

**NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL CENTER (NLACRC)  
9200 OAKDALE AVENUE, SUITE 100  
CHATSWORTH, CALIFORNIA**

**MINUTES OF THE VENDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
HYBRID – CHATSWORTH OFFICE / ZOOM  
JANUARY 8, 2026, 9:30 A.M.**

**MEMBERS:**

Alex Kopilevich, Jaklen Keshishyan, Jodie Agnew-Navarro, Paul Borda, Andrea Devers, Ute Escoria, Vahe Mkrtchian, Jen Pippard, Sharon Weinberg, Cal Enriquez, Jason Gillis, Tal Segalovich, David Ebrami, Ricki Macken-Chilvers, Desiree Misrachi

**STAFF:**

Angela Pao-Johnson, Evelyn McOmie, Vini Montague, Arshalous Garlanian, Silvia Renteria-Haro, Robin Monroe, Belinda Abatesi, Lindsay Granger, Arezo Abedi

**GUESTS:**

**ABSENT:** Octavia Watkins, Masood Babaeian

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich invited attendees to introduce themselves. Participants introduced included Daniel Ortiz (SEDUP), Jason Gillis (BuildAbility), Ricky (Pleasant View), Tal Segalovich (Maxima Healthcare), David Ebrami (Care Connection Home Health), Sharon Weinberg (Free2B Programs), Alex Kopilevich (K&L Care/VAC Chair), Angela Pao-Johnson (Executive Director), Jaklen Keshishyan (Creative Minds), and staff members Evelyn McComie, Vini Montague, Arsho Garlanian, and Lindsay Granger. Jen Pippard (Activities, Recreation, and Care) was also introduced after it was noted that an introduction had been missed.

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice of the meeting having been given, the meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. The NLACRC Civility Code was read by Alex Kopilevich.

**2. COMMITTEE MEMBER ATTENDANCE**

Members were asked to identify themselves when speaking or making a motion.

**3. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was no public input.

**4. SHARE IMPACT STORY FROM INDIVIDUAL SERVED**

Executive Director Angela Pao-Johnson shared an impact story from Jessica Gould, owner of Jay Gould Consulting.

## **5. CONSENT ITEMS**

**On a motion made by Sharon Weinberg, seconded by Jaklen Keshishyan, it was resolved to approve the minutes of the Vendor Advisory Committee meeting held on November 13, 2025, as presented. Motion carried.**

**On a motion made by Jen Pippard, seconded by Ricki Macken-Chilvers, it was resolved to approve the agenda. Motion carried.**

## **6. COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Call for new VAC Members**

Chair Alex Kopilevich announced four upcoming vacancies on the Vendor Advisory Committee (VAC) due to upcoming term endings for Cal Enriquez, Daniel Ortiz, and Alex Kopilevich at the end of June, one currently vacant seat, and one recent resignation. Applications are due January 15, 2026, and the full VAC will review applicants in February. To maintain confidentiality, applicants will be listed on the agenda by number (e.g., Applicant 1, Applicant 2, etc.). The VAC will collectively select candidates to move forward to in-person interviews.

The interview panel will consist of Tal Segalovich, David Ebami, and Alex Kopilevich, with interviews held either in person or via Zoom depending on the number of applicants.

Cal Enriquez asked what happens after the end of the term in June and whether reapplication would be required. It was clarified that members may reapply after a one-year break and are welcome to continue attending meetings, though they would no longer be able to make motions or vote once their term ends.

### **6.2 VAC Applicant Interview Panel**

Alex Kopilevich reviewed that the interview panel consists of three members who will conduct interviews for prospective VAC applicants. It was noted that the VAC typically includes 18 members. While the Committee aims to maintain a full membership, it was shared that the VAC can continue to function even if not fully seated. Alex Kopilevich emphasized the Committee is seeking members who are committed, attend meetings regularly, and actively participate.

### **6.3 Update on VAC Members with Expiring Terms**

Alex Kopilevich asked for clarification on which Vendor Advisory Committee members are approaching the end of their terms and whether there are any open positions. Committee staff reviewed the roster and confirmed one open position and clarified several member term dates, including that some members are not yet expiring.

