Maine Statewide Independent Living Council

Minutes

December 2021

Members Present: Darcy Gentle (Chair), Program Director of the Wabanaki Vocational Rehabilitation Program (WVR); Trish Thorsen (Member at Large), Long Term Care Ombudsmen Program (LTCOP); Diane Frigon, Regional Manager, Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI); Samantha Fenderson, Assistant Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR); Stephanie Desrochers, Program Manager, Benefits Counseling Services, Maine Medical Center (BCS-MMC); Lee Glynn, PWD, Acquired Brain Injury Advisory Council (ABIAC); Jessica Cyr, PWD, Moving Maine Network.

Absent: Tom Newman, Executive Director, Alpha One.

Members of Public: Katy Bizier, Brain Injury Association of America, Maine Chapter.

Acceptance of Minutes: The October minutes were accepted as distributed.

Financial Report: The final financial report for FFY2021 was shared prior to the meeting. There were no questions or comments.

Program Progress Report (PPR): Cheryl shared that the FFY2020 PPR was submitted on time on November 1st. The PPR for FFY21 is due January 31, 2022. The group talked about Activity Tables and how they help complete the PPR. The group strategized on the best way to set up the Activity Tables on the OneDrive. Stephanie suggested having the Activity Tables on every agenda going forward.

State Plan on Independent Living (SPIL): The Council went over the SPIL to see what goals/objectives have been worked on/completed. Here is that work:

**Goal 1**

**Promote Awareness of Independent Living Services for those with disabilities throughout the State**

**Objective 1.1:** The IL Network will provide information on disability issues statewide.

**Action Step:** The IL Network will survey consumers statewide annually to access knowledge of IL services.

**12-1-21 Maine SILC will follow up with Alpha One on the status of survey and identify timelines for FY2022 survey. Review survey monkey questions and revise as necessary.**

**Objective 1.2:** Maine SILC will educate Policy Makers and Legislators to increase awareness of the needs and issues facing people with disabilities.

**Action Step**: ME SILC will keep monitoring state policy rules and legislative proposals in order to advocate any issues concerning people with disabilities.

By providing alternate ways of testimony, video conferences, in home visits, mini documentaries regarding disability needs this will bridge the gap between policy makers and consumers.

**12-1-21 Maine SILC will follow up with Tom, Julia and Sara Squires regarding legislative proposals that will impact people with disabilities. Have them share with SILC. BRS and other groups have forums to discuss this information. Have SILC develop an opportunity for a round table discussion with reps from various agencies and groups or explore where Maine SILC may want to have a SILC rep as a liaison. Collectively, voices are louder than individually. Maine SILC will have a legislative item on each agenda going forward. What is in Maine SILC’s scope.**

**Objective 1.3**: Maine SILC develop education and advocacy materials to be disbursed to communities throughout Maine.

**Action Step:** Maine SILC will create a PowerPoint presentation to be used to educate other organizations, Brochures outlining SILC, goals, and where to find resource information, and a Flyer to be inclusive of information above in various cross disability formats.

**Identify 3 organizations per quarter to present SILC information.**

12-1-21 **One presentation was done to the Acquired Brain Injury Advisory Council during the final quarter of 2021. Check with Alpha One (Tom or Julie) regarding presenting SILC info to case managers. Add where will present as a standing agenda item at SILC meetings. Ideas for groups we can present to in January 2022: Developmental Disability Council; State Rehabilitation Councils ( DVR and DBVI); VR Counselors (WVR, DVR and DBVI); Maine Coalition for Housing and Quality Services.**

**Include: current events, webinars, legislative updates i.e., ABLE ME presentation – collaboration with Bangor Savings, National Disability Institute and the Maine State Treasures Office – Maine Medical Center Benefits Counseling Services will be participating in the planning for January and February webinars. Provide updates such as this webinar and other info on the SILC website.**

**Goal 2**

**Consistently strive for Maine SILC Membership**

**Objective 2.1:** Make a list of people with disabilities who have indicated they have an interest in learning more about Maine SILC.

**Action Step:** Consistently use education and advocacy materials to gain interest for potential membership.

**Action Step**: When appropriate, include Maine SILC membership information with other presentations.

**Objective 2.2:** Make a list of councils that educate and advocate cross disabilities statewide.

**Action Step:** Contact councils to establish a partnership, exchanging information between Maine SILC and other councils. This will be done quarterly during each year of the SPIL.

