



Employment First Committee Meeting Minutes July 13, 2023

Attending Members

Julie Gaona (SA)
Michael Luna (DDS)
Steve Ruder (UCD)
Nick Wavrin (CDE)
Larry Yin (USC)
Carol Asch (DOR)
Wesley Witherspoon (SA)
Christine T. Moody (UCLA)

Members Absent

Cathay Liu (FA)
Robert Loeun (DOR)
Sarah Issacs (DRC)

Others Attending

Aaron Carruthers
Tania Morawiec
Bridget Kolakosky
Mary Ellen Stives
Robin Maitino-Erben
Suza Szewiola
Michelle Cave
Beth Hurn
Kate Bjerke (DOR)
Gabriela Solval
Angel Garcia
Marjorie Solomon
"CA Resident"

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Julie Gaona (SA) called the meeting to order at 10:36 a.m.

2. **ESTABLISH QUORUM**

A quorum was established.

3. **WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS**

Members and others introduced themselves.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

5. **APPROVAL OF THE MAY AND JUNE 2023 MEETING MINUTES**

Approval of the June minutes was tabled until the October meeting as they were unfinished.

It was moved/seconded (Gaona [SA]/Witherspoon [SA]) and carried to approve the May 2023 meeting minutes. (Motion passed unanimously. See page one for a list of voting members.)

6. **APPROVE 2022 EMPLOYMENT FIRST REPORT**

Members reviewed the report to ensure that the changes requested at the June 19th were complete. Committee member Nick Wavrin pointed out that the language of the education code in the section on alternate pathways to a high school diploma was recently modified and requested that the final report reflected that. Deputy Director Bridget Kolakosky suggested adding a footnote to include that information. An outdated link will also be replaced.

It was moved/seconded (Witherspoon [SA]/Gaona [SA]) and carried to approve the report as amended. (Motion passed unanimously. See page one for a list of voting members.)

7. **UPDATES ON CIE RELATED LEGISLATION**

Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Bridget Kolakosky presented an update on CIE related Legislation. The update included a summary of SCDD Employment First Policy work over the last three years.

Ms. Kolakosky announced that SCDD, in collaboration with DOR, eliminated the sunset clause of the LEAP SIP (Limited Examination and Appointment Program State Internship Program). At this time, the program will continue indefinitely. SCDD championed SB 639 to end subminimum wages in California and convened stakeholder workgroups to assist in its implementation. SCDD championed and won the establishment of an Employment First Office in the California Health and Human Services Agency.

The Current EFC will be inoperative as of July 1, 2023 and an Employment First Office will be established under the California Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). The new office will consist of the following members: at least one designee of each of the members of the SCDD; Department of Developmental Services (DDS) director or designee; Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) director or designee; Superintendent of Public Instruction/California Department of Education director or designee; one from each of the three University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs); Department of Health Care Services (HCS) director or designee; a member of the Consumer Advisory Committee of the SCDD. Committee member Christine Moody suggested the current EFC invite a representative from HHS to attend one of the final meetings so the EFC can share information and make recommendations.

8. CIE IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORTS UPDATE

SCDD Deputy Director of Regional Center Operations Tania Morawiec spoke about efforts to bring CIE resources to and implement best practices in the State California. She announced that the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has issued grant funding to the UC Davis MIND Institute to pilot test a new supported employment tool (Individualized Placement and Support – IPS) which has been successfully used to help people with mental illness.

Ms. Morawiec reviewed the origin of the CA NEON Competitive Integrated Employment Community of Practice (CoP). Grant funding from the U.S. Department of Labor’s National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) is being used to present a series of online lectures and Q & A sessions as California transitions out of subminimum wage.

The sessions focus on staff development and the subject matter is based on feedback from the EFC, DOR, DDS, and DRC. Each session is led by national subject matter experts (SMEs). Along with other resources, the session’s didactic content will be recorded and made available for future reference on the SCDD website.

