

**NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL CENTER (NLACRC)
9200 OAKDALE AVENUE, SUITE 100
CHATSWORTH, CA 91311**

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
ZOOM
APRIL 8, 2026 6:00 P.M.**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Sharmila Brunjes (President), Juan Hernandez (Vice President), Anna Hurst (Treasurer), Curtis Wang (Secretary), Leticia Garcia (ARCA Rep), Alex Kopilevich (VAC Chair), George Alvarado, Cathy Blin, Nicholas Abrahms, Jacquie Colton, Jeremy Sunderland, Laura Monge, Jennifer Koster

ABSENT:

Jason Taketa

STAFF:

Angela Pao-Johnson - Executive Director, Evelyn McOmie – Deputy Director, Vini Montague – Chief Financial Officer, Dr. Carlo DeAntonio – Director, Clinical Services, Lisa Butters-Smith, Vipin Gautam, Silvia Renteria-Haro, Arshalous Garlanian, Donna Rensch, Sarah Yap, Elisa Hill, Lindsay Granger,

GUESTS:

Xochitl Gonzalez – DDS, Charlotte Tay—Lindquist, Von Husen & Joyce, Andy Ou – Lindquist, Von Husen & Joyce, Jo Huie – Lindquist, Von Husen & Joyce, Hellen Carlson, Puja Trivedi, Grigore Madikians, Erica Rodriguez – Office of Clients Rights Advocate/Attorney, John Francis – SDLVAC member

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND CALL TO ORDER

Upon confirmation of quorum, the meeting was called to order by President Sharmila Brunjes at 6:00 PM. Opening remarks included a welcome, reminders for participants to display their full names, and guidance for Board members to state their names when making or seconding motions to support accurate minute-taking.

The Board reviewed the organization’s mission and vision statements, reaffirming its commitment to supporting individuals with developmental disabilities in leading healthy, productive, and inclusive lives. Meeting protocols were also outlined, including public comment procedures—limited to agenda items at the beginning of the meeting, with general public input scheduled later—and adherence to the civility code to ensure respectful and inclusive dialogue.

Housekeeping items included confirmation that Spanish interpretation was available and instructions for Board members to update their display names to include their role and geographic designation.

2. IMPACT STORY FROM INDIVIDUAL SERVED

Executive Director Angela Pao-Johnson shared a video from Ruby, the parent of an individual served, Judah.

3. **BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE/QUORUM**

Board members were confirmed in attendance on Zoom. Quorum was confirmed by staff.

4. **AGENDA – APPROVAL**

A proposed agenda change was introduced: the Transparency and Public Information Policy item was not ready for presentation and would be deferred to the following month. The Board was advised that a formal vote to defer would occur when the item was reached on the agenda.

Absent objection, the agenda was approved as amended.

5. **PUBLIC INPUT & COMMENTS—RESERVED FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

During the public input portion of the meeting, Sharmila Brunjes reminded attendees that comments were limited to agenda items, with a three-minute time limit per speaker.

One public comment was received from community member Jon Francis. Jon Francis began by offering an apology for comments made at a previous meeting. Jon Francis then expressed continued advocacy for services supporting individuals with developmental disabilities, with a particular focus on the Self-Determination Program (SDP).

Jon Francis shared that, as a community partner and committee member, active involvement has included submitting a letter to the Governor regarding proposed budget cuts that may impact SDP services. Jon Francis emphasized the significant positive impact of SDP—particularly in improving access to communication services—compared to traditional service models, noting meaningful progress for individuals and families.

Jon Francis acknowledged ongoing challenges within the program while recognizing efforts by stakeholders to address them. Concern was expressed regarding potential Medicaid-related funding reductions and their impact on SDP, alongside continued advocacy efforts to preserve and strengthen the program. Jon Francis concluded by thanking the Board for its support.

No additional public comments were made, and the meeting proceeded to the next agenda item.

6. **CONSENT ITEMS**

Sharmila Brunjes listed the consent items as approval of the Board of Trustees meeting minutes from March 11, 2026. Sharmila Brunjes asked if there was any discussion.

Absent objection, it was resolved to approve the meeting minutes from the March 11, 2026, board meeting. Motion carried.

7. **ACTION ITEMS**

7.1 **Lindquist, Von Husen & Joyce Presentation on IRS Form 990 Tax Return**

Sharmila Brunjes introduced the action items, beginning with a presentation on the IRS Form 990 tax return by Joe Huie of Lindquist Von Husen & Joyce. The Board was informed that a more detailed review of the Form 990 had previously been conducted at the Executive Finance Committee (EFC) meeting, and this presentation would serve as a high-level summary.

