

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Government & Community Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

May 17, 2023

Present: Andrew Ramirez, Nicholas Abrahms, Rocio Sigala, Brian Gatus, Cathy Blin, Jordan Feinstock, George Alvarado, Sharmila Brunjes – Committee Members

Ruth Janka, Liliana Windover, Crish Whitlock, Cristina Preuss, Gabriela Eshrati, Evelyn McOmie, Hailey Lauderdale – Staff Members

Michelle Heid – Legucator, Leticia Garcia- Board Member, Ana Quiles - Board President, Anthony - Coach for George Alvarado, Jasmine Barrios- Minutes Services - Guests

Absent: Sylvia Brooks-Griffin

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Jordan Feinstock, Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

Jordan introduced himself as the current Committee Chair, the former Chair and Vice-Chair of the NLA Self-Determination, and current Board of Trustees Member.

The Committee Members and NLA staff introduced themselves.

II. Public Input

No public input

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

Ruth added Item #: Board Recognition application for Rocio Sigala and Josefina Romo under Committee Action Items. All subsequent items were moved down accordingly.

M/S/C (A. Ramirez/A. Quiles) To approve the agenda as revised

B. Approval of Minutes from the March 15th Meeting

M/S/C (B. Gatus/A. Ramirez) To approve the March 15th meeting

IV. Legucator Report – Michelle Heid

A. April Report

Michelle reviewed this item as presented in the packet. Highlights include:

Legislative Update

As we enter April, the California Legislature is working hard with bill and budget hearings happening daily. During bill hearings, committees are hearing the over 2,600 bills that have been introduced since the beginning of the session in December 2022.

California Budget

On January 10th, Governor Newsom released his \$296.9 billion spending plan (\$223.6B in General Funds, \$70.4B in special funds & 2.9B in bond funds) for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, 1111Page 2 of 12 Engaging and Empowering the Disability Community which runs from July to June. Governor Newsom is projecting a \$22.5 billion shortfall that his administration

will attempt to solve through a series of trigger cuts, delays or deferral of spending authorized in earlier budgets, and withdrawals or reductions of planned one-time spending.

Coordinated Family Support Service

DDS has released a directive with information about Coordinated Family Support (CFS) services, specifically designed for adults who are 18 years and older, choose to live in their family home and are served by a regional center. The new service option will help reduce or remove barriers to staying in the family home, and provide adults with assistance with coordinating services and supports to develop skills in home, access “generic services”, and gain access to their communities.

DS Task Force

The DS Task Force provides guidance on the delivery of services to Californians who have intellectual and developmental disabilities. 42 individuals serve on the full DS Task Force while an additional 115 serve on the 5 Task Force Workgroups (Community Resources, Oversight, Accountability and Transparency, Safety Net, Service Access & Equity, and System & Fiscal Reform).

Governor Newsom Proposes Modernization of CA's Behavioral Health System

Governor Newsom proposed a 2024 ballot initiative to improve how California treats mental illness, substance abuse, and homelessness: A bond to build state-of-the-art mental health treatment residential settings in the community to house Californians with mental illness and substance use disorders and to create housing for homeless veterans, and modernize the 1717Page 8 of 12 Engaging and Empowering the Disability Community Mental Health Services Act to require at least \$1 billion every year for behavioral health housing and care.

ARCA Grassroots Day - March 29th, 2023

Many from the NLACRC community participated in ARCA Grassroots Day on Wednesday, March 29th, 2023 where they were able to meet with ten of the state legislators in the NLACRC catchment area. The teams were often joined by regional centers that share areas with the legislator. During the meetings they were able to share their experiences with legislators and their staff. The discussion focused on ARCA's Advocacy Key Points including modernization of the Core Staffing Formula, support for AB 649 (Wilson) which repeals a prohibition on regional centers from purchasing some services that would otherwise be available through other sources (e.g., Medi-Cal, Medicare, private insurance, and dental services), support for provider rate reform, and support for repealing fees on families (e.g., Annual Family Program Fee and Family Cost Participation Program).

Assemblymember Dr. Joaquin Arambula's Budget Request

RC's Core Staffing Formula sharing The Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) announced that Assemblymember Dr. Joaquin Arambula (D31) has championed a request to modernize DDS's Core Staffing Formula and fund additional regional center service coordinators. This Budget request of \$64.6 million from the General Fund on an ongoing basis will help reduce caseloads, stabilize caseload ratios, and help all Californians with developmental disabilities, particularly those from diverse communities, receive the care that they deserve and is promised by the Lanterman Act. Assemblyman Arambula chairs Budget Subcommittee 1 on Health and Human Services. Read his request to the Budget Committee at the link above.

