

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Executive Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2025

Present: Board of Trustees President Sharmila Brunjes, Vice President Juan Hernandez, Board Treasurer Anna Hurst, Board Secretary Curtis Wang, ARCA Representative Leticia Garcia, Jacquie Colton, Jason Taketa, VAC Representative Jaklen Keshishyan – Committee Members

Executive Director Angela Pao-Johnson, Deputy Director Evelyn McOmie, and Executive Administrative Assistant Lindsay Granger, Stephanie Margaret, Justice Agonoy – Staff Members

Guests:

Absent: Chief Financial Officer Vini Montague

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 6:08 p.m. Sharmila Brunjes reminded members to identify themselves prior to making a motion and reviewed the NLACRC Board of Trustees Civility Code.

2. **COMMITTEE MEMBER ATTENDANCE**

3. **AGENDA**

The agenda was amended to defer Action Item A, Action Item B, and Committee Business Item A. the time for the action items B and C to seven minutes instead of five minutes.

Absent objection the agenda was approved as amended. Motion carried.

4. **PUBLIC INPUT – AGENDA ITEMS**

There was no public input regarding the agenda.

5. **CONSENT ITEMS**

A. Approval of Minutes of the August 28, 2025, Executive Finance Committee Meeting

Absent objection the minutes from the September 25, 2025 Executive Finance Meeting were approved. Motion carried.

6. **ACTION ITEMS**

6.1 **Status of FY2025 Vendor Audit Requirement**

This item was deferred until the next committee meeting in January.

Absent objection the status of the FY2025 vendor audit requirement was deferred until the January Executive Finance Committee meeting. Motion carried.

ACTION: Board Support will add this to the January committee meeting agenda for approval.

6.2 Amendment of the Board Budget

This item was deferred until the next committee meeting in January.

Absent objection the amendment of the board budget was deferred until the January Executive Finance Committee meeting. Motion carried.

ACTION: Board Support will include this item January Executive Finance Committee agenda.

6.3 Approval of POS CPP Startup Contract – Brilliant Corners – PL2495-999

Chair Sharmila Brunjes introduced the action item regarding the approval of POS CPP Startup Contract – Brilliant Corners – PL2495-999. Due to the absence of Chief Financial Officer Vini Montague, Stephanie Margaret, Contract and Compliance Supervisor in Community Services, presented the item.

Stephanie Margaret provided an overview of a proposed \$500,000 Community Placement Plan (CPP) startup contract with Brilliant Corners, which has already been approved by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

The funding will support the construction of a two-person accessory dwelling unit (ADU) located on the same property as an existing home purchased earlier in the year in Palmdale. The ADU will be developed for use as a specialized residential facility. Staff confirmed that the \$500,000 award represents a standard DDS funding amount for this type of project.

During discussion, Laura Monge raised questions regarding the cost relative to serving two consumers. Stephanie Margaret clarified that the project scope and funding level are consistent with DDS standards and prior DDS approval.

On a motion made by Curtis Wang, seconded by Jacquie Colton it was resolved to move this item to the full Board of Trustees the Brilliant Corners – PL2495-999 contract. Motion carried. Laura Monge abstained.

ACTION: Board Support will include this on the January Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

6.4 Discuss and Approve Executive Finance Committee Priorities

Sharmila Brunjes presented Action Item D regarding discussion and approval of the Executive Finance Committee (EFC) priorities for the 2025–26 fiscal year. Sharmila Brunjes explained that the draft priorities were developed at the start of the year and informed by best practices discussed during the ARCA Academy, including a workshop led by former technical advisor Tresa Oliveri and the Executive Director of the Orange County Regional Center, which emphasized outcome-focused, structured governance goals. The draft priorities were also designed to align with the Executive Director, Angela Pao-Johnson, goals presented to the Board.

Sharmila Brunjes outlined six draft priorities and emphasized that the document was intended to serve as a working draft for discussion, feedback, and refinement prior to finalization by staff. The priorities included ongoing compliance requirements tied to special contract language, specifically correcting caseload ratios in accordance with Department of Developmental Services (DDS) target

dates of October 2025 and March 2026. Additional compliance-related priorities included improving consumer and family satisfaction, including tracking required survey data and addressing challenges related to historically low statewide IPP survey response rates.

A governance-focused priority was also presented to strengthen board effectiveness through board-initiated governance policies and procedures, clarification of the distinct roles of the Board and Executive Director, and adoption of board goals using the Carver governance framework, with the intent of posting approved board goals on the NLACRC website by the end of the fiscal year. Sharmila Brunjes also referenced a related compliance objective of maintaining zero substantiated whistleblower complaints related to board contracts.

