

# Draft Minutes

Name of Organization: Nevada Statewide Independent Living Council (NV SILC)

 Legislative Subcommittee

Date and Time of Meeting: Thursday, February 24, 2022

 2:00 p.m.

This meeting will be held via video-conference only:

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1. Welcome, Roll Call and Introductions

Renee Portnell, Subcommittee Chair

Members Present: Ace Patrick, Dawn Lyons, Dora Martinez, Jack Mayes, Kate Osti, Lisa Bonie, Renee Portnell, Sondra Cosgrove

Guests: Tracy Brown May, Cindi Swanson, Steven Cohen, DeeDee Foremaster

Staff: Dawn Lyons and 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.)

Ace Patrick: Glad this subcommittee is meeting again and thanked Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May for attending.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from 6/23/2021 **(For Possible Action).**

Renee Portnell, Subcommittee Chair

 Jack Mayes motioned to approve the 6/23/21 Draft minutes. Ace Patrick seconded. The motion carried.

1. Discussion and Make Recommendations Regarding Integrated Employment Education and Advocacy **(For Possible Action).**

Renee Portnell, Subcommittee Chair

Sondra Cosgrove: She has been in contact with the Lieutenant Governor’s office and has received an email stating that Sunny Vinuya, who oversees implementing AB184, will be coming to the next Integrated Workforce Development subcommittee meeting. He is happy to interact and figure out how the new Office of Small Business advocacy can help this group.

Dawn Lyons: Thanked Assemblywoman, Tracy Brown-May, and Dr. Cosgrove for taking the time to be at the Integrated Workforce Development subcommittee meeting the prior week, and this current meeting. Dr. Cosgrove attended the AB450 Community College Workforce Training and Programs meeting and sent Dawn the agenda for the next meeting, which is Monday, the 28th at 3 PM. Dawn forwarded that information to everyone in this group. She can send it out to anyone who does not have it.

Dr. Cosgrove encouraged people to provide public comment at the next AB40 Community College Workforce Training and Programs meeting.

It's important to make sure that everyone knows that this is “Nothing about us without us”, and this doesn't work, unless the disability community’s voice is heard as well.

Sondra Cosgrove: She will be at that Community College Workforce Training and Programs meeting and providing public comment in person.

They are taking public comment through email as well. She reminded people to identify themselves as constituents at the beginning of their public comments.

Renee Portnell: She will try to attend the meeting as well.

1. Update and Discussion Regarding Proposed BDRs by Assemblywomen Brown-May and Cohen.

Tracy Brown-May, Assemblywoman, District 42

Tracy Brown-May: Agreed with Sondra Cosgrove, that “Constituent” is an important word in Nevada. It’s important for all the people living in districts to engage to have a truly representative democracy. She has been appointed to represent the people in Assembly District 42. She has spent 20 years advocating for members of the disability community, and is honored to be part of these meetings,

She has submitted two Bill Draft Requests (BDRs). Each Nevada legislator in the Assembly receives 10 BDRs for each legislative session and there is a timeframe for which each BDR must be submitted. They are due by August for each member of the Nevada Assembly.

Her first BDR affects people with disabilities.

That's the introductory language, and all of this will become public knowledge as soon as the Legislative Council Bureau (LCB), posts the BDR listing through the legislative website.

Her first BDR will propose a transition of the current jobs and day training provider network away from the use of sub minimum wage certificates.

It helps provider network transition away from the current model that engages people with developmental disabilities and productive work where they're compensated at less than minimum wage.

There are a few provisions that are currently being written into the draft language.

She has floated a couple of past possible structural paragraphs to the provider network so that they can weigh in on things such as, “How do we transition and when?

The goal is to ensure that people with disabilities are engaged in productive activities at a rate that is minimum wage or higher.

That's not necessarily employment, however, as many day provider organizations are not really employing people with disabilities but instead are focused on vocational training, more pre-vocational training to help someone become work ready.

It is important to identify a difference between employment and the Day Activity Program where a person is learning vocational skill development.

This first BDR will help the provider network evolve away from special minimum wages in a proposed number of years.

She has spoken with Jack Mayes in the past week, creating language for the BDR. As this BDR gets ready to roll out, she will share it with this group for feedback on the language. The goal is to get all stakeholders involved in the crafting of this BDR before the legislative session begins.

Then everyone can champion the forward progress within Nevada.

Her second BDR is specific to youth with mental health issues who oftentimes, have a dual diagnosis.

There are kids transitioning with the dual diagnosis of intellectual disability and mental health. Currently, there isn’t good care for them.

Recently, she had the opportunity to work with some people within the administration to identify where there are barriers for support. They would like to begin building additional supports to address the needs of dual diagnosed youth in the foster care system.

