

2019 – 2020 |



SSAN Annual Report

The Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



The 2019 – 2020 SSAN Annual Report was produced by the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities



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2019-2020 SSAN Annual Report

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About SCDD

The California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) is established by State (Lanterman Act) and Federal (Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000) and is one of 56 State Councils on Developmental Disabilities within the US and its territories. SCDD belongs to a national association called the National Association for Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) that provides guidance and support to all 56 State Councils. Growing and supporting self-advocacy is a core principal for every State Council as identified by the Developmental Disabilities Act of 2000.

SCDD has identified self-advocacy as their top goal in their current State Plan and is committed to supporting self-advocacy in California. To meet their commitment to establishing and strengthening a program lead by individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, develop and promote leadership skills, and expand participation in a cross-disability coalition, SCDD created the Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (SSAN) in 2012. Through supporting SSAN, SCDD aims to help self-advocates in California increase knowledge and provide support to help them advocate for their civil and service rights and achieve integration and inclusion in all areas of community life. SCDD supports SSAN members' efforts to be leaders in their communities.

About SSAN

The Statewide Self Advocacy Network (SSAN) promotes leadership and builds bridges that strengthen advocacy among disability communities by focusing on policy change.

Vision Statement

SSAN is a cross-disability network of self-advocates that was established in 2012 and works to do the following:

- Develop the knowledge and skills to make a difference in our region and state.
- Speak up for all people with disabilities.
- Learn about and advocate for issues important to all people with disabilities.
- Lead regional and statewide advocacy groups and networks.
- Train advocates in their communities in order to grow the Self-Advocacy movement in California.
- Share information about programs and supports for people with disabilities.

Agency Members



[California State Council on Developmental Disabilities](#)



[California Department of Developmental Services](#)



[California Foundation for Independent Living Centers](#)



[Association of Regional Center Agencies](#)



[Disability Rights California](#)

California UCEDDs



[UCLA Tarjan Center](#)

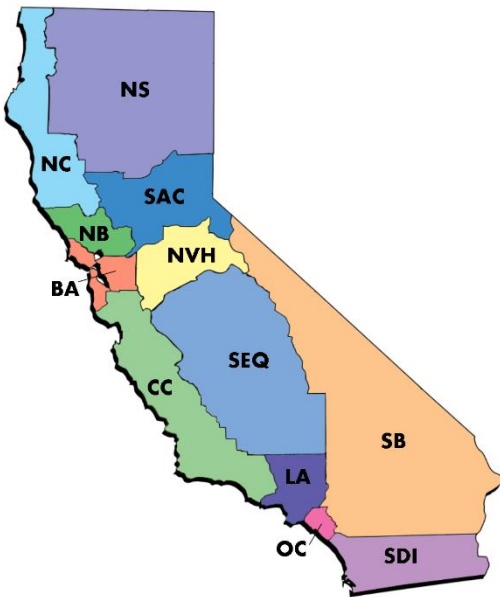


[USC Children's Hospital](#)



[UC Davis MIND Institute](#)

SSAN Members (Roster) 2019–2020



- North Coast Region – Nathaniel Florez
- North State Region – Teresa Moshier
- Sacramento Region – Lisa Cooley
- North Bay Region – Vacant
- Bay Area Region – Regina Woodliff
- North Valley Hills Region – Robert Balderama
- Central Coast Region – David Forderer
- Sequoia Region – Rebecca Donabed
- Los Angeles Region – Julie Gaona
- Orange County Region – Sean Sullivan
- San Bernardino Region – Daniel Fouste
- San Diego Region – Paul Mansell



- Association of Regional Center Agencies – Desiree Boykin
- California Foundation of Independent Living Centers – Renee Wooten/Russell Rawlings
- Department of Developmental Services – Nicole Patterson
- Disability Rights California – Scott Baron
- State Council on Developmental Disabilities – Wesley Witherspoon
- University Center on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
 - UC Davis MIND Institute – Robert Levy
 - UCLA Tarjan Center – Kecia Weller
 - USC Children’s’ Hospital – Wesley Witherspoon

Message from the Officers

It has been two years of great work and surprises for the SSAN membership. We are so honored that we had the privilege of leading this team over that time. It has been with great pride to see how the SSAN adapted to dealing with the pandemic and continued their work and commitment to SSAN and advocates they represent in their own communities. No words can express how delighted we are to be a part of such a great body of people. We have grown into a strong team of advocates and have learned how to support each other in new ways as we charter unknown territory. It is important for the SSAN to continue to be present, and a voice not only in our communities, but statewide even as we continue working through this difficult time. Over the last two years, SSAN has been able to accomplish the following:

