



State Council on Developmental Disabilities



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Gavin Newsom, Governor

• website • www.scdd.ca.gov

• email • council@scdd.ca.gov

3831 North Freeway Blvd., Suite 125
Sacramento, CA 95834
(916) 263-7919
(916) 263-7963 fax

April 8, 2026

Mr. Pete Cervinka, Director
Department of Developmental Services
P.O. Box 944202
Sacramento, CA 94244-2020

RE WIC 4685.8 TRAILER BILL LANGUAGE RE: SELF-DETERMINATION
IMPLEMENTATION FUNDING

Dear Director Cervinka:

The Statewide Self Determination Advisory Committee (SSDAC) would like to thank the Department of Developmental Services (DDS/Department) for its attendance at the February 17, 2026, SSDAC meeting and for its ongoing collaboration and continuous effort to improve the implementation of the Self-Determination Program. The Committee appreciates the Department's efforts to stay informed about community concerns regarding WIC 4685.8 Trailer Bill Language and is writing to recommend that the Department continue to provide SDP implementation funds to regional centers so that they may ensure that the distinct outreach, educational, and resource development needs of our communities are addressed.

The SSDAC would like to express its concern that the loss of funding for regional level projects would negatively impact the implementation of the program and further limit the participation of those in underserved communities. The funding that is annually allocated for LVAC distribution represents a modest portion of the DDS budget, yet it has enabled meaningful outreach and support for communities that are historically underrepresented in SDP. The SSDAC is concerned that redirecting those funds to internal operations would reduce the community infrastructure that makes equitable access achievable.

The SSDAC urges the Department to consider that each regional center's service area is comprised of unique client demographics with unique outreach and educational needs, and that the implementation and expansion of the Self-Determination Program requires the development of a variety of resources and services that will be specific to each region. Implementation funding and the programs it supports are intended to meet these very

"The Council advocates, promotes & implements policies and practices that achieve self-determination, independence, productivity & inclusion in all aspects of community life for Californians with developmental disabilities and their families."

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specific and ongoing needs, as they are identified by the regional center staff and Local Volunteer Advisory Committees (LVACs) that serve and understand the needs of these communities. The attached report highlights some of the successful projects that the regional centers have initiated over recent years. The Committee wishes to emphasize that many regional centers have not only initiated successful outreach direct coaching services, but they have increased the number of certified, educated Independent Facilitation providers that are available to serve their communities.

Should the Department find that it is not possible to continue the distribution of implementation funds as it has done historically, the SSDAC respectfully recommends an alternative approach: that the Department establish and administer a grant program to allow implementation-related projects to continue at a local level. The SSDAC believes that using the Department's Service Access and Equity Grants as a model and collaborating with regional centers and LVACs to evaluate grant applications would be an effective way to ensure that proposed projects respond to identified community needs and would encourage collaboration between grantees and the communities that they serve. The SSDAC recognizes that this approach would allow the Department more flexibility in addressing the administrative costs of continuing to support the Self-Determination Program. This approach would also allow the Department to strengthen fiscal accountability for the appropriated funds, as well as provide an opportunity to generate meaningful program evaluation data that would demonstrate measurable outcomes.

The SSDAC sincerely believes that the continuation of some form of funding for local projects is necessary to the successful implementation of the Self-Determination Program and is committed to its role in advising and collaborating with the Department to identify solutions. The Committee would like to invite DDS to its next meeting on May 5, 2026 to provide an update on this issue and discuss next steps. Should you have any questions about these recommendations, please feel free to contact us at your convenience.

Kindest Regards,



Rick Wood, Co-Chair
Statewide Self-Determination
Advisory Committee (SSDAC)



Nestor Nieves, Co-Chair
Statewide Self-Determination
Advisory Committee (SSDAC)

cc: Aaron Carruthers, Executive Director, State Council on Developmental Disabilities
Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee Members
Marlene Morales, Department of Developmental Disabilities

Enclosure: The Impact of Implementation Funds: Successful Regional Center Projects

The Impact of Implementation Funds: Successful Regional Center Projects

Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC)

CVRC has used implementation funds to expand the pool of available Independent Facilitators, providing sponsorships, recruitment, training and mentorship to aspiring Independent Facilitators, with a focus on bilingual and culturally competent professionals that reflect the diversity of the community they serve.

