

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

September 28, 2022

Present: Ana Quiles (Chair), Alma Rodriguez, David Coe, Leticia Garcia, Lillian Martinez, Rocio Sigala

Liliana Windover, Liz Chavez, Vini Montague, Ruth Janka, Clarence Foster, Evelyn McOmie, Cristina Preuss, Dr. Michael Fernandez, Silvia Haro, Robert Dhondrup, Maddy Gonzalez, Malorie Lanthier – Staff Members

Leticia Garcia - Board Member, Sheila King, T Jones Newman, Isabel Romero-Interpreter, Azucena Bustillos- Interpreter, Jasmine Barrios-Minutes Services - Guests

Absent: Angelina Martinez

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Ana called the meeting to order at 7:42 pm.

II. Public Input

No public input

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda – (Page 2)

Vini Montague added Contracts: HCBS Funding Contract as Item M under Committee Business. Board Resolution to Remove Jesse Weller was added under Committee Business as Item O.

M/S/C (D. Coe/R. Sigala) To approve the agenda as revised.

B. Approval of Minutes of August 31st Meeting - (Page 9)

M/S/C (D. Coe/A. Rodriguez) To approve the August 31st Meeting Minutes as presented.

IV. Consumer Advisory Committee – Dr. Michael Fernandez (Page 4)

A. CAC Report - Highlights discussed at the August 3rd Committee Meeting:

- a. Employment opportunities and the discrimination that consumers in the LGBTQ+ community have experienced in the Antelope Valley. Dr. Fernandez will be collaborating with the Workforce Team to continue to increase opportunities, looking for paid internships and competitive employment, job placement and support.
- b. The lack of transportation available in the Antelope Valley, public transportation by bus is \$1.50 and two transfer is three dollars.
- c. The CAC would like to have a Consumer Advocate in the Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita locations.
- d. The group would like to have a presentation on adult consumers and how they can

prepare for their next phase of life, getting older, not being able to work. Concerns include who will take care of the clients and their parents who cared for them but are now unable to do so.

- e. Transitions to adulthood and the different paths, identifying options on preparing for the emergency events (fires, natural disasters, etc.)

There have been some items listed that have already been addressed by NLA, Ana Quiles recommended Dr. Fernandez/CAC review this report with NLA staff before the Executive Committee meeting to streamline the report to focus on what issues still need to be addressed.

B. ARCA - Ana Quiles (*Page 21*)

Ana shared that the ARCA Board Meeting Minutes and Director's report were provided for Committee Review as Angelina Martinez has stepped down from the ARCA Delegate position and does not have anything to report. Moving forward, Leticia Garcia will serve as the new ARCA delegate and will attend the next ARCA meeting.

C. Self-Determination Local Volunteer Advisory Committee- Rocio Sigala

Areas of concern that were noted include:

- a. SDP transition is not timely and not seamless
- b. Disparities are still present in SDP enrollment
- c. There is a lack of training for SDLAC committee members
- d. Currently, only one self-advocate sits on the SDLAC committee
- e. Coordinators take months to send POS, verify orientation attendance, to set up meetings for their person center planning (PCP).
- f. Unmet needs are difficult to authorize during a PCP presentation and often another meeting must be scheduled.
- g. RFPs and IPPs are not being paid on time by NLA
- h. The Committee also requested that the SDP Workbooks be printed in both English and Spanish

Ana asked what the process is to address concerns that are determined by the SDLAC Committee, Silvia Haro explained that a Best Practices Committee that meets bi-weekly reviews. This includes 2 members of the SDLAC Committee, Silvia, Gabriela Eshrati and Robin Monroe to address issues. An SDP Timeline has been created and posted on the website and CSCs have been notified of this timeline. She also noted that Disability Voices United is collaborating with the Committee on SDP Committee training.

Ana requested a time for her to sit with Rosie to review these concerns monthly and discuss the timelines for a resolution. Dr. Jesse Weller suggested addressing these concerns in the monthly SDP report for better tracking.

