# MISILC

20240112-1200 Meeting

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 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Okay we will be getting started just shortly. Just waiting for everyone to get situated. And I'll give it about a minute or so. My name is Jamia Davis. And I'll be facilitating today's business meeting.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Tracy, do you want to share the agenda?

 >> TRACY BROWN: Sure.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: All right well I guess if everyone is situated, I would like to call the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m. Are there any ‑‑ well first let me welcome everyone to today's business meeting for SILC. And it's a pleasure to have you all here. Just giving up your time to come together. Recording in progress. In regard to our Independent Living philosophy. With that being said, are there any accommodation requests that anyone would like to be made at this time? Okay, hearing none, Tracy, may we have a roll call, please.

 >> TRACY BROWN: Sure.

 >> AARON ANDRES: Present.

 >> FRANK ANIMIKWAM: I don't believe he has joined us yet.

 >> GLEN ASHLOCK: Present. All.

 >> ALLEN BEAUCHAMP: Here.

 >> ERICA COULSTON: Here.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Present.

 >> STEPHANIE DEIBLE: Present.

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: Who I don't believe has joined us yet.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Present.

 >> JAN LAMPMAN: Here.

 >> THERESA METZMAKER: Here

 >> TRACY BROWN: You have a quorum.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, everyone. And thank you, Tracy. Next, we will be putting a motion on the floor for our consent agenda. We will have the approval of the January 12th business meeting as proposed today. Which is in front of you. The approval of the September 8th, '2023 draft business meeting minutes as well as the executive committee minutes. The financial reports. And the executive director report which you should have already received in your e‑mail. And so, with the consent agenda as presented, may I have a motion on the floor to approve?

 >> JAN LAMPMAN: This is Jan Lampman. So, moved.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Jan and may have a second to approve the agenda?

 >> GLEN ASHLOCK: This is Glen Ashlock, and I would second.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you and may we have a roll call vote, Tracy?

 >> TRACY BROWN: Sure.

 >> AARON ANDRES: Yes.

 >> FRANK ANIMIKWAM: I don't believe he is here yet.

 >> GLEN ASHLOCK: Yes.

 >> ALLEN BEAUCHAMP: Yes.

 >> ERICA COULSTON: Yes.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Yes.

 >> STEPHANIE DEIBLE: Yes.

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: Who has not joined yet.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Yes.

 >> JAN LAMPMAN: Yes.

 >> THERESA METZMAKER: Yes.

 >> TRACY BROWN: Motion carried.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Tracy. Next, we will have our Council education presentation. Today it will be on the budgeting process by Ms. Paula McElwee. Thank you, Paula, for joining us today and whenever you are ready.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: On mute and get going here. There we go. So, I'm not sure what all you want to cover. So, I'm going to start with a short presentation. But I just want you to know that I'm available for questions for as long as your agenda allows. So please feel free to be aware of that. And to jump in. You can do that during the conversation. And that would be fine with me. I may or may not see your hands raised and so if somebody can bring that to my attention, if I don't respond to the raised hands, I would appreciate it. Sometimes I've got too many screens going on on my computer and I miss basics like that.

 So that would be helpful. Let me tell you a little who I am and give you a quick visual description. I am the director of technical assistance and training for the contractor with your major funder, which is ACL or administration on community living, the office of Independent Living programs. And they contract with us to provide technical assistance to both centers and to SILCs. And that technical assistance is provided in a number of different ways. Like this in person is one of them. There's also a lot of information on our website to train on a number of different topics related to Independent Living, related to Federal funding and other areas. So just know that we are available at any time.

 I am a silver haired blue eyed Scottish complected older woman in my office with a black turtleneck sweater. I love jewelry and have a necklace and earrings made of real stone. We are going to talk a little bit about budgeting. But we are also going to talk about what is allowed and not allowed and kind of how it happens. So, if it's okay if I share my screen, the host would need to make that available.

 >> TRACY BROWN: You should be a cohost.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: It says host has disabled participant screen sharing.

 >> TRACY BROWN: Okay.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: So, I must still be a participant, I think.

 >> TRACY BROWN: Let's see.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: I don't need this presentation. I was just going to give you something to look at other than my face so if it doesn't pop up easily, we can just go ahead.

 >> TRACY BROWN: You should be okay now.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: Let me try one more time. There it is. If I can find it in all these open windows. There it is. All right, so there is our actual screen. So that's the name of our organization if you ever need to see that particular, there is another logo you might sometimes see too that says IL net and the IL net is a partnership across all of the Independent Living associations, and so forth.

 So, I'm going to talk first about allowable costs. And the reason I'm going to talk about allowable costs is because your budget cannot include unallowable spending. So, this is kind of your foundation. It comes out of the Federal regulations. But a cost is allowed to be charged to your federal grant if it fits this definition of being an allowable cost. The Federal grant is the Part B money that gets passed through the SILC based on the SPIL. And you do a budget related to that. Or a resource plan related to that. All of those costs must be allowed. You can't put a cost into that budget and think, well, we approve the budget therefore it's an allowed cost. No, it still has to fit the Federal regulations. That is also true with INE money that might be used by the SILC. That's also Federal money that needs to meet these Federal requirements.

 And for the cost to be allowed it has to be reasonable. That's the first language you'll find in the regulations. And so, if there is an argument that you make or that someone makes that hey wait minute that's not reasonable, that's outside of the realm of what is reasonable, you would have to make a case for reasonableness. So, you would have to say this is reasonable. Now it's interesting, typically cost is part of what you use to determine if something is reasonable, right? Is it a reasonable cost? And sometimes you cost compare, or you do other things to show that the cost is reasonable. But like during COVID when there were shortages on masks and the centers had all the cares act money they were able to show that it was necessary, which is the next bullet point, to pay the price they had to pay because of the shortage. So, reasonableness is not rigid. You see what I mean? It's flexible. It has the potential to be flexible. And you have to pair it with is it necessary to accomplish the purpose of the grant which in the case of the SILC is defined in your state plan. So, the purposes of how the money is going to be spent are determined in the plan itself. In the state plan itself. They are not determined by any external entity or factor.

 The plan is approved, of course, by the centers, 51% of them have to agree to it. And by SILC itself.

But the necessary to accomplish the purpose of the grant means necessary to accomplish the goals in the SPIL.

If the costs are used to do more than one thing and you have more than one funding source, you have to share it appropriately. That is called allocation. You don't probably have a lot of allocation at the SILC level but that's one of the other requirements for a cost to be allowable is that it's properly allocated.

 And it can't be disallowed by Federal regulation. I'm going to mention a couple of those that might apply there. Now, the important thing to notice here though is that many of these items that we look at are conditional. Reasonableness like I said, flexible, it's not rigid. Necessary is flexible, not rigid. You have to just think about it and make a case. You don't have somebody else telling you this is the definition of whether or not this item is reasonable. You discern that and you make the case that it's a reasonable and necessary expense. And that it fits within the SPIL.

 Now, we are looking at the regulations we look at typically are 45CFR75. That's the code of Federal regulations. And HHS says that applies to all your Part B funds, part C funds too for what it's worth. But not uniform guidance. And this is a big distinction that was recently revealed to me. And it took me by surprise. Because I thought, well, it's kind of the same. Well, it isn't the same because uniform guidance sets the structure. But then HHS comes in and it sets additional structure or maybe doesn't keep up with uniform guidance as it changes. And so, an example of that is that in uniform guidance if you have an indirect cost rate, which often you don't at SILC level but if you are a CIL, you understand what I'm talking about. If you have an indirect cost rate and you choose the de minimis in uniform guidance you can change your mind and go back to the assigned rate. But in HHS' requirements you can't go back. So, once you have that de minimis you can't go back and do vice versa. If you have chosen an indirect cost rate and you have an approved indirect cost rate, under HHS you cannot go back to the 10% de minimis. That is an example of how the regulations are not the same. So, you still need to look at the right regulations as you are looking at this. And I find that this is often something that the DSE is not aware of and does not do. Because they have a lot of other grants, they tend to fall back on 2CFR200. And it may not be identical. And you really need to be referencing 45CFR75. There aren't a lot of differences. But sometimes there are and when there are they might be important.

 So, what makes a cost reasonable is described a little bit. As ordinary and necessary for the proper and efficient operation of your grants. So ordinary and necessary, you follow the acquisition requirements. We are going to talk about that in just a second. And you acted reasonably under the circumstances. So, people wouldn't say, oh, what's going on there? But they would say instead oh, that makes sense. And that's what you strive for when you look at whether or not a cost is reasonable.

 You might need prior written approval to spend the money if it has to do with equipment. And it's 5,000 or more. You have to have prior approval from ACL to spend that money.

Not from the DSE. Not from SILC. From ACL. The president asks it to be doubled and it may trickle down in the future but right now it's $5,000 or more. Fines and penalties and damages and other settlements you would have to have approval to apply funds to those things. Typically, that won't be approved. But you have to at least ask for it. And you're not allowed to spend the money on that unless you have prior approval.

 Any goods or services for personal use. Any participant support costs must have prior approval. Now sometimes that prior approval is in your SPIL. You could choose in your SPIL to have some costs of this sort. And the approval would be when they approve your SPIL. But think in terms of participant support costs like people transitioning out of nursing homes. Under the cares act we were able to pay for things like their utilities and their deposits and even their first and last month's rent and stock the pantry and all of that but that's not allowed under title 7. Some centers kind of got tripped up on that oh, good now we can do these things that are personal participant support costs, yeah, it was short term, and the money is gone, and we are back to the old rules again. And we can't without prior approval.

 Now, if you make a case that there's a reason why you would sometimes pay those costs, the example that I can think of is under disaster preparedness. So, a lot of SILCs have a goal around disaster preparedness. And you certainly could include in that SPIL around disaster preparedness that you would help with some of the costs for shelter, for people who are with disabilities who are displaced and not able to use the community shelters during that, I don't know, time. You could include something like that in your SPIL. And then it would be approved, hopefully, and once it's approved then it would be allowed.

 Membership and travel and insurance are also in this list of prior approval, but those are longstanding costs. And you only have to get their approval in the beginning. So, you're kind of way down the road on that. And that's not going to require additional approval if you have a membership in the national association of, you know, in NCIL or other things, yeah, Steve?

