NOTICE/AGENDA

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
COUNCIL 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.

MEETING DETAILS:

TELECONFERENCE LOCATION:
SCDD LA REGIONAL OFFICE
411 N. Central Avenue, Suite 620
Glendale, CA 91203

JOIN BY TELECONFERENCE:
CALL IN NUMBER: (888)-475-4499 or (877) 853-5257
MEETING ID: 850 3709 8173

JOIN BY ZOOM:
https://bit.ly/SCDDNovCouncil2026
MEETING ID: 850 3709 8173
PASSCODE: 011256

DATE: November 17, 2026

MEETING TIME: 10:30 AM – 3:00 PM

COUNCIL CHAIR: Julie Gaona

Item 1. CALL TO ORDER

Item 2. ESTABLISH QUORUM

Item 3. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Item 4. PUBLIC COMMENTS Page 4

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.

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

Item 5. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 2026 MINUTES VOTE Page 5

All

Item 6. 2027 CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR ELECTIONS VOTE Page 13

Item 7. CHAIR REPORT & COMMITTEE REPORTS Page 24

Julie Gaona, Council Chair

A. Membership Committee Workgroup Summary
B. Executive Committee Summary
C. Self-Advocates Advisory Committee (SAAC) Summary
D. State Plan Committee (SPC) Summary

Item 8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT & STAFF REPORTS Page 30

Aaron Carruthers, Executive Director

A. Executive Director Report
B. Chief Deputy Director Report
C. Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Report
D. Deputy Director of Regional Office Operations Report
E. RA Project Report
F. QA Project Report

Item 9. 2026 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT (PPR) VOTE Page 51

Jessica Brown, State Plan Committee Chair
David Delgado, Branch Chief - HQ Operations & State Plan
Beth Hurn, Manager of Data, Reporting, and Community Engagement

Item 10. YEAR-END DISCUSSION Page 52

Harold Ashe, Council Vice-Chair

Item 11. 2027 COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETING DATES AND ADJOURNMENT Page 53

The next Council meeting will be virtual on January 26, 2027.

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 Yaritza Sanchez at (916)-207-2856 or yaritza.sanchez@scdd.ca.gov. Please provide at least 3 business days prior to the meeting to allow adequate time to respond to all requests.

All times indicated and the order of business are approximate and subject to change.

NOVEMBER 17, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 4.
INFORMATIONAL ITEM

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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.

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

NOVEMBER 17, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 5.
ACTION ITEM

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Approval of September 2026 Minutes

The draft minutes from the September 29, 2026 Council meeting have been included in the packet for review. Councilmembers will vote on whether to approve the minutes.

Attachment
September Council Meeting Minutes

Action Recommended
Approve the September Council meeting minutes.

DRAFT
Council Meeting Minutes
September 29, 2026

Members Attending
Aubyn Stahmer (UCEDD)
Andy Imparato (DRC)
Ana Acton (CDA)
Blake Warner (UCEDD)
Bob Twomey (F.A.)
Cathay Liu (F.A.)
Debra Cooper (CHHS)
Eric Aguilar (S.A.)
Harold Ashe (F.A.)
Harold Fujita (F.A.)
Irene Valdez (F.A.)
Jessica Brown (F.A.)
Joseph Billingsley (DHCS)
Julie Gaona (S.A.)
Kara Ponton (S.A.)
Kate Bjerke (DOR)
Kim Rothschild (F.A.)
Larry Yin (UCEDD)
Lupe Rodriguez (F.A.)
Melissa Fitch (F.A.)
Michi Gates (DDS)
Michelle Padilla (S.A.)
Nestor Nieves (S.A.)
Rosanna Ryan (S.A.)
Sascha Bittner (S.A.)
Sonia Jones (S.A.)

Members Absent
Azucena Garcia-Ferro (S.A.)
Noelia Hernandez (CDE)
Sherry Johnson Alvarez (F.A)

Others Attending
Aaron Carruthers
Aaron Schofield
Austin Murphy
Beth Hurn
Bruce Joseph
Charles Nguyen
Chris Arroyo
Christine Tolbert
David Delgado
Debra Ponton
Dena Hernandez
Elizabeth Marie Hernandez
Julie Eby-McKenzie
Kenya Martinez
Lisa Hooks
Melyiah Del Rosario
Michael Santiago
Michelle Cave
Nick Lutton
Nicole Patterson
Patricia Herrera

Others Attending (cont.)
Renee Bauer
Riana Hardin
Robin Maitino-Erben
Rondale Holloway
Scarlett von Thenen
Sheraden Nicholau
Stacey Martinez
Sue Schofield
Todd Schofield
Veronica Bravo
Yaritza Sanchez
Yolanda Cruz

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
   Chair Julie Gaona called the meeting to order at 10:35 A.M.

2. **ESTABLISH QUORUM**
   A quorum was established.

3. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**
   Members and others in attendance introduced themselves.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**
   There were no public comments.

5. **APPROVAL OF JULY 2026 MINUTES**
   Action 1
   It was moved/seconded (Bittner [S.A.]/ Padilla [S.A.]) and carried to approve the July 2026 Council meeting minutes as presented by unanimous acclamation. (See last page for a voting record of members present)

6. **CHAIR REPORT AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**
   Chair Julie Gaona led the Council in a moment of silence in honor of former Councilmember Eric Ybarra, who passed away on August 26, 2025.

   Ms. Gaona shared her flight experience, noting that her wheelchair's joystick mount arrived damaged. She relayed Southwest Airlines' policy for addressing wheelchair damage and how quickly the airline arranged repairs. She reflected on the progress made in helping travelers with disabilities.

   She also encouraged members to stay informed about federal and state changes and to continue advocating for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

7. **STATEWIDE SELF-ADVOCACY NETWORK REPORT**
   SCDD SSAN representative Eric Aguilar provided Councilmembers with an update from SSAN's virtual meeting on September 2, 2026.

8. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT & STAFF REPORTS**
   Executive Director Aaron Carruthers provided updates on the Special Education Parent Action Network (SEPAN), the Council's current and

upcoming five-year State Plans, requests from the Administration on Community Living (ACL), monthly outreach themes, Community Conversations, and administrative matters.

Program and State Plan Updates
Mr. Carruthers reported that the state budget provided SCDD with $2.4 million in one-time funding to establish the Special Education Parent Action Network (SEPAN). The network would support parents and students in building their knowledge and advocacy skills and working together to improve special education systems across California. SCDD held a community listening session on September 14, 2026, to gather input from special education advocates on what should be included in the program and grant process. A request for proposals will be released in early October through a competitive grant process.

Mr. Carruthers reported that SCDD was looking for an organization or partnership with statewide reach, knowledge of IDEA, and experience helping people advocate. He emphasized that the network should give parents and students an independent voice. Councilmembers encouraged SEPAN to serve families across disabilities, support needs, languages, and cultural backgrounds. They emphasized including students with moderate to severe disabilities, reaching language communities beyond Spanish speakers, addressing barriers affecting Native American communities, and providing resources for different developmental disabilities.

Additionally, Mr. Carruthers reported that SCDD had met or exceeded all measurable objectives in its 2022–2026 State Plan, which will end on September 30, 2026. The 2027–2031 State Plan was submitted by the August 15 deadline and awaiting review by the Administration on Community Living (ACL).

ACL Requests
Mr. Carruthers shared examples of SCDD's responses to recent ACL requests for information about its work. These included advocacy training with the Hoopa Education Department, crisis intervention training involving Tribal law enforcement, and outreach with Tribal communities. SCDD also provided examples of assistance to individuals and families facing suspected financial fraud or abuse. In one case, staff provided reporting information and a referral to legal services regarding suspected financial misconduct involving supported living services. In another, staff

helped a family understand legal options and reporting procedures after their son died following neglect and overmedication at a residential care facility. Mr. Carruthers reported that Community Care Licensing investigated the facility, found it at fault, and imposed a fine.

Outreach and Administrative Updates
Mr. Carruthers highlighted SCDD's monthly outreach themes, including Disability Pride in July, back-to-school activities in August, emergency preparedness in September, and National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October. He also reported on his in-person Community Conversations, which gave community members an opportunity to hear updates on the Council's work and share their concerns directly. For details on upcoming sessions across the state, please visit: https://scdd.ca.gov/community-conversations/.

