

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
 August 1, 2024

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

Cristina Preuss, Evelyn McOmie, Vini Montague, Donna Rentsch, Arshalous Garlanian, Chris Whitlock, Emmanuel Gutierrez, Geri Sue Cox, Arezo Abedi, Ana Maria Parthenis-Rivas – **Staff Members**

Michelle Heid – Legucator, – **Guests**

Other than panelists, there were 66 other attendees.

Absent: Vahe Mkrtchian, Daniel Ortiz, Lisa Williamsen

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Alex Kopilevich, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

II. Public Input

Public input was given.

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

M/S/C (Masood Babaeian / Sharon Weinberg)

B. Approval of Minutes from May 2nd, 2024

Action item / Board Support:

Update the meeting minutes as discussed:

Sharon suggested the following edits to Minutes:

Pg. 4 - Director's Report: Everything, should be: Everyone.

Pg. 7 - 1st paragraph: It would likely be one, should say: Administrator and others to be assigned.

Pg. 8

- Vendorization Reminder. "rootstodevelopment@nlacrc.org" should be resourcedevelopment@nlacrc.org.

- Employment services: "finding an assistant" should be finding assistance.

- There were upcoming "PNI" should be P & I

- "special incident and mitigation" add – risk before the word mitigation.

M/S/C (Sharon Weinberg / Masood Babaeian) To approve the Minutes as amended.

IV. Committee Information – Alex Kopilevich

A. Board Committee List and VAC Roster

Alex reviewed the Board Committee List and the VAC Roster

B. VAC Priority Outcomes

Cristina Preuss confirmed for the Committee that the VAC Priority Outcomes document has not been reviewed or updated since 2022-23. She further clarified that the Committee should consider review for updating at a future meeting.

Action Item: To add a review of the VAC Priority Outcomes to a future VAC Agenda – *Alex Kopilevich*

C. Board of Trustees: VAC Primary Activities

Alex explained to the Committee what their Primary Activities are.

V. Fiscal Information – Vini Montague, NLACRC Chief Financial Officer

Vini Montague reviewed for the committee the various types of financial reports that she presents to this committee, including the following:

Monthly Summary Report:

This report shows NLACRC's Operations breakdown of expenditures. This includes Salaries, Operating Expenses, funding received for Special Projects, Purchase of Services, and CPP funding.

Monthly Summary Detailed Report:

Includes details of what is rolled up into the Monthly Summary Report. This includes items like a breakdown of allocations, operation expenditures, etc.

Consolidated Report:

This report breaks down the details by the types of services, types of operation expenditures, etc.

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Vini also reported on the Preliminary Allocation Comparison for FY 2025 vs. 2024. She explained that this report gives a comparison of the allocations received in the previous year against what is expected for the new year. This report gives us an idea of what to expect for base operations.

VI. Consumer Services – Evelyn McOmie, Deputy Director**Service Standards:**

NLACRC's Service Standards for Social Rec were approved by DDS on July 29, 2024. These now reflect services and supports necessary for each individual that shall be made through the Individual Program Plan process or the Individualized Family Service Plan process for Early Start program eligible children. The individual shall not be required to use the least costly provider if it will result in the individual moving from an existing provider of services or supports to more restrictive or less integrated services or supports.

NLACRC's outreach plan was also approved by DDS to include the following activities, dissemination of information to the community, continuing local grassroots marketing and outreach, continuing provider outreach for vendors, ongoing service coordinator training for the purpose of disseminating information and discussing the availability of social recreation, camp, non-medical therapies, and educational services to individuals served and families, and continuing efforts to increase access to social recreation, camp, non-medical therapies, and educational services including a streamlined vendorization process for entities not already vendored with the regional center.

Vendor Portal Update:

NLACRC vendor Portal pilot in progress with service providers. Portal images of the progress were shared during the meeting.

Staff Recognition:

NLACRC has a Staff recognition process within the organization to highlight all the positive feedback of our staff and to recognize them for it. Thank you to those of you who have taken the time to share with us positive feedback about our staff. We appreciate it and want to let you know it helps acknowledge our employees for doing a great job.