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Hi Paula, this is Steve. For example, if SILC had a line item in there like we did in the last SPIL for youth leadership forum that the CILs were going to perform, the DSE did allow that in our last SPIL but did not want to carry that forward to continue funding a program that the SILC was not directly involved in. Other than providing financial support. What is that line there in terms of DSE being able to deny at the budget negotiation level.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: DSE cannot deny it. They do not negotiate your budget. The budget is negotiated in your SPIL with ACL, with your program officer. And once it's approved, then the DSE must pay it according to the SPIL. That's what the regulations say. So, the DSE doesn't approve your SPIL either. They don't sign to approve the SPIL; they sign to agree to pass the money through.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: We would defer back to the cost reasonableness and the slide that you just reviewed a couple slides ago in terms of it not getting outrageous in terms of what a SILC would ask for to support a program like that.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: Well, yeah. But that ‑‑ if you have a goal for youth development, and you have costs attached to that goal, then your approvals are already there in place because ACL approved your SPIL, the centers approved your SPIL, the SILC approved your SPIL. The DSE is just the mechanism by which you get the money to flow. They do not have the right to deny this.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Okay, so as a follow‑up to that, our Part B money is very, very minimal in the SILC budget. The majority of our SILC budget comes from state funds. What authority would they have then in that process over those state funds?

 >> PAULA McELWEE: Yeah, that's a little bit more complicated. And.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Yeah.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: One of the things I would suggest is that if you have INE funds that you use for those the operation of the SILC and transfer all the Part B money you can to your direct operations. See what I'm saying? So, if your office is operated using INE funds, then that puts ‑‑ maybe it is. But that would allow more of your Part B funds to be under your discretion.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Okay.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: But, yeah, if the state provides the funding and the state does have the right to tell you "Yes" or "No." So, if it's state dollars rather than Part B dollars. Now, I would think, this is just me, I don't know, it doesn't have any regulations anywhere, I would think that it would make sense to have in your agreement with the state that the spending is done according to the SPIL. In the same way that the Federal money is, that it would follow those same rules because it just makes sense. Right? How else are you going to identify your budget and get your approval? You've gotten statewide input into this plan. You've got all of the centers or more than half of them agreeing to the plan. You've got a state Council that oversees the money that is agreed to the plan. So, it just makes sense that your contract would have language around it being spent according to the SPIL. And I think that that's advantageous to all the parties at the end of the day, right? But advocating to get that in place might take, you know, some time. I just think it makes good sense for you to maybe start in that direction. Because does it seem like that might make sense?

 >> STEVE LOCKE: It does. That does. Knowing that distinctly we are talking about discretion over Part B funds versus the larger amount of the state funds and them getting that language in there. So yes, you did answer my question very clearly. Thank you so much.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: Yeah, you're welcome. So, yeah, what I'm talking about is yes go ahead.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Hi, this is Mindy Kulasa. Can you define for us what you mean by INE funds, please?

 >> PAULA McELWEE: Sure. So INE funds are innovation and expansion funds. They are identified in title one of the rehab act. But they are also identified as one of the things they must be spent on is the SILC. So INE funds may be one of the sources the state is using for some of the other things that they're doing. But those are in many states used to operate the SILC in its entirety, it all comes from INE then all the Part B money can go back into the implementation of the state plan.

 >> MINDY KULASA: And what was the E again?

 >> PAULA McELWEE: Expansion.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Thank you.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: Innovation and expansion.

It's also used to fund the state rehab Council. And then it's used to fund the SILC. Or it's supposed to be based on the regulation.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Yeah, all these acronyms get a little confusing.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: Sorry about that. I forget I snuck another one in there. Sorry.

 >> MINDY KULASA: That's quite all right. We understand.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: Yeah so, the distinction when your state dollars and your federal pass-through money certainly is something your budget will need to look at. And back up here where I talked about allocation, you need to know which funding source pays for what. That's a requirement in the Federal regulations. And then you share those costs, you share anything that you're doing, you share it in a fair‑way. So, all your, you know, your costs need to be looked at. And you need to ask, okay, is this Part B or is this state? And you need to be able to distinguish it. Unless the state agrees that it's a single ‑‑ if they call it a single cost objective in the regulation but what that means is they let you make it into a pool, and it's all used according to the SPIL. Which was what I was mentioning a minute ago.

 If you're purchasing anything there are rules around that. They are very generous. So, oops I went too far. So, a micro purchase is $10,000 or less. For example. And they say you don't even have to check costs, although I still suggest that you do because you want to prove that it's reasonable. So, I would still at least check the cost. Maybe print off the page off the Internet where you Googled it and found out these were two of the costs or something. You're not required to do that.

In fact, it says in the language that you can distribute it between equally or equitably qualified suppliers without competitive quotes. Isn't that interesting? Now all these years we thought we had to have bids for everything under $500 and it's not the case. So, there it is.

Small purchases do require rate quotes. That's up to $150,000. And then above that you need sealed bids. I just find this interesting. I throw it out there because you still have to follow your own policies so if you have policies this are more restrictive than this you have to follow them, but you can change the policies to be in line with this if you choose to do that.

 Selected items of cost I'm going to talk about. There are some things that are allowed and not allowed. And one of the first things I say to people is watch your language. And I'll use allowable terms and not allowable terms as we go through for you to look at. Audit services, if you spent more than $750 which the SILC did not in Federal dollars, you're required to have a certain kind of audit. But you're not allowed to spend money on that audit if you don't meet that requirement. So, we recommend you use the term financial statement audit. So that you're clearly distinguishing between this kind of audit, which may not be allowed if you didn't spend $750,000 in Federal money. And an audit is allowed. So that's the language that you would watch for as financial statement audit is allowed and a single audit is not allowed in some circumstances.

 Contributions and donations. You can't donate to another nonprofit, for example. That's not allowed.

 Making a donation now you can of course do what your SPIL requires related to passing money through to other entities. You're not allowed to pay for defense or prosecution of criminal and civil proceedings, claims, appeals or patent infringements. You can't entertain people. So, you can't have big galas for fundraising or any other purpose. Typically, that's not allowed. It's typically not allowed to have meals paid for unless you can show that it's reasonable, necessary and has a program purpose.

 So, you'll see that is often not allowed. Fines, penalties, damages, settlements not allowed. So, when you do your budgeting, you have to look at what these kinds of costs are. There are certain kinds of insurance that you can't provide. For example, you can't provide life insurance for your SILC members. As an example. So, there are certain kinds of insurance that you need to look at. And it's described there. Lobbying is not allowed but advocacy is if it's in your SPIL. So don't use the term lobbying unless you mean it. If you are asking people to vote in a certain way, it's lobbying. But you can educate legislators about the impact of things. And that would be advocacy and would be allowed.

 If you lose money on a project, you can't make it up from a different award. You can't pay for organization costs like incorporating and other kinds of things that are related to the establishment of a reorganization of your organization unless you have prior approval.

 So, recruiting costs, if you are recruiting staff look at the whole section. It's pretty complex. But there are things you can and can't do. Alcohol is never allowed. For what it's worth. But you get the idea. There's a long section of things that are allowed and not allowed and I have got to tell you I look at it all the time. Because people will say well can I do this with Federal dollars. And the answer is it depends. The answer is always it depends. Unless it's alcohol. But I have to go back and read the details. Because there's a lot of information there. And you look at this when this recruiting cost it's so interesting it's okay for you to pay for some of their costs for relocation if you hire a new employee and Steve, you know, has to relocate, or whatever. You can pay for some of that. But if they leave for reasons within the employee's control within 12 months, you're required to refund the Federal share of those costs. Well, who would have thunk it, right? I would never have thought of that unless I went back and reread the section. So don't hesitate to go back. This is found in 45CFR75.420. And then it goes from there. You notice this recruiting is 463. That means there were that many items in between the beginning and when I got to recruiting. It's alphabetical. So, we're not quite to the end but almost. So, you get the sense of it. So, when you're budgeting you want to make sure your costs are allowed. And this is where you go to find that out.

 With Federal dollars. Now, how much of what your state is passing through to you is also Federal? And whether the state also agrees with these is something that I'm not really aware of. So just for what it's worth.

 And there's my information and it's wrong. Where did I get that one? It's Gmail.com, not hotmail.com. I pulled up an old slide someplace along the line. Sorry.

 All right so what can I answer for you that I didn't answer?

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Is this presentation available to be sent out to everyone? Or is this on the ILRU website.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: I will send it to you.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you so much for the presentation and educating us today.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: Was that what you wanted to know? Or did you want to know something else? Or more?

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Any questions anyone or comments? All right, well thank you so much, Ms. McElwee. We truly appreciate your time today. If no one.

 >> PAULA McELWEE: Reach out at any time if more comes up. I'm sorry I did not mean to interrupt Jamia.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: No problem if there are no questions or comments, we will go to the next agenda item which is the SILC audit and that will be presented by Ms. Carri Bevard.

 [ Technical difficulties from the Zoom meeting‑please stand by]

 >> STEVE: Apologies, everyone, for that. I think Paula was still the host when she exited, and it ended up killing the whole meeting so looks like we are all coming back online here.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thanks, Steve, just waiting for everyone to get situated.

 >> AARON ANDRES: Make sure the recording gets turned back on as well. Recording in progress.

 >> STEVE: Thanks for that Aaron I think Tracy will hit the record button to make sure we continue recording.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Okay I think we have just about everyone back. I'm trying to see if Carri is here.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Jamia?

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Yes.

 >> MINDY KULASA: This is Mindy. Carri will not be joining us today. She is ill. So, I will be presenting the audit and the IRS form 990 filing for Council review and action.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Great, thank you so much, Mindy, for that. Mindy, whenever you are ready you can go ahead with your presentation.

 >> MINDY KULASA: No problem. Wow we have been talking about numbers for a while so far this meeting. And we're going to have to talk numbers just a little bit more. Steve or Tracy, if you would be so kind as to first pull up the audit for us to look at. And if we could pause right there, I am going to Zoom in. The good news here about our audit is that once again it is a clean audit. So, on the letter that's directed to the board of directors, under the independent auditor's report that you are looking at, the second paragraph is really the most important in this board of directors of the Michigan Statewide Independent Living Corporation. Of course, that's what we are as the SILC. So, it does say by the ALG group, our external CPA firm in the second paragraph, that, in our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly and all material respects, the financial position of Michigan Statewide Independent Living Corporation as of September 30, '2023. So that is our fiscal year end as you are aware. And so, this audit covers that timeframe from October of 2002 to September of 2023. So, I'm very happy to say that there are no findings in this audit. I think I referred to it just a bit ago as a clean audit. That's financial jargon for exactly what it sounds like. The fact that there were though findings. So that goes to kudos to management. Certainly, to Tracy and Steve. And to Brad who provides our accounting services.

