

**NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL CENTER (NLACRC)
9200 OAKDALE AVENUE, SUITE 100
CHATSWORTH, CALIFORNIA**

**MINUTES OF THE VENDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
VIA TELECONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 7, 2024, 9:30 A.M.**

MEMBERS:

Alex Kopilevich, Jaklen Keshishyan, Jodie Agnew-Navarro, Octavia Watkins, Masood Babaeian, Paul Borda, Andrea Devers, Cal Enriquez, Ute Escorcia, Ricki Macken Chivers, Vahe Mkrtchian, Jen Pippard, Sharon Weinberg

STAFF:

Angela Pao-Johnson, Vini Montague, Arshalous Garlanian, Donna Rentsch, Belinda Abatesi, Geri Sue Cox, Kimberly Visokey, Arezo Abedi

GUESTS:

Mark Wolfe – DDS Tech Advisor, Sasha Chernik- Minute Solutions
Other than panelists, there were 82 other attendees.

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice of the meeting having been given, the meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m. Alex Kopilevich presided as Chair.

2. COMMITTEE MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Members were asked to identify themselves when speaking or making a motion.

3. AGENDA

There were no objections to the meeting agenda.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

5. CONSENT ITEMS

M/S/C (Masood Babaeian / Sharon Weinberg) to approve the minutes of the Vendor Advisory Committee meeting held on October 3, 2024, as amended.

ACTION – Kimberley Visokey will amend the minutes of the Vendor Advisory Committee meeting held on October 3, 2024.

6. DEPUTY DIRECTOR OFFICER'S REPORT

Arshalous Garlanian presented the Director Officer's report on behalf of Evelyn McOmie.

6.1 NLACRC Vendor Portal Updates

There are a total of 569 vendor IDs in the queue, 252 of which have been successfully onboarded onto the vendor portal. There are 107 IDs pending vendor acceptance, 143 are in the queue pending ID creations and 67 have been submitted with an error. Staff is following up on the invalid applications and will continue to onboard more vendors as applications are received.

6.2 POS Approval

There were 5,518 POS approvals in October of 2024 and increase from 4,433 in September of 2024. Per a question from Alex Kopilevich, Arshalous Garlanian confirmed that vendors can receive email notifications for POSs becoming available if they opt in in the portal.

ACTION – Per a question from Sharon Weinberg, Arshalous Garlanian will investigate if POSs for approval will be available before or after AAs are generated for residential providers.

6.3 Staffing Updates

Silvia Renteira-Haro has been promoted to Director of Client Services. Christine Pruse, Director of Consumer Services – Early Start School Age, will be retiring.

7. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Vini Montague presented the Chief Financial Officer's Report.

February 6, 2025, is the deadline for vendors to bill for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. This information is posted on the e-billing website.

DDS has announced that the e-billing service now has the capability for uploading attendance files. The NLACRC team is testing the functionality and piloting it with a small number of service providers before implementing it fully for everyone. Training info and FAQs will be provided once the service is released to all providers.

8. COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Arshalous Garlanian reviewed the Community Services Director's Report, highlighting certain items.

8.1 Rate Reform

The benchmark rate is changing to account for state minimum wage and mileage. The January, 2025, increase will be 90% of the difference between the rate in 2022 and the new benchmark rate. The remaining 10% will be reserved for the Quality Incentive Payment (QIP). NLACRC is currently working on Phase 2b, which is making updates to rates effective July, 2024, to incorporate the various rate increases to state minimum wage and mileage. NLACRC will send out rate letters to providers and is currently investigating providing the letters through the vendor portal. Vendors who are curious about where they are in the rate update process can reach out to their Contract and Compliance Representative for information.

The department postponed some of the trainings that were scheduled in October of 2024. The next training is on November 14, 2024. The registration information will be available on the department website.