Joe Huie explained that the Form 990 is an annual informational tax return required by the IRS that provides transparency into the organization's financial position, governance, and operations for public review. Joe Huie noted that the current year's filing reflects no significant changes from the prior year, with no unusual transactions or reportable issues. The reported financial figures, including total assets, net assets, revenue, and expenses, are consistent with and directly tied to the organization's audited financial statements, with the Form 990 serving as an alternate presentation format with additional disclosure requirements.

Joe Huie further reported that the organization continues to demonstrate strong public support, consistently exceeding 99%, which satisfies IRS public support tests and confirms the organization's classification. While there were increases in both revenue and total assets compared to the previous year, these changes were expected and did not reflect any material shifts in operations or financial structure. Overall, the return reflects stable operations, consistent financial reporting, and no compliance concerns.

Board members were invited to ask questions; however, no questions or discussion were raised. It was also noted that Board members could reference the detailed EFC discussion and upcoming published minutes for additional information.

Following the presentation, Vini Montague, Chief Financial Officer, noted that a formal motion was required for approval.

On a motion made by Anna Hurst, seconded by Curtis Wang, it was resolved to approve the IRS Form 990 tax return. Motion carried.

7.2 Approval and Adoption of Updated Board Policies – Board Recruitment Plan
a. Board Member Onboarding Plan

Sharmila Brunjes introduced the approval and adoption of updated Board policies, beginning with the Board Onboarding Plan. Sharmila Brunjes provided background, noting that the plan was originally submitted to DDS in 2025 as part of special contract language, returned with feedback in July, and subsequently revised and resubmitted. The plan has now been finalized and brought forward for formal adoption and website posting.

On a motion made by Jeremy Sundelrand, seconded by Alex Kopilevich, it was resolved to approve and adopt the Board Member OnBoarding Plan. Motion carried.

Sharmila Brunjes then addressed the Transparency and Public Information Policy, noting that the policy is currently in draft form and under review by outside legal counsel. As the policy is not yet ready for Board consideration, a request was made to defer the item to a future meeting.

No objections were raised, and the Transparency and Public Information Policy was deferred.

7.3 Approval of New Purchase of Services (POS) Policy for Social Rec Camping Non-Medical Therapies

Sharmila Brunjes introduced the next action item: approval of the new Purchase of Service (POS) Policy for Social Recreation. Evelyn McOmie presented the policy and provided an overview.

Evelyn McOmie, Deputy Director, explained that the policy update is based on guidance issued by DDS on March 25, directing regional centers to align with a standardized policy framework. Adoption of this model policy allows for implementation without requiring additional DDS approval. The policy aligns with existing service standards and clarifies the purpose and scope of social recreation services.

Evelyn McOmie noted that the policy emphasizes services that support skill development and promote community-based inclusion. Requests for services must be addressed through the Individual Program Plan (IPP) process, with a focus on utilizing cost-effective, community-based resources. The policy also includes examples of eligible services and outlines an exception process for unique circumstances, requiring approval by the Executive Director or designee.

No questions or discussion were raised.

On a motion made by Jeremy Sunderland, seconded by Cathy Blin, it was resolved to approve the new Purchase of Services (POS) Policy for Social Rec Camping Non Medical Therapies. Motion carried.

8. BOARD BUSINESS

8.1 Introduction of New Dental Consultant

Sharmila Brunjes introduced a new Board Business item, welcoming Lisa Butters-Smith as the Regional Center's new full-time dental consultant.

Lisa Butters-Smith provided an overview of professional background, including experience as a dental hygienist and prior work with another regional center. Lisa Butters-Smith explained that the role will continue core responsibilities such as reviewing dental treatment plans and coordinating funding, while expanding efforts in outreach, education, and training due to the full-time, on-site presence.

Recent and upcoming activities include hosting virtual presentations on children's oral health and the impact of autism on oral health, participating in vendor fairs, and conducting community and family outreach. Lisa Butters-Smith also highlighted ongoing efforts to increase the number of vendored dental providers, including recruitment of pediatric and adult providers, particularly in underserved areas such as the Santa Clarita Valley. Additional updates included onboarding a provider capable of administering general anesthesia and collaboration with a behavioral therapist specializing in dental-related support.

