# FY2025-2027 SPIL Public Input Session February 18, 2024

20240218-1200 Meeting

Captioned by Q&A Reporting, Inc., [www.qacaptions.com](http://www.qacaptions.com)

 >> STEVE LOCKE: It is Noon, and it looks like we have a few people joining us. We will wait until they connect here. We will wait one more minute to see if we have any other members of the public who would like to join the meeting today. It's 12:00 and we will get started here in about 50 seconds. All right we are going to go ahead and get started. I want to thank everybody for joining with us this afternoon. I want to thank you for joining the Michigan independent living Council public hearing on the 2024‑2027 state plan for Independent Living. I'm Steve Locke, the Executive Director and staff to the Council. This meeting is being recorded and closed captioning and ASL interpretation is being provided. The MISILC is a Governor appointed consumer-controlled Council that jointly develops a three-year state plan for Independent Living. Also known as the SPIL or state plan. Jointly we developed this with the centers for Independent Living in the state after public input from individuals with disabilities, stakeholders and the public. The SPIL establishes a blueprint for present and future Independent Living programs and services in Michigan and reflects our commitment to comply with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements during the three years that are covered by the plan.

 MISILC is conducting a survey to gather information about programs and services that provide support and opportunities for people who have disabilities who live independently in the community. And the information collected will help to assess how those programs and services are meeting the needs of people who have disabilities living in Michigan. Results of the survey will provide the statewide Independent Living Council with the information necessary to work with advocates and policy makers to create new initiatives and to exhaust existing services for Michiganders who have disabilities. Your participation in the process is vital and we appreciate your time and consideration in completing this survey. Statewide Independent Living Council needs to hear directly from people who have disabilities, their family members, friends, caregivers and other stakeholders. The 2024‑2027 SPIL timeline is as follows. Between now and May 1st of this year the Council will continue gathering public input from May 1st to May 30th the Council will receive public comments on the draft SPIL. So we plan to have a draft SPIL up on our website, available for public review no later than May 1st of this year.

 Our SPIL is actually due to the administration on community living which is our Federal oversight entity no later than June 30th of 2024. Along with participating in today's meeting you may also submit your comments by completing SILC's community needs assessment online survey. A link to the survey may be found on the Council's website which is www.misilc.org. You may also submit your comments via e‑mail to Tracy@misilc.org. Which is TRACY@MISILC.ORG. You may also mail them to PO Box 71 Middleville, Michigan, that is M‑I‑D‑D‑L‑E‑V‑I‑L‑L‑E, Michigan zip code 49333. You may also leave a recorded message by calling toll free 833‑808‑7452. If you need any accommodations to participate in this survey please contact Tracy Brown who is the SILC director of operations at 833‑808‑7452 or by the e‑mail that I have just given to you. To encourage orderly administration of this meeting and to minimize the possibility of any disruptions this meeting will be conducting in accordance with the following two protocols. One, the sole purpose of this meeting is to receive public input into the development of the 2024‑2027 SPIL. Two, members of the public who desire to give their input will be given a single five-minute time period for each question to make their public comment. Members of the public or groups or organizations wishing to submit written or recorded comments may do so by providing their written or recorded comments again to Tracy Brown SILC operations director.

 We have six questions that we are going to ask. And then each member of the public that would like to give public comment on those questions will be given a five‑minute time period to do so. These are the same questions that you will find on our online survey known as our community needs assessment. So the first question is: What barriers have you experienced or are experiencing now that impact your ability to live independently in your community? And I see we have several members of the public with us today. Is there anyone that would like to give public comment on this question? You can either use the hand raise feature at the bottom of your screen under reactions. If you click on reactions you will see a raised hand feature. Or you may just state your name to be recognized for public comment.

We do have questions up on the screen. I'll read that first question. I see go ahead, Emily Smith.

