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STATEWIDE SELF ADVOCACY NETWORK MEETING INFORMATION



DATE: Wednesday, February 28, 2023 and Thursday, February 29, 2023



TIME: Wednesday, February 28, 2023 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Thursday, February 29, 2023 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM

This meeting is being held via teleconference within the meaning of Government Code section 11123.2. Members may be physically present at one or more teleconference locations. There may be members of the public body who are participating in today's meeting that were granted a reasonable accommodation per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Accessible formats of all agenda and materials can be found online at www.scdd.ca.gov.

MEETING DETAILS:

Teleconference Location:

SCDD HQ OFFICE
3831 North Freeway Blvd., #125
Sacramento, CA 95834

ZOOM LINK:

<https://bit.ly/SSAN2024Feb>

CALL- IN NUMBER: (669) 900 9128

WEBINAR ID: 839 4141 6855

PASSCODE: 568075

Accessibility

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AGENDA FOR DAY 1

**February 28, 2023
10:00 AM – 2:30 PM**

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Presented by: Charles Nutt, Chairperson, Nicole Patterson, Vice-Chairperson, and Rebecca Donabed, Secretary



2. Public Comment

Public comment is welcome. Comment on agenda items is taken as they are discussed.



3. Review and Approval of December 2023 Minutes

Presented by: Charles Nutt, Chairperson
ACTION



4. SCDD Update

Presented by: Aaron Carruthers, SCDD Executive Director



5. Energizing the Disability Vote for 2024

Presented by: Disability Vote California



Break



6. DDS Updates: Compliance with the HCBS Settings Requirements

Presented by: Susan Crow, Chief, HCBS Regulations,
California Department of Developmental Services



7. Reflections on the Day

Presented by: SSAN Officers
Information

8. Recess

Presented by: Charles Nutt, Chairperson
Information





AGENDA FOR DAY 2

**February 29, 2023
10:00 AM – 2:30 PM**

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

Presented by:

- Charles Nutt, Chairperson
- Nicole Patterson, Vice-Chairperson
- Rebecca Donabed, Secretary



2. Public Comment

Public comment is welcome. Comment on agenda items is taken as they are discussed.



3. Accessible Transportation Planning

Presented by: California Department of Transportation
Information



4. SCDD Legislative Update

Presented by: Bridget Kolakosky, SCDD Deputy Director of
Policy and Public Affairs
Veronica Bravo, SCDD Policy Analyst



Information

Break



5. **Approval of February 2024 SSAN Newsletter**
Presented by: Robert Levy, Newsletter Workgroup Chair
ACTION



6. **Update on SSAN Workgroups and Projects**
Presented by: SSAN Officers



7. **Meeting Takeaways and Planning for June 2024 Meeting**
ALL

8. **Adjournment**

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FEBRUARY 28, 2024

SSAN MEETING AGENDA ITEM 3

ACTION ITEM

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network

Approval of December 2023 Minutes



Attachments

- December 2023 Minutes

Recommended Action

Approve the December 2023 SSAN Meeting Minutes

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Statewide Self-Advocacy Network Meeting Minutes December 12, 2023 Zoom

SCDD Regional Members Present

Sonya Force – North Coast
Charles Nutt – North State
Lisa Cooley – Sacramento
Sara Desumala – Bay Area
Rebecca Donabed – Sequoia
Julie Gaona – Los Angeles
Eric Aguilar – San Bernardino
Viri Salgado – San Diego

Agency Members Present

Alex Reyes – SCDD
Desiree Boykin – ARCA
Russell Rawlings – CFILC
Nicole Patterson – DDS
Scott Barron – DRC
Robert Levy – UCD MIND Institute
Kecia Weller – UCLA Tarjan Center
Wesley Witherspoon – USC CHLA

Members Not Present

Ellen Sweigert – North Bay
Robert Balderama – North Valley Hills
Sean Sullivan – Orange County
YO! Disabled and Proud Rep

SCDD Staff in Attendance

Rihana Ahmad – SCDD HQ
Veronica Bravo – SCDD HQ
Aaron Carruthers – SCDD HQ
Riana Hardin – SCDD HQ
Beth Hurn – SCDD HQ
Ibrahim Muttaqi – SCDD HQ
Charles Nguyen – SCDD HQ
Gabriela Solval – SCDD Bay Area

Others Present

Megan Christian
Sabrina Epstein
Charlene Gonzalez
Wayne Glusker
Miguel Lugo
Sarah May
Holly Oliver
Marin Ventures Advocacy Group



DRAFT

SSAN Minutes

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

SSAN Chairperson Charles Nutt, North State Representative, called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. Members were asked to introduce themselves by sharing their name, the region and/or agency they represent and how they prepare for an emergency. Members mentioned keeping a flashlight nearby, knowing where important documents are, having an extra supply of medication to grab, creating a go bag, along with other tips and resources.

2. Public Comment

Robert Levy let SSAN members know that UC Davis is looking for SSAN members to participate in their Science Community OUTreach (SCOUT) Team and that members can contact Kris Wallman for more information at ktownsendwallman@ucdavis.edu. An outreach flyer will be posted on the SSAN page under the December meeting handouts.

Miguel Lugo encouraged SSAN members to apply to be a part of Disability Voices United's second cohort of Self-Advocates Speaker Bureau. The Disability Voices United Self-Advocates Speaker's Bureau includes a 3-day training to help advocates learn how to refine our message. Sign-up by January 31st. This year's classes start on February 21.

Rebecca Donabed let SSAN members know that Resources for Independence Central Valley (RICV) will be hosting a Winter Self-Advocacy Symposium and will send out the event flier and registration information after the meeting.

3. Review and Approval of September 2023 Minutes

The members reviewed the minutes from the September 8, 2023 meeting. Materials for this agenda item can be found on pages 5-12 of the December 2023 SSAN Meeting Packet.

