



State Council Meeting Summary

January 27, 2026

Ensure that Californians with developmental disabilities are guaranteed the same full and equal opportunities for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as all Americans.

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Executive Director Carruthers swore in new Councilmember Azucena Garcia-Ferro.
- The Council secured an author for Council-sponsored legislation related to Authorized Representatives.
- SCDD raised ongoing concerns about California's developmental disability services system during a Little Hoover Commission hearing.
- The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) shared updates on the Governor's proposed 2026–27 state budget. Members expressed concerns for ending local Self Determination Program funding.
- DDS discussed the upcoming renewal of the Self-Determination Program Medicaid waiver.
- In 2025, SCDD staff directly reached 137,355 Californians through advocacy, training, and technical assistance and indirectly impacted 3 million.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Senator Lena Gonzalez agreed to author a Council-sponsored bill (Senate Bill 1052) clarifying SCDD's authority to appoint an Authorized Representative to support individuals served by Regional Centers when families are unexpectedly separated.
- SCDD submitted written testimony to the Little Hoover Commission. The Council emphasized that while the Commission's recommendations were beginning to take shape, many individuals and families continue to face challenges navigating services, finding providers, and accessing approved supports.
- The Council hosted a briefing attended by legislative staff from 35 offices to share findings from the statewide State Plan survey, which highlighted the challenges community members reported experiencing within California's service systems.

GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET

- The Governor's proposed 2026–27 state budget totaled approximately \$343.6 billion and included a projected \$2.9 billion shortfall.
- Proposed federal policy changes could impact programs such as Medi-Cal and CalFresh, including potential benefit reductions and work requirements for certain populations.
- The proposed DDS budget would increase to approximately \$21.1 billion, reflecting continued growth in the number of individuals served through California's Regional Center system.

SELF-DETERMINATION PROGRAM WAIVER RENEWAL

- DDS presented information on the upcoming renewal of the Self-Determination Program Medicaid waiver, which allows California to receive federal funding for services provided through the program.
- Approximately 8,000 individuals currently participate in the Self-Determination Program, with about 5,000 enrolled in the federal waiver.
- The waiver renewal will be released for public comment for at least 30 days before being submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for federal review.

COUNCIL ACTIONS

- Approved the November 2025 Council meeting minutes.

FUTURE MEETING DATE

- The next Council meeting will be via Zoom on March 24, 2026.

MEETING RESOURCES

- For presentation materials and additional meeting resources, visit: <https://scdd.ca.gov/councilmeetings/>