There have been over 200 registrants for each session. The first one was held on June 28, 2023, and the last one is scheduled for August 23, 2023. Session topics include(d):

- Benefits
- Customized Employment/Discovery/Job Shadow
- Job Development/Job Customization/Business Bottom Line
- Job Retention Coaching/Systematic Instruction,
- Mental Health/Co-Occurring/Accommodations
- Best Practice in Job Coaching
- Wrap-Up Transition Planning
- Financial Structuring in Employment Services.

More information on the sessions can be found on the SCDD website.
<https://scdd.ca.gov/sb639-ca-neon/>

Ms. Morawiec stated that California was able to secure consultation and information sharing by SME Lisa Mills, through the Administration for Community Living’s (ACL) Administration on Disabilities (AoD). Ms. Mills will do a presentation and Q & A on September 15, 2023.

<https://acl.gov/programs/employment/disability-employment-technical-assistance-center>.

9. **TARGET PRIORITIES UPDATE**

Ms. Moody spoke briefly about the progress of the SMART Goals Workgroup in regard to inviting new members to the EFC, creating an EFC member role description, updating the Data Dashboard, and identifying New Data Directions. Taking into consideration the imminent formation of a new EFC under HHS, members agreed to discontinue the process of seeking new members and, instead, focus on recommendations and resources for the new EFC.

Ms. Kolakosky suggested that materials from the SMART Goals Workgroup be included in a packet of resources to the new EFC. The group agreed that they should continue to fulfill the SMART Goals related to data. The SCDD Data Dashboard will be updated to reflect the most recently released data (DDS), with links to expanded information. The update is currently on hold so the material can be made WCAG accessible.

Ms. Morawiec volunteered to proofread the Data Dashboard once everything is uploaded if the process is not complicated and does not compromise the clarity of the data. Otherwise, she will consult the Workgroup for suggestions.

Members directed staff to create a survey to identify:

- EFC focus in its final year.
- Recommendations on data points to include on the Data Dashboard
- What has worked and what hasn't worked in the current committee structure. (This will be used to form recommendations for the new EF office).

EFC members and staff will complete the survey and the responses will be included in the next EFC meeting packet.

10. **UPDATE ON CIE BLUEPRINT IMPLEMENTATION**

Michael Luna stated that the Blueprint Team is in the process of writing the end of project report. Information will be shared once the report is released.

11. **DDS UPDATES**

Micael Luna announced that the DDS Employment Grant has been released, and that DDS will release their second quarterly report at the end of July. This report will include substantial data that can be presented to the Legislature in August.

The DDS Employment Work Group has released a draft of the service code description for the pilot program, Career Pathways to Competitive Integrated Employment. The draft includes descriptions for the Career Pathway Navigator and Customized Employment. The service code is expected to be released in the Fall.

Mr. Wavrin stated that Senate Bill 114, Section 58 modifies the language to California Education Code 51225.31 Alternate Pathway to a High School Diploma. It doesn't change the pathway but attempts to clarify some of the elements in the Education Code. The California Department of Education is currently developing a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document about the Alternate Pathway. Mr. Wavrin stated that the current language in the Code is that those that enter 9th grade in the 2022-23 school year or later shall be eligible for the Alternate Pathway. However, it is unclear if students in previous years would also qualify.

SB 531 was recently enacted to modify California Education Code 45125.1(a) which unintentionally created obstacles for work experience programs. The Code's blanket background check requirements made it difficult to place students into paid employment opportunities.

CDE's Special Education Division has started to meet and collaborate with the Transition and Partnerships Unit of the Children, Adolescent, and Young Adult Services division of DDS to help smooth the transition out of high school.

12. **MEMBER UPDATES**

Chairperson Gaona stated that the Self-Advocacy Board of Los Angeles County continues to give presentations on employment, IPPs, and conservatorship.

13. **FUTURE MEETINGS AND ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting for 2023 will occur on October 12th. The meeting adjourned at 2:11 p.m.