The committee reviewed the color coding on the term tracker. Red indicated members who were due for term renewals, and yellow indicated members scheduled to term out at the end of the fiscal year, including Daniel Ortiz, Alex Kopilevich, and Cal Enriquez. Questions arose about why recruitment was only planned for two positions when more members appear to be terming out.

Lindsay Granger stated that the committee roster and term list will be reviewed and updated with Public Information, and updated information will be shared with the committee to confirm the accurate number of vacancies.

### **6.4 Update on Term Renewals**

Alex Kopilevich confirmed that the terms for Cal Enriquez, Daniel Ortiz, and Alex Kopilevich will expire on June 30, 2026. The VAC will interview new applicants and anticipates requesting volunteers for the VAC Chair position around March. If only one member volunteers, no election will be needed; if multiple members express interest, an election will be held. The VAC Chair position is typically a one-year term, with the option to continue if re-elected.

Alex Kopilevich reported that all current members eligible for renewal have submitted signed term renewal paperwork, and Lindsay Granger has received and maintained the documentation. No further action is required for renewing members, and they will continue serving after June 30.

Members were reminded that July is a dark month, and the first meeting of the new board year will be in August. Chair Alex Kopilevich stated that a transition meeting will be held with the incoming VAC Chair to support continuity and review responsibilities. Members interested in serving as VAC Chair were invited to email Chair Alex Kopilevich for additional details regarding the time commitment and expectations.

Chair Alex Kopilevich noted that the VAC Chair also serves as the VAC representative on the Board of Trustees and participates in additional committee work, including attendance and meeting responsibilities (e.g., the Chair currently serves on the Nominating Committee).

## **6.5 Self-Determination Update**

Alex Kopilevich introduced Silvia Renteria-Haro to provide an update on Self-Determination. Silvia reported that as of January 1, there were 686 participants enrolled in the SDP, with 197 transitions completed in 2025. Silvia also invited members to attend the Local Entry Advisory Committee virtual meetings held Thursdays from 6:30–8:30 p.m., noting the next meeting would be January 15.

## **7. REPORT OUTS**

### **7.1 Deputy Director Officer's Report**

Alex Kopilevich introduced Deputy Director Evelyn McOmie to provide agency announcements and updates impacting service providers. Evelyn McOmie shared that, at the end of the year, regional centers received several DDS directives outlining new reporting requirements that will take effect this year.

#### SIR Reporting Directive / Implementation Date

Evelyn McOmie highlighted changes to Special Incident Report (SIR) reporting as a key directive that will impact vendors. Evelyn McOmie stated that regulatory amendments approved in June 2025 will become effective on May 1, and emphasized this as an important date for providers to note. Evelyn McOmie explained that these changes are intended to promote statewide consistency across all 21 regional centers and vendors, not only NLACRC.

#### Vendor Preparation Requirements

Evelyn McOmie advised that vendors must prepare for implementation by May 1 by updating internal systems and procedures. Evelyn McOmie outlined key areas of preparation, including adopting and operationalizing the updated reporting guidelines, updating internal reporting procedures, enhancing oversight and quality assurance mechanisms, and continuing to collaborate with DDS for monitoring and support.

#### DDS Webinars and Technical Assistance

Evelyn McOmie shared that DDS will host upcoming webinars and town halls to provide further information, technical assistance, and clarification regarding the SIR reporting process. Evelyn McOmie stated that NLACRC will forward emails and details to vendors as information becomes available and will continue providing updates during VAC meetings. Evelyn McOmie noted that Lindsay Granger would post the directive in the chat and that paper copies were available at the meeting for anyone who preferred a hard copy.

#### Additional Reporting Requirements (Disagreements/NOAs and HCBS)

Evelyn McOmie also shared other reporting requirements that will be implemented, including that regional centers will begin reporting to DDS the number of disagreements and Notices of Action (NOAs) occurring at the time of IPP planning. Evelyn McOmie additionally referenced HCBS reporting requirements for vendors. Evelyn McOmie stated that NLACRC has been conducting HCBS review and reporting since 2024 and that NLACRC's process mirrors the federal rule. Evelyn McOmie indicated that NLACRC does not anticipate major changes to the current HCBS review/reporting process, but staff will consult with DDS to determine whether any recommendations or updates will be required. Evelyn McOmie stated that if changes are made effective 2026, vendors will be notified.

#### SIPP Survey Reminder / NLACRC Campaign

Evelyn McOmie reminded attendees to encourage families to complete the DDS SIPP survey and shared that NLACRC would be launching a community campaign during the month to promote awareness and participation. Evelyn McOmie noted the survey is short (approximately 5–6 questions) and quick to complete, and emphasized that the feedback is important for DDS.

#### SDP Vendor Forums – Participation and Next Steps

Evelyn McOmie provided an update regarding the SDP vendor forums that NLACRC offered from September through December. Evelyn McOmie explained these forums were intended to provide technical support and answer provider questions, and noted that there had been significant interest expressed by vendors, including through VAC discussions. However, Evelyn McOmie reported that only one person attended across all four forums. As a result, NLACRC will not be offering additional forums this year. Evelyn McOmie directed vendors with SDP-related questions to email [self-determination@nlacrc.org](mailto:self-determination@nlacrc.org). Evelyn McOmie also stated that if VAC committees would like a presentation or technical assistance, members may contact Silvia Renteria-Haro, and the SDP team will make themselves available to present at committee meetings.

#### Generative AI Directive – Caution to Vendors

At Chair Alex Kopilevich's request, Evelyn McOmie also provided an overview of a newly issued DDS Generative AI directive, which staff would post in the chat. Evelyn McOmie explained that regional centers will be required to go through a DDS review and approval process before implementing generative AI-related processes internally. Evelyn McOmie noted that specific approval requirements have not yet been provided by DDS, and it is unclear what documentation or verification will be required (e.g., an affidavit confirming safeguards are in place, or a more detailed review process). Evelyn McOmie further stated that regional centers are being tasked with informing vendors and ensuring vendors follow similar generative AI requirements, and NLACRC anticipates mirroring DDS requirements once clarified. Evelyn McOmie cautioned vendors to be very careful about implementing or expanding AI use at this time, emphasizing that approval processes are not yet established and that providers may not have full control over how staff use AI tools. Evelyn McOmie stressed that maintaining confidentiality and protecting HIPAA/PHI is the top priority.

#### Discussion / Q&A – SIR Reporting Timelines and Reporting Expectations

Chair Alex Kopilevich asked whether the current SIR form would be changing. Evelyn

McOmie responded that there are no immediate changes to the form at this time, but DDS may issue a more standardized or streamlined form for all 21 regional centers. Evelyn McOmie stated that additional guidance is expected soon, and updates will be provided as May 1 approaches. Evelyn McOmie confirmed the directive is available on the DDS website and was also provided via chat and hard copy.

A vendor asked about challenges meeting SIR reporting timelines when incidents occur after hours (e.g., Friday evening sessions) and reporting must still occur within the required timeframe. Evelyn McOmie clarified that vendors must submit SIR reports within 24 hours verbally and within 48 hours in writing, and emphasized that submissions must be received before midnight of the 48th hour. Evelyn McOmie stated that vendors must have internal processes in place to ensure timely reporting, noting that regional center after-hours staff have historically received SIR calls late at night to meet the required deadlines. Evelyn McOmie reiterated that upcoming statewide streamlining is expected to be more prescriptive but will not change the regulatory timeline requirements.

Another vendor asked about situations where a verbal report is made and an email is sent, but a full written report cannot be completed within 48 hours due to delayed fact-finding (such as needing staff statements over a holiday weekend). Evelyn McOmie advised vendors to submit what information they have within the required 48-hour timeframe, emphasizing that the primary responsibility is to report that the incident occurred. Evelyn McOmie clarified that NLACRC does not expect a full investigation conclusion within 48 hours, and that reports can be updated or amended later as more details become available, including noting that the investigation is still pending.