VII. Community Services Director's Report – Arshalous Garlanian

Arshalous gave a brief overview of what her monthly report will include before reviewing this month's report. She also took this time to remind vendors of the Service Provider Directory statewide project and that they are currently in the "data collection" phase (July 17th through August 15th).

Vendors were encouraged to complete the online survey at <https://forms.office.com/g/8M3J2m471J>

DSP Training Stipend program

<https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Enclosure-B-DSP-Training-Stipend-Program-FAQs-FINAL.pdf>. Each DSP can receive up to two \$625 stipends and \$150 reimbursement for provider's administrative costs. DSP are eligible to take training through extended deadline of August 31, 2024.

Vendor Fair- Save the Date

- Chatsworth office: 9/24 & 9/25
- Antelope office: 9/26
- Eventbrite registration will open August 5th.

Vendor Support Forum

Next Vendor Support Forum will be Thursday, August 15th 10:30 am. Please submit questions/agenda topics to CRomero@nlacrc.org by August 9th.

HCBS Final Rule Compliance:

NLACRC continues to conduct on-site reviews of all HCBS settings. For residential settings, compliance will be assessed during Annual Reviews. Regional Centers have a deadline to complete all reviews by August 31, 2024. If the HCBS setting is found out of compliance with any of the federal HCBS requirements, further remediation efforts will align with the existing Corrective Action Plans and Sanctions. Assessment Tools available on NLACRC website.

Service provider training opportunities:

There are several person-centered trainings, webinars, symposiums, and PCT Bootcamps available. For the person-centered thinking training, there is a \$500 incentive for those who attended and completed the PCT training.

ICF lag funding was extended to December 31, 2024.

Resource Development

Residential Services Orientation (RSO)

Registration is now open for Fall RSO now until Friday, August 30, 2024. For more information and registration details please visit Residential Service Providers Orientation | NLACRC

Coordinated Career Pathways (CCP) Service Code 956.

NLACRC has posted a Request for Proposal (RFP). For more information, please email the resourcedevelopment@nlacrc.org.

Transportation services, Service Code 875

NLACRC is seeking qualified vendors to transport individuals to and from their community-based day programs or other vendored services for the regional center. More information to come. All inquiries may be sent to resourcedevelopment@nlacrc.org

Money Management services, Service Code 034

NLACRC is seeking qualified vendors to provide Money Management services acting as the representative payee for NLACRC consumers identified by the accounting Department. More information to come. All inquiries may be sent to resourcedevelopment@nlacrc.org

Self-Directed Support Services for the Self Determination Program (Service Code 099)

NLACRC is seeking qualified vendors to provide Self-Directed Supports by submitting a standardized vendor packet created by DDS. For more information please visit the NLACRC website: <https://www.nlacrc.org/service-providers/how-to-become-a-service-provider/rfv-announcement-self-directed-supports-standardized-vendorization-website-announcement>

Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)

For more information, please visit DDS website: <https://www.dds.ca.gov/services/evv/>

VIII. Executive Director's Report – Cristina Preuss

Cristina gave a brief description of what the Executive Director's Report will include on a monthly basis.

Staff Introduction

Cristina introduced Betsy Monahan, Director of Human Resources, welcoming her to NLACRC.

Legislative

Governor Newsom signed REVISED 2024-2025 state budget bills and 5 trailer bills (HEALTH, MANAGED CARE ORGANIZATION TAX, EDUCATION FINANCE, STATE GOVERNMENT, TAXATION). ARCA developed a top-level summary of this year's TBL. In general, these changes came into effect as soon as the bill was signed by the Governor (July 2, 2024).

Department of Developmental Services

Nancy Bargmann announced her retirement as the Director of the Department of Developmental Services. Also, the Chief Deputy Director of Program Services, Brian Winfield as announced his retirement. Dr. Michi Gates, Executive Director Kern Regional Center, will be stepping in for Brian.

DDS had received continued concerns about the board governance, organizational strength, workforce deficits leading to extraordinarily high caseload ratios and the ability of North Los Angeles County Regional Center to fulfill its obligations to the individuals and families it serves. As such, DDS provided NLACRC with a special contract that stipulated the requirement to enter into an agreement with a consulting organization assigned by DDS as part of the training and technical assistant support to assist NLACRC in improving the areas of concern.