ACTION: Motion #1 to approve the September 2023 minutes was made by David Forderer/Seconded by Wesley Witherspoon. A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed. See vote log on page 6 of the minutes.



DRAFT

4. SCDD Update

State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) Executive Director Aaron Carruthers provided updates on SCDD activities since the September SSAN meeting. SCDD has had several important accomplishments in 2023. SCDD submitted a report to the legislature on SB 639 and will be providing an update soon. SCDD worked closely with the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to create an Office of Employment First to promote competitive integrated employment (CIE) for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). SCDD awarded grants to groups in Los Angeles and San Francisco interested in changing policy and improving hiring practices for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. SCDD is working on expanding outreach and services for people with I/DD in underserved communities in 2024. California is a part of a community of practice (COP) at the national level on the intersection of aging and disability, to improve services and supports.

5. Updates on SSAN Workgroups and Projects

SSAN currently has 4 workgroups focused on different parts of employment for people with disabilities. SSAN Vice-Chair Nicole Patterson suggested that members currently signed up to be a part of the Success Stories Workgroup, consider participating in another workgroup. An email will be sent out with the different workgroups and meeting times for members to think about joining.

6. Supported Decision-Making Technical Assistance Program (SDM-TAP)

SCDD started the Supported Decision-Making Technical Assistance Program (SDM-TAP) earlier this year, with funding from the State of California. Supported decision-making is a way to help people who may need guidance and/or other assistance in making important decisions. This includes people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (PwI/DD), dementia, or others who may need help in understanding information, options and making informed choices. SDM is a process that respects people's rights and dignity, promotes independence, and prevents abuse or exploitation.



DRAFT

The SCDD SDM-TAP team provided SSAN with an overview of the program and recent listening sessions to gain input from community members. SSAN members had a chance to ask questions about the new program and encouraged staff to continue outreach efforts in the community.

7. Demonstration of SSAN Trello Board

The SCDD Self-Advocacy Coordinator, provided an overview of the web-based tool Trello. SSAN members were encouraged to use the SSAN Trello board to share ideas and track SSAN projects.

8. Approval of December 2023 SSAN Newsletter

SSAN Newsletter Project Lead, Robert Levy reviewed the DRAFT December 2023 Voices of SSAN Newsletter. Project Lead Levy called for a motion to approve the December 2023 Edition. Materials for this agenda item can be found on pages 25 - 38 of the December 2023 SSAN Meeting Packet.

ACTION: Motion #2 to approve the December 2023 Newsletter as presented made by Charles Nutt/Seconded by Rebecca Donabed. Motion passed. See vote log on page 6.

After the vote was taken, members shared their ideas for the next edition of the newsletter. The March 2024 edition will be about Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Tips on how to write SSAN Newsletter Articles can be found on pages 39 and 40 of the December 2023 SSAN meeting packet.

9. SCDD Legislative Efforts for 2023

SCDD Policy Analyst Veronica Bravo, provided SSAN members with an overview of 2023 SCDD Legislative achievements and shared updates on the development of the new California Office of Employment First.

This update included the outcome of SCDD sponsored legislation which can be found on the Legislative and Public Policy Committee page. The update also included a conversation about bill ideas for the next legislative cycle. Members talked about the importance of amending the marriage penalty for individuals who receive SSI/SSDI.



DRAFT

10. Approval of 2023 SSAN Annual Report

Riana Hardin, SCDD Self-Advocacy Coordinator reviewed the Draft Annual Report with members. A motion to approve the SSAN Annual Report was called for.

ACTION: Motion #3 to approve the 2022-2023 SSAN Annual Report was made by Kecia Weller/Seconded by Wesley Witherspoon. Motion passed. See vote log on page 7.

11. Planning for 2024 SSAN Activities

This agenda item provided members with the chance to share their ideas about what SSAN could work on in 2024. Topics that members wanted to learn about included Conservatorship, the Self-Determination Program, how to make good healthcare decisions, voting, legislative advocacy, HCBS Final Rule, training on emergency evacuation, and building connections with other advocates.

12. Adjournment

The December 2023 SSAN meeting was adjourned at 2:58 PM.



DRAFT

DECEMBER 2023 SSAN VOTE TALLY

Name	Region	Roll Call	Motion 1	Motion 2	Motion 3
Alex Reyes	SCDD	Absent	No Vote Recorded	No Vote Recorded	No Vote Recorded
Sonya Force	North Coast	Virtual	For	For	For
Charles Nutt	North State	Virtual	For	For	For
Lisa Cooley	Sacramento	Virtual	For	For	For
Ellen Sweigert	North Bay	Absent	No Vote Recorded	No Vote Recorded	No Vote Recorded
Sara Desumala	Bay Area	Virtual	For	For	For
Robert Balderama	North Valley Hills	Absent	No Vote Recorded	No Vote Recorded	No Vote Recorded
David Forder	Central Coast	Virtual	For	For	For
Rebecca Donabed	Sequoia	Virtual	For	For	For
Julie Gaona	Los Angeles	Virtual	For	For	For
Sean Sullivan	Orange County	Absent	For	For	For
Eric Aguilar	San Bernardino	Virtual	For	For	For
Viri Salgado	San Diego	Virtual	For	Vacant	Vacant
Desiree Boykin	ARCA	Virtual	For	For	For
Russell Rawlings	CFILC	Virtual	Abstain	For	For
Vacant	YO Disabled & Proud	Absent	No Vote Recorded	No Vote Recorded	No Vote Recorded
Nicole Patterson	DDS	Virtual	For	For	For
Scott Barron	DRC	Virtual	For	For	For
Wesley Witherspoon	USC – CHLA	Virtual	For	No Vote Recorded	For
Kecia Weller	UCLA Trajan Center	Virtual	For	For	For
Robert Levy	UC Davis Mind Institute	Virtual	For	For	For

FEBRUARY 28, 2024

**SSAN MEETING AGENDA ITEM 4
INFORMATION ITEM**

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



SCDD Update

SCDD Executive Director Aaron Carruthers will update SSAN members on Council activity related to meeting the needs of Californians with I/DD during these challenging and unique times.