## **7.2 Chief Financial Officer's Report**

Vini Montague provided reminders and updates related to provider audit requirements, fiscal year deadlines, and payment processing.

Service providers receiving between \$500,000 and \$2 million in total regional center payments are required to submit an independent financial review, while providers receiving more than \$2 million must submit a full independent audit. These requirements have been in place for several years and are tied to eligibility for performance incentives under future rate implementation. Audits and reviews must be completed by an independent, licensed CPA, and providers were advised to verify CPA licensure. Compliance status is reported to DDS, which tracks provider compliance.

Vini Montague reminded providers that the deadline to submit all billing for Fiscal Year 2024 is February 6, 2026, and encouraged timely submission to support fiscal year closeout. NLACRC is also preparing 1099-NEC forms for calendar year 2025 and confirmed that steps are being taken to ensure accuracy, including correcting prior issues related to ICF GAAP funding.

The annual check run schedule for POS, STP, and Purchase & Inventory payments is posted on the NLACRC website under the Service Provider section. Annual consumer statements for Fiscal Year 2025 were mailed to consumers and families in November.

Vini Montague explained that audit notifications are sent after NLACRC receives consolidated provider payment data from DDS, typically between November and February. Providers receive an initial notice and follow-up reminders if needed. Audit or review reports are due within nine months of the end of the provider's fiscal year. Providers with approved audit waivers are cross-referenced and reported to DDS.

Providers were advised not to rely solely on email notifications and to proactively begin the audit or review process if they exceed the \$500,000 threshold based on the state fiscal year (July 1–June 30), as the process can be lengthy. DDS maintains a published list identifying providers in compliance.

### **7.3 Community Services Director's Report**

Chair Alex Kopilevich introduced Arshalous Garlanian to provide the Community Services Director Support report. Arshalous Garlanian shared that a more detailed report was included in the meeting packet and provided several updates and reminders for service providers.

Arshalous Garlanian announced that NLACRC received the 2026 rate increase adjustments and stated that no action was required from vendors at this time. Arshalous Garlanian explained that Community Services and Accounting are working on applying the adjustments to January billing, and vendors participating in rate reform should see a slight increase reflected in billing. Arshalous Garlanian also reported that NLACRC continues to work through rate reform implementation and has completed 91% of the implementation, including rate and loan increases, new subcodes, and new service codes. Arshalous Garlanian noted that remaining work involves resolving identified issues and missing items and stated that implementation is nearly complete.

A question was raised regarding whether older subcodes are removed once new subcodes are implemented. Arshalous Garlanian clarified that older subcodes will remain available for a limited period to allow for any outstanding billing tied to an open fiscal year. It was noted that this can cause confusion when selecting the correct subcode, and Arshalous Garlanian stated that staff are reminding service coordinators that subcodes vary by year.

Arshalous Garlanian reviewed requirements for providers to be eligible for the Quality Incentive Program (QIP) rates for Fiscal Year 2026–2027. Arshalous Garlanian stated that providers must be validated in the DDS provider directory, remain compliant with EVV, remain compliant with required independent audits and reviews, and maintain HCBS compliance. Arshalous Garlanian noted that NLACRC has been conducting HCBS settings reviews for the past several years, completed all HCBS site reviews for 2025, and plans to continue monitoring in 2026. Arshalous Garlanian also reminded providers participating in rate reform that the required QIP survey must be completed by January 31 to be included in QIP eligibility. Arshalous Garlanian stated that the survey was emailed to the address listed in the DDS provider directory and advised providers who did not receive it to contact DDS directly.

A question was raised regarding whether providers can confirm completion status for the survey. Arshalous Garlanian shared that DDS has published a tool on the DDS website where providers can check whether the survey has been completed and confirm compliance status for EVV and independent audit requirements. Arshalous Garlanian stated that NLACRC would send an email later that day with links to the DDS compliance and survey status pages. Arshalous Garlanian also advised that providers with rate-related questions should email [ratesquestions@nlacrc.org](mailto:ratesquestions@nlacrc.org).