NLACRC and its Board of Trustees take all complaints, formal and otherwise, seriously, and is continuously working to improve internal processes and policies to resolve issues that may impact the individuals we serve, their families, and employees and intend to fully abide by and cooperate with the recommendations made by the Department.

IPP template

Regional Centers received a directive requiring the establishment of a standardized individual program plan (IPP) template and standardized procedures that are consistent with person-centered services planning requirements described in the Federal Medical Home and Community Based Final Rules (42 Code of Federal Regulations 441.301(c) (1-3).

A written guide for regional center service coordinators has been provided with detailed information about the process and procedures necessary and an additional guide for individuals and families to prepare for an IPP meeting is currently under development. Full implementation is expected by January 1, 2025 for all Regional centers to use the new standard IPP template for all new IPP meetings, amendments, reviews, and renewals.

Master Plan updates

The California Health and Human Services Agency has announced the meeting dates for the Master Plan Work Groups, which are included in the Meeting Packet.

- Workgroup 1: Individuals and families experience person-centered service systems they trust.
- Workgroup 2: Individuals receive timely, inclusive, and seamless services across all service systems.
- Workgroup 3: Individuals and their families receive services from a high-quality, stable, and person-centered.
- Workgroup 4: Individuals and their families experience consistent, transparent, accountable, and data-driven systems that focus on.
- Workgroup 5: Individuals are entitled to life-long services from systems with adequate resources.

Center Operations

Staffing Data– Current Status -

- Total # positions filled: 748
- Total # of positions authorized: 949

Total # of new hires since January 1, 2024:

- Total - 153
- CSCs - 123

July New Hires: 1st cycle and 2nd cycle.

- 7.1.24 - 9
- 7.15.24 - 8
- 7.29.24 – 6

Center Updates

Best Start extended an invitation to Antelope Valley Parent and Family Support Specialist and Spanish speaking Outreach Language Specialist to participate in Zero to Three:

- The Growing Brain Train the Trainer workshop in June
- The Zero to Three Learn 2-day Conference on July 31 and August 1, 2024.

Staff is also included in their Monthly partnership collaborative meetings with other Community Based Organizations targeting the 0-5 community.

To improve the hybrid capacity for our public meetings, NLACRC IT department will be replacing equipment and renovating our conference rooms in SFV (8/12-8/16) and AV (7/29-7/31).

Introducing IDEA Specialist, Mayra Loza

The IDEA Specialist can help parents understand child's rights for the educational needs and can provide information about IDEA, which is a law for children with disabilities to receive a free, appropriate, and public Education. The IDEA Specialist can provide guidance through the process for eligibility and to develop an individual educational plan. Parents can ask their service coordinator for a consultation with IDEA specialist.

IX. Legislative Report – Chris Whitlock

Legislative Update

Chris Whitlock gave an overview of the monthly Legislative Report and the information that will be included in it. He stated that each month he would give a brief overview of the items within the report and answer in more detail any questions that committee members have.

Legislative Bills:

As budget discussions and negotiations have taken up much of the legislature's space, bills are also moving through the process. Each house had a May 24th deadline to pass bills. Any bill not moved to the second house by May 24th will not continue through the process this year.

Chris Whitlock explained that included in the monthly report with regards to each bill is the information that is important to the bill and the bill's status. Additionally, each bill's information will include a link that allows for viewing more detailed information.

Key Legislators

Chris reviewed this area of the monthly report with the committee, detailing the information that can be found there.

Legislative Calendar:

This section of the report gives a listing of several events in many areas. This also includes links to the events, links to the legislator's pages and detailed information.