 >> Hi, my name is Emily Smith and for me one of the biggest barriers is access to adequate healthcare. And access to a healthcare advocate. I have multiple complex chronic illnesses as well as physical and intellectual disabilities. And it's really difficult for me to get access to care. Just seeing doctors that are able to treat me. But then also managing my care as far as getting prescriptions, getting referrals, scheduling appointments, attending appointments and there is no like I don't have, you know, a family member or somebody that can do those things for me. And I don't have access to any, I don't know, program or anything because the only option is private pay, which is something that I cannot afford. And so I'm left to manage my own healthcare. Which basically means that I don't really have proper healthcare.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Thank you very much for that input, Emily. All comments that we receive today will be compiled into a comment document that is shared with our SPIL writing team so all of your comments will be forwarded to our writing team. For consideration as we write our goals and objectives for the state plan. So thank you very much, Emily for that input. Is there anyone else that would like to give public input to question number one? And I'll read that question one more time. Go ahead, Katherine Fisk, yes.

>> STEVE LOCKE: You may have to unmute yourself Katherine in the lower right-hand corner is a mute button.

 >> I'm a parent of a special needs young adult and who is 20. And we are now just entering this experience of finding living outside of the home. So I guess the barriers that I see are access to what's available. And Emily's share kind of widens that whole kind of scope for me. So we are very in the beginning of the process.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Thank you very much, Katherine. Is there anyone else who would like to give public comment on our first question about what barriers have you experienced or are experiencing now that impact your ability to live independently in your community?

 >> The lack of caregivers.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Great, thank you for that. What was that, that just spoke?

 >> Rosalie Austin.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Thank you so much Rosalie. Is there anything else that you would like to put into public comment for question number one besides caregivers?

 >> Access to services from community mental health and approval of appropriate budget to meet the needs.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Great, thank you very much Rosalie. Anyone else who would like to give public comment to question number one before we move on?

 >> Affordable accessible housing.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Affordable and accessible housing. We have that recorded. Thank you, Rosalie. Denise?

 >> Yes, I'd like to just make a comment.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Go ahead.

 >> Yeah, I have found that I agree with all of the other statements. I did take your survey. One of the biggest obstacles for my family is that our son is so severely cognitively impaired and so incontinent that there really is a huge barrier for how he can be in the community and right now he is still in school. But once he graduates at age 26, what I'm finding is community mental health of Ottawa county is depending on me hiring direct care support to come into the home or take him into the community. There are some programs for those that can live or that can speak or maybe have less cognitive impairment. There is a few programs for them. But what I'm finding is my son is really being discriminated on. That he doesn't meet criteria and therefore there are no day programs. And there is no place that he can meet other peers in Ottawa county.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Thank you for your comment. We appreciate that. Anyone else who would like to give public comment on question number one? .

 >> This is Emily again. I wanted to add to the previous comment about affordable, accessible housing. I have also found that to be a huge barrier for myself and a lot of people. Even just considering like physical accessibility as a wheelchair user, I was living in an apartment building for a time. And ended up being trapped in my apartment for two weeks because the elevator was broken and then made the decision to look for other housing and there was none. And it took me months and months and using up all of my savings to buy a house that I then had to alter to make it more accessible for myself. And still had to go over a month without a wheelchair ramp to get in and out of the house. And there just was no accessible housing in my community available to me. Let alone anything that was affordable.

 >> STEVE: Thank you for that, Emily. In the chat box I did put a link to Disability Network Michigan. That is the state association for centers for Independent Living. If you go to that website, you will be able to locate contact information for your area center for Independent Living. As a resource.

 Okay, I see no other hands. We will move to question number two. What would you like to see change in your community?

 >> More transparency on services available in one's place. We are directed to look at the 211 United Way website which is difficult and outdated, CMH websites lack transparency to obtain these services. You get referred and referred around in circles.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Thank you Rosalie. Emily Smith, go ahead.