Possible Handouts

- Council Meeting Summary

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FEBRUARY 28, 2024

**SSAN MEETING AGENDA ITEM 5
INFORMATION ITEM**

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



Energizing the Disability Vote in 2024

Disability Vote California is a nonpartisan, collaborative project between the Arc of California, State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), Disability Rights California (DRC) and California Foundation for Independent Living (CFILC) that started in 2018. Disability Vote California works to educate Californians with disabilities on the voting process and build leaders throughout California who can educate their communities and encourage people with disabilities to participate in the voting process.

Representatives from #DisabilityVoteCA will provide an overview of the upcoming 2024 election cycle.

Presenters

Gabe Taylor, Disability Rights California, Senior Advocate,
Voting Rights Practice Group

Russell Rawlings, California Foundation for Independent
Living Centers, Community Organizing Manager

Wesley Witherspoon, USC Children's Hospital,
Consumer Advocate

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FEBRUARY 28, 2024

SSAN MEETING AGENDA ITEM 6

INFORMATION ITEM

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



DDS Updates: Compliance with the HCBS Settings Requirements

Susan Crow, Chief of HCBS Regulations at the Department of Developmental Services will provide SSAN members with an update on HCBS Settings Requirements.

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FEBRUARY 28, 2024

**SSAN MEETING AGENDA ITEM 7
INFORMATION ITEM**

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



Reflections on the Day

This agenda item is meant to give members a chance to reflect on the day's discussions and agenda items.

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FEBRUARY 29, 2024

**SSAN MEETING AGENDA ITEM 3
INFORMATION ITEM**



Statewide Self-Advocacy Network

Accessible Transportation Planning

Representatives from the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) will be providing SSAN members with an overview of the progress of Caltrans FTA 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) Program. This agenda item will provide SSAN the chance to have a conversation with representatives from CalTrans on ways SSAN Members, and other self-advocates can provide feedback and recommendations on how to improve the accessibility of different public transportation projects.

Presenters

- Mark Barry, Branch Chief of FTA Section 5310 Program, Division of Rail and Mass Transportation at CalTrans
- Kathy Pongratz, Chief, FTA Section 5311 and Intercity Bus Branch at CalTrans

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FEBRUARY 29, 2024

**SSAN DAY 2 AGENDA ITEM 4
INFORMATION ITEM**

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network

SCDD Legislative Update



SCDD Policy Analyst Veronica Bravo and SCDD Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs will provide SSAN members with an update on SCDD legislative activities and priorities for 2024.

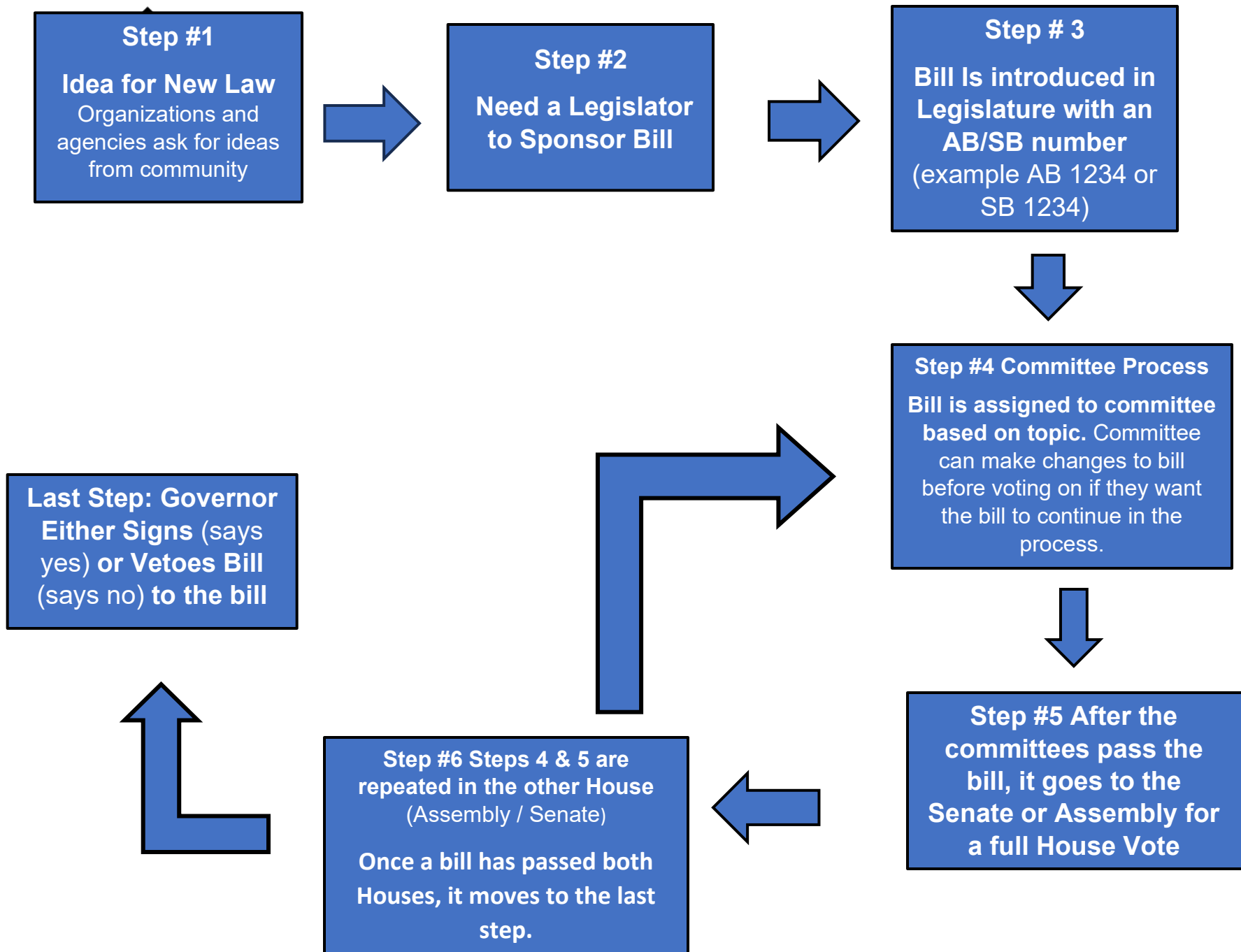
Presenters

Bridget Kolakosky, SCDD Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs
Veronica Bravo, SCDD Policy Analyst

