Call to Order and Introductions

Bob Kresmer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

ILB Funding Discussion

Bob Kresmer stated the Independent Living Blind (ILB) Workgroup was meeting to discuss the potential $500,000 increase in funding for ILB services, and how those funds would be distributed. Bob Kresmer stated he was aware that in previous years, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) had returned any ILB funds that were not used. Kristen Mackey clarified that VR had not returned any funds but used those funds in other ways such as through the purchase of equipment. Ms. Mackey stated Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) might have to potentially revert some funding across the program if RSA did not receive a waiver. Bob Kresmer inquired whether RSA ever received waivers in the past. Kristen Mackey stated she was not aware of the Department of Education ever providing waivers, although there were some conversations with Federal Legislation regarding
Bob Kresmer inquired whether VR would be able to use all funds for blind and visually impaired services. Kristen Mackey stated that SBVID had about 3 months to expend the 110 funding, although the required 15% in Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) set aside could affect that. Amy Porterfield inquired whether RSA still had ILRS services. Kristen Mackey stated that when the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was enacted, the ILRS funds were dedicated to the Centers for Independent Living (CIL)s in which RSA was a pass through for those funds. Amy Porterfield stated the CILs took over all IL services except for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) services. Bob Kresmer stated that council members had met with members of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) to ensure there were IL services for individuals under 54, in which SILC indicated there was not a current mechanism to offer those services. Bob Kresmer inquired whether there would be a way to use the potential increase of $500,000 to bolster outreach efforts and a way to offer those services. Kristen Mackey stated there would likely be a method for those services to be offered under the Department of Economic Security (DES) using stable funds. Ms. Mackey stated the Area Agency on Aging, for example, had partnerships with organizations that could provide those services. Bob Kresmer inquired whether that department could provide services to individuals under 54. Kristen Mackey stated she was unsure whether there were age requirements, although it was worth exploring current services for individuals seeking IL skills but were not interested in employment. Amy Porterfield noted that anyone providing the IL services would need to be able to provide blindness training as well.

Amy Porterfield inquired whether $500,000 would be enough funding to provide those services. Kristen Mackey noted that it could be developed, it would be a small program. Brian Dulude inquired whether the CILs could share the names of individuals that were referred to the organization. Amy Porterfield stated it would likely depend on the CIL, although she was unsure whether they would be able to share that information. Kristen Mackey stated the CILs were Federally funded. Bob Kresmer inquired whether it would be worth the effort to connect with the CILs regarding IL services. Brian Dulude stated the council could have that conversation with the CIL and noted the benefit from obtaining information prior to discussing the issue with the Legislation. Amy Porterfield stated that any increase in funding would go towards the ILB program, and individuals seeking ILB services under 55 would need a way to receive services. Bob Kresmer stated he would refer individuals seeking ILB services to apply for VR and would explain that individuals did not have to work 40 hours a week if they were unable to. Brian Dulude stated that if the individual was working in an integrated setting, VR was willing to work with them. Ted Chittenden agreed that the council would benefit from learning about the need for services and
to obtain some statistics. Bob Kresmer stated that number of individuals seeking services would be small. Amy Porterfield stated that many individuals were not aware of the blindness services that were available and would benefit from outreach efforts.

Amy Porterfield inquired whether DES would support a priority of funding for the OIB program and fund a mechanism for DES to provide outreach efforts to build capacity for under 55 services. Kristen Mackey stated that funds were available for OIB services for individuals over 55, and RSA could potentially expand services with stable funding. Kathy Ber clarified that DES could not support funding that was not included in the Governor’s budget. Amy Porterfield agreed and noted the GCBVI could not advocate for an item not supported by the Governor’s Office either. Amy Porterfield inquired whether there was a current infrastructure for RSA to provide services to individuals under 55. Kristen Mackey stated there was not a current infrastructure for those services currently, although RSA could potentially partner with other departments and provide the blindness training portion. Amy Porterfield stated that in the past, there were positions in the past that would provide outreach efforts to specific populations. Kristen Mackey stated the Statewide Coordinators positions had been morphed into the supervisor and manager roles, although all staff should be advocating and education the community about the available services. Bob Kresmer stated the Arizona Talking Book Library had an Outreach Librarian position that would provide presentations regarding the library’s services. Kristen Mackey stated that all VR staff should be providing outreach services, and it would be difficult to justify one Full Time position for each disability population, although she would consider a position that would advocate for all populations. Ms. Mackey noted that RSA had an agreement with the Talking Book Library and there might be an opportunity for the library to provide information regarding VR services. Brian Dulude stated that RSA also supported the Newsline, which could be used to provide information about VR and OIB services. Amy Porterfield stated the importance in identifying the need for OIB services and where the individuals were located, and to develop a partnership with other agencies to provide services for individuals under 55. Kristen Mackey agreed that it would be beneficial to learn about the need for services and to potentially collaborate with other agencies and organizations. Amy Porterfield inquired whether the potential increase in $500,000 would go towards ILB services. Kristen Mackey stated that additional funding would go towards ILB services, and RSA would need to coordinate efforts to provide services for individuals under 55. Ms. Mackey stated that she and Brian Dulude had discussed keeping an informal list of individuals referred for services. Kristen Mackey stated the benefit for other agencies to keep track of the referrals for 3 months to identify what the individuals need and where they were referred to. Amy Porterfield stated
the council would continue to be in contact with the Legislature and would inform RSA of any updates. Bob Kresmer stated the workgroup members had work they could perform independently prior to the next Full Council meeting.

**Agenda and Date for Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the ILB Workgroup will be determined. Agenda items are as follows:

- ILB Funding Discussion

**Announcements**

There were no announcements.

**Public Comment**

A call to the public was made with no response’s forthcoming.

**Adjournment of Meeting**

Bob Kresmer motioned to adjourn the meeting. Amy Porterfield seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.