 >> Yeah, this is Emily Smith. Something that I really struggle with is just both physical and social barriers to access to just really the community as a whole. There are so many just physical places that are not physically accessible. And I shouldn't have to call, you know, a bunch of people and get the Government involved just to go shopping. And then also it seems to be that in a lot of these community spaces people with disabilities are an afterthought or, you know, people just do the bare minimum to us, but we are not considered equals in these spaces, and we are not considered for leadership positions. And really having that ability to lead and guide a lot of these decisions that are happening in our communities and our cities because we are just an afterthought. And then the accessibility is done at a bare minimum instead of looking at what's the best and what would put us at equal footing with others.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Thank you, Emily. Anyone else who would like to give public comment on what would you like to see change in your community? Okay we will move on to question number three. What Independent Living services do you currently receive? And we have listed out several of the core services that centers for Independent Living are federally required to provide to their communities. Those are advocacy. Information and referral services. School to work transition. Peer support. Independent Living skill support. And transition to community‑based living. Many centers offer services above and beyond these Federal core services. But we are curious what Independent Living services do you currently receive? It can be inclusive of what the centers for Independent Living provide or services you receive elsewhere as well. Yes Emily go ahead.

 >> Hi, this is Emily. I do receive peer support services and I also was able to get a ramp installed on my home last year through the Disability Network as a free service. I have not been able to find or have been offered any type of advocacy services. And that has been a very major barrier for me to not having, you know, an advocate which is very different from peer support. I meet with my peer support, and they can help me talk through things and give me some resources and things that I can do on my own. But I've not had access to an advocate that can actually help me in advocating whether it's in the healthcare setting or the work setting or any other community setting.

 >> STEVE: Thank you very much for that, Emily. Rosalie, go ahead.

 >> Like you're sitting in your picture that Michigan independent supported living what does the C stand for?

 >> STEVE LOCKE: In my background?

 >> Yes.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: That stands for the Michigan Statewide Independent Living Council.

 >> Okay, and are they different or separate from the disability living networks? Or Disability Network?

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Yes. We are a separate ‑‑ we are a Governor appointed Council, but we work hand in hand with the centers for Independent Living to create this three‑year state plan. So where the centers are providing services that are local, the Council is more of a statewide entity whose main jobs are to, one, write a state plan for Independent Living in collaboration with the centers for Independent Living based on the input that we are gathering from folks like you. Monitoring the implementation of that state plan. And then evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of that state plan. So much like centers for independent living our Council is made up of a majority of people with disabilities who are neither state nor CIL employees. So anybody from the disability community can apply to be on this Council. If you go to the Governor's appointments website they have an application on there and we strongly encourage folks from the disability community to apply to be appointed to the Council by the Governor.

 >> But locally it's your Disability Networks?

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Yes, they are the actual service providers. The Council is not a service provider. We are federally barred from providing services. We can provide information and referral. And generally we will refer people to a center for Independent Living if they call us or the appropriate agency. Another agency that works directly with people with disabilities in terms of legal assistance would be disability rights Michigan. They have a lot of attorneys on staff. And they actually if someone has a complaint about a center for independent living or the services that they are providing, they are the Federal contractor who investigates those complaints. And, Rosalie, I see you have your hand up.

 >> Yeah, I'm still trying to process like I know there is a Disability Network lakeshore in my county. But I'm just unsure of what they provide. I know there is Disability Network Southwest Michigan in Kalamazoo area.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Yes.

 >> And they are just outstanding as far as just information. But how much it varies from county to county, how productive an agency is.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Sure. So if you go to that link that I put in the chat, Disability Network Michigan, that is the state association for all the centers here in Michigan. There are 13 centers for Independent Living in Michigan. And they all have their own counties that they provide services to. So if you go to that website, you will see Michigan is divided up according to the counties that each one of those centers provides services to. Nationwide there are over 400 centers for Independent Living in the country. Michigan has 13. And almost all of the counties in Michigan are covered by a center for Independent Living in terms of services. And here in question number three, these are the Federal core services that each center is required to provide. Although many of them go above and beyond that. Those centers for Independent Living are all nonprofit organizations and they are designed by, run by and managed by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. So when you say Disability Network lakeshore, that would be a sister agency to Disability Network Southwest Michigan. And then there is Disability Network eastern Michigan. Disability Network capital area. If you go to that website you will see the list of all the different names that are on there. And then there is a map of Michigan that will show you what counties each of those centers for Independent Living covers in terms of service territory. And also provides a link to each one of their websites so that you can learn more individually about each one of those centers. Thank you for that, Rosalie. And I hope that it is at least some starting information for you. Anyone else that would like to give public comment on question number three before we move on? Yes, Denise, go ahead.

