



**Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 24, 2025**

Attending Members

Aminah Abdul-Hakim (IRC)
Beth Martinko (RCOC)
Charles Nutt (FNRC)
Deaka McClain (HRC)
Debby Hight (NBRC)
Ellen Hunt (TCRC)
Emma Villa (CVRV)
Erin Moynahan (RCRC)
Francine Soto (SGPRC)
Jennifer Walsh (GGRC)
Joyce Clark (SDRC)
Kavita Sreedhar (SARC)
Lisa Cooley (ACRC)
Lori Walker (NLACRC)
Nestor Nieves (Co-Chair)
Pierre Landry (FDLRC)
Rick Wood (KRC)
Sherry Alvarez (SCLARC)
Vi Ibarra (RCEB)
Vivian David Nicolas (VMRC)
Youngeng Sun (ELARC)

Absent Members

Westside RC

Others Attending

Aaron Carruthers
Albert Faliciano
Ariela Gross
Amanda Pelaccio
Angelina Demetry
Austin Murphy
Beth Hurn
Carolina Vargas
Charles Nguyen
Chris Benedict
Christine Tolbert
Cindy Cox
Cynthia Salomon-Ponce
David Delgado
David Forderer
DJ Tomko
Dena Hernandez
Elena Tiffany
Elizabeth Gomez
Faviola Valencia
Felicia Ford
Hilary Johnson
Ibrahim Muttaqi
Josefina Romo
Irene Litherland
Jennifer Lucas
Jon Francis

Others Attending

Judy Mark
Kayley Proenza
Katie Dempsey
Katie Hornberger
Katie Ramirez
Ken Parekh
Kayley Proenza
Kristianna Moralls
Liliana Lemus
Lisette Duarte
Maria Berumen
Maria Klassen
Maria Lopez-Saparoll
Mariana Guerrero
Maribel Ahumada
Marlene Morales
Michelle Smith
Miriam Kang
Nina Spiegelman
Oina Enciso-Engush
Oscar Mercado
Pete Cervinka
Rachel Teefy
Renee Bauer
Robin Maitino-Erben
Sandra Saavedra
Sangita Prasad
Sarah Castillo

Others Attending

Sandra VanScotter
Scarlett VonThenen
Selvin Arevalo
Shelia Keys
Sofia Cervantes
Sonni Charness
Taleen
Khatchadourian
Tanya Hernandez
Tim Jin
Tony Venzor
Veronica Garcia
Vanessa Garcia
Vivian Haun

1. CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Rick Wood (FA) called the meeting to order at 11:08 A.M.

2. ESTABLISH QUORUM

A quorum was established.

3. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Members and others in attendance introduced themselves as indicated.

4. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 2025 MEETING MINUTES

It was moved/seconded (Hight [FA]/Cooley [SA]) and carried to approve the February 2025 meeting minutes as presented (Motion passed with abstentions from Kavita Sreedhar, Erin Moynahan, and Deaka McClain. All other members voted to approve. See Page 1 for a list of members present).

5. CO-CHAIR REPORT TO SSDAC

Co-Chairs Nestor Nieves and Rick Wood provided members with an update on SSDAC-related activities, including the submission of the SSDAC's December 2024 Town Hall Report, IF/FMS Standards Feedback, and the Budget Process map to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Co-Chair Rick Wood informed members that the workgroup is reviewing a draft of the SSDAC Orientation Resource and that the committee will focus on identifying goals and priorities at the September SSDAC Meeting.

Co-Chair Nestor Nieves encouraged committee members to prioritize recruiting new LVAC members and making LVAC meetings more accessible to the public by ensuring that meetings are advertised and that links to virtual meetings are easy to locate on the regional center's website. Members requested guidance on the best times to hold LVAC meetings to ensure greater public accessibility. Members also expressed concern and requested guidance regarding LVAC member qualifications and conflicts of interest.

