



# NOTICE/AGENDA

## STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL MEETING

This meeting is being held via teleconference within the meaning of Government Code section [11123.2](#). Members may be physically present at one or more teleconference locations. There may be members of the public body who are participating in today's meeting that were granted a reasonable accommodation per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Accessible formats of all agenda and materials can be found online at [www.scdd.ca.gov](http://www.scdd.ca.gov)

### MEETING DETAILS:

**TELECONFERENCE LOCATION:**

SCDD LA REGIONAL OFFICE  
411 N. Central Avenue, Suite 620  
Glendale, CA 91203

**JOIN BY TELECONFERENCE:**

**CALL IN NUMBER:** (888)-475-4499 or  
(877) 853-5257  
**MEETING ID:** 870 3374 7034

**JOIN BY ZOOM:**

<https://bit.ly/SCDDNovCouncil2025>

**MEETING ID:** 870 3374 7034

**PASSCODE:** 082389

**DATE:** November 18, 2025

**MEETING TIME:** 10:30 AM – 3:00 PM

**COUNCIL CHAIR:**

Julie Gaona

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**Item 1. CALL TO ORDER**

**Item 2. ESTABLISH QUORUM**

**Item 3. SWEARING IN NEW COUNCILMEMBERS** Page 4

**Item 4. PUBLIC COMMENTS** Page 5

*This item is for members of the public to provide comments and/or present information to this body on matters not listed on the agenda. There will be up to 20 minutes allocated to hear from the public with each person allotted up to 3 minutes to comment.*

*Separately, there will be up to 10 minutes allocated to hear from the public on each Council agenda item, with each person allotted up to 1 minute to comment.*

**Item 5. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 2025 MINUTES ** Page 6  
*All*

**Item 6. CHAIR REPORT & 2026 COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS** Page 14  
*Julie Gaona, Council Chair*

- A. Executive Committee Summary
- B. Legislative and Public Policy (LPPC) Summary
- C. State Plan Committee (SPC) Summaries
- D. Self-Advocates Advisory Committee (SAAC) Summary

**Item 7. 2025 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT (PPR) ** Page 18  
*Jessica Brown, State Plan Committee Chair*  
*Rihana Ahmad, Chief Deputy Director*  
*David Delgado, Branch Chief - HQ Operations & State Plan*

**Item 8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT & STAFF REPORTS** Page 19  
*Aaron Carruthers, Executive Director*

- A. Executive Director Report
- B. Chief Deputy Director
- C. Policy and Public Affairs Report
- D. RAP Project Report
- E. QA Project Report

**Item 9. 2026 POLICY PLANNING** Page 40  
*Aaron Carruthers, Executive Director*

- A. 2026 Policy Priorities 
- B. 2026 Policy Theme 

**Item 10. 2027 – 2031 STATE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS ** Page 58  
*Jessica Brown, State Plan Committee Chair*  
*Rihana Ahmad, Chief Deputy Director*

**Item 11. 2026 COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETING DATES AND ADJOURNMENT** Page 59  
*The next Council meeting will be in person on January 27, 2026.*

**Accessibility:**

Pursuant to Government Code Sections 11123.1 and 11125(f), individuals with disabilities who require accessible alternative formats of the agenda and related meeting materials and/or auxiliary aids/services to participate in this meeting should contact Yaritza Sanchez at (916)-207-2856 or [yaritza.sanchez@scdd.ca.gov](mailto:yaritza.sanchez@scdd.ca.gov). Please provide at least 3 business days prior to the meeting to allow adequate time to respond to all requests.

All times indicated and the order of business are approximate and subject to change.

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**NOVEMBER 18, 2025**

**AGENDA ITEM 3.  
INFORMATION ITEM**

**STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

***Swearing in New Councilmembers***

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Executive Director Aaron Carruthers will swear in new Councilmembers Eric Aguilar, Sascha Bittner, Melissa Fitch, Azucena Garcia-Ferro, Michelle Padilla, and Kim Rothschild.

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**NOVEMBER 18, 2025**

**AGENDA ITEM 4.  
INFORMATION ITEM**

**STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

***Public Comments***

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**NOVEMBER 18, 2025**

**AGENDA ITEM 5.**

**ACTION ITEM**

**STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

***Approval of September 2025 Minutes***

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The draft minutes from the September 30, 2025 Council meeting have been included in the packet for review. Councilmembers will vote on whether to approve the minutes.

***Attachment***

September Council Meeting Minutes

***Action Recommended***

Approve the September 2025 Council meeting minutes.



**DRAFT**  
**Council Meeting Minutes**  
**September 30, 2025**

**Members Attending**

Ana Acton (CDA)  
Andy Imparato (DRC)  
Aubyn Stahmer (UCEDD)  
Bob Twomey (F.A.)  
Cathay Liu (F.A.)  
Debra Cooper (CHHS)  
Ernie Cruz (DDS)  
Harold Ashe (F.A.)  
Irene Valdez (F.A.)  
Joseph Billingsley (DHCS)  
Joyce McNair (F.A.)  
Julie Gaona (S.A.)  
Julie Neward (F.A.)  
Julio Garnica (S.A.)  
Kara Ponton (S.A.)  
Larry Yin (UCEDD)  
Lee Bycel (F.A.)  
Liz Laugeson (UCEDD)  
Lupe Rodríguez (F.A.)  
Maria Aliferis-Gjerde (DOR)  
Nestor Nieves (S.A.)  
Nicole Adler (S.A.)  
Noelia Hernandez (CDE)  
Rosanna Ryan (S.A.)  
Sonia Jones (S.A.)

**Members Absent**

Harold Fujita (F.A.)  
Jessica Brown (F.A.)

**Others Attending**

Aaron Carruthers  
Alex Reyes  
Austin Murphy  
Beth Hurn  
Brian Hoang  
Carole  
Charles Nguyen  
Chanel Murray  
Chris Arroyo  
Christopher Benett  
Christine Tolbert  
David Delgado  
Debra Adler  
Dena Hernandez  
DJ Tomko  
Holly Bins  
Judi Muirhead  
Janet Fernandez  
Jennifer Lucas  
Kevin Rowell  
Kris Wallman

**Others Attending (cont.)**

Maureen Fitzgerald  
Michelle Cave  
Riana Hardin  
Rihana Ahmad  
Robbin Puccio  
Robin Maitino-Erben  
Sheraden Nicholau  
Veronica Bravo  
Wesley Witherspoon  
Yaritza Sanchez  
Yolanda Cruz  
Zerida Mponye

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Julie Gaona called the meeting to order at 10:33 A.M.

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Legend:

SA = Self-Advocate  
FA = Family Advocate

N/A = not available  
DNP = Did Not Participate

Page 1

**2. ESTABLISH QUORUM**

A quorum was established.

**3. SWEARING IN NEW COUNCILMEMBER**

Executive Director Carruthers swore in new Councilmember Bob Twomey, representing the Bay Area region.

**4. CHAIR REPORT AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Chair Julie Gaona began her Chair report by acknowledging the passing of Councilmember Eric Ybarra on August 26, 2025. She expressed condolences on behalf of the Council and held a moment of silence in his honor.

She announced the appointment of Councilmember Kara Ponton as the Chair of the Self-Advocates Advisory Committee (SAAC) and appointed Councilmember Bob Twomey to the Legislative and Public Policy Committee (LPPC). She also recognized outgoing Councilmember Alex Reyes, expressing gratitude for his service and thoughtful contributions to the Council.

Additionally, she announced the release of the Fifth Annual There Should Be a Law Contest Report and shared that 150 bill ideas were submitted this year. She encouraged Councilmembers to review the committee reports and staff summaries included in the meeting packet at <https://scdd.ca.gov/councilmeetings/>.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Debra Adler provided a public comment. She welcomed Councilmember Bob Twomey to his first Council meeting and thanked outgoing Councilmembers for their service. She expressed her appreciation to the Council and its members for their ongoing advocacy on behalf of all Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**6. APPROVAL OF JULY 2025 MINUTES**

**Action 1**

It was moved/seconded (Rodriguez [F.A]/ Ponton [S.A.]) and carried to approve the July 2025 meeting minutes as presented. (See last page for a voting record of members present)

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## 7. **HONORING COUNCILMEMBER ERIC YBARRA**

Chair Gaona shared a presentation honoring former Councilmember Eric Ybarra and highlighted his many contributions to self-advocacy and disability rights. She mentioned his involvement with Self-Advocacy Council 6, San Joaquin County People First, the Choices Planning Team, Valley Mountain Regional Center, Disability Rights California, and the SCDD North Valley Hills Regional Advisory Committee. She noted he was appointed to the Council in 2022 by Governor Newsom and was appointed by the Council as Chair of the Self-Advocates Advisory Committee (SAAC) in January 2024. She also shared reflections from colleagues and community members who spoke to Eric’s kindness, optimism, enthusiasm, and dedication that left a lasting impact across the community.