Attachments

- Plain Language Map of the Legislative Process
- Text Only Steps to the Legislative process

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LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Step #1: Idea: someone has an idea to fix a problem.

Step #2: Need a legislator for the idea to become a bill and go through the legislative process.

Step #3: Idea is assigned a number. Now it can be called a “bill”. The bill is introduced in the legislature. The number helps track the bill.

Step #4: Committee Process: The bill is assigned to a committee based on the topic of the bill. The committee votes to pass/fail the bill. Sometimes they make changes to the bill before voting whether it will pass to the next committee or not.

Step#5: After the committees pass the bill, it goes to the Senate or Assembly for a full House Vote.

Step#6: The bill goes to the opposite house for a committee and full House Vote. If the bill passes both houses it goes to the Governor for approval.

Last Step: Governor says yes or no to the bill. If he says yes, the bill becomes law.

FEBRUARY 29, 2024

SSAN MEETING AGENDA ITEM 6

ACTION ITEM

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



Approval of February 2024 Newsletter

Robert Levy, Chair of the SSAN Newsletter Workgroup, will present SSAN members with a DRAFT version of the February 2024 Newsletter and ask members for any changes or additions. Robert will lead a discussion about ideas for the June 2024 Newsletter, so please come prepared with your ideas of the types of articles you would like to write for the next edition.

Attachments

- DRAFT February 2024 Voices of SSAN Newsletter
- Voices of SSAN Newsletter Article Tips Newsletter Article Tips

Recommended Action

Approve the DRAFT February 2024 Voices of SSAN Newsletter

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IN THIS EDITION:

Since 1987, March has been recognized as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

[Front Page:](#) Developmental Disabilities Awareness

[Page 3:](#) Legislative Advocacy

[Page 4:](#) Recapping the AUCD Conference in D.C.

[Page 5:](#) Affordable, Accessible Housing

[Page 7:](#) Update from CFILC

[Page 8:](#) Turning Concern into Action

[Page 9:](#) Get to Know a SSAN Member

[Page 12:](#) Project SAFE

[Page 13:](#) SCDD Storytellers

[Page 14:](#) Kudos Corner

[Page 15:](#) Disability Reads and Listens

[Page 16:](#) Community Resources

[Page 16:](#) DDS CAC is Recruiting

Editor: Robert Levy

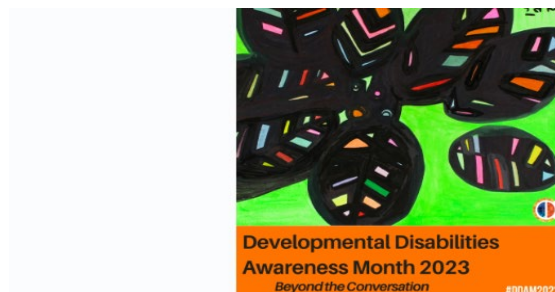
Contributors:

- David Forderer
- Wesley Witherspoon
- Lisa Cooley
- Russell Rawlings
- Viri Salgado
- Robert Levy

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month: Celebrate with Us!

The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) holds a contest each year asking artists with developmental disabilities to create a logo that represents the year's theme.

This year's theme is 'World of Opportunities.' Since the logo contest is still going on, you will have to keep an eye out for this year's logo. In the meantime, here are some of the past logos:



Learn more about the history of Developmental Disabilities Month on the next page of this issue.



President Ronald Reagan proclaimed March as ‘Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month’ in 1987. In recent years, the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) has partnered with the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) and National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) to create a social media campaign for the month. The social media campaign highlights the many ways in which people with and without developmental disabilities come together to form strong, diverse communities.

Some people might wonder why there is a whole month focused on developmental disability awareness; after all, there can’t be too many individuals with developmental disabilities, can there? In 2017, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) published data from a study showing that about 1 in 6 children are identified to have some type of developmental disability.

The theme for this year’s campaign is “A World of Opportunities.” People are encouraged to share stories about the lives of people with I/DD and resources available to help them live the life they choose. People are encouraged to use #DDAM2024 to “tag” their content on social media.

In California, the term “developmental disabilities” means the disability began before a person is 18 years old, and severely limits someone’s ability to carry out activities related to self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, and/or self-direction. Here are some examples of conditions include within the I/DD umbrella term:

- Autism
- Cerebral Palsy
- Down Syndrome
- Epilepsy
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Intellectual Disability
- or a disability that significantly impacts a person’s ability to carry out life functions.

The Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month shines a spotlight on the disabled community and demonstrates how people with developmental disabilities live normal lives. In turn, the public can learn how they can help people with developmental disabilities achieve their dreams.



Legislative Advocacy

By David Forderer, Central Coast Regional SSAN Representative

As an advocate, there are many ways to approach advocacy work at the local, county, state, and national levels. Choosing the one that works best for you is sometimes the best way to be effective.

To start with, you can become a member of different organizations that support and advocate for your cause. By joining their boards or committees, you can work with other like-minded advocates. Working at this level, you can combine your knowledge with others on the committee. Giving lectures or talks about your advocacy work to other groups such as churches, Kiwanis or Elks clubs and school classrooms is one way to spread your advocacy message. Either way, you will affect or influence a rather small part of the population of those who live in your area.

