



# San Bernardino Regional Office

## Regional Advisory Committee (RAC)

Minutes

**August 29, 2023**

**4:00 pm to 6:00pm**

### **Members Present**

Dustlyne Beavers, **Chair**

Eric Aguilar, **Vice-Chair**

Cindy Cox

Ryan Nelson

Brandi Halstead

Kimberly Risser

Sofia Benitez

Michelle Burns

Kelli Guillory

Reggie Davis

### **Members Absent**

Cathy Rosas

### **SCDD Staff**

Patricia Herrera, MS, Staff Services Manager II (SSMII)

Esteban Ortiz, MHA, Associate Governmental Program Analyst (AGPA)

### **Guest Speaker**

- Bridget Kolakosky, SCDD Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs

### **Public Attendees**

Stella Corbalan

Maria Gomez

### **Meeting called to order at 4:05 p.m.**

Quorum Established. Welcome from Dustlyne Beavers, Chair.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Ryan Nelson motioned to approve minutes of the 8-29-2023 meeting. Motioned seconded by Kim Risser. Unanimously minutes were approved.

### **Presentation- New State Employment First Office presented by Bridget Kolakosky, Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs State Council on Developmental Disabilities**

California became an employment first state in 2013, yet employment of people with disabilities has continued to linger at 17% despite their ability and desire to work for wages at or above the state minimum wage.

Employment First Policy assumes everyone wants to work and that needed services are provided regardless of the severity of an individual's disability. Used successfully in other states, the Employment First Office will help support and coordinate consistent understanding and application of Employment First Policy statewide.

The Employment First Office will be a permanent state office under the California Health and Human Services Agency charged with facilitating the consistent and complete interpretation and implementation of Employment First Policy across the many state agencies and departments providing services to the intellectual and developmental disabilities community.

In 2021, SCDD championed SB 639 by Senator Durazo (Los Angeles), which directs the phase out of subminimum wage programming in California, effective January 1, 2025. As an employment first state, the next logical step is creating an office to help realize Employment First Policy and improve employment opportunities for our community statewide. "We all want to work, and employers need employees," said SCDD Chair Wesley Witherspoon. "The new Employment First Office will focus on helping everyone, including the state agencies supporting us." The Employment First Office will resolve the incomplete interpretation and implementation of California's Employment First Policy.

The Employment First Office will resolve the incomplete interpretation and implementation of California's Employment First Policy. You can read more about the policy here:

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=4869.&highlight=true&lawCode=WIC&keyword=employment+first+policy](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=4869.&highlight=true&lawCode=WIC&keyword=employment+first+policy)

Read the 2023 SCDD report with recommendations about how to phase out of subminimum wage here:

[https://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2023/01/SB639-REPORT-FINAL\\_ACCESSIBLE-FOR-WEB\\_1.2023.pdf](https://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2023/01/SB639-REPORT-FINAL_ACCESSIBLE-FOR-WEB_1.2023.pdf).

### **Report from Regional Manager – Patricia Herrera, M.S.**

- SBRO on August 1, 2023, launched for the first time a Paid Internship Program (PIP). Brandi Halstead, well known to the RAC applied for the PIP via Inland Regional Center (IRC). Brandi went through the process of eligibility of the PIP with IRC. FMS City Walk is the employer. IRC funding job coaching and the PIP. Brandi has been placed at SBRO for a six-month paid internship for the development of skills and for permanent employment at the end of her internship.
- SBRO has been assisting the Local Volunteer Advisory Committee (LVAC) for the Self-Determination Program with solving quorum issues and committee that being able to work on any funded projects with funds DDS has allocated for each LVAC throughout the state. New LVAC members have been recruited by SCDD and IRC. There is finally a quorum. LVAC will be able to move forward with deciding on funded projects with the \$170,000 DDS allocation to promote the Self-Determination Program widely in the community.
- SBRO continues to hold Self-Determination Program Independent Facilitator workshops on different components of the program for self-advocates and family-advocates. The monthly workshops are for self-advocates, parents who serve as IFs for their sons/daughters, new IFs and experienced IFs to share best practices. Sessions are held by different IFs with Kristianna Moralls' leadership. Dustlyne Beavers has joined the workshop series and supporting development of topics and discussions. All IFs are welcomed to the sessions to participate and to present. A separate session is held in the Spanish language with the IF leadership of Lourdes Gomez.
- SBRO team continues to conduct monthly Law Enforcement Trainings for the San Bernardino County Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention Team and the Sheriff's Department. SBRO conducts a 3-hour training on Developmental Disabilities as part of a 40-hour course for the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department. Brian Herritt, Autism Cop, an ex-cop and a dad of a young adult with autism has

been an asset to the SBRO law enforcement training. Esteban Ortiz, SBRO AGPA spearheads the training.

- SBRO is partnering with Disability Rights California (DRC) to offer a series of basic advocacy workshops on accessing Medi-Cal, Institutional Deeming, Medi-Cal Waivers, Tenants Rights, SSI and IHSS. Team is spearheaded by Leilani Pfeifer with sessions being conducted by bilingual English/Spanish Senior Attorney Maria Iriarte. Maria conducts the training separately in English and Spanish. DRC has been an extraordinary training partner for SBRO.
- SBRO launched the Inland Empire Business Advisory RoundTable on August 16, 2023. The Business RoundTable is being spearheaded by Ryan Nelson, RAC self-advocate with his father Keith Nelson. The purpose of the Business RoundTable is mentor potential and new businesses in the hiring of individuals with developmental disabilities. Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), Inland Regional Center and businesses involved in inclusive workforce development were at the meeting. State DOR conducted a presentation on the Demand Side Initiative and the EmployAbility grants targeting small and medium size businesses. The Business RoundTable was held in-person at the Inland Regional Center and virtually with Microsoft TEAMS connection. Tania Morawiec, SCDD Deputy Director of Planning and Regional Office Operations and Jessica Grove, Deputy Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Policy and Resources Division attended the meeting with extraordinary leadership on moving Employment for People with Disabilities forward.
- SBRO continues to advocate for affordable housing for people with I/DD. Involved with the SB 4 advocacy to ensure this bill passes allowing religious institutions and private colleges to lease without strict zoning restrictions for the construction of affordable housing throughout the state. Affordable housing which targets the most vulnerable populations like Senior Citizens and Veterans. People with I/DD have not been included as a vulnerable population. SB 4 legislation and working with religious institutions interested in leasing land for affordable housing and with mainstream affordable housing developers who use tax credits and government funds for targeted populations in need of housing will open the door for individuals with I/Dd to be considered for carve-out subsidized rental units when affordable housing is constructed in religious institutions leased property.

- SBRO Self-Advocacy Council continues to meet monthly to develop education sessions for self-advocates and leadership development opportunities. Planning a Self-Advocacy development series with the support of Brandi Halstead, Outreach Coordinator Intern.

### **Public Comments on Matters Not on the Agenda**

- The Self-Determination Program and the Financial Management Services continue to be of great concern. Delays in the Transition from the Regional Center traditional Service coordination to the Self-Determination Program are significant. There are self-advocates and family advocates who are going on a year waiting to be approved for the program.
- Vendorization of IFs will also be limiting the availability of this crucial service. There is a shortage of Spanish speaking IFs and the vendorization will limit the number of IFs available to conduct this crucial service.

### **Meeting adjourned**

- Dustlyne Beavers motion to adjourn meeting, Kim Risser seconded the motion. Motioned approved by RAC members. Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.