 >> So would the center for Independent Living, would they be able to provide anyone like maybe an independent facilitator for a person-centered plan for example?

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Many of them do provide those services. Or they can link you with somebody who will do independent facilitation. I personally know that several centers for Independent Living provide those services either in-house or they have a list of people that provide independent facilitation for a person-centered planning. Yes, I would encourage you what county do you live in?

 >> Ottawa.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Ottawa county. Do you know who your center for Independent Living is? Would that be Disability Network or Disability Network of Kent county.

 >> I don't know. But I can look that up. Thank you for the information.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Yeah, you're welcome. It looks like for Ottawa county that will be Disability Network lakeshore. And they are located in Holland, Michigan. Rosalie, do you have more to add or is your hand just up from the last time? And that is okay if it is. We are going to move on to ‑‑ okay, okay, no worries. We are going to move on to question number four. What services would you like to see your center for Independent Living provide? Yes, Katherine, go ahead.

 >> I put this in the chat because this is always confusing to me. And I appreciate you taking the time to explain this stuff to us. But would there be a conflict between what our CMH people do and what the center for Independent Living people do? Because I feel like one would one supersede the other because I've heard the center for Independent Living can do, supports coordination which is what I CMH does. So it's all confusing.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Yeah, actually a lot of centers for Independent Living work hand in hand with their local community mental health agency. I know some centers actually have contracts with their local CMH to provide services such as CLS which is community living supports. Or supports coordination as you just mentioned. Often times CILs will act in an advocacy capacity. Or a consumer who is receiving CMH services. And then sometimes centers will actually contract with CMHs to provide CMH services to the community. So the relationship kind of varies and it can be different from county to county and from CIL to CIL. So in terms of conflict I think that they try to work more with each other as instead of sub planting what the other agency does. So that may be why you're seeing, you know, one center is offering supports coordination through CMH because more than likely they have bid on a contract with CMH to provide those services for CMH consumers.

 >> But then I would be the person that's coordinating both of these, so it's kind of like it seems like and that's a bit much to handle.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Well, it would be that center would be a subcontractor of community mental health. So the person that's receiving services is still a CMH consumer or customer. And those services are being provided by subcontractors to community mental health. If that makes sense.

 >> Thank you.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Yes.

 >> Can you do more education about conflict free access and planning? Because even though an independent supports coordinator is not employed directly by CMH, in our area I would love to see more independent supports coordination.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Great. And that's exactly the kind of input that we are looking for, Rosalie, so that is perfect for question number four, and we've got that down and recorded.

 >> And that I know the center has helped me with like our community pool was charging a $2 caregiver fee for a person who needs assistance to go to the pool. They help do away with that. But that's how I found out they have an ADA504 coordinator. And I feel CMH needs to utilize that person's knowledge more in the advocacy realm versus all this internal CMH making all these decisions. That each CMH having a contracted ADA‑504 coordinator.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Thank you for that. Yeah, that's the thing with CMH's is that each one of them are locally controlled as opposed to the state administering it. It's much like, you know, the problem that we have with transportation. Because a lot of that is controlled at the regional level. And I know a lot of folks have trouble, for example, using public transportation across county lines. Because that transportation is needed in a service area that is a funding supports for that county. We have that here in Mid‑Michigan where I live where folks are trying to get to say Saginaw valley state University from a county that the University is not in and having to use two or three separate public transportation systems because it's controlled regionally. And it creates those real barriers for folks just to either get groceries or continue their education. Or just access those basic life services that we all need to live independently, day‑to‑day. Yes, Emily, go ahead.

