



Council Meeting Minutes September 19, 2023

Members Attending

Alex Reyes (S.A.)
Andy Imparato (DRC)
Brian Winfield (DDS)
Eric Ybarra (S.A.)
Harold Ashe (F.A.)
Harold Fujita (F.A.)
Jessica Brown (F.A.)
Joseph Billingsley (DHCS)
Joyce McNair (F.A.)
Julie Gaona (S.A.)
Julie Neward (F.A.)
Julio Garnica (S.A.)
Kara Ponton (S.A.)
Kilolo Brodie-Crumsey (F.A.)
Larry Yin (UCEDD)
Liz Laugeson (UCEDD)
Michael Ellis (F.A.)
Michael Thomas (DOR)
Nestor Nieves (S.A.)
Nicole Adler (S.A.)
Rosanna Ryan (S.A.)
Sonia Jones (S.A.)
Viviana Barnwell (F.A.)
Wesley Witherspoon (S.A.)

Members Absent

Aubyn Stahmer (UCEDD)
Cathay Liu (F.A.)
Lee Bycel (F.A.)
Mark Beckley (CDA)
Marko Mijic (CHHS)
Nick Wavrin (CDE)

Others Attending

Aaron Carruthers
Beth Hurn
Brian Weisel
Bridget Kolakosky
David Grady
Dena Hernandez
Gilda Giron
Hilary Baird
Holly Bins
Ken DaRosa
Lisa Hooks
Lourdes Gomez
Lynn
Maria Arredondo
Mary Ellen Stives

Others Attending

(cont.)

Maureen Fitzgerald
Michelle Cave
Miguel Lugo
Mirna Leal
Nicole For Love
Nicole Patterson
Renee Bauer
Riana Hardin
Rihana Ahmad
Ryan Duncanwood
Rondale Holloway
Scarlett VonThenen
Sheraden Nicholau
SJackson
Tania Morawiec
Veronica Bravo
Yaritza Sanchez

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Wesley Witherspoon called the meeting to order at 10:32 A.M.

2. **ESTABLISH QUORUM**

A quorum was established.

Legend:

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3. **WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS**

Members and others in attendance introduced themselves.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

5. **CHAIR REPORT AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Chair Witherspoon shared that he attended the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) Conference in Florida alongside Executive Director Carruthers. He trained Council Chairs on how to run a good Council. He also announced plans to present at the Association of University Centers on Disabilities' (AUCD) 2023 Conference in Washington, DC in early November on leadership roles for people with disabilities in non-profit organizations. Furthermore, he was invited by the National Association to serve on a search committee for the next CEO, composed of self-advocates, family advocates, Council Executive Directors, and Council Chairs.

The Chair announced various national observances for September, including Rosh Hashanah, Mexican Independence Day, National Voter Registration Day, and Yom Kippur. For October he highlighted Hoshana Rabbah, World Cerebral Palsy Day, National Coming Out Day, his birthday on the 30th, and Halloween. He also invited Councilmembers to his birthday party on October 21st.

SCDD committee reports were provided in the meeting packet. Chair Witherspoon asked that members read through these reports when they are able. The committee reports can be accessed online at <https://scdd.ca.gov/councilmeetings/>.

6. **APPROVAL OF JULY 2023 MEETING MINUTES**

Action 1

It was moved/seconded Fujita [F.A]/ Adler [S.A.] and carried to approve the July 2023 meeting minutes as presented. (See last page of minutes for a voting record of members present)

7. **STATEWIDE SELF-ADVOCACY NETWORK (SSAN) REPORT**

SCDD SSAN representative Alex Reyes provided Councilmembers with an update from SSAN's in person hybrid meeting on September 7th, 2023. The next SSAN meeting will be held in December.

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SCDD POLICY UPDATE

Deputy Director Bridget Kolakosky announced the 3rd annual “There Should Be a Law Contest!” from September 1st through September 30th. In 2023, the Council prioritized employment, safety, and housing. Employment was their number one priority. Deputy Director Kolakosky highlighted the success of the Employment First policy which led to the creation of the Employment First Office and the permanence of the LEAP SIP program. She relayed that the Legislative and Public Policy Committee has consistently dedicated time during their meetings to address concerns and engage in discussions on policies related to safety for people with disabilities. Additionally, the ongoing advocacy for housing, specifically through the co-sponsoring of SB 37, aimed to address rental subsidies for those in need.

She provided a comprehensive overview on the legislative process of the bills supported by the Council. She noted that given the two-year legislative session, bills that did not pass in 2023 may still progress. AB 244 failed to meet its committee deadline, while SB 483, AB 222, and SB 37 shifted to a two-year cycle. The Council extended its support to SB 544 and AB 624, while withdrawing support from AB 1097 due to its transition into a tax measure. Two bills, SB 246 and AB 1568, failed in the Appropriations Committee but may be reconsidered. The Governor signed AB 87 and AB 946 into law. AB 1567 remains in committee with hopes for advancement next year. Bills awaiting the Governor’s signature include AB 248 (Mathis), AB 545 (Pellerin), AB 447 (Arambula), AB 624 (Grayson), SB 271 (Dodd), and SB 544 (Laird).

The Council does not often take positions on federal bills, as they defer to the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities on federal legislation. However, they received information about the SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act, a bill designed to enhance security income benefits and raise asset limits to \$10,000 for individuals and \$20,000 for couples. Staff will monitor the Act as it is in motion and subject to amendments.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT AND STAFF REPORTS

Executive Director Carruthers began his report with a quote from Dr. Victor Pineda, a Social Development Scholar and Disability Rights Advocate. He highlighted the need to celebrate diversity within the Latino community and among individuals with disabilities.