Arshalous Garlanian provided an update on Early Start Intervention Incentive Payments for Calendar Year 2024, stating that NLACRC received the final list and is reconciling it against payments already processed. Arshalous Garlanian noted that providers will receive payments if any additional updates are identified.

Arshalous Garlanian also announced that beginning January 1, NLACRC began using the Provider Directory Portal for new vendorizations for specific service codes, which are listed on the NLACRC website. Arshalous Garlanian stated that beginning March 1, the portal will be

used for all new vendorizations. Providers with questions about applications submitted between January 1 and March 1 were directed to email [resourcedevelopment@nlacrc.org](mailto:resourcedevelopment@nlacrc.org). Arshalous Garlanian concluded by sharing that the NLACRC staff directory was emailed to all providers the previous day, and the group expressed appreciation for the distribution of the directory as it had been a requested resource.

During discussion, a provider shared concerns about receiving multiple versions of the Prevention and Wellness survey and experiencing technical issues, including inconsistent survey questions and difficulty verifying and printing confirmation after completion. Arshalous Garlanian acknowledged the concerns and stated that NLACRC would raise the issue with DDS during the next meeting, noting that the survey is a DDS process. Arshalous Garlanian recommended that the provider follow up with DDS by email to document attempts to complete the survey. Another attendee noted that DDS offered a training for the Prevention and Wellness survey and suggested the issues may be due to a system glitch. Additional discussion referenced prior survey glitches, including technical limitations with data entry, and it was noted that DDS previously advised submitting a whole number in place of a decimal and then providing the exact number separately for correction.

A provider asked whether receiving only one QIP survey meant no additional surveys would be issued. Arshalous Garlanian stated that eligibility for additional QIP surveys depends on whether the provider qualifies under other QIP categories and advised contacting DDS if additional surveys were expected but not received. It was also noted that some providers received survey links for QIP categories they did not qualify for. Chair Alex Kopilevich asked whether there were any additional questions from VAC members online.

#### **7.4 Legislative Report**

Belinda Abatesi presented updates on recent legislative and policy changes affecting individuals with disabilities and service providers.

Belinda Abatesi reported on the expansion of ABLE accounts under the ABLE Age Adjustment Act. Eligibility has expanded by increasing the disability onset age from 26 to 46, allowing more individuals to qualify. Benefits include up to \$100,000 excluded from SSI calculations, no balance limit for Medicaid eligibility, and tax-free earnings when used for qualified disability expenses. The annual contribution limit increased to \$20,000, with an additional \$15,650 allowed for eligible working individuals not enrolled in an employer-sponsored retirement plan. Belinda Abatesi noted that an eligibility quiz is available and offered to share the link in the chat.

An update was provided on the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and announced that beginning February 1, DOR will implement an Order of Selection (OAS) process due to increased demand and limited resources. New applicants may be placed on a waiting list and categorized into three priority levels: Category 1 for individuals with the most significant disabilities, Category 2 for significant disabilities, and Category 3 for all other eligible individuals. Services will be offered based on priority category and application date.

Several key dates and benefit updates were reviewed. SSI payments increased by 2.8% this month. CalFresh work requirements are expected to begin June 1, 2026. Medi-Cal asset limits and enrollment freezes began January 1, 2026, and Medi-Cal work requirements are expected to begin January 1, 2027. Belinda Abatesi shared that a short informational video explaining Medi-Cal and CalFresh work requirements was included for reference.

Belinda Abatesi highlighted a new bipartisan bill introduced on December 10, 2025, the Supporting Blue Envelope Programs Act, introduced by Congresswoman Norma Torres of California and Congressman John Rutherford of Florida. The bill aims to improve safety and

communication between law enforcement and individuals with disabilities through the use of a blue envelope as a visual cue during interactions. The legislation would fund the creation and expansion of Blue Envelope programs, modeled after programs implemented in San Diego and San Bernardino, and would support law enforcement training, public education, participant privacy, sustainability, and community-based partnerships.

Belinda Abatesi reminded the committee that all bills signed during the prior legislative session took effect on January 1, 2026, unless otherwise specified.