Chair Gaona then invited Councilmembers to share their memories of Eric. Councilmembers reflected on how Eric made people feel included and valued, even when they were new to the Council. Others reflected on his dedication to advocacy and his continued participation during periods of illness, recognizing his deep commitment to the Council and disability community. Councilmembers expressed condolences to his family and acknowledged that his presence and leadership will be missed. Chair Gaona shared that an in-person memorial service would be held on November 11 in Stockton and invited those planning to attend to wear Eric’s favorite color, blue.

Former Councilmember Alex Reyes provided a public comment, noting that Eric welcomed him during his first Council meeting. He spoke about the personal impact of Eric’s kindness and offered his condolences to his family. Debra Adler also provided a public comment, reflecting on Eric’s warmth and constant effort to check on others. She encouraged everyone to honor his example by continuing to build connection. Former Council Chair Wesley Witherspoon provided a public comment, expressing his gratitude for Eric’s enthusiasm and commitment to the Council.

## 8. **RECOGNIZING OUTGOING COUNCILMEMBERS**

Chair Gaona recognized outgoing Councilmembers whose second terms were expiring in 2025 and invited designated presenters and the Executive Director to offer tributes.

Councilmember Julie Neward recognized Councilmember Nicole Adler for her service and leadership. She noted that Nicole joined the Council at 19

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and became a powerful voice for self-advocates. She helped shape the Council's priorities through service on the Executive Committee, the Legislative and Public Policy Committee (LPPC), and the Self-Advocates Advisory Committee (SAAC). Julie highlighted Nicole's statewide and national advocacy through public speaking, writing, social media, and her podcast that addressed mental health, LGBTQ+ inclusion, voting rights, sex education, and relationships for people with disabilities.

Former Council Chair Wesley Witherspoon recognized Councilmember Lee Bycel for his service as a rabbi, educator, humanitarian, and leader. He cited Lee's roles as Vice Chair and Executive Committee Chair and his contributions on the Legislative and Public Policy Committee (LPPC). He emphasized Lee's compassion, wisdom, and commitment to justice. Wesley described Lee as an advocate who asked thoughtful questions, listened deeply, and kept the focus on improving people's lives. He shared that Lee's service reflects his dedication to social and civil justice and thanked him for his leadership and advocacy.

Councilmember Harold Fujita recognized Councilmember Julio Garnica for his dedication as a self-advocate and service on the Executive Committee, State Plan Committee, SAAC, and as Chair of the Administrative Committee. He described Julio as reliable and thoughtful, noting that when he spoke, his words reflected lived experience and a commitment to disability rights. Harold highlighted Julio's outreach to underserved communities, including work during the COVID-19 pandemic with Latino and Native American communities and travel to the Four Corners region to connect people with resources. He thanked Julio for representing self-advocates with dignity, leading with responsibility, and demonstrating the value of persistence and consistency.

Vice Chair Harold Ashe recognized Councilmember Joyce McNair for her years of service to the Council and the Sacramento region. He noted her work on the Executive Committee, Membership Committee, State Plan Committee, and on the Department of Social Services Master Plan for Developmental Services Stakeholder Committee. He emphasized Joyce's thoughtful preparation, depth of experience, and clarifying questions to complex issues. He also recognized her lived experience as a family advocate and her ability to connect individual needs with the bigger picture of systems change. Harold thanked Joyce for her contributions, leadership, and steady commitment to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

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Page 4

Councilmember Nicole Adler recognized Councilmember Julie Neward for her service on the Council and advocacy on behalf of siblings and families. She noted Julie’s work on the Administrative Committee and LPPC, helping to guide the focus around the safety and well-being of people with developmental disabilities. Nicole described Julie’s advocacy as deeply personal, highlighting that she co-founded California Sibs and the Natalie Project to raise awareness about sexual assault against people with disabilities and to equip families with tools to prevent and respond to abuse. Nicole thanked Julie for inspiring others through courage, honesty, love, and advocacy.

Chair Gaona recognized Councilmember Rosie Ryan for her service on the Council, Self-Advocates Advisory Committee (SAAC), and the Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (SSAN). She noted Rosie’s active work with People First in Redding, participation in regional and statewide conferences, recognition as Advocate of the Year in 2024, and selection as an “Advocacy Hero” for building acceptance and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities in the North State. She thanked Rosie for her kindness, public-speaking skills, and commitment to helping others build confidence.

Executive Director Carruthers also offered a tribute to each outgoing Councilmember.

**9. STATEWIDE SELF-ADVOCACY NETWORK (SSAN) REPORT**

SCDD SSAN representative Rosie Ryan provided Councilmembers with an update from SSAN’s virtual meeting on September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**10. 2026 LEGISLATIVE BILL IDEAS**

Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Chris Arroyo presented the proposed 2026 legislative bill ideas developed from the 5th annual “There Should Be a Law” contest. He explained that this year’s timeline was moved up to allow staff to begin identifying authors in October–November. He reported that more than 150 bill ideas were received, with the largest number related to human services and education, followed by health and civil rights. The ideas included clarifying the authorized representative process in the Lanterman Act; defining and strengthening government agency requirements to provide plain-language materials; establishing protected, paid leave for sibling bonding during major care transitions; addressing inequities in how chronic absenteeism policies are

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applied to students with disabilities; and resolving barriers created by fingerprinting/background check requirements for personnel at off-campus student worksites. He also added one additional issue, addressing the “marriage penalty” in Supplemental Security Income.

## **Action 2**

It was moved/seconded (Ponton [S.A]/ Ryan [S.A.]) and carried to approve the identified legislative ideas as a package and authorize staff to work with legislative offices to secure bill authors. (See last page for a voting record of members present)

The full presentation can be accessed at <https://scdd.ca.gov/councilmeetings/>.

### **11. CLOSED SESSION: PERSONNEL**

The Council went into closed session.

### **12. RECONVENE OPEN SESSION**

The Council reconvened from closed session with no actions to report.

### **13. NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT**

The next Council meeting will be held on November 18, 2025. Chair Gaona adjourned the meeting at 3:00 P.M.

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<b>Name</b>	<b>Vote 1</b>	<b>Vote 2</b>
Acton, Ana	Aye	Abstain
Adler, Nicole	Aye	Aye
Aliferis-Gjerde, Maria	Aye	Abstain
Ashe, Harold	Aye	Aye
Billingsley, Joseph	Aye	Abstain
Bycel, Lee	Aye	Aye
Cooper, Debra	NP	Abstain
Cruz, Ernie	Aye	Abstain
Gaona, Julie	Aye	Aye
Garnica, Julio	Aye	Aye
Hernandez, Noelia	Aye	Aye
Imparato, Andy	Aye	Aye
Jones, Sonia	Aye	Aye
Laugeson, Liz	Aye	Aye
Liu, Cathay	NP	Aye
McNair, Joyce	Aye	Aye
Nieves, Nestor	Aye	Aye
Ponton, Kara	Aye	Aye
Rodriguez, Lupe	Aye	Aye
Ryan, Rosie	NP	Aye
Stahmer, Aubyn/ Wallman, Kris	Aye	Aye
Twomey, Bob	Aye	Aye
Valdez, Irene	Aye	Aye
Yin, Larry	Aye	Aye

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**NOVEMBER 18, 2025**

**AGENDA ITEM 6.  
INFORMATION ITEM**

**STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

***Chair Report and 2026 Committee Assignments***

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Council Chair Julie Gaona will provide Councilmembers with an oral report about her recent activities and current priorities for the Council, and an announcement on the 2026 committee assignments.

SCDD committee summaries have been provided for informational purposes.

***Attachments***

Executive Committee Summary 10/21/25  
Legislative and Public Policy (LPPC) Summary 10/28/25  
State Plan Committee (SPC) Summary 10/29/25

***Handouts***

2026 Committee Assignments  
State Plan Committee (SPC) Summary 11/13/25  
Self-Advocates Advisory Committee (SAAC) Summary 11/17/25

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**AGENDA ITEM 6A.****EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SUMMARY**

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***Date of Meeting***

October 21, 2025

***Meeting's Focus***

The Executive Committee met on October 21, 2025, and included a staff spotlight recognizing HR Officer Thuy Le, two sponsorship requests, six conflict resolution plans, an SCDD budget update, Executive Director's report, and a year-end discussion. Executive Director Carruthers provided an overview of several Council-supported bills that had been signed into law, including legislation expanding public meeting accessibility, strengthening services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, improving safeguards for students in non-public schools, expanding respiratory care capacity in schools, removing unnecessary re-diagnosis requirements for autism insurance coverage, allowing adult day program staff to respond to seizure-related emergencies, and standardizing accessible pedestrian crossing signals statewide. He also reported on the ongoing federal shutdown, noting that the Council remained in a stable position for several months, though services funded through CalFresh and other Department of Social Services programs could experience impacts sooner. The Council was entering the final year of its current State Plan and would continue its work while preserving flexibility to meet emerging needs. More than 3,800 survey responses had been collected statewide to inform the development of the next State Plan. Mr. Carruthers concluded by welcoming Sam as SCDD's new Travel Coordinator.