This second BDR is really about a diagnosing a mental health condition and that diagnosis travels with a youth through the system.

Her third BDR may not need legislation but pertains to identifying that the white cane for people who are blind or have low vision, being recognized as durable medical equipment, it's not currently covered by Nevada Medicaid.

The administration feels confident they can build it into their budget and recommending to Medicaid, that the white cane be recognized as durable medical equipment.

Federal Medicaid might not necessarily feel like it is.

They have the support of the state division right now, and they are going to continue to move that forward

She also met with Blind Connect and discussed some need for Independent Living Center funding and so Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May has the division checking some of those budget areas where they can request specific grants. She invited the group to reach out to her about issues they would like to champion and work with her on. March is recognized as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

The Governor's Council on People with Developmental Disabilities is partnering with her to host a coffee break in March.

They will talk about the issues that are important to members of the disability community, and then they will kick off that month to celebrate ability.

Renee Portnell: Will follow the legislative bills that come in and share information.

Dawn Lyons: Thanked Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May for her update. She was grateful that the Assemblywoman was including the disability community for input.

Sondra Cosgrove: The Interim Finance Committee has a specific subcommittee this time to track how all the Federal dollars are being spent that have been coming in for the Rescue Money Cares Act dollars, and she has been watching those meetings. There is a lot being funded with those dollars. She put the link to that committee's page in the chat: <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/InterimCommittee/REL/Interim2021/Committee/1907/Meetings> the website has a recording and the various PowerPoints from presentations.

Dawn Lyons: At the SILC meeting in January, there was a public comment from a gentleman who's employed with Nevada Center for Excellence and Disabilities, whose wheelchair was broken, and he was having trouble getting it replaced and covered by Medicare. He wanted the SILC to bring this up as a potential legislative item. It sounded like it would be covered, and she asked Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May if this is part of what she is talking about.

Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May: She has been inquiring as to whether wheelchairs are recognized as durable medical equipment. They are covered under Medicaid. She has been working to make sure people have access to good wheelchairs. She asked Jack Mayes for his input.

Jack Mayes: He needs more details about the situation. NDALC has seen some difficulties in getting some equipment covered.

Dawn Lyons: Will give the gentleman with the wheelchair issue, the contact information for Jack Mayes and Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May to give them more information regarding his wheelchair situation.

Ace Patrick: The SILC agenda in April, will have this gentleman as a speaker. She has a friend who uses a wheelchair, and the repairs are very expensive.

Dawn Lyons: Is hoping that with the combination of different programs like the IL program, this issue can be resolved. One of the biggest issues is that there may be services out there, but it's hard to figure out who provides those services, where to find that information, and how to get in touch with those entities. She thinks the Centers for Independent Living would be a good place to start because they have those resources.

Dora Martinez: She knows that there is a federal law regarding accessible websites. It has been difficult, particularly during the Pandemic, to be on websites that are not accessible. People who are looking for jobs could benefit from accessible websites. She wonders if it would be possible to draft laws for Nevada that are similar to Utah and California.

Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May: Rather than a BDR she wonders if it can be addressed more quickly regarding some of the Federal dollars that are coming into the State.

To help people engage in workforce development employment independence integration, maybe they can champion the use of some of the state’s Federal dollars to upgrade the state's website. She has spoken to the Diversity Equality Inclusive Office. She recognized Dora Martinez’s efforts to be involved in with legislators during the last legislative session.

Dora Martinez: She will follow up with Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May about the bill language, after the meeting.

Dawn Lyons: She sent out a link to a YouTube live presentation the morning of this meeting. It was an international presentation on some great software that is being used to involve the disability community virtually, in many issues. This would enable them to have more of an opportunity to be heard. This is one direction that the SILC Legislative Subcommittee could support. Nevada is behind, and this could further things along.

She asked Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May if when the Assemblywoman was talking with Raquel O’Neill from Blind Connect, about funding Centers for Independent Living more in the state, if she was talking about Part B centers and what structure was she looking at? Dawn knows there are two Part C centers in the state. One is for Clark County, and the other is for the rest of the state. There is another center doing a lot of great work in the rural areas and the SILC is trying to support that center. She asked if Blind Connect was looking into becoming a Center for Independent Living, and what are the parameters that the Assemblywoman and Raquel O’Neill talking about?

Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May: No, they are not trying to become a Center for Independent Living, they are providing training for people to be able to live independently. Some of the training is written in the Nevada Revised Statute and should be funded. The state is currently providing funding support services. They are looking to expand the training available for people to be able to live independently as a support under existing legislation.

Dawn Lyons: There is funding available in the State budget that has not been tapped yet. She is looking into it. She asked the Assemblywoman to keep her updated on information about the IL network.