Additional priorities included continued development of the NLACRC strategic plan in collaboration with the community and staff, recognizing that plan completion is anticipated in the following fiscal year. Sharmila Brunjes also highlighted the need for oversight of potential crisis-mode operations in light of anticipated state and federal budget constraints and the Regional Center's responsibility to serve as funder of last resort. The final priority focused on protecting operational flexibility in anticipation of increased Public Records Act (PRA) demands, noting that only a small portion of the Regional Center's overall funding is discretionary and that increased PRA-related costs could impact administrative and operational capacity.

Sharmila Brunjes explained that following committee approval and incorporation of any amendments, the priorities would be forwarded to staff for final drafting and implementation for the remainder of the fiscal year.

On a motion made by Curtis Wang, seconded by Laura Monge, it was resolved to approve the Executive Committee Priorities for FY 2025-26. Motion carried.

ACTION: The priorities will go to staff for the final priorities.

7. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

7.1 Status Report on Lease Agreements

This item was deferred until the January Executive Finance Committee meeting.

ACTION: Board Support will add this item to the January Executive Finance Committee agenda.

7.2 Financial Reports

Justice Agonoy, Controller of the Accounting Department, presented committee business item B the Financial Reports on behalf of Vini Montague. Justice Agonoy reviewed the Fiscal Year 2025–26 financial report as of September 2025, noting that the Regional Center is operating under the B2 allocation with a total NLACRC budget of approximately \$1.3 billion. This includes approximately \$1.2 billion in Purchase of Services (POS) funding and \$117 million for operations.

Justice Agonoy reported year-to-date expenditures of approximately \$23 million for operations and \$268 million for POS. Justice Agonoy explained that no projected annual surplus or deficit is available at this time, as the first POS projection for the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is not due until December 10, 2025. Once the projection is completed, surplus or deficit estimates will be available.

Justice Agonoy reviewed the operational budget breakdown, noting that caseload ratio funding is presented separately from general operations. This includes approximately \$15 million allocated for caseload ratios for children through age five and approximately \$10 million allocated for other caseload ratios. Additional operational funding supports Family Resource Centers (FRCs), Self-Determination

Program (SDP) operations, and Language Access and Cultural Competency (LACC) initiatives, which collectively comprise the \$117 million operations budget.

Justice Agonoy also reviewed the POS budget breakdown, explaining that the preliminary B1 allocation of approximately \$961 million combined with the B2 allocation of approximately \$261 million totals approximately \$1.2 billion in POS funding. When combined with projected Intermediate Care Facility State Plan Amendment (ICF SPA) revenue, total funding is approximately \$1.239 billion.

During discussion, Laura Monge asked about the absence of funding for social recreation projects. Justice Agonoy clarified that prior Social Recreation Activity (SRA) projects funded in fiscal years 2023–24 are no longer provided as operational funding and that current SRA funding is addressed within the POS budget rather than the operations budget. Justice Agonoy further noted that DDS has indicated that language access and cultural competency costs may be embedded into regular operational budgets going forward, with additional guidance from DDS pending.

Justice Agonoy also noted that no year-to-date expenditures have yet occurred for the language access coach role, but contracts have been approved and expenditures are expected to begin in the coming months. Jaklen Keshishyan, MPH, confirmed that Self-Determination Program (SDP) costs are included in the POS budget rather than operations.

No further questions were raised.

7.3 Admin vs. Direct Allocation Report

Justice Agonoy, Controller of the Accounting Department, presented the Admin vs. Direct Allocation Report of the financial report regarding administrative versus direct service expenditures. Justice Agonoy explained that, pursuant to statute, administrative expenditures may not exceed 15 percent of total expenditures on a year-to-date basis. As a result, staff monitor this ratio monthly to track both month-to-month activity and cumulative year-to-date compliance.

During the presentation, Sharmila Brunjes sought clarification regarding how month-to-month administrative expenditure percentages are evaluated in relation to the 15 percent statutory limit. Justice Agonoy explained that month-to-month percentages may fluctuate due to the timing of expense recognition and do not independently indicate noncompliance. Justice Agonoy noted that the statutory requirement applies strictly to the year-to-date calculation and that the cumulative percentage must remain below the 15 percent threshold. As reflected in the September report, administrative expenditures were approximately 12.9 percent of total expenditures, remaining within statutory limits.

Justice Agonoy confirmed that staff will continue to monitor the administrative versus direct expenditure ratio on a monthly basis. No questions were raised.

7.4 Outstanding Authorizations Report

Justice Agonoy, Controller of the Accounting Department, presented the Outstanding Authorizations Report of the financial report regarding outstanding vendor authorizations with issues. Justice Agonoy provided context, noting that NLACRC works with approximately 700 vendors, encompassing more than 1,600 vendorizations and 1,700 service lines. Of these, 29 vendor authorizations were currently identified as having outstanding issues.