- Updates to SSAN Bylaws
- Supported our members involved in wildfires across California
- Some SSAN members attended AUCD in Washington D.C. and did a presentation
- Disability Sensitivity Training
- Disability Pride and Being a Better Advocate-Training
- Established SSAN Priorities
 - ✓ Youth
 - ✓ Transportation
 - ✓ Employment
- Renewed our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)
- Person Centered Planning Training
- CalFresh Training
- Census Training
- Voting Trainings
- Public Transportation Projects and People with Disabilities presentation
- Cyber Security Training
- CFILC and YO! Disabled and Proud Training

- Distributing Personal Protective Equipment to people in their community with the Regional Offices of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities

As the team passes on the torch to the next executive team, we would like the next team to know that no matter what the future holds as far as who becomes elected in December 2020: please know that the support from this team will always be there to carry out your vision to drive the SSAN forward. As things come to an end for this team, we want the SSAN members to know how much we appreciate them for doing that for this team and making it so easy to lead.

Nicole Patterson (Chairperson)

Nicole has been involved with the SSAN since the beginning in 2012 representing the California State Department of Developmental Services (DDS) as a partner. Nicole has worked for DDS for fourteen years as the Coordinator of Advocacy Services. Nicole provides a voice, on behalf of people DDS serves, to the Director and the Department, on issues and problems that people with disabilities may be facing in California and helps to come up with solutions. Nicole has worked in the field of empowering people with disabilities for the past 25+ years. She is passionate about working with people with all types of disabilities, providing assistance and advising them on their rights, helping to change the future view of people with disabilities. It's important to Nicole to show California and other states that people with disabilities can be fully included in all aspects of life by helping to educate the people who provide services, and to enlighten the communities we live in.

Nicole would like to thank SSAN members for the opportunity to serve as Chairperson and appreciates the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities continued support in empowering SSAN members as advocates on a state and local level.

Desiree Boykin (Vice-Chairperson)

Desiree has a B. A. degree in Health and Human Services. In 2011, South Central Los Angeles Regional Center hired her as their Consumer Advocate. She is passionate about the people they serve having the resources they need to reach their goals. Desiree also serves on the Association of Regional Center Agencies' Client Advisory Committee (ARCA CAC). The ARCA CAC elected her to serve as their representative for the SSAN.

Desiree would like to thank SSAN members for the opportunity to serve as Vice-Chair from December 2018—December 2020. She has learned so much under the leadership of Chair Nicole Patterson, along with Secretary Lisa Cooley. She is grateful for the opportunity to work with all of you and looks forward to seeing SSAN continue to advocate for many young and older adults with developmental disabilities throughout California and encourage people with disabilities to get involved in creating positive change.

Lisa Cooley (Secretary)

Lisa started doing disability advocacy work over twenty years ago because our local transportation provider thought that she could walk to a bus stop because she could walk around her house. She became so good at advocating that she decided to become a member of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. She also is a longtime member of her regional center's Client Advisory Committee. Her passion is to empower people with disabilities and move California forward.

Lisa would like to thank SSAN members for the opportunity to serve as the SSAN Secretary for 2018—2020. She has enjoyed working with Nicole and Desiree and getting to know them as the strong and determined advocates they are. She has learned a lot of skills that could help her with future opportunities with advocacy organizations and employment.

2019 – 2020 SSAN Meetings

SSAN held 4 meetings between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020. The meetings were held both in-person in Sacramento, California and virtually using Zoom. Each SSAN meeting included member reports on issues and concerns in their regions, legislative updates, training for members, and resources to distribute to member's communities. Highlights from Meetings include:

- Participated in Training on Active Shooter Guidance
- Participated in Training on California's Voters Choice Act
- Participated in Training on the 2020 Census
- Presentation on AUCD and the importance of Competitive Integrated Employment
- Provided feedback to California Department of Transportation on Public Transportation Projects for People with Disabilities
- Discussed the importance of Youth Engagement in Disability Advocacy
- Presentation on healthy relationships
- Discussed the importance of Disability Sensitivity
- Disability Pride and Being a Better Advocate
- Impact of the Camp Fire on People with Disabilities
- Overview of the Disability Organizing Network
- Reviewed the MOU between SCDD and SSAN
- Person Centered Planning
- Reviewed and approved 4 editions of the SSAN Newsletter

Reflections from SSAN Members



“This year has been challenging for people with I/DD because of social distancing practices. I have had the opportunity to participate in the virtual training series “Raise the Roof” and learned a lot about the topic of affordable housing.”

