



State Council on Developmental Disabilities



STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
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September 8, 2025

Mr. Pete Cervinka, Director  
Department of Developmental Services  
P.O. Box 944202  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2020

RE LOCAL VOLUNTEER ADVISORY COMMITTEE ROLE IN SERVICE  
COORDINATOR TRAININGS

Dear Director Cervinka:

The Statewide Self Determination Advisory Committee (SSDAC) would like to thank the Department of Developmental Services (DDS/Department) for its ongoing collaboration and continuous effort to provide timely and necessary program directives and guidance to improve the implementation of the Self-Determination Program.

To that end, the SSDAC is writing to request that the Department provide guidance to clarify the collaborative relationship between Local Volunteer Advisory Committees (LVACs) and regional centers regarding the training of service coordinators and fair hearing specialists. To support this request, we have enclosed a report outlining our findings and recommendations.

The report presents the information collected from SSDAC members, along with analysis and recommendations. The SSDAC has determined that although statute states that regional centers shall conduct service coordinator (and fair hearing specialist) training "in collaboration with the local volunteer advisory committee," this collaboration is not occurring consistently. LVACs report differences in both level and type of involvement, and very few LVACs have reported conducting any review of SC training materials or curriculum.

The SSDAC's concern is that the LVAC's role in SC and fair hearing specialist training is not clearly defined in statute. Anecdotally, this lack of clarity has led to disagreements between LVACs and regional centers. The SSDAC has found that ambiguity in statute leads to differing interpretations and thus to wide variation in regional center policies and practices. The Committee believes that further clarification would assist the LVACs in fulfilling their

*"The Council advocates, promotes & implements policies and practices that achieve self-determination, independence, productivity & inclusion in all aspects of community life for Californians with developmental disabilities and their families."*

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advisory role and would provide a framework for regional centers to develop internal policies and practices in support of that role.

It is the hope of the SSDAC that as best practices in training these regional center staff are identified that the Department will consider moving toward standardization, as the SSDAC recognizes the benefits of ensuring statewide access to high quality training, as has been seen with statewide Self-Determination Orientations.

Should you have any questions about this recommendation, please feel free to contact us at your convenience.

Kindest Regards,



Rick Wood, Co-Chair  
Statewide Self-Determination  
Advisory Committee (SSDAC)



Nestor Nieves, Co-Chair  
Statewide Self-Determination  
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cc: Aaron Carruthers, Executive Director, State Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee Members  
Marlene Morales, Department of Developmental Disabilities

Enclosure: Local Volunteer Advisory Committee Involvement in Regional Center Service  
Coordinator Training

# Local Volunteer Advisory Committee Involvement in Regional Center Service Coordinator Training

## Background:

In February 2022 the Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SSDAC) set a priority to review Service Coordinator (SC) training materials and provide recommendations on best practices. Although several Local Volunteer Advisory Committee (LVAC) Chairs/Co-Chairs, along with SSDAC support staff, have requested regional center training materials, attempts to collect and review curriculum/materials have been largely unsuccessful. In response to this barrier, leadership reviewed statute for the purpose of formulating next steps.

WIC 4685.8 (r)(9) states that regional centers shall: "Train all service coordinators and fair hearing specialists in the principles of self-determination, the mechanics of the Self-Determination Program, and the rights of consumers and families. The training shall be conducted in collaboration with the local volunteer advisory committee."

Because SC training falls under the purview of the LVACs, SSDAC leadership requested that members report on how their LVACs are currently fulfilling this function.

## SSDAC Member Reports

### Involvement in SC Training

When asked if their LVAC was involved with SC training:

- 5 members stated their LVAC is involved in training SCs
- 6 Members stated that their LVAC is not involved in SC training
- 2 Members stated that they are not sure or do not know if they are involved in SC training

In describing their LVAC's involvement in SC trainings, SSDAC members reported the following activities:

- Approved funding for staff training and made suggestions regarding how many trainings to offer
- Provided opportunities (at LVAC meetings) for members and guests to share experiences/make suggestions for improving the process

## Reviewing Training Materials/Curriculum

When asked if their LVAC has reviewed/provided feedback on SC training curriculum or materials:

- 9 members reported that their LVACs have not reviewed/provided feedback on SC training curriculum or materials
- 2 reported that they do not know if their LVACs have done this.
- 3 members stated that they have reviewed/provided feedback.

## Issues and Recommendations

**Issue:** While some LVACs report that they are involved in SC training to some extent, very few have reported that their involvement extends to reviewing materials/curriculum. None of the LVACs reported direct member involvement in providing SC trainings.

**Recommendation:** Evidence suggests that LVACs may not be aware that collaborating with the regional center to train SCs is within their statutory authority. The SSDAC should ensure that all LVAC Chairs are informed about the role of their committee and SSDAC Leadership should strongly encourage them to initiate this collaboration.

**Issue:** The LVAC's role in SC training, as described in statute, is not clearly defined ("training shall be conducted in collaboration with the LVAC"). Anecdotal reports from SSDAC members suggest that this has led to conflict between LVACs and regional centers. Differing opinions and interpretations of statute creates variation in regional center policies and practices, limiting the ability of LVACs to provide necessary guidance and oversight.

**Recommendation:** The SSDAC recommends that the Department of Developmental Services issue guidance regarding regional center collaboration with LVACs in providing training to Service Coordinators.