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**Minutes**

Name of Organization: Nevada Statewide Independent Living Council (NV SILC) Integrated Workforce Development Subcommittee (IWD)

Date and Time of Meeting: Tuesday, March 8, 2022, 9:00 a.m.

This meeting will be held via video-conference only:

The public may observe this meeting and provide public comment on Zoom.

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1. Welcome, Roll Call and Introductions

Dr. Sondra Cosgrove, Subcommittee Chair

Members Present: Ace Patrick, Bryan Hilbert, Cindi Swanson, Dora Martinez, Mechelle Merrill, Raquel O’Neill, Robin Kincaid, Sondra Cosgrove,

Members Absent: Tracy Brown-May,

Guests: Sonny Vinuya, Lea Case, Carley Murray,

Staff: Dawn Lyons & Wendy Thornley

1. Public Comment

(No action may be taken upon a matter raised under public comment period unless the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an action item. Comments will be limited to three minutes per person. Persons making comment will be asked to begin by stating their name for the record and to spell their last name and provide the secretary with written comments.)

No public comment.

1. Presentation by Sonny Vinuya on the Lt. Governor’s Office for Small Business Advocacy

Chief of the Lt. Governor’s Office for Small Business Advocacy

Sonny Vinuya: He was hired in February, and his office has only been open for four weeks. As the Director, he has been tasked with three things:

* To serve as a voice for small business owners with the state government.
* To serve as a centralized hub to for small business owners to face.
* To coordinate with other state agencies.

His office will help ensure the long-term growth and resiliency of Nevada’s small business industry by receiving, reviewing, and attempting to resolve complaints from small businesses. They are building a customer relation management system that they are hoping to launch the following week. This new system will be able to collect data and pinpoint the different issues that are reported.

The system will have main duties:

* Collect information regarding business owner issues and allow the office to connect the business owners with the right resources in the community.
* Data collection for issues, what are recurring issues, what is most important to the business owners. His office can use the data to create programs or draft legislation in support of the small business owners.
* For small businesses to understand their rights and responsibilities.
* Analyze, monitor, and make recommendations concerning loss to regulations and policies relating to smaller businesses.

The biggest issue that small business owners have, is licensing. There are many different licenses, and all have certain criteria. He wants his office to be a clearinghouse of information for the small business community. They are creating a business resource center that will probably open in about a year and a half. The Business Resource Center will have classes and host seminars. They would help a potential small business owner with licensing and then refer them to community resources. They are building a webpage that will have their mission statement. They would appreciate any help in getting the word out among the small business community, that they are open.

Dawn Lyons: For people entering the job market for the first time, they must pay for all of this out of their own pockets. Some have parental support, but not all. Some have disabilities as well. She was wondering if there could be a discussion about a labor forum for people that do not have income to pay for those things.

Sonny Vinuya: He is not sure if that will be part of their scope. He will look into it and get the information to Dawn.

Sondra Cosgrove: For people who have been out of work, and would like to start a small business, how do they pay for the business license?

Sonny Vinuya: It’s been an ongoing problem; banks do not loan to startup businesses. He suggested looking into Prestonos, a lender that specializes startup businesses with a lower ceiling. These entities are called Community Development Funding Institutions (CDFIs). His office will be compiling a list of CDFIs.

Sondra Cosgrove: This is something we talk to our legislators to advocate for some type of grant process or a waiver to deal with this issue.

Sonny Vinuya: There’s so many fees, the business license could cost $425.00 to $450.00.

Bryan Hilbert: Asked if a Vocational Rehabilitation client wanted to start a small business and needed some small administrative things taken care of, could that be paid for if that were written into their IPE.

If someone is a Social Security recipient, there is a program called, “Pass Plan”, a plan to achieve self-support in the Southeast. Those are in Atlanta, but he does not know about the West Coast.

Mechelle Merrill: Vocational Rehabilitation does help people with small businesses, but it is a very exhaustive process. It is similar to the banks, and she believes it is $2,000.00 to help a small business. If it would be a larger investment, then the business owner would have to work with a professional to complete a self-employment plan, which is a very prescriptive document which would then be reviewed by Vocational Rehabilitation’s panel.

Sondra Cosgrove: That’s useful information that Sonny could make available in his office.