8.2 Service Provider Directory

Step 1 of the Service Provider Directory project was completed in August of 2024, when providers were asked to provide their contact information. Step 2 is data validation; emails have been sent to all providers asking them to validate their information. The deadline to validate and be eligible for the 10% QIP tied to the rate reform is November 20, 2024. Once providers validate their information, regional centers are notified and will be approving or denying and reaching out for additional information. To date, 100 providers have completed the validation. Providers that have not received the validation email can contact the provider directory emails for DDS or NLACRC.

8.3 Employment Services

The Employment Specialist is working on the annual survey report due to the department on all Paid Internship Programs (PIPs) and Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) incentives. Providers should submit them shortly so they are reflected in the report.

8.4 Quality Incentive Program

NLACRC has received feedback from providers that they have not received information on whether they have been accepted for the incentives. Staff is following up with the department.

9. LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Belinda Abatesi introduced herself as the new Legislative Specialist at the NLACRC and reviewed the Legislative Report in the meeting package.

10. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Angela Pao-Johnson reviewed the Executive Director's Report in the meeting package and addressed some questions from the panelists.

AB 1147 will be coming into effect in stages, the portions NLACRC is currently working on will be enacted on January 1, 2025. The full bill will be enacted by January, 2026, according to the government website.

Multiple accounting positions have been added over the past year, including two new self-determination dedicated accountant, two new account payables specialists to support service provider payments, one position dedicated to understanding operations issues, an accounting assistant to support tracking issues and a senior accounts payables specialist to support authorization processing.

11. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

11.1 Return to In-Person Meetings

M/S/C (Jacklen Keshishyan / Sharon Weinberg) to return to monthly in-person meetings with no mandatory in-person attendance, rotating the NLACRC offices to host the meetings.

ACTION – Kimberley Visokey will update the meeting schedule and send out update calendar invites with locations.

11.2 New Service Provider Vendor Training and Mentorship Program Updates

Ricki Macken Chivers provided the new service provider vendor training update.

The following options have been discussed to obtain a perspective from the vendor community to make the onboarding of new vendors easier:

- Training to understand what the POS items are and what they stand for.
- Training to understand the process of obtaining signatures, including the various levels of management through the regional center departments and timelines.
- Training on the language and laws that are used by CSC's to approve or deny service requests.
- A mentorship program, including a resource list of vendor contacts new vendors can inquire with about a specific service code.
- Mandatory new vendor training before they submit their first RFP request on vendor obligations and responsibilities.
- Training to write appropriate goals when submitting assessments.

Members and providers who are interested in attending the next meeting about new vendor training and mentorship programs should contact Alex Kopilevich.

11.3 Self-Determination Update

Silvia Renteria-Haro presented the self-determination update.

As of November 1, 2024, there are 455 participants in self-determination and there were 30 transitions. Disability Voices United will host a virtual training tailored towards service coordinators on November 13, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

11.4 Call for New VAC Members

There are three open positions on the Vendor Advisory Committee. One person has expressed interest so far. Interested applicants should email Kimberly Visokey at BoardSupport@NLACRC.org.

11.5 VAC Members with Expiring Terms

Vendor Advisory Committee members with expiring terms at the end of the current fiscal year will be receiving a renewal interest application by the end of November of 2024, which they should resubmit if interested in reapplying.

12. OPEN TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

12.1 AB 1147

There is no consensus or clear information on how AB 1147 will impact vendors. Belinda Abatesi reported working closely with the legislative educator and the executive team to gather information.

ACTION – Belinda Abatesi will inquire with Michelle Hyde, Legislative Educator, about the impact of bill AB 1147 to vendors, and will provide an update at the next VAC meeting.

12.2 NLACRC Board Recognition

Jodie Agnew-Navarro presented the Board Recognition Policy and procedure in the meeting package. Kimberley Visokey noted that this information and deadlines will be posted on the website.

ACTION – The Board will add the Recognition Policy, deadlines, and submission requirements to the website.

