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STATEWIDE SELF ADVOCACY NETWORK MEETING INFORMATION



DATES: Wednesday, March 4, 2026, and Thursday, March 5, 2026



TIME: 11:00 AM – 3:30 PM

MEETING DETAILS:

This meeting is being held using the Zoom meeting platform.

ZOOM LINK:

<https://bit.ly/SSAN-March-2026>

Call-in Information:

CALL IN NUMBER: (669) 900 9128

MEETING ID: 894 5339 6083

PASSCODE: 287102



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Accessibility

SSAN is a project of SCDD and values people's access needs. If you would like SSAN materials in different formats and/or languages, please contact Riana Hardin at (916) 263-8196 or Riana.Hardin@scdd.ca.gov. We ask that you give at least 5 business days notice before the meeting to allow enough time to respond to all requests.



DAY 1
AGENDA
March 4, 2026
11:00 AM – 3:30 PM

1. Welcome and Introductions

Presented by:

- Rebecca Donabed, Chairperson
- Eric Aguilar, Vice-Chairperson
- Ellen Sweigert, Secretary



2. Review and Approval of December 2025 Minutes

Presented by: Rebecca Donabed, Chairperson

ACTION ITEM



3. SCDD Update

Presented by: Aaron Carruthers, SCDD Executive Director

Information Item



Lunch Break



4. SCDD Legislative Update

Presented by: Chris Arroyo, SCDD Deputy Director, Policy and Public Affairs

Information Item



5. Voting Makes Change in 2026

Presented by: Gabriel Taylor, Disability Rights California, Senior Advocate and Scott Barron, Disability Rights California, Peer Advocate

Information Item



6. Recap and Reflections

Presented by: SSAN Leadership Team





DAY 2 AGENDA
March 5, 2026
11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

1. Welcome and Introductions

Presented by:

- Rebecca Donabed, Chairperson
- Eric Aguilar, Vice-Chairperson
- Ellen Sweigert, Secretary



2. Feeling Calm and Relaxed

Presented by: Scott Barron, Peer Advocate, Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy, Disability Rights California

Bebo Saab, Supervising Attorney for Outreach, Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy, Disability Rights California



Lunch Break



3. Flood Preparedness Tips

Eric Aguilar, SCDD SSAN Representative

4. One-Page Descriptions as an Advocacy Tool

Presented by: Ellen Sweigert, North Bay Regional SSAN Representative

5. Understanding CalAIM

Presented by: Resources for Independence Central Valley Representative

6. Reflections and Closing Remarks

Presented by: SSAN Leadership Team



MARCH 4, 2026

SSAN MEETING DAY 1 AGENDA ITEM 2

ACTION ITEM

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network

Approval of December 2025 Minutes



Attachments

- December 2025 Minutes

Recommended Action

Approve the minutes from the December 2025 SSAN meeting.

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Statewide Self-Advocacy Network Meeting Minutes

December 10 and 11 (virtual)

SCDD Regional Members Present

Sonya Force – North Coast
Robert Rogers – North State
Lisa Cooley – Sacramento
Ellen Sweigert – North Bay
Sara Desumala – Bay Area
Crystal Enyeart – North Valley Hills
Daniel Stickney – Central Coast
Rebecca Donabed – Sequoia
Julie Gaona – Los Angeles
Viri Salgado – San Diego

Agency Members Present

Eric Aguilar – SCDD
Scott Barron – DRC
Desiree Boykin – ARCA
Robert Levy – UCD MIND Institute
Nicole Patterson – DDS
Wesley Witherspoon – USC CHLA

Members Not Present

Sean Sullivan – Orange County
Kecia Weller – UCLA Tarjan Center
Russell Dawsons-Rawlings – CFILC
YO Disabled and Proud

SCDD Staff in Attendance

Aaron Carruthers – SCDD HQ
Austin Murphy – SCDD HQ
Barbara Imle – SCDD HQ
Brian Hoang – SCDD HQ
Chris Arroyo – SCDD HQ
Dena Hernandez – SCDD North Valley Hills
Jennifer Lucas – SCDD Central Coast
Riana Hardin – SCDD HQ
Tobias Weare – SCDD North Bay
David Delgado – SCDD HQ

Others Present

German Cervantes
Justin Hole
Ted Jackson
Robin Keehn
Haneef
Gabriel Rogin



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December 2025 SSAN Minutes

Day 1

SSAN Members held a moment of silence for Alice Wong, a San Francisco-based disability rights activist, author, and leader who passed away on November 15, 2025.

