



NOTICE/AGENDA

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES STATEWIDE SELF-DETERMINATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE 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

PHYSICAL LOCATION:

SCDD Los Angeles Regional Office
411 N. Central Avenue, Ste. 620
Glendale, CA 91203

JOIN BY TELECONFERENCE:

Call-In Number: (669) 444-9171
or (669) 900-9128
Meeting ID: **860 3079 0894**

JOIN VIA ZOOM:

Meeting ID:

[August 2026 SSDAC Meeting](#)

860 3079 0894

Password:

999848

DATE: August 10, 2026

TIME: 10:30 AM – 4:00 PM

COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS:

Nestor Nieves & Rick Wood

Item 1. CALL TO ORDER

Item 2. ESTABLISH QUORUM

Item 3. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Item 4. APPROVAL OF MAY 2026 MINUTES 

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Item 5. CO-CHAIR REPORT TO SSDAC

Page 11

Presented by Rick Wood & Nestor Nieves

- A. 2026-27 SSDAC Priorities Update
- B. Ongoing Projects
- C. Workgroup Update
- D. Hot Topics: LVAC Funding

Item 6. DDS UPDATES

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Invited: Yang Lee, Marlene Morales, Ombuds Office

- A. Self-Determination Program Budget Update
- B. Cost-Effective Language Update (Section 4248)
- C. Program Updates
- D. Office of the Ombudsperson's Updates

Item 7. SCDD UPDATES

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Presented by Aaron Carruthers

Item 8. CO-CHAIR ELECTIONS

Page 24

Presented by Rick Wood & Nestor Nieves

Item 9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

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 2 minutes to comment.

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

Item 10. NEXT MEETING & ADJOURNMENT*December 3, 2026 (Please Note: This may be a Townhall Meeting)*

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 (916) 263-7919. Requests must be received by 5 business days prior to the meeting. *All times indicated and the order of business are approximate and subject to change.*

August 10, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 4.

ACTION ITEM

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES – SSDAC

Approval of May 2026 Minutes

The draft minutes from the May 5, 2026, Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee meeting have been included in the packet for review. Committee members will vote on whether to approve the minutes.

Action Recommended

Approve the May 2026 meeting minutes.

Attachment

May 2026, Meeting Minutes



DRAFT

**Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2026**

Attending Members

Aminah Abdul-Hakim (IRC)
Beth Martinko (RCOC)
Carola Maranon (ELARC)
Charles Nutt (FNRC)
Chris Miller (RCRC)
Deaka McClain (HRC)
Ellisa Reiff (NBRC)
Emma Villa (CVRC)
Francine Soto (SGPRC)
Gricelda Estrada (VMRC)
Jennifer Walsh (GGRC)
Joyce Clark (SDRC)
Kavita Sreedhar (SARC)
Kristianna Moralls (FDLRC)
Lisa Cooley (ACRC)
Lori Walker (NLACRC)
Nestor Nieves (Co-Chair)
Rick Wood (KRC)
Vanessa Garcia (WRC)
Vi Ibarra (RCEB)

Absent Members

Ellen Hunt (TCRC)
Sherry Johnson Alvarez (SLARC)

Others Attending

Aaron Carruthers
Albert Feliciano
Alejandra Paramo
Alejandra Rivera
Alex Ostell
Anjanette Robinson
Anna Keller

Others Attending

Ara Lopez
Austin Murphy
Brian Hoang
Carla Lehmann
Charles Nguyen
Chris Arroyo
Christine Tolbert
Christopher Jaime
Cindy Cox
Cynthia Salomon-Ponce
David Delgado
Dena Hernandez
Diana Martinez-Longoria
Eden Rosales
Elian Morim
Elisa Luna
Faby Ramos
Faviola Valencia
Fernando Gomez
Georgina Kier
Griselda Silva
Irene Litherland
Jan Opsvig
Jeannet Cardenas
Jennifer Lucas
Jennifer Rivera
Jinsook Baek
Joe Macias
Jon Francis
Josefina Romo
Judy Mark
Julie LaRose
Katie Hornberger
Kayley Proenza

Others Attending

Kelly Levig
Kelly Orosco
Kim Sandoval
Kyle Anderson
Laci Frisby
Laneishae Myles
Leslie Diaz
Leticia Mendoza
Lisa Walker
Marcela Sanchez
Marlene Morales
Miriam Erberich
Mozh Akbari
Nick Lutton
Renee Bauer
Rhiannon Morsch
Rihana Ahmad
Robert Beckham
Robin Maitino-Erben
Rosie Lasca
Rubi Saldana
Sam Wijesiriwardane
Sara Castillo
Scarlett vonThenen
Shanna Holzer
Sheila Keys
Shelia Jordan Jones
Taryn Davis-Greenberg
Tina Ewing-Wilson
Yami Coca
"Yasmin"
Yang Lee
Yolanda Cruz

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Co-Chair Rick Wood (FA) called the meeting to order at 10:32 A.M.

