



Council Meeting Minutes May 23, 2023

Members Attending

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

Members Absent

Mark Beckley (CDA)
Marko Mijic (CHHS)

Others Attending

Aaron Carruthers
Aminah Abdul-Hakim
Anne De Medeiros
Beth Hurn
Brian Weisel
Bridget Kolakosky
Charles Ngyuen
Christine Tolbert
David Grady
Debra Adler
Dena Hernandez
Hilary Baird
Holly Bins
Julie Eby-McKenzie
Julie Hillstead
Ken DaRosa
Lisa Hooks
Lynn Villoria
Mary Ellen Stives
Michelle Cave
Mirna Leal
Nicole Patterson
Renee Bauer
Riana Hardin

Others Attending

(cont.)

Robbin Puccio
Rondale Holloway
Ryan Duncanwood
Scarlett VonThenen
Shar'on Williams
Sheraden Nicholau
Sidney Jackson
Swathi
Veronica Bravo
Yaritzza Sanchez
Yolanda Cruz

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wesley Witherspoon called the meeting to order at 10:34 A.M.

Legend:

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2. **ESTABLISH QUORUM**

A quorum was established.

3. **SWEARING IN OF NEW COUNCILMEMBERS**

Executive Director Carruthers swore in new Councilmembers Sonia Jones, Nestor Nieves, and Jessica Brown.

4. **WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS**

Members and others in attendance introduced themselves.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Executive Director Carruthers welcomed the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities' staff, who were visiting various state Councils nationwide to gain insights into their operations and enhance their own Council.

Shar'ron Williams and David Ingram from the North Carolina Council provided a public comment. They expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to observe California's State Council. Unfortunately, their Executive Director, Talley Wells, was unable to join.

6. **CHAIR REPORT AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Council Chair Witherspoon presented photos from his visit to the Festival of Books at the University of Southern California, which took place on April 22-23. This event was the largest free book fair in the United States and included various activities such as panels, author readings, musical performances, a poetry stage, and a food court. Additionally, there were more than 250 vendors and exhibitors present.

The Chair also discussed his meeting with the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) and other advocates to address the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) requirements. He shared a personal story about a friend with cancer who was placed in a facility, where he faced restrictions and lost contact with his friends. Former Councilmember Kecia Weller also spoke about person-centered planning.

Additionally, he shared that he had spoken three times at the 27th Annual Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference on May 12th and 13th. He delivered a keynote presentation and discussed topics such as how to succeed independently in California and his perspective on health during the COVID-19 pandemic. During his keynote speech, he emphasized the

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importance of individuals with disabilities having the autonomy to make decisions about their own lives. He recounted his personal journey from special education to college and beyond, highlighting the challenges he faced in finding employment and forming relationships. He encouraged attendees not to give up in their job search and shared his pride in working at USC UCEDD since 2006. The Chair also mentioned his involvement with the Council since 2008, getting re-elected in 2022. He highlighted his past speaking engagements at the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) in 2018 and 2019, as well as his presentation on health inequities for people with disabilities in 2022. The Chair further discussed the significance of the Lanterman Act, which provides important regulations for people with disabilities.

The Chair emphasized the need for individuals to embrace their uniqueness and make decisions about their own lives. He urged attendees not to limit themselves and encouraged them to persevere in their pursuit of employment and personal happiness.

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/>.

7. APPROVAL OF MARCH 2023 MEETING MINUTES

Action 1

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

8. SCDD 2023-24 BUDGET

Councilmember Brian Winfield from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) provided a comprehensive update on the Governor's May revision to the proposed 23-24 budget. He highlighted various aspects, including the numbers of individuals served, expenditure data, and new policy items. Regional centers expect to serve over 396,000 individuals in the current year and nearly 421,000 in the 23-24 budget year. State-operated services are anticipated to support a total of 312 individuals, which includes those served in the Porterville Developmental Center, Canyon Springs Community Facility, and Acute Crisis Star Homes.

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The May revision allocates \$14.1 billion in total funds, representing a significant net increase of \$1.8 billion over the current year's budget. One of the notable policy changes is the introduction of Coordinated Family Support Services, a new service developed in collaboration with stakeholders to support families in caring for their loved ones in the family home. Initially funded through the American Rescue Plan Act, the Governor's budget projects ongoing funding for coordinated family support services through regional centers, although the funding will end in December 2023.

Additionally, the budget allocates \$15 million for updating rate models, as well as funding for regional center service coordination and supervisors to align them with the state equivalent. Other provisions include \$330,000 for START Teams certification, a \$10.8 million reappropriation for the community placement plan, and an extension of provisional eligibility under the Lanterman Act for children ages 0 through 2. The budget also addresses compliance with home and community-based services, with additional positions for monitoring and oversight.

The Executive Director presented an overview of the draft budget, which had been previously discussed in detail during the March Council meeting. In March, the proposed budget included an increase of \$20,000 in federal funding from the Administration on Community Living (ACL). The budget aimed to fully fund salaries and benefits, resulting in a cost increase of \$31,000 compared to the previous year. To compensate for these increases, proposed adjustments were made in various spending areas. Communication expenses were reduced by \$30,000, postage by \$6,000, information technology by \$14,000, and out-of-state travel was increased by \$2,000. Additionally, Community Development Grants were increased by \$40,000. These adjustments reflected actual spending and future projections. Executive Director Carruthers reminded Councilmembers that a cash reserve of \$1,750,000 was still available and planned for, while prior year unexpended funds of \$345,000 could be allocated for any additional items beyond the proposed budget.