CVRC has also used funds to provide direct support for individuals without Independent Facilitators and to host community meetings where participants and families can ask questions and collaborate with the regional center to resolve challenges.

Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC)

FNRC used implementation funds to contract with a local filmmaker to produce a short documentary featuring 3 families enrolled in the Self-Determination Program. FNRC launched this outreach film in October 2023, holding premier events throughout the region. These events included presentations and Q&A sessions and were followed by SDP workshops to go over the “nuts and bolts” of the program. In the year following the launch of this project FNRC saw SDP participation increase 92% from 122 participants to 235 participants.

Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center (FDLRC)

The FDLRC LVAC used implementation funds to sponsor the certification of 86 Independent Facilitators, providing training in English, Spanish, Korean and Armenian, increasing the provider pool for the region and ensuring greater access to support for underserved communities. Training attendees provided positive feedback through survey results and requested additional mentoring, which the LVAC also sponsored by providing a year of ongoing support through independent facilitator platform membership.

Golden Gate Regional Center (GGRC)

Recognizing a need for collaboration across the regional centers that serve the bay area, GGRC used implementation funding to launch the SDP Community Building & Onboarding Program and create a collaborative Self-Determination Program resource website with San Andreas Regional Center and Regional Center of the East Bay. This allows for the sharing of event information across communities, as well as the sharing of regionally specific resources, reducing duplication of efforts and creating a central hub for SDP participants in the bay area.

GGRC has also developed a community of support, using implementation funds to initiate the GGRC SDP Onboarding program, providing individual coaching sessions, group coaching sessions, webinars and bilingual monthly support groups. GGRC has seen participation in the program increase from 4.7% to 7.8% over the course of this program. During this same period, the rate of individual budget approval more than doubled, alongside the rate of utilization of the person-centered plan approach. Surveys of participants in the Onboarding Program indicated that 90% of respondents agreed that the program improved their knowledge of the Self-Determination Program.

Harbor Regional Center (HRC)

HRC used implementation funds to provide training for Independent Facilitators, with a focus on providing support for bilingual providers, increasing the availability of Spanish-speaking Independent Facilitators in the region. This project has been expanded to focus on developing the IF workforce to ensure the availability of providers who can meet the needs of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

Inland Regional Center (IRC)

IRC has the second highest levels of enrollment in the Self-Determination Program, which has been supported by the use of implementation funds to provide support groups for families/participants along with a variety of SDP conferences and resource fairs.

The use of implementation funds to provide Independent Facilitator training has expanded the pool of available providers.

IRC is currently in the process of implementing training on the co and sole employer models in response to the Department's guidance on best uses of implementation funds.

Kern Regional Center (KRC)

KRC has seen a boost in enrollment after using implementation funds to provide direct coaching services to underserved populations. In the 6-month period following the creation of these services, 70 new participants enrolled in the Self-Determination Program.

North Los Angeles County Regional Center (NLACRC)

NLACRC has provided direct SDP coaching services to over 240 English and Spanish-speaking participants/families through the use of implementation funds. These funds have also allowed the RC to create and facilitate a support group for these clients, which averaged approximately 80 attendees at each of its monthly meetings. Several regional centers have created support groups using NLACRC's as a model.

NLACRC has used implementation funds to train and provide ongoing mentoring support for Independent Facilitators, resulting in the certification of 250 new providers. This funding also produced an Independent Facilitator Guidebook, a resource that has been shared with other regional centers to support the development of their own regional resources.

Additionally, implementation funds have supported the LVAC in conducting training for 169 CSCs, ensuring that RC staff has adequate knowledge to guide RC client in choosing the service delivery system that best suits their needs. Due to positive feedback from attendees, the RC has expressed a desire to continue these LVAC-run trainings.

Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB)

RCEB has used Implementation Funds to conduct targeted outreach to those in the local Black and Spanish-speaking communities in response to evidence that those communities are underrepresented in the Self-Determination Program.

RCEB has also used these funds to provide training to 30 Independent Facilitators, expanding the pool of providers in the community.