Another more powerful and effective way is to advocate through politics, where policy and law have a bigger influence by affecting everyone living in your local, county or state area.

You can start by working with the politicians in your state, city, or county.

Begin by contacting the local, county or state government representatives and introducing yourself as a disability advocate. Let them know you would like to meet with them or one of their staff members to discuss the issue(s) important to you and you would like them to take legislative action on.

Once you've been able to fully explain your issue, let them know it would help tremendously if they could assist you with promoting your issue(s).

The goal is to propose and create legislation that would instill a change in the way the disabled population is viewed and treated.

Wesley at the AUCD Conference in November 2023

By Wesley Witherspoon, USC Children's Hospital UCEDD SSAN Representative



I attended the AUCD Conference located in Washington DC at the Westin Hotel on November 5th-8th, 2023. The theme for this year's conference was 'Emerging Leaders: Shaping the Future'. Over 1,000 people attended the conference, traveling from all 50 states and 6 territories. The topic of quality of life was a major concern to many advocates at the conference. My colleague, Maria Marquez and I provided a presentation titled: 'Emerging Leaders in the Non-Profit Sector: Supporting Self-Advocates as Founders and Executive Directors of Non-Profits'.

While in D.C., I was able to see a lot of sites. I got the opportunity to tour the White House on November 7th. It was a life changing experience. On November 8th, I went to Capitol Hill, and spoke to Congressional staff about people with disabilities and their issues. My advice to all is to ask for what you want. You will be surprised; you might have a chance to visit the White House. To all the self-advocates out there, keep advocating for yourself.

SSAN Members

- Sonya Force – North Coast
- Charles Nutt – North State
- Lisa Cooley – Sacramento
- Ellen Sweigert – North Bay
- Sara Desumala – Bay Area
- Robert Balderama – North Valley Hills
- David Forderer – Central Coast
- Rebecca Donabed – Sequoia
- Julie Gaona – Los Angeles
- Sean Sullivan – Orange County
- Eric Aguilar – San Bernardino
- Viri Salgado – San Diego Imperial
- Desiree Boykin – ARCA
- Russell Rawlings – CFILC
- Nicole Patterson – DDS
- Scott Barron – DRC
- Robert Levy – UC Davis MIND Institute
- Kecia Weller – UCLA Tarjan Center
- Wesley Witherspoon – SCDD and USC Children's Hospital
- Alex Reyes – SCDD

The Need for More Affordable, Accessible Housing in California

By Lisa Cooley, Sacramento Regional SSAN Representative



Access to affordable and accessible housing is a very important issue for all people who have disabilities (and especially intellectual and developmental disabilities). Because of the way that the social safety net is set up, people with disabilities receiving benefits like SSI and SSDI have a hard time being able to afford traditional housing due to the high cost of housing. Unless a person has a full-time job that pays well enough for them to afford traditional housing, without assistance, people with disabilities rely upon renting housing that is affordable. They also need to consider their access needs before deciding where they are going to live. For example, if they have a physical disability such as cerebral palsy which can require some people to use wheelchairs or other mobility devices to get around their apartment independently and safely with or without assistance from others.

In California if you want to rent affordable and accessible housing there is a program called the housing choice voucher program (formerly called Section 8). The housing choice voucher program has two different types of housing programs that can accept potential tenants: project-based and tenant-based housing vouchers. Project based vouchers are housing vouchers that can be used at specific housing projects for example, if you want to live in a specific community in Sacramento that accepts your voucher then you need to live in that community. You have more flexibility with tenant-based vouchers however, because you can choose to live in any housing community that accepts your voucher. The way to apply for vouchers is to get your name on a voucher program list for affordable housing in your local area. You will need to know how much income you get monthly, and what type of benefits you have; how many people are in your family if you are applying for yourself and family members, and if you have a disability (because some people who have disabilities can get priority status for housing depending on the community).

Continue reading on page 6 of the February 2024 SSAN Newsletter: Affordable, Accessible Housing.



Continued from page 5 of the February 2024 SSAN Newsletter: Affordable, Accessible Housing.

To be able to pay for your rent once you have the voucher you will be required to pay at least 30% of whatever your monthly income is to your apartment manager if renting an apartment and the voucher program would have to pay the difference between your portion of rent that you can afford the government pays for the rest. If you need an accessible apartment or house, you can get reasonable accommodations for your housing by saying that you have a disability on your housing application when you are applying for housing. Once you have affordable and accessible housing, keep all your information up to date, especially information related to your income because you have to have a low income to qualify for most lower income housing and if your income goes up you will have to pay rent that is a little bit higher. Keep your personal information (name, address, phone number and email address current so that you can be contacted to find out if your name has been moved up on the waitlist (some communities in different parts of California have long waitlists especially Sacramento or Los Angeles and some close after a certain period of time, so as soon as you know that you want to move get help if you need it to start the process of getting the voucher.)

There are several ways to get involved with advocating for affordable and accessible housing in your local area and statewide. If your city has local housing meetings; attend one of them and talk about the needs of people who have disabilities related to housing. On the statewide level, a non-profit organization called The Kelsey advocates for accessible, affordable, and inclusive housing. The Kelsey is based in San Francisco but advocates for affordable, accessible, and inclusive housing all over the state and anyone who is interested in learning more about housing access, should get involved. To learn more about the Kelsey and get involved in their activities visit:

<http://www.theKelsey.org>.

The issue of housing access is important for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month because people with intellectual and developmental disabilities deserve the opportunity to live independently in our communities. Finding a safe, affordable, and accessible place to live where you feel included in community activities can be a challenge. Often affordability takes center stage when looking for housing options over access to services and supports that increase our quality of life. If there was more affordable and accessible housing options: people with disabilities would be significantly less worried and be able to live independently without having to worry about how to manage paying for housing every month and the accessibility of our housing because it is already accessible.