Jack Mayes: He worked at the Center for Independent Living. Blind Connect does not qualify as a Center for Independent Living because the CIO must be cross-disability.

Kate Osti: Raquel may have been inquiring about the funding for Blind Connect’s life skills training classes through Angela’s House, for the individuals with visual impairments.

Dora Martinez: She believes that Blind Connect gets Federal money. She feels that the people who are providing the services, should be certified. A mobility instructor must be certified. She is concerned that non-profits that receive the federal funding, may not be providing the level of training that the Colorado School for the Blind, which is run by the National Federation of the Blind, provides. Graduates of that school are completely self-sufficient.

Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May: Blind Connect currently only receives philanthropic funding, but she will follow up with that.

1. Discussion and Make Possible Recommendations Regarding Starting a “Nothing About Us Without Us” Initiative **(For Possible Action).**

Renee Portnell, Subcommittee Chair

Dawn Lyons; She feels that a formal initiative needs to be launched due to a large, disregarding of the “Nothing About Us Without Us” message. Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May does get it, but the other legislators need to understand it. She would like the SILC Legislative Subcommittee to create a presentation to present to as many interim committees as possible. The disability community accounts for 30% of the population of constituents and their voice is important. Even if it is difficult to articulate, it is important for them to be heard.

She would like to see that initiative formalized and get the message into the Nevada Legislature.

Renee Portnell: Agrees with Dawn. It would be helpful to be face to face with legislators and that children with disabilities take part.

Dora Martinez: An Assembly person told her that the legislators are interested in hearing from the Disability Community and encouraged people to testify and submit public comment. Dora, and many members of the Disability Community are not always comfortable with public speaking, but they need to step up and do it.

Sondra Cosgrove: The DD Council is working on the “Nothing About Us Without Us” issue. She suggested people talk to legislators and governing officials when they are running for office at meet and greet gatherings both in-person and virtual, as a member of the community. Getting to know them makes it easier to give public comment at a legislative committee meeting.

Renee Portnell: She learned from different Councils, that it is best to reach out to legislators when they are not in Washington. Their interns also will not have time to talk when they are in Washington.

Ace Patrick: Agreed with Renee.

Dawn Lyons: The DD Council is doing great work and the SILC will be partnering with them at the Self-Advocacy Conference. It is important for the SILC to learn how to be good self-advocates. An example of this would be if a city is building a new stadium or something new at the airport. The Disability Community is never involved in the planning process and needs to be in those planning conversations to start talking about transportation and employment. Without the voice of the Disability Community, these things will not be designed to empower or accommodate them. They need to be proactive right down to the city or municipality level to be included. A presentation needs to be created that is meaningful and impactful, to be presented to legislators, the Chamber of Commerce, and any planning authorities in those planning committees.

Ace Patrick: Agreed with Dawn and added that accessible housing needs to be part of the discussions. Current construction does not include much accessible housing. Affordability is another issue, there are apartments that are more expensive than others because they are on the ground floor.

Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May: For Disability Awareness Month, it would be helpful to have a table at various conferences to do outreach and promote the “Nothing About us, Without us,” discussion.

Dawn Lyons: The SILC had a table at Pumpkin Palooza, Disability Awareness Day, and will have a table at the Self-Advocacy Conference.

Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May: An idea for starting this campaign, along with a campaign, introduce a call to action. Becoming a familiar voice or face to the legislators is very helpful to move an idea forward through the process. Serving on boards and commissions outside of the Disability Community is important, the Governor’s website has a listing of Councils and Commissions with vacancies.

Dora Martinez: Obtainable, accessible, and affordable housing is incredibly hard to find. She wondered if this subcommittee could do some research around this and if it was possible to help create a law about requiring potential residents to have earnings that are two and three times higher than the rent. Virginia and N. Carolina have good housing models and has heard other states like North Carolina and Virginia have passed legislation to fix this problem.

Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May: Would like to work with Dora on this issue.

Dawn Lyons: She would like to be part of the discussions with Dora and Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May. She will organize a meeting outside of this subcommittee meeting to work on that.

Dora Martinez: The Reno Council had a meeting the day before and they have their ARPA money. They do what they can, with those funds.

Dawn Lyons: The SILC needs to be at that table to make their voice heard.

The Transition Workgroup is tentatively scheduled to meet March 10th. At the last SILC meeting, the SILC talked about beginning the discussion about housing issues because the Disability Community is being affected in a hard way. People who are institutionalized, cannot find housing to get out of the institutions. With no affordable, accessible housing, the Disability Community cannot get their needs met and be independent and live independently.

