



State Council on Developmental Disabilities

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March 23, 2026

Senator Caroline Menjivar, Chair
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #3 Health and Human Services

Assemblymember Dr. Corey Jackson, Chair
Committee on Budget Subcommittee #2 Human Services

RE: Governor's proposed budget for the Department of Developmental Services and trailer bill language

Dear Senator Menjivar and Assemblymember Dr. Jackson,

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) recognizes and thanks you for your commitment and passion for the rights and services of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. This letter offers SCDD's perspective and suggestions on the Governor's 2026-2027 proposed budget and trailer bill language for the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

For more than 55 years, SCDD has elevated community voices to drive more effective, efficient, and accountable systems. Recently, over 4,200 Californians in the IDD community told us their priorities and needs. This history and feedback inform the following letter. Thank you for your consideration as you craft a budget that balances many competing priorities.

SCDD appreciates that year-over-year, the Legislature prioritizes funding the growth in number of individuals served through regional centers despite deficit budgets. The Governor's budget includes \$21.1 billion total funds in 2026-27 to serve about 525,000 individuals in 2026-27. This is an increase of \$2.4 billion total funds and 35,000 individuals compared to 2025-26. The IDD community does not take this continued support for granted. Thank you for again considering this increase to support caseload growth.

Rate Reform/Quality Incentive Program Contract Exemption ([RN 26 04786](#)): No comment or suggestion

Early Intervention Programs Oversight ([RN 26 04982](#)): Comment

SCDD supports this proposal. Proposed language would strike specific resources family resource services provide only if federal funds are available and instead require them to be provided by the lead agency or their contractor. SCDD appreciates and welcomes the required provision of the following services:

- Difference between Part C and Part B services
- Information about local Part B programs and other services in a family's community
- Options for services for families after their child reaches three years of age

SCDD finds significant value in the specificity of these services. Transitions between and within systems can be very confusing to families and ensuring resources are available to understand them will be helpful.

Life Outcomes Improvement Systems ([RN 26 06430](#)): Comment

SCDD is enthusiastic about LOIS' potential. We support technology systems that allow for a more consistent statewide experience for individuals served and families. We support the possibility of better access for individuals served and families to their own information. SCDD welcomes this modernization.

Remote Services ([RN 26 04798](#)): Suggestion

SCDD welcomes continuing flexibilities learned during the pandemic for remote services. However, the necessities of a pandemic should not always become the new standard. SCDD is concerned that the proposed language widely opens the possibility of remote services for those that are better delivered in person. For example, there may be creative options for remote day program activities, however socialization is lost. Behavioral therapy and independent living programs would be fundamentally altered if solely virtual. Also, we can imagine a scenario where in-person services are phased out, leaving no true option for individuals served and families.

Suggestion: Incorporate language as a backstop

SEC 1. Section 4648 (a)(3)(B) **If receiving certain services or supports remotely consistent with professional standards** would effectively meet the needs identified through the planning team process, consumers and families may choose to receive any of the following services remotely if offered by the authorized service provider:

Regional Center Oversight/Fiscal Allocation ([RN 26 05400](#)): Suggestion

SCDD supports many elements contained in this proposal, including:

- Encouraging people served and families to be part of regional center boards and committees
- Mandating plain language for board materials, whenever possible
- Ensuring Consumer Advisory Committees (CAC) exist across regional centers
- Ensuring CAC has a leadership role with the board by appointing two members to serve on the board
- Creating and mandating training requirements for regional center board members
- Incorporating performance measures into regional center contracts
- Eliminating the requirement that providers maintain a physical location in the catchment area, unless a physical location is needed to deliver services
- Ending courtesy vendorizations

SCDD is concerned about the section that restructures regional center boards to include professional expertise while minimizing the expertise of leaders with lived experience, both individuals served and family members. Based on SCDD's experiences of being led by a board of Governor-appointed leaders with lived experience, SCDD offers the following suggestions:

Suggestion: Balance professional expertise with leaders with lived experience

- Retain and amend WIC Section 4622 (e):
A minimum of 50 percent of the members of the governing board shall be persons with developmental disabilities or their ~~parents or legal guardians~~ family members served by that regional center. Subsection 4622 (b)(1-5) is waived for governing board members with developmental disabilities and their family members. If such expertise exists, it will be counted towards satisfying subsection 4622 (b)(1-5). No less than 25 percent of the members of the governing board shall be persons with developmental disabilities.
- Amend WIC Section 4622 (h):
The governing board ~~may~~ shall appoint a consumers' advisory committee composed of persons with developmental disabilities representing the various categories of disability served by the regional center. The committee shall designate all persons with developmental disabilities and family members to serve on the governing board as full voting members per subsection 4622 (e).

Federal Access Rule ([RN 26 04847](#)): No comment or suggestion

Employment Access Alignment ([RN 26 05714](#)): Comment

SCDD understands the motivation to eliminate CARF standards. However, eliminating CARF should not leave these services without standards. SCDD strongly supports the department creating standards in consultation with stakeholders (SEC. 3. Section 4856 (a)(3)). SCDD is ready to join the Department in developing these standards.

Self-Determination Program Administrative Cost Funding ([RN 26 04797](#)):

Suggestion

SCDD understands the Department's need to fund the statewide administration of the Self-Determination Program (SDP). Current statutory structure prioritizes offsetting the Department's fingerprinting and other administrative costs with federal financial participation funds. It is unclear how much of

On balance, too much is lost when eliminating federal financial participation funds for local use. SCDD's Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee captures how these funds have been used creatively to meet local needs on training and education, independent facilitators, and person centered planning. Examples of projects include "Direct Coaching for SDP Participants," "Supporting Bilingual Independent Facilitators," and "People Planning Together – Person Centered Planning Training,"

<https://scdd.ca.gov/sdp-best-practices-platform/>

Suggestion: It is unclear how much of the total federal financial participation funds the Department needs for administration. If the Governor's proposal is supported, the Department's administrative implementation could include a statewide grant to support creative solutions for local SDP needs. Under this concept, the Department would conduct a grant program that encourages ideas from regional centers in consultation with their local volunteer advisory committees for solutions consistent with current WIC Section 4685.8(f)(2)(A-D).

Related, the trailer bill language strikes statute that authorizes federal financial participation funds to support the Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee. The Department has reassured SCDD that funds for this committee will continue as this committee is viewed as part of administrative costs of implementing SDP, per proposed WIC Section 4685.8(f)(1).

Thank you for your consideration of the comments and suggestions above. Please contact Aaron Carruthers at aaron.carruthers@scdd.ca.gov or Chris Arroyo at christofer.arroyo@scdd.ca.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,



Aaron Carruthers
Executive Director
State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Cc:

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