



North Bay Regional Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Meeting of July 30, 2024

Posted at: scdd.ca.gov/northbay

- **Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 6:07 pm

- **Welcome & Introductions**

RAC Member Attendance (mark if present)

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sally Stafford | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoe Bartholomew |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ellen Sweigert | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christopher Bennett |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Danie Cruz | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bobby Craig |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angela Zamora | <input type="checkbox"/> Holly Armijo |

Members of the Public Attendance

None

SCDD Staff Attendance (mark if present)

- | | |
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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kenya Martinez | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tobias Weare |
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AI Companion and Team Introductions

New SCDD North Bay Manager Kenya Martinez introduced the AI companion to ensure meeting notes were kept confidential and focused on business matters. SCDD staff Tobias expressed excitement about the AI's potential to ease his note-taking burden to focus on the RAC meeting. Everyone participating in the RAC meeting accepted the recording. Introductions: RAC member Christopher, a former intern for a California lawmaker, shared his extensive background and upcoming work with the public service agencies. RAC member Dr. Zoe Bartholomew, a university professor and behavior specialist, introduced her role in special education and shared her fun facts. RAC Member Sally, a senior vocational rehabilitation counselor at the California Department of Rehabilitation, discussed her work in supported employment and her personal journey to self-discovery, self-advocacy, and autonomy.

Rack Expectations, Council Review, and News

Tobias welcomed RAC Member, Bobby Craig, and discussed the agenda which included reviewing expectations for the "RAC" and the wider council. RAC Member

Ellen raised a question about her continued role in the "RAC" after her term, which Tobias confirmed hadn't changed but noted they would need to review the criteria for consecutive service. Sally shared news of a proposed name and branding change at the Department of Rehabilitation, which had been postponed. Christopher shared his upcoming plans to attend the White House in October as a guest speaker for the anniversary events of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), and a national disability advocacy group event at Capitol Hill next year. Tobias expressed his respect for Christopher's advocacy efforts. Ellen added that the North Bay Regional Center had a well-attended community vendor programs event, with around 500 people, although she wasn't in attendance. No public comments or action items were raised during the meeting.

Strategic Plan for Napa, Sonoma, and Solano Counties

Ellen shared her experience of creating a platform for cancer survivors, which she will be using to assist consumers in August. Kenya, the new regional manager, discussed the need for a better strategic plan for Napa, Sonoma, and Solano counties, and sought input from the group on potential areas of focus, including transportation and employment. Ellen agreed to share a list of para-transit services resources with Kenya and Tobias. Sally also highlighted the challenges in providing transportation for individuals with disabilities and IDD, and the California Department of Rehabilitation efforts being made to address these issues, such as providing bus passes, repairing bicycles, and arranging ride shares.

Challenges in Employment for People with Disabilities

Sally discussed the challenges faced by the Redwood Empire District of the Department of Rehabilitation in providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities, particularly the dissatisfaction expressed by employers after initial job assessments. Ellen shared her ongoing work on a program to increase the advocacy experience of people with disabilities, which she hoped would demonstrate their capabilities to employers. Dr. Zoe then discussed the challenges faced in Solano County, including inadequate support and training for employers, leading to difficulties in managing behavioral incidents and providing necessary assistance. She emphasized the need for focused action and support, given that Solano County receives the least amount of funding support out of all counties in California.

Addressing Public Transportation Accessibility Issues

Ellen and Dr. Zoe discussed issues with the public transportation system in Napa and Solano County, particularly the lack of accommodations and new routes. Sally shared her experience with person-centered planning and the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing employment and transportation. Christopher highlighted his own transportation barrier and the need for a more accessible system. The team agreed to further explore these issues with their respective employers and stakeholders.

Employer Support for Individuals with Disabilities

Kenya and Dr Zoe discussed the challenges faced by employers in hiring and supporting individuals with disabilities. Dr.Z emphasized the need for direct communication with employers to better understand their needs and to provide necessary training and support. They also discussed issues with the current vocational rehab system, including a lack of accountability and support for employers. Kenya agreed to discuss potential solutions with former North Bay Manager Lisa Hooks.

Employer Training and Driving Accessibility

Ellen shared her research on the DMV's accommodations for people with disabilities to learn how to drive, which Tobias and Kenya found valuable. Kenya proposed collaborating on training for employers on creating a person-centered plan, utilizing Ellen's expertise and the new regional manager's certification. Ellen confirmed she had more information on the topic and agreed to investigate it further. They also discussed the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in obtaining driving licenses and the need for funding to send out representatives to employers to provide training on accommodations.

Adjusting Meeting Time and Attendance

The team agreed to switch the meeting time to the evening to accommodate more members, with the next meeting scheduled for September 23rd. They also decided to continue the current frequency of meetings, which was switched to every other month to maximize attendance. Kenya proposed implementing a reminder system for future meetings to ensure a quorum is present. Additionally, a new member, Bobby Craig, was introduced and it was agreed that he would be kept informed about discussions, even if he cannot attend in person.

Transportation Issues and Career Opportunities

Christopher shared his transportation issue to intern for Center Alex Padilla's office in Sacramento. Kenya suggested Amtrak's Capital Corridor and committed to emailing Christopher more details. The meeting ended with Kenya confirming no further comments and closing the session, and Tobias stopped the recording at her request.

Quick recap

The team discussed the introduction of an AI companion for meeting notes, the roles of various members, and upcoming plans and events. They also addressed challenges in providing employment opportunities and transportation for individuals with disabilities, with a focus on the need for better strategic planning and training for employers. Lastly, they agreed to adjust meeting times and frequency, and to collaborate on training for employers, while also introducing new members and discussing potential solutions to systemic issues.

Next steps

- Kenya to email Christopher about the Capital Corridor train option for transportation to Sacramento.
- Ellen to send her contact information to Dr. Zoe.
- Dr. Zoe to send her contact information to Ellen.
- Kenya to follow up with Lisa about discussing potentially reducing the number of members required for a quorum.
- Kenya to send out reminders the day of future RAC meetings to ensure quorum.
- Ellen to keep Bobby informed about RAC meetings and potentially include him via phone if he cannot attend in person.
- State Council to consider developing a person-centered planning training for employers.
- The next RAC meeting is scheduled for September 23rd, 2024. Time: to be determined

Adjournment

The RAC meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.