 >> Yeah, I think, I mean, the one big thing that I would like to have is, you know, the healthcare advocacy and help with healthcare management. But I think also something that would be, I think, just overall much better is if the Disability Networks were working directly with the disability rights organizations. Because that is something that I see a lot where people, you know, individuals are bringing up these issues that come down to like a public policy issue or a legal issue and then they just get sent as an individual to disability rights organizations for legal assistance. And then, you know, whether or not they pick that up as a case or not, but then on these larger, because a lot of issues that I have I can recognize them as systemic issues within, you know, the healthcare system or within the community that aren't really, you know, it's not an individual issue. But then the Disability Network can't do any type of like legal work or they can't do policy advocacy lobbying‑type work. And so there is just this real gap where it's like, okay, we don't have the legal framework for this yet, but we have this need but then they can't carry that over to the legal arena when it's not just an individual issue.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Thank you for that, Emily. I did go ahead and put in the link to disability rights Michigan's website. You can get quite a bit of information on the services they offer there. They are heavily involved in public policy advocacy. A lot of the folks that are on staff over there are attorneys and that is their main focus is to work on disability policy here in the State of Michigan. As well as provide some advocacy services for people with disabilities. Rosalie, did you want to add anything? Or Denise or Katherine?

 >> It seems to me a well-kept secret that about Disability Network lakeshore or I've been unaware until about a year ago that this agency exists.

 >> STEVE: And, Rosalie, I'm curious how did you hear about that? Because, you know, I've worked in this for 20 years in this network. I worked as a center for Independent Living for 13 years. And we constantly said this. It's almost like the best kept secret and we are trying so hard to not be that. Our Council started a statewide outreach program about three years ago so that we have more of a presence on social media to get the word out about centers for Independent Living and Independent Living here in Michigan. So Rosalie I'm curious how did you hear about that?

 >> It was because the community pool in my city was charging that $2 caregiver fee. And somebody suggested contact Disability Network lakeshore about ADA and the 504. And all these years my daughter has received services from CMH, but CMH never tells you about advocacy organizations. And so I connected with the Disability Network lakeshore, and they helped me. We eliminated that fee.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: That is very valuable information, Rosalie for me to know.

That is very important because we want to find out, one, how people are eventually finding out about centers for independent living and SILC and the gaps are because we don't want to be the best kept secret any longer. We want people to be able to access the services and for the most part a lot of these from the centers are free and no charge. Denise you said you just learned about SILC last week. Can I ask you where or how you learned about SILC?

 >> It was actually Facebook. It was your survey.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Facebook.

 >> It was the survey link.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Wonderful. Fantastic. I'm glad to hear that. Katherine, how did you come to learn about centers for Independent Living and SILC?

 >> What is SILC?

 >> STEVE LOCKE: SILC is the acronym. I'm sorry it stands for the statewide Independent Living Council. So I work for the Council as an employee. And this is the Governor appointed Council who is conducting this survey that you are participating in.

 >> Well, I heard about the center for Independent Living. We have one not too far from where we live. I'm in Washtenaw County. And it seemed to me like it mainly was just kind of a place for people to go and be social. But I'm learning more that I talk to people that there is more to it and I understand that they recently changed their name and so I'm interested in seeing how they could help us in various ways.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Yes. Wonderful. Yeah, definitely reach out to them. They did recently change their name. And if you go to the first website that I posted, you will be able to find a link directly to their website.

 >> Yeah, I got that.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: All right. Great. Excellent. Anyone else on what services would you like to see your center for Independent Living provide before we move on to our last question of the survey?

 >> I would like to see parent peer support for like adults with significant disabilities aging out of the school system where they fall off that imaginary cliff and are struggling to find services. And not panic about what are we going to do? We are aging. We don't want a group home. What happens next?

 >> Like a parent support circle. To even go to each other's person-centered planning and say well, this worked for us, hopefully it could work for you. Or try this, try that.

 >> STEVE: Thank you, Rosalie. Katherine, go ahead.