Ace Patrick: Vocational Rehabilitation has a program that works with blind and vision impaired persons to set up vendor contracts.

Mechelle Merrill: The program is the Blind Enterprises of Nevada, which is part of the Randolph Shepard Act of 1923. It talks about blind entrepreneurs who come through Vocational Rehabilitation to Blind Services. The state has priority of right to vending routes at state and governmental entities. These include courthouses and legislative buildings, among others. There's very there's a limited number of opportunities because there's a limited number of State and federally run buildings that Vocational Rehabilitation has priority right with, and then the individual must go through extensive training.

Ace Patrick: It’s a very narrow population here in Nevada.

Mechelle Merrill: Although airports are public/private entities and would normally be subject to having a vendor do business in the airport, the airports do not want to give up that prime retail space. It would become a very complicated and expensive legal fight and the State isn't always equipped to have those fights.

Ace Patrick: If a person wanted to open a shop in the Meadowood Mall for instance, could they combine the services of both the Lt. Governor’s Office for Small Business Advocacy for services and Vocational Rehabilitation for funding?

Mechelle Merrill: She has never helped someone open a shop in the mall, however she thinks that it would be possible to work with both entities. She cannot speak to the finances because each case is unique.

Sonny Vinuya: That’s a connection that we need to make, but yes, that individual could work with both entities

Sondra Cosgrove: It’s a steep climb to figure out all the programs, offices, and money resources.

Sonny Vinuya: That kind of what he is envisioning for his office, it is very frustrating for a small business owner to navigate through the government regulations.

Raquel O’Neill: Appreciates the information that Sonny is providing, and wonders if there are accessible materials for people wanting to start their own business. She offered assistance from Blind Connect to make sure materials are accessible.

Sonny Vinuya: This is being built from scratch, and he is finding more answers for anyone with a print disability or special software.

Lea Case: Is there a website?

Sonny Vinuya: Not yet they are working on what might be a link under the Lieutenant Governor’s website or they may have their own website. They are hiring a marketing company for assistance.

Lea Case: Her husband has been trying to start his own small business. Sonny encouraged her to have her husband reach out to Sonny’s office. She works with the Children’s Advocacy Alliance; they are interested in getting a childcare business started. There are not many in the state and the Children’s Advocacy Alliance would like to assist people to start a micro, neighborhood childcare center in their homes. She asked Sonny if his office could help with that.

Sonny Vinuya: Yes, he would like to help and invited her to connect with him about that.

Mechelle Merrill: The Governor has been very concerned about the lack of childcare providers in the state. DETR is working to help unemployed and create opportunities as childcare providers.

Sonny Vinuya: The Governor did promise $600,000,000 in grants that some could funnel in some businesses for childcare.

Sondra Cosgrove: This group invited Sonny to this meeting to ask questions and it turned out that the group will be a resource for him.

Sonny Vinuya: He is pleased to have more contacts and resources.

Sondra Cosgrove: Will work with Dawn and Ace to come up with further questions. She would also like to create a document that outlines what different entities and people do and how they are resources.

Sonny Vinuya: That would be great, and he would like to come to meetings, he will be added to the email list.

Dawn Lyons: We are also a data resource and are connected to the Disability community. If Sonny has surveys that he would like the input of the Disability community, the SILC can help distribute them.

Sondra Cosgrove: This is a productive group that often includes legislators and DETR representatives. The SILC also has a separate Legislative subcommittee that can assist with legislative issues as well.

Dawn Lyons: Asked Sonny if he would like to be added to the email list.

Sonny Vinuya: Replied that he did and added his address to the chat.

1. Member Announcements and Upcoming Events

Dr. Sondra Cosgrove, Subcommittee Chair

Bryan Hilbert: Sent out information for a Nielsen scholarship for UNLV for individuals who have experienced spinal cord injuries (SCI). This scholarship can be used for any level of education. They will have this scholarship each year for the next three years.

Ace Patrick: Thanked Sonny Vinuya for coming to the meeting and for the information he brought. She also thanked Sondra Cosgrove for having this meeting. She announced that the SILC Transition Workgroup would be meeting on March 10th at 2:00 pm. She invited the participants of this meeting to join the Transition Workgroup meeting. The SILC website has all the upcoming meetings on the “Meetings” tab of the website.