Lisa Butters-Smith emphasized that dental care remains a significant unmet need for individuals with developmental disabilities and expressed a goal of improving access and awareness through expanded services and partnerships.

During Board discussion, Anna Hurst inquired about outreach to dental providers and training on working with individuals with developmental disabilities. Lisa Butters-Smith confirmed ongoing outreach and noted challenges related to Medi-Cal reimbursement rates.

Jeremy Sunderland asked about involvement in advocacy for a behavioral management billing code. Lisa Butters-Smith confirmed support efforts, including letters and petitions, and noted that while such codes exist, reimbursement denials remain a challenge.

Additional comments highlighted the need for services that accommodate individuals with mobility limitations, including those who use wheelchairs.

The Board expressed appreciation for the presentation, and the meeting proceeded to the next agenda item.

8.2 Introduction of New IT Director

Sharmila Brunjes introduced a new Board Business item, welcoming Lisa Butters-Smith as the Regional Center's new full-time dental consultant.

Lisa Butters-Smith provided an overview of professional background, including experience as a dental hygienist and prior work with another regional center. Lisa Butters-Smith explained that the role will continue core responsibilities such as reviewing dental treatment plans and coordinating funding, while expanding efforts in outreach, education, and training due to the full-time, on-site presence.

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The Board expressed appreciation for the presentation, and the meeting proceeded to the next agenda item.

8.3 Announcement on Upcoming Elections

Sharmila Brunjes announced that Board elections will take place in June, with the proposed slate to be presented at the May meeting.

Sharmila Brunjes noted that while the Nominating Committee has already developed a slate, Board members interested in running for an Executive Committee position may still do so. Nominations may be made from the floor at the time of the election, either by self-nomination or by another Board member.

The announcement emphasized that additional interest and participation in the election process are encouraged.

8.4 Strategic Plan Update

Angela Pao-Johnson provided an update on the organization's strategic planning process. The project, facilitated by a consulting group, has completed the fact-finding phase, which included interviews with approximately 85 internal and external stakeholders, including staff, Board members, committees, DDS, ARCA representatives, and community partners.

The process is currently in Phase 2 and remains on schedule. A Strategic Lab was conducted on March 17, bringing together executive leadership and staff across departments and levels to discuss mission, vision, values, and organizational priorities. Feedback from this session is being used to inform the next steps, including the distribution of internal and external stakeholder surveys. Board members will receive a survey to provide input.

Angela Pao-Johnson shared that four key focus areas have emerged for action planning: enhancing customer service through a more person-centered approach, improving organizational alignment and efficiency, strengthening and empowering the workforce, and supporting community partners. Action planning teams are being formed to develop specific strategies and outcome metrics, followed by a Strategic Planning Summit and development of a final implementation roadmap. The strategic plan is expected to be completed by the end of June, with Board presentation anticipated at a subsequent meeting.

During discussion, Lety Garcia inquired about the duration of the plan and timeline for presentation. It was noted that the plan is expected to span approximately three years, with final presentation likely in August.

Sharmila Brunjes raised the importance of Board involvement in the development process. Angela Pao-Johnson confirmed that Board input will be incorporated through upcoming surveys and increased participation in Phase 3 of the process.

Anna Hurst expressed support for the process, noting the value of alignment across the organization and the importance of strengthening organizational culture and relationships.

The Board expressed appreciation for the progress and noted that the strategic planning effort is advancing efficiently.

8.5 Board Committees for FY 2026-2027

Sharmila Brunjes provided updates on Board workgroups and upcoming activities. Planning for the Board Retreat and an end-of-year Board dinner is ongoing, with dates currently being finalized to accommodate Board participation and availability of the Board coach. Board Support will distribute scheduling communications in the coming days.

8.6 Board Workgroup Updates

Sharmila Brunjes provided updates on Board workgroups and upcoming activities. Planning for the Board Retreat and an end-of-year Board dinner is ongoing, with dates currently being finalized to accommodate Board participation and availability of the Board coach. Board Support will distribute scheduling communications in the coming days.

The Board Retreat and calendar workgroup continues to meet weekly on Fridays at 11:00 a.m., and Board members were encouraged to participate. The Executive Director (ED) Evaluation Workgroup is progressing on schedule, meeting biweekly on Mondays at 10:30 a.m., and nearing completion of its work.

8.7 Update on Board Recruitment Plan

Sharmila Brunjes also reviewed Board committee participation for the upcoming fiscal year, encouraging members to explore and join committees of interest. Committees highlighted included Community Relations, Executive Finance, Nominating, and Post-Retirement. Board members were invited to attend upcoming meetings to learn more before committing.