Mr. Carruthers reported that SCDD's budget remained strong and that ACL had released the remaining portion of its federal grant before the end of the federal fiscal year. He also shared that staff training through the National Leadership Consortium continued.

9. **NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIR & VICE CHAIR**
Executive Director Aaron Carruthers opened nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. He explained that the Council elected its officers every two years and would vote at its November 17th meeting. He reviewed the duties and eligibility requirements for both roles and explained that one office would be held by a self-advocate and the other by a family advocate. Councilmembers could nominate themselves or another eligible member, and candidates could withdraw before the election.

Michelle Padilla, Nestor Nieves, Sascha Bittner, Julie Gaona, and Harold Ashe accepted nominations for Chair. The nominees for Vice Chair were Eric Aguilar, Sascha Bittner, Sonia Jones, Melissa Fitch, Julie Gaona, Harold Fujita, and Nestor Nieves. Bob Twomey initially accepted a nomination for Vice Chair and later withdrew during the meeting.

Mr. Carruthers explained that candidates would be asked to submit written statements and could also speak before the vote. The November meeting packet would include the final list of candidates and their statements. He reminded members to refrain from discussing the election or soliciting votes from one another outside the meeting.

10. **2027 LEGISLATIVE PLANNING**

Deputy Legislative and Public Policy Committee (LPPC) Chair Harold Fujita and Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Chris Arroyo presented the Committee's recommendations for six policy projects for 2027. Mr. Fujita reported that LPPC met on September 10, 2026, to receive legislative updates, review the annual "There Should Be a Law" contest report, and consider policy projects for 2027.

Mr. Fujita shared that the "There Should Be a Law" contest received 184 ideas. Human services and education were the two largest categories and made up 42% of submissions. He noted that people wanted information that was easy to find and understand, reliable access to services, more opportunities to participate in community life, and better economic security. Mr. Arroyo explained how those ideas shaped the six proposed projects.

Recommended Policy Projects

The Legislative and Public Policy Committee (LPPC) recommended building on its work to strengthen plain language and address disability-related chronic absenteeism. Another project would examine how fingerprinting requirements at school worksites affect student work opportunities. A separate project would explore state options to address the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) marriage penalty and asset limits. The Committee also considered concerns about how regional center internal review committees made service decisions and how people could keep a record of what was discussed at In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) meetings. It recommended removing the requirement for those committees and allowing people to record IHSS meetings.

Mr. Arroyo explained that staff planned to seek legislative authors for four projects and hold two for a second round of discussions. The goal would be finding a total of two authors for SCDD bill ideas. Staff would also identify partners and consider whether each issue could be addressed through legislation or policy work.

Action 2

It was moved/seconded (Bittner [S.A.]/ Aguilar [S.A.]) and carried to adopt the six policy projects for 2027.The motion passed by roll call vote. (See last page for a voting record of members present)

11. **CLOSED SESSION: PERSONNEL**
The Council went into closed session.

12. **RECONVENE OPEN SESSION**
The Council reconvened from closed session with no actions to report.

13. **NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT**
The next Council meeting will be held on Zoom on November 17, 2026. Chair Gaona adjourned the meeting at 3:00 P.M.

Name	Vote 1	Vote 2
Acton, Ana	Aye	Abstain
Aguilar, Eric	Aye	Aye
Ashe, Harold	Aye	Aye
Bjerke, Kate	Aye	Abstain
Billingsley, Joseph	Aye	NP
Bittner, Sascha	Aye	Aye
Brown, Jessica	Aye	Aye
Cooper, Debra	Aye	Abstain
Fitch, Melissa	Aye	NP
Fujita, Harold	Aye	Aye
Gaona, Julie	Aye	NP
Gates, Michi	Aye	Abstain
Imparato, Andy	Aye	Aye
Jones, Sonia	Aye	Aye
Liu, Cathay	Aye	Aye
Nieves, Nestor	Aye	NP
Padilla, Michelle	Aye	Aye
Ponton, Kara	Aye	Aye
Rodriguez, Lupe	Aye	Aye
Rothschild, Kim	Aye	Abstain
Ryan, Rosie	Aye	Aye
Stahmer, Aubyn	Aye	Aye
Twomey, Bob	Aye	Aye
Valdez, Irene	Aye	Aye
Warner, Blake	Aye	Aye
Yin, Larry	Aye	Aye

NOVEMBER 17, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 6.
ACTION ITEM

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

2027 Chair and Vice Chair Elections

The Council elects its Chair and Vice Chair every two years at its last meeting of the calendar year, unless a vacancy occurs. Council officers are elected by a simple majority vote and will serve from January 2027 through December 2028.

On September 29, 2026, the Council began the process of electing a new Chair and Vice-Chair by asking members for nominations for both Chair and Vice-Chair. At the November 17th Council meeting, Councilmembers will vote for their next Chair and Vice-Chair. Below are the eligible members that were nominated and/or expressed interest in serving as Council Chair and/or Vice-Chair.

Council Chair:
Harold Ashe (F.A.)
Julie Gaona (S.A.)
Michelle Padilla (S.A.)

Council Vice Chair:
Eric Aguilar (S.A.)
Melissa Fitch (F.A.)
Harold Fujita (F.A.)
Julie Gaona (S.A.)
Sonia Jones (S.A.)

S.A. = Self-advocate
F.A. = Family advocate

The meeting packet includes candidate statements for members to review before the meeting. Each candidate will have the opportunity to speak for up to three minutes. Additional time will be available as an accommodation for any candidate who needs it.

Attachments
Detail Sheet on 2027 Officer Elections
Candidate Statements

Action Recommended
Elect the Council Chair and Vice-Chair to serve from January 2027 through December 2028.

COUNCIL MEETING DETAIL SHEET

ISSUE: 2027 Officer Elections

SUMMARY: The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) has two officers, a Chair and Vice-Chair. The Council holds elections for these officers every two years. In an election year, the Council takes nominations at its second-to-last meeting and elects its officers at its last meeting.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: On September 29, 2026, the Council accepted nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair. At the meeting, five members were nominated for Chair and seven members for Vice-Chair. Since that meeting, two nominees withdrew from consideration for Chair, and two withdrew from consideration for Vice-Chair. The remaining candidates submitted statements that explain why they wish to serve as an officer. The statements are included in the November Council meeting packet. Councilmembers will vote for their next Chair and Vice-Chair at the November 17th Council meeting. The new officers will begin serving on January 1, 2027.

WHO CAN BE AN OFFICER?

Only self and family advocate members are eligible to hold these positions. See Welfare and Institutions Code Section 4521(b)(1) for information on membership.

The Chair and Vice-Chair will be held by one self-advocate and one family advocate. See page 9 Article VII, Section 2 of the Council Bylaws.

WHO CANNOT SERVE?

A self or family advocate member with less than one year left on their second term.

An agency representative.

VOTING PROCEDURE:

- Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair were received during the September Council meeting.
- Candidates will have the opportunity to speak for up to three minutes.
- The Council will vote for Chair first, then for Vice Chair.
- Council officers shall be elected by a simple majority vote.

- If no nominee is elected by a majority vote, the Council will hold a run-off election between the candidates who received the two highest number of votes. The Council may waive the run-off with a majority vote.

Term of Office:

- The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be elected for a term of two years. They may be elected to these positions for no more than two consecutive terms. Their term of office shall begin the first day of the new calendar year.

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF THE CHAIR?

Along with the typical duties of all Councilmembers, the Chair

- Leads all Council meetings.
- Sets the agenda for Council meetings.
- Appoints committee chairpersons and members to all Council committees.
- Appoints Council representatives in relation to other agencies and consumer groups.
- Represents the Council as needed.

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF THE VICE-CHAIR?

Along with the typical duties of all Councilmembers, the Vice-Chair

- Performs all the duties of the Chair if the Chair is absent or upon request of the Chair.
- Serves as Chair of the Executive Committee.
- Serves as the Council's Parliamentarian.
- Serve as the Chair of the Executive Committee.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

Nominated members completed a candidate statement form that explains why they wish to serve as an officer. The completed forms are included in the November Council meeting packet. At the November 17th Council meeting, candidates will have the opportunity to speak for up to three minutes. Members will then vote for their next Chair and Vice-Chair. On January 1, 2027, the new officers will begin serving.