So that's the great news about the audit. Once again, this year. Not that we would expect anything less. From our team here at the SILC. If you could scroll down to the next page, please. This is just required language by generally accepted auditing principles. I do want to point out that the audit is limited in scope and that it does not speak to the efficacy of our internal control structures. So, the auditors look at internal control, meaning are the duties properly segregated? Is the person who is signing the checks the same approver of the expenses? All of the internal control structure that we have within the SILC is basically electronic through three systems that I promise I won't bore you with. But we have an excellent internal control structure in place that is certainly designed to identify any fraud that could be occurring. Or any errors or omissions that could be occurring. Any questions about that board letter? That's really an important part of the audit.

Okay, let's zap through the financials. You can see what our cash position was. Our total assets, just under a hundred thousand. Our liabilities and net worth are just under a hundred thousand. Please keep scrolling. And stop me if you have any questions as we go through this.

 Our major sources of revenue, of course, are from MRS. And BSBP, Michigan Rehabilitation Services. And the Bureau of services for blind persons. That is where our grant revenue primarily comes from. Along with Federal dollars.

 So, you can see that we had like a $10 change. Over the course of the year. So, we can skip the cash flows since it's not terribly applicable to our situation.

 This next chart though I think it is important for Council members to understand. Because it does clearly layout in a very succinct diagram what our program expenses are. And what are supporting services expenses are. And in other words, supporting services are general and administrative. They would include resource development. If we had fundraising in this particular SPIL, which we do not. But are contemplating for the next three‑year SPIL. And this is a statement that potential individuals would take a look at if we do choose to authorize resource development in the next SPIL, as Paula pointed out, call it resource development. Don't call it fundraising. Well, this is why. Funders are going to take a look at, okay, total expenses of this organization were $367,708. And I am in the far lower right‑hand corner of this financial statement. The question then goes through a potential funders' mind, well, gee, I wonder of that dollar amount of expenses, how much was spent on actual programs that benefitted the public, your customers, and how much of it went to supporting services which had more of an indirect benefit, perhaps. And we hit perfectly in the sweet spot of what funders want to see. Because the general rule of thumb is that a funder wants to see no more than 20%, no more than $0.20s on the dollar going to supporting services expenses. And if you look at that bottom line again, at the $72,939, as a percentage of our total expenses, it is like 19.89%, which means that 80 cents on a given dollar goes directly to where it should be going and that is to programming. Aside from salaries and wages, our greatest cost is listed towards the bottom under program services. It would, of course, be our SPIL support, which came in at $78,930, for travelling to meetings. And then you can see up above because we are able to allocate, and we have been able to allocate both, take that our second largest expense is for travelling, and up above is payroll expenses, both Steve and Tracy's wages between program‑related and supporting services.

 So that was a big mouthful of information. Does anyone have any questions on the statement of functional expenses? Okay, let's rock on then through the rest of this audit. The notes are really exactly what they say they are. They are footnotes to support the quantitative information that's covered in the audit. This is the qualitative portion of the audit. Where for a given category of information in the audit itself you can go to for further information. And, again, much of this is required boilerplate language. As per the United States of America FASB rules, the financial accounting standards board. So, unless anyone who may have reviewed this had a particular question, I think we can skip the notes.

 There really isn't anything major to be pointed out here to all of you.

Okay, thank you very much. That consists of our presentation today of the audit.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you.

 >> MINDY KULASA: You are welcome. I would like to move, and we will be looking for, once I am done today, we will be looking for a motion to accept the fiscal year 2023 SILC audit as just presented by me. We are not going to take that vote right now. Because there's a concurrent vote that will take place in which we approve an authorized the 2022 form 990 for submission.

 So we will wrap all of this financial information into one motion once I complete the review of the 990.

 Now, the 990 is the return of an organization exempt from income tax. The first thing you might wonder about is why does it say 2022? I thought we were talking about 2023 numbers. Well, you might notice that the beginning of this period of time was back in 2022. And since it started in 2022, even though its numbers as of September 30th, it's always a year lag. So, it's a little bit different than how we file our personal income taxes. So, Steve signs off on this. The Council does not. And he relies on me, I guess, to be his Eagle eye in reviewing the 990 each year to ensure that all of the information is accurate and correct to the best of our knowledge and ability and the knowledge and ability of the ALG group.

 So, if you can go to page, not page ten of the audit, but page ten of the PDF file. I just want to show you where all of your names appear. And all of your names appear online on the form 990 because this is a part of the public record. So, there is a company called Guide Star. You can join guide star for free. Look us up on guide star. And you can see our form 990 filing. And I just thought you would like to know that all of your names are being published. As well as that million dollars in compensation that each of us receives from serving on the SILC. Of course, that comes as intangible rewards to us. But we do have to reflect on what Steve's salary and wages are as well as other amounts of compensation that went to Steve. He is the only employee of the SILC that we have to report on. So, there you are.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Mindy. I'm sorry to cut you off.

 >> MINDY KULASA: No, that's all right I just thought everybody would like to know that their names are part of the public record. You don't have to go through guide star. You can also search IRS form 990, put in the Michigan Statewide Independent Living Corporation and you can see the 990 for yourself online. And funders also go online through organizations like Guide Star, and they look at form 990 filings when they are making decisions about whether or not to make a charitable contribution to a particular entity. So, the 990 is important in that regard. If you could go, please, to page 13. Briefly. This is basically also a statement of functional expenses. It's broken out very similar to what we just reviewed in some detail in the audit. And, again, a potential funder is going to look at this and say, okay, here we go. If I contribute a dollar to the SILC, what's the dollar going to get spent on? And 8$0.00s on our dollars, as I indicated previously, goes directly to program support, fulfilling our mission, fulfilling our vision, supporting all of our stakeholders, and only $0.20s on the dollar goes to supporting services. So, again, that's the good news.

The last thing I'd like to point out in the form 990 filing is on page 25. So, this has 30 pages. My CILs form 990 filing has going on 60 pages. So quite a bit more. Yeah. There we are.

 I just wanted to point out that at the present time we just have two contributors, two organizations that give us grants. We all know who they are. They are both MRS and BSBP housed under the Michigan department of labor and economic opportunity, otherwise known as LEO. And you can see the amount that MRS funded us was 200. I'm looking at the very top of the report. Right under part one, the name, address, and zip. You can see that MRS funded $239,017 for our operations. And BSBP funded $128,701 for our operations.

 If we allow for resource development in the next SPIL, our hope is that we will see the number of contributors increase. And we will see a record of those contributions in future form 990 filings.

 So that's the salient information I wanted to point out within the form 990. I hope I did not bore all of you to tears with that. I tried to keep it interesting. At least as interesting as financial wong can. So, I'd be happy to entertain any questions at this time about the IRS form 990 filing. Hearing that, I would like to seek or Jamia, do you want to go ahead and seek the required motion?

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Sure, Mindy and thank you so much for your thorough presentation today. Okay, may I have a motion on the floor for fiscal year 2023 SILC audit as presented as well as the authorize the 2022 form 990 submission?

 >> AARON ANDRES: I saw a message in chat where we have a motion if you would like to go through that, I think somebody else had a question.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Oh, I believe it was just a comment from Theresa. Just commending Mindy on her presentation.

 >> AARON ANDRES: Okay, sorry.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: No problem.

 >> STEPHANIE DEIBLE: This is Stephanie. So moved to support the motion.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Stephanie and may I have a second, please?

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: This is Yvonne Fleener and I second that, sorry.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Jan. Okay, and may we have a roll call vote, please, Tracy?

 >> TRACY BROWN: Sure.

 >> AARON ANDRES: Yes.

 >> FRANK ANIMIKWAM:

 >> GLEN ASHLOCK: Yes.

 >> ALLEN BEAUCHAMP: Yes.

 >> ERICA COULSTON:

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Yes.

 >> STEPHANIE DEIBLE: Yes.

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: Yes.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Yes.

 >> JAN LAMPMAN: Yes.

 >> THERESA METZMAKER: Yes.

 >> TRACY BROWN: Motion carried.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Tracy. Now we will move into our next agenda item which are the staff and committee reports and our first report today will be from Steve who will be giving the Executive Director report.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Thank you very much Jamia. My Executive Director report went out earlier this week. I hope you all had a chance to review that, and I would be happy to take any questions on it. I'm not going to read through the entire thing, but I do want to point out a couple of things. And bring you up to speed on our SPIL writing teams. Our main SPIL writing team which is comprised of CIL directors and Council members and the DSE and also BSBP have been meeting on a monthly basis. We just met last week. The CIL directors are working on goals that they would like to see in the SPIL. In the 2025‑2027 SPIL.

 There's also a SILC SPIL writing subcommittee who reports back to VME to the SPIL writing team that are working on SILC‑specific advocacy goals. And in our last meeting with the SPIL writing team, we were able to dovetail the life areas that the Council desires to work on based on public input that we are receiving from the community statewide needs assessment, dovetailing with the CILs in some of the advocacy activities that they envision engaging in during the period of the next SPIL.

 So that's going along very well. I do want to point ‑‑ I also want you to know that our SPIL writing team and also our SILC SPIL subcommittee writing team meetings are open to the public. Those are via Zoom. They are posted to our website along with the agenda. And meeting notes are also posted to our website for public review at any time.

 A couple of dates I would like to draw your attention to, the SPIL timeline from now through May 1st we are going to continue gathering public input through our community needs assessment survey that is on survey monkey. I want to thank the CILs for helping us publicize that survey. We also have two Zoom virtual public hearing input sessions scheduled for next Monday at 6:00 p.m. And then the following Saturday, which is the 20th, at 1:30 p.m. We do envision continuing doing these virtual Zoom meetings on a monthly basis. We are also looking to do in‑person meetings once the spring rolls around. When I did those the last time, we did not have very good participation in terms of people actually showing up to the in‑person meetings. So, we will talk more about that at the March meeting and see what the Council's desire is in terms of scheduling those. We typically will hold those at a CIL and CILs around the state in order to give access to folks in those areas. So more to come on that.

