

Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee New Member Resource Guide



Produced by: SSDAC Co-Chairs in collaboration with SCDD Staff

September 2025

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Program History

The California Self-Determination Program (SDP) was inspired by the broader disability rights movement, emphasizing autonomy, choice and control over services.

In 1998, California launched a Self-Determination pilot project in five regional centers (Harbor, Westside, Kern, Far Northern, and Redwood Coast). This pilot was authorized under Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) § 4685.5.

Participants of the pilot reported higher satisfaction than that of traditional services. Including experiencing a better quality of life and more personalized use of funds.

Following several failed attempts to bring the program statewide, SB 468 passed in 2013 establishing the California's Self-Determination Program (WIC Section 4685.8). SB 468 required that California receive approval to use Medicaid funding. This is a "Medicaid waiver."

In 2018, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approved California's Medicaid waiver. The Department of Developmental Services then began implementing a 3-year phase-in with 2,500 participants statewide.

As of July 1, 2021, the Self-Determination Program became available to all eligible regional center clients who wish to participate.

Committee Purpose

The Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SSDAC) is a statutorily created volunteer advisory committee made up primarily of the Chairs of the Local Advisory Committee to advise and make recommendations on ways to increase the effectiveness of the Self-Determination Program.

Role of the SSDAC Co-Chairs & Term Limits

The SSDAC functions under a Co-Chair model which means that instead of having a single chairperson, the committee is led by two individuals who share the leadership role.

Current practice is that the Chair of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities appoints one of the Co-Chairs and the committee elects the other.

Elections for the SSDAC-elected Co-Chair are held every two years, while the SCDD-appointed Co-Chair is selected annually.

Co-Chair Duties

- Set meeting agenda
- Facilitate productive and balanced meetings
- Ensure priorities and decisions align with the group's purpose
- Assist the committee to reach consensus
- Follow-up on action items
- Coordinate with SCDD staff and/or other stakeholder to move the committee's work forward

SSDAC Priorities

To ensure that the SSDAC remains productive and engaged in projects to fulfill its statutory mandate, the committee periodically establishes priorities. SSDAC priorities typically consist of three focus areas with defined goals and/or projects.

To establish priorities, committee members are asked to identify their top 3-to-5 priorities. The SSDAC Workgroup then conducts an analysis of the committee's submissions and discusses ways to address them. These goals and priorities are then presented to the full committee for a vote. Once approved by the Committee, the Workgroup will collaborate with SCDD staff to initiate timelines and workplans.

Current Priorities

In February of 2022, SSDAC members participated in a group activity to share their top priorities. The SSDAC workgroup analyzed feedback, which resulted in identifying three priorities:

- Creation of a platform to share best practices
- Identifying trainings and/or provide feedback on trainings for Service Coordinators
- Engaging in disparity outreach and/or developing an educational video targeted at ethnic disparities.

The Workgroup created timelines and workplans for each of these priorities, which were approved by the committee in June of 2022.

SSDAC Meetings

SSDAC meetings give LVAC Chairs the opportunity to share achievements, discuss local issues, and make recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the Self-Determination Program.

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) organizes and convenes up to four of these meetings each year.

As a statutorily created state body, SCDD is also responsible for ensuring that these meetings comply with the [Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act](#).

The Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act protects the people of California's right to access information about public business. The law, among other things, establishes open meeting procedures that include:

- The timing and contents of meeting notices and agendas
- The rights of the public at an open meeting
- Teleconference rules for decision making-bodies

For more information on the Bagley-Keene Act, please see the [California Department of Justice Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act Guide](#).

SSDAC Meeting Etiquette

To help SSDAC meetings run smoothly, the committee adheres to Robert's Rules of Order. Following these guidelines provides structure and makes meetings more efficient, while ensuring productive and respectful interactions between members. For more information, please see the Robert's Rules of Order Plain Language Guide ([English](#)) ([Spanish](#)).

Role of the LVAC Chairs before and/or at SSDAC Meetings

Sharing Information from LVACs

Because one of the primary functions of the SSDAC is to collect and report information on systemic issues, implementation concerns, and best practices in implementing the Self-Determination program, it is important that SSDAC members are responsive to requests to share information with the Committee. It is recommended that SSDAC members keep track of the following information:

- Successes/milestones of the LVAC or regional center
- Barriers to SDP implementation
- Emerging issues in SDP implementation
- Changes to SDP-related policies/practices at regional center (and their outcomes)
- LVAC recommendations for improving outcomes
- How implementation funds are spent (and associated outcomes)
- New efforts to reduce barriers to SDP enrollment
- Comments from the public that the LVAC wants to highlight

This information, along with any other information that the SSDAC may use to fulfil its responsibilities, will be requested periodically by SSDAC leadership (through SCDD staff). Collection of this information is typically conducted through Member Report surveys or through email requests for information. Members are also encouraged to reach out to SSDAC leadership and staff if there are issues of immediate interest or concern.