Justice Agonoy explained that the majority of outstanding authorizations originated in Fiscal Year 2025 and were primarily related to vendors who experienced ownership changes and had not yet submitted required documentation. Additional cases involved vendor overpayments for which repayment agreements are in place; these authorizations will remain on the outstanding list until repayment is fully completed.

Justice Agonoy noted that the current tracking system was intentionally designed to create greater accountability and a sense of urgency in resolving authorization issues. Justice Agonoy further explained that the system will be enhanced in the coming months with stricter thresholds, which may result in a temporary increase in the number of outstanding items. This change reflects higher compliance standards rather than a deterioration in vendor performance.

Justice Agonoy identified that most authorization issues stem from delayed admission agreements, which can cause downstream billing delays. To address this, staff plan to tighten timelines so that admission agreements not returned within one month will be flagged as outstanding. The intent is to strengthen authorization controls and ensure service quality.

During discussion, Sharmila Brunjes asked whether consumer or family reimbursement vendors appear on the same outstanding authorization list. Justice Agonoy clarified that those reimbursements are tracked separately and that the list presented focuses on fully vendored providers. Jaklen Keshishyan, MPH, asked whether an overpayment related to service code 880 appeared on the list. Justice Agonoy responded that most items on the list involve placement-related service codes, such as 915s, and indicated that further review would be needed to confirm whether the service code 880 overpayment was included.

Justice Agonoy stated that staff would follow up on the inquiry. No further questions were raised.

ACTION: Staff will follow up on Jaklen's Keshishyan's question regarding overpayments related to service code 880 on the list.

7.5 Quarterly Fees for PRMT and UAL

- a. 1st Quarter PRMT Fees Report
- b. 1st Quarter CalPERS UAL Fees Report

Justice Agonoy, Controller of the Accounting Department, presented the Quarterly Fees Report for PMRT and UAL of the financial report regarding trustee service fees by quarter for post-retirement medical trusts. Justice Agonoy reported that the Post-Retirement Medical Trust (PRMT) currently has an estimated market value of approximately \$46 million, with trustee fees recorded to date at approximately \$10,000. Justice Agonoy noted that projected trustee fees are expected to approximate 13 percent of market value; however, current fees remain significantly lower due to the absence of invoices.

Justice Agonoy explained that the delayed fees are likely attributable to the recent transition of trustee services from Highmark to PFM. Staff have not yet received the corresponding invoices and will follow up accordingly. Once invoices are received, trustee fees are expected to increase and align with projected levels.

Justice Agonoy further noted that a similar situation applies to the Unfunded Accrued Liability (UAL) trust, which currently reflects a market value of approximately \$10 million and recorded trustee fees of approximately \$4,500. Justice Agonoy stated that fees for the UAL trust are also expected to increase once pending invoices are received.

No questions were raised.

7.6 Audits Update

- a. CalPERS

The CalPERS audit update will be deferred until the January Executive Finance Committee meeting.

b. **Independent Audit**

Justice Agonoy, Controller of the Accounting Department, provided an update on committee business item F. 2 – the Independent Audit Update. Justice Agonoy reported that NLACRC is currently undergoing the LinkIST Audit (Linkus | Hazen) and that the audit remains in progress. Justice Agonoy stated that staff have submitted all requested documentation to date, with the exception of two remaining items scheduled for submission the following day. Justice Agonoy explained that audit requests are being addressed promptly, with documents provided within a few days when available and additional time required when reconciliation or document retrieval is necessary. Justice Agonoy noted that staff are actively monitoring the audit portal and responding to follow-up questions related to previously submitted materials.

c. **DDS Audit**

The DDS Audit Update will be deferred until the January Executive Finance Committee meeting.

Following the update, Sharmila Brunjes stated for the record that, absent objection, Committee Business Item F. 1., Audits Update – CalPERS, and Item F. 3., Audits Update – DDS Audit, would be deferred to the next meeting. No objections were raised, and both audit updates were deferred.

7.7 1st Quarter Human Resources Report

Angela Pao-Johnson, Executive Director, presented the First Quarter Human Resources Report. Angela Pao-Johnson reported that during the first quarter of the fiscal year, NLACRC hired 50 new employees and promoted 16 employees, noting an emphasis on internal promotions to support long-term career development within the organization.

Angela Pao-Johnson reported 39 employee separations during the quarter. Of these, six employees retired, 24 employees separated for personal reasons, and the remaining separations resulted from a variety of factors, including some non-voluntary separations. Angela Pao-Johnson noted that some level of planned attrition is anticipated as accountability metrics are more consistently enforced. Angela Pao-Johnson reported that the turnover rate for the quarter was 4.36 percent.

No questions were raised.

7.8 Monthly Whistleblower Log for September 16, 2025 – October 15, 2025

Angela Pao-Johnson, Executive Director, presented the Whistleblower Report covering the reporting period from the 15th of the previous month through the 15th of the current month. Angela Pao-Johnson reported that there were five open whistleblower complaints during the period. Of these, four cases remain open, and one case is considered open pending direction from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), as staff are awaiting DDS guidance following multiple communications regarding a specific incident.