V. Committee Business

A. Annual Report on Whistleblower Compliance Activity - Ruth Janka

1. Employers Report - Clarence Foster
Clarence reviewed the report as presented. There was one allegation of bribing of a Board Member that was unsubstantiated as it was part of an ongoing scam on Facebook.
2. Providers Report - Evelyn McOmie
Evelyn reviewed the report as presented in the packet. She noted that all QA's are trained through an independent party prior to conducting an investigation. There were 8 total

whistleblowers for the reporting year. A new category was added to this report to identify any entities outside of NLA who were involved in an allegation. All reports are archived and details of the full report are held in high-confidentiality. In situations where an allegation is substantiated, NLA takes action with the Vendor that includes establishing a plan of correction. Of the 8 allegations listed in the report, 3 were listed as inconclusive, 1 were listed as unsubstantiated, 1 was deferred, 1 was listed as substantiated and 1 was listed as partially substantiated.

B. Update on NLACRC's 2022–2026 Strategic Plan– Ruth Janka

The sources of data for POS Expenditures have been determined and additional metrics are being created. A summary of the plan will be submitted to the Board in November and will be presented by Ami Sullivan from Kinetic Flow. NLA will also apply to the California Association for Performance Excellence in the HR Department.

C. Board and Committee Time and Attendance Requirements

1. Proposed Revision for Board Members Responsibilities Policy – Ruth (*Page 6*)

The proposed policy states that meeting attendance for Committee Members should be comprised of the member attending at least half the time of the duration of the meeting. Leticia Garcia noted that the average meeting time is 2-2.5 hours, and proposed that attendance should be at least 1 hour of the meeting.

M/S/C (L. Garcia/D. Coe) To amend the policy to include meeting attendance for members to be set at least 1 hour.

2. Committee Times (*Page 27*)– Liz Chavez

In order to be mindful of the time of the Committee/Board Members, Ana recommended that this document be reviewed by each Committee in order for them to determine their meeting timeframes, specifically how long the meeting will last to cover all the applicable areas within the stated time. The Consumer Services Committee determined a meeting time of 6:00 pm- 7:30 pm. Discussions on this item will continue.

D. DRAFT California State Auditor Findings Response Letter (*Page 8*)

Ruth reviewed the letter as presented in the packet. She is proposing the letter to identify each area where NLA had a finding in the report and what the response will be from NLA. The Committee is being asked to approve this letter for Board review before submission to DDS.

M/S/C (R. Sigala/A. Rodriguez) To approve the Response Letter for Board Review.

E. Conflict Resolution Plan For Rocio Sigala - Clarence Foster

Clarence reviewed this item as presented in the packet, there were no change to the plans from last year. Leticia Garcia noted that Rocio's sister, Belen Sigala, works for Helpful Hands on the Conflict Resolution Plan. However, on the COI Form that was submitted, reported Federico Vasquez was listed as the family member working for Helpful Hands. Rocio confirmed that it is Belen Sigala who is an employee at Helpful Hands and that it is no longer Federico Vasquez. Ruth stated that the COI Form will be revised to reflect the correct name before submission.

M/S/C (R. Sigala/A. Rodriguez) To approve the Resolution Plan and COI Form as revised.

F. Executive Director Evaluation Policy – Clarence Foster (*Page 12*)

Clarence stated that this document has been revised to include his new position title initials as CHRO, chief human resources officer, in Lieu of the previous acronym listed on the timeline as CODO.

M/S/C (L. Garcia/R. Sigala) To approve the Executive Director’s Evaluation Policy as revised.

G. CY23 Performance Contract

1. Update: Public Input/Meeting – Robert Dhondrop

This contract is a performance-based accountability system in which all Regional Centers are required to participate. Requirements include: 1 public meeting with at least 10 calendar day’s notice, surveys to collect feedback and the draft contract must be available to review prior to the public meeting. Also, according to the contract, one of the three following criteria items must be met:

- Outcome has improved over prior years baseline
- Performance exceeds the statewide average
- Performance equals a standard and defined by DDS.

Clarence reported that so far, 2 public meetings were held with 30 days’ notice on Sept 20th and 22nd in English and Spanish.