B. May Report

Michelle reviewed this item as presented in the packet. Highlights include:

Legislative Update

As we enter May, we are closing in on the release of the May Revise which will include revisions to the Governor's 2023-2024 Budget which was released in January. This year's budget process will be unlike the typical budget process in CA due to the extended tax deadline for many California residents. In all but three counties in the state, the tax deadline was extended due to unrelenting winter storms and is now October 15th. This means that the budget process will likely last throughout the session and may require additional early budget action when the legislature reconvenes in 2024. The Legislature will still need to meet all constitutional requirements regarding the budget which means that the budget bill will need to be passed by June 15th.

Fun Fact

In 2010 California voters passed Proposition 25, requiring state legislators to forfeit pay when they do not pass a budget by the June 15th constitutional deadline. This proposition also changed the two-thirds majority vote to a simple majority. Since enactment, the legislature has not missed a June 15th deadline. This year's process may look a little different due to the extended tax filing deadline for many Californians. "We're going to have to make more projections and assumptions because the cash we could normally have in the bank in April, we're not going to receive until mid-October," said H.D. Palmer, spokesman for Gov. Gavin Newsom's Department of Finance. Last year, the state brought in \$25 billion in personal income tax revenue in April. Palmer said in typical tax years, April accounts for about 15-20% of the personal income tax collected by the state.

DSP Workforce Survey

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is collecting data from agencies that employ Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) about factors that impact the workforce. The DSP workforce is experiencing challenges such as high turnover and vacancy rates, which can affect the lives of individuals needing support. Stakeholders have expressed support for learning more about the employment of DSPs to inform policy changes, designing recruitment and retention efforts, and examining the impact of rate increases over time. The data collection effort will collect data, through an online survey, on vendor agencies' direct service professionals (DSPs) for calendar year 2022 and will establish baseline information from which DDS, agencies and stakeholders may assess challenges, evaluate the impact of existing initiatives and shape future policies to improve workforce stability. The 2023 DSP Workforce Data Collection will begin in early May 2023. Registration is required to participate. Vendor agencies who are eligible to participate in the data collection and complete the survey in its entirety will receive an \$8000 incentive after the data collection has ended.

Little Hoover Commission

The Little Hoover Commission is an independent California state oversight agency, and recently conducted an extensive study of California's Department of Developmental Services system (DDS). The Commission released its report, "A System in Distress: Caring for Californians with Developmental Disabilities" in which it highlighted ongoing disparities and inconsistencies in service quality and availability among racial and ethnic groups and geographic areas. The report also outlines seven recommendations, urging California's legislature to take action to expand state oversight of the 21 regional centers, and to establish more consistent policies and procedures across them.

Little Hoover Commission - Senator Scott Wilk Appointed

Senator Scott Wilk-(R), District 21, has been appointed by the Senate Rules Committee to serve on the Little Hoover Commission. The Commission is an independent California state oversight agency whose work involves researching and evaluating the structure, operation, and function of state government departments, agencies, and the executive branch. Their 3030 Page 9 of 11 Engaging and Empowering the Disability Community recommendations aim to improve program outcomes, increase government transparency, reduce spending without sacrificing services, eliminate duplication or wasteful practices, and to consolidate services or abolish, create, and reorganize government to better meet the needs of Californians.

V. Committee Business

Action Items

A. NLACRC Grassroots and Legislative Activities update – Ruth Janka

Ruth shared that there has not been any further formal grassroots/legislative activities planned at this time. There are several legislators who were invited to the Board Dinner, 3 have declined, 1 has confirmed and the rest are pending responses.

In regards to the Doodle survey that measured responses on legislative priorities, there will need to be a re-do as the account with which the results were collected was a personal account, not an NLA account. With the departure of Robert Dhondrup, there has not been a way for NLA to access the survey results.

B. Discussion of Meeting Schedule for FY23-24 – Jordan Feinstock

The Committee engaged in discussion related to meeting frequency. It was determined to continue the meetings on a bimonthly basis with considerations to be made on emergency sessions on a case-by-case basis. It was noted that due to pre-determined months when NLA goes dark, that there will be an extended period of time without a meeting. As a work around, the Committee agreed to hold special sessions and e-mail correspondence if needed.

M/S/C (B. Gatus/A. Ramirez) To approve the continuation of a bimonthly Committee meeting schedule for FY23-24. The motion passed with 1 opposition from Jordan Feinstock.

C. Draft Committee Critical Calendar for FY23-24

The selected calendar would be the bimonthly format. The calendar will also be revised to include the Board Recognition policy submission deadline as discussed.