PREPARED: November 04, 2026, by Yaritza Sanchez, Assistant to the Executive Director

SCDD 2027 Chair and Vice Chair Candidate Statement

NAME: Harold L. Ashe

Position you are running for? Select all that apply.

- ✓ **Chair**
- ☐ **Vice-Chair**

Why are you interested in being Council Chair/Vice-Chair?

I am intrigued by this Council membership and the Council's ability to align itself for the central purpose of impacting lives in the disability community. My passion for purpose is because of all the members I serve with and all of the energy you all deliver.

If elected, what would your priorities for the Council be?

Each and every day that I'm fortunate to wake up, I will rise with the priority of service to this Council and our community, but also mindful of the fact that each Councilmember awakens each morning with the same identical priority. As Chair/Vice Chair, my humble undertaking is to create a slow cooker of effectiveness. Keeping an open mind.

What leadership experience do you have as Chair or Vice Chair on this or another council or committee?

I have been fortunate and blessed to have served in my current capacity as Vice Chair and Chair of the Executive Committee. Each Executive Committee meeting has afforded me the opportunity to serve with assigned Council members to carry out the duties and responsibilities which align with the Council's mission statement. All of my leadership experience is a direct result of the care and patience each of you have provided to me.

SCDD 2027 Chair and Vice Chair Candidate Statement

NAME: Julie Gaona

Position you are running for? Select all that apply.

- ✓ **Chair**
- ✓ **Vice-Chair**

Why are you interested in being Council Chair/Vice-Chair?

I'm interested in being council chair because I still want to focus on the marriage penalty I would like to do more networking throughout the state. I know there will be changes in 2027.

If elected, what would your priorities for the Council be?

If i were elected my priority would advocating for people with developmental disabilities protecting our services for people with disabilities. Examples will be self-determination independent living services or some of our employment services that we have that are working for us.

What leadership experience do you have as Chair or Vice Chair on this or another council or committee?

i have been the chair for state council for a few years. i have experience networking with reginal centers, independent living agency's, the arch, some legislators and senators. Hopefully i am able to do more with marriage penalty than i have. i feel our community is growing and more people want to get married.

SCDD 2027 Chair and Vice Chair Candidate Statement

NAME: Michelle Padilla

Position you are running for? Select all that apply.

- ✓ **Chair**
- ☐ **Vice-Chair**

Why are you interested in being Council Chair/Vice-Chair?

To be an ambassador for the State Council. To be a voice a to others. To lead the Council with empathy and compassion.

If elected, what would your priorities for the Council be?

If elected, bringing more outreach to the Council. Collaborating with other State agencies. If elected, running the meetings more smoothly. Increasing public visibility through outreach to non-profits and educational programs. Collaborating with Community with events. More resourcing , and networking.

What leadership experience do you have as Chair or Vice Chair on this or another council or committee?

Organizing meetings and events. Recruiting participants or new members. Assigning duties to the other board members. Advocating for those that don't have a voice. Support others to find their voice and make people more aware of the resources around them. Making sure everyone is ok. Showing people with disabilities to have more self-advocacy for themselves. Scheduling appointment's Making sure that we have a quorum. Notifying the members if the room has been canceled or changed.

SCDD 2027 Chair and Vice Chair Candidate Statement

NAME: Eric Aguilar

Position you are running for? Select all that apply.

☐ **Chair**
✓ **Vice-Chair**

Why are you interested in being Council Chair/Vice-Chair?

I am interested in serving as Vice Chair of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities because I believe people with developmental disabilities should have a meaningful voice in the decisions, policies, and programs that affect their lives. My experience as a self-advocate and disability advocate has strengthened my commitment to ensuring that individuals are heard, respected, and included in decisions that affect their communities.

Through my work in self-advocacy, leadership development, accessibility, and emergency preparedness, I have seen the importance of listening to different perspectives and working together to address challenges. I want to use my experience to support the Council's mission, strengthen partnerships, and help advance opportunities for people with developmental disabilities throughout California.

As Vice Chair, I would work collaboratively with the Chair, Council members, staff, and community partners to support the Council's goals and ensure that self-advocates remain an important part of the decision-making process.

If elected, what would your priorities for the Council be?

My priorities would be to strengthen self-advocacy, increase meaningful participation in decision-making, and promote greater inclusion and accessibility for people with developmental disabilities throughout California.

I would focus on the following priorities:

- **Strengthen self-advocacy:** Support opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to develop leadership skills, speak for themselves, and participate in decisions affecting their lives.
- **Increase accessibility and inclusion:** Encourage policies, programs, meetings, and public information that are accessible to people with different communication, learning, sensory, and functional needs.
- **Support emergency preparedness:** Promote inclusive emergency planning and preparedness so people with developmental disabilities have access to the information, resources, and support they need before, during, and after emergencies.
- **Build partnerships:** Strengthen collaboration among self-advocates, families, regional advisory committees, service providers, and community organizations.

- **Develop future leaders:** Encourage emerging self-advocates to take on leadership roles and ensure that individuals with a variety of experiences and perspectives have opportunities to contribute.

I would approach these priorities by listening to self-advocates, working collaboratively with Council members, and supporting practical efforts that help turn the Council's goals into meaningful results for the disability community.

What leadership experience do you have as Chair or Vice Chair on this or another council or committee?

I currently serve in leadership roles as Vice Chair of the Regional Advisory Committee for the State Council on Developmental Disabilities San Bernardino Regional Office and Vice Chair of the Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (SSAN). These positions have strengthened my understanding of the importance of collaboration, representation, and ensuring that self-advocates have opportunities to participate in discussions and decisions that affect their lives.

My other leadership experience includes serving as a member, instructor, and program manager with the Redlands Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) since 2013. I have also served with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary since 2017. These experiences have helped me develop skills in teamwork, public service, preparedness, and working with people from different backgrounds.

I have continued to develop my leadership and advocacy skills through the Systemic Advocacy and Leadership Academy, Leadership Investment Training, and the UCLA Leadership Academy for Emerging Disability Rights Leaders.

These experiences have taught me that effective leadership requires listening, accountability, respect, and a willingness to work with others toward shared goals. As Vice Chair, I would bring that approach to supporting the Council, strengthening self-advocacy, and advancing the rights and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities.

SCDD 2027 Chair and Vice Chair Candidate Statement

NAME: Melissa Fitch

Position you are running for? Select all that apply.

☐ **Chair**
✓ **Vice-Chair**

Why are you interested in being Council Chair/Vice-Chair?

I am interested in being Council Vice-Chair because I want to take on a greater role in supporting the Council and the work we do. After more than 24 years in the disability community, both as a mother and an advocate, this work is very personal to me. I have seen firsthand how much policies, services, and opportunities can affect the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. I would like the opportunity to work closely with the Chair, support my fellow Council members, and help the Council continue moving forward together. I believe every individual deserves the choices, opportunities, and support to live the life they want, and I want to continue being part of making that possible across California.

If elected, what would your priorities for the Council be?

As Vice-Chair, my first priority would be to support the Chair and work with the entire Council to carry out our State Plan and policy priorities. I would focus on elevating self-advocate voices, strengthening collaboration among Council members, regional offices, and communities throughout California, and work to expand opportunities in education, employment, housing, and independent living while protecting the rights and choices of individuals with developmental disabilities. I also want to address gaps in services and supports and help individuals and families better understand their rights and access what they need. Most importantly, I would work to keep us focused on our goals and ensure our efforts lead to improvements in people's lives.

What leadership experience do you have as Chair or Vice Chair on this or another council or committee?

My leadership experience includes serving as President of the Down Syndrome Association of Santa Barbara County, Vice-Chair of Devereux California's Advisory Board, Chair of the Santa Barbara Unified School District Special Education Parent Advisory Committee, El Camino School Site Council Chair, and Chair and Co-Chair of the Goleta Union School District District Advisory Committee. I also served as President and Vice President of the El Camino Elementary and La Colina Junior High PTAs. These roles have given me extensive experience leading organizations, building partnerships, facilitating collaboration, and bringing people together.

SCDD 2027 Chair and Vice Chair Candidate Statement

NAME: Harold Fujita

Position you are running for? Select all that apply.

☐ **Chair**
✓ **Vice-Chair**

Why are you interested in being Council Chair/Vice-Chair?

In order to be of greater service to our community.

If elected, what would your priorities for the Council be?