2. **ESTABLISH QUORUM**

A quorum was established.

3. **WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS**

Members and others in attendance introduced themselves.

4. **APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 2026 MEETING MINUTES**

The February 17, 2026, minutes were approved by acclamation.

5. **CO-CHAIR REPORT TO SSDAC**

Co-Chairs Rick Wood and Nestor Nieves provided members with a report on activities since the February meeting. The Town Hall Report, which compiles public comment on the Self-Determination Program (SDP) Waiver renewal application, has been completed and is included in the meeting packet. The report was sent, with a letter, to Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Director Pete Cervinka.

The Co-Chairs reported on the proposed elimination of the implementation funds used by Local Volunteer Advisory Committees (LVACs). Following the Committee's review, the Co-Chairs and Workgroup approved a letter to DDS that conveyed the SSDAC's recommendations and requested that the funding be continued in the budget currently before the Legislature. Members were encouraged to continue writing to the Legislature to advocate for continued funding.

Members discussed the impact of a potential loss of implementation funds on local outreach, training, and support activities, and shared local practices for demonstrating impact, including a monthly feedback process used by one LVAC to collect one success and one hurdle from its members. Members also discussed the value of peer-led presentations and the neutral role LVACs play in supporting participants and families.

The full Co-Chair Report presentation can be found at the following link:
[Co-Chair Report](#).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

“Yasmin” expressed support for rotating members of the public into the DDS SDP Roundtable, stated that she would like to participate, and noted that she has gaps in SDP implementation and the administrative process to bring forward.

6. IMPLEMENTATION FUND HIGHLIGHT: INDEPENDENT FACILITATOR (IF) TRAINING

Chris Miller, Chair of the Redwood Coast Regional Center LVAC, presented on his committee's use of implementation funds to train independent facilitators in a rural area where facilitators and resources are limited. He introduced independent facilitators Rosie Lasca of the Independent Facilitator Training Academy, and Rhiannon Morsch of Life Leap's IF Mentorship Program. They described their work and the value of accessible, online independent facilitator training for participants, families, and prospective facilitators.

Members discussed the importance of independent facilitator training, the continuing need for more facilitators, including facilitators who speak languages other than English, and how LVACs share training opportunities and promising practices across regional centers.

Members were also informed that SCDD requested that each LVAC Chair provide the name and contact information for the independent facilitator training used with implementation funds. SCDD will compile and post this information on the Best and Promising Practices platform.

The full presentation can be found at the following link:
[Independent Facilitator Training Spotlight Presentation](#)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Diana Martinez-Longoria, a parent of a Self-Determination Program client and a student of the independent facilitator training, commented that the courses had been beneficial and that families continue to have difficulty navigating the SDP process.

Leticia Mendoza commented in Spanish, with interpretation, in support of the independent facilitator training funded through implementation funds. She stated that the training helped her understand the program and support her family, and that more facilitators who speak Spanish are needed in her community. She also commented that it would be helpful to open independent facilitator trainings to parents who have already completed the SDP orientation.

Ara Lopez commented that having more training options available is valuable because every family learns differently.

Jinsook Baek of Being Built Together commented in support of expanding independent facilitator training and language access, noting a shortage of bilingual facilitators with cultural competency and long waitlists for those who are available.

Jennifer Rivera, a parent of a regional center client transitioning to the Self-Determination Program, thanked the Committee for the trainings and described the independent facilitator training as life changing.

Yami Coca commented that she was grateful to have taken the Independent Facilitator Training Academy course through Kern Regional Center implementation funding, and that she now serves regional centers in English and Spanish.

7. DDS UPDATES

Eden Rosales, Developmental Services Ombudsperson, provided a brief overview of the Office of the Ombudsperson, which opened on October 1, 2025, under Senate Bill (SB) 471. The office consolidated the former self-determination and traditional services ombudsperson offices into a single office serving all individuals eligible for services. The presentation reviewed the

office's staffing, role, data from the October 2025 through March 2026 reporting period, and how to contact the office.

Katie Hornberger, the DDS Ombudsperson, reported that proposed trailer bill language would replace the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 4731 complaint process with a single, unified grievance process that corresponds with federal access requirements. Implementation is pending legislative approval.

Marlene Morales, Branch Chief for the Self-Determination Program, provided general program updates, including SDP enrollment and the Department's upcoming areas of focus: Financial Management Service (FMS) standardization, an updated cost-effective definition, and spending plan standardization. She also reviewed the 2025-26 SSDAC Recommendations Tracking document with the Committee and requested feedback on what is working and not working at the local level.

Yang Lee, Chief of the Division of Community Assistance and Empowerment, responded to member concerns about the proposed reallocation of implementation funds, clarifying that direct services included in participants' Individual Program Plans (IPPs) and spending plans would not be impacted, and that growth in the program requires additional administrative staff at the Department to complete work such as background checks in a timely manner. He noted that the proposal is not final and remains subject to legislative action.

Members expressed concern regarding the proposed elimination of implementation funds and the effect on coaching, mentorship, resource fairs, and outreach to underserved and bilingual communities, and asked for transparency about how the loss of these activities would be mitigated.

Members also discussed transition and processing timelines, denials of services, staff training for participants who use communication devices, outreach to participants in day programs and those who are conserved, the status of an independent facilitator certification program, and local work to develop best practices for FMS models.

The Office of the Ombudsperson presentation can be found at the following link: [Office of the Ombudsperson Presentation](#).

The full DDS presentation can be found at the following link: [DDS Presentation](#).

The DDS SSDAC Recommendation Tracking document can be found at the following link: [DDS Tracking Sheet](#).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ara Lopez commented that families are sending repeated emails to Self-Determination Program staff without receiving timely responses, and asked what actions and timelines would be put in place to ensure timely communication.

8. STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (SCDD) UPDATES

Executive Director Aaron Carruthers reported that more than 14,400 people have attended the SDP orientation since 2022. He reviewed the orientation redesign, which took effect April 1, 2026, dividing the curriculum into Part A and Part B, and establishing SCDD as the only statewide provider of the orientation.

Mr. Carruthers also provided legislative updates. These included Senate Bill 1052 regarding authorized representatives and a Council-sponsored bill requiring plain language on state forms. He noted that the Council's letter to the Legislature opposes the elimination of implementation funds.

Mr. Carruthers then provided an update on federal Medicaid changes under H.R. 1 and their anticipated impact on the State budget, including the Governor's May Revise expected on May 14th. He reported on a series of town halls the Council held on the federal Medicaid changes, including a session on May 6th from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. that members and the public were invited to attend.

The full SCDD Update presentation can be found at the following link: [SCDD Updates](#).

9. CO-CHAIR ELECTION PROCEDURE

Co-Chair Rick Wood reviewed the procedure for the election of a Co-Chair, which will be held at the August 10th meeting. Mr. Wood is completing his

service as Co-Chair. Only the elected Co-Chair seat is open; the seat appointed by the State Council is not up for election.

Mr. Wood stated that candidate statements are due July 28th and should be emailed to staff for inclusion in the advance packet. He explained that each candidate will have seven minutes to present, followed by a public vote of the members present. A simple majority is required for election. He invited members with questions about the role to contact the Co-Chairs before the deadline.

The full Co-Chair Election Procedure can be found at the following link: [Voting Procedure](#).

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Carla Lehmann's comment was read on her behalf. She expressed concern that some regional centers are imposing rules that make the SDP resemble the traditional service system, including questioning provider rates, limiting services, issuing more denials, delaying transitions and renewals, and that disparities between regional centers are growing. She asked DDS and SCDD for clarification and stronger guidance so that participants have consistent rights and access regardless of where they live.

Ara Lopez commented that delays directly affect children's services and development, that families should not have to send repeated emails to obtain basic support, and asked whether DDS could establish clear response timelines and an official escalation process for families who do not receive a response.

Patricia asked who families should contact, stating that regional centers continue to interpret requirements as they choose.

Members expressed the need to standardize program mechanics without limiting the budget and employer authority granted through the Waiver, improve regional center responsiveness and timelines, and support regional center staff in understanding and embracing the program.

11. NEXT MEETING & ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held via Zoom on August 10, 2026. The meeting was adjourned at 3:29 P.M.

August 10, 2026

**AGENDA ITEM 5.
INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES – SSDAC

Co-Chair Report to SSDAC

Co-Chairs Rick Wood and Nestor Nieves will provide an update on SSDAC and SDP-related activities that have taken place since the May 2026 meeting.