Regarding changes since March, Executive Director Carruthers shared that a new column for the Supported Decision-Making Technical Assistance Program (SDM-TAP) had been added to the Council's budget. Last year, the legislature allocated \$5 million to create this program as part of the Council's reform work on conservatorships. SDM-TAP serves as a resource for individuals who may not require full conservatorship but

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need guidance on supported decision making. The budget summary included the Basic State Grant of \$8,034,000, Quality Assessment (QA) contract of \$3,672,000, Client's Rights Advocates Volunteer Advocacy Services (CRA/VAS) contract of \$1,661,000, and the newly added SDM-TAP with a one-time amount of \$5 million from the state's general fund. The Executive Director proposed a budget of \$18,365,000 for the Council's consideration.

The full presentation can be accessed at <https://scdd.ca.gov/councilmeetings/>.

Action 2

It was moved/seconded (Reyes [S.A]/ Ybarra [S.A.]) and carried to adopt the 2023-2024 SCDD Budget as presented. (See last page of minutes for a voting record of members present)

9. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT AND STAFF REPORTS

Executive Director Carruthers emphasized the Council's collaborative spirit and commitment to person-centered planning. He also highlighted the Council's successful Program and Performance Report (PPR) for the previous year, which received praise from the Administration on Community Living (ACL). The ACL commended the Council for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families, mentioning their translation efforts and various accomplishments. The State Plan Team reported positive progress on the current work plan, with a few areas identified for improvement. The Executive Director provided updates on advocacy efforts to phase out subminimum wage and initiatives for alternatives to conservatorship, including the formation of a Community of Practice and the allocation of five million dollars from the Department of Finance for a supported decision-making program. Additionally, Councilmember Ellis and the Executive Director met with Assembly Budget Subcommittee Chair Arambula to discuss priorities, including the Employment First Office.

Furthermore, Executive Director Carruthers highlighted the Council's efforts in promoting community voices at an international level through the "There Should Be a Law" contest. Under the leadership of Dr. Liz Laugeson at UCLA, the Council transformed the data into an academic analysis. The analysis was accepted by the International Society for Autism Research. Councilmember Laugeson shared some key findings from the analysis, including a significant focus on health and human

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services (40% of responses) and education (19% of responses). Other areas such as employment, public safety, and housing were also represented, with participants offering creative solutions.

Deputy Director Kolakosky shared that all the submissions from the contest were also included into a comprehensive report that had been circulated to legislative offices. The report was met with positive feedback from legislators who found it valuable in understanding the concerns raised by their constituents along with clever solutions.

10. **PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING DEMONSTRATION**

Vaccine and Public Health Access Program Manager Mirna Leal, and self-advocate Sylvia Delgado highlighted the significance of person-centered thinking and planning. This approach focuses on the individual and tailoring support around their needs and preferences. Mirna shared insights from her experience supervising regional center workers in implementing person-centered planning, and Sylvia shared her personal experience and perspective with obtaining a person-centered plan.

Person centered thinking involves reflecting on one's own identity, including likes, dislikes, dreams, strengths, goals, and wants. It requires clear and specific communication of individual desires. Mirna and Sylvia emphasized that if individuals feel their needs/wants are not being met, it is crucial for them to elaborate on their preferences and work with their coordinator(s) to find more suitable options. A key aspect of person-centered planning is ensuring individuals have control over their own lives, including decisions about employment, clothing, social interactions, and leisure activities. To provide a clear understanding of who individuals are, a person-centered plan is created. It serves as a comprehensive document capturing essential information. The plan should effectively convey a person's identity to someone who has never met them before. While it is impossible to include every detail, it serves as a starting point and a guide for achieving a fulfilling and joyful life. The person-centered plan is not mandatory and can be a simple or complex document completed by the individual, family, or an external party. It plays a crucial role in guiding the individual program plan, which is a legal contract between individuals and the regional center. By outlining specific goals, timelines, responsibilities, and funding sources, the person-centered plan helps individuals prioritize and focus on their objectives. Individuals are encouraged to proactively inquire about person-centered planning with their service coordinator or regional center staff and collaborate on

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creating the plan. Ultimately, the emphasis is on aligning the plan with the individual's values and translating them into reality.

11. NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT

The next Council meeting will be held on May 23, 2023. The meeting was adjourned at 3:34 P.M.

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| Name | Action 1 Minutes | Action 2 SCDD Budget |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Adler, Nicole | For | For |
| Ashe, Harold | For | For |
| Barnwell, Viviana | For | For |
| Billingsley, Joseph | For | Abstain |
| Brodie-Crumsey, Kilolo | For | For |
| Brown, Jessica | For | Abstain |
| Bycel, Lee | For | For |
| Ellis, Michael | For | For |
| Fujita, Harold | For | For |
| Jones, Sonia | For | For |
| Gaona, Julie | For | For |
| Garnica, Julio | For | For |
| Laugeson, Liz | For | For |
| Liu, Cathay | For | For |
| McNair, Joyce | For | For |
| Neward, Julie | For | For |
| Nieves, Nestor | Abstain | For |
| Ponton, Kara | For | For |
| Reyes, Alex | For | For |
| Ryan, Rosanna | For | For |
| Stahmer, Aubyn | For | For |
| Smith, Sandra | For | For |
| Thomas, Michael | For | Abstain |
| Wavrin, Nick | For | For |
| Winfield, Brian | Abstain | Abstain |
| Witherspoon, Wesley | For | For |
| Ybarra, Eric | For | For |
| Yin, Larry | For | For |