Co-Chair Rick Wood informed members that the legislature's draft Trailer Bill Language was released shortly before the start of the meeting, and asked the founder of Disability Voices United, Judy Mark, to provide highlights of the changes that will impact the Self-Determination Program. These highlights included:

- A requirement that IPP teams consider the utilization of generic resources when developing the individual budget.
- Establishment (with community input, by March 1, 2027) of statewide standardized processes and procedures that shall include (but not be limited to) enrollment, individual budgets, spending plans, Financial Management Services, and access to transition supports.
- Inclusion of language stating that regional centers “shall not prohibit the purchase of any service or support that is otherwise allowable [under statute].”
- Inclusion of language stating that “initial individual budgets shall be the total amount of the most recently available 12 months of purchase of service authorizations” (as opposed to “expenditures”).
- Inclusion of language stating that “the IPP team shall discuss unmet needs for participants with no or low purchases of services.”
- A change of language to state that the regional center shall “certify” (as opposed to “review”) the spending plan to verify that goods/services are not available from generic services, are eligible for federal financial participation, and to add the requirement that goods/services “address the individual’s desired outcomes identified in the IPP.”

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chris Benedict provided public comment, stating that at the end of each year there are not funds available to pay their staff and that they have difficulty getting a new budget approved.

6. **SCDD UPDATES**

SCDD Executive Director Aaron Carruthers provided an update on SCDD’s SDP activities, including the July release of the State Council’s Statewide Survey to inform the next 5-year State Plan, and SDP Orientation data through April 2025. Members asked questions regarding Orientation data collection and sharing, expressing a desire for information about attendance to be available to regional centers. In the interest of saving time, Executive Director Carruthers let members know that they can refer to the report in their packet for additional updates on federal legislation regarding Medicaid funding and SCDD’s “Tell Your Story” Letter Campaign. The full presentation can be found in the full report at the following link: <https://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2025/06/6.24.25-SCDD.Report.To.SSDAC.FINALpptx.pdf>

7. DDS AND OMBUDSPERSON UPDATES

Pete Cervinka, Director of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), provided an update on the Department's budget following the release of Trailer Bill Language (AB 143). Director Cervinka stated that the budget is responsive to State budget concerns and is not yet impacted by anything happening at the Federal level. The Director highlighted that the budget would provide funding for an additional 39,000 people to join the regional center system, and stated that the Department is proud of the outreach that is being done to provide early start services to children with I/DD. Director Cervinka informed members that despite savings in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the approved budget is still set to increase by \$3 billion each year, including \$350 million in growth to the Self-Determination Program. He stated that the Department is interested in protecting the SDP, and that the intent behind updated language in the trailer bill is to put up guardrails to protect SDP from inappropriate scrutiny that could jeopardize the program.

Members asked questions about changes to the Department's SDP Directives webpage and asked for clarification regarding the differences between guidance and directives, and who is responsible for following the department's directives. Director Cervinka clarified that each directive is addressed to a specific audience, and that each entity (regional center, LVAC, etc.) is expected to follow those directives.

Members discussed the need for more education for participants on employer readiness and the sole and co-employer models. Director Cervinka agreed and stated that he saw this potentially being addressed through Orientation training. Members also raised concerns about oversight and accountability, and the fear of unmet needs potentially not being addressed moving forward. It was also recommended that, in addition to standardizing the budget approval process, that the Department create a standardized budget renewal process.

