

# **SDLAC SUMMARY**

**MAY 21, 2026**

## **Quick recap**

This was a meeting of the Self-Determination Program Local Volunteer Advisory Committee (LVAC) for North LA County Regional Center, where committee members and staff discussed program implementation, challenges, and updates. Committee members shared personal introductions, with participants including family members, clients, and staff representing various roles in the SDP program. Several parents and caregivers raised concerns about responsiveness issues with service coordinators, including delayed responses to emails and requests, vacant caseloads, and challenges in getting necessary documentation like IPP signature pages in a timely manner. Angela Pao-Johnson, the regional center Executive Director, acknowledged the issues and explained that they are working to reduce caseload ratios and improve training for new service coordinators, noting that 20% of their service coordinators are under one year of service. The committee reviewed implementation statistics showing 863 certified budgets and 781 approved spending plans, discussed upcoming training opportunities including new orientation sessions and coaching programs. The conversation ended with updates on funding allocations and discussion of potential changes to meeting times, though no decisions were made about timing adjustments.

## **Next steps**

### **DJ**

- Relay feedback about the orientation schedule (e.g., more session, recordings) to the SCDD team

### **Jordan & Ricardo**

- Will present at the next committee meeting on an SDP-related topic

### **Robin Monroe**

- Work on conveying the new PDS provider (Cambrian) process to CSCs and provide training materials.
- Follow up with Mariela regarding the independent facilitator payment process and vendorization, directing her to the appropriate resources.

## **Silvia Renteria-Haro**

- Follow up with Diana's case to ensure her service coordinator's situation is addressed and provide guidance on changing service coordinators if needed.
- Connect with Donna regarding her IPP and service delays and follow up with her service coordinators.
- Campaign internally and with the community about the importance of the IPP signature page and ensure it is provided to families promptly.
- Provide an update at the next meeting regarding median rates and service codes not included in the rate study.

## **Victoria Berrey**

- Send the link to the Padlet resource she created to the committee for review and feedback.

## **Collaboration**

- Committee: Discuss and consider changing the meeting time or date based on feedback.

## **Summary**

### **Self-Determination Program Committee Meeting**

The meeting began with introductions where members shared their connections to the Self-Determination Program (SDP), including family members of individuals with special needs, program participants, and advocates. Miriam, who was leading the meeting guided the process and noted that two committee members were absent.

### **Self-Determination Program Resource Updates**

The meeting focused on sharing resources and updates for the Self-Determination Program (SDP) at North LA Regional Center. Miriam introduced several training opportunities, including small group coaching from the Autism Society of LA and a Smart Staffing series from the Self-Determination Institute. Kristianna urged participants to email Senator Menjivar and Dr. Corey Jackson to support preserving LVAC funding. David Ellis announced that Cambrian FMS was approved to provide PDS services at North LA Regional Center. Jon raised concerns about potential cuts to communication devices for non-speaking individuals, citing them as being deemed not evidence based. The meeting also included

updates about training opportunities for independent facilitators and a personal account from a parent about their experience with the regional center services.

### **Regional Center Funding Challenges**

Diana shared her challenging experiences working with the regional center to secure funding for Eric's adaptive ski lessons, describing communication breakdowns and difficulties in getting responses from staff. She highlighted the positive impact of specific individuals like Arezo and Cecilia who provided effective support, while expressing frustration with inconsistent service coordination. Diana emphasized the importance of clear communication and reasonable response times, particularly as she navigates the transition to the self-determination program.

### **Service Coordination Process Improvements**

Diana discussed her transition to SDP and expressed concerns about relying too heavily on Arezo for help, while Silvia explained that service coordinators can be changed without delaying the process and offered to follow up offline. Donna shared her experience with delays in receiving services for her grandson, including not having an IPP yet and being told services would be put on hold until July. Ricardo expressed frustration about ongoing service coordinator responsiveness issues across the regional center. Angela acknowledged the concerns and provided updates on improvements, including reduced caseload ratios to 1 in 93 for school-age services and a 72-hour response policy, while apologizing for current challenges and assuring that feedback is being addressed.

### **Service Coordination Response Time Issues**

The meeting focused on discussing service coordination issues and response times at the regional center. Angela acknowledged that while most service coordinators are responsive, there is a subset that needs improvement and that staffing shortages and training gaps are contributing factors to delays. The discussion included details about service level agreements, with Rita expressing concerns about unclear response timelines from service coordinators during IPP meetings. The meeting also covered information about Officer of the Day specialists and their roