



January 2025 Report from Deputy Director – Policy and Public Affairs

POLICY UPDATE

- ✓ **2025 Legislation:** Council voted in 2024 for the policy theme *Taking Charge: Who's In Charge? We're In Charge!*
 - Legislation will be tracked in February, when bills are introduced.
- ✓ **2025 Policy Priorities:** Policy analyses and research for ideas/issues submitted through the *There Should Be a Law Contest* have been conducted. The identified priorities include:
 - **Exceptional Medically Underserved Population (EMUP).** Some individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have exceptional medical needs. If individuals with IDD were designated as part of the exceptional medically underserved population, disparities in health care services could be addressed, such as providing additional funding for programs and research. A variety of strategies are being explored to make this a reality.
 - **Chronic Absenteeism in Schools:** Chronic Absenteeism policies impact some students with disabilities and a review is being conducted to evaluate if and how changes are needed.
 - **Plain Language:** SCDD promotes and advocates for plain language usage to ensure materials are understood by all. SCDD has drafted legislative language requiring state agencies to use plain language in their materials for the public and efforts are underway to identify a legislative author.
- ✓ **SB 639 Report 2024: Tracking the Transition Out of 14(c) (Subminimum Wage) to Minimum Wage:** This report is required by statute to be submitted to the legislature and has been finalized. Findings from the October 30th townhall meeting regarding the transition from subminimum wage to competitive integrated employment are included in the report.
- ✓ **SB 37 SCDD Sponsor:** Since 2022, SCDD has prioritized the effort to pass a housing subsidy bill for aging individuals and people with disabilities age 50 and over. Due to the budget deficit at the time, the bill was amended to reduce its cost from \$500,000 to \$25,000 and to establish it as a pilot program. Though the bill passed both houses this past year, it was vetoed by the Governor, and in his veto message, he recommended existing resources should be leveraged to implement SB 37's provisions rather than request new resources or funding from the budget because no budget was secured for the bill in 2024. With this recommendation in mind, the coalition has begun planning to run the bill again in 2025.
- ✓ **Employment First Coalition:** In 2023, this diverse coalition and SCDD successfully championed the creation of the Employment First Office at the California Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). The coalition continues to develop recommendations for the Master Plan on Developmental Disabilities. However, due to the lack of updates concerning the

development of the Employment First Office, the coalition has been unable to provide recommendations to the new office.

- ✓ **CA Technical Center for Inclusive College:** SCDD, in collaboration with the Inclusive College Association Coalition, successfully advocated for \$2M in recurring funds to establish a California Center for Inclusive College. This Center, to be administered by a County Office of Education (COE), will connect agencies such as the Department of Rehabilitation and Regional Centers to college opportunities for students with IDD. The Center will also identify best practices for colleges developing inclusive programs and help secure funding for such programs. SCDD recommended the Sacramento COE for this award and submitted a letter of support. An update on the selected COE is still pending.
- ✓ **Deaf Steering Committee:** DDS has provided updates concerning the availability of DDS grant funding to train staff on working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers. A vendor was selected to develop assessment tools for deaf-plus clients. SCDD shared the great need to administer assessments appropriately given relative high staff turnover and the possible consequent risk of inconsistent tool use. DDS responded that all training modules and onboarding materials will be available online. Future meetings are scheduled and SCDD is participating in them.
- ✓ **Public Comment on Proposed Federal Regulations:** The US Department of Labor proposed regulations to end 14(c) subminimum wage programs nationwide and SCDD submitted public comment in support of them. The submission included updates on California's transition to minimum wage and recommendations for permanent funding to support this shift. Additionally, SCDD sent an eBlast highlighting SCDD's prior work and encouraging stakeholders to submit their own comments.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

- ✓ **Los Angeles Windstorm and Wildfires:** Featured messaging about evacuation center locations, updates, and resources. Shared with over 12,000 unique email addresses, including the California Legislature, via Constant Contact and social media platforms (two eBlasts and four social media posts).
- ✓ **Public Comment on Proposed Federal Regulations:** Featured messaging about the US Department of Labor's proposed regulations to end 14(c) subminimum wage programs nationwide and submission deadline. Requested folks to submit their own comments and shared with over 19,000 email addresses, including the California Legislature, via Constant Contact and social media platforms.
- ✓ **Creative Design for SB 639 Report Covers:** Designed the front and rear covers for the report (Transition Plan to Phase Out Subminimum Wages), which outlines the transition of approximately 6,000 individuals from subminimum wages to competitive employment. Messaging was shared via email to over 11,000 unique email addresses, including the California Legislature, and on social media.
- ✓ **The Should Be a Law Contest Winner & Report Announcement:** Featured messaging about the number of entries, the winning idea, and a quote from the winner. Shared with over

19,000 email addresses, including the California Legislature, via Constant Contact and social media platforms.

- ✓ **December Blog Feature – “Living and Loving with Laughter”:** Highlighted a profile on Jonathan “Vincent” Anuneko on the Storytellers Blog Page. Promoted via email blast to nearly 9,000 unique email addresses, including the California Legislature, and on social media. The rotating banner on the Council’s website also featured this post.
- ✓ **News & Events email blast, November and January:** Featured messaging with links to November and January commemorative events such as California Sikh American Awareness & Appreciation Month, National Native American Heritage Month, National Braille Literacy Month, MLK Day, and Ed Robert’s day; additional topics included the end of daylight-saving time, General Election Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, SCDD meeting announcements, New Year’s day, a request to share feedback with the federal government about experiences with subminimum wage, and recruitment for Council and RAC members. Shared with over 13,000 unique email addresses, including the California Legislature, via Constant Contact and social media platforms.
- ✓ **Regional and Partner Support:** Assisted regional offices, SCDD HQ, committees, and partners with creative design and messaging for various initiatives, including webinars and live in-person events, shared statewide via email and social media.
- ✓ **Veterans Day Commemoration:** Created and shared custom social media posts on Instagram, Facebook, X, and LinkedIn, along with office closure notices.
- ✓ **Thanksgiving Messaging:** Shared bilingual (English/Spanish) office closure messages and creative posts on Instagram, Facebook, X, and LinkedIn.
- ✓ **Holiday Office Closure Notices:** Shared messaging via Instagram, Facebook, X, and LinkedIn.