1. Approve Next Meeting Agenda Items and Meeting Dates **(For Possible Action)**

Dr. Sondra Cosgrove, Subcommittee Chair

Sondra Cosgrove: Sonny is interested in working with this group and she is interested in the Governor’s Office think about adding a grant process so that people can possibly, get a waiver for a six-month business license to be able to start their small business and generate a small amount of funds, before having to pay for a regular business license.

Mechelle Merrill: She has noticed that often, assistive technology or the belief in barrier, is a barrier to small businesses getting off the ground. She knows that Vocational Rehabilitation does have assistive technology to help people but not everyone ends up working with Vocational Rehabilitation. She wonders, if someone’s business plan is not approved by Vocational Rehabilitation, what other assistive technology is out there to assist new business owners. There is no line-item budget in any state budget for any agency to have funds to provide technology to an individual.

Sondra Cosgrove: She works in higher education, and they have the same issue. They are expected to meet all Federal requirements for ADA and yet there is no funding for assistive technology.

Bryan Hilbert: Agrees with both, his office does a lot with assistive technology and accommodation. His staff get good service in this area. In other areas, he sees a lack of clear and apparent funding and it can affect the hiring process of someone who needs assistive technology. Perhaps the legislative subcommittee could put something together mirroring the Federal government's, centralized agency model that anchors the opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Things like assistive technology costs could be built into the State central funds. There could be training about this when entities are budget building. There is an untapped resource of job candidates with disabilities due to this issue.

Sondra Cosgrove: She is going to start asking the businesses that she works with, if they have fund accommodation technology for their workers, if not she may want to take her business elsewhere.

Dawn Lyons: This is a huge issue that can be collaborated on. The AT Council’s next meeting is coming up and she will talk to John Rosenlund about adding an agenda item regarding this issue.

Sondra Cosgrove: She would like the next Integrated Workforce Development Subcommittee meeting to focus on idea generating for issues to bring up to legislators and other committees.

Cindi Swanson: This is more of a global conversation. There is a program that started in Cincinnati at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital back in 1996, called the Project Search. She sent a link to Dawn and Sondra and would like them to forward it to the group. Project Search started at a hospital and is now international, it claims a 100% success rate with employment. As this group moves along, looking at different kinds of opportunities, to employ the basis of Project Search to go into areas of large employment, such as hospitals. Nevada has a huge employment population with casinos that would be a perfect target.

Mechelle Merrill: Nevada is a project search state and do Project Search in hospitals. They avoid the casino environments because they are often putting youth through the program, and they don’t want the youth to be in a casino environment. They have focused more on hospital environments because medical is so needed.

Ace Patrick: She sent an email to Job Corps to possibly work with them since their population is predominantly youth with disabilities that are going into employment training. She also wonders what it would take for a young person to become involved in the legislature to enact change and how can the SILC support that.

Dawn Lyons: There is a Youth legislative committee under the state legislature and information can be found on the legislative website. The Youth Action Council has new members, and she encourages them to be involved and get some experience with what they are working on, how they are doing business and perhaps providing public comment.

Sondra Cosgrove: She suggested the second week of April for the next subcommittee meeting. She can write up a summary of this meeting to present at the next full SILC meeting.

Dawn Lyons: The SILC meeting is scheduled for the third week in April.

Sondra Cosgrove: Sonny will be easy to work with for future meetings.

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Sondra Cosgrove: Thanked Sonny Vinuya for coming to the meeting and looks forward to working with him and his office.

1. Adjournment

Dr. Sondra Cosgrove, Subcommittee Chair

Meeting adjourned at 9:54 AM.

**NOTE:** We are pleased to make reasonable accommodations for members of the public who have disabilities and wish to attend the meeting. If special arrangements for the meeting are necessary, please notify Wendy Thornley at (775) 687-0551 as soon as possible and at least five days in advance of the meeting. If you wish, you may email her at [wthornley@adsd.nv.gov](mailto:wthornley@adsd.nv.gov) According to NRS 241.020, supporting materials for this meeting is available at: 3416 Goni Road, #D-132, Carson City, NV 89706 or by contacting Wendy Thornley at (775) 687-0551 or by email at [wthornley@adsd.nv.gov](mailto:wthornley@adsd.nv.gov).

***Agenda Posted at the Following Locations:***

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