 May 1st is our cutoff for gathering public input. Because we have to have a draft SPIL ready for public comment on the draft itself. By Federal regulation we are required to allow a 30‑day comment period and that will run from May 1st to May 30th of this year.

Once we receive any comments on the draft, the SPIL writing team will take those comments into account and make any adjustments or modifications as needed based on those comments. June 30th is the due date that the next SPIL is ‑‑ needs to be sent to ACL.

 As long as the SPIL is approved by ACL, we will have a start time of October 1st of this year. So, are there any questions on the SPIL process or the upcoming dates that guide our process?

All right, a couple other things or just some upcoming events and trainings. As I just mentioned, January 15th at 6:00 is the first Zoom input meeting at 6:00 p.m. on January 20th at 1:30 which is a Saturday. We wanted to accommodate folks that work during the week and cannot join in the evening, on a weekday. We will probably continue that pattern as the months roll on.

 Also on January 23rd is Ed Roberts day. As you know he is considered the father of Independent Living. And SILC is going to celebrate his life and legacy with some social media posts that we have crafted with IDEA39, our outreach contractor. I'm not aware of any CIL activities that might be going on around that but if there are some activities, if the director would be willing to send those to us, we stay abreast of their newsletters and the activities going on there. But if you're holding any special events, please let us know and we would be happy to share those on our social media channels.

 Again, the SILC Congress is going to be held March 11th through March 13th in Little Rock, Arkansas. I think the early bird fee is still in effect. I might be wrong on that. But if you do want to attend that, let Tracy know right away. I think we do have a couple of Council members that have made reservations to go. I would highly encourage any Council member that has not gone to attend the Congress. It is a wealth of information. There are breakout sessions. ILRU and Paula, who just presented on SILC finances will be there. She will be leading several workgroups at the Congress. What is also nice about it is that ACL leadership is there along with Paula and the other staff from ILRU. You get a chance to talk one on one with ACL leadership and folks from ILRU and also meet other Council members from around the country. So, it's a really great peer support opportunity. And last year was a lot of fun. I did have a couple of CIL directors call and ask if that is just for SILC Council members and SILC staff and I said absolutely not.

In fact, last year one of the CIL directors did come to the SILC Congress in little rock and that was a great opportunity for us to have some fellowship and some peer support together. So, this is kind of the equivalent of what the CILs have with NCIL, which is the national Council on Independent Living, and they typically hold their annual conference in Washington D.C. during the summer months. So, again, if you have any interest in attending, I would really encourage you to go. SILC has budgeted to support five to six people attending Congress this year. So, if you have the time and the desire, please let Tracy know as soon as possible.

 Also, in the report I added some upcoming ILRU trainings for the next six months. In my March report I will include the final six months of this calendar year. And update that as new opportunities come online with ILRU. When we get notifications of ILRU of live trainings or webinars that are upcoming we typically forward those on to you so that you can join those as you wish. And I would be happy to entertain any questions you might have about the balance of the Executive Director's report.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Hi, Steve, it's Mindy. This is just a reminder, and it's another plug for the SILC Congress, but if you are considering attending and it requires you to be away from work and that time is not compensated by your employer, please remember that we have a stipend policy now. And you will be compensated 150 a day for your time spent traveling to and attending the SILC conference or Congress. So just keep that in mind if your decision making if you would.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Thank you for that reminder, Mindy. Reminder, I appreciate that.

 Any other questions, comments, or observations? All right, thank you all very much.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Steve. So, we have strategic planning and there are no updates on this regarding strategic planning, correct?

 >> STEVE LOCKE: The only update we would have is that we are using our strategic plan that we created a few years ago to guide our work with the next SPIL in terms of our advocacy goals and objectives that the SILC SPIL writing team is crafting right now.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Okay great, thank you, Steve, appreciate that. Okay, next on our agenda we will have the financial report by Mindy Kulasa.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Oh, my, it's me again. This time my report will strictly be verbal. I won't be flashing any more financials in front of you to have to try to digest.

 I am happy to say that our accountant, Brad, with Steve and Tracy's able assistance as always was able to get to us hot off the press numbers as of December 31st. And I have reviewed our statement of our financial position. I've reviewed our budget versus actual expenses. I've reviewed the check register. And everything is in great order for us financially as we move into this particular calendar year.

 I do want to mention that I believe, if you did glance at the statement of budget versus actual expenses, that was an attachment to this meeting invitation. We did have a technical glitch. And it does reflect all 0s rather than having actual numbers in that. We are aware of that. It's been corrected. And the proper posting is being made to the website if it hasn't already happened.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Mindy.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Yep, I think that's about all she wrote on finances today. And that's because the SILC financial policies workgroup does not have any updates.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Wonderful. Are there any questions for Mindy? Regarding the financial report? Okay, and the next agenda item is the policies and Bylaws committee. But I do not believe we have any updates regarding that.

 So, at this time it is 1:15. We will take a break for ten minutes. And we will be back here at 1:25.

 (Break until 1:25)

 Recording stopped.

 Recording in progress.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Welcome back, everyone. Okay, we are going to move forward with our agenda. And that is going to be the ex officio reports given by our various departments in the state. And if we could please limit the reports to five minutes per person. Thank you. And the first department we are going to have is Michigan Rehabilitation Services by Bill Addison.

 >> BILL ADDISON: My report will not last over five minutes, I can guarantee that. I'm trying to put ‑‑ I'm not sure I know how to do this. I have a slideshow and I sent it to Tracy. And what the slide sort of shows is kind of what we call our production reports. And I don't know, Tracy, are you able to put that up on the screen?

 >> TRACY BROWN: Yep, can you see it?

 >> BILL ADDISON: Got it, great. So, there is our Bill Colombo administrator within MRS, love this slide he just retired so we keep continuing to use his slide in memory of him, state capital picture again I'm Bill Addison I'm from the Michigan Rehabilitation Services and we are part of employment and training. So, what we will see in the next couple slides is kind of the number of folks that come into our agency. The number of folks that get served that is are considered eligible and a number of folks who exit. And so, it's coming in serviced and exiting. So, the first slide we are looking at it's a historical one. I will give you a minute to look at because what we are looking at is from fiscal year 2019 to fiscal year 2024 for several months. And these are new applications, so these are folks who walk in the door or go online and apply for VR services here. And you can see the trends here in these last couple years. Again, I know there is a lot of lines here and look like they get a little jumbled together. But what our good news is for fiscal year 2024 as you can see on the very bottom line there the numbers are going up and up and going up and up compared to prior years. And of course, the toughest year we had was the COVID years. You can see that in December they dropped down to 718 applicants coming in. But again, since that time the numbers have gone up. I also want to bring up the fact that MRS never closed. We developed different methods of servicing our customers as they came in. And not only face‑to‑face but other virtual services that we could provide. So, we were never closed. The number of people who came in went down. But we were fully staffed to address anyone who walked into our office. Can you go to the next one, please?

 This is eligibility staff and come in and apply for our services. They have to meet some minimum requirements to be eligible. Pretty easy to be eligible for our program. And so, as you can see, again, kind of jumbled up in the middle here and the COVID years, the numbers went down but again the eligibility in 2024 as you can see the numbers continue to go up. Which means the number of people who have walked in the door have gone up and the number of people from that group that are eligible have also gone up. So, all good news. Gives us an opportunity to serve a lot more people. Now that COVID is over there is more of an open door for them to come for these services. If you can go to the next one, please.

 IPE individual plan of employment. And this is kind of interesting because you can see in one there's an…it almost has some seasonal kind of implications here. As you go into the months of April, May, and June you can see those are going up. And that's because a lot of them come through our doors in the early months. Takes us a while to make them eligible, takes us a while to give them an employment plan. And again all good news here. I think one of the things that we really looked at is again under 2024 here on the bottom line if you look at that we get 927. That's huge. That's a lot of folks that we have plans for. We had 850 in November and again 790 for the month after that. So again, everything is going up. More people coming in the door. More people are becoming eligible. More people are getting an employment plan. We go to the next one, please, Tracy.

 And our last one and again these are the folks that exit our system. As you can see it's a rather straight line here. Most of these years are kind of bunched together. It's kind of interesting. But, again, what we see is all good news because the number of individuals exiting employed has also gone up. So, you can see in October of 24 the bottom line again 576 folks left employed. I tell you, that is good news for the people that come in the door. It's good news for our Counselors who service these individuals. And, again, it stayed really high going into November of ’24, still at 520. Still pretty high in 504 in December. So that is kind of the summary of folks coming in, folks getting served and folks exiting. And, Steve, that's all I have for a report for MRS.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Bill. Does anyone have any other questions for Bill? Regarding the MRS report?

 >> MINDY KULASA: Hi, it's Mindy. I saw a question from Steve in the chat. I'm not sure if Bill wanted to address that.

 >> BILL ADDISON: What is the question, Steve?

 >> MINDY KULASA: Steve?

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: I can read the question.

 >> STEVE: Get myself off mute, I'm wondering if there is any information related to the SPIL from the DSE perspective in terms of things like funds on hand, expended year to date, anything like that at all?

 >> BILL ADDISON: Give me a little bit more detail about what you're asking for, Steve.

 >> STEVE: The funds that throw through the SPIL our final table where we have funds allocated and information like that, that funds that flow to the CILs and SILC. Just I don't know. Just you know a high-level sort of financial status.

 >> BILL ADDISON: Are you asking for how much are at each one of the SILC cracks is that what you're asking?

 >> STEVE LOCKE: No, the question was is there any information related to the SPIL in terms of funds on hand, expended, et cetera, kind of a check‑in point.

 >> BILL ADDISON: Are you saying do we keep track of your budget, how much your expended to date and the repainting amounts is that the question then?

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Overall as a general pool, you know, we have the financial table in there, how much Part B because you know we've gotten in situations where Part B money was left on the table, and I think the Council should be aware of those sorts of situations.

 >> BILL ADDISON: Like I think now the first payments of the year are Part B, aren't they? Don't we exhaust our Part B amount first? And then use the state funds. And the reason we did that I thought was a response to a few of the CIL directors and they didn't know how much Federal funds were in their contract. It's really important.