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The State Plan serves as the Council's contract with the federal Administration on Community Living (ACL) for federal funding. This 5-year plan (2022-2026) reflects the Council's values and commitment to bringing positive change to California for individuals with disabilities and their families. Notable achievements from the past year included the completion of 4 out of 11 objectives, a revision to increase the goals for those objectives, and significant progress on two more objectives. State Plan staff have initiated the Program Performance Report (PPR), detailing last year's achievements. Furthermore, the ACL approved the Council's workplans for 2024, 2025, and 2026. These internal documents guide the Council's work. As a reminder, Cycle 45 grants end on September 30th, and Cycle 46 grants begin on October 1st.

The Statewide Self-Advocate Network (SSAN), a self-advocacy project overseen by the Council, held their first in-person hybrid meeting on September 7, 2023. They met to discuss ways to be more effective in their work, both individually and collectively as a self-advocacy network. They generated ideas for regional projects in the areas of Self-Advocacy, Systems Change, and Capacity-Building. Additionally, SSAN restructured its workgroups to prioritize four short-term projects related to employment. These projects include hosting an Employment (NDEAM) Webinar on October 30th, creating employment tip-sheets, documenting success stories in employment, and developing Disability Awareness Trainings.

On September 12, 2023, the Service International Employees Union (SEIU) members ratified a contract with the state of California. This agreement included a 3% wage increase for employees starting July 1, 2023, and a 7% increase for Office Technicians. This move ensures that entry-level state jobs will now offer \$25/hr, an essential raise to acknowledge employees' hard work and to address inflation. The next step involves modifying the Council's adopted budget display for 2023-2024 to accommodate the wage increase, which will be presented to the Executive Committee for approval.

The Executive Director shared that he and other community leaders were invited to the White House for "Communities in Action: Building a Better California" on October 5, 2023. He offered to carry forward messages and concerns from Councilmembers regarding issues that matter most to individuals with IDD and their families.

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Councilmember Brodie-Crumsey advocated for removing the R word from federal language. Councilmember Jones discussed the challenges faced by married couples with disabilities due to benefit structures that risk cutting their income. Councilmember Neward discussed the importance of partnering with developers and building owners to address access issues and supporting disability-owned businesses through private-public partnerships. Councilmember Reyes emphasized the importance of including people with disabilities in decision-making. Councilmember McNair advocated for person-centered services from infancy to end of life, emphasizing the need for well-trained, respectful, and well-paid staff. Councilmember Barnwell emphasized the importance of considering the perspective of people with disabilities when crafting laws and policies, keeping in mind their unique challenges, talents, and attributes. Councilmember Ponton raised awareness of rare diseases and the need for accessible healthcare, especially in rural areas. Councilmember Nieves called for equal participation in employment, healthcare, and social opportunities. Councilmember Gaona pointed out the need to reevaluate IHSS benefits to avoid penalizing higher earnings. Councilmember Adler reinforced the significance of eliminating derogatory terms from law and society.

The Executive Director assured Councilmembers that he would convey their concerns to the White House.

9. **NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH OCTOBER 2023 STORIES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

National Disability Employment Awareness Month, celebrated every October, highlights the contributions of workers with disabilities and promotes inclusivity in the workforce. Three self-advocates, Sydney Krebsbach from the Washington State Council, Councilmember Julie Gaona, and Councilmember Alex Reyes shared their unique employment journeys.

Sydney, who co-chairs the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council, discussed her experiences as an Energy Specialist at Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners (SNAP) and her advocacy work with the ECHO Autism Hub Team at the University of Washington. She recounted her decade-long journey through various jobs, emphasizing the challenges she faced in securing stable full-time employment. Sydney's

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inspiring message urged others not to give up in their search for the right job.

Councilmember Julie Gaona recounted her academic journey, highlighting a shift from university aspirations to community college and eventually to a career catalyzed by volunteer work. Julie emphasized the value of volunteering as a pathway to employment and skill development.

Councilmember Alex Reyes noted that he was hired through the SSI Program "Your Ticket to Work" with the Fremont Unified School District in 2015. He currently serves as a substitute campus supervisor, and responsible for campus security. He also revealed that he began his own DJ business in 2001. Alex emphasized the importance of finding the right resources for job opportunities.

10. CLOSED SESSION: PERSONNEL

Vice Chair Lee was unable to attend the September Council meeting to lead the closed session, so it was postponed to November's Council meeting.

11. RECONVENE OPEN SESSION

Postponed to November's Council meeting.

12. NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT

The next Council meeting will be held on November 28, 2023. The meeting was adjourned at 2:28 P.M.

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Name	Action 1 Minutes
Adler, Nicole	For
Ashe, Harold	For
Barnwell, Viviana	For
Billingsley, Joseph	For
Brodie-Crumsey, Kilolo	For
Brown, Jessica	For
Ellis, Michael	For
Fujita, Harold	For
Imparato, Andy	For
Jones, Sonia	For
Gaona, Julie	For
Garnica, Julio	NP
Laugeson, Liz	For
McNair, Joyce	For
Neward, Julie	Abstain
Nieves, Nestor	For
Ponton, Kara	For
Reyes, Alex	For
Ryan, Rosanna	For
Thomas, Michael	For
Wavrin, Nick	For
Winfield, Brian	Abstain
Witherspoon, Wesley	For
Ybarra, Eric	For
Yin, Larry	For