**12-1-21 SILC has a list of organizations that Council members are connected with on the OneDrive. The DBVI SRC chair, DVR SRC chair and Associate director of DD council attended SILC meeting in October to share and exchange information. Representatives from DOT (Greater Portland Council of Governments) abd Moving Maine Network presented at the SILC Annual Training in the final quarter of 2021.**

**Goal 3**

**Explore and identify the best agency to serve as the DSE**

**Objective 3.1:** Gain concept approvals from DSE, CIL, SILC and other agencies to draft program and budget considerations.

**Action Step**: Compile a list of agencies that would be a good fit to be the DSE for the SILC and Alpha One (Maine’s CIL). This is to be done in the first year of the SPIL. **Completed**.

12-1-21 Completed.

**Objective 3.2:** Make recommendations regarding the relocation of the DSE by first quarter of the second year of the SPIL.

**Action Step:** Draft detailed plan outlining the responsibilities and duties of the DSE. Expected to be done by the first quarter of the second year of the SPIL.

**12-1-21 January - March 2022 - In process.**

**Goal 4**

**Advance emergency preparedness supports and services**

**Objective 4.1:** People with disabilities have adequate resources and are included in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

**Action Step:** Identify and implement online materials for use by Alpha One and other disability service providers to educate their clients about being prepared in case of emergency. This will include information for consumers on how to make an emergency plan kit. The responsibility for this step will be among the SILC, Alpha One, and partnering disability organizations.

**12-1-21 Follow up with Alpha One (Tom and Julie) re:****status and updates.**

**Objective 4.2:** Ensure SILC, Alpha One and other disability partner’s staff have access to inclusive disability specific planning and preparedness resources.

**Action Step:** As Maine SILC establishes relationships with cross disability organizations, a working plan will be developed based on the needs of individual clients. Maine SILC will develop materials to be placed on the website that each organization can use when working with individuals to educate, train and develop plans to either shelter in place or evacuate to a shelter.

12-1-21 Maine SILC does have a resource page on it’s website for emergency preparedness. Update may be needed.

**Goal 5**

**Collaborate to improve access to transportation for people with disabilities**

**Objective 5.1:** Engage key transportation partners to commit to improving transportation options for people with disabilities.

**Action Step:** Identify key contacts within the transportation network to discuss ways to improve availability/access of transportation throughout the State for people with disabilities.

**12-1-21 Jessica is on the Moving Maine Network sponsored by GPCOG.** Maine SILC h**ad representatives from DOT and Moving Maine Network at the Maine SILC Annual Training. Cheryl will be meeting with local transportation group.**

National Association of SILCs (NASILC) vs. Association of Programs of Rural Independent Living (APRIL): Maine SILC received a request from NASILC to become a member. The consensus was what to these groups offer that Maine SILC is not getting through the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) or Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU). Cheryl will reach out to other SILCs and Alpha One to get a better understanding of what NASiLC and APRIL offer.

Achieve a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Accounts: The goal is to have a live webinar with CART/ASL in late January/February with a question-and-answer session, record the webinar, and make it available online for anyone to view after. At the moment, participating parties are hoping to have a panel of speakers: the Maine State Treasurer’s Office, Bangor Savings Bank (BSB), and potentially the National ABLE Resource Center (to answer questions about non-BSB ABLE accounts) and Benefits Counseling Services (to explain how ABLE does/does not impact public benefits). For some individuals, an out-of-state ABLE account may be preferable/compatible than a Maine ABLE account, so the goal is to offer a well-rounded overview of ABLE so each individual can make the best choice for them. There is going to be high demand for the webinar. If so, and if it goes well, additional sessions may be offered as many people will prefer to attend live and can ask questions than watch a recording. Until the webinar above happens, Stephanie does not personally feel comfortable giving presentations about ABLE aa accounts. If individuals are looking for a presentation on ABLE accounts before the webinar mentioned above, Stephanie encourages them to reach out to Bangor Savings Bank directly.

Announcements: The Council talked about how Maine SILC could honor Beth Mogan, former Executive Director of Maine SILC, who passed away on November 25, 2021. Stephanie offered to be a point person for individuals who may want to donate money to Pine Tree Camp as this was in the obituary. Maine SILC will send Beth’s husband, Mike, a sympathy card.

Webmaster: Cheryl reported Maine SILC and both State Rehabilitation Councils has offered the job as webmaster to Roger Fuller, who has accepted the position.

Trish talked about Direct Care Workforce. She reported that she was just following up on the email that she had sent out about recruiting direct workers for the discussion groups and wanted to update that the groups are going well and from these groups there will be applications for direct care workers who participated to apply to be on an advisory council of direct care workers and provide input to the State on issues impacting the direct care workforce.

Adjournment: 12:02pm.