M/S/C (J. Feinstock/C. Blin) To approve revisions to the Critical calendar to include a bimonthly format and the addition of the Board Recognition application deadline submission to be March 1st.

D. Board Recognition Policy submission deadline – Ruth Janka

Ruth reviewed the policy as presented in the packet. The purpose of this policy is to guide the board in its efforts to recognize individuals who have made a distinguishable contribution in the lives of people with developmental disabilities. The board may choose to recognize individuals as follows:

- Award a plaque
- Pass a resolution
- Send a letter

The highest award is a plaque, followed by a resolution, then a letter.

The committee may consider an individual's application for recognition that is submitted by a person knowledgeable about the individual's contributions. The application must be complete and be accompanied by a letter(s) of recommendation. The committee, at its discretion, may vote to recommend to the full board that the individual be recognized for his/her contributions. The committee's recommendation will include the type of recognition as mentioned above. The board, by a majority vote of members present at a regularly scheduled meeting, may pass a motion for the center to recognize the individual for his/her contributions.

The Committee is being asked to determine submission deadlines and voting dates to include in the revised Critical Calendar for presentation at the annual Board Dinner. It was proposed that the deadline for submissions be March 1st. The Committee will review the applications and discuss at the March meeting for proposal to the Board. The policy will be revised and emailed to the Committee for an e-mail vote for Board approval.

M/S/C (J. Feinstock/A. Ramirez) To revise the policy to include a March 1st submission deadline for FY23-24.

E. Board Recognition Application for Rocio Sigala and Josefina Romo- Ruth Janka

The Committee reviewed the application that was submitted for Rocio Sigala and Josefina Romo. The application included reference letters and noted Rocio and Josefina's work with the AV Seed and Grow programs and how it has made a positive impact in the Antelope Valley for 18 years. In addition to holiday events catered to individuals from disabilities, Rocio and Josefina have worked on social skills gatherings and has interfaced with cities to provide them with grants for swimming lessons, etc. They have also received recognition from Senator Tom Lackey's office for assistance in organizing volunteers for programs. Sharmila Brunjes proposed that the Committee orders an individual plaque for Rocio and Josefina to be presented at the Board Dinner. IN the event that the plaque is not ordered in time for a June presentation, that a letter be presented to inform them that a plaque was ordered.

M/S/C (A. Ramirez/S. Brunjes) To recognize Rocio Sigala and Josefina Romo with an individual letter and plaque at the June Board Dinner, for their work with the disability community.

F. Social Media – Chris Whitlock

1. Social Media Analytics March 2023

Chris reviewed the report as presented in the packet.

Twitter

Daily Exposure: 4,037

Post Engagement: 38

Reach: 20,868

Total Followers: 474

Tweets Sent: 198

Instagram

Followers Gained: 53

Total Followers: 498

Posts: 194

Facebook

Post Impressions: 9,271

Page Reach: 4,063
Total Impressions: 14,400
Total Engagement: 402

2. Social Media Analytics April 2023
Chris reviewed the report as presented in the packet.

Twitter

Daily Exposure: 3,774
Post Engagement: 26
Reach: 20,229
Total Followers: 474
Tweets Sent: 169

Instagram

Followers Gained: 40
Total Followers: 538
Posts: 169

Facebook

Post Impressions: 7,489
Page Reach: 3,207
Total Impressions: 8,554
Total Engagement: 367

G. Legislative Update - Ruth Janka

1. FY23-24 Legislative Bills– Ruth Janka

The bills identified by the Committee as legislative priorities via the Doodle poll are no longer available to NLA as the results were collected on a personal account. The Committee was asked to discuss the listed bills and to propose the bills for which NLA is being requested to provide a letter of support. After discussion, the following was determined:

SB 299 (Eggman) Medi-Cal redetermination

As part of the process when County's verify eligibility for Medi-Cal participation, current law states that they be mailed a form that is required to be mailed back. If this mail gets bounced back by the Post Office as "undeliverable" they are automatically cut from Medi-Cal. This legislation will end this auto drop outcome.

M/S/C (S. Brunjes/A. Ramirez) To add SB299 Eggman to the Legislative Priorities list

AB 649 (Wilson) Developmental Services

This bill would delete the prohibitions on regional center purchases for services that would otherwise be available from Medi-Cal, Medicare and private insurance and delete regional centers from purchasing medical or dental services for a consumer 3 years or older unless provided with documentation from Medi-Cal, private insurance or healthcare service plan denial.