Attachments

Co-Chair Report PowerPoint Presentation

Handouts

There may be handouts on the day of the meeting.

Agenda Item 5.

Co-Chair Report to SSDAC

Presented by Rick Wood and Nestor Nieves

2026-27 SSDAC Priorities

On September 9, 2025, the Committee discussed priorities for 2026–27 and provided input on the areas they believe should be the Committee's primary focus. The feedback identified four key priority areas:

- Increase accessibility and participation in Local Volunteer Advisory Committee (LVAC) meetings.
- Create opportunities to work directly with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) outside of regular SSDAC meetings.
- Continue identifying and sharing best and promising practices to reduce disparities in the Self-Determination Program (SDP).
- Strengthen collaboration and information sharing among LVACs.

2026-27 SSDAC Priorities: Where We Are

Increase accessibility and community participation in LVAC meetings.

In progress. SCDD staff is creating a “best practice guide for inclusive meetings” and will include it as part of the SSDAC New Member Orientation Resource Guide once reviewed and adopted by the workgroup. **Target completion date – Spring 2027.**

Create/Identify ways to work directly with DDS outside of SSDAC meetings.

Ongoing. Co-Chairs have begun meeting with DDS and SCDD leadership in between meetings as hot topics arise to receive guidance to share with the Committee in a timely manner. Co-Chair Rick Wood has also worked with DDS to establish a SDP Roundtable made up of at least one SSDAC member and other stakeholders to meet quarterly to discuss emerging issues and hot topics. Committee members should email SSDAC Co-Chairs with issues they wish to have discussed at these quarterly meetings.

2026-27 SSDAC Priorities: Where We Are

(continued)

Identify best/promising practices in reducing disparities.

Completed. Committee members Lori Walker and Vi Ibarra led the SSDAC Service Equity Project to identify best and promising practices by reviewing previously funded Service Equity grant proposals and progress reports. The review found that the available materials provided little insight into effective strategies for reducing disparities or increasing enrollment among underserved communities.

Support collaboration between LVACs.

On hold. SCDD staff continue to work on finding technology that allow SSDAC members to communicate in order to provide support and share ideas in a way that does not violate the open meeting act (Bagley Keene). This project has been put on hold until the Statewide Self-Determination Analyst returns from leave. **Target completion date – Fall 2027.**

Ongoing Projects:

Best Practices Platform

- **2022:** SSDAC identified a need to share best and promising practices statewide.
- **SCDD developed** the SSDAC Best Practices Platform to support LVACs, SDP participants, families, professionals, and other stakeholders. <https://scdd.ca.gov/sdp-best-practices-platform/>
- The platform continues to grow with resources contributed by partners across California.
- **Recent addition:** SSDAC delegate Beth Martinko partnered with SCDD to share resources developed through her nonprofit.
- **Keep the resources coming!** The platform's value depends on community contributions and information sharing.

Workgroup Activities

The SSDAC Workgroup has met twice since the May SSDAC meeting and focused on the following tasks:

- ❖ Establishing the today's agenda.
- ❖ Reviewing the progress of the Committee's adopted priorities.
- ❖ Discussing the need for a Co-Chair succession plan.
- ❖ Identifying ways to do a better job in telling our story to DDS and the community on what this committee has been doing.

Local Volunteer Advisory Committee Funds

- ❖ On July 22nd, the Co-Chairs met with DDS to seek clarification on the recent directive sent to regional centers:
- ❖ <https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/regional-center-directives/>
- ❖ The directive covered several key budget items including how local volunteer advisory committee funds can be spent and whether previous year funds we still available.

LVAC Implementation Funding: Where the Funds Stand

Below is a summary of the three fiscal year appropriations discussed and the status of each funding allocation.

- **Fiscal Years 2024-25 and 2025-26:** volunteer advisory committees retain full access to funds.
- **Fiscal Year 2024-25** funds are usable until **March 2027**
- **Fiscal Year 2025-26** funds usable until **March 2028**
- **Unused Fiscal Year 2023-24** funds are being re-appropriated and used to meet the needs of participants, increase service access and equity, and reduce disparities.

Local Funding Opportunities: What Comes Next

- ❖ During today's meeting, DDS will be asking members provide input on possible uses for future funding. More details will be provided from DDS directly during their presentation.