- Total Number attending 2022 Public Meeting: 52
- Total Number attending 2021 Public Meeting: 37
- Total Number attending 2020 Public Meeting: 26

Methods for promotion of the meeting include posting notices on the website, mailing postcards, News You Can Use, social media platforms and survey creation.

Topic Areas in Public Meeting Comments:

- Disparity and Equity: 1 question/comment
- Internships and Employment: 7 questions/comments
- Public Meeting Presentation: 3 questions/comments

After the meeting, a feedback survey was sent and the respondents to the survey included:

- Parent/Family Member: 18 English, 1 Spanish
- Consumer: 2 English, 0 Spanish
- Service Provider: 1 English, 0 Spanish
- Community Member: 0 English, 1 Spanish
- Resides in San Fernando Valley: 17 English, 2 Spanish
- Resides in Santa Clarita Valley: 3 English, 0 Spanish
- Resides in Antelope Valley: 2 English, 0 Spanish

Survey Results

The top 3 topics identified in the survey from English Respondents:

1. Make it easier to understand what services and supports are available 72.73%
2. Make it easier to get services and supports 68.18%
3. More access to services and supports to help people live on their own or meet their IPP goals 63.64%

The top 3 topics identified in the survey from Spanish Respondents:

1. Make it easier to navigate the regional center system 25%
2. More jobs, higher-paying jobs 25%
3. More access to services and supports to help people live on their own or meet their IPP goals 25%

The survey showed some disparities but will help the team tailor the survey and address the barriers listed.

David Coe asked what can be done to increase survey feedback. Out of 30,000 people, only 20 completed the survey which allows for very limited accuracy of the needs of the community. Robert suggested that smaller surveys be sent out to smaller groups in order to expand the sample size. Ana noted that one issue with survey completions is that families might not see the point if they are disconnected to when the concerns will be addressed. Ruth recommended making the survey a part of the meeting, taking time to address the survey and what the data will be used to encourage participation.

H. Board and Committee List Update - Ana Quiles (*Page 14*)

Ana reviewed the revisions as presented in the packet. Leticia Garcia will serve as the ARCA Delegate, opening the position for ARCA Alternate. Rocio Sigala will continue to serve on the Board and Consumer Services Committee, but will no longer serve on the Administrative Affairs and Government/Community Relations Committees. Angelina Martinez will serve in the areas left vacant by Rocio.

Leticia recommended replacing Dr. Weller on the Strategic Planning Committee with Evelyn McOmie upon his departure.

M/S/C (L. Martinez/D. Coe) To approve the list as revised for presentation to the Board.

I. FY2021-22 Board vs Expenditures – Vini Montague (*Page 15*)

Vini reviewed this information as presented in the packet. This is only an update, there are no action items for the Committee on this item.

J. FY2022-23 Board Budget – Vini Montague (*Page 16*)

Vini reviewed this information as presented in the packet. This is only an update, there are no action items for the Committee on this item.

K. Establish Quarterly Off-Site Meeting– Ana Quiles

This item was reviewed as an agenda item in the Administrative Affairs Committee. It was determined to combine quarterly off-site meetings between the Administrative Affairs and Executive Committees to be held on the last Thursday or Friday of the quarter.

L. Executive Memo 637 Proposal Form Social Recreation FMS

Ana reviewed the memo as presented. The Committee is being asked to vote to finalize and post this memo to the NLA Website and submit to DDS.

M/S/C (R. Sigala/L. Martinez) To approve the Memo to DDS as presented.

M. Approval of Contract - Vini Montague

HCBS Funding FY2021-2022 Compliance Services Agreement

POS Contract – Provides assistance in broader community work that promotes HCBS compliance

2-year contract effective September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2024

Projected total contract amount is \$284,109

M/S/C (R. Sigala/D. Coe) To approve the Funding as presented.

N. Board Resolution: Remove Jesse Weller from Financial Accounts

In light of the upcoming departure of Dr. Jesse Weller from NLA, the Committee made one motion to remove Dr. Jesse Weller from all applicable financial accounts.