Tracking Outcomes

In order to identify best or promising practices and to report successes, it is important to have a plan in place to keep track of outcomes. This is especially important when your regional center implements a new policy or practice, and when engaging in projects using SDP implementation funding.

Tracking outcomes of regional center policies, practices and projects can be simple if it is planned for. This process requires the following steps:

1. Identify the intended outcome

Examples: to increase enrollment; to speed up the budget approval process; to reach 150 people with information; to increase enrollment for Spanish-speaking population; etc.

2. Identify the data needed to measure success

Examples: Number of people enrolled; amount of time to approve a budget; number of people attending an event; demographics of participants; etc.

3. Create and implement a plan to collect and report data

Example: regional center staff will collect data; management will synthesize and report to LVAC

These steps should also be used by regional center grantees who are awarded implementation funding through the Request for Proposal (RFP) process. It is highly recommended that regional centers require that grantees report the outcomes of any projects that utilize SDP implementation funds.

Role of DDS at SSDAC Meetings

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is invited to attend all SSDAC meetings. Their role in these meetings is to:

- Report on Self-Determination Program data
- Inform the SSDAC about the Department's recent directives, ongoing initiatives, and upcoming areas of focus
- Hear about the Committee's concerns, emerging issues and recommendations

SSDAC Workgroup

In June of 2019 the SSDAC requested approval from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to form a workgroup to assist with developing agendas for SSDAC meetings, creating work plans and to continue to push forth the priorities, goals and projects of the SSDAC in between meetings. In October of 2019, the Executive committee of the State Council approved the formation of a workgroup.

The SSDAC Workgroup is made up of volunteers from the SSDAC. Only SSDAC members who are Chair or Co-Chair of their LVAC can serve on the Workgroup (designees cannot serve). To ensure that Workgroup meetings do not violate the Bagley-Keene Act, there can be no more than ten (10) members serving on the Workgroup at any given time.

Role of the SSDAC vs. LVAC

Statute

The Self-Determination Program and the committees that support the program are established by [WIC 4685.8](#).

Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SSDAC)

The Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee is established by WIC 4685.8 (w)(2) as follows:

“W (2) The State Council on Developmental Disabilities shall form a volunteer committee, to be known as the Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee, comprised of the chairs of the 21 local advisory committees, or their designees. The council shall convene the Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee twice annually, or more frequently in the sole discretion of the council. The Statewide Self-Determination Advisory committee shall meet by teleconference or other means established by the council to identify self-determination best practices, effective consumer and family training materials, implementation concerns, systemic issues, ways to enhance the program, and recommendations regarding the most effective method for participants to learn of individuals who are available to provide services and supports. The council shall synthesize information received from the Statewide Self-Determination Advisory committee, local advisory committees, and other sources, share the information with consumers, families, regional centers, and the department, and make recommendations, as appropriate, to increase the program’s effectiveness in furthering the principles of self-determination.”

In Summary, the role of the SSDAC is to:

- Share information with consumers, families, regional centers, and the DDS as appropriate.
- Identify self-determination best practices.
- Identify effective consumer and family training materials.
- Identify implementation concerns and systemic issues.
- Identify ways to enhance the program.
- Make recommendations to increase the program’s effectiveness in furthering the principles of self-determination.

Local Volunteer Advisory Committees (LVACs or local SDACs)

Local Volunteer Advisory Committees are established by WIC 4685.8 (w)(1) as follows:

“Each Regional Center shall establish a local volunteer advisory committee to provide oversight of the Self-Determination Program and identify a regional center liaison to the committee. The regional center and the State

Council on Developmental Disabilities shall each appoint one-half of the membership of the committee. The committee shall consist of the regional center clients' rights advocate, consumers, family members, and other advocates, and community leaders, including a representative from a family resource center. A majority of the committee shall be consumers and their family members. The committee shall reflect the multicultural diversity and geographic profile of the catchment area. The committee shall review the development and ongoing progress of the Self-Determination Program, including whether the program advances the principles of self-determination and is operating consistent with the requirements of this section, and may make ongoing recommendations for improvement to the regional center and the department. Annually, the regional center shall confirm, in writing, that the committee meets the requirements specified in this paragraph and provide the department with the name of the staff liaison and the names of the committee members, the positions they fill on the committee, and which entity appointed them to the committee."

WIC 4685.8 (r) states that in implementing the Self-Determination Program, the regional center shall do the following:

"(r)(7) Contract with local consumer or family-run organizations and consult with the local volunteer advisory committee established pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (w) to conduct outreach through local meetings or forums to consumers and their families to provide information about the Self-Determination Program and to help ensure that the program is available to a diverse group of participants, with special outreach to underserved communities.

(r)(8) Collaborate with the local consumer or family-run organizations identified in paragraph (1) to jointly conduct training about the Self-Determination Program. The regional center shall consult with the local volunteer advisory committee established pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (w) in planning for the training, and the local volunteer advisory committee may designate members to represent the advisory committee at the training.

(r)(9) 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."