Should I have the privilege of serving as your Vice Chair, I will do my utmost to improve the system that ensures all Californians with I/DD are effectively served, included, and valued and will work diligently to maintain those rights which past advocates fought so hard to achieve for our community.

What leadership experience do you have as Chair or Vice Chair on this or another council or committee?

I was Chair of the Los Angeles Regional Advisory Committee for numerous years.

SCDD 2027 Chair and Vice Chair Candidate Statement

NAME: Sonia R. Jones

Position you are running for? Select all that apply.

☐ **Chair**
✓ **Vice-Chair**

Why are you interested in being Council Chair/Vice-Chair?

I am interested because it's important to represent the disabled community, especially for people who don't yet know how to speak up for themselves. The Vice-Chair position supports the Council Chair when needed. I have prior experience at the NBRC in the position of Chair. I had to step up and fill the position when others didn't want the responsibility.
I feel like it's the next step in my political role. It's my passion to represent the disabled community.

If elected, what would your priorities for the Council be?

If I was elected I would prioritize making sure the needs of the disabled community are met by advocating for their individual needs. I am there to make sure that I can keep the focus on what's important to the individual.
I also want to make sure that the disabled community has access to the wider community. I want to show what's possible as a disabled person. My experience can be used to help others.

What leadership experience do you have as Chair or Vice Chair on this or another council or committee?

The leadership experience I've had is by speaking on multiple platforms for advocacy. I was The Chair at SCDD for the NBRC. Some of the platforms I have been involved in are The Leadership Academy, I have spoken on various platforms for North Bay. At the ARC Solano I share information with other participants and staff.

NOVEMBER 17, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 7.
INFORMATIONAL ITEM

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Chair Report and Committee Reports

Council Chair Julie Gaona will provide Councilmembers with an oral report about her recent activities and current priorities for the Council.

SCDD committee summaries have been provided for informational purposes.

Attachments
Membership Committee Workgroup Summary 10/13
Executive Committee Summary 10/20
Self-Advocates Advisory Committee (SAAC) Summary 11/2
State Plan Committee (SPC) Summaries 11/12

AGENDA ITEM 7A.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: WORKGROUP SUMMARY

Date of Meeting
October 13, 2026

Meeting Focus
The Membership Workgroup met on October 13th to review applications for Regional Advisory Committees (RAC) and Local Self-Determination Advisory Committees (LVAC). Workgroup members approved 12 new RAC appointments, 2 local LVAC appointments, and 3 RAC reappointments.

The Membership Committee did not meet during the period between Council meetings.

Items Acted Upon
- The Workgroup approved 12 new RAC appointments.
- The Workgroup approved 2 new LVAC appointments.
- The Workgroup approved 3 RAC reappointments.

Future Meeting Dates
TBA

AGENDA ITEM 7B.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Date of Meeting
October 20, 2026

Meeting's Focus
The Executive Committee met on October 20, 2026. Items included a staff spotlight on David Delgado, Branch Chief of Headquarters Operations and State Plan; five conflict resolution plans; a budget update; four sponsorship requests; the Executive Director's report; and a year-end discussion.

Executive Director Carruthers reported that SCDD met or exceeded all objective in its 2022–2026 State Plan. The next five-year State Plan was submitted by the August 15 deadline and will begin on October 1. He also shared that SCDD was preparing to seek proposals for the Special Education Parent Action Network (SEPAN), a $2.4 million initiative to help parents and students advocate for improvements to special education.

Of the 19 bills on which the Council took a position, two supported bills were signed into law: SB 837 (Reyes), addressing emergency preparedness training for older adults and people with disabilities, and AB 350 (Bonta), addressing Medi-Cal coverage of fluoride treatment for individuals under 21. The Governor vetoed AB 1099 (Bryan) and AB 2081 (Stefani). SB 84 (Niello), which the Council opposed. Both Council-sponsored bills, SB 1052 (Gonzalez) on authorized representation and AB 2360 (Arambula) on plain language, were held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Mr. Carruthers reported that a short-term spending bill would keep federal funding in place through December 11 and discussed California's renewed commitment to community living. He noted that regional centers must fund supported employment while people wait for Department of Rehabilitation services. Lastly, Mr. Carruthers shared updates from his in-person Community Conversations, which gave community members an opportunity to hear updates on the Council's work and share their concerns directly.

Items Acted Upon

- Approved the August Executive Committee meeting minutes.
- Approved conflict resolution plan renewals for regional center board members Jacqueline Armstrong, Jacqueline Dubois, Patricia McCarthy, William Moore, and Monica Soria.
- Approved a one-time increase in sponsorship funding from $25,000 to $50,000.
- Approved a limit of two sponsorship requests per organization per fiscal year.
- Approved sponsorship requests from Epilepsy Support Network of Orange County, PathPoint, Special Needs in My City, and Special Needs Resource Foundation of San Diego.

Future Meeting Date

February 2027

AGENDA ITEM 7C.
SELF-ADVOCATES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Date of Meeting

November 2, 2026

Meeting's Focus

The Self-Advocates Advisory Committee (SAAC) held a meeting in November over Zoom. Due to the absence of a committee member at the teleconference location, scheduled voting items were tabled until the next committee meeting. The committee proceeded with the informational items and discussions on their agenda.

Members present provided feedback on SCDD's 2026 themed month efforts, shared how being involved in SCDD has helped them with their advocacy skills and activities, and talked about the importance of participating in the voting process.

Members of the committee shared their experiences participating in SCDD's outreach efforts for Disability Pride Month, National Preparedness Month, and National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Members also shared experiences with information overload being a contributing factor in their unawareness of the outreach efforts. Ideas for future awareness campaigns included using short videos and spotlights to showcase different talents and experiences. Suggestions for future outreach events included highlighting healthy relationships, promoting general health, including chronic illness, cancer, Rare Disease Month and Heart Awareness Month in February.

Committee members shared that being a part of the Council has helped them to connect with new people and speak in other platforms to raise awareness of the Council's work.

Committee members talked about how confusing the language for ballot initiatives can be and the need for plain language explanations of impact to be available. Attendees shared that consulting with trusted people, non-profits, and county committee endorsements helps them to navigate dis- and misinformation.

Future Meeting Dates

January 2027

AGENDA ITEM 7D.

STATE PLAN COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Date of Meeting
November 12, 2026

Meeting's Focus
The State Plan Committee (SPC) will meet on November 12, 2026. The meeting's main focus will be reviewing the draft 2026 Program Performance Report (PPR) and receiving an update on the 2027–2031 State Plan.

Staff will provide members with an update on the status of the 2027–2031 State Plan and next steps. In January 2026, the Committee reviewed public comments on the proposed plan and determined that no changes were needed. The State Plan was posted online and submitted to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) on August 14, 2026.

Members will then review the draft 2026 PPR, presented by the Committee Chair and staff. The report documents the outputs, outcomes, and impacts achieved through the activities of the 2022–2026 State Plan during federal fiscal year 2026 (October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026). Members will review activity and project highlights, provide input, and make recommendations.

Following discussion, the Committee is expected to consider recommending approval of the draft 2026 PPR and forwarding it to the full Council for consideration.

Proposed Items to be Acted Upon

- Approve January 15, 2026 Meeting Minutes.
- Recommend approval of the draft 2026 Program Performance Report to the full Council.

NOVEMBER 17, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 8.
INFORMATIONAL ITEM

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Executive Director Report and Staff Reports

SCDD Executive Director Aaron Carruthers will provide Councilmembers with an oral report regarding recent Council activities. Additionally, SCDD Staff reports have been included in the packet for informational purposes.

Attachments
Chief Deputy Director Report
Deputy Director of Regional Office Operations Report
RAP Report
QAP Report

Handouts
Executive Director Report
Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Report

Chief Deputy Director Report
November 2026

Rihana Ahmad

Overview:

The Chief Deputy Director (CDD) continues to oversee operational functions in collaboration with staff, while identifying tools and strategies to strengthen organizational effectiveness. Recent efforts have focused on engaging with staff, leadership, and external partners to support program development, policy implementation, and operational alignment.

Key initiatives include implementation and oversight of the Supported Decision-Making Technical Assistance Program (SDM-TAP), along with collaborative discussions with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) on the Quality Assurance (QA) program, Rights and Advocacy Program (RAP), Self-Determination Program (SDP) Orientations and Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SSDAC) projects.