M/S/C (L. Martinez/A. Rodriguez) To approve the removal of the signing approval for Dr. Jesse Weller from all applicable financial accounts as presented.

VI. Center Operations – Ruth Janka

Regional Center Staffing - Ruth recognized Dr. Jesse Weller for all of his work at NLA. Dr. Weller will be leaving NLA to serve as the Executive Director for the San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center. Dr. Weller started with NLA 5 years ago as a CSC Director, Chief Program Director and finally, Deputy Director. He has worked tirelessly and has done a fantastic job. He has served as Ruth's right hand for the past 5 years; he will be greatly missed. Dr. Weller expressed his thanks to Ruth, NLA staff, Board Members and the community for the support and guidance. He will miss everyone but is excited for this new journey.

Ruth stated that at this current time, she does not intend to recruit for the Deputy Director position and that the duties will be reorganized. Evelyn McOmie will supervise Consumer Services Directors (Gabriela Eshrati, Cristina Preuss and Jazmin Zinnerman) and focus on Case Management. Kim Rolfesis interested in contracting with NLA for Community Services consultation/support. Ruth will also be providing support herself in regards to Community Services. Dr. D'Antonio will supervise the Clinical aspect of the Deputy Director position and this reorganization will begin and re-evaluated as needed.

The Consumer Services Director Position for Adults/Transition in position is currently open as Jazmin Zinnerman will be pursuing other endeavors and will leave NLA on October 6th. A Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist candidate has reached the background phase of the hiring process. Upon completion, the candidate will begin onboarding within the next few weeks. HR is currently evaluating the accommodation needs for this candidate.

Staff Engagement/Retention - NLA continues to view staffing as a top priority. All staff members can and should be involved in Staff Retention. Leadership can help support their staff by engagement. Coffee meetings will be held bi-monthly in a smaller setting with Ruth. A Let's get Connected Event will be held at each location, a 15–30-minute icebreaker to allow staff to get reacquainted with each other. Since COVID, there has been a lost sense of connection amongst staff. Multiple ideas for events to engage with staff are in progress.

DDS sent a Consumer Electronic Records Management System Project Team to NLA for a visit. The purpose was for NLA staff to provide information on what will be helpful when designing the new ERM system. Ruth will provide updates as they become available. She noted that a Consumer Software may be necessary as the 5-year rollout looms. Malorie Lanthier will be identifying software that can support Case Management.

The California Early Childhood Special Education Network Needs Program sent a response to NLA's submission. Although they were very impressed with the center, NLA was not selected to participate in the program.

Cultural Competency Training - Inclusion Equity and Diversity Policy provides for quarterly training. The training for Quarter 1 was held for staff and service providers/staff on Implicit Bias. The Training for Quarter 2 will be focused on LGBTQ+ community and is being coordinated by Dr. Fernandez and Cristina Preuss and will take place by December.

Housing Training for Staff - Case Management Supervisors will attend a training on October 3rd and the Consumer Advisory Committee in November.

HCBS Remediation Consultant- An RFP was put out to help providers with HCBS Final Rule Compliance, but has received no proposals. Consumer Services has asked DDS to reallocate the funding for consultants to provider training. The training on person-centered thinking and universal lifestyles training will take place once the allocation is approved by DDS.

Town Halls - At the September Town all: Parent Perspective Early Start. There were 17 attendees and went well. October's Town Hall will also be a Parent Panel focused on School-Age Services on October 20th at 1:30pm.

Language Access and Cultural Competency - Bridging Voices, the consultant has submitted a proposal for assessing language access needs in the community. The information collected will allow NLA to develop a plan to for further Language Access.

Community Engagement - Ruth recently met with the CEO of New Horizons to discuss their future plans. New Horizons currently employ 385 individuals served by regional centers and seek to increase that number to 2,000 individuals by 2027. The Go-for -Grocery Program helps prepares individual for working in stores and New Horizons is in the process of meeting with several grocery stores to explore this opportunity.