In Summary, the role of the LVAC is to:

- Review the development and ongoing progress of the Self-Determination Program
- Identify whether the program advances the principles of self-determination
- Identify whether the program is operating consistent with the requirements of the law
- Make ongoing recommendations for improvement to the regional center and the Department of Developmental Services
- Collaborate with the regional center to conduct outreach through local meetings or forums to provide information about the SDP, with special outreach to underserved communities
- Advise the regional center on and participate in SDP trainings (conducted in collaboration with local consumer or family-run organizations)
- Collaborate with the regional center to conduct training of all service coordinators and fair hearing specialists in the principles of self-determination, the mechanics of the SDP, and the rights of consumers and families

Department of Developmental Services

Under the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act, the [California Department of Developmental Services \(DDS\)](#) is responsible for overseeing the coordination and delivery of services and supports to more than 400,000 Californians with developmental disabilities.

DDS does this by contracting with local, non-profit agencies known as regional centers. There are 21 regional centers across California.

DDS is also responsible for monitoring and supporting the implementation of the Self-Determination Program at all 21 regional centers.

State Council on Developmental Disabilities

The [State Council on Developmental Disabilities \(SCDD\)](#) is established by federal law (Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Act) and state law (Lanterman Act at Welfare and Institutions Code, section 4520 et. seq.). to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the planning, design and receipt of the services and supports they need which promote increased independence, productivity, community inclusion and self-determination. Federal law requires SCDD to identify methods to improve and increase services for individuals and their families and to submit these to the federal government.

SCDD supports the successful implementation of the Self-Determination Program in many ways, including:

- Convening and providing administrative support for the Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SSDAC).
- Appointing one-half of the members of the local volunteer advisory committee (LVAC or local SDAC) members.
- Providing training and technical assistance to local volunteer advisory committees and self/family advocates who are interested in participating in the SDP.
- Engaging in advocacy and systems-change efforts to increase the program's effectiveness in furthering the principles of self-determination.

Appendix

LVAC Membership

To ensure that Local Volunteer Advisory Committees (LVAC or Local SDAC) reflect a balanced mix of local and statewide perspectives, WIC 4685.8 requires that half of the committee members be appointed by the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) and the other half by the regional center.

Each regional center has established their own process for appointing LVAC members. Please contact your regional center for information about their process.

SCDD's appointment process consists of the following steps:

1. The candidate submits an application ([English Application](#)) ([Spanish Application](#))
2. The candidate is contacted by their local SCDD Regional Office
3. The candidate's application is reviewed by the Council's Membership Committee Workgroup
4. If appointed by the Workgroup, the candidate receives a letter confirming their appointment and start date.

Note: if there are no vacancies on the LVAC, SCDD may hold an application for consideration when a vacancy occurs or appoint the candidate to a waitlist so that they may serve immediately once a vacancy occurs.

Additional Resources:

- SCDD Training Slides – The Role of SDAC <https://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2023/09/SCDD-Training-Role-of-SDAC-Bilinugal-English-and-Spanish.pdf>
- SSDAC Member Training Slides <https://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2024/09/Chair-Training-SSDAC-Bilingual-2024-09-03-1.pdf>
- SSDAC Member Training Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VtB7xT4f8I
- SSDAC Webpage: <https://scdd.ca.gov/ssdac/>
- SSDAC Best Practices Platform: <https://scdd.ca.gov/sdp-best-practices-platform/>
- SCDD SDP Resources: <https://scdd.ca.gov/sdp-home/>
- DDS SDP Directives: <https://www.dds.ca.gov/initiatives/sdp/program-directives/>

Local Volunteer Advisory Committee Links and Contacts

Regional Center	Contact
Alta California Regional Center	Lisa Cooley
Central Valley Regional Center	Emma Villa
Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center	Yougeng Sun
Far Northern Regional Center	Charles Nutt
Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center	Kristianna Moralls
Golden Gate Regional Center	Jennifer Walsh
Harbor Regional Center	Rosalinda Garcia
Inland Regional Center	Aminah Abdul-Hakim (Co-Chair)
Kern Regional Center	Rick Wood
North Bay Regional Center	Debby Hight (Co-Chair)
North Los Angeles County Regional Center	Lori Walker Miriam Erberich (Co-Chairs)
Redwood Coast Regional Center	Chris Miller Frank Van Curen (Co-Chairs)
Regional Center of the East Bay	Vi Ibarra
Regional Center of Orange County	Beth Martinko
San Andreas Regional Center	David Forderer/ Kavita Sreedhar (Co-Chairs)
San Diego Regional Center	Joyce Clark
San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center	Francine Soto
South Central Los Angeles Regional Center	Sherry Alvarez
Tri Counties Regional Center	Ellen Hunt
Valley Mountain Regional Center	Kenneth Huntley
Westside Regional Center	David Wyles Joey Juarez (Co-Chairs)

Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee Contacts

SCDD Staff – SSDAC Committee Support

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SSDAC Co-Chairs

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