Core administrative responsibilities are being prioritized, including executive oversight of the agency's budget development and monitoring processes, contract and procurement oversight, personnel management, interagency coordination, and day-to-day operational support across the organization.

Agency Coordination and Organizational Development:

- ✓ **Agency Transition and Operational Improvements:** Continued working with the executive leadership team to strengthen agency operations. This includes implementing the new State Plan; rebranding the State Plan and Self-Advocacy unit as Data, Reporting, and Community Engagement to better reflect its work; improving communications; developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and guidance documents; and developing a staff training plan for 2027. This work includes setting priorities, clarifying responsibilities, and adjusting timelines based on staff capacity and agency needs.
- ✓ **AskCA Testing Opportunity:** Worked with the Office of Data and Innovation to provide an opportunity for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and their families to test AskCA, an AI assistant being developed to help people find and navigate California government services. Participants can provide feedback on ease of use, plain language, and accessibility.

- ✓ **North State Regional Office:** In partnership with the Deputy Director of Regional Office Operations, worked with CDSS and DGS to secure a lease for the North State Regional Office. Work continues with CDSS and technology partners to prepare the new location for staff.
- ✓ **Cross-Team Coordination:** Established and continue to facilitate biweekly planning meetings with the deputy directors and communications and IT/web team to coordinate priorities, share updates, and plan upcoming communications and website needs.
- ✓ **Staff Development:** Continued coordinating with the National Leadership Consortium (NLC) to identify staff needs and plan virtual trainings delivered by NLC. The trainings provide practical tools and strategies for prioritizing work, addressing barriers, identifying what needs attention, and putting plans into action while staying grounded in the agency's values.
- ✓ **Budget and Sponsorships:** Presented a budget update and sponsorship requests to the Executive Committee for review and approval. The Executive Committee also approved an increase in the sponsorship allocation from $25,000 to $50,000.
- ✓ **Interagency Agreement Renewals:** Began planning for upcoming interagency agreement renewals. Project managers are reviewing their current agreements and identifying recommended changes to the scope of work, staffing, and funding. This information will guide internal planning before discussions with DDS.

The following sections highlight recent activities and accomplishments from some of the operational and program support units under the Chief Deputy Director's oversight.

Personnel:

- ✓ Conducted 2 recruitment in FY 2027 (July 1, 2026 – present), with 6 active recruitments currently ongoing.
- ✓ Hired 2 staff members in FY 2027, October 2026
- ✓ New Hires include:
    - Jessica Albarran, Office Technician for Sacramento RO and HQ QA: October 19th
    - Beth Hurn, Manager of Data, Reporting, and Community Engagement, November 2nd

Budget:

- ✓ Calculated and submitted Employee Compensation Adjustments-Item 9800
- ✓ Submitted SWCAP Apportionment
- ✓ Completed the Executive Committee Budget Report
- ✓ Submitted SCIF payroll reporting

- ✓ Submitted Control Section 3.60 Employer Retirement Rate Contribution Adjustments
- ✓ Conducted past year's expenditure reporting to DOF for the Federal Trust Fund
- ✓ Provided operational support for Chief Deputy Director

Information Technology:

- ✓ In addition to their ongoing support and maintenance of agency technology and hardware, SCDD IT staff have been working to finalize Wi-Fi network installation at the new SCDD North State Office location in collaboration with CDSS/CDT teams.
- ✓ SCDD IT staff has begun a 2027 Activity reporting platform reconfiguration in collaboration with key Data, Reporting, and Community Engagement unit staff. They hope to complete this modernization effort by January 2027 which will deliver a more streamlined data collection experience for staff.
- ✓ SCDD IT staff have been in discussions with internal CDT stakeholders and external vendors to procure several new software tools that will improve council staff's capacity to deliver trainings and information to their communities with greater efficiency and ease.

Data, Reporting, and Community Engagement

State Plan:

- ✓ After review by the federal Administration on Community Living, the 2027-2031 State Plan submitted by the Data, Reporting, and Community Engagement (DRE) unit was approved unconditionally on September 30, 2026. Regional office staff have begun planning their activities for the upcoming FFY using the new plan as their guide.
- ✓ The DRE Team has completed review of 2,025 Activity Reports (AR) submitted by regional staff for the past federal fiscal year to date. The unit has cleaned and analyzed the data and has begun drafting this year's Program Performance Report (PPR).

Self-Advocacy:

- ✓ The Self-Advocates Advisory Committee will be meeting on Nov 2nd to reflect on their self-advocacy efforts over the last year, discuss and share tips for how to prepare to vote, and share ideas for council themed month topics for 2027.
- ✓ Self-Advocacy Coordinator, Riana Hardin, attended the People First of San Diego conference on October 17th and presented to conference participants on the role and importance of plain language in systems change advocacy efforts.

Business Operations and Committee Supports (BOCS):

- ✓ Since the September Council meeting the BOCS unit continues to refine and finalize Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that will ensure alignment on committee, council planning, invoicing and other key business operations:

- Notably the unit completed a new Council/RAC/LVAC tracking modernization project that will streamline and simplify the agency's membership and appointment processes.

- ✓ BOCS staff have completed end-of-fiscal year reports to its various control agencies to ensure compliance with AB 2019 mandated procurement goals.
- ✓ BOCS staff also processed invoices, purchase orders, travel claims, and reimbursements for Councilmembers and staff, to ensure timely payments and compliance.
- ✓ BOCS, in partnership with other key staff, have completed 2027 Council and Committee planning.

Statewide Self Determination Advisory Committee (SSDAC):

- ✓ SCDD received a six-month no-cost extension to the current SSDAC contract to align the contract period with the State fiscal year.
- ✓ SSDAC leadership participated in the DDS Roundtable on October 22. The discussion focused mainly on the FMS Standards feedback that was released on October 15. The DDS Roundtable will meet again on December 18th.
- ✓ SCDD staff completed a review of SSDAC activities to make sure the Committee's work is consistent with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. Updated guidance was sent to the Committee on October 6.
- ✓ SSDAC Co-Chairs are hosting a 2-day training on December 3 and 4 that focuses on: 1) the roles and responsibilities SSDAC members and LVAC Chairs; 2) protecting public trust while serving on a state body; and 3) understanding conflicts of interest, Bagley-Keene, communications in between meetings.

Supported Decision-Making Technical Assistance Program (SDM-TAP):

- ✓ The first quarter of the internal implementation phase of the SDM-TAP at SCDD has wrapped up. To date the team has met with 14 Regional Centers and ARCA as part of its statewide needs assessment, presented at the Autism Society LA (ASLA) conference on September 16th, and provided subject matter expertise for the development of SDM informational videos being developed by Tri-counties Regional Center.
- ✓ As part of the teams needs assessment, the team will be meeting with 4 additional RCs over the next several months. The team has also completed their survey of SCDD staff and is in the process of developing resources and toolkits to help them effectively provide technical assistance and education on Supported Decision-Making (SDM) to community members.

Self-Determination Program Orientation Project

The SCDD Statewide Self-Determination Program (SDP) Orientation Project is a long-term Interagency Agreement with the California Department of Developmental Services

(DDS) to deliver the required first step of the Self-Determination Program. Since July 2022, SCDD has run these sessions statewide in multiple languages, led by SCDD staff alongside co-trainers with lived SDP experience.

On April 1, 2026, SCDD and DDS launched a redesigned two-part orientation (Part A and Part B), each two hours long. Both parts are required before beginning the SDP transition process. The updated curriculum improves consistency, aligns with current statute and policy, and covers the developmental disabilities service system, Regional Center service delivery options, the Self-Determination Program, Person-Centered Planning, the Individual Program Plan, Individual Budget, Spending Plan, Independent Facilitators, Financial Management Services and models, preparing for transition, resources, and next steps.

The SCDD webpage provides registration, resources, and recordings for both parts in English/ASL and Spanish. Full live Zoom attendance is required to receive a certificate.

Participation remains strong, with 1,749 attendees in September (Part A: 897 | Part B: 852) and 2,262 attendees in October (Part A: 1,275 | Part B: 987).

In addition to regular monthly English and Spanish sessions, SCDD offers live AI translation during English-language sessions. In September 2026, attendees used the tool in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, and Spanish. SCDD will expand the updated curriculum into all contracted languages as translations are completed.