Angela Pao-Johnson provided a brief update on the Board Recruitment Plan, noting that a minor typographical correction had been made. No substantive changes were reported.

The meeting then proceeded to the next agenda item.

9. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Angela Pao-Johnson presented the Executive Director's Report, beginning with organizational wins. Angela Pao-Johnson shared that NLACRC currently leads regional centers in enrollment for the Paid Internship Program, while noting continued efforts to increase transitions into competitive integrated employment.

Angela Pao-Johnson also reported progress on IPP survey participation, which remains part of the organization's special contract language. Survey completion increased from 2% in 2025 to 9% in January 2026 and 8% in February 2026. Outreach efforts include multilingual flyers and continued reminders to families.

Additional updates included a presentation by Employment Services Specialists at the Cal-TASH Conference, continued progress in strengthening cybersecurity and platform integration, and DDS updates related to the Pathways pilot, Self-Determination Program waiver enrollment, AB 2423 rate-related cost estimates, and emergency preparedness planning.

Angela Pao-Johnson reported that NLACRC currently has 963 filled positions and serves nearly 42,000 individuals across its three valleys. The Quality Assurance team completed 144 residential visits, including 54 unannounced visits, resulting in four corrective action plans. For social recreation reimbursement, Angela Pao-Johnson shared that nearly 4,900 individuals have been served and more than 10,267 authorizations processed. Processing timelines have improved, and additional staffing is being added to support seasonal demand. Angela Pao-Johnson also highlighted recent outreach at the City of Los Angeles Shine LA Resource Fair, where staff shared information about NLACRC services with families and community members.

During discussion, Lety Garcia asked whether social recreation information was also being shared with Spanish/Latino support groups. Angela Pao-Johnson confirmed outreach to Spanish-speaking groups, including Puentes de Amor.

No further questions were raised.

10. CLOSED SESSION

Sharmila Brunjes announced the Board would move into closed session to discuss personnel.

Absent objection the board entered closed session at 7:08 p.m.

A motion was made by Jeremy Sunderland, seconded by Anna Hurst, for a personnel issue.

Absent objection the board exited closed session at 7:32 p.m.

11. **PUBLIC INPUT & COMMENTS**

During public comment, community member Jon Francis raised questions regarding the Self-Determination Program (SDP) waiver enrollment process, specifically regarding facilitation of applications and access to federal matching funds.

Evelyn McOmie clarified that waiver enrollment has been a required component of SDP participation and confirmed that NLACRC has been in compliance with these requirements. It was noted that the previously mentioned concerns reflect a statewide issue rather than a local gap in implementation.

A second public comment was provided by community member Grigore Madikians, who shared an urgent personal situation involving housing instability and medical concerns. Grigore Madikians requested immediate assistance, including temporary housing support, and expressed concern regarding delays in service implementation.

Angela Pao-Johnson acknowledged the comment and confirmed that follow-up would occur. Sharmila Brunjes also expressed concern and appreciation for the comment.

No additional public comments were made.

12. **SDLVAC LIAISON REPORT AND SELF-DETERMINATION (SDP) IMPLEMENTATION REPORT**

Juan Hernandez provided updates, noting prior concerns regarding delays in processing authorizations. Juan Hernandez shared that Case Management and Accounting are working collaboratively to address and prevent ongoing delays. Additional updates included discussion of approximately \$133,000 in DDS funding to support coaching and independent facilitation/mentoring, as well as ongoing collaboration with the State Council to fill a vacant position on the Local Vendor Advisory Committee (LVAC).

Evelyn McOmie presented the Self-Determination Program (SDP) report as of April 1, 2026.

Key updates included:

- 1,365 individuals enrolled in SDP (an increase of 28 since the prior report)
- 828 certified budgets
- 751 approved spending plans, with 48 in progress
- 703 completed person-centered plans (increase of 26)
- 751 active SDP participants
- 3 participants discontinued after budget certification; 17 opted out
- 13 inter-regional center cases during transition

Evelyn McOmie also noted continued growth in program participation, updates on Financial Management Service (FMS) models, and ongoing transitions of cases. Orientation attendance and future transition of orientation responsibilities to the State Council were also highlighted.

The Board acknowledged the updates and proceeded to the next agenda item.

13. **ITEMS 13-20**

The Board received the following committee reports for information:

- Association of Regional Center Agencies presented by Lety Garcia.