1. Welcome and Introductions

SSAN Chairperson and DO Network Representative, Rebecca Donabed, called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM. SSAN Vice-Chair, Eric Aguilar, then reviewed the SSAN Meeting Agreements with members, reminding them to be respectful to others in the meeting and to try to actively listen to understand what people are saying. Members were asked to introduce themselves by sharing their name and the region and/or agency they represent. They were also asked to share an advocacy activity they had participated in since the last meeting, as well as their favorite holiday tradition or food. Members mentioned attending regional center board meetings, meeting with elected officials, speaking at conferences, participating in planning meetings, serving on a panel and giving trainings.

2. Review and Approval of September 2025 Minutes

The members reviewed the minutes from the September 2025 meeting. Materials for this agenda item can be found on pages 5-12 of the December 2025 SSAN meeting packet.

ACTION: Motion #1, to approve the September 2025 minutes, was made by Lisa Cooley and seconded by Robert Levy. A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed. See vote log.

3. SCDD Update

Aaron Carruthers, SCDD Executive Director, provided members with an update on SCDD activities since the September meeting. This update included recent changes to CalFresh and Medi-Cal. California plans to exempt people with disabilities from the new changes.



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SCDD sought feedback from the community during the development process for the 2027-2031 state plan. Major barriers identified included housing, health and safety, employment, access to regional center services, and community inclusion.

4. Systemic Advocacy Leadership Academy (SALA)

Chris Arroyo, SCDD Deputy Director, Policy and Public Affairs, presented the fourth segment of the Systemic Advocacy Leadership Academy (SALA) training for SSAN members. Members were provided with an overview of how laws are passed, the three branches of the US government (legislative, executive, and judicial), and their roles and responsibilities. Members were given examples of the different opportunities people have to advocate during the legislative process.

5. Sensory Implications When Working with People with Developmental Disabilities in Crisis

Jennifer Lucas, (SCDD Regional Office Manager of the Central Coast Office), and Yolanda Cruz (SCDD Regional Manager of the San Diego and Imperial Office), provided members with training on how to create a sensory friendly Emergency Preparedness Plan. This training explained why sensory overload happens and how it can affect a person's ability to communicate or stay regulated. Members learned about the role the eight (8) senses play, how sensory processing differences influence emotional and behavioral regulation, and how sensory-informed communication/de-escalation strategies promote safety and inclusion.

6. Recap and Reflections

Members reflected on the day's events and what they plan on sharing with their communities. Day 1 of the December SSAN Meeting was recessed at 3:23.



DAY 2

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair, Rebecca Donabed, called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM. Secretary Ellen Sweigert reviewed the SSAN meeting guidelines. Members introduced themselves and shared their New Year's resolutions. Members shared goals such as not procrastinating as much, learning more, strengthening self-advocacy skills, enjoying good food, maintaining good health, advocating for an end to the marriage penalty for people with disabilities, prioritizing self-care, and improving work-life balance.

2. SSAN Annual Report

Riana Hardin, SCDD Self-Advocacy Coordinator, reviewed the 2024-2025 SSAN Annual Report with members. During the 2024-2025 Federal Fiscal Year, members used information from SSAN meetings to create and host leadership trainings, spoke at conferences and events, and partnered with regional offices to provide trainings and outreach. SSAN hosted three (3) virtual events and discussed their hopes for the future of the network. Members suggested sharing information about SSAN meetings with regional centers.

3. Participation Barriers

Members talked about the challenges of participating in SSAN meetings, and other self-advocacy activities while managing doctor's appointments, medical conditions, personal and family obligations, work, and Zoom fatigue. Members shared they would like more hybrid meetings because it increases flexibility but also discussed the importance of making sure everyone feels included in this style of meeting.

4. Types of Advocates

Ellen Sweigert, SSAN Secretary and North Bay Regional Representative, provided a presentation on different types of advocates. The presentation provided definitions, approaches, and tools used by individual-focused advocates, self-advocate ambassadors, community self-advocates, nonprofit advocates, self-advocate peer leaders, and leader-advocates. Members shared what type of



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advocate they identify with, and many shared that they identify as more than one type, depending on the situation.

5. Strengthening Connections with Regional Centers

Ellen Sweigert, SSAN Secretary, North Bay Regional SSAN Representative and North Bay Regional Center Client Advocate, along with North Bay Regional Center Executive Director Gabriel Rogin, led a conversation about how SSAN members can improve collaboration with regional centers. Mr. Rogin shared that while regional centers exist to serve people with developmental disabilities, they don't always prioritize self-advocate voices in decision-making. Ideas shared during this discussion included: partnering with independent living centers (ILCs), sharing SSAN and self-advocacy materials with regional center client advocates and at regional center executive director meetings, and including SSAN updates at regional advisory committee meetings.