Upcoming events and key dates were reviewed, and members were encouraged to review scheduled events for the current and following month. Members were asked to save the date for Disability Advocacy Day at the Capitol, taking place May 18–19, with additional details to be shared later. Belinda Abatesi also noted upcoming advocacy-related events and encouraged review of the state calendar. Belinda Abatesi shared that the Governor's 2026–2027 State Budget would be released the following day, in accordance with the January 10 constitutional deadline, along with a press conference hosted by the Department of Finance and a stakeholder call focused on health and human services budget proposals.

Belinda Abatesi concluded with advocacy opportunities, noting that ARCA's Voter Voice campaign continues to provide opportunities for engagement. Belinda Abatesi highlighted a January 14 press conference and lobbying activities in Sacramento hosted by the Fight for Our Health Coalition and encouraged participation. Belinda Abatesi also shared a list of trusted information sources and encouraged subscribing to reliable newsletters to stay informed during the new legislative session.

Chair Alex Kopilevich thanked Belinda Abatesi for the report and asked whether there were any questions from in-person or online attendees; none were raised.

## **7.5 Executive Director's Report**

Chair Alex Kopilevich introduced Executive Director Angela Pao-Johnson to provide Executive Director Support updates. Angela Pao-Johnson welcomed attendees and encouraged vendors participating remotely to attend meetings in person when possible.

Angela Pao-Johnson shared updates on recent internal workforce efforts, noting that executive leadership met with the first cohort of new hires from September at the three-month mark to assess onboarding, training, and overall fit. Feedback from staff was highly positive, with average ratings of approximately 8.5 out of 10 for onboarding, training, and supervisor relationships, and 9.5 out of 10 for ongoing support and organizational culture. Staff described the culture as warm, open, and supportive, reflecting significant improvement from prior years.

Angela Pao-Johnson also reported on results from the 2025 Individual and Family Survey, conducted by a third-party vendor. Over 38,000 individuals and families were invited to participate, with more than 5,000 responses received. Compared to 2023, results showed increases in 18 of 23 metrics, with only minor, statistically insignificant decreases in areas related to service coordinator satisfaction. Overall scores averaged 3.59 on a 5-point scale, indicating performance between good and excellent.

Additional highlights included recognition from Senator Caroline Menjivar for NLACRC outreach efforts, particularly support groups serving Filipino, Armenian, and Farsi-speaking communities. Angela Pao-Johnson shared that DDS requested NLACRC's Self-Determination Program budget tool, which is now being used to help inform statewide guidance and has been requested by other regional centers.

Updates were also provided on service outcomes and operations. Competitive integrated employment participation increased from 337 individuals in 2024 to 540 individuals in 2025. For behavioral day programs, the DDS compliance deadline was extended to February 28, and DDS continues to assess provider capacity and implementation challenges, including BCBA availability and dual vendoring considerations. Angela Pao-Johnson noted statewide updates including the increase in minimum wage to \$16.90 and the standard mileage reimbursement rate to \$0.725 per mile, along with ongoing transportation rate adjustments.

Angela Pao-Johnson shared legislative and administrative updates, including projections from the Legislative Analyst's Office of an \$18 billion state budget deficit and reminded members of the Governor's upcoming budget release. Information was also provided on Public Records Act requests, noting that requests can be submitted through the NLACRC website and that compliance is resource-intensive, though the agency remains committed to transparency.

Operational metrics were reviewed, including 927 filled positions, 1,035 authorized positions, recent onboarding of new staff, and a total of 41,090 individuals served. Updates were provided on Social Recreation referrals, quality assurance activities, outreach efforts, and collaboration with Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Angela Pao-Johnson also announced upcoming meetings and opportunities, including the Disability Rights California Board meeting on March 19, the Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee meeting on January 15, and an invitation for providers to participate in the Catalyst Lab Workforce Edition in San Diego from February 24–26.

Angela Pao-Johnson concluded by introducing two new specialist roles—Aging Specialist and Systems of Care Specialist—and briefly described their responsibilities in supporting aging services, cross-system collaboration, and provider and community training.