Updates from CFILC

By: Russell Rawlings, California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC) SSAN Representative

Here is a quick update on CFILC networks for SSAN members and the readers of the Voices of SSAN Newsletter.

DO network (Disability Organizing Network) Update

The DO network (Disability Organizing Network) is a statewide network of California disability community organizers and advocates. The DO network's mission is to educate, organize and mobilize the California disability community to encourage positive change to policy and culture for people with disabilities.

At the beginning of the year, we started a process known as the "DO network Reboot." The systems change advocates and community organizers at California's 26 Independent Living Centers (ILCs) are working together to build a new web resource that will serve as a place for disability advocates to connect with DO network.

An additional DO network priority is participation in the Disability Vote California coalition. DO network, along with the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), Disability Rights California (DRC) and The Arc of California, will be holding trainings throughout the 2024 election cycle. We will share our training flyers with the Statewide Self Advocacy Network (SSAN).

YO! Disabled & Proud Update

YO! (Youth Organizing) Disabled & Proud is gearing up for an exciting 2024. The California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC) has hired a new Statewide Youth Organizer: Jason Cook-Harvey.

YO! Disabled & Proud is preparing to celebrate its 15th anniversary this March. If you know any disabled youth between the ages of 15 and 28, please have them get in touch with us!



SSAN Mission Statement

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

SSAN's past newsletters, annual reports, and meeting info, can be found at www.scdd.ca.gov under the "Self-Advocacy" tab.

Let us know if you want to see anything specific in future newsletters!

How do you contact the SSAN Newsletter Editor, Robert Levy? Leave a message for him by contacting the SCDD Self-Advocacy Coordinator **Riana Hardin at (916) 263-8196**

Check out the [SCDD YouTube Page](#) for stories from self-advocates, past meetings, and more!

Tips for Turning Concern into Action

It can be hard to know what you can do to help advocate for change. SSAN members have shared some ideas on how you can turn your concerns and worries into action:



- Share your thoughts with family members and friends.
- Consider mentoring another advocate.
- Write down the issue or problem that you are having, then think about and make a list of your ideas about what would make the situation better. Is there anything on that list that you can do to make the situation better?
- Write a social media or blog post.
- Listen to, host, and/or be a guest on a podcast.
- Write a letter to the editor or an opinion piece for your local newspaper or organization's newsletter.
- Contact to your local representatives about important issues.
- Get involved in your community by joining a club or board.
- Attend a city council meeting to share your concerns.
- Connect with your local regional center, independent living center, and/or State Council on Developmental Disabilities regional office and ask about their self-advocacy groups and trainings.
- Donate your time by volunteering for an organization.
- Join a board or commission like the [Department of Developmental Services Consumer Advisory Committee \(DDS CAC\)](#).
- Learn about the issues important to candidates running in upcoming local, state, and national elections. Let your voice and your choice be heard by voting.



Get to Know a SSAN Member: Viri Salgado

By Viri Salgado, San Diego and Imperial Valley Regional SSAN Representative



My name is Viri Salgado and I'm a newly elected SSAN member. I work at the San Diego Regional Center (SDRC) as the Client Information Specialist. I was born with Cerebral Palsy which affects my motor skills. I was born in Mexico and have lived in San Diego since I was 8 years old. My disability is not the only thing that defines me as a person. I am also a mother of a beautiful young 23-year-old woman. I am a hard worker, and I am a source of pride for my family. I enjoy working with technology and on computers. I love learning new things and taking on new challenges. For fun, I like attending music concerts, festivals, community events, family gatherings, and connecting with people out in the community.

I have made many sacrifices and have overcome difficult challenges to get to where I am today. I knocked on many doors and did volunteer work for 2 years as an office assistant in hopes of getting hired but had no luck. Then I moved to a part-time position at a sheltered program as a Data Entry Clerk. At first, I started doing data entry and filing, but then I took on a vast variety of staff duties throughout the years.

In the meantime, I took on a second part-time position working for an Independent Living Service agency providing in-home service support to an individual with a disability. I learned to work with this individual by building a peer-to-peer connection of trust, respect, and communication. I helped my client connect to their online college classes and attend self-advocacy trainings and board meetings they found interesting. I also shared resources on self-advocacy opportunities and assisted her with participating in various self-advocacy conferences.

At the beginning of the pandemic, I was presented with a great opportunity to connecting with the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. I started participating in virtual self-advocacy meetings that led me to connect with members of the Council. As I continued participating in the self-advocacy trainings, I took much interest in growing my leadership skills to educate others about self-advocacy.

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I took on a third part-time job as an Information & Outreach Intern with the State Council on Developmental Disabilities through a Paid Internship Program through the Regional Center. During this paid internship, I helped design and create educational trainings and presentations to provide self-advocates with the skills necessary to become leaders in their communities and advocate for systemic changes.

After 3 years of juggling three part-time jobs going back and forth with multiple responsibilities, I gained the experience, skills, and knowledge necessary to qualify for a full-time job position at the Regional Center. My ultimate goal was to get a full-time job with benefits, so I left my three part-time jobs and started to work as a Client Information Specialist. This was a huge accomplishment for me.

This position brings more relief and stability but also a chance to expand my connections and knowledge to better help others in the community. In my role of Client Information Specialist, I had the opportunity to tailor this position to better utilize my experience, skills, and connections in an efficient and self-directed way. I serve as a liaison between the advocacy community and service providers to help regional center staff have a better understanding of the areas that need improvement to provide high-quality services by implementing the views from a client/self-advocate's perspective. My position offers representation for clients and families in all of San Diego and Imperial County areas. I also collaborate closely with the State Council in offering ongoing self-advocacy trainings for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I'm actively involved in community events like resource fairs and informational conferences.

I serve as a representative and sit on the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee Board of the County of San Diego Registrar of Voters and bring client perspectives, as needed.