We can understand their concern. Because as Paula brought up, when you hit $750,000, you are required to have what's called the single audit. And it's a much more expensive audit. Since that time, since we have talked to the CILs, what we have developed is the formula of how much each CIL will get in Federal funds. So, we know on the offset, and I think it's one of the first few pages that we made to them, these are the Federal fund dollar amounts. I believe, in fact, Steve, I think it's in every contact now that we put the Federal dollar amount. I'm pretty sure about that. I'm sorry, did I answer your question, Steve?

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Well, yeah, kind of. I think that is the kind of information that the Council might be looking for kind of going forward.

 >> BILL ADDISON: Okay.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Is, you know, what's the Part B amounts. I mean we've had conversations behind the scenes about the way that MRS allocates those pots of funds now. But I'm not sure the Council has ever heard that during a Council meeting. And I think that that might be kind of what they're looking for going forward from the DSE.

 >> BILL ADDISON: Steve, I can help you with that. What would you like next Council meeting I can give a breakdown of all of it. Would that help you?

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Well, I put it back to the Council on what information would the Council like to know about those funds that flow through the SPIL in terms of being able to monitor.

 >> MINDY KULASA: This is Mindy. The more financial information we could have, the better.

 >> BILL ADDISON: And I can do that for you, Mindy. I can give you kind of a breakdown of the funds. And, again, there is only to really break downs there are state funds and the Part B for us. So, I can do that. I think pretty much, excuse me, by contract. That's not hard to obtain.

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: This is Yvonne. Speaking on behalf of the CILs we would love to see that as well. And so, I think, Bill, if I just heard you correctly, you're going to give us not just what it starts at in the contract, you're going to give us a year to date, here is how much has been spent in aggregate.

 >> BILL ADDISON: Okay so I kind of understand. I think I agree with you, Yvonne. So, what you're asking for is the amount paid based on and the categories paid are state and Federal funds. And you want that break down. Do I have that right?

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: Yeah. Just you know how much has been spent. What's left? In each of the categories.

 >> BILL ADDISON: Okay, and I have to pause just a minute. Because I have to run this through to make sure I am not disclosing critical information outside the department. So, my answer is yes, we can do that. Let me get approval to do that.

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: And I think if you did it in aggregate, right, then that should be easier than.

 >> BILL ADDISON: Yeah, and I agree, Yvonne. I think that's most likely doable.

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: Okay.

 >> BILL ADDISON: Thank you. Steve, did I answer everything for you? All right, thank you.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Bill, this is Mindy. I just have a real quick question.

 >> BILL ADDISON: Okay.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Thank you for your report on the number of consumers and customers you're serving. What are your clients' satisfaction ratings looking like these days? I know you have reported on that metric in the past. We don't need a slide or anything.

But if you could just give us a quick recap of what your customers' satisfaction surveys are telling you?

 >> BILL ADDISON: Well, I'm going to do better than that. Next time I come I will give you a report. And I want to say that 92%. It's either 92 or 94% of our customers who obtained employment are very satisfied. But I can get you exactly that. What we do is, and, again, this is a federal requirement of ours, is our federal regulations require us to determine the satisfaction of the clientele that we serve. So, what we do is hire a firm to do that who does the polling for us, and every year give us a summary of the satisfaction and it's broken down many, many different ways by geographic area, income, lots of different ways. But the bottom line is I think it's very impressive because like I say it's either 92 or 94. It might even be 96% of the folks that go through our system are satisfied. And, again, I can get you that next time we come.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Yeah, that's cool and important information to know. So, thank you.

 >> BILL ADDISON: Okay.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Are there any other questions for Bill regarding his report or any other comments? Okay hearing none, we are going to move to our next ex officio report which is from Lisa Kisiel from the Bureau of services to blind persons.

 >> LISA KISIEL: Good afternoon, everybody, I want to turn my camera on to say hello. And just kind of run through a couple things.

 First of all, just a quick update for you all. BSBP has undergone a significant case management service migration in the last several months. You may have heard me talk about that. Sometimes I get a little, you know, sweaty, because it's been an undertaking. But we are getting there. We launched on November 13th. So, within that there will be an IL Part B module as there was in the previous system so we can manage our cases. We also submitted our state plan which is a full year state plan very similar to the SPIL. That is out for public comment. And you should have that information available to you to review. If you have questions or concerns that you would like to make on the comment form that is sent along with it. So please take a minute to review that. That is our VR state plan for voc rehab.

 In fiscal year 2023 actually program year 2023 we served about 1200 individuals in VR in various statuses. And so, as Bill says that's been a, you know, we went from you know, 1400 before COVID down to in the 900s and now we are climbing back up, so we are making that shift as well. We serve approximately 100 people in the independent Part B program which we administer our portion of that grant to serve individuals that are blind or visually impaired and have additional disabilities and we serve them utilizing our internal subject matter expert’s rehabilitation teachers. And rehab therapists do that for us.

 In fiscal year 23 we expended 138,147.52. Of that 21,880.08 was dedicated to purchasing devices and trainings to customers. We did carry over from FY22, $182,350.17. And we exhausted all carry over from 2021 when we got that extra year to expend those funds.

 Some of the things that we purchased in addition to case services with the independent Part B grant we purchased teacher kits in order for them to be able to conduct their work and utilize the devices that they need. We also purchased the Iris system for the training center which is an interactive basically it's a travel assistance or it's guided travel if you want to call them and they have people that answer their phones and you can like put yourself on and say what does the street sign say or in this case what do the hallway signs say at the training center and how do I get from here to cafeteria, et cetera. So that is a service that we have at the center that we used a little bit of our monies to pay for all from the IL Part B grant. We also purchased some video magnifiers. Ones used at our library in Lansing, which has been newly renovated. I know Steve was there to visit. And so we did purchase that will be in our lobby area so if we have customers from the community who needed to read materials it doesn't matter if they are BSBP customers or not in the spirit of IL it can be any individual that might need that service and could benefit from it so they need to come into the library of history museum and needed to read you know their phone bill or something or credit card bill or whatever they can come into that space and use that equipment. We also purchased some for the training center as well for our customers there.

 We wrote about 160 service authorizations in FY23 to utilize the 21,880.08 of expenditures for customers. Please also remember that we also administer the Independent Living over blind program which back in the day RSA managed both and IL Part B was moved to ACL and serve 607 individuals in that program. And between salaries, wages, and service provision we spent over a million dollars on that program. So I think that we are serving our customers who are wishing to maintain their independence and to live in the most in the least restrictive environment possible including providing outreach to nursing homes and other assisted living facilities to let them know who we are and what we do so if they have customers that would benefit from the services that we can provide those. We had over 70 outreach experiences in FY23.

 So that's a little bit about BSBP and IL Part B and our state plan and some of the things that are happening. If you have any questions? Thank you for that. I will mention one of the goals that I have in reviewing the SPIL is that I would really like to know a little bit more about how our local CILs are serving customers who are blind, who are not part of our system. So that would mean the walk-ins. And those individuals that maybe don't want to work with BSBP or have worked with us and we have exhausted our work with them but there still is a need, especially for independent, possibly some tweaking I'm sorry not independent living but information and referral advocacy services, peer support, et cetera. So that is something that I know, and I will be reaching out to as an organization to the directors to ask for some additional statistics from that. Because one of the things we want to do is grow the service from the Independent Living community to serve individuals who are blind and visually impaired who don't necessarily wish or qualify for our services because we know IL is supposed to reach everybody regardless. So, thank you.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Lisa. We appreciate your report.

 >> LISA KISIEL: Thank you. And I have one more thing. Sorry, I came later in and forgot. I invited a new team member to this meeting today. His name is David Plink, a rehabilitation manager for our Flint and Lansing offices. And I want to he is kind of a little bit of my shadow these days, so I wanted him to know about the SILC and who you are and what we do. As he covers a pretty large territory for that Flint and Lansing area. That incorporates a few different CILs. So please welcome David to the BSBP team.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Wow, David on behalf of the whole SILC.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Welcome aboard.

 >> Thank you very much, I'm very impressed with your guys' meeting so far. It has been very informative so thank you for letting me sit aside and letting me learn a little bit. I appreciate it.

 >> MINDY KULASA: You have joined an outstanding organization in the BSBP. Such a valued partner of ours as you.

 >> LISA KISIEL: Thank you for those words, Mindy. The check is in the mail.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Make sure it has an extra 0 on it, okay, Lisa?

 >> LISA KISIEL: Let's make sure it has a 0.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Yep, thank you.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you. Thank you for joining us today, Dave.

 >> Thanks for having me.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: So, our next report today will be from the Michigan department of civil rights and the report will be given by Annie Urasky.

 >> ANNIE URASKY: Hi. This is Annie signing. Happy New Year to everyone. I hope everyone's new year went well. So, several updates from me. Let me put my screen one sec. Sorry. So I wanted to share with you some things that are related to what's been happening for us. Just wanted to mention we just found out yesterday the reappointments. And one new appointment for our division advisory Council. If you're not familiar with it, we have a 13 member Governor appointed Council. They meet approximately three times a year. And we were able to reappoint three members and appoint a new member and we are just waiting on one more. And also, we have a new chair because our chair, Jill Gaus, her term expired so we are waiting for the announcement of the new chair. And our next scheduled meeting will be Friday, February 23rdrd. And it will be an in‑person meeting in Ann Arbor at the Washtenaw community college. It will be from 9:30 to 12:30. And members of the public are welcome to attend. And it's going to be a great session. Because our guest speaker is Dr. Michael McKee. He's from the University of Michigan. And he's also the codirector of the center on disability health and wellness. And his presentation is going to involve, let me pull up the language here, I want to make sure I get the presentation title correct. He will be presenting on goes darn it, there are so many emails. Okay, he will be presenting on the breakdown of barriers in redesigning healthcare for the deaf and hard of hearing patients. In regard to really alleviating and embracing health equity. So, it's going to be a very important topic. And I'm happy to have it on our agenda. We developed some fliers and some, you know, graphics and that. And once we get that all done, we will share it with you as well. And you can share it on your social media. Our Council's next meeting will be in May and then October after that. And we are still looking for locations for the next two meetings.