Alex Kopilevich invited questions from VAC members. Clarifications were provided regarding behavioral day program directives, Catalyst Lab participation costs, and access to the new specialist roles. No further questions were raised.

## **8. OPEN DISCUSSION TOPICS**

### **8.1 Discuss Updated Staff Roster**

During open discussion, the Chair noted that the updated NLACRC staff roster had been distributed. A question was raised regarding the frequency of the roster, and staff confirmed that it will be provided on a quarterly basis. Members shared that the roster is helpful for identifying appropriate points of contact and supervisory relationships. Sharon Weinberg asked Arshalous Garlanian a question regarding distribution, and staff clarified that the roster was sent to the email address on file with the Regional Center for each provider.

### **8.2 Discuss Communication Strategies Report/Proposal**

Sharon Weinberg asked to have this item added under open discussion topics. The question was raised regarding previously issued communication strategies intended to improve communication between vendors and regional center staff. Sharon Weinberg noted that guidance had been shared several months earlier and asked whether it had been implemented.

Evelyn McOmie clarified that the communication strategies were released as best practices for vendors, not as a requirement, and were developed in response to a request from this Committee. Evelyn McOmie noted that uptake has been limited but confirmed that vendors are encouraged to use the guidance.

Evelyn McOmie further stated that the communication strategies are available on the NLACRC website under Service Provider and “How to Contact Regional Center.” The Chair asked if there were any additional questions, including from online participants; none were raised.

### **8.3 Quarterly Meetings for Vendors**

During open discussion, Sharon Weinberg raised the topic of reinstating quarterly meetings for vendors, noting that she valued the opportunity these meetings previously provided to collaborate directly with regional center staff. Sharon Weinberg shared that separate quarterly meetings had been held for residential providers and for vendors, but attendance had been low despite significant staff participation. She expressed interest in returning to a regular forum for collaboration and suggested that there may be value in creating spaces tailored to different provider types, including smaller or boutique organizations that may face distinct operational challenges.

Jen Pippard commented that while her organization had not previously participated in those meetings, it would now be interested in attending and agreed that the meetings could be beneficial if structured effectively.

Evelyn McOmie responded that the decision to discontinue quarterly meetings was based on low attendance and the substantial staff resources required to support them. Evelyn McOmie explained that current operational demands, including rate reform implementation, new reporting requirements, and anticipated performance measures reporting, limit the Regional Center’s ability to reinstate the meetings at this time. Evelyn McOmie stated that the meetings may be reconsidered in the future once workload demands stabilize and emphasized that providers continue to have access to regional center staff through existing communication channels, including the provider hotline.

Sharon Weinberg acknowledged the explanation and noted continued interest in future opportunities for collaboration.

No additional comments were raised.

## **9. COMMITTEE WORK GROUP INFORMATION**

### **9.1 Early Start Services**

Jodie Agnew-Navarro provided an update on the Early Start Services workgroup. Jodie Agnew-Navarro noted that the Early Start committee continues to have strong vendor participation, which is supported by consistent outreach and coordination from Early Start regional center staff, including direct email notifications and distribution of meeting agendas.

Jodie Agnew-Navarro reported that the committee met in November and focused on rate reform and challenges related to new service codes, with rates staff attending to provide clarification. The next Early Start Services meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 15, at 9:00 a.m., and Early Start vendors are welcome to attend.

### **9.2 School Age Services**

Under Committee Workgroup Information and Workgroup Final Reports, Paul Borda provided an update on the School-Age Services workgroup. Paul Borda shared that the workgroup did not meet in October or December and follows the broader VAC schedule for subcommittee meetings. A meeting was held in November; however, Paul Borda was unable to attend and did not provide a detailed update from that meeting.

Paul Borda reported that the next School-Age Services meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. No questions were raised following the update.

**9.3 Adult Services**

Under Committee Workgroup Information and Workgroup Final Reports, Jen Pippard provided an update on the Adult Services workgroup on behalf of Octavia Watkins. Jen Pippard reported that the most recent meeting included a presentation and discussion focused on supports for aging adults.