Lety Garcia provided an update from the March ARCA meetings. Highlights included a presentation by the San Diego Regional Center on marketing strategies, focusing on strengthening community engagement, promoting services and support groups, and enhancing Board recruitment through social media and other outreach channels.

Lety Garcia shared that the Governor's budget revision is forthcoming and will focus on regional center operations and Early Start services. One-day Early Start workshops are expected to roll out soon, with additional information to be provided by DDS. Updates were also provided on the Self-Determination Program (SDP), including efforts led by the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to standardize a statewide orientation consisting of two sessions. Final trailer bill language is anticipated in late June or July, and the next ARCA meeting is scheduled for June 26 in Sacramento.

Lety Garcia further reported that DDS is working to standardize respite, intake, and vendorization processes across regional centers. As part of this effort, NLACRC received a 100% score on intake services, reflecting strong performance by staff.

The Board acknowledged the update and expressed appreciation for the report.

- Consumer Advisory Committee presented by Juan Hernandez

Juan Hernandez provided a brief update, highlighting a recent presentation on emergency preparedness focused on heat waves. The presentation covered guidance on how to respond during extreme heat, including safety precautions, staying cool, and accessing appropriate resources.

Juan Hernandez noted that the full report is included in the meeting packet for Board review. The next meeting is scheduled for May 2 at 5:00 p.m.

The Board acknowledged the update and proceeded to the next agenda item.

- Executive Finance Committee presented by Sharmila Brunjes and Anna Hurst.

Sharmila Brunjes provided a summary of the Executive Finance Committee (EFC) meeting. Key items reviewed included the IRS Form 990 tax return, financial reports, the administrative versus direct allocation report, and the outstanding authorizations report. Updates were also provided on audits, the whistleblower policy, the strategic plan, and ongoing workgroup activities.

Sharmila Brunjes noted that additional details will be available in the posted committee minutes. The next EFC meeting is scheduled for April 30, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

- Community Relations Committee presented by Jeremy Sunderland.

The next committee meeting will be on Wednesday, May 20th at 5:00 p.m.

- Nominating Committee presented by Curtis Wang.

Curtis Wang reported that the Nominating Committee met on April 1 and finalized the slate of Board officers and additional Executive Finance Committee members. The full slate, along with Board member renewals and new applicants, will be presented at the next Board meeting. The next Nominating Committee meeting is scheduled for August.

During discussion, Anna Hurst inquired about the pipeline for future Board recruitment. Sharmila Brunjes shared that, based on the proposed slate and anticipated trailer bill requirements, the Board is expected to reach full capacity. It was noted that future recruitment may focus on specific gaps, particularly identifying a member with financial expertise, depending on final approval of the trailer bill.

Sharmila Brunjes also noted that the Post-Retirement Medical Trust Committee had no updates. The next meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

The meeting then proceeded to the next agenda item.

- Post-Retirement Medical Trust Committee presented by Sharmila Brunjes.

The next PRMT Committee meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

- Vendor Advisory Committee presented by Alex Kopilevich.

Alex Kopilevich provided an update on Vendor Advisory Committee (VAC) activities. The VAC recently completed an applicant review process, during which seven candidates were selected for interviews; five candidates participated. Following interviews, the panel recommended two candidates to move forward for a full VAC vote, scheduled for the next meeting.

Alex Kopilevich noted that the VAC currently has 17 members, with a maximum capacity of 18. Depending on the outcome of the vote, membership will be adjusted accordingly for the upcoming fiscal year.

The next VAC meeting is scheduled for April 9 at 9:30 a.m. and will be held in a hybrid format at the Chatsworth office.

14. OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

Sharmila Brunjes provided updates under old and new business. Board members were reminded that Regional Center email passwords must be updated every 90 days by contacting IT. Lindsay Granger offered assistance to Board members and noted that support will also be available at the next in-person meeting. Until access issues are resolved, communications may continue to be sent to personal email accounts.

Board members were also reminded to review and confirm the accuracy of attendance sheets and time reports. It was noted that a list of acronyms is included in the Board packet for reference.

Vini Montague confirmed that the organization's strategic plan will span three years. Sharmila Brunjes encouraged Board members to review committee options and sign up for committees of interest for the upcoming term.

No additional comments were raised.

15. ANNOUNCEMENTS / INFORMATION

16. NEXT MEETING

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13th in person at the Chatsworth office or on Zoom.

17. **ADJOURNMENT**

Absent objection the meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

DISCLAIMER

The above document 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.