 The other update I want to share it's really great that the Council is all working out, but I want to share one area that our office is really shifting on and focusing on this year. This fiscal year. Because I had mentioned the last meeting there has been a huge shift in trying to increase awareness in relations to service for older deaf and deaf blind and hard of hearing individuals, residents, because this year Congress is supposed to reauthorize the older Americans act. And some states are starting to assess their relationship with the area agency on aging. The Commission on aging within their states. And how can they partner and build partnerships. And thinking about providing accessible services for those individuals who are deaf, deaf blind and hard of hearing senior citizens.

 And that could be not only related to providing interpreters or captioning, but access to accessible healthcare. And hiring staff in a group home or in a nursing home or a care home who are fluid and can communicate with that and are culturally competent in working with that senior community. So, some states even have funding that is set aside to develop assisted living centers or senior centers for those individuals and residents who are deaf, deaf blind and hard of hearing. So really it's really going to be a huge effort on the legislature to get that going. Because it is a mix of that private sector in addition to what we're doing here as ‑‑ within our government procedures. So, and also our ‑‑ my team will be presenting to the Commission on aging next month. Yes. And we will be presenting to the state Commission on aging. We want to talk about a partnership. How can we collaborate on those types of things?

 So, the state of Arizona is leading a competition in regard to increasing awareness in regard to available resources. I know you are all familiar with, you know, the managing of community living services and who oversees that. And how that funding is, you know, allocated. So, the goal is to highlight awareness and experience. And what the preferences are for the people in our community in terms of getting services that are accessible, getting interpreting and captioning services as well. I also wanted to mention specifically for our department, as I mentioned at the last meeting we are shifting focus on issues related to fair housing. And that we are going to ‑‑ we just hosted our first in‑person session in Detroit. And then the next three sessions will be throughout the state. And I will disseminate that information. We will have a virtual house session on February 7th. That will be from 4:00 to 7:00. And in Flint it will be March 16th. 4:00 to 7:00. And that is a Saturday. And Grand Rapids, I believe it will be on Sunday the 28th. And then June 12th, in Detroit, at the ‑‑ we will have the fair housing Commission at the icon building, yep. So, we will have advertisements. We will get the fliers out to you, and you can disseminate those as well and share those on your pages.

 And last but not least and maybe you've already seen the next state of the state speaker for the Governor will be, that will be on January 24th. And we've already worked with the Government office, Governor's office to make sure that captioning is provided as well as interpreting. And that's all for me. Thank you.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Annie. Are there any questions for Annie regarding her report? Okay, hearing none we will have our next report by Shawan Dortch from the Michigan Department of Education.

 >> SHAWAN DORTCH: Good afternoon, good afternoon. On February 4th, I will make it brief, 2024 Michigan will submit a state performance plan for our annual performance report to the United States Department of Education office of special education. If you would like to have prior year information regarding how Michigan did on the annual performance reporting for special education, you can look in my school data. And get that information. They have a lot of years in there.

We also, I'm sorry, my phone is ringing, we also are working with ISDs to provide training and guidance for better high school transition planning for students with IEPs. There is an IEP boot camp available to everyone to access on the Michigan virtual University's website. As well as working with Wayne state University to improve response rates for students who have transition from high school to post school life.

 If you have specific special education questions, please contact our MDE‑OSE@Michigan.gov e‑mail or call 1888‑320‑8384 information line. They also now have an interpreter for different languages to support getting information across the state for special education.

 If there's any information that I can assist this group with regarding special education monitoring or technical assistance, or anything you would like me to present in the future, at these meetings please reach out to me at Dortchs@Michigan.gov or 517‑335‑0465. And that's all I have for today.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Shawan. Are there any questions for Shawan regarding her report? Okay, we're going to move to our next report, thank you, we are going to move to our next report from Yasmina from the Michigan Development Disability's Council. Welcome. This is your first time joining us.

 >> Yeah, thank you very much. Actually, I have not beneficially ‑‑ been‑officially appointed to the Council yet so I'm just observing today, and I'll be prepared to report at the next meeting once I'm appointed, thank you.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you. Thanks for joining us. And next we are going to have the IL network update from Yvonne Fleener.

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: Hello. I don't have a lot to report but since the last meeting in September, we've been really focused on the SPIL goals, kind of doing what the SILC is doing having our own internal group and some of us, myself included, are on the SPIL committee. We ‑‑ and I think this is ‑‑ I'm pretty new to the CIL role, but I think this is a new step, but we really spent a lot of time analyzing all the data that Steve provided from the stakeholder surveys. And not only thinking about that in terms of the SPIL but how does this feedback align with the services our CILs are providing the community based on this feedback. So that's led to a broader discussion of really, you know, what is our plan, what is the role of the CIL in the disability advocacy movement. How is it different than what others are doing and how do we do more to collaborate and be at some of those tables that I think the CILs are missing from? So that has been some really great dialog that we are having. And you know relates back, of course, to our SPIL goals, which I'm excited about. And we will have more on that soon.

 That's really it. You know, we have ‑‑ there is something coming up.

I can talk about it again in March. But I'm going to put it in the ‑‑ I'm going to put a link here in the chat. It's called I love you lead on. It's an ADA caravan. It's a group that I'm hesitant to talk about it because I don't know enough about it yet but during the ADA they are going to travel across Michigan in a caravan. We don't know the size of that because people can join in at any time. But it's not a bicycle. It's cars. So, people will drive across the state together and they will add people along the way. And they're going to make stops in Michigan. And so, we have met with them. And they're going to time it with our ADA anniversary. And the stops that they have identified are Kalamazoo. So, the CIL that I'm part of will be one of those. Jackson, Ann Arbor, Northville, and Detroit. So, they have been talking to us about what are the different ways our CILs can be involved in that. Most of us that are involved are going to plan our ADA events to coincide with the day of their stop. So that link I just sent you gives you some information about that.

 What I learned since I've been at the Southwest Michigan CIL is that Kalamazoo was the first ever in the nation curb cut that was ever formed. So that's something we want to kind of memorialize at this event with the caravan there is and I'm hoping to get a plaque. You know, I went and saw this particular curb cut recently and I felt like I was kind of like seeing the Mona Lisa in the Louvre. Like Mona Lisa and the Louvre anticlimactic with grass growing up and used to have metal rail, that have been taken off. So, I'm like that is kind of sad so we will clean it up. It's right downtown so people see it and use it all the time. And hopefully memorialize it in a way it deserves to be memorialized and do that at this year's ADA event. So more to come on that as well as what the other CILs are doing for their ADA events.

 But that's it for now. So really focused on the SPIL.

 >> LISA KISIEL: Before you move on Yvonne can I add I believe that Kalamazoo was pretty mission driven on being one of the first communities to have audible traffic crossing signals given the blindness and low vision program at western with those guys, the old guys that are since retired and moved on but they worked really hard to get those audible signals so Kalamazoo knows what to do.

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: Exactly and for those who don't know Lisa is from Kalamazoo too, so we are lucky to have her in our neighborhood.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Yvonne, this is Mindy. I just wanted to say thank you for sharing. I think it's so cool that our CIL partners are doing a deep dive into that consumer survey and that it's really triggered and started the broader discussion that you mentioned.

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: Yeah.

 >> MINDY KULASA: That is music, I'm sure, to everyone's ears on the SILC.

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: Definitely, yeah.

 >> MINDY KULASA: So, thank you to the CILs for really taking that into account. And, more importantly, acting on it.

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: Yeah, and I'll have more to share about that later. You know, just really trying to home in on what, you know, what do we bring to the table and what are our strengths and how do we really utilize those. So, I will have more to share later but they, Mindy for that.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Are there any more questions for Yvonne? And thank you so much for sharing that interesting information. That's so cool. Okay hearing no other comments or questions, we're going to move next to our next to our SPIL monitoring reports. The first one is going to be given by Theresa Metzmaker who is going to be reporting on advocacy and leadership.

 >> THERESA METZMAKER: I don't have anything since we talked about the YLF so I don't think there is any updates and you can correct me if I'm wrong, Steve.

 >> STEVE: Yeah, just to add to what Theresa said, SILC had set aside some money in the SPIL in our operational budget over the last three years. That money ended last fiscal year. The CILs are moving forward with a YLF in the summer of this year. So, they are in the process of putting that together right now. That's all I have on that particular SPIL objective.

 >> THERESA METZMAKER: Thank you, Steve.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, both. Are there any questions regarding Theresa's report?

 >> THERESA METZMAKER: I have a question will I be looped into the conversation about the event the CILs are trying to create? If I'm supposed to report on it?

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: This is Yvonne. I know we just sort of talked about that at our last meeting. And Jon talked about your role and that you need to be involved. So, it's early on and have not missed anything. I think the discussion really centered around transportation issues and how we manage that. But, yeah, definitely you will be involved. And I'll make sure I send that backwards to Jon too to remind him of that.

 >> THERESA METZMAKER: Thanks.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: We are going to move on to our next agenda item, diversity, and inclusion from Mark Pierce. Luke Zelley is the CIL lead and Mark is not here today. Yvonne, do you have anything to report on this?

 >> YVONNE FLEENER: I do not. And that is going to go for the other ones listed here too. I looked at those and I wasn't prepared. And don't know that I have any updates. Or I don't know that there are any updates. Not that I don't have them, I don't think they exist right now.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: This is Steve. I could do a little bit of filling in here with diversity and inclusion. The first indicator was three CILs piloting diversity and inclusion best practices approach to facilitate engagement of people with disabilities and existing IL practices. They developed an internal training I believe in the first year of the SPIL and they had I believe all of the CILs go through that training. So that was the last report that I received from Luke. I believe in the second year of the SPIL on that.

 Another objective in there is the CIL participating in the developmental disabilities Council community of practice. I have continued to represent SILC in that initiative. They did have a community summit this past fall where they brought partners to the table to engage them in the work that they have been doing over the past five to six years with Georgetown University. To increase linguistic and cultural competency among providers that provide services to people with developmental disabilities. I'm not sure if that program is ‑‑ I don't want to say it's sunsetting but it's transitioning into a new phase. Our December meeting was cancelled due to technical difficulties. So more to come on that when we get that meeting rescheduled sometime this month.

