

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Consumer Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes (Via Zoom)
August 6, 2025

Present: Juan Hernandez, Jennifer Koster, Bill Abramson, Pam Aiona, Destry Walker, George Alvarado, Bill Abramson– **Committee Members**

Lety Garcia, Nicholas Mendoza, Marianita Mendez – DDS, - **Guests**

Angela Pao-Johnson, Santos Rodriguez, Jose Rodriguez, Chris Whitlock, Lindsay Granger, Belinda Abatesi,– **Staff**

Absent: Elena Tiffany

1. Call to Order & Introductions

- A. Committee Chair and Board of Trustees Vice President, Juan Hernandez called the meeting to order at 3:19 pm.

2. Agenda

M/S/C (Jennifer Koster/Juan Hernandez) motioned to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

3. Public Input

There was no public input.

4. Consent Items

- A. Approval of Minutes from June 4, 2025 Meeting

M/S/C (Juan Hernandez/Jennifer Koster) motioned to accept the minutes from the June 4, 2025 meeting. Motion carried.

5. Action Items

- A. Discuss and Approve Topics for CAC Open Conversations

Juan Hernandez introduced the action item of expanding public CAC discussions and open conversations. Chris Whitlock suggested that instead of assigning topics, the CAC should identify and vote on key issues of interest, such as housing, transportation, and the self-determination program. He also recommended inviting subject matter experts to future meetings. Chris asked whether a formal vote was required. Chris explained that once priority topics are identified, the committee could invite subject matter experts. The committee discussed and identified potential topics: transportation, housing,

identity fraud and security. Members agreed to continue developing and voting on topics.

ACTION: Committee to finalize topics to start the open conversations.

M/S/C (Jennifer Koster/Juan Hernandez) motioned to approve implementing this at the CAC meetings. Motion carried.

6. Committee Business

A. Discuss Committee Chair and Vice Chair for Next Fiscal Year

The committee also discussed the need for a vice chair position to provide backup support when the chair is unavailable. Juan Hernandez emphasized the importance of this role. Board Support clarified that while the committee chair often serves as the board liaison, Juan Hernandez would continue in that role if a non-board member were elected chair.

ACTION: An email would be sent to all members to see if any members are interested in the position.

B. Board Orientation

Juan Hernandez introduced the bylaws item, and staff provided orientation. The meeting packet included excerpts from the bylaws relevant to the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC). Key points reviewed were: members may join after attending five consecutive meetings; the chair is elected annually without term limits; and the chair does not need to be a Board Member. Staff noted the bylaws were recently updated and adopted in June.

Juan Hernandez raised concern that references to the Nominating Committee may be outdated, as it is no longer actively filling CAC seats. It was agreed this could be revisited in the next update.

Staff reported that no mission statement could be located for the CAC despite multiple attempts. The committee agreed to add development of an updated mission statement to the next agenda.

Staff also presented the draft CAC priorities for the year: supporting meaningful employment opportunities for people with disabilities, staying informed on transportation issues, sharing information on consumer issues through the CAC and website, and educating consumers to encourage involvement and membership.

Juan Hernandez confirmed the priorities looked good and noted that members have already begun outreach efforts, including attending public forums to raise awareness of the committee.

C. NLACRC Update

Angela Pao-Johnson provided center updates, beginning with highlights from the recent Legislative Breakfast. The event offered 150 free spots, which filled overnight, though only 80 attendees participated. Despite that, the session was well received, with discussions on public transportation, early start services, Medicaid funding, housing, and employment. Disability rights advocate Marty served as emcee, and the Jenny Retzinger Award was presented to former Board Member and community leader, Suad Bisogno.

Angela Pao-Johnson also reported that the center has successfully filled all 15 Lead Trainer positions to better support new hires. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is preparing to strengthen the Self-Determination Program and will seek community input on budgets, financial management, and spending plans, with updates expected soon.

On staffing, NLACRC closed the fiscal year with a net gain of 156 employees—an 84% increase from the prior year—and reduced turnover from 17.8% to 10.8%. The center is now approaching 40,000 active consumers, reflecting continued growth and community need.

D. Update on Site Visits

This was deferred until the next meeting.

E. Review CAC Priorities:

The committee briefly reviewed CAC priorities, previously discussed during orientation. Staff will work on updating priorities.

F. CAC Upcoming Training Calendar

This item will be discussed further at the next meeting.

7. Identify Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting

8. Announcements/Information/Public Input

Flyers for upcoming events were shared with the members of the consumer advisory committee members.

8. Adjournment

Juan Hernandez adjourned the meeting at 4:02pm

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Submitted by:
Lindsay Granger
Executive Administrative Assistant