***Items Acted Upon***

- Approved the August 2025 meeting minutes.
- Approved sponsorship requests from the San Diego Committee on Employment for People with Disabilities (SDCEPD) and Special Needs in My City (SNIMC).
- Approved conflict resolution plans for Executive Director Dexter Henderson and Regional Center Board Members Jacqueline Armstrong, Lisa Soloway, Anna Hurst, Jacquie Colton, and Dylan Sepull.

***Future Meeting Date:*** February 2026

## **AGENDA ITEM 6B**

### **LEGISLATIVE AND PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE SUMMARY**

#### ***Date of Meeting***

October 28, 2025

#### ***Meeting's Focus***

The Legislative and Public Policy Committee met on October 28th to discuss legislative and policy initiatives for 2026. Members were provided with a detailed update on Council-supported legislation and reviewed the 2025 "There Should Be a Law" Report, which summarized the Policy team's review of more than 150 community submissions, and discussed next steps for the Council's selected legislative ideas.

After discussing potential focus areas for 2026, the Committee recommended that the Council adopt "Better, Stronger, Together" as the theme for the upcoming legislative season. Members also reviewed and approved staff-proposed revisions to the Council's 2026–27 Policy Priorities and voted to recommend these updates to the full Council.

#### ***Items Acted Upon***

- Approval of the August 2025 Meeting Minutes.
- The Committee acted to recommend that the Council approve the proposed revisions to the 2026-2027 Policy Priorities.
- The Committee acted to recommend that the Council make "Better, Stronger, Together" the theme for the 2026 legislative season.

## **AGENDA ITEM 6C STATE PLAN COMMITTEE SUMMARY**

### ***Date of Meeting***

October 29, 2025

### ***Meeting's Focus***

The State Plan Committee (SPC) met on October 29th to review data from the statewide State Plan Development survey and to begin drafting Objective-level language for the 2027-2031 State Plan.

Members were provided with an analysis of 4,197 survey responses, representing the views of Self-Advocates, Family Advocates and others throughout the state. The Committee used this data to develop and refine Objective-level language for Goal 1 (Self-Advocacy) and Goal 3 (Capacity Building). Members identified health and safety, housing, employment, education, and emerging issues as focus areas for Goal 3 projects and events. Goal 2 (Systems Change) objectives will be developed at the November 13<sup>th</sup> SPC meeting.

### ***Items Acted Upon***

- The Committee approved the August 2025 Meeting Minutes

### ***Future Meeting Dates***

November 13, 2025.

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**NOVEMBER 18, 2025**

**AGENDA ITEM 7.  
INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

**STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

***2025 Program Performance Report (PPR)***

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This agenda item provides an overview of the 2025 Program Performance Report (PPR).

The Office on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD) requires State Councils to prepare an annual Program Performance Report (PPR) outlining outputs/outcomes/impacts accomplished in carrying out the activities of our 2022-2026 State Plan. The reports are due to the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD) each year for activities performed October 1 through September 30 of every federal fiscal year (FFY).

State Plan Committee Chair Jessica Brown, Chief Deputy Director Rihana Ahmad, and HQ Operations & State Plan Branch Chief David Delgado will present highlights of the 2024-2025 PPR outputs/outcomes/impacts. The PPR presentation will be provided as a handout at the Council meeting. Councilmembers will vote on whether to approve the PPR.

***Action Recommended***

Approve the 2024-2025 Program Performance Report.

***Handouts***

2025 Program Performance Report (PPR) Presentation  
May be additional handout(s) on the day of the meeting.

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**NOVEMBER 18, 2025**

**AGENDA ITEM 8.  
INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

**STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

***Executive Director Report and Staff Reports***

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SCDD Executive Director Aaron Carruthers will provide Councilmembers with an oral report regarding recent Council activities. Additionally, SCDD Staff reports have been included in the packet for informational purposes.

***Attachments***

Chief Deputy Director Report  
Deputy Director of Regional Office Operations Report  
RAP Report  
QA Project Report

***Handouts***

Executive Director Report  
Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Report

# Chief Deputy Director Report – November 2025

Rihana Ahmad

## Overview:

The Chief Deputy Director (CDD) continues to oversee operational functions in collaboration with staff, while identifying tools and strategies to strengthen organizational effectiveness. Recent efforts have focused on engaging with staff, leadership, and external partners to support program development, policy implementation, and operational alignment.

Key initiatives include implementation and oversight of the Supported Decision-Making Technical Assistance Program (SDM-TAP), along with collaborative discussions with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) on the Quality Assurance (QA) program, Self-Determination Program (SDP) Orientations and Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SSDAC) projects.

Core administrative responsibilities are being prioritized, including executive oversight of the agency's budget development and monitoring processes, contract and procurement oversight, personnel management, interagency coordination, and day-to-day operational support across the organization.

**The following sections highlight recent activities and accomplishments from some of the operational and program support units under the Chief Deputy Director's oversight.**

## Personnel:

- ✓ End of the year Performance Appraisal, Duty Statement, and Staff Expectations in the process of evaluation and completion.
- ✓ Statewide Generalist Consolidation currently in process (effective 1/1/2026)
- ✓ Conducted 13 recruitments in FY 2026 (July 1, 2025 – present), with 5 active recruitments currently ongoing.
- ✓ 2025 Workforce Analysis Report completed - full compliance
- ✓ Hired 7 staff members in FY 2026, with 3 new hires since July
  - HQ Business Operations and Committee Support, Staff Services Analyst, Samindra Wijesiriwardne (10/22),
  - North State Regional Office, Office Technician (Typing), Jennifer Rosenfield (11/3)
  - San Bernardino Regional Office, Associate Governmental Program Analyst, Esteban Ortiz (11/5)

## Budget:

- ✓ Calculated and submitted Employee Compensation Adjustments-Item 9800
- ✓ Submitted SWCAP Apportionment
- ✓ Identified expenditure coding errors and submitted corrections
- ✓ Researched and provided backup information for DOF inquiries
- ✓ Prepared expenditure and budget report for the Executive Committee
- ✓ Provided operational support for Chief Deputy Director

## IT:

- ✓ Collaborated with the State Plan team to analyze and prepare reports on statewide State Plan Development Survey data
- ✓ Finalized Service Code Descriptions webpages to enhance accessibility and clarity of service information
- ✓ Oversaw the IT Refresh Cycle, including upgrades to laptops and software licenses, ensuring staff have access to up-to-date technology
- ✓ Provided ongoing technical support to staff to resolve IT issues and maintain smooth operations
- ✓ Currently collaborating with CDSS in project to improve telecommunications (Teams Calling, iPhone Refreshes)

## Business Operations:

- ✓ Processed invoices and purchase orders to ensure timely payments and compliance with procurement requirements
- ✓ Processed travel claims and reimbursements for Councilmembers and staff, ensuring accuracy and adherence to state travel policies
- ✓ Completed the hiring process for a new Business and Operations Logistics Analyst position and began onboarding plan
- ✓ Continued to refine and expand the internal process and guidance documents to ensure consistency and best practices across operations

## Committee Supports:

- ✓ The Legislative and Public Policy Committee met on October 28th where they reviewed year-end updates on the 2025 Legislative package and budget and received updates on the next steps for Council-selected "There should Be A Law" contest legislative ideas
- ✓ The Legislative and Public Policy Committee also reviewed and voted on proposed language changes to the Councils 2026-2027 Policy Priorities and legislative theme for 2026

- ✓ State Plan Development Committee met on October 29th to review and update Goal and Objective language for the 2027-2031 State Plan

### State Plan:

- ✓ Launched the statewide 2027-2031 State Plan Development Survey and received a total of 4,222 responses during the collection period between August 15th and October 18th, 2025
- ✓ Regional staff submitted a total of 2,135 activity reports for FFY 2025
- ✓ Began drafting the annual Program Performance Report (PPR) to be submitted to the Federal Government by Dec 30, 2025
- ✓ Monitored progress on three program development grant (PDG) projects: one from Cycle 46 and two from Cycle 47, ensuring alignment with State Plan goals and compliance with grant deliverables.

### Self-Advocacy:

- ✓ SSAN hosted a webinar on “How I Found My Open Door to Employment” celebrating NDEAM at the end of October reaching 70 people.
- ✓ SSAN held 10 workgroup meetings for the Self-Advocacy Virtual Engagement (SAVE) and the Leadership team to plan the October webinar, to debrief from September SSAN meetings, and to start planning for the December SSAN meetings on 12/10 and 12/11 as well as planning for 2026 events.
- ✓ SCDD hosted a Statewide Self-Advocacy Chat in October.