Attendee feedback:

- *I am excited about the possibilities with this program!! - K.S.*
- *Thanks so much— you are both wonderful presenters and the SDP training Part A and Part B were both extremely helpful! - N.E.*
- *The training was very good simple and clear. - K.M.*
- *Thank you so much!! Very professional and educational and kind. - D.T.*
- *The new website is awesome. - K.C.*

Deputy Director, Regional Office Operations (DDROO) Report, November 2026

Sheraden Nicholau

Overview:

The Deputy Director of Regional Office Operations is the lead position fulfilling the department's federal and state mission for systems change and capacity building. This position leads the 12 regional teams to carry out the work of the State Plan, including systemic identification and removal of barriers that keep people with IDD from living integrated lives in the community.

Additionally, this position:

- Represents SCDD externally to build partnerships and advance the work of the SCDD.
- Leverages change management to maximize SCDD's impact.
- Provides leadership and oversight of the programmatic, administrative, and strategic work of the SCDD regional teams.
- Supervises SCDD Regional Managers.

Recent Regional Office Highlights:

✓ SCDD Regional Offices, in partnership with SCDD Communications and IT, wrapped up a successful Emergency Preparedness themed-month in September. This included trainings in English and Spanish, in partnership with Project SAFEE, and a 2026 -2027 Safe Together Resource Guide, available in English and Spanish.

✓ SCDD Regional Offices, in partnership with SCDD Communications and IT, wrapped up a successful National Disability Awareness Month (NDEAM) themed-month in October. This included trainings and panels on

Employment First, benefits planning, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and best practices from employers' perspectives. This month's content was presented in English and Spanish, and included a 2026 -2027 NDEAM Resource Guide, available in English and Spanish.

- ✓ SCDD Regional Offices have continued hosting and co-hosting a series of 12 Community Conversations across CA this fall. These Community Conversations are an opportunity for community members to meet in-person with SCDD Director Carruthers, to hear updates on the Council's work and policy developments, to have a chance to connect with other advocates, and to share perspectives on the issues that matter most to the community.

Recent External Partnership Highlights:

- ✓ SCDD DDROO provided Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) sessions, for law enforcement and first responders across counties.
- ✓ SCDD DDROO served as a planner with Golden Gate Regional Center (GGRC) and Service Provider Advisory Committee representatives for the Northern CA celebration of the 60th anniversary of GGRC and the regional center system, 'From Pilot to Promise: Honoring the Past, Strengthening the Present, Shaping the Future'.
    - The event began with a film exhibit, 'Sign 504 Now', by Clear Blue Light Video Collective. The event's speakers included a CA State Senator, advocates and community leaders with lived experience, the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA), regional center board members, CA Department of Developmental Services, service providers, and more.

Recent Administrative Highlights:

- ✓ SCDD regional teams and HQ teams continue to collaborate on updating in-house procedures and best-practices, for effective and efficient regional operations. Two short-term internal workgroups are commencing this fall, one on cultural humility and outreach, another on grant and new opportunity readiness.
- ✓ Seven SCDD teams are in process of renewing their office lease or evaluating new lease options.
- ✓ Three SCDD Regional Offices are in the process of recruiting and hiring team members.

State Plan Activities Year-to-Date from the Regional Offices & HQ Team Members:

Since the completion of the fiscal year ending September 30th, 2026, the team has begun new State Plan planning, activities, and has worked to complete last fiscal year's final activity documentation, review, and audit of the year's outputs and outcomes.

Activities reported on, to-date, for the final year of the previous State Plan:

- ✓ 348 self-advocacy activities (Goal 1), impacting 5,354 individuals
- ✓ 1,643 systems change activities (Goal 2), impacting 44,421 individuals
- ✓ 778 capacity-building activities (Goal 3), impacting 31,051 individuals
- ✓ Delivering a total of 741 trainings / events, and 2,028 meetings, chats, and clinics
- ✓ Preparing 718 self-advocates and 55 family advocates to be trainers, facilitators, and presenters across 502 prep sessions
- ✓ Developing 123 curricula and resources, updating 71 curricula and resources, and translating 22 curricula and resources
- ✓ Reaching 17,889 ***new*** individuals with SCDD's work

✓ A Few Recent State Plan Activities Highlights:



Community leaders and advocates attend Spanish-language Emergency Preparedness trainings in Avenal (L) and Kettleman City (R), provided by SCDD's Sequoia Regional Office.



(L) SCDD's North Valley Hills Regional Office joins and presents to the Self-Advocacy Council 6 during a recent business meeting. SAC6 looks forward to hosting the region's Community Conversation with SCDD Executive Director Carruthers later this fall. (R) Orange County's Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) member, Drew Smith, is commended for concluding his second term on the RAC – 6 years of dedicated service!

Goal 1: Self-Advocacy

✓ The SCDD North Bay Regional Office provided coaching and advocacy guidance to a community advocate with lived-experience, in preparation for them to provide

testimony to the Solano County Paratransit Coordinating Council (PCC). This community advocate offered input on the proposed discontinuation of a bus route serving the Solano County mall, sharing their concerns and explaining how transit policy shapes access to community destinations, personal independence, and civic and social participation for people with disabilities in the region. The PCC, as well as a variety of community stakeholders, were in attendance. This firsthand testimony provided the PCC's deliberations with an experiential perspective. As a result, the PCC extended an invitation to the community advocate to attend an upcoming meeting and resumed consideration of temporarily restoring the route with limited weekend service. The PCC's willingness to revisit the route and to welcome ongoing participation marked a significant advance toward more responsive, community-informed transportation planning.

- ✓ The SCDD North State Regional Office convened a North State Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) meeting in Tulelake, a rural community in the northeastern corner of Siskiyou County near the Modoc County border. Regional Advisory Committees provide an important connection between local communities and SCDD. They create opportunities for people with developmental disabilities, family members, and community advocates to share their experiences, identify regional needs, and contribute to statewide advocacy and systems change. The meeting recognized three outgoing RAC members for completing two consecutive terms, each totaling six years of dedicated volunteer advocacy. Their service was acknowledged through certificates of appreciation recognizing their contributions, knowledge, experience, and commitment to people with I/DD and their families. Outcomes included: Increased awareness of critical SCDD resources; expanded awareness of opportunities to engage with SCDD leadership through Community Conversations with the SCDD Executive Director and other regional outreach activities; increased awareness of opportunities for public participation and comment through regional center board meetings, local Self-Determination Advisory Committee meetings, and other community engagement opportunities; and strengthened connection between rural communities, regional advocacy, and statewide Council priorities.

Goal 2: Systems Change

- ✓ The SCDD Los Angeles Regional Office participated in and supported the Emergency Network Los Angeles (ENLA), where 60 professionals addressed the ongoing response to the Lineage cold-storage warehouse fire, burning for 8 days in Boyle Heights. Nearby communities were affected through smoke, air-quality concerns, shelter-in-place orders, and the subsequent spoilage of frozen food, creating significant odor, pest, and environmental concerns. ENLA facilitated coordination among emergency response and community partners to share information, identify emerging community needs, and connect affected residents with resources and assistance. SCDD team members connected Baby2Baby leadership with the Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center (ELARC) to coordinate the distribution of air purifiers and other essential supplies to ELARC families impacted by the Lineage warehouse fire. Baby2Baby is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit organization that provides children and families in need with essential items such as diapers, formula, clothing, hygiene products, food, and other necessities. The organization serves communities across the United States and has a significant focus on disaster relief and emergency response. This connection helped link a community-based resource partner with families with disabilities and their support networks, addressing immediate health and safety needs resulting from the fire and poor air quality.
- ✓ The SCDD San Diego Imperial Regional Office hosted a Threat Assessment & Violence Prevention training, where participants learned about threat assessment, concerning behaviors, early intervention, violence prevention, community partnerships, and considerations for people with I/DD in need. The training highlighted the importance of understanding the difference between someone who may pose an immediate threat and someone who may simply be experiencing a crisis. Two-hundred and forty participants attended, including four international participants from Europe and Dubai. As a result of the training, participants gained a better understanding of how to identify concerns early, work across systems, and connect people to appropriate supports before a situation escalates. The training also helped bring an I/DD perspective into broader threat assessment, including the importance of not

automatically interpreting disability-related behaviors or crisis as a threat.