– Paul Mansell, San Diego

“When I participate in SSAN, I get very excited because I am working to make life better for people with disabilities. Thanks to SSAN, we are able to meet people from all over the United States who are interested in SSAN.”

– Wesley Witherspoon, USC Children’s Hospital UCEDD



“The Statewide Self-Advocacy Network is important because it provides a voice for the developmental disability community in California. SSAN has given me the opportunity to develop my leadership skills through participating in programs like “Raise the Roof” so I can advocate for inclusive housing for people who have disabilities.” – Lisa Cooley, Sacramento

“2020 Has been a very challenging year for all SSAN members and advocates across California, the United States and around the world because of COVID—19. We still realize that the power in advocacy is strong and important no matter what. I feel that SSAN has provided a safe space and knowledge for all people with developmental disabilities to live and strive.”

– Julie Gaona, Los Angeles



Reflections on “Raise the Roof”

Members of SSAN participated in the virtual, training series “Raise the Roof” hosted by the Kelsey, on affordable housing. Key takeaways included:

- The Five basic needs that people have

“There are five basic needs people have to have—food and water, shelter, clothing, and education. Shelter means housing, and for many with limited income, that means affordable housing because housing these days is so terribly expensive.

- Housing needs for people with disabilities

For people with disabilities affordable housing needs to have the following: accessibility (especially for those who use wheelchairs), amenities (located near mass transit hubs, grocery stores, quality schools, and medical facilities), safe, and clean. Affordable housing is a health issue as underscored by the pandemic and the need to shelter in place. Very importantly affordable housing is social justice issue fighting racism, poverty, and ableism.

- Barriers to Affordable and Accessible Housing

Affordable housing is extremely limited due to the concept of “Not in My Backyard (NIMBYism)”, Zone restrictions, regulations, state law, funding complexity, and limitations to housing monies. Regardless of the limitations, it is essential for people with disabilities to live independently, included and integrated in their communities.

SSAN Reflections on Collaborating with Regional Offices to Respond to Community Needs

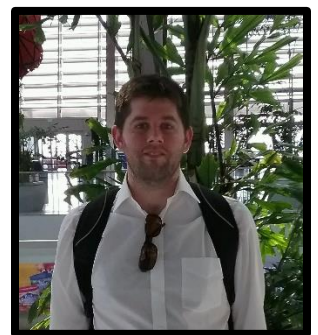
In the wake of the ongoing COVID—19 Pandemic, SSAN Members worked with SCDD Regional Offices to distribute Personal Protective Equipment to Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Key takeaways included:



“Thanks to the hard work of the Los Angeles Regional Office of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. I was able to protect my wife, my family and myself from COVID—19 through the distribution of PPE.”

– Wesley Witherspoon, USC Children’s Hospital UCEDD

“Let’s not beat around the bush: 2020 was the pits. It was especially hard on me, at home with my family, even without COVID affecting us. Despite all that. I still managed to vote and participate in the Census. No virus will define me. Despite these challenges, we’re still together and we’re still going strong. I am grateful to have been part of this organization for four years running and I hope to continue with all of you for four more. Now let’s do something good in 2021.” – Daniel Fouste, San Bernardino



“I have been working with the Regional Office to conduct outreach to the younger generation and am excited that the SSAN is interested in engaging with youth with disabilities in 2021.” – Kecia Weller, UCLA TARJAN Center UCEDD

2019 – 2020 Highlights

SSAN Members participate in Coalitions, Boards and Planning committees throughout California along with providing self-advocates, family advocates and others, trainings related to increasing self-advocacy and access to community supports. Highlights from members during the 2019 – 2020 reporting period include:

- Participated at Regional Advisory Committees
- Participated at SCDD Meetings in Sacramento
- Participated on the SCDD Self Advocates Advisory Committee
- Attended, presented at and organized the following conferences:
 - Supported Life Institute Conference Online
 - In-person and online PFCA Gatherings
 - Virtual “ADA for the Next Generation” Event
 - Virtual Disability Vote California Trainings and Chats
 - Virtual Regional Self-Advocacy Chats
- Members are on their regional center boards, IHSS Public Authority, transportation boards, and People First groups
- Wrote and sent their stories to their Legislators
- Collaborated with regional offices of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to give statewide trainings
- Collaborated with regional offices of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to distribute Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Participated in the Kelsey’s “Raise the Roof: A Training Program for Leaders with Disabilities to Advance Housing”
- Presentations informing their community about SSAN
- Collaborating with agencies to conduct interviews
- Presentation on the California Self-Determination Program



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