### Supported Decision-Making Technical Assistance Program (SDM-TAP):

- ✓ Implementation and grant management with the Supported Decision-Making Technical Assistance Program team and external partners
- ✓ Grantees have held over 1,450 activities statewide in 15 languages (English, Spanish, Tagalog, Traditional Chinese, Mam, Hindi, Punjabi, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Cantonese, Korean, Arabic, Vietnamese and ASL)
- ✓ Over 100 resources and materials have been developed by grantees to-date, these deliverables are being collected prior to the grant end date of 12/31/2025 for continued use by SCDD staff
- ✓ UCLA, the Co-creator of the SDM-TAP resource library has produced an SDM resource rating rubric and a corresponding 'best practices' guide that lists expert-derived best practices for creating future tools to help with SDM implementation
- ✓ An evaluation survey has been released by UC Davis for participant feedback as part of SDM-TAP grantee activities throughout California. The survey will collect data on outcomes and persons reached through the program to inform a report of the program's accomplishments and identifying future needs and policy recommendations.

## Self-Determination Program Orientation Project

The SCDD Statewide Self-Determination Program (SDP) Orientation Project is a long-term Interagency Agreement with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to conduct the required first step of the Self-Determination Program: the SDP Orientation. Since July 2022, SCDD has offered these sessions statewide in multiple languages. The project is carried out by SCDD staff working alongside co-trainers who are family members of participants and SDP participants themselves, bringing lived experience to the training.

Participants who attend the full session and provide the required information receive an orientation certificate that is honored by all 21 regional centers. This certificate allows eligible individuals to enroll in the Self-Determination Program, if desired.

- ✓ Between August and October 2025, the SDP Orientation Project delivered 25 sessions in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, reaching 1,535 participants, with a total project attendance of 11,973 individuals.

- ✓ Participants have offered recent feedback on sharing clear and helpful information as well as the value of including co-trainers with lived experience. A few examples:

*“Thank you, it was very good. I didn't realize that I didn't know what I didn't know. It's a lot of information to unpack. I appreciate the time your team took to present to us.”*

*“Thank you SO MUCH - this has been very informative. Loved having a parent who went through the process as one of your presenters!”*

*“Thank you for a very informative evening! Appreciated, well organized and clear presentation. Many Thanks!”*

- ✓ We continue to offer the AI translation tool during English sessions. Over the past quarter, participants used it in Arabic, Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, Turkish, and Vietnamese, helping us extend access to more of California's diverse language communities.
- ✓ The SDP team is working with DDS on curriculum revisions to align with recent statutory updates and improve clarity around roles, responsibilities, and processes, so individuals and families have what they need at this first step to begin their SDP planning with confidence.



# **Deputy Director, Regional Office Operations (DDR00)**

## **Report, November 2025**

### Sheraden Nicholau

#### **Overview:**

The Deputy Director of Regional Office Operations is the lead position fulfilling the department's federal and state mission for systems change and capacity building. This position leads the 12 regional teams to carry out the work of the State Plan, including systemic identification and removal of barriers that keep people with IDD from living integrated lives in the community.

Additionally, this position:

- Represents SCDD externally to build partnerships and advance the work of the SCDD.
- Leverages change management to maximize SCDD's impact.
- Provides leadership and oversight of the programmatic, administrative, and strategic work of the SCDD regional teams.
- Supervises SCDD Regional Managers.

#### **Recent Regional Office Highlights:**

- ✓ Statewide community data collection is now completed for the State Council's next 5-year State Plan.
- ✓ Regional Offices have begun strategic evaluation of their teams' project portfolios and planning work, as a part of strategic planning for this last year of the current State Plan.
- ✓ Screening and interviews continue in the process of securing Regional



Manager positions for the Sequoia Regional Office and for the Bay Area Regional Office.

### **Recent External Partnership Highlights:**

- ✓ SCDD DDROO was a keynote speaker or featured presenter at the following conferences, trainings, and events:
  - Annual Golden Gate Regional Center All-Staff
  - The California Down Syndrome Conference 2025
  - Annual Golden Gate Self-Advocacy Conference
  - Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) sessions for law enforcement, first responders, and street teams across counties.
  - Additional Medicaid Law & advocacy updates for professional groups and community groups

### **Recent Administrative Highlights:**

- ✓ SCDD DDROO, in partnership with SCDD Regional Managers, has expanded the priorities list for updated in-house procedures and best-practices, for effective and efficient regional office operations. This work continues and will result in more effective and efficient internal processes and external facing work.
- ✓ SCDD DDROO, in partnership with SCDD Human Resources and SCDD Regional Managers, continues to support personnel and performance expectations work with teams, and is preparing for this fall's performance appraisal summary process.



### **State Plan Activities Year-to-Date from the Regional Offices & HQ Team Members:**

SCDD staff continue to lead and contribute to a variety of statewide and regional activities, this fourth year of the State Plan (Federal Fiscal Year 2025).

Activities conducted, so far, this year include:

- ✓ 266 Self-Advocacy activities (Goal 1)
- ✓ 1,146 Systems Change activities (Goal 2)
- ✓ 687 Capacity-Building activities (Goal 3)
- ✓ Delivering 867 trainings, and 2,814 meetings, chats, and clinics to:
  - 12,939 Self-Advocates
  - 23,215 Family Advocates
  - 32,689 Others (including Professionals)
- ✓ Preparing 821 Self-Advocates and 102 Family Advocates to be trainers, meeting facilitators, presenters across 509 prep sessions
- ✓ Developing 19 resources or curricula
- ✓ Organizing or participating in 336 events
- ✓ Providing technical assistance (TA) to 3,851 individuals

## A Few Recent State Plan Activities and/or Highlights:



SCDD Regional Office Managers Scarlett vonThenen (left, in Southern CA) and Kenya Martinez (right, in Northern CA) bringing resources and technical assistance to community events.

### Goal 1: Self-Advocacy

- ✓ The SCDD Sacramento Regional Office, SCDD North Bay Regional Office, and the SCDD Statewide Self-Advocacy Coordinator collaborated to provide a breakout session at the 2025 Supported Life Conference. This breakout session addressed ableism in the workplace and in the community, titled, 'Access = Power: Dismantling Ableism, Fostering Belonging at Work'. The session content was developed with SCDD's Disability Advisory Committee (DAC). Under California Government Code § 19795(b), each state department is required to establish a Disability Advisory Committee composed of employees with disabilities or representatives of disability interests to advise the department head on policies and practices affecting employees with disabilities. The DAC's involvement grounded the session in state policy and highlighted the importance of governance structures



that promote equitable, disability-informed decision-making within government organizations.

- ✓ The SCDD North State Regional Office supported a trainer with lived-experience in developing PowerPoint, script, and other preparation for the 'Healthy U' training in Chico. The training involved hands-on activities and the development of visual aids. The trainer educated other advocates with lived-experience on empowerment, nutrition, physical health at all abilities, and healthy minds.

## Goal 2: Systems Change

- ✓ The SCDD North Coast Regional Office founded the Justice in Education Disability Initiative (JEDI) to create a space for over a dozen Special Education advocates and attorneys to discuss trending issues, and to plan and execute strategies to improve access and outcomes. This fall, the focus has been on equity issues for Native students with disabilities, and the planning of an event for Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation families in November.
- ✓ The SCDD Bay Area Regional Office, after providing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for hundreds of law enforcement and first responders, was contacted by the Police Sergeant in charge of San Francisco's CIT Program, with information on a recent incident where an at-risk person's life had been saved because of the timely and skilled de-escalation and autism / sensory responsive efforts of the responding unit, in line with SCDD's instruction and curriculum. SCDD staff provided feedback for the responding unit through the Sergeant and connected with the survivor to link them to supports, resources, and to peer support groups.
- ✓ The SCDD Central Coast Regional Office and the SCDD San Diego Imperial Regional Office co-presented, 'Sensory Implications in Crisis for Shelters', at a statewide symposium, The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Government and Disability Summit. The purpose of this symposium / summit was to provide a unique opportunity for representatives from



various levels of government (city, county, state, etc.), non-profit organizations, and companies from across California interested in increasing their involvement to:

- Explore innovative solutions addressing access barriers across various aspects of life.
- Engage in collaborative dialogues with diverse stakeholders to co-create a more inclusive future for communities throughout California.
- Learn from leading experts in accessibility, policies, programs, and new and innovative ideas to increase and disability inclusion.

The intended outcome was achieved. The SCDD presenters educated attendees about sensory considerations for people with IDD in shelter environments. Additional outcomes included the Santa Barbara County Dept. of Social Services reaching out requesting training about SCDD, and Ventura County Emergency Medical Services requesting the training be provided to paramedics / emergency medical technicians (EMTs).