- ✓ The SCDD San Bernardino Regional Office partnered with the Greater Riverside Chamber of Commerce for a recent convening of the Inland Empire Neurodivergent Business Roundtable. The roundtable brought together business leaders, employers, and workforce partners to advance inclusive employment through business collaboration and systems change. Presentations highlighted evidence-based hiring practices, successful neurodivergent workforce models, employee retention, and business mentorship. The roundtable advanced a strengths-based approach that prioritizes demonstrated skills, peer leadership, customized employment, and measurable workplace outcomes. Four new businesses participated in collaborative meetings, expanding employer involvement in inclusive hiring and workforce development. Three paid internship pathways are being advanced to provide practical experience and support transitions into sustainable employment. Additionally, SCDD team members are advancing a project-based internship pathway to prepare interns for employment and/or contract opportunities. SCDD facilitated discussion among Regional Centers (RCs), the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), and Workforce Development Boards to identify opportunities for stronger coordination and employment supports. By promoting employer-led solutions, paid work experience, peer mentorship, and skills-based hiring, this roundtable supports sustainable career pathways while helping businesses build inclusive, effective, and reliable workforces.
- ✓ The SCDD Sacramento Regional Office met with District 4 Supervisor Suzanne Jones to discuss the growing housing needs of people with I/DD. This discussion aligned with additional regional efforts to create permanent, community-integrated housing solutions that provide stability, dignity, and long term support for adults with I/DD -- especially as families and caregivers age. The meeting included Supervisor Jones, her Chief of Staff, the SCDD Executive Director, and the SCDD Sacramento Regional Manager. SCDD reviewed and discussed data and concepts from the Placer County Lifelong I/DD Housing Initiative, including the need for nonprofit owned permanent housing and the importance of planning before crisis situations occur. As a result,

this meeting strengthened collaboration with county leadership and increased awareness of the urgent housing gap for people with I/DD, helping position the county to take actionable next steps toward a sustainable, community-centered housing strategy.

- ✓ The SCDD North Coast Regional Office, in partnership with DREDF, has continued to provide training and technical support for Hoopa Tribal Education Association special education advocates. These professional advocates are members of the Hoopa Valley Tribe and are parents themselves. Their roles provide hands-on advocacy assistance for native families in Hoopa and surrounding areas. As SCDD and DREDF invest in building their knowledge and capacity, the intent is for these advocates to provide Hoopa families with competent, culturally relevant information and support from within their community. To-date, the advocates have reported that over 90 families have reached out for educational rights and services advocacy assistance. These families have come from the Hoopa, Karuk, and Yurok tribes. This approach continues to produce stronger outcomes for this community, compared to more traditional training and IEP clinics provided by external partners.
- ✓ At the request of CA Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), the SCDD Central Coast Regional Office and SCDD Sacramento Regional Office partnered to provide statewide training on the differences between the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Section 504, and 504 Plans, as a part of DOR's in-service learning series for professionals who work with youth and young adults with disabilities. The training session covered eligibility, services and accommodations, student and family rights, and key differences between IDEA and Section 504. Discussion focused on how DOR staff can apply this information when supporting students with disabilities as they prepare for employment and life after high school. The training reached approximately 260 DOR staff from throughout California. Survey respondents, post-training, indicated that they found the training beneficial, with several noting that it helped clarify the differences between IEPs and 504 Plans and how the information applies to their work with students. Feedback included:

- *'Excellent info; much needed'*
- *'Thanks, seems like a lifelong learning pathway'*
- *'Very straightforward and easy to understand'*
- *'Very helpful information to consider when corresponding with students as a Work incentives Planner'*
- *'Awesome presentation on a subject that I often get questions about!'*
- *'I appreciate the facilitators for providing real life examples to help me to understand the different accommodations available to persons with developmental disabilities.'*
- *'It helped clarify the differences between 504s and IEPs for me.'*

The training helped strengthen DOR staff's understanding of educational rights and supports, giving them information they can use to better assist students with disabilities as they navigate educational services and prepare for employment.

Goal 3: Capacity-Building

✓ The SCDD Orange County Regional Office delivered an emergency preparedness training to young adults with disabilities at the Fullerton Joint Union High School District's (FJUHSD) Adult Transition Program (ATP) serving Fullerton, La Habra, and Buena Park, as well as portions of several other northern Orange County cities such as Anaheim and Brea. This activity increased self-advocacy and capacity building by equipping Adult Transition Program participants with practical emergency preparedness skills, empowering them to make informed decisions, communicate their needs, and coordinate proactively with caregivers and trusted supporters. The training reached approximately 25 young adults and 8 educators with actionable safety tools and increased awareness of SCDD resources among program staff. The training prepared self-advocates for emergencies such as earthquakes, fires, and

natural disasters. Through self-empowerment activities, participants learned core concepts: Early planning, coordination with caretakers, important safety knowledge, training on when and when not to call 911, working with guardians and parents to register for emergency alerts, and assembling go bags and creating emergency contact lists. Educators learned strategies to support their students and received information about the SAFEE Self Advocacy Group, sponsored by SCDD's San Diego Imperial Regional Office. Two students expressed interest in participating and received follow up details. Post-training, SCDD was invited to visit Café ATP, where students build job and interpersonal skills by serving coffee to the public. SCDD met ATP staff members and shared resources available to families of individuals with disabilities, including flyers on upcoming trainings on preventing exploitation, on safely using AI to support independence for individuals with I/DD, and the October series of SCDD trainings for National Disability Employment Month (NDEAM).

- ✓ The SCDD Bay Area Regional Office provided training and technical assistance for Cantonese and Mandarin speaking families on building more inclusive communities for health and safety, at the request of Friends of Children with Special Needs (FCSN), covering Santa Clara and Alameda counties. At this training, families learned about community inclusive crisis prevention tips and services, and crisis response options. These trainings contributed to families being more prepared to prevent crisis, to address safety concerns, and to respond to crises in their families and the larger community. Forty-six attendees participated, asked questions, discussed preparedness, planning, and response, and gained resources in three languages, thanks to translation services of SCDD's content, provided by FCSN.
- ✓ The SCDD Sequoia Regional Office provided trainings statewide and regionally to support individuals with I/DD and other disabilities, family members, and professionals on healthy relationships, understanding consent, setting personal boundaries, knowing the difference between public and private behaviors, and communicating with others about sexual health, development, and safety. The goal of these trainings has been to assist participants in staying safe, preventing abuse, communicating openly, and understanding that sexuality is a natural part of growing

and being human. One of these trainings took place at a local community college; 102 students with disabilities participated. As a result, students with disabilities developed a better understanding of healthy relationships and how to set and respect personal boundaries. They also gained the knowledge to speak up for themselves and the skills to set and maintain healthy boundaries in their relationships. A separate training, 'Supporting Growth & Healthy Sexual Development Training', was held at the Bridging Horizon Conference. Participants learned about common barriers to discussing sexuality, risks for sexual abuse, and gained practical tips for starting conversations about safety. Forty individuals engaged in this training. As a result, participants developed a better understanding of sexuality, recognition of signs of sexual abuse, increased confidence in talking about these topics, and gained practical strategies and resources to support open and informed conversations.

- ✓ The SCDD North Valley Hills Regional Office engaged in two remembrance ceremonies recognizing and honoring the lives of individuals that lived and died in California's State institutions, many of them buried in unmarked graves over the decades. Self-Advocacy Council 6, Valley CAPS, Valley Mountain Regional Center, Disability Rights CA-Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy, and SCDD hosted one of these remembrance ceremonies at Parkview Cemetery in Manteca. Host partners, DRAIL, and people with lived experience participated in the program; over 75 attendees were present. SCDD served as a guest speaker. The partners also hosted a remembrance ceremony at Stanislaus State Stockton Campus, in Stockton, to honor individuals that lived and died at the Stockton Developmental Center. A SCDD North Valley Hills Regional Advisory Committee member served as the emcee for this event. Thirty-nine attendees were present in Stockton. At both remembrance ceremonies, self-advocate community leaders created visual artwork, songs and poems to recognize this time of remembrance.

Rights and Advocacy Program

COUNCIL REPORT | NOVEMBER 2026

Program Overview

During this reporting period, the SCDD Rights and Advocacy Program (RAP), including Rights Advocates (RAs), Volunteer Advocacy Services (VAS) Coordinators, and Volunteer Advocates, supported people at and transitioning from Porterville Developmental Center (PDC) and Canyon Springs (CS). Work focused on individual rights and safety, self-determination, access to services and communication, and continuity of advocacy during community transitions.