Angela Pao-Johnson reported a total of ten whistleblower complaints during the period, with eight complaints related to service providers and two complaints related to employees. Angela Pao-Johnson further noted that one additional whistleblower complaint submitted directly to the Board regarding an NLACRC employee had been omitted from the initial count. When included, the total number of whistleblower complaints would be eleven, with the additional complaint having been closed and determined to be unsubstantiated.

No questions were raised.

8. CLOSED SESSION

Absent objection closed session was entered at 6:51 p.m. to discuss real estate negotiations.

Absent objection, it was unanimously decided to exit closed session at 7:08 p.m.

Real estate negotiations were discussed, but the Quarterly Legal Update was deferred.

9. CENTER OPERATIONS

Angela Pao-Johnson, Executive Director, provided a Center Operations update. Angela Pao-Johnson reported the addition of three new Self-Determination Program (SDP) Lead Service Coordinators, bringing the total to 12 SDP leads, with four located in the Antelope Valley office, five in the San Fernando Valley office, and three in the Santa Clarita Valley office. Angela Pao-Johnson explained that these positions were created to support families transitioning from the traditional service model to SDP by providing specialized guidance within each unit.

Angela Pao-Johnson also reported on the Associate Consumer Services Coordinator program developed in partnership with California State University, Northridge (CSUN). Two part-time coordinators are currently supporting San Fernando Valley School Age units with social recreation requests, and two additional coordinators are being onboarded. Angela Pao-Johnson noted that NLACRC is exploring opportunities to expand the recruitment pipeline with CSUN by engaging students earlier in their academic careers.

Angela Pao-Johnson announced that NLACRC received approval for its first multifamily housing project, which will provide 11 low-income housing units for individuals served.

Angela Pao-Johnson provided Department of Developmental Services (DDS) updates, including ongoing exploration of allowing behavior management day programs to operate in conjunction with regular day services. Angela Pao-Johnson also reported that, for Service Code 620, behavior management consultants are not required to be Board Certified Behavior Analysts but must remain in good standing with appropriate licensing or certification boards, and that consultation hours may be used for both direct and indirect support.

Additional DDS updates included forthcoming plain-language guidance on In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) data sharing involving the Department of Social Services and the Department of Health Care Services, with future data-sharing efforts focused on CalFresh, including confirmation that individuals served by regional centers are exempt from work requirements. Angela Pao-Johnson also noted continued statewide work on refining Self-Determination Program guidance related to individual budget development, financial management services, cost effectiveness, and provider and participant agreements. An SDP orientation in partnership with the State Council on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities is scheduled for January.

Angela Pao-Johnson reported that 916 positions are currently filled, NLACRC is serving 40,897 individuals, and 17 new employees are being onboarded during the month. Angela Pao-Johnson also shared the date of the upcoming Disability Rights California board meeting.

During discussion, Sharmila Brunjes asked about DDS's decision to relax licensing requirements for behavior management consultants under Service Code 620. Angela Pao-Johnson stated that additional information would be requested from DDS and shared at a future meeting.

No further questions were raised.

10. BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEMS/ACTION ITEMS

- Board Support will add the Brilliant Corners – PL 2495-999 to the January board meeting agenda for full board approval.
- Board Support will add the Status of FY2025 Vendor Audit Requirement, Amendment of Board Budget, and Status Report on Lease Agreements to the next Executive Finance Committee agenda.

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS / PUBLIC INPUT / INFORMATION ITEMS

There was no public input.

Sharmila Brunjes announced that a board-only gathering, with limited staff participation, would be scheduled in the coming weeks. Lindsay Granger confirmed that outreach to Board members to finalize a date would occur the following day. The group discussed plans for a low-budget White Elephant gift exchange, with a spending limit of \$15 or less.

Angela Pao-Johnson shared that additional White Elephant gifts would be brought to ensure participation for all attendees. Angela Pao-Johnson also offered closing reflections, noting that earlier in the day a staff gratitude gathering had been held and expressing appreciation for the resilience, collaboration, and commitment demonstrated by staff and Board members throughout the year.

Sharmila Brunjes added remarks expressing appreciation for the Board's dedication, willingness to take thoughtful risks, and commitment to excellence in service to the community.

Due to ongoing technical difficulties preventing Juan Hernandez from being heard, no additional comments were received. At the suggestion of Angela Pao-Johnson, and with agreement from Sharmila Brunjes, the meeting proceeded to adjournment.

12. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Executive Finance Committee will be January 29, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

13. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Curtis Wang, seconded by Sharmila Brunjes, it was agreed that there was no further business to transact; the meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes 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.

