondering: What kind of involvement do the CILs have in recruitment, how have they been involved in California?

>> LIZ PAZDRAL: That's a great question. Yeah, thank you.

So the CILs have been a major source of recruitment for the SILC. I don't think that we could have a full complement without them. I mean, I know the law -- the Rehab Act says that we need to have the member who is elected by all of the EDs in the state, and our California foundation for Independent Living Centers, our membership association has structured their board so that the SILC representative, the IL representative to the SILC is an executive officer on the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers. So they get this leadership role. So we automatically have that person -- well, automatically -- we have that person, but also I feel like the centers have been very good about recruiting -- we've had several directors who have served. We have some staff right now who are in the work. We have some staff right now who are on the SILC. So I think what we've actually had a problem with is keeping below the 51%, because, you know, it's SILC staff -- sorry, it's ILC staff and state employees. And, you know, that's pretty easy to get to 51% pretty quickly.

>> TIM FUCHS: Right. Okay. Well, good. Thanks.

All right. Again, \*# if you have a question on the phone or you can type your question in the chat.

I'll give some chance to make sure we answer all the questions here.

You have 30 more seconds just to make sure we've got everyone.

While we're waiting, I'm going to go to the next slide here, slide 37 where Liz and Brad have been generous enough to provide contact information. Thanks to you all for doing that.

And then also at the bottom of this slide we'll see the link to the evaluation form.

And you can actually click on it and make sure you wait until the call ends or press your control button when you click it, but that will take you directly to the evaluation form.

If you're participating in a small group today, that's great, we encourage it, but please do fill out the evaluation yourself. So I hope that each of you will take time to respond to the eval.

And like I said, it's pretty short and easy to complete.

All right. Well, I don't see any further questions. So I will let you all have a few moments back here at the end of your day or the end of the day on the east coast anyway.

Well, Brad and Liz, thank you so much. This has been really helpful. I know that it is hard to keep a fully constituted SILC and it's something that a lot of people struggle with, and these tips have been really useful.

And I appreciate, too, that you've shared some additional resources and your contact information for people to use.

Oh, we just had another question roll in and I'm going to let you all respond since we have plenty of time left, if that's okay.

Shouldn't 51% of your SILC composition be individuals with disabilities who are not employed by the CIL? And Liz you were just mentioning that. Do you want to reiterate that quickly?

>> LIZ PAZDRAL: Yeah. So we really try for 100% of our membership to have disabilities. And you're not supposed to have a majority either working for centers or for the state. So CIL employees and state employees need to be the minority.

>> TIM FUCHS: Right. Okay. Thanks for clarifying.

Okay. So anyway, I just want to thank you all for putting this together and I want to thank all of you for taking the time to join us too. And we have a few more SILC activities coming up this year, so be on the lookout for those. Like I said, just next week you'll see the announcement for that free complementary call, virtual town hall on June 15th. We have others in the pipeline too. So be on the lookout. And if you have any questions about our activity -- training activities or any ongoing TA, feel free to reach out to me. My email is simple, it's just Tim@ncil.org.

All right. Thanks again to all of you. Have a wonderful afternoon. We'll talk to you soon.

Bye!

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