Regional Center of Orange County (RCOC)

RCOC has seen a notable increase in the enrollment of Latino participants in the Self-Determination Program over recent years, which it attributes to the intentional bilingual outreach and resource fairs that have been provided with implementation funds.

The RCOC LVAC has developed Requests for Proposals for a Parent Support Group, Person-Centered-Planning training, Labor Law training, and advanced training for Independent Facilitators – initiatives that were developed in direct response to identified community needs.

San Gabriel Pomona Regional Center (SGPRC)

SGPRC used implementation funds to host an annual Self-Determination Program Conference and to run “The Waiting Room,” a monthly parent support group focused on helping families navigate the program. Attendees of the SDP Conference and Coaching Series reported increased understanding of SDP options, budgeting, and service flexibility. Families expressed feeling more confident and prepared to pursue enrollment after participating in trainings and connecting with peers and providers. Participants said that they valued hearing real-life experiences, which helped build trust and clarify the program. Regional Center staff and LVAC members observed increased community interest, stronger event participation, and improved engagement from underserved and bilingual communities. Many families reported accessing services and supports they were previously unaware of.

Westside Regional Center (WRC)

WRC saw an increase in enrollment after using implementation funds to provide a Self-Determination Program Resource Fair. The regional center noted that enrollment in the program increased by over 140 participants (representing a 25% increase in overall participants) in the 6 months following the event. WRC received positive feedback from the community and stakeholders and is following up by hosting a virtual Resource Fair for their Spanish-speaking community members.

Regional Center	Implementation Fund Projects
<u>Alta California Regional Center</u>	SDP Educational Videos (animated)
<u>Central Valley Regional Center</u>	Provided coaching and individualized support Provided SDP training books Provided short-term individualized advocacy for individuals without an Independent Facilitator Recruited, trained, and mentored Independent Facilitators Provided scholarships to expand the Independent Facilitator workforce Delivered Service Coordinator SDP trainings Hosted community SDP meetings Conducted culturally and linguistically responsive outreach in underserved and rural communities Provided Person Centered Thinking training. Created SDP informational videos Participated at the Fresno Bridging Horizons HCBS conferences.
<u>Far Northern Regional Center</u>	Hired Project Coordinator SDP movie showings and workshops (English & Spanish) IF grant opportunities
<u>Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center</u>	Independent Facilitator training (English, Spanish, Korean and Armenian) Participant transition coaching Resource fair SDP data analysis
<u>Golden Gate Regional Center</u>	Individual and group coaching sessions Bilingual monthly support groups Bay Area SDP Website Data Coordination Support Webinars and resource fairs
<u>Harbor Regional Center</u>	Independent Facilitator training (bilingual focus) Participant/Family Mentorship
<u>Inland Regional Center</u>	Bilingual SDP conferences Training on FMS co/sole employer models
<u>Kern Regional Center</u>	Coaching for underserved populations
<u>North Bay Regional Center</u>	Independent Facilitator training/workshops SDP participant coaching Monthly support groups Annual resource fair

Regional Center	Implementation Fund Projects
<u>North Los Angeles County Regional Center</u>	Participant Coaching Provider coaching IF Training IF Mentoring Participant Support Group Small Group Trainings
<u>Redwood Coast Regional Center</u>	Independent Facilitator Training (focused on supporting rural areas)
<u>Regional Center of the East Bay</u>	Outreach events (Black Community, Spanish-speaking community) Resource creation (bilingual) SDP webinars (English and Spanish), Independent Facilitator Training IF and PCP recruitment and training IF Roundtable
<u>Regional Center of Orange County</u>	Family/Participant Coaching Resource Fairs Trainings
<u>San Andreas Regional Center</u>	SDP Ambassador Program Technical assistance roundtables with underserved communities
<u>San Diego Regional Center</u>	Resource Development (accessible, Plain Language, multiple modalities) Training/mentoring/skill building for Self-Advocates Annual conferences/resource fairs Technical Assistance for clients/families Power Hour Sessions
<u>San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center</u>	SDP Conference SDP Coaching Series
<u>South Central Los Angeles Regional Center</u>	Bilingual SDP training One-to-one coaching SDP "bootcamps"
<u>Valley Mountain Regional Center</u>	SDP Resource Fair
<u>Westside Regional Center</u>	SDP Resource Fair