Rate Reform: Rate Model Implementation

In the coming weeks, the Department will be issuing a series of directives to provide detailed information about the updated service descriptions, requirements, and timelines for any transitions for each service category. The Rate Models were constructed in consideration of costs providers faced in delivering a particular service consistent with the state's requirements. This allows providers to receive the same rate for the same service in the same area consistently across the Regional Centers. Service providers with rates above the Rate Model base rate will be held harmless (no change to rate) until June 30, 2026, after which time the provider's rates will be adjusted to the Rate Model base rate. The rates and rate models to be effective January 1, 2025 below include updated cost components as of January 2024. Updated cost components as of February 2022 were used to calculate the rate adjustment effective April 1, 2022 and January 1, 2023.

Legislative Update

With the May Revision released the real negotiations on spending priorities has begun including budget hearings in the Senate and Assembly. The state constitution requires the main budget bill to be approved by the Legislature by June 15th or members of the legislature will not get paid. Then lawmakers and Newsom have until July 1st to agree on a final 2024-25 spending plan. Budget negotiations, however, can last all the way through September with trailer bills. Budget trailer bills, which contain implementing and policy language related to the appropriations in the main budget bill, can be approved at any time. The fiscal bill policy committee deadline was April 26th. All bills with a cost to the state must have been approved by the relevant policy committee in order to advance this year.

May Revision

The May Revision (released on or before May 14) updates the governor's economic and revenue outlook; adjusts the governor's proposed expenditures to reflect revised estimates and assumptions; revises, supplements, or withdraws policy initiatives that were included in the governor's proposed budget in January; and outlines adjustments to the minimum funding guarantee for K-14 education required by Proposition 98 (1988). A memo from the Department of Finance outlines adjustments included in the May Revision as they relate to the Department of Developmental Services stating, "due to lower revenue projections and a resulting increase in the budget problem, the May Revision proposes adjustments to prior investments to assist in closing the projected shortfall."

X. Committee Business

A. Proposed Meeting Schedule

A discussion took place regarding changing the monthly meeting date of the VAC. This is n an effort to shorten the time between the VAC meetings and the Board of Trustees meetings and allow for a quicker turn around for any items that need to be take to the Board from the VAC.

Action: Table until the next meeting for everyone to look at their schedules then take a vote to move to the 2nd Thursday at 9am.

B. Vendor Forum

Alex explained that this would be designed to allow for better communication between vendors. He asked for discussion on committee members thoughts on the value of instituting this. Clarification was given on the existing Vendor Support Forum. Staff form NLACRC are present at this forum to answer questions for Vendors. After further discussion, it was determined to not make any changes to the Vendor Forum at this time.

C. Self-Determination Update

An update was given by Alex Kopilevich. Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of every month form 6:30-8:30. There are currently 381 consumers in Self-Determination.

D. Committee / Workgroup Positions

Action / Board Support: Update the Workgroup and Committee assignments as follows:

Workgroup Assignments

- Jodie Agnew-Navarro / Early Start Services 3rd Thursday every other month
- Paul Borda & Cal Enriquez / School - 2nd Tuesday of each month
- Octavia Watkins / Adult Services – currently: 1st Monday every other month at 11am (next 9/2 at 11am). Proposing 1st Wednesday, every other. Octavia and Erica will reach out to others to confirm a new meeting date.

Committee Assignments

- Sharon Weinberg – Consumer Services Committee
- Alex Kopilevich– Nominating Committee
- Jodie Agnew-Navarro – Govt & Community Relations Committee
- Octavia Watkins – Strategic Planning Committee
- Jaklen Keshishyan – Administrative Affairs Committee

XI. Review of Meeting Action Actions (Item Owner and Due Date)

- A. The minutes from June 6th will be revised. – *Board Support*
- B. Share the family Guides with the Vendors – *Cristina Preuss*
- C. Present a report of terminations to see the difference of onboarding and terminations. – *Betsy Monahan*
- D. Update the Workgroup assignments and times – *Board Support*
- E. Update the Committee assignments – *Board Support*

XII. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting

- A. Minutes of the June 6, 2024 Meeting

XIII. Announcements / Public Input

- A. Next Meeting: Thursday, September 5, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.
- B. Committee Attendance was reviewed.

XIV. Adjournment

Suad adjourned the meeting at 11:44 a.m.

Submitted by:

Kimberly Visokey

Executive Administrative Assistant

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