### Goal 3: Capacity-Building

- ✓ The SCDD San Bernardino Regional Office led a 5-part capacity-building series called, 'Inteligencias Múltiples' with collaborators from Horizontes de Inclusion. This series was held in Spanish, for Spanish-language community members. This series provided information and resources with the aim of reducing disparities and involved the theory and concepts of multiple intelligence.
- ✓ The SCDD North Valley Hills Regional Office contributed to the California Memorial Project Remembrance Ceremony. This ceremony acknowledged and educated the community on the loss of people with IDD in institutional settings. The ceremony included self-advocates, family members, professionals who serve them, and the general community. The SCDD team



members presented at this ceremony and read poetry by advocates with lived experience. This event included the Coalition of Local Area Service Providers, Independent Living Centers, NAMI, Self-Advocacy 6, San Joaquin Behavioral Health, and other stakeholders.

- ✓ The SCDD Sequoia Regional Office serves on the Bridging Horizons Conference Committee, a capacity-building conference serving the Central Valley. This conference features a dedicated self-advocates' day of programming, a day focused on regional center professionals, an inclusive dance, and an inclusive gala. As of the end of September, over 1,900 community members and professionals had registered for this anticipated conference.
- ✓ The SCDD Los Angeles Regional Office organized, presented, and distributed resources at the event for Madres Líderes (now known as ALAS en Acción). This event served as a celebration of the outcomes achieved by these Los Angeles-based, Spanish-language parent leaders over the years, and was also designed to promote the new SCDD State Plan survey for 2027–2031. During the event, several parent leaders shared accomplishments that they attribute in part to SCDD's support and guidance. Parent leaders shared powerful examples of impact, including launching a podcast on disabilities, starting a radio station focused on disability, faith, and spirituality, and publishing a book while also opening an Independent Living Services (ILS) agency. These stories showed how parent leaders are using their skills to create change in their communities. The local parent group, Ángeles Sin Límites, composed of three ALAS graduates and ALAS en Acción active members, secured the event room at no cost thanks to their strong relationship with Downey Parks and Recreation.
- ✓ The SCDD Orange County Regional Office presented on Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits and appeal strategies for adults covering the following topics: Overview of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) /Childhood Disability



Benefits (CDB / Title II) benefits for adults, the application process, eligibility requirements (also known as Sequential Evaluation Process for Adults), and appeals & strategies. The in-person took place in Fullerton, at the request of the Fullerton Joint Union High School District Adult Transition Program. Attendees, at the end of the session, provided SCDD with SCDD State Plan survey feedback and input.

# **State Council on Developmental Disabilities Rights and Advocacy Programs SCDD Council Report: November 2025**

Census for Oct 1, 2025: Porterville Developmental Center 153, Canyon Springs 36

## **Overview**

The SCDD Rights and Advocacy Program (RAP) consists of the Clients' Rights Advocacy (CRA) and Volunteer Advocacy Services (VAS) programs at Porterville Developmental Center (PDC) and Canyon Springs (CS) continue to advance the rights, dignity, and inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities. Through advocacy, training, and collaboration with Regional Centers, DDS, and community providers, the programs are driving person-centered change that ensures individuals are heard, supported, and integrated into their communities.

## **Key Advocacy Achievements**

**Restoring and Protecting Rights:** Advocates successfully reversed long-standing rights denials at both facilities, securing full reinstatement for individuals after years of restricted autonomy. CRAs also intervened when inaccurate background checks restricted family visitation—resulting in the restoration of visiting rights and improved family engagement.

**Facilitating Community Transitions:** Over the past two months, multiple individuals at both facilities transitioned or began preparing for placement in less restrictive settings. Advocates led meet and greets, ensured access to employment discussions, and supported families navigating transitions, helping individuals achieve stability and independence.

**Strengthening Family Connections:** Advocates helped individuals reconnect with family members through letters, calls, and virtual meetings when direct contact was challenging. These ongoing efforts reduce isolation and strengthen emotional well-being.

**Collaborative System Improvement:** CRA and VAS coordinated with DDS, DOR, and Regional Centers to address delays in placements, employment access, and benefit disbursement. Advocacy prompted updates to visitation and discharge procedures, making them safer, faster, and more transparent.

**Empowering Self-Advocacy:** After sustained CRA/VAS advocacy, People First meetings resumed under a new name—Clients’ Self-Advocacy Group—ensuring individuals again have a structured platform to learn, speak up, and participate in decision-making about their lives.

**Building Workforce and Community Awareness:** CRAs provided rights and advocacy training to San Bernardino Valley College students and CS staff, cultivating future professionals who understand person-centered advocacy and inclusive practice.

### **Systemic Challenges Identified**

- Persistent staffing shortages and licensing delays impede timely community placements.
- Communication gaps between facilities, providers, and Regional Centers slow coordination.
- Employment options in community settings remain limited, particularly for those with complex needs.
- Need for expanded aging and behavioral health services in community programs.

### **Why It Matters**

These reports underscore that advocacy is not only about resolving individual cases—it’s about transforming systems to uphold dignity, autonomy, and inclusion. CRA/VAS efforts ensure that individuals’ voices shape their own life choices, families remain engaged partners in care, and institutions are held accountable for fair treatment and timely transitions. Community living and employment goals align with the promise of the Lanterman Act and Olmstead decision.

Every right restored, every meeting attended, and every connection rebuilt brings California closer to a fully inclusive system where people with developmental disabilities thrive—not just live—in their chosen communities.



# Quality Assessment Project (QAP) Report

## November 2025

### **Upcoming Cycle: Family Surveys**

DDS will continue to stratify data collection with a focus on obtaining a targeted sample of 400 surveys from each RC that has proportionate representation from five ethn racial groups (i.e., African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic, White, and Other). The tables in the following pages are from the UC Davis Population Plan identifying the target sample for each ethn racial group. See Table 1 for AFS, Table 2 for CFS, and Table 3 for FGS.

For this FY 25-26 cycle, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has elected to sample all eligible families per regional center, per family survey as opposed to a sampling of eligible families for the CFS and AFS. Challenges with collecting updated contact information for family members in previous cycles resulted in extremely low response rates for the FGS for certain regional centers, so this survey has a statewide goal this cycle.

DDS has also elected to examine responses for family members of clients who entered the Self Determination Program (SDP) based on the following criteria: 1) For clients who exited as of 5/7/25: client was enrolled in SDP for at least 6 months or more and 2) For current clients as of 5/7/25: client entered SDP at least six months before the FY25-26 survey cycle launch.

Surveys are offered in a total of 19 languages: Arabic, Armenian (Eastern), Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), English, Farsi, Hindi, Hmong, Japanese, Khmer, Lao, Mien, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese. Survey mailing is anticipated to start around December 2025.

### **Eligibility for Family Surveys**

Family Surveys collect demographic information on both the individual receiving services ('family member') as well as the person who fills out the survey (the 'respondent') and information on services and supports received.

Child Family Survey (CFS): Mailed to families who have a child family member (ages 17 and under) who lives with the respondent and receives at least one regional center funded service in addition to case management.

Adult Family Surveys (AFS): Mailed to families who have an adult family member (ages

18+) who lives with the respondent and receives at least one regional center funded service in addition to case management.

Family Guardian Survey (FGS): Mailed to families who have an adult family member (ages 18+) who lives in the community (outside the family home) and receives at least one regional center funded service in addition to case management.