Questions



August 10, 2026

**AGENDA ITEM 6.
INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES – SSDAC

Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Update

Yang Lee and Marlene Morales with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will provide an update on SDP-related activities, including relevant updates on the budget, guidance on recent directives, program data and more. As part of their update, DDS will ask members to provide input on potential statewide trainings.

The Office of the Ombudsperson will also be present to give an update on trends.

Attachments

None.

Handouts

There will be handouts on the day of the meeting.

August 10, 2026

**AGENDA ITEM 7.
INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES – SSDAC

State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) Update

Executive Director Aaron Carruthers will provide members with an update on SDP-related activities the Council is engaging in.

Attachments

None.

Handouts

There will be handouts on the day of the meeting.

August 10, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 8.

ACTION ITEM

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES – SSDAC

Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SSDAC) Co-Chair Elections

Members will elect a Co-Chair to serve in partnership with the SCDD-appointed Co-Chair.

Responsibilities

- In partnership with the SCDD-appointed Co-Chair, helps keep the SSDAC focused on the shared goals and responsibilities identified by the full committee.
- In partnership with the SCDD-appointed Co-Chair, coordinates workgroup and meeting agendas with input from members.
- In partnership with the SCDD-appointed Co-Chair, facilitates SSDAC meetings and attends workgroup meetings.
- In partnership with the SCDD-appointed Co-Chair, ensures all members have a chance to participate in meetings.
- In partnership with the SCDD-appointed Co-Chair, keeps discussions focused on the topics listed on the agenda.
- Works with State Council staff, the SCDD-appointed Co-Chair, and SSDAC members to build agreement and support good decision-making.
- In partnership with the SCDD-appointed Co-Chair, partners with staff to prepare for meetings and follow up on action items.
- Encourages members to participate, share ideas, and work together.
- Brings new ideas or proposed changes to the full committee for discussion before moving forward on the committee's behalf.

Eligibility

Any local volunteer advisory committee chair is eligible to nominate themselves or another local chair to serve as the SSDAC-appointed Co-Chair of the SSDAC. To be nominated, candidates must be present to be considered. Local volunteer advisory committee chair delegate-representatives to the SSDAC are not eligible.

Process

The Co-Chair is elected by SSDAC Members through a public vote by a simple majority. The SCDD Executive Director will conduct the election. If no nominee is elected by a simple majority, there will be a run-off election between the two nominees who received the highest number of votes.

Each candidate will be provided with 4 minutes to present their Candidate Statement Form. Time accommodations may be given to any candidate who needs it.

Following candidate statements, members will be allotted up to 2 minutes to ask questions.

Effective Date

The Co-Chair elect will begin their 2-year term on September 1, 2026.

Attachments

Candidate Statement Forms

Handouts

There may be handouts on the day of the meeting.



2026 SSDAC Co-Chair Candidate Statement Form

The following Candidate Statement Form is being provided to those who may be interested in nominating themselves as Co-Chair of the Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SSDAC). Candidate statements are due by July 28, 2026 in order to be distributed and posted before the August 10th meeting. Statements may be emailed to robin.maitino@scdd.ca.gov.

The Co-Chair will serve in partnership with the SCDD appointed Chair as a co-equal. Together, the Chair and Co-Chair will run SSDAC meetings, set meeting agendas and work closely together. Chairs will work with staff on SSDAC needs.

The SSDAC Co-Chair must be a member of SSDAC remain a member of SSDAC to continue to serve as Co-Chair.

The Co-Chair is elected by SSDAC Members through a public vote. SSDAC Co-Chair candidates can self-nominate and candidates will provide a statement answering the questions located on the following page.

A SSDAC member may serve as Co-Chair for 2 years. That person may serve one additional 2-year term. No person may serve more than two consecutive terms as the SSDAC Co-Chair.



2026 SSDAC Co-Chair Candidate Statement

Candidate Name: Chris Miller

Why do you want to serve as Co-Chair?

I want to serve as co –chair because I believe in the self Determination program and what it means for those who receive services from regional centers and their families. As a participant of the SDP its continued growth and lasting success is important to me, as it is to all of us who show up and invest our time, energy, and perspectives to help make the program better and more impactful. I hope to be chair so that I can continue to support the committee and use what skills I have to make SDP better for more people.

What are your experiences in leadership and/or the Self-Determination Program and meeting facilitation skills?

I was the Client Advocate for Redwood Coast Regional Center for 15 years much of that time I was involved with Self Determination I have led trainings and advocacy efforts not just locally but across the state and Participate in a couple of groups to provide feed back to the department of developmental services. I have my degree in social work, and I am currently the Director of Respite Services and Employment services for a regional center vendored agency. I think not only being a person who receives services in the SDP and being in a leadership role in an agency gives me perspective and experience

What is your time availability to serve as Co-Chair?