12.3 Special Contract Language – Improving Relationships with the Community

Angela Pao-Johnson reported that the NLACRC will be setting up a small focus group of seven to nine vendors across different services and organization sizes to get opinions to help better address all stakeholders' needs. The focus group will help NLACRC better understand what functional implementations to leverage and what areas need improvement. Interested attendees were asked to leave their contact information during the meeting.

ACTION – Staff will contact interested vendors who left their information in the meeting chat to be part of the vendor focus group.

13. COMMITTEE WORK GROUP FINAL REPORTS

13.1 Early Start Services

Jodie Agnew-Navarro reported that there was no Early Start Services Committee meeting in October of 2024, and the next meeting will be on November 20, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

13.2 School Age Services

Cal Enriquez and Paul Borda reported that the School Age Services Committee had a meeting the week of October 24, 2024. Many new people have been invited to the Committee, expanding their reach within the community. The next meeting is on November 12, 2024.

Silvia Renteira-Haro will meet with the School Age Services Committee to discuss the self-determination process.

13.3 Adult Services

Octavia Watkins corrected previously provided information; the next meeting for the Adult Services Committee will be on November 18, 2024, at 11:00 a.m.

14. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

14.1 Administrative Affairs

Jaklen Keshishyan reported that the last Administrative Affairs Committee meeting was in September of 2024, and the next meeting will be on November 21, 2024.

14.2 Consumer Services

Sharon Weinberg reported that the last Consumer Services Committee meeting was in September of 2024, and the next meeting will be in November of 2024.

14.3 Government and Community Relations

Jodie Agnew-Navarro reported that the Government and Community Relations Committee is planning the legislative events for 2025, including the February Town Hall, April ARCA grassroots events, spring legislative breakfast, September voting rights event and October candidates' forum.

The Committee is introducing a letter writing campaign to new legislators to help them understand the NLACRC systems and build relationships. Staff is drafting those letters and the drafts and rollout plan will be shared at the next meeting.

The next meeting is on January 15, 2025.

14.4 Nominating

Alex Kopilevich reported that the Nominating Committee met on November 6, 2024 and discussed the application and interview process for the outstanding spots on the Board. December 15, 2024, is the last day for applications for the Board and for the Vendor Advisory Committee. The next meeting is on January 2, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

14.5 Strategic Planning

Octavia Watkins reported that the Strategic Planning Committee met on November 4, 2024, and summarized discussion points.

15. REVIEW OF MEETING ACTION ITEMS

The following action items were noted during the meeting:

ACTION – Kimberley Visokey will amend the minutes of the Vendor Advisory Committee meeting held on October 3, 2024.

ACTION – Per a question from Sharon Weinberg, Arshalous Garlanian will investigate if POSs for approval will be available before or after AAs are generated for residential providers.

ACTION – Kimberley Visokey will update the meeting schedule and send out update calendar invites with locations.

ACTION – Belinda Abatesi will inquire with Michelle Hyde, Legislative Educator, about the impact of bill AB 1147 to vendors, and will provide an update at the next VAC meeting.

ACTION – The Board will add the Recognition Policy, deadlines, and submission requirements to the website.

ACTION – Staff will contact interested vendors who left their information in the meeting chat to be part of the vendor focus group.

16. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next Board meeting agenda will include the updated meeting schedule and a separate Bill AB 1147 update item.

17. ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC INPUT

17.1 Caltech Conference

Jodie Agnew-Navarro noted that the Caltech Conference will be in Burbank in March, 2025, and the call for proposals is open to vendors, individuals with disabilities and NLACRC and other regional center staff.

18. NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Vendor Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled on January 9, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. at the NLACRC Chatsworth office.

19. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made and carried, it was agreed that there was no further business to transact; the meeting closed at 11:15 a.m.

DISCLAIMER

The above document should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

Submitted by:

Kimberly Visokey

Executive Administrative Assistant

(The majority of these minutes are taken from the Minutes Solutions submission and reviewed/edited as presented herein by NLACRC staff.*