*Table 1: AFS Target Number of Surveys Returned for Each Regional Center by Ethno-racial Category and Overall*

<b>Regional Center</b>	<b>Asian Sample</b>	<b>Black Sample</b>	<b>Hispanic Sample</b>	<b>White Sample</b>	<b>Other Sample</b>	<b>Total RC Sample</b>
ACRC	46	46	83	187	38	400
CVRC	31	20	250	84	15	400
ELARC	56	4	299	31	10	400
FDLRC	57	27	201	108	7	400
FNRC	14	10	67	290	19	400
GGRC	147	26	107	94	26	400
HRC	60	40	186	76	38	400
IRC	20	47	219	89	25	400
KRC	13	31	231	106	19	400
NBRC	35	44	118	161	42	400
NLACRC	30	42	201	116	11	400
RCEB	94	73	103	104	26	400
RCOC	81	9	147	118	45	400
RCRC	10	12	76	274	28	400
SARC	109	9	165	89	28	400
SCLARC	4	81	302	5	8	400
SDRC	38	25	189	116	32	400
SGPRC	63	18	249	50	20	400
TCRC	20	7	187	167	19	400
VMRC	42	33	174	124	27	400
WRC	20	105	156	82	37	400
Total Statewide Sample	990	709	3710	2471	520	8,400

*Table 2: CFS Target Number of Surveys Returned for Each Regional Center by Ethno-racial Category and Overall*

<b>Regional Center</b>	<b>Asian Sample</b>	<b>Black Sample</b>	<b>Hispanic Sample</b>	<b>White Sample</b>	<b>Other Sample</b>	<b>Total RC Sample</b>
ACRC	57	45	89	128	81	400
CVRC	24	15	264	54	43	400
ELARC	54	5	287	24	30	400
FDLRC	48	30	207	105	10	400
FNRC	11	8	81	255	45	400
GGRC	118	21	144	72	45	400
HRC	49	40	198	42	71	400
IRC	19	28	173	53	127	400
KRC	15	28	265	66	26	400
NBRC	30	29	159	100	82	400
NLACRC	28	39	226	91	16	400
RCEB	98	50	135	62	55	400
RCOC	91	9	142	75	83	400
RCRC	6	10	109	219	56	400
SARC	104	5	192	49	50	400
SCLARC	2	55	323	3	17	400
SDRC	36	16	185	75	88	400
SGPRC	71	14	273	26	16	400
TCRC	10	3	224	127	36	400
VMRC	46	31	199	70	54	400
WRC	19	96	172	70	43	400
Total Statewide Sample	936	577	4047	1766	1074	8,400

*Table 3: FGS Target Number of Surveys Returned for Each Regional Center by Ethno-racial Category and Overall*

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Sample Target</b>
Asian	93
Black	103
Hispanic	223
White	747
Other	58
Total Statewide Sample	1224

## About National Core Indicators

National Core Indicators {NCI} strives to provide states with valid and reliable tools to help improve system performance and better serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

Through a contract with Department of Developmental Services {DDS}, State Council on Developmental Disabilities {SCDD}, using the NCI Survey tools, collects quantitative data on consumer satisfaction, provision of services, and personal outcomes. Data collection is completed through face-to-face interviews with consumers as well as mail-in surveys from families.

This data collection effort will enable DDS to evaluate the quality and performance of California's developmental disability service delivery system and among all 21 regional centers over time.

For RC results of past surveys go to:

<https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/nci/reports/>

For more information about the NCI go to:

<https://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/>

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Scan QR code below to go to QA Project Webpage

[scdd.ca.gov/qap](https://scdd.ca.gov/qap)



## QAC Regional Center Assignments

*QAC: Sarah Wirrig*  
*Support Staff: Jennifer Rosenfeld*

**Far Northern  
Redwood Coast  
North Bay**

*QAC: Ron Usac*  
*Support Staff: Valerie Buell*

**East Bay  
San Andreas**

*QAC: George Lewis*  
*Support Staff: Vacant*

**Alta California  
Central Valley  
Valley Mountain**

*QACs: Lia Cervantes-Lerma ■ Vacant ■*  
*Jenny Villanueva*

*Support Staff: Vacant and*  
*Marina Bchtikian*

**East Los Angeles Frank D. Lanterman  
Harbor**

**North Los Angeles  
San Gabriel Pomona  
South Central Los Angeles  
Westside**

*QAC: Nancy Carlson-Zapata*  
*Priscilla Huang, AGPA*  
*Support Staff: Vacant*

**Golden Gate  
Orange County  
San Diego**

*QAC: Vacant*  
*Support Staff: Jose Valle*

**Inland  
Kern  
Tri-Counties**

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**NOVEMBER 18, 2025**

**AGENDA ITEM 9.  
INFORMATION ITEM**

**STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

***2026 Policy Planning***

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Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Chris Arroyo will provide an overview of the Legislative and Public Policy Committee's (LPPC) recommendations regarding the Council's 2026 Policy Priorities and annual policy theme.

The Policy Priorities have been updated to reflect emerging issues in federal policy and law, including the addition of a new section titled "Ensuring Federal Policies and Laws Advance Inclusion and Self-Determination."

***Actions Recommended***

Approve the Legislative and Public Policy Committee's (LPPC) recommendations to adopt the 2026 Policy Priorities and the theme, "Better, Stronger, Together".

***Attachments***

Policy Planning Presentation  
Policy Priorities  
Bill Chart Summary

***Handout(s)***

May be additional handouts on the day of the meeting

# Item 6: 2026 Policy Planning

November 18, 2025

Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs  
Christofer Arroyo

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# Overview

- 2026 Policy Priorities
- 2026 Policy Theme
- Vote

# 2026 Policy Priorities

## Agenda Item 9A.

# 2026 Policy Priorities

- The Council has approved priorities by subject and authorized staff to advocate for them. LPPC is recommending the Council adopt the revised 2026 Policy Priorities and authorize staff to advocate for them.
- Presently, the priorities are addressed in the sections:
  - Protecting and Enhancing Civil Rights
  - Guaranteeing Access to Education and Employment
  - Identifying and Prioritizing Emerging Issues in the IDD Community
  - Promoting Access to Quality Supports in the Community

# 2026 Policy Priorities

- Current priorities continued:
    - Ensuring Safety in the Community
    - Improving Housing and Community Living
  - These priorities are periodically reviewed to ensure they're relevant, timely, and inclusive of emergent issues
  - LPPC recommends adding a new section, “Ensuring Federal Policies and Laws Advance Inclusion and Self-Determination”
  - LPPC is recommending the Council adopt these revised 2026 Policy Priorities and authorize staff to advocate for them
-

# 2026 Policy Theme

## Agenda Item 9B.

# Discussion: Select Theme for the Year

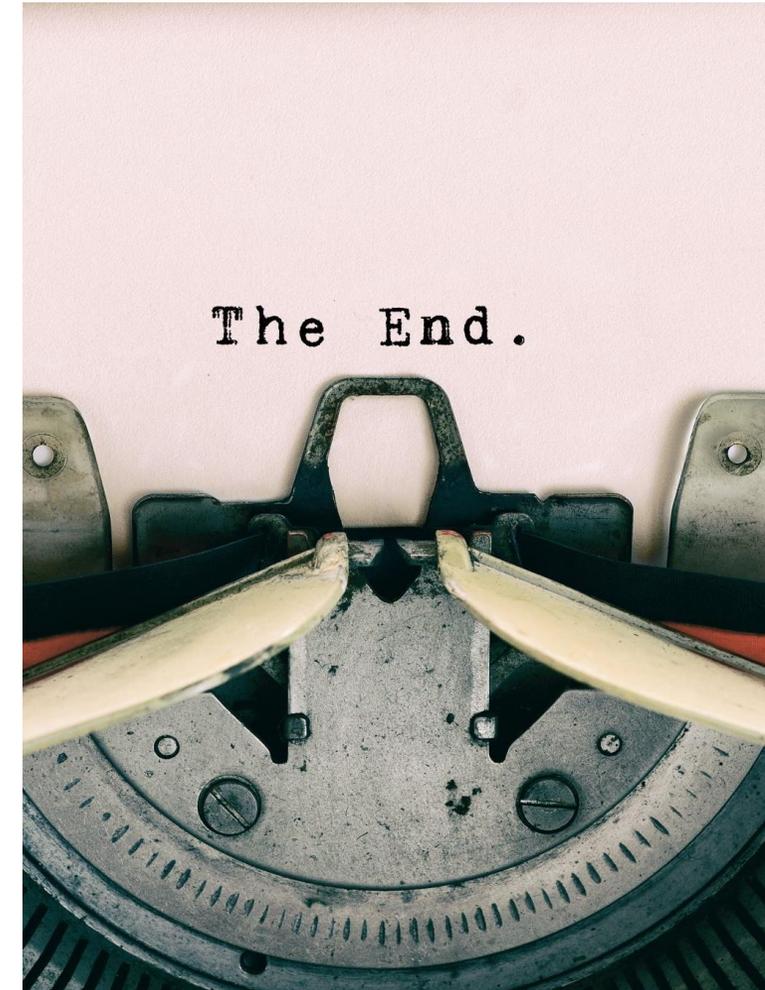
- The Council has adopted themes for advocacy and communications
  - 2025 Theme: Taking Charge: Who's in Charge? We're in Charge!
- After consideration of multiple themes, LPPC selected “Better, Stronger, Together”
- LPPC is recommending the Council adopt the theme, “Better, Stronger, Together” for staff’s use in its activities and communications

# Recommended Actions

- Approve the Legislative and Public Policy Committee's (LPPC) recommendations to adopt the 2026 Policy Priorities
- Approve the theme, “Better, Stronger, Together”.

THANK YOU!

Questions or  
Discussion?





## Policy Priorities 2025-26

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families have a right to exert control and choice over their own lives, play decision making roles in policies and programs, and be fully integrated into the economic, political, social, cultural and educational mainstream of California.<sup>1</sup> To advance these rights, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities declares these policy priorities.