Circle of Hope Event - Ruth attended the event held by Tierra del Sol. The campus includes various animals and several art studios where artwork is being prepared for exhibition and sale. A new gallery has been opened in Chinatown and in the San Gabriel Regional Center catchment area. Individuals are employed and selling their artwork.

Family Promises Center - This is an organization helps supports individuals and families who have become homeless. At their annual charity event, Ruth met with Suzette Valladares, assembly member. She and Ruth will be meeting to discuss how she can help with advocating in legislation.

Self- Determination - DDS has been issuing guidance on funding to support self-determination. \$80,078.71 has been allocated to self-identify non-white consumer specific funding to help support transition into Self-Determination. Priorities are recruitment of independent facilitators, joint training to increase self-advocates, spending plan development and collaborative groups and workshops.

Adjustments to Individual Budgets - Budgets can be increased or decreased depending on a decrease in State Minimum rate.

SDP Participation - as of September 1st, there are 137 participants, 172 Certified Budgets with 24 in-progress.

New DDS Directive - DDS is rescinding the directive that allowed for PA, ILS, and supported employment through participant directed services because it is now in regulation.

COVID Statistics - Hospitalization and Positivity rates are continuing to decrease. Ruth received feedback in regards to the staff masking survey. NLA is not unmasking at this time but is evaluating the comfort level for in-person events. According to the survey about 2/3 of staff would be comfortable with in-person masked events and 1/3 noted they were not comfortable. NLA will continue to align with California Public Health on this issue.

Dr. Weller Farewell Dinner - Ana Quiles shared that a Farewell Dinner for Dr. Weller will be held September 29th at 6pm at Newhall Press Room

VII. Review of Meeting Action Items

- A. CAC Report Out - Provide feedback on how concerns are being addressed internally (Dr. Michael Fernandez)
- B. SDLAC - Implement a strategy to include and address concerns and current SDP Implementation Report (Evelyn McOmie)
- C. Revise the Board Responsibilities to specify requirements for 1 hour attendance, provide the Committee Meeting Time Averages to Committee Chairs to review (Ruth Janka/Liz Chavez)
- D. Conflict Resolution Plan - update plan to reflect Belen Sigala as the employee for Helping Hands (Clarence Foster)
- E. Revise the Committee List to replace Dr. Jesse Weller with Evelyn McOmie for the Strategic Planning Committee (Liz Chavez)

VIII. Board Meeting Agenda Items

The following items were identified for the committee's section of the June 8th Board Meeting agenda:

- A. Minutes of the September 28th Meeting
- C. FY2021-22 Board vs. Expenditures
- D. FY2022-23 Board Budget
- E. Board Resolutions/Contracts
- F. Board Resolutions to remove Jesse Weller as an authorized signor

IX. Announcements / Information Items / Public Input

- A. Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 26th at 7:45 pm
- B. Committee Attendance (Page 23)
- C. FFRC Taller Basico de IEP, October 4th at 11:00 am
- D. Self-Determination Support Group, October 5th, 6:00 pm
- E. Black & African American Support Group, October 5th, 6:30 pm
- F. FFRC Transicion Secundaria, October 7th, 1:00 am
- G. Virtual Alianza de Hombres, October 11th, 7:00 pm
- H. FFRC Mamas Latinas Support Group, October 12th, 11:00 am
- I. Virtual Cafecito Entre Nos, October 13th, 11:00 am
- J. FFRC IEP Basic Workshop, October 14th, 11:00 am
- K. Parent Check-In & Chat Support Group, October 16th, 12:30 pm
- L. Filipino Support Group, October 17th, 6:30 pm
- M. NLACRC Self-Advocacy Group Meeting, October 18th, 10:45 am
- N. Virtual Aprendiendo Entre Nos/Learning Amongst Us, October 20th, 10:00 am
- O. Virtual Town Hall: Parent Perspective–School Age Svcs, October 20th, 1:30 pm
- P. Cultivar y Crecer, October 28th, 6:30 pm

X. Adjournment

Ana Quiles, Committee Chair, adjourned the meeting at 9:54 p.m.

Submitted by:

(*) *Maddy Gonzalez*

Executive Administrative Assistant

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