I have a strong interest in advocating for reliable transportation service access and serve on the MTS Appeals Board Group. I also collaborate and provide public input during the Accessible Services Advisory Committee meetings.

I have participated in speaker panels, given presentations, and collaborated in various annual conferences throughout our local community. I sit in multiple conference planning committee for 4 different conferences: FERIA (a Spanish language conference for parents of individuals with disabilities), Parent Conferences that take place in San Diego and Imperial Valley,

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the Leading the Charge Conference, and the Self-Determination Conference.

I'm also an officer and member of the San Diego People First Group, which is formed by people with disabilities. We put together the annual Self-Advocacy Conference that has become one of San Diego's biggest events for people with disabilities and the people who support them.

I collaborate with representatives from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to create and host various advocacy trainings. For example, we've done a vision board experience, and emergency preparedness and Paid Internship Program presentations in local communities. We also work together on virtual trainings on a weekly and monthly basis. I connect with other self-advocates through amazing group discussions at our weekly "Advocates at the Movies." I help host the "Advocates at the Movies" sessions every Wednesday at 4 pm. Every month I choose a theme and select movies, short videos, documentaries, etc. Our sessions are mostly an hour and a half long and always involve a productive discussion after each film. Self-advocates learn about courage, empathy, and perseverance as they watch and discuss these inspiring stories.

My goal is to encourage everyone in California to sharpen their advocacy skills and be an advocate for and support those that need support. Listening and learning is about building that strong connection and adding to our power by using ourselves as a resource for good leadership and self-advocacy. Self-advocacy and self-determination are essential as one strengthens the other. The more information we share, the more tools and opportunities we'll find to live the life we want.

411 on Project SAFEE



By Viri Salgado, San Diego and Imperial Valley Regional SSAN Representative

Project S.A.F.E.E (Self-Advocates for Emergency Education) is a group organized by self-advocates committed and responsible to create positive change in the world of emergency education. Their interest is to bring social awareness for individuals and make a difference throughout California.

While adjusting to the COVID-19 pandemic and meetings shifting to the Zoom platform, self-advocates from different regions got connected virtually. Project SAFEE was created based on the advocacy voices from individuals across the state of California that showed interest in offering emergency education. Project SAFEE has created a space for people with disabilities to feel empowered by creating presentations about important issues like “vaccine hesitancy.” Many individuals with disabilities faced uncertainty at the start of the pandemic because of the lack of information available in plain language. The pandemic also brought with it an increased awareness of health disparities that Project SAFEE members are interested in addressing.

Under the support and collaboration of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Project SAFEE gathered information on the importance of getting vaccinated and safety tips. They presented these important updates and resources in plain language form to different community groups. These presentations offered a safe place for individuals with disabilities to ask questions and share lived experiences related to safety and how to be prepared for an emergency. Members of Project SAFEE have worked very hard putting these presentations together.

Project SAFEE group in collaboration with the American Red Cross have provide training sessions on Emergency preparedness education statewide. Each training session offered information on a different topic like earthquakes, home fires and floods. Project SAFEE also presented a second statewide virtual training series for self-advocates which was a hands-only CPR training.

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This was a non-certified training where individuals learned helpful basic life-saving skills. Project SAFEE has educated over 500 people on how to plan and what to do for an emergency. Currently, Project SAFEE members are participating in a “train the trainer” program provided by the American Red Cross. After completing the program, they will become certified trainers which enables the participants to host or co-host training sessions on emergency preparedness for their communities.

In addition to other projects and presentations, Project SAFEE is working on putting together an active shooter presentation with the collaboration from the San Diego Regional Center. This presentation is meant to educate individuals with disabilities on safety practices in case of an active shooter situation. Project SAFEE continues to expand their empowerment and positive impact through their members and collaboration groups across California. To learn more about Project SAFEE and how to become a member you can join in a Zoom meeting the first Wednesday of every month at 1:00 pm using this [Zoom Meeting Link](#) or contact Debbie Marshall Debbie.Marshell@scdd.ca.gov.

Introducing the SCDD Storytellers Blog



The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) has launched a new platform and invites you to share your story. [Storytellers](#), a [blog](#) where people with disabilities, their family members, professionals who work in the field disability services can share their stories of successes and struggles.

You can find the Storytellers blog under the “News and Events” tab on the top of the SCDD website as “SCDD Blog”. We look forward to reading the next story, it might be yours!



Kudos Corner



David Forderer is a long-standing member of SSAN who has served as the Central Coast Regional Representative on the Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (SSAN) since July 2018. Before representing the Central Coast, David served as the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) Representative on SSAN. David has done a lot for the Self-Advocacy movement in California including giving testimonies to committees and legislators about bills that would impact the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). David has done a lot of presentations at events like the Supported Life Conference. He has been a great leader for the Legislative and Civic Engagement Workgroup for SSAN in the past.

David has done a great job of using supports and services, like facilitation and personal care services to support his access and functional needs, while he works to improve access to supports and services for others. I think that David is a great self-advocate for our community and has helped to mentor and support other advocates.

I enjoyed attending a leadership training for 4 days in Seattle Washington in 2015 with David and two other advocates. We can all learn from David and his determination. David does not let his disability change the level of his participation in the community. Keep on doing the work to help people with disabilities have the life they want in their communities. I am sure David will always be a self-advocate for as long as he wants because he enjoys helping others in the community. From all of us at SSAN kudos to you, David!!



Event: California Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference

Conference Theme: Self-Advocacy: Reaching for the Stars

Conference Dates: May 17-18, 2024

Conference Location: Wyndham Hotel in Sacramento

Details: [Supported Life Institute Conference Information](https://www.supportedlife.org/conference)



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Disability-Related Reads

Here are a few Self-Advocacy and Disability-related publications to check out:



[Disability Scoop](#) is an online resource with disability-related news.



[Social Security Administration Blog](#) has SSI information.



[World Institute on Disability News](#) has updates on what is happening around the world.