 >> I wholeheartedly agree and a lot of times the thing is that those stuff, those things might be out there. But it's not communicated like I mean our son is still on the young adult program. But, you know, it would be ideal if there was more connection to school districts or places that have these young adult programs. So that they can provide information, ease of transition. I'm part of a group called the Washtenaw life span which is a bunch of mainly moms trying to develop all these things that we are talking about. You know, what is happening after age 26. Where are they going to go. So you know, and, again, I'm a newbie and I'm learning all this but it's like we have to hunt and Peck for this stuff. And there's so many places to hunt and Peck. That it's like there is no one place that we can go that would find or that would help us with all of this stuff.

In fact, there was a parent in the school district who put together steps once your child turns 18 these are the things you need to do. And that was made like, you know, 15 years ago and it's still being used by people. There is nothing like that out there to tell parents of students who are transitioning into the young adult, or you know, transitioning out of the young adult program, what do they need to do? I'm just finding it, you know, through things I get in the mail. Or I mean it's like and it's overwhelming.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Yeah.

 >> Or peer support.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Very frustrating.

 >> A peer support parent to go to an IEP. I'm advocating they start that process at 14 years old. And educate and informed. I learned most of what I learned from other parents. But where are these other parents?

 >> Exactly.

 >> I mean there is Michigan alliance for families that has a lot of resources too. But again that is another one of those places that we have to hunt and Peck.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Yeah, it seems like having a no wrong door approach to all of these different, it can be overwhelming the number of agencies that are out there. And then having to learn about those on your own. I'm going over to the chat. Denise had put in why do -- she says schools would be a great place to market centers for Independent Living and SILC. And why do each parent caregiver need to research all this? CMH is not advocating or serving, appears they believe their job is gate keeping, state funds. I attend Ottawa center does a poor job of life after 26, hunt and Peck or bleed. Thank you for those comments.

Okay, the last question we have for our survey, and I really, really appreciate all of you taking the time to come on here on a Sunday afternoon and share this important information with us. The last question we have is what have we not asked you about your experience with Independent Living that you feel is important for us to know?

 >> Just awareness that they exist and what they're capable of doing. And that.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: More awareness of what is out there.

 >> And what they are capable of doing. Because most of us need help with advocacy. But a lot of advocacy organizations don't ‑‑ it's more action versus talk. And changing some of these systemic issues. And a lot of times it takes a formal complaint, a formal appeal, and a lot of us don't know how to do that or where to do that and just to have some moral support and encouragement to make this world a better place for people with disabilities. Because another information and referral to somewhere else is time consuming and exhausting when ‑‑ if they are here locally, could help more with local efforts.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Thank you for that, Rosalie. Would anyone else like to give public comment about question number five what have we not asked you about your experience with Independent Living that you feel is important for us to know? And, again, if you can't think right now about your answers, we are taking public comment all the way through the end of May. And I would encourage you to get on SILC's website and on the first page you will see a link to that survey, and you can complete that survey and there is room in there for you to give longer answers in these boxes. It's really kind of unlimited number of characters that you can type in there. So if you have anything else that you want to add, please go ahead and fill that survey out. There is a question here from Denise, how will the survey be published? Do you mean the survey itself or the answers to those? The responses? The answers and responses. Those are located on the Michigan Statewide Independent Living Council's website. Yes, the current state plan is on our website. Along with the responses that we have received to the survey so far. Those are available for public review. And I'll put in our website right here. And that will take you right to where you can view the current state plan. And also all of our SPIL writing team meetings are open to the public as well.

We do those via Zoom. And the public is welcome to join those. And watch the process. We do have public comment at the end of each of those meetings. So the public is welcome to listen in on those meetings as we craft the SPIL.

 Okay, I see Rosalie and Emily's hands up, go ahead.

 >> I'm thinking it would be less confusing if there was one name or include in parentheses Disability Networks. Because you are like the parent agency for Disability Networks, right? But yet.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: We are not actually. Because, yeah, the Disability Network Michigan is the state association. It's a voluntary state association that all the centers in Michigan belong to. The Council is a completely separate entity. So when we talk about Michigan's Independent Living network, our Council is one of three legs on that stool. The centers for Independent Living as a whole represent the third leg. And then what's called our designated state entity, which in our case is Michigan Rehabilitation Services, is the third partner at the table.

 >> Okay, I got a question about this MRS.