### **PROTECTING AND ENHANCING CIVIL RIGHTS**

Every person with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) has the right to self-determination, equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency no matter their disability.

*The Council will work to ensure civil rights, are protected, and enhanced, including identification and reduction of racial and ethnic inequalities and disparities, advocating for transparency in processes, and supporting persons with I/DD and their families to participate in policy/systems change.*

### **ENSURING FEDERAL POLICIES AND LAWS ADVANCE INCLUSION AND SELF-DETERMINATION**

Federal law recognizes that individuals with developmental disabilities have the right to make informed choices and decisions about their own lives, live independently, and participate fully in their communities. Further, these values call for providing persons with IDD and their families with the information, skills, opportunities, and supports needed to pursue meaningful and productive lives; contribute to their families, communities, and the nation; and achieve full inclusion in society consistent with their unique strengths and abilities. Federal policies play a crucial role in ensuring robust, community-based systems of services and supports that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and inclusion.

*The Council will work to ensure that information about federal policies and laws that have an impact on persons with IDD and their families is shared in plain language. The Council will also work to ensure that these federal efforts uphold the values of informed choice, independence, and full community participation for all persons with IDD and their families.*

<sup>1</sup> Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, (Public Law 106–402; 42 U.S.C. Sec. 15001 et seq.) Section 101

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## **GUARANTEEING ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

Every student with I/DD has the right to a quality inclusive education with their peers that prepares them for post-secondary education and/or competitive integrated employment (CIE). Students with disabilities must be provided the same opportunities for learning, in the classroom and online, as students without disabilities.

Every person with I/DD should have the opportunity to be employed in CIE. Individuals must have access to information, benefits counseling, transition planning, job training, career exploration and information and support for inclusive post-secondary education. New or expanded pathways to CIE must be developed and supported, including apprenticeships and internships.

*The Council will work to ensure the full and robust implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, California's Employment First Law, and the California Employment First Office. The Council will ensure that policies and practices improve opportunities for and incentivize CIE, encourage supports for employers, and make the state a model employer.*

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## **IDENTIFYING & PRIORITIZING EMERGING ISSUES IN THE I/DD COMMUNITY**

Every person with a developmental disability should not have to deal with problems of that arise due to the emergence of inequality issues in the community. Events in our everyday lives, both due to policy changes and unforeseen events, ~~can have the ability to~~ cause unintended consequences for the I/DD community. These issues must be identified and acted upon swiftly to ensure as little harm as possible is inflicted.

*The Council will work to ensure emerging issues including, but not limited to, dealing with disparities across all I/DD issues, barriers to participating in a community setting, and roadblocks to access for people with I/DD are dealt with through policy changes and by keeping the administration and lawmakers informed about issues.*

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## **PROMOTING ACCESS TO QUALITY SUPPORTS IN THE COMMUNITY**

Every person with I/DD should have the ability to fully participate in their communities. Receiving quality, individualized services is the cornerstone for people with I/DD to be safe, healthy and to promote self-determination, interdependence, and inclusion.

Community-based services/supports require adequate wages for providers; therefore, the state must restore rates. Disparities in access, outcomes, and quality ~~for~~of services and supports must be addressed. Complexities in the service delivery systems must be reduced.

*The Council will make meaningful improvements to the service delivery system to reduce disparities, increase transparency and accountability and increase quality*

*outcomes by making recommendations to the Master Plan on Developmental Services, and by ensuring successful implementation of the Self-Determination Program and Achieving Better Life Experience Act.*

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## **ENSURING SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY**

Every person with I/DD has a right to be safe and must be ~~provided~~provided with emergency preparedness training and training in personal safety. Law enforcement personnel, first responders, emergency medical professionals and the judicial system must be trained in how to work with people with I/DD (including those who are suspects, victims or witnesses of crimes) ~~during the course of their duties.~~

*The Council will work to ensure people with I/DD are safe, free from abuse and neglect and have access to services and supports in their communities during all types of disasters or emergencies and an adequate safety net for people in crisis and access to adequate crisis intervention services. The Council will work to improve outcomes of law enforcement interactions with people with I/DD.*

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## **IMPROVING HOUSING AND COMMUNITY LIVING**

Every person with I/DD should have the opportunity to live in the community. Permanent, affordable, accessible, safe and sustained housing options must be continually developed. Statewide inclusive living options for individuals with I/DD must be increased and enhanced through access to housing and subsidies that are paired in a timely manner with needed services and supports.

*The Council will work to identify housing resources for persons with I/DD and their families to prevent homelessness and advocate for availability of accessible and affordable housing.*

**For more information, contact: [scdd@scdd.ca.gov](mailto:scdd@scdd.ca.gov) | 916-263-7919**

## Policy Priorities 2025-26

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families have a right to exert control and choice over their own lives, play decision making roles in policies and programs, and be fully integrated into the economic, political, social, cultural and educational mainstream of California.<sup>1</sup> To advance these rights, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities declares these policy priorities.

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### **PROTECTING AND ENHANCING CIVIL RIGHTS**

Every person with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) has the right to self-determination, equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency no matter their disability.

*The Council will work to ensure civil rights, are protected, and enhanced, including identification and reduction of racial and ethnic inequalities and disparities, advocating for transparency in processes, and supporting persons with IDD and their families to participate in policy/systems change.*

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### **ENSURING FEDERAL POLICIES AND LAWS ADVANCE INCLUSION AND SELF-DETERMINATION**

Federal law recognizes that individuals with developmental disabilities have the right to make informed choices and decisions about their own lives, live independently, and participate fully in their communities. Further, these values call for providing persons with IDD and their families with the information, skills, opportunities, and supports needed to pursue meaningful and productive lives; contribute to their families, communities, and the nation; and achieve full inclusion in society consistent with their unique strengths and abilities. Federal policies play a crucial role in ensuring robust, community-based systems of services and supports that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and inclusion.

*The Council will work to ensure that information about federal policies and laws that have an impact on persons with IDD and their families is shared in plain language. The Council will also work to ensure that these federal efforts uphold the values of informed choice, independence, and full community participation for all persons with IDD and their families.*

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### **GUARANTEEING ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

Every student with IDD has the right to a quality inclusive education with their peers that prepares them for post-secondary education and/or competitive integrated employment (CIE). Students with disabilities must be provided the same opportunities for learning, in the classroom and online, as students without disabilities.

Every person with IDD should have the opportunity to be employed in CIE. Individuals must have access to information, benefits counseling, transition planning, job training, career exploration and information and support for inclusive post-secondary education. New or expanded pathways to CIE must be developed and supported, including apprenticeships and internships.

*The Council will work to ensure the full and robust implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, California's Employment First Law, and the California Employment First Office. The Council will ensure that policies and practices improve opportunities for and incentivize CIE, encourage supports for employers, and make the state a model employer.*

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## **IDENTIFYING & PRIORITIZING EMERGING ISSUES IN THE I/DD COMMUNITY**

Every person with a developmental disability should not have to deal with problems that arise due to the emergence of inequality issues in the community. Events in our everyday lives, both due to policy changes and unforeseen events, can cause unintended consequences for the IDD community. These issues must be identified and acted upon swiftly to ensure as little harm as possible is inflicted.

*The Council will work to ensure emerging issues including, but not limited to, dealing with disparities across all IDD issues, barriers to participating in a community setting, and roadblocks to access for people with IDD are dealt with through policy changes and by keeping the administration and lawmakers informed about issues.*

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## **PROMOTING ACCESS TO QUALITY SUPPORTS IN THE COMMUNITY**

Every person with IDD should have the ability to fully participate in their communities. Receiving quality, individualized services is the cornerstone for people with IDD to be safe, healthy and to promote self-determination, interdependence, and inclusion.

Community-based services/supports require adequate wages for providers; therefore, the state must restore rates. Disparities in access, outcomes, and quality of services and supports must be addressed. Complexities in the service delivery systems must be reduced.

*The Council will make meaningful improvements to the service delivery system to reduce disparities, increase transparency and accountability and increase quality outcomes by making recommendations to the Master Plan on Developmental Services, and by ensuring successful implementation of the Self-Determination Program and Achieving Better Life Experience Act.*

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## **ENSURING SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY**

Every person with I/DD has a right to be safe and must be provided with emergency preparedness training and training in personal safety. Law enforcement personnel, first responders, emergency medical professionals and the judicial system must be trained in how to work with people with IDD (including those who are suspects, victims or witnesses of crimes)

*The Council will work to ensure people with I/DD are safe, free from abuse and neglect and have access to services and supports in their communities during all types of disasters or emergencies and an adequate safety net for people in crisis and access to adequate crisis intervention services. The Council will work to improve outcomes of law enforcement interactions with people with IDD.*

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## **IMPROVING HOUSING AND COMMUNITY LIVING**

Every person with IDD should have the opportunity to live in the community. Permanent, affordable, accessible, safe and sustained housing options must be continually developed. Statewide inclusive living options for individuals with IDD must be increased and enhanced through access to housing and subsidies that are paired in a timely manner with needed services and supports.