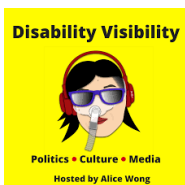
[RespectAbility News](#) has updates on national efforts to engage people with disabilities in the political process.

Learn About SSAN Member Organizations

- [Association of Regional Center Agencies \(ARCA\)](#)
- [California Foundation for Independent Living Centers \(CFILC\)](#)
- [Department of Developmental Services \(DSS\)](#)
- [Disability Rights California \(DRC\)](#)
- [University of California, Davis \(UCD\) MIND Institute](#)
- [University of California, Los Angeles \(UCLA\), Tarjan Center](#)
- [University of Southern California \(USC\), Children's Hospital](#)

Disability-Related Listens

Click on the logos to check out some creative content on disability related topics.



Self-Determination Update

Self-Determination is LIVE in California. Check out the [DDS Self-Determination Newsletter](#) for the latest on California's Self-Determination Program (SDP). Talk to your regional center service coordinator to learn more.



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Community Resources



[SARTAC Zoom Meetings](#)

[ARCA Public Policy Resources Library](#)



[DRC's Resource Library](#)



[CalABLE](#)



National Council on Disability
An independent federal agency committed to
disability policy leadership since 1978

[National Council on Disability](#)



[Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program](#)

DDS' CAC is RECRUITING!

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) needs your voice to advise DDS on policies, programs, legislation, and regulations that affect the lives of Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Please note: Regional Center employees are not eligible for CAC membership.

Interested advocates should fill out the online [DDS Consumer Advisory Committee Application](#) and submit it with their nomination letter.



SAVE THE DATES

Disability Rights California



[Events and Trainings](#)

CalABLE



[News and Trainings](#)



[DO Network Training Library](#)

Plain Language Resources

Available on:

[SCDD Website](#)

Register for the Monthly
[California Statewide Self-Advocacy Chats](#) on Zoom!



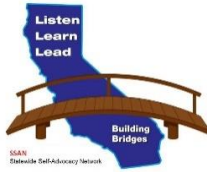
[Current Issues and Resources](#)

[Voting Resources](#)

DRC Hotline: 888-569-7955

[Disability Vote California](#)

Questions about the Self-Determination Program? [The Self-Determination Advocates Leadership Group](#) meets monthly on Zoom.



Voices of SSAN Newsletter Article Tips

Audience: Keep in mind that “Voices of SSAN” is shared with people across California. Try to write articles that would interest the statewide disability community.

Purpose: Is the article a human-interest story or an issues story? If it is a human-interest story, can you tie it back to an issue or larger regional or statewide problem?

Helpful Tips:

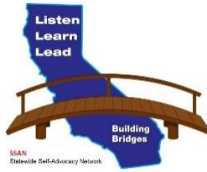
- Tie your article back to the Mission/Vision/Purpose of SSAN
- Articles should be about systemic (city/county/regional/statewide) problems
- Limit individual advocacy articles
- Stay away from writing about personal details of an individual
- Attend the next Newsletter Office Hour over Zoom if you need help

Types of Articles: Articles in “Voices of SSAN” should be related to the SCDD State Plan. The SCDD State covers topics of Self-Determination, Employment, Housing, Health and Safety, Transportation and other Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS). Article types can include:

- Informational and Resource Sharing (you want the reader to learn something)
- Call-to-Action (you want the reader to do something)
- Event Recaps
- “Kudos Corner” articles are recognize the advocacy efforts of others
- Announcements and Save the Dates

Key Parts of Articles:

- Title
- Author (Your Name)
- Introduction: Tie the article back to SSAN
- Evidence or Support: 1-3 paragraphs
- Closing: Tie it back to SSAN



Voices of SSAN Interview Article Tips

Audience: Keep in mind that “Voices of SSAN” is shared with people across California.

Choosing a Person to Interview:

- Is the person a regional/statewide/national/international leader?
- Does the person have the ability to affect change?
- Does the person have a story or experience people with disabilities from across California can relate to?
- Is the person making positive impact/or change that can be shared with other regions/organizations to improve their practices?

Choosing a Message

- What do you want the reader to learn from reading the article? Make sure you have a clear purpose in mind when writing
- Do you want to inspire others to do something like get involved in a project or campaign?

Choosing Your Interview Questions

- Ask questions that relate to SSAN, self-advocacy or the focus areas in SCDD’s State Plan
- Choose questions that relate to your message
- Ask open ended questions that will allow the person to respond in detail.
- Avoid questions that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”

Writing Your Interview Article

- Add your own thoughts in response to what the interviewee has said
- Use the interview’s responses to shape your article instead of having a question/answer format
- Remember your audience and purpose when writing your interview article

FEBRUARY 29, 2024

**SSAN MEETING AGENDA ITEM 7
INFORMATION ITEM**

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



Updates on the SSAN Workgroups

In addition to the SSAN Leadership Team, there are currently 4 SSAN workgroups to focus on different projects that meet in-between SSAN meetings to work.

- **SSAN Webinar Workgroup:** focus on creating and hosting 3 SSAN webinars a year, in March, July, and October.
- **SSAN Employment Tip Sheet Workgroup:** Create tipsheets on the topic of employment for people with disabilities.
- **Success Stories Workgroup:** focus on collecting stories of success and achievement for people with disabilities.
- **Disability Training for Hotels and Businesses:** Research existing disability sensitivity training materials that exist and create a resource guide to be given to hotels used to host SSAN and other SA group meetings.

This agenda item will give members an opportunity to talk about the next steps with the SSAN workgroups and projects.

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FEBRUARY 29, 2024

**SSAN MEETING AGENDA ITEM 8
INFORMATION ITEM**

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



Meeting Takeaways and Planning for June 2024

The SSAN Chair will lead the group in a discussion about potential agenda items for the June 2024 meeting. Members will also have the opportunity to complete meeting evaluations for the February 2024 meeting.

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