 >> STEVE: Yeah unfortunately I won't be able to answer those questions because again the sole purpose of the meeting today is to receive public input into the SPIL. But I would welcome you to join any of our Council meetings. Those are available via Zoom. Our next one is coming up, on March 8th. And there is opportunity for public comment during our meetings. And if you do have questions about MRS, I would encourage you to contact your center for independent living because almost all of the centers work with Michigan Rehabilitation Services. And can answer any questions that you might have about them.

 >> So, again, the Disability Network then isn't the center for Independent Living.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Well, they all have different names. But about 15 years ago, because it was confusing, because they were all named something different, they all attempted to change their name with Disability Network at the beginning of their name. But not 100% of them ended up doing that. So most of them start out with Disability Network of and then they have their service area. They did that intentionally to stop confusing the public. But the center that serves, say, Grand Rapids, is still called disability advocates of Kent county. The Ann Arbor center for Independent Living just recently changed their name like within the past four months to have Disability Network at the beginning of their name. So that they all were easier to find. However, they are all separate, distinct, non‑profits that operate on their own. They do come together voluntarily under the umbrella of Disability Network Michigan which is their state association that they have created for themselves.

I know it's very confusing. It can be very confusing. I think a visual map of how it works would be probably beneficial for the public to help understand that.

 Anyone else that would like to give public input into our last question about what have we not asked about your experience with Independent Living that you feel is important before we wrap up here today? .

 >> This is Emily. I have just a quick question about the Council. Because I know that the Disability Networks at least most of them have a like minimum requirement for how many employees identify as having a disability. I was just wondering if that is something that the Council also has.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: It is. Yes. We are required to have at least 51% or more of our Council members be people with disabilities. And our general membership and also our voting membership.

 >> And then also I guess in addition to attending the general Council meetings, are there other opportunities to get more involved with the Council?

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Absolutely. One of those would be our state plan writing team. If you read the state plan for Independent Living that we have right now, there are multiple objectives that we are working on. For instance direct care worker wages is one of our objectives. Emergency preparedness for people with disabilities. We do have leadership teams that meet usually on a monthly basis and those teams are made up of Council members and also employees of centers for Independent Living. So that we can monitor the progress that we are making on those objectives. So, yeah, there is multiple ways that Council members can be more involved than just attending those quarterly business meetings as Council members. Absolutely.

 Any other questions before we wrap up?

 >> Yeah, I had my hand up.

 >> STEVE: Go ahead, Katherine.

 >> I don't know if you have done this or not but add the visual map to I think it is question four that would be very helpful.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Yep, we have noted that. Thank you.

 >> And then just listening to you now, and I can't remember what you are saying but it sounds like ARC or association for community advocacy so there is another entity that is out there trying to help us. So you know how is that connected to what you are doing?

And then you mentioned the three steps that you are on. First one is to write the state plan. Second one is monitoring and then the third one is evaluating. What step are you on now? Are you on step one? Trying to read.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Yeah, we are in the last year of our current state plan for Independent Living. So right now we are evaluating the current state plan that we are coming to the end of. And we are in the process of writing the next one. That's going to go in effect on October 1st of this year. So we are kind of doing all three at the same time depending on, you know, what year of the SPIL that we are in.

 >> Thank you.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: You're welcome.

 >> That is what my question was for is when will a new state plan be published and when and you just answered that in October and I assume on your website.

 >> STEVE LOCKE: Yep, the current state plan is on our website. You can pull that up either in PDF format or word format. We hope to have the next draft state plan available for public review by May 1st. And there will be a 30‑day public review period. Where the public can submit their comments on the draft. Again, we are going to continue having these Zoom meetings each month. We will get the March one scheduled and then we will push that information out to all of our social media channels. We plan to have at least three Zoom meetings per month all the way up through April. Again, the survey is available all the time online for folks to fill out. And I really appreciate your participation this afternoon. And well appreciate all of you taking the time on this Sunday afternoon to come and give public input into this process. So thank you all very much. And I hope you have a wonderful rest of your weekend. And thank you for your participation.