The group discussed opportunities for deeper partnership with the Regional Center and explored potential systemic changes to better support aging adults. One key topic was using the Early Start model as a reference for how similar levels of investment and coordinated supports could be applied later in life. The workgroup will continue these discussions in future meetings.

**10. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**10.1 Executive Finance Committee**

Alex Kopilevich introduced Jaklen Keshishyan to present the Executive Finance Committee report. Jaklen Keshishyan reported that the Committee met on November 20 and is scheduled to meet again on January 29. Discussion items included topics already covered earlier in the meeting by Vini Montague and Angela Pao-Johnson, review and approval of a Purchase of Service (POS) for a CPP startup contract, and review of expense levels to ensure the organization remains within the 15% administrative cost threshold. Additional updates will be provided following the January 29 meeting.

**10.2 Community Relations Committee**

Alex Kopilevich introduced Sharon Weinberg to provide the Community Relations Committee update. Sharon Weinberg reported that there were no updates to report, noting that the Committee did not meet in November. The next Community Relations Committee meeting is scheduled for January 21 from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.

**10.3 Nominating Committee**

Alex Kopilevich provided the Nominating Committee report. Alex Kopilevich reported that the Committee met recently and commended Chris Whitlock and team for developing a successful board recruitment campaign, which resulted in nine new Board of Trustees applications, in addition to several candidates who had already been interviewed. The Committee will review all applicants and determine next steps for Board appointments.

Alex Kopilevich noted that the next Nominating Committee meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2026, during which the Committee expects to continue reviewing applications and conducting interviews as part of the selection process. No questions were raised.

**11. BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no board meeting agenda items.

**12. ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC INPUT**

Chair Alex Kopilevich opened the Public Input portion of the meeting, noting that up to three individuals were permitted to speak for up to three minutes each. Laura provided comments

regarding adult consumer programming, specifically referencing the Patterns of Adult Consumers program. The speaker noted that while the program was well attended when first launched, participation has declined in recent years despite ongoing facilitation efforts by Victoria Berrey. The speaker expressed concern about limited engagement and a perceived lack of support for adult consumers and requested additional information regarding opportunities to participate in or learn more about adult consumer workgroups. The Chair thanked the speaker for the public comment.

During Public Input, Alona Yorkshire provided comments related to rate updates and advocacy efforts. Alona Yorkshire noted that links to recently published materials had been shared for distribution, including links to new rates effective January 1. Alona Yorkshire also referenced AB 2423, a bill signed by the Governor two years ago that published updated rate models adjusted for cost-of-living increases, noting that some of these rates are approximately 10% higher. Alona Yorkshire shared that following release of the Governor's budget, advocacy efforts between now and May may focus on seeking funding or partial funding for these published rate models.

Alona Yorkshire encouraged vendors to consider joining CDSA to participate in advocacy efforts in Sacramento, noting the organization's active engagement with legislators and the Capitol and its role in advancing funding priorities.

Additionally, Alona Yorkshire clarified how vendors can determine which QIP surveys and compliance requirements apply to them. Alona Yorkshire explained that lists published on December 26 include vendor numbers and indicate compliance status for QIP surveys, fiscal audit requirements, and EVV. The lists are available on the DDS website and are expected to be updated weekly, with links to be shared via email.

Jodie Agnew-Navarro shared an announcement regarding the upcoming CalTASH Conference, which will take place on February 27–28 in Sacramento. Jodie Agnew-Navarro noted that the conference will feature a range of presenters, including Jim LeBrecht, producer of *Crip Camp*, who will participate in a fireside chat-style discussion. The conference town hall will focus on employment, with presenters from DDS and the State Council. Jodie Agnew-Navarro shared that CalTASH is vendoried with regional centers for individuals served and family members and encouraged attendees to visit the CalTASH website, follow on social media, or sign up for the email list for additional conference information.

To allow attendees time to copy information from the chat, the meeting remained open briefly following adjournment.

**13. NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next Vendor Advisory Committee meeting is on February 12, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. at the Santa Clarita Valley office.

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

**On a motion duly made and carried, it was agreed that there was no further business to transact; the meeting closed at 10:55 a.m.**