 And then the third objective is consumer satisfaction. Tracy has most of the CILs have uploaded their consumer satisfaction data to SILC's survey monkey. We compiled that data into the five SILC questions that we have. And we will be presenting that aggregate data to the Council in the March meeting. And that's all I have on diversity and inclusion for you.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Steve. Our next agenda item is personal care attendants and Jan Lampman is going to report for us.

 >> JAN LAMPMAN: This is Jan Lampman, and I will report about some things that happened since our September meeting. I know I didn't get to report in September because that was the day of my son's car accident. I had to miss the Council meeting. But as of October 1st, you know the legislature last summer when they finalized the fiscal year 24 budget, they included an 85 cent an hour increase across the board for direct support professionals that would include people in behavioral health system. That would include people that are working with the my choice waiver and the aging system, that would include adult home help as well. So, a pretty comprehensive raise for people that are doing that work for direct support professionals. We know that still is not where we need to be in order to really attract and retain a solid workforce. We still ‑‑ that 85 cents brought the average wage across Michigan you know, some obviously being much lower, some being a bit higher but to be 16.50 an hour and we still feel like it needs to be our floor needs to be 20 an hour to bring those direct support professionals you know out of the Alice population, out of the poverty level wage earning level. And to be able to attract and retain good workers. And so, we continue to work on the advocacy side, right, around trying to get funds so that that can happen. But we also know that there are some efficiencies that could occur within our systems that would perhaps free up more money to be able to attract and retain those workers. But also make their lives easier. So, the direct support wage coalition has created a set of recommendations to improve administrative efficiency across. This is really focused on the behavioral health system which is where a number of folks receive their services, but it would also it also kind of touches like the my choice waiver. And adult home help which is the resource that lots of other folks utilize. So, it's behavioral health, home health, my choice waiver, you know, those Medicaid funding sources that are for people living in their own homes in the community. And so, I'm going to quickly share some of the recommendations, the key recommendations regarding administrative efficiencies. So, recommendation one is that MDHHS would develop a uniform contractual standard for behavioral health providers or for, you know, home health providers. And that those uniform contractual standards would be utilized with the prepaid in‑patient health plans, with the CMHs, with MDHHS. And whoever else you might be contracting with. Because right now we have, you know, how many counties do we have? That's about how many different ways you can have a contract to provide Medicaid funded services. So, there are providers of direct care workers that may be cross county lines and they literally have different requirements for training, they have different requirements for documentation. And they are given a different amount of money to pay their workers. And they are right next door to each other, right? And so, one of our recommendations is to try to eliminate some of that.

 Another administrative recommendation is to simplify the way that the different the various billing codes that you can obtain direct support from. Again, if you are a person with a physical disability and you're getting you know, you need help with cooking, cleaning whatever there is two different billing codes that can be used if you are in the behavioral health system there are different billing codes you can use. It just adds to confusion for providers and for the direct support professionals in terms of what they're required to do by way of documentation. It takes away from the work that they want to do with the person.

 We also have a recommendation regarding the electronic visit verification that is a federal requirement. And currently, if you're a person with a disability, even if you live in your own home and manage your own supports, if you get 24-hour support, you have to do this electronic visit verification. You're going to have to do this electronic verification and we really feel like when people are living in their own homes they are not in a facility of some sort it's not a licensed group home, it's not any of those things that we just feel like people should be able to be you know exempted from that. So that's one of our recommendations.

 And then we also want to recommend that the funding sources for people who need help with, say, actual hands-on physical care, so lots of people that are supported by centers for independent‑living get adult help which is a certain Medicaid program for hands on help with cooking, bathing cooking cleaning and dressing. But what if you need other things? What if you need someone to travel with you because you have to go out of town and you need someone to travel with you and help you with some of the things that are not hands on care, right? That would come from a different funding source so then you have to apply for a different set of fundings. One of our recommendations is, no, we have to figure out how to collapse that so that if I need help, doesn't matter what kind of help I need I go to one funding source and don't have to apply for three or four programs and have them fight over who is not going to provide me with the support I need which sometimes happens.

 So those are the recommendations that the direct care wage coalition is putting out there publicly to try to ease some of that administrative burden.

 We also feel like if we can make it simpler to do the paperwork part of the job, the billing part of the job, more people will want to stick around because the actual hands-on work part of the job is really pretty great. So that's my update for now. I know that was a little long winded so if anyone has questions, I'm happy to entertain them. No questions, awesome.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you so much, Jan, for your report today. Okay we are going to go to our next agenda item which is emergency response. And that will be given by Frank Animikwam. Is he ‑‑ he is not here. I thought I saw him earlier. He is not here. Okay.

And then BSBP we went through that. And so, our last point will be the SILC led outreach and awareness campaign and we have Adrienne Pickett from IDEA39 here with us.

 >> ADRIENNE PICKET: Hi, everyone. This is Adrienne Pickett. I'm the founder and creative director of IDEA39. And for those of you who may not be familiar with me, I am a 40 something‑year‑old blonde woman. And I'm at home in my home office. I'm very much looking forward to sharing this work with you all. I don't know. Do I have co‑hosting abilities, Tracy?

 >> TRACY BROWN: I can set you up. Just one second.

 >> ADRIENNE PICKET: Perfect.

 >> TRACY BROWN: Okay.

 >> ADRIENNE PICKET: Awesome.

I have too many tabs open Mindy; I think you said you had tabs open earlier as well. I have the same problem. So, okay, I'm going to do the slideshow on this then I'm going to share my screen. Pick a screen to share. Can you all see the outreach outline?

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Yes.

 >> ADRIENNE PICKET: I got the thumbs up from Steve and we will fly through this pretty quickly here. If it let me. This is something we have taken the team through in the past. Kind of go through our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. And some of the opportunities that we've identified for 2024 making sure we are identifying new excuse me CTAs or calls to action. We really want to expand the thought leadership by leveraging expert knowledge among the board members, CIL, staff, and others. So, this is kind of a heads up for some of you on the call that will be reaching out to leverage more of your expertise through, you know, social media, video, all of that good stuff. So more to come here in the first quarter.

 We are going to be incorporating some themes and phases which you will see in a moment. We want to improve search Rankings for content and SEM too. I'm not going to go through all of this. The team is aware but definitely informed of our outreach plan for 2024.

 So, we are looking at everything through a phasing lens. Our overall theme has been shine a light since 2022 but we like to evolve that every year so that that's kind of a cornerstone. But this time for 2024 we are looking at shining a light on leadership. So, we are really exploring all these ways that people with disabilities, their families, friends, their communities, and even greater society can act as leaders and advocates for the community as a whole.

 So, we are looking at it through four different lenses, family, Government, and society, the individual and community. So, we've kind of got this timeline of how we are doing the phases which we started in November of this past year. So, the first phase is really around families as leaders, allies, and advocates. And this really helps us kind of frame where we are going every single month with all of the different communications platforms that we are managing. And it really kind of helps give us some guardrails on you know, any outreach opportunities around earned media. Or blogs and social, et cetera.

 For phase two, February through May, we are looking at individuals who advocate for themselves and their communities. So again, some different topics here that fall under that umbrella and that theme.

 For June through September really speaking to communities that hold the key to access and inclusion. So, we know obviously summer is a big, huge time for events especially around disability pride month. So, we are really making sure that we are kind of leveraging and book ending around July since that is very, very important.

 And then finally phase four, obviously we all know it's a big-time election year. Knowing that we really want to be raising awareness for folks around this time period, educating voters and elected officials around their rights and issues and inclusion and access at the polls. Specifically, and then once we get through the election obviously speaking to some new elected officials about the needs and wants of the disabled community so advocating on their behalf. And then of course December helping elected officials and allies plan to become disability advocates in the new year. So really kind of planning out this whole year with calendar events and different communications.

 So, some of the tactics that we are going to be employing this kind of gets into where we were for 2023 and kind of where we are going for 2024. But we are obviously going to be continuing on the SILC website to create a blog feature every single month that focuses on those relevant regional and national topics. This helps with organic search. It's making sure that there's key words that are constantly coming up, for SILC's website so they can come up higher in search resumes. We do want to begin posting the newsletter online as well. We do believe that that will be very helpful. So, some unique things here to kind of note we did increase over all traffic from 2022 by over 93%. And we've also increased the e‑mail sign up list by 4% as well. So that there are 116 new e‑mail sign ups which is fantastic. In social media, Facebook, at least at this point when we created this there was 953 followers we are doing on average about 20 posts per month. On things about news, events, featured resources, cross promoting and cross sharing things from the CILs. So that's been very, very exciting. We love doing the calendar for the SILC.

 Instagram, actually there is more followers now than this since we last reported out 157 followers we did 498 posts in the past year. And we are following about 502 pages. There were four Facebook roundtables in 2023 featuring different artists, musicians, disability advocates and we are really hoping to continue that momentum in 2024 with more of the roundtable live events.

 I'm going to let Holly in. We also had a Google SEM campaign that was running which has been fantastic and definitely helped with search. The current website is the first result. But we do have an optimizing the search engine marketing for Google to make sure that we are not missing any key words. Now that we have things like chat GPT it's really a lot easier for us to create hundreds of key words to make sure that we are really optimizing.

 So, for social kind of again to kind of talk about what we did and where we are going, we did have those Facebook roundtable discussions. We are posting at least three times per week. We were boosting posts on topics of interest to make sure we are growing the page M and we worked with partner organizations to cross share content so that has been really helpful from the CILs as well.

 In 2024 we are planning to do some targeted mini campaigns again. Kind of book ending both Q2 when we get into the ADA pride event and then after that as well. We do want to add Linked‑In and next door to the list of social media channels that SILC has a presence on so we can increase engagement among other adults as well. We are going to be knocking on your doors to create some video content. Don't worry, it's not as scary as it sounds. Steve and Jan and Jamia have been very instrumental in helping with that so we will be expanding that reach to you all. I want to make sure our posts are aligning every month, so we are creating that consistency. Then we are planning on six Facebook live roundtables. So, we have begun outreach to different individuals about how they can be part of those Facebook lives.

 Okay so for e‑mail newsletter and blog we continue to send our shine a light newsletter and blog to a growing list of e‑mail recipients. If you get that newsletter at the end of the month it usually comes out on the very last day or very close to the last day of the month but it highlights a lot of the key staff, resources and program outcomes, recaps any events that have happened, features and important work and achievements and of course choosing a blog theme and topic we do that every month as well. Which falls out from the themes that I had mentioned.