*The Council will work to identify housing resources for persons with IDD and their families to prevent homelessness and advocate for availability of accessible and affordable housing.*

**For more information, contact: [scdd@scdd.ca.gov](mailto:scdd@scdd.ca.gov) | 916-263-7919**

# 2025 Legislation Update – LPPC

## Civil Rights

Bill Number/Author	SCDD Position	Status	Summary
<a href="#"><u>AB 1225 (Bennett- D)</u></a> State parks and state beaches: Accessibility Advisory Committee	SUPPORT	<b>Vetoed by Governor</b>	Requires the Director of Parks and Recreation to establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee to make recommendations for improving the accessibility of the state park system and state beaches for individuals with disabilities.
<a href="#"><u>SB 84 (Niello – R)</u></a> Disability access: construction-related accessibility claims: notice of violation and opportunity to correct	OPPOSE	<b>ASM Judiciary – Failed Deadline 6/18/25</b>	Would establish waiting periods and procedural barriers before a person with a disability who encounters an access barrier can enforce their civil rights in court or bring lawsuits.
<a href="#"><u>SB 470 (Laird - D)</u></a> Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act: teleconferencing.	SUPPORT	<b>SIGNED by Governor on 10/1/25</b>	Authorizes the alternative set of teleconferencing provisions until a further date, January 1, 2030.

## Education

Bill Number/Author	Position	Status	Summary
<a href="#"><u>AB 784 (Hoover – R)</u></a> Special education: specialized deaf and hard-of-hearing services	SUPPORT	<b>SIGNED by Governor on 7/14/25</b>	Clarifies the inclusion of specialized Deaf/Hard of Hearing services in an IEP, more consistent practices and specialized instruction for students with hearing impairments would be authorized. Additionally, allowing non-public agencies to provide specialized instruction will expand the resources to provide such services and ensure the provision of a free appropriate public education.
<a href="#"><u>SB 244 (Grayson - D)</u></a> Public postsecondary education: disabled student services: assessments	SUPPORT	<b>May be acted upon Jan 2026</b>	Requires the Trustees of CA State University and request Regents of the University of CA to cover diagnostic assessment costs for students with disabilities who seek academic accommodation in colleges.
<a href="#"><u>SB 373 (Grove - R)</u></a> Special education:	SUPPORT	<b>SIGNED by Governor 10/10/25</b>	Would create stronger safeguards and require the Superintendent to do more, including collecting and sharing information and documentation relating to certification of a nonpublic/nonsectarian school, to review

nonpublic, nonsectarian schools or agencies	.	.	grievance policies and investigation/reporting procedures of these schools. This bill also requires more oversight of students with disabilities who attend certain private special education schools and ensure pupils are informed about their rights and are provided with a copy of their rights and procedural safeguards.
<a href="#"><u>SB 389 (Ochoa Bogh - R)</u></a> Pupil health: individuals with exceptional needs: specialized physical health care services	SUPPORT	<b>SIGNED by Governor 10/10/25</b>	Authorizes a licensed vocational nurse, under the supervision of a credentialed school nurse, to assist students with disabilities with basic respiratory services.

## Employment

Bill Number/Author	Position	Status	Summary
<a href="#"><u>SB 422 (Grayson - D)</u></a> California Workforce Development Board: developmental services	SUPPORT	<b>May be acted upon Jan 2026</b>	Would direct the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) to analyze the factors behind the workforce shortage in supporting individuals with developmental disabilities to improve services they need.

## Health

Bill Number/Author	Position	Status	Summary
<a href="#"><u>AB 308 (Ramos - D)</u></a> Mobile crisis teams or units: procedures	SUPPORT	<b>May be acted upon Jan 2026</b>	Would authorize the county behavioral health director to develop procedures for mobile crisis response teams focused on the proper response to cases involving individuals with autism, behavioral health issues, or any other developmental disability.
<a href="#"><u>AB 315 (Bonta - D)</u></a> Medi-Cal: Home and Community-Based Alternatives Waiver	SUPPORT	<b>May be acted upon Jan 2026</b>	Would among other things, expand capacity in the Medi-Cal Home and Community-Based Alternatives (HCBA) Waiver by removing the current limit on how many people can join the program (previously capped at 5,000 extra slots). Instead, it will require the state to enroll all eligible applicants.
<a href="#"><u>AB 350 (Bonta - D)</u></a> Health care coverage: fluoride treatments	SUPPORT	<b>May be acted upon Jan 2026</b>	Would make the application of fluoride, including fluoride varnish, a covered benefit under the Medi-Cal program and also a health care service plan contract or health insurance policy for children under 21 years of age starting January 1, 2026.
<a href="#"><u>AB 517 (Krell - D)</u></a> Medi-Cal: complex rehabilitation technology: wheelchairs	SUPPORT	<b>May be acted upon Jan 2026</b>	Would prohibit the requirement for prior authorization for the repair of powered wheelchairs if the cost does not exceed \$1,250 and removes the need for an individual prescription or medical necessity documentation for approved powered wheelchair repairs.

<a href="#"><u>AB 951 (Ta - R)</u></a> Health care coverage: behavioral diagnoses.	SUPPORT	<b>Signed by Governor on 7/30/25</b>	Starting January 1, 2026, health insurance plans cannot require people with a past diagnosis of autism or a related developmental disorder to get re-diagnosed to maintain health coverage.
<a href="#"><u>AB 974 (Patterson - R)</u></a> Medi-Cal managed care plans: exemption from mandatory enrollment.	SUPPORT	<b>May be acted upon Jan 2026</b>	The bill sets new rules to help Medi-Cal managed care enrollees who also have other health insurance. Ensures that providers and insurers can still accept Medi-Cal fee-for-service clients once they move into managed healthcare.
<a href="#"><u>SB 363 (Wiener- D)</u></a> Health care coverage: independent medical review.	SUPPORT	<b>May be acted upon Jan 2026</b>	Require health care service plans or health insurers to annually report their number of denials of treatment and hold them liable with administrative fines in specific circumstances.

## Informal and Formal Community Supports

Bill Number/Author	Position	Status	Summary
<a href="#"><u>AB 1099 (Bryan - D)</u></a> Developmental services: initial intake: assessment.	SUPPORT	<b>May be acted upon Jan 2026</b>	Would streamline and expedite the eligibility process for child welfare and juvenile justice-involved youth suspected of having IDD, improving disparities in regional center services among these vulnerable youth.
<a href="#"><u>AB 1172 (Nguyen - D)</u></a> Adult Day programs: administration of inhalable emergency antiseizure medications.	SUPPORT	<b>Signed by Governor on 10/7/25</b>	Would establish a training program and create procedure to allow staff in adult day programs facilities to volunteer to administer emergency anti-seizure medication, and to provide immediate medical intervention.
<a href="#"><u>AB 1220 (Arambula - D)</u></a> Developmental services: denials of services and notices of actions	SUPPORT	<b>May be acted upon Jan 2026</b>	Would require a regional center to track disagreements and denials of service in the individual program plan (IPP) and publicly report such data, providing stronger oversight and improve disparities in regional centers.

## Safety

Bill Number/Author	Position	Status	Summary
<a href="#"><u>SB 671(Cervantes- D)</u></a> Pedestrian crossing signals.	SUPPORT	<b>Signed by Governor 10/3/25</b>	Codifies Caltrans' current practices for installing Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPI) and Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS).

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**NOVEMBER 18, 2025**

**AGENDA ITEM 10.  
INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

**STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

***2027 – 2031 State Plan Recommendations***

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The Council’s State Plan Committee has met over the past few months to develop timelines, collect and analyze data, develop goals and objectives, and recommend the proposed 2027-2031 State Plan to the Council, as drafted and submitted.

State Plan Committee Chair Jessica Brown and Chief Deputy Director Rihana Ahmad will present the State Plan draft, with the State Plan Committee’s recommendation.

Councilmembers will vote on whether to adopt the 2027-31 State Plan.

***Action Recommended***

Adopt the 2027-2031 State Plan as recommended by the State Plan Committee.

***Handouts***

Detail Sheet: Proposed 2027-31 (5-Year) State Plan (with timeline)

2027-2031 State Plan Draft

May be additional handouts on the day of the meeting

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**NOVEMBER 18, 2025**

**AGENDA ITEM 11.  
INFORMATION ITEM**

**STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

***2026 Council and Committee Meeting Dates and Adjournment***

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The Council's next meeting date is scheduled for January 27, 2026. A chart of the 2026 Council and Committee meeting dates will be provided as a handout.

***Handout***

**2026 Council and Committee Meeting Dates**