Acting Self-Determination Program Manager Marlene Morales provided a presentation that covered current SDP enrollment data, recent DDS SDP directives, and upcoming areas of focus. These include clarification of rules and responsibilities for FMS providers to support standardized practices, the creation of an Independent Facilitator certification through an online Learning Management System (LMS), standardization of the individual budget process, and the provision of a spending plan template that can be used across regional centers and FMS agencies. The full presentation can be found at the following

link: https://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2025/06/DDS_SSDAC_Presentation_June2025.pdf

Acting SDP Ombudsperson Cynthia Salomon-Ponce presented data regarding the issues that participants, families, providers, and regional centers are contacting the Office of the Ombudsperson to resolve. Members requested that the Ombuds office begin tracking and reporting resolution and satisfaction data. The full Office of the Ombudsperson presentation can be found here:

<https://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2025/06/DDS-Ombuds-SSDAC-2025.pdf>

8. SSDAC MEMBER PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS AND DISCUSSION

The Committee heard presentations from three members who highlighted promising projects and practices from their regional centers. Jennifer Walsh with Golden Gate Regional Center (GGRC) reported that a joint committee was formed between GGRC, San Andreas Regional Center (SARC), and Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB). This collaboration led to the decision to combine Implementation Funds to create a Bay Area SDP website, which will serve as a central hub for SDP-related information and resources for the region. The contractor has completed the website, and there are plans to conduct user focus groups before launching it for public use. The joint committee continues to consider future joint projects, including the development of a Bay Area service provider database.

Debby Hight with North Bay Regional Center (NBRC) reported on her regional center's infrastructure for implementing the Self-Determination Program, highlighting the dedicated SDP staffing unit that consists of a full-time SDP Manager, five full-time Participant Choice Coordinators, and a Client Service Assistant that provides clerical support for the team. NBRC reported that this structure, in addition to investments in training and community outreach and the dedication of Regional Center Executive staff, has almost doubled enrollment in SDP between January of 2024 and May of 2025.

Charles Nutt with Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC) highlighted his LVAC's decision to use Implementation Funds to hire a Project Coordinator to facilitate the work of their committee and its workgroups. The Project Coordinator facilitates workgroup meetings, carries out the projects, prepares invoices and progress reports, and communicates challenges to the LVAC. Mr. Nutt reported

that hiring a Project Coordinator has made a big difference for his committee, helping them stay organized and ensuring that work is completed in a timely and effective manner.

Committee members formed groups to discuss promising projects and practices at their regional centers, using this time to share ideas on how to measure success and how to expand and improve these practices. Members of the public were invited to listen in and engage in these discussions. When the committee reconvened, the groups reported discussing a wide variety of issues, including the creation of LVAC orientation materials and the need for LVAC members receive training to understand their roles; managing updates to SDP content on regional center websites; collaboration between LVACs; and the success of dedicated SDP units, Independent Facilitator trainings, and SDP conferences.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sandra Van Scotter, Co-Chair of the Kern LVAC and parent of an SDP participant, advocated for implementation and standardization across regional centers of Assembly Bill 3291, which passed the legislature in 2024 and requires caregiver succession planning to be provided to regional center consumers at age 22. She also encouraged the committee to work on growing the community of self-advocates and stated that the Supported Life Institute has been told that doing so requires engaging support staff.

Tina (no last name provided) stated that if unmet need is eliminated for people already enrolled in the SDP, it may cause those who lose their providers and aren't able to find a replacement right away to lose funding. Unforeseen issues such as long hospital stays could cause lapses in services, and she expressed concerned that people will be penalized unfairly with a lower budget. She also stated that regional centers need to do a better job with IPPs, since that is what SDP budgets are based on.

Judy Mark announced that Disability Voices United is having two in-person SDP conferences in 2025. One will be on September 11th in Oakland and the second will be on November 19th in Los Angeles. She stated that registration has opened for the Oakland event, and both will be very inexpensive. SDP and Supported Decision Making will be the main topics at these conferences. Judy also stated that she is concerned that SDP participants may lose access to 10% of their budget due to the way that regional centers are handling rate increases and requested that LVACs write letters to DDS to advocate on behalf of SDP participants.

Miriam Kang advocated for LVAC members all to receive the same training, whether they are appointed by the State Council or by the regional center.

10. **NEXT MEETING & ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting will be held via Zoom on September 9th. The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 P.M.