 The open rates average around 26%. And we grew that subscriber list by 4% as mentioned. So, in 2024 we are going to continue with our newsletter. We think it's very important and people get a lot out of it. We are also shining a light on the disability for making a difference, the informal and official leaders. We are also going to create those blogs and newsletters around those themes and really want to use key words and prominent topics, so we are improving the website's search performance. And we do plan on e‑mailing the blog itself. This is another monthly touch point.
we don't want to over, you know, we don't want to over send e‑mails to folks because everyone here gets e‑mails constantly and definitely don't want to spam people and want to make sure it's open and something they can use and that they look forward to getting.

 So, in 2023 we did a mini campaign with Disability Network Southwest Michigan, thank you so much for participating with us in that. It was what we believe to be very successful. We wanted to make sure we were targeting rural audiences specifically. And SWN catchment area. So, this really focused on uplifting imagery of folks paired with statements that challenged perceptions of disability. And people with disabilities so some of the tactics that we employed we did two billboards in Van Buren County for a three-week period from September 15th through October 15th. We had fold out mailers that featured imagery and statements plus information about SILC. And Disability Network Southwest Michigan independent living and any available services that were available to them. We also did an e‑mail campaign to these folks and text messages to them as well to also encourage that engagement. There was a QR code on all of these pieces with the exception of out of home that drove directly to DNSWM.org and we also had meta-ads that drove traffic to the site and to survey as well.

 So, in terms of the metrics for how it performed, we know that the texts reached at least 2024 people. The mailer itself went to 22 mailboxes across the county. The billboards according to the billboard company had about 243,000 impressions. And the e‑mail was opened by 132 people. The QR code itself was scanned about five times. And the meta-ads received 279 clicks which added about 42 "Like"s to the page and reached almost 9500 accounts. So, we do believe it performed really well so we wanted to do two similar campaigns this year. And we will be reaching out to the respective CILs to coordinate with you all and hoping to do one in Northern Michigan and in the UP just to make sure we are reaching our rural areas that need it.

 Time around we would also like to make sure we are leveraging our blog and social media posts to complement the campaign as well.

In 2023 for experimental we had a very successful, well attended disability pride event where we partnered with Disability Network eastern Michigan. And we had a huge outpouring of art submissions from people in the disability community. And I think we had over 50 pieces submitted. And we ended up selecting quite a few of those which were available for purchase, and several were purchased by people in the community. And we also solicited artist submissions for large scale work, and we ended up having five submissions and we ended up selecting one for the community piece. We held an event for the community through the city of Madison heights and their partnership and we ended up creating a community driven mural.

We had activities, food, tabling, and we believe about 75 people or more did come to the event, and it actually captured people just happening to walk by which was really exciting.

 In 2024 we are really hoping to partner with the capital area to create another, you know, either partner with you on your current pride celebrations or help you create one. Again, kind of leveraging our shine a light theme. And we've got some different ideas that we want to be bouncing off of you all and we want to make sure this time around we are capturing video and photography but also leveraging more PR for this and earned media opportunities as well.

 So more to come on that.

 In terms of earned media and PR we did our Facebook roundtables, and our SILC leaders, Steve and Jan were on the disability matters Podcast with Joyce bender and we ended up getting them on with her. We also created several opt Ed and letters to the editor targeting geographic areas statewide. Wrote nine releases for EIN news wire and were picked up by the Lansing news reporter wood MBC Grand Rapids and several others. So, in 2024 we are hoping to do more robust PR to garner some of that media attention. We would like to work with bridge Michigan, and some other prominent nonpartisan publications to identify opportunities. We have a very lofty goal of getting the board members interviewed on at least six Podcasts. And we want to again do the six Facebook roundtables and use another experimental event like we did last year to drive more interest from publications. And we do want to table this for now. But we would love to have more of a discussion as the year goes on about launching a MISILC Podcast in 2025.

 Okay? So, a lot of this I already kind of touched on but website traffic did increase 71% over the previous year. I think it's 91% on the other one. 71% is the correct metric.

It had 12000 unique visitors to the site. Which is great. So, the number three, the top three places that folks actually went to the independent living resources page which is directing to all of the CILs. And then home followed by the Madison heights inclusive art event entry and then the shining the light blog.

 Okay, this is the heat map of where people kind of came from to the website. So, Detroit, others which of course lumps everybody together in a category and hard to parse from that. Lansing, Southfield, Grand Rapids, Sterling Heights, Plymouth, Warren and Clinton Township and Ann Arbor and we will focus on mini campaign and hoping in the UP we get some more presence.

 In terms of the e‑mails we sent 21 e‑mails this past year. We got 116 new subscribers. 26% average open rate with 84 clicks through to social media. There were 1300 plus clicks through to other sites from our e‑mail newsletter. So, this makes sure people are getting resources, reading news links, et cetera. And again 15,172 total subscribers currently on the e‑mail list.

 The number one performing e‑mail by open rate in 2023 was celebrating and reflecting on our history. There is a nice chart of organic subscriber growth that you can all see. And then Facebook had 51,000 plus reach which was an increase of 13% in 2022. 916 followers which is an increase of 214 new fans from 2022. There was over 11,000 interactions. So that is engagement and "Like"s, comments, shares, reactions which was an increase of 120% from 2022. And the average age of people coming to this site are 45‑54‑year‑old ladies. And the top cities for Facebook are Detroit, Lansing, Midland, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, Canton, and Holt.

 Instagram, there are 161 followers now on the gram which is an increase of 24.8%. There is over a 6.6K reach with the Instagram and increase of 128 from 2022. Over 1300 interactions. Again, that is "Like’s, comments, shares, engagement in general and that is an increase of 173%. And it's 35 to 44‑year‑old women who are engaging with the page the most. And those top cities are Midland, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor and Canton.

 So that is our report. I would love to answer any of your questions if you have them.

 >> THERESA METZMAKER: I have a question about the partners feature on our page. So, does your group pick the partners that we feature on the page or is that something Steve suggests partners to feature on the page? How does that work?

 >> ADRIENNE PICKET: Generally speaking, we keep an eye out for the different events the partners are having so anything that we feel is kind of relevant. The more active the partners are on their Facebooks the more ap we are to be able to share some of that information. So, and it kind of depends too depending on the theme and what is kind of happening during the month. So, we know if it's around epilepsy awareness, for example we want to make sure we are being relevant to those kind of time periods.

 >> JAN LAMPMAN: Theresa we do have our meeting though, this is Jan Lampman I'm so sorry I did not say who I was. We do have a meeting that anybody from the Council can attend. It's every other Monday. And that's where we are able to give feedback to the, you know, to Adrienne's team about things we would like to make sure we see or if there was something that went oh, the that misses the Mark. We don't want to put it on there, that kind of thing. So, there is a committee that can influence that. And that helps to shape what that looks like if that answers your question.

 >> THERESA METZMAKER: I can also bring that up now in the conversation that we are having. I feel whenever I ask questions about our Facebook or anything I'm told to join some other committee. So like if we are reporting on it. It feels like it tries to get pushed into another meeting. That's how I'm responding to you. You can join our Monday meeting.

 >> JAN LAMPMAN: That wasn't what I meant Theresa, but you asked how we decide what is on there and I'm explaining and it's that.

 >> THERESA METZMAKER: Who decides the partners the partners are whoever likes our page and we reshare things? Partners like a list of partners that the SILC decides. That is where my question is.

 >> ADRIENNE PICKET: So, I think to answer that we do have all of the CILs. So, the CIL is usually our priority. And then secondarily are anything that may be relevant to the disability community at large.

 >> THERESA METZMAKER: Okay.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Adrienne, this is Mindy Kulasa, hello.

 >> ADRIENNE PICKET: Hi Mindy.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Thank you for all the great work that IDEA39 has done and is doing. It's awesome. These are great stats so thank you for being such a good partner. But as I was reviewing your presentation before the meeting, people popped into my mind that could be featured in some of these ‑‑ I don't know what to call them. Not social media. People that would be good to include, you know, leaders, leaders, formal and informal in the disability community. What's the best way and would you like input from the Council if we know of people that you might want to focus on?

 >> ADRIENNE PICKET: Yes 100% we would love, love, love any input that you all have on different leaders who can be, you know, part of our roundtables or featured on social or in any possible way. So, I would probably say the best way would be to e‑mail any of your suggestions to Steve or Jamia. And their contact information. So, either e‑mails or phone numbers so that we can reach out to them to make sure that they can be part of what we're building. So, yes, please.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Okay, great, because I thought of some really good people.

 >> ADRIENNE PICKET: Anybody on this call, please share and make those connections.

 >> MINDY KULASA: Will do. Thank you, Adrienne.

 >> ADRIENNE PICKET: Thank you, Mindy.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you Adrienne, does anyone have any questions or comments for her? Thank you so much for your presentation. It's so much exciting work and so much in the pipeline for us and we are excited. So.

 >> ADRIENNE PICKET: We are excited too and will be in touch with a lot of you. Thank you so much.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Great so moving along with our agenda, we have no unfinished business or new business on here. And so now is the time for information sharing or announcements that anyone may have. Just anything that's happening within the disability community, that anyone would like to share.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Jamia, this is Steve. I would just like to congratulate you, Mindy, and Aaron on your reappointment to the Council. We are very excited to have you come back. And for Yvonne's appointment to the CIL director representative on the Council. Congratulations and welcome aboard. And as you heard earlier, Yasmina, the new director of the disability developmental disabilities Council, is starting the application process and should be appointed here relatively soon and we are excited to have her fill that ex officio seat for the DD Council. So, congratulations to all of you.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, Steve. Thank you so much for that. Is there any other announcements or things that we need to know about? Okay, hearing none, we are going to open up our meeting to public comment. So, if anyone has any public comment or anything that they would like to share, anyone, the floor is open for you to speak. Hearing no public comment, I would like to make a motion to adjourn the meeting. Is there a second?

 >> GLEN ASHLOCK: This is Glen, I second.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Okay all in favor.

 >> Aye.

 >> JAMIA DAVIS: Thank you, everyone for joining us today. We truly appreciate your reports and information, and we look forward to the next one in March of 2024. Have a nice day, everyone.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Enjoy your weekend and be safe out there everyone.