2026 SSDAC Co-Chair Candidate Statement

I have time. I already co chair my local SDP advisory Committee and attend the State wide SDP Advisory committee but also sir on the SSDAC working group.so I am already doing much of the work. I have the support of my agencies executive director to be able to take this on as I already do much of it.



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The SSDAC Co-Chair must be a member of SSDAC remain a member of SSDAC to continue to serve as Co-Chair.

The Co-Chair is elected by SSDAC Members through a public vote. SSDAC Co-Chair candidates can self-nominate and candidates will provide a statement answering the questions located on the following page.

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2026 SSDAC Co-Chair Candidate Statement

Candidate Name:

Kristianna Moralls

Why do you want to serve as Co-Chair?

I would love the opportunity to serve as Co-Chair because I believe the Self-Determination Program is at an exciting point in its growth, and I want to help shape what comes next. Self-Determination is one of the few places in our service system where the law guarantees participants, families, and self-advocates a seat at the table. That is something worth protecting and continuing to strengthen.

I also see a wonderful opportunity to partner with Co-Chair Nestor, whose leadership and commitment to improving accessibility and strengthening Local Volunteer Advisory Committees I deeply respect. His work reflects many of the values that have guided me, and I believe we could work well together to continue building on the strong foundation SSDAC has already established.

I have a clear vision for how SSDAC can continue to grow while building on the strong foundation that already exists. That vision is centered on three key pillars that I look forward to sharing during the August meeting presentation. Together, they focus on strengthening collaboration, improving communication, and creating a clearer path for community feedback to inform statewide action. My goal is to build on what is already working and strengthen it so that Local Volunteer Advisory Committees, families, self-advocates, Regional Centers, SCDD, FMSs, and the Department work together to improve outcomes for everyone.

I bring lived experience that shapes my leadership. As someone who is both Japanese and Mexican, I understand firsthand the importance of culturally responsive outreach and authentic representation. I do not have to imagine what it means to navigate these communities because I am part of them. That perspective influences how I listen, build relationships, and approach this work every day.

I believe leadership is about bringing people together, listening first, and creating opportunities for others to be heard. I would be honored to help lead SSDAC into its next chapter alongside the many dedicated advocates, families, self-advocates, and partners who make this work possible.



2026 SSDAC Co-Chair Candidate Statement

What are your experiences in leadership and/or the Self-Determination Program and meeting facilitation skills?

I have more than 20 years of experience in special education, disability advocacy, and Regional Center services. I am the mother of an autistic adult son who has been a Regional Center client since age four and has participated in the Self-Determination Program for the past five years. My experience gives me both a professional and personal understanding of the system.

I currently serve as Co-Chair of the Lanterman Regional Center Local Volunteer Advisory Committee, where I facilitate monthly meetings, build consensus among diverse stakeholders, and help ensure community feedback informs meaningful discussion and recommendations. I also serve as an Independent Facilitator and as a co-trainer for the State Council on Developmental Disabilities' statewide Self-Determination Program Orientation. Beyond that role, over the past six years, I have trained more than 14,000 participants throughout California on the Self-Determination Program, person-centered planning, and advocacy through conferences, workshops, resource fairs, and community trainings.

I hold certifications in Independent Facilitation, Person-Centered Thinking, and Special Education Advocacy, as well as mediation training from Loyola Law School. I earned a Bachelor of Science in Social Science, a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership through change, and I am currently completing my doctorate.

Throughout my career, I have focused on bringing people together, strengthening collaboration, and building systems that turn community input into meaningful action. I believe those experiences have prepared me to serve as Co-Chair of SSDAC.



2026 SSDAC Co-Chair Candidate Statement

What is your time availability to serve as Co-Chair?

Serving as Co-Chair would be a priority for me. I understand the responsibility and trust this role entails, and I am fully committed to dedicating the time necessary for thoughtful preparation, collaboration with the Co-Chair, facilitation of meetings, and consistent follow-through between meetings.

My professional work is already focused on advancing the Self-Determination Program throughout California, so this role is a natural extension of my day-to-day work. I am committed to being accessible, responsive, and fully engaged in supporting SSDAC and the Local Volunteer Advisory Committees across the state.

August 10, 2026

**AGENDA ITEM 9.
INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES – SSDAC

Public Comments

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.