

SDLAC Summary

January 15th 2026

Quick recap

The group reviewed housekeeping items and introduced committee members, while also discussing translation services. Budget concerns were raised regarding potential cuts to the Self-Determination Program, with plans to draft a letter opposing any reductions. The group reviewed various coaching and mentoring services offered by different organizations, including dental services and transitions between support groups. The conversation ended with updates on program implementation, participant numbers, and budget certifications, along with discussions about rate reform changes and the need for updated committee documents.

Next steps

- [Committee \(optional follow-up\): Consider drafting and sending a letter to the Governor \(and CC the board\) objecting to potential reductions in self-determination implementation funding, with John Francis offering to help draft if someone picks up this task](#)
- [Denise or Anna: Send out a Zoom reminder for the RFP bi-monthly meeting on January 21st at 10 a.m. to all 2026 RFP recipients.](#)
- [Claudia: Pull and provide data on average and highest number of coaching hours per family/participant to Miriam.](#)
- [Megan: Look into and provide data on total SDP transitions for 2024 and 2023 for Michael.](#)
- [All committee members: Review the updated Committee Center Plan and Self-Governance document \(to be distributed by Lori, Miriam, and Kristianna\) before the next meeting and provide feedback.](#)
- [Silvia: Bring information on rate reform changes, especially regarding new service codes and rates, to next month's meeting.](#)
- [Lori, Miriam, and Kristianna: Finalize and distribute updated Committee Center Plan and Self-Governance document to committee and North LA/State Council for review before next meeting.](#)

- [State Council representative \(DJ\): Update committee on potential new members to fill State Council openings.](#)

Summary

Self-Determination Budget Concerns

The meeting began with introductions and housekeeping items, including instructions for committee members to enter SDLAC with their name and steps to access translation services. John Francis raised concerns about potential budget reductions for the Self-Determination program in Governor Newsom's draft budget and suggested drafting a letter to the governor opposing any cuts. Lori mentioned that more information would be shared as it became available, and the committee would address the issue further. The conversation ended with Erica Rodriguez introducing herself as a client rights representative.

Self-Determination Program Updates

The meeting covered updates on the Self-Determination Program (SDP), including a clarification from a January 9th call with Health and Human Services that SDP would not be cut. Kristianna shared information about the Self-Determination Institute's monthly meetings, which include financial management services and community building. Lori highlighted upcoming resources, including a town hall meeting on February 17th to discuss the renewal of the SDP waiver, which is crucial for accessing federal dollars. She also recommended the NLACRC website as a valuable resource for SDP information and support.

Dental Consultant's Role and Outreach

Lisa Butters-Smith, the dental consultant at North LA, discussed her role in reviewing dental treatment plans and approving purchases of service for vendored dental providers. She explained that she works to negotiate treatment plans and assist families in accessing necessary dental services, including funding for general anesthesia when needed. Lisa also mentioned her plans to conduct outreach and presentations during National Dental Children's Health Month in February, aiming to raise awareness about dental health and available services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Dental Service Coordination Process

Lisa explained the process for accessing dental services through service coordinators, emphasizing that while direct contact is welcome, using coordinators is preferred. She clarified that regional centers act as the payer of last resort, covering costs not covered by other insurance or Medi-Cal, and detailed how funding decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, considering factors like medical necessity and cost-effectiveness. Silvia added that for SDP cases, funding is limited to Medi-Cal rates.

Self-Determination Program Funding Updates

The meeting discussed the Self-Determination Program (SDP) and its funding processes. Silvia explained that while participants can use non vendor dentists in SDP, it might be in their best interest to use an NLACRC vendored dentist so that they do not pay out of pocket. Jordan inquired about emergency dental services, and Silvia clarified that this is another reason why going to a NLACRC vendor could be beneficial as the dental office would be able to reach Lisa to obtain approval, even when NLACRC offices are closed.

Self-Determination RFP Update

The meeting then introduced the 2026 Request for Proposal (RFP) recipients, including Accolades for Achievement, Claudia Cares, Disability Voices United, Autism Society Los Angeles, the Self Determination Institute, and Help Grow LLC, who were allocated a total of \$131,332.77 for participant coaching, support groups, IF coaching, and joint training. Claudia presented her agency's work in self-determination coaching, noting they have provided over 200 hours of SDP coaching since 2021 and conducted IF training cohorts in previous years. She explained their current offerings include both SDP participant and IF coaching, with coaching accessible either through service coordinator referral or direct website contact, and they maintain a monthly North LA IF meeting for practitioners.

The meeting discussed various coaching and mentoring services offered by different organizations. Lori explained the evolution of their IF (Independent Facilitator) coaching program to meet more sophisticated needs. Kim Sinclair, Executive Director of the Autism Society of Los Angeles, presented their two-pronged approach to self-determination coaching, which includes group coaching sessions in English and Spanish, as well as participant-directed Q&A sessions. The group agreed to create a separate section on the website to clearly distinguish between individual and group coaching services.

The meeting discussed the transition of the Self-Determination support group from DVU to the Self-Determination Institute, with Kristianna explaining the importance of the support group for administrators and the program's focus on civil rights and sustainable practices. Kayley from Disability Voices United announced their upcoming training for service coordinators and the community, building on their previous successful session. The

discussion also covered coaching hours provided by Claudia and Jacquie, with an average of 2-5 hours per family, and addressed concerns about fraud and the need for clear protocols in the Self-Determination program.

Public comments and other updates

Edward introduced his company, Ekata Training Center, which provides movement-based awareness training and specializes in working with neurodivergent individuals. He explained their services, including mindfulness and social integration strategies, and mentioned their current work with the Northern Regional Center. Lori discussed the upcoming board meeting and strategic planning for North LA, highlighting the need for focus on workforce development. The committee also reviewed the State Council on Developmental Disabilities' summary of the governor's proposed 2026-2027 budget, which predicted more revenue than anticipated. Finally, Lori provided updates on the best practices subcommittee's activities, including plans to update the Committee Centered Plan and self-governance document.

Self-Determination Program Implementation Updates

The meeting focused on updates and discussions regarding the Self-Determination Program Implementation Report, including participant numbers, budget certifications, and transitions. Megan presented data on program participation and transitions, while Silvia addressed questions about Hispanic participants and program models. The group discussed rate reform changes and the need for updated committee and self-governance documents. Lori and Miriam emphasized the importance of feedback on proposed changes and highlighted positive developments in email response times and service coordination. The conversation ended with plans to address rate reform and document updates in the next session.