She suggested that a small workgroup of possibly three people, could be formed to focus on these issues. Information gathered, could be discussed in the next Transition Workgroup meeting.

Ace Patrick: Agreed with Dawn about putting together a “Nothing About Us Without Us” presentation to present to contractors and builders of new projects.

Dawn Lyons: Do they want a general presentation or targeted presentations using a template? She can start a draft and send it out to this group for feedback and present at the next subcommittee meeting. She suggested that members with a visible disability presenting would be appropriate.

Dora Martinez: Would like to help with the presentations.

Renee Portnell: Would also like to help with the presentations.

Ace Patrick: A template would be a good thing.

Dawn Lyons: Will create a generic template and asked the members to create a presentation on different subjects.

Renee Portnell: Asked what type of templates are being discussed.

Dawn Lyons: There are many types of templates, she is thinking of a PowerPoint with accessible imaging. The main message would be that the Disability Community does not want planning done without them and then explain why. These would be short, “elevator speech” type presentations. It would be more impactful to do these presentations in person, even if it is through Zoom. A training for presenting this presentation could be developed.

They are currently working with Temma Hammond and her company, Golden Network TV, who is creating a short documentary about the SILC as well as short training videos for the SILC. Dawn is currently creating a list of possible training videos.

Dawn Lyons: She can create the generic template and people could volunteer to work on specific topics.

A list of things that the members are interested in for presentations and for legislation, was started. During the last legislative session, requests to present were due before May for the Interim committees.

Dora Martinez: Will do transportation and accessible websites.

Ace Patrick: Will do affordable and accessible housing. Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May will be putting forth a BDR regarding this issue.

Renee Portnell: Will do employment.

Sondra Cosgrove: In the Governor’s State of the State address, he stated that there will be funding for affordable housing.

Dora Martinez: The affordable housing in Northern Nevada is out past the bus route of para transit.

Dawn Lyons: Suggested they get together to work on this for the next subcommittee meeting. They need to get ready to present to the full SILC in April where more of the SILC members can become involved and provide more ideas and support.

Renee Portnell: Her daughter is helping her with her other, disabled daughter due to a lack of PCAs.

Dawn Lyons: It is an important issue in the community. Not everyone has family that can help them. She invited the members to email her with any new ideas for presentations.

Sondra Cosgrove: The Governor announced in his State of the State, that he is planning to spend some of that money during the interim period. He will probably go in front of the Interim Finance Committee or another subcommittee. She will watch the agenda and will send relevant information to Dawn.

Ace Patrick will work with Dora on a presentation.

Dawn Lyons: Will create the general, “Nothing about us without us” template and send to the group. They will start with presenting to the legislative interim committees.

1. NV SILC, State Agency and Community Guest and Other Council/Commission Reports and Make Possible Recommendations **(For Possible Action).**
2. NV SILC’s Transition Workgroup Overview – Ace Patrick, Chair, NV SILC

Ace Patrick: Most of this was covered at the Transition subcommittee. A discussion about PCAs was also about housing and transitioning from care facilities to home. PCAs were given a $500 bonus, either individually or through their employers. They will be discussing what is meant by home and community-based services. Legislators also need information and direction in this area.

Dawn Lyons: SILCSpeak is coming up. She wonders if ILRU, who is the SILC’s technical assistance organization, could work with ACL to find that answer about the two services. Not everyone attends every meeting. If she gets a response from ILRU regarding the definition of home and community-based services, she will send that out.

1. Vote Nevada (Vote NV) Community College Workforce and Training Programs Committee Overview - Dr. Sondra Cosgrove, President, Vote NV

Renee Portnell, Subcommittee Chair

Sondra Cosgrove: Several parents are complaining that their students are not receiving legal services. They are working to get an ombudsman office opened through the Board of Education to establish a central place for parents to go for information or to file complaints.

Dawn Lyons: Thought there was an ombudsman.

Sondra Cosgrove: They also thought there was. Currently, the parents need to go through the principal of the school and some schools are better at this process than others.

Dawn Lyons: Appreciates hearing about that and asked if the SILC could offer assistance in getting the ombudsman office going.

Sondra Cosgrove: She will let Dawn know.

Dawn Lyons: She will share this information with the SILC, it could include the SILC writing a letter or contacting the Governor’s office.

Sondra Cosgrove: They want it to be at the state level.

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

Renee Portnell, Subcommittee Chair

The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 7, 2022, at 2:00pm.

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.)

Renee Portnell: Was wanting to know the information that Sondra Cosgrove gave earlier in the chat. She was also curious about two of the upcoming conferences

Dawn will put all the information into an email for everyone.

1. Adjournment

 Renee Portnell, Subcommittee Chair

Meeting adjourned at: 3:48pm

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

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