6. Reflections and Closing Remarks

Members reflected on important information they received today that they would like to share with their communities. The meeting was adjourned at 2:36 PM.



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SSAN VOTE LOG: DECEMBER 2025

Name	Region	Day 1 Attendance	Motion 1	Day 2 Attendance
Eric Aguilar	SCDD	Present	For	Present
Sonya Force	North Coast	Present	For	Present
Robert Rogers	North State	Present	For	Present
Lisa Cooley	Sacramento	Present	For	Present
Ellen Sweigert	North Bay	Present	For	Present
Sara Desumala	Bay Area	Present	Abstain	Present
Crystal Enyeart	North Valley Hills	Present	Abstain	Present
Daniel Stickney	Central Coast	Present	For	Present
Vacant	Sequoia	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
Julie Gaona	Los Angeles	Present	Abstain	Present
Sean Sullivan	Orange County	Not Present	Not Present	Not Present
Eric Aguilar	San Bernardino	Present	For	Present
Viri Salgado	San Diego	Present	Not Present	Present
Desiree Boykin	ARCA	Not Present	Not Present	Not Present
Russell Dawson–Rawlings	CFILC	Not Present	Not Present	Not Present
VACANT	YO! Disabled & Proud	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
Rebecca Donabed	DO Network	Present	For	Present
Nicole Patterson	DDS	Present	For	Present
Scott Barron	DRC	Present	For	Present
Wesley Witherspoon	USC – CHLA	Present	Abstain	Present
Kecia Weller	UCLA Tarjan Center	Present	Abstain	Present
Robert Levy	UCD MIND Institute	Present	For	Present

MARCH 4, 2026

SSAN MEETING DAY 1 AGENDA ITEM 3

Information Item

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



SCDD Update

SCDD Executive Director Aaron Carruthers will update SSAN members on the Council's activities and efforts to meet the needs of Californians with I/DD during these challenging times.

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MARCH 4, 2026

**SSAN MEETING DAY 1 AGENDA ITEM 4
INFORMATION ITEM**

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



SCDD Legislative Update and SB 1052 Explainer

SCDD Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Chris Arroyo, will provide members with an overview of SCDD-sponsored legislation, SB 1052, and the steps they can take to support legislatively driven systems change.

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MARCH 4, 2026

**SSAN MEETING DAY 1 AGENDA ITEM 5
INFORMATION ITEM**



Statewide Self-Advocacy Network

Voting Makes Change in 2026

Representatives from Disability Rights California will discuss how members can prepare for the upcoming midterm elections.

Presenters:

- Gabriel Taylor, Senior Advocate, Disability Rights California
- Scott Barron, Peer Advocate, Disability Rights California

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MARCH 4, 2026

**SSAN MEETING DAY 1 AGENDA ITEM 6
INFORMATION ITEM**



Statewide Self-Advocacy Network

Recap and Reflections

This agenda item gives members a chance to reflect on the day's discussions and the topics covered.

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MARCH 5, 2026

**SSAN MEETING DAY 2 AGENDA ITEM 2
INFORMATION ITEM**

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



Feeling Calm and Relaxed

Scott Barron, Peer Advocate for the Office of Clients Rights Advocacy at Disability Rights California, and Bebo Saab, Supervising Attorney for Outreach for the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy at Disability Rights California will provide SSAN members with training on strategies and tools to help people feel calm and relaxed.

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MARCH 5, 2026

**SSAN MEETING DAY 2 ITEM 3
INFORMATION ITEM**

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



Flood Preparedness

Eric Aguilar, SSAN Vice-Chair and SCDD SSAN Representative to SAAC will provide members with training and resources on how to prepare for floods.

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MARCH 5, 2026

**SSAN MEETING DAY 2 ITEM 4
INFORMATION ITEM**

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



One-Page Descriptions as an Advocacy Tool

Ellen Sweigert, SSAN Secretary and SCDD North Bay Regional Office SSAN Representative, will be giving a presentation on using one-page descriptions as an advocacy tool.

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MARCH 5, 2026

**SSAN MEETING DAY 2 ITEM 5
INFORMATION ITEM**

Statewide Self-Advocacy Network



Understanding CalAIM

SSAN members will hear a presentation about CalAIM from a representative of Resources for Independence Central Valley and learn about what this program offers, and how it can benefit them.

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MARCH 5, 2026

**SSAN MEETING DAY 2 AGENDA ITEM 6
INFORMATION ITEM**



Statewide Self-Advocacy Network

Meeting Reflections and Closing

This agenda item gives members a chance to reflect on the day's discussions and the topics covered. Members will have a chance to share ideas for items to include in the 2026 meetings.

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