Notable actions included responding to allegations of staff mistreatment, supporting an individual's advance health care decision-making, restoring access to programming, maintaining family and legal contacts, and identifying training resources for staff serving transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals. Persistent barriers include unpredictable placement timelines, benefits and identification documentation, and reliable, private communication.

DDS State Operated Facility Snapshot

Location	Census (Oct. 1)	Reported community placements	Other movement and transition updates
PDC	160	September: 0 October: 1	1 transfer to CS; 1 return from county jail to PDC; 1 placement from CS to PDC VAS catchment area
Canyon Springs	34	September: 3 October: 0	4 individuals on track for transition; 2 anticipated admissions from PDC tentatively accepted

Individual Advocacy and Positive Outcomes

Porterville Developmental Center

- **Safety and accountability** The RA completed two General Event Reports (GERs) after individuals reported verbal abuse by staff. Individuals received emotional support and welfare checks; the Protective Services Branch was notified and investigated. The submissions do not report investigative findings.
- **Health care choice** The RA and VAS Coordinator worked with social work staff on an individual's advance directive, reviewed the decisions with the individual, and witnessed the document to support an informed expression of end-of-life preferences.
- **Access to programs and representation** Following VAS intervention, an individual on the subacute unit resumed training three times weekly. Staff also assisted with Denial of Rights questions, contact with public defenders, family communication, and information about alternatives to conservatorship.
- **Inclusive services** Following an earlier rights-focused review concerning transgender and gender-nonconforming residents, RAP provided management with staff training options. Discussion with PDC and DDS about possible implementation remains forthcoming.

Canyon Springs

- **Community connections** Advocates continued contact with individuals after placements, including two individuals who moved to Los Angeles and are participating in day programs. Advocates reinforced coping skills practiced at CS and supported family reconnection, including helping an individual mail three letters seeking relatives.
- **Transition planning** VAS advocates participated in provider training, individual planning, and transition reviews. The RA reported that the final individual in the WIC 7505 commitment group transitioned to the community on September 15; four other individuals were identified as on track for transition. The RA also reported one active Denial of Rights and one Request for Release.
- **Individual engagement and choice** Advocates adapted visits and activities to individual communication needs and supported correspondence with family. The RA is collaborating with the dietitian on future education covering food choice, culturally acceptable diets, individualized meal planning, and self-advocacy.

Systemic Issues and RAP Follow-up

Priority	Reported issue/status	RAP response or next step
Community placement readiness	CS reports vague transition timeframes and gaps in qualified providers or staffing. PDC VAS addressed two delays involving Regional Center vendorization. Some improvement was reported.	Seek individualized timelines; continue Regional Center and provider coordination.
Benefits and identity documents	CS reports delays of six months or more in access to personal funds. PDC reports missing IDs or birth certificates and difficulties establishing SSI benefits.	Address documentation, payee arrangements, and benefit readiness before placement.
Reliable, private communication	Reported PDC payphone outages were resolved; free IT phones and privacy screens were ordered but not yet installed. Community phone issues and CS shift-related access barriers persist.	Monitor installation and preserve private contact with advocates, legal counsel, and families.
Oversight and specialized supports	PDC VAS reports late or missing provider SIRs and limited aging-related services. CS VAS reports improvement in access to provider video meetings.	Follow up on provider reporting, specialized services, and accessible meetings.
Inclusive, person-centered services	PDC received RAP training resources on supporting transgender and gender-diverse individuals with I/DD. CS nutritional-rights education is being planned.	Continue discussions about training and track person-centered practices.

RAP in Action

The following are counts reported separately by each site and staff function for September–October 2026. "—" means not separately reported, not zero.

Activity	PDC RA	PDC VAS	CS RA	CS VAS
IPP and special meetings	13	2	16	16
Transition meetings	0	37	—	21
Post-placement meetings	—	—	7	—
Provider trainings	—	—	—	39
Incident Action Team	16	2	—	0
Human Rights / Behavior Committee	16	0	2	1
Behavior-plan reconciliation meetings	7	—	—	—
Monthly HRC meetings	2	—	—	—
Denial of Rights reviews	11	1	—	—
Court attendance	0	0	6	10
Escort review committee	8	—	—	0
Individual Council meetings	—	—	4	—
Self-advocacy / People First meetings	1	0	—	2
New employee / block orientations	2	—	—	—
Orientation participant attendances	19 / 19	—	—	—
Staff trained by RA	3	—	11	—

Quality Assessment Project (QAP) Report
November 2026

Current Cycle: In-Person Survey (IPS)

The upcoming IPS cycle is scheduled to begin in January 2027. During this cycle, a random sample of individuals 18 years or older, receiving at least one regional center funded service in addition to case management, will be surveyed.

Respondents will be given the option to have their face-to-face survey conducted in-person at their preferred location or virtually using Zoom Healthcare.

The target for all 21 regional centers remains 400 each for a statewide goal of 8400 surveys.

To conduct these surveys, SCDD plans to contract with 150-200 surveyors statewide covering languages such as Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Vietnamese.

Trainings for all surveyors and Quality Assessment Coordinators (QACs) are being conducted through December 2026, implemented through live webinars and self-paced online training modules.

About National Core Indicators

National Core Indicators {NCI} strives to provide states with valid and reliable tools to help improve system performance and better serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

Through a contract with Department of Developmental Services {DDS}, State Council on Developmental Disabilities {SCDD}, using the NCI Survey tools, collects quantitative data on consumer satisfaction, provision of services, and personal outcomes. Data collection is completed through face-to-face interviews with consumers as well as mail-in surveys from families.

This data collection effort will enable DDS to evaluate the quality and performance of California's developmental disability service delivery system and among all 21 regional centers over time.

For RC results of past surveys go to:
https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/nci/

For more information about the NCI go to:
https://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/

Scan QR code below to go to QA Project Webpage
scdd.ca.gov/qap

QAC Regional Center Assignments

QAC: Sarah Wirrig
Support Staff: Jennifer Rosenfeld
Far Northern
Redwood Coast
North Bay

QAC: Ron Usac
Support Staff: Valerie Buell
East Bay
Golden Gate

QAC: George Lewis
Support Staff: Valerie Telles
Alta California
Central Valley
Valley Mountain

QAC: Esteban Ortiz
Support Staff: Vacant
Inland
Kern
San Diego

QAC: Jenny Villanueva
San Gabriel Pomona
Frank D. Lanterman
Westside

QAC: Lia Cervantes-Lerma
Eastern Los Angeles
South Central *Los Angeles*
Harbor

QAC: Patricia Jackson
North Los Angeles

Support Staff: Michele Wagner and Marina Bchtikian

QAC: Nancy Carlson-Zapata
Support Staff: Jessica Albarran
San Andreas
Orange County
Tri-Counties

NOVEMBER 17, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 9.
VOTE ITEM

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

2026 Program Performance Report (PPR)

This agenda item provides an overview of the 2026 Program Performance Report (PPR).

The Office on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD) requires State Councils to prepare an annual Program Performance Report (PPR) outlining outputs/outcomes/impacts accomplished in carrying out the activities of our 2022-2026 State Plan. The reports are due to the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD) each year for activities performed October 1 through September 30 of every federal fiscal year (FFY).

State Plan Committee Chair Jessica Brown, HQ Operations & State Plan Branch Chief David Delgado, and Manager of Data, Reporting, and Community Engagement Beth Hurn will present highlights of the 2025-2026 PPR outputs/outcomes/impacts. The PPR presentation will be provided as a handout. Councilmembers will vote on whether to approve the PPR.

Action Recommended
Approve the 2025-2026 Program Performance Report.

Handouts
2026 Program Performance Report (PPR) Presentation
May be additional handout(s) on the day of the meeting.

NOVEMBER 17, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 10.
INFORMATIONAL ITEM

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Year-End Discussion

Councilmembers will engage in an end-of-year discussion to reflect on accomplishments from the past year and express priorities and goals for the coming year as the Council concludes its work.

NOVEMBER 17, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 11.
INFORMATIONAL ITEM

STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

2027 Council and Committee Meeting Dates and Adjournment

The Council's next meeting will be held on January 27, 2026.

Handout
2027 Council and Committee Meeting Dates