M/S/C (A. Ramirez/C. Blin) To add AB649 Wilson to the Legislative Priorities list

AB 1147

The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act makes the State Department of Developmental Services responsible for providing various services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities, and for ensuring the appropriateness and quality

of those services and supports. Pursuant to that law, the department contracts with regional centers to provide services and supports to persons with developmental disabilities. This bill would enact the Disability Equity and Accountability of 2023, which would make various changes to the act for purposes including gathering relevant data and providing increased oversight of regional center operations and performance. The bill would require an evaluation of regional center performance by the department, which would be implemented using a common set of performance measures. The bill would require the assessments to use performance measures in 7 specific domains: community integration, employment, equity in access, case management, client and family choice, experience and satisfaction, human and civil rights, and health and safety. The bill would require the department to establish standards for these performance measures, as specified, by July 1, 2024. The bill would require the department, in consultation with stakeholders, including consumers and family members, to annually establish, update, and review a uniform process to be used by regional centers to develop corrective action plans that respond to below standard performance. The bill would require the department to oversee the process to develop a corrective action plan and assess corrective action undertaken by a regional center.

M/S/C (J. Feinstock/A. Ramirez) To add AB1147 to the Legislative Priorities list

AB 1588 (Wilson) - Affordable internet and Net Equality Act of 2023- Provides for increased access to high-speed, low-cost internet.

M/S/C (S. Brunjes/C. Blin) To add AB1588 to the Legislative Priorities list. The motion passed with 1 opposition from J. Feinstock.

SB 37 (Caballero) - Housing support grants – Creates (upon appropriation) a grant program to fund housing for older adults and adults with disabilities, including a specific reference to the Lanterman definition, who are “at risk” of homelessness. “At risk” is defined based off of income/expenses.

M/S/C (A. Ramirez/ S. Brunjes) To add SB37 Caballero to the Legislative Priorities list. The motion passed with 1 opposition from J. Feinstock.

SB 445 (Portantino) IEP translation Expands “parent” to include guardian rights holder and requires LEAs ensure the parent has language access.

M/S/C (A. Ramirez/ B. Gatus) To add SB445 Portantino to the Legislative Priorities list. The motion passed with 1 opposition from J. Feinstock.

AB 447 (Arambula) Inclusive college education Would create inclusive pilots at California public universities and request UCs to serve college students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

M/S/C (S. Brunjes/ G. Alvarado) To add AB447 Arambula to the Legislative Priorities list. The motion passed with 1 opposition from J. Feinstock.

The Committee requested more information on AB 1157 (Ortega) - DME repair coverage- Would expand existing coverage mandates for durable medical equipment to include fixing said equipment. Ruth will provide to the Committee. Michelle Heid will also help provide more information on the selected bills. It was also proposed that at future meetings where

bills are selected, that Michelle Heid be present to provide more information to the Committee.

H. Local Grassroots Marketing and Outreach - Cristina Preuss

Cristina reviewed the information as presented in the packet. Cristina included all of the activities done by different members of the DEIB Team and DEIB specialist. The team has been very active, there were 634 individuals reached this month. The highlight of the month was the participation in the West Valley Day of Help Event, hosted by Assembly Member Jesse Gabriel, from which NLA received a Certificate of Recognition.

There is also an MOU being developed with the Eastside Union School District per their requirements. Life After High School events have been successful in all 3 locations.

VI. Review of Meeting Action Items (Item Owner and Due Date)

- A. Committee Action Log
- B. Send a link for the Board Recognition Application for Rocio Sigala and Josefina Romo to the Committee for vote via email (Ruth Janka)
- C. Amend Board Recognition Policy to include a March 1st application submission deadline, to be reviewed by the Committee at the March meeting. (Ruth Janka)
- D. Amend Critical Calendar to add Board Recognition application review in March (Ruth Janka)
- E. Add the discussed bills to the Legislative Priorities (Ruth Janka)
- F. Send more information to the Committee on AB1157 (Ruth Janka0)

VII. Board Meeting Agenda Items

- A. Minutes of the May 17th Meeting
- B. Draft Critical Calendar for FY23-24

VIII. Announcements / Information / Public Input

- A. Next Meeting: TBD
- B. Committee Attendance

Public Input

Gabriela Eshrati shared that the Transition Fair will be taking place on Thursday, May 25th from 6pm-8pm at the Lancaster office. The Transition Fair will be for individuals transitioning out of high school to adulthood and will help provide resources and next steps.

IX. Adjournment

Jordan Feinstock adjourned the meeting at 8:24 pm.

Submitted by:

(*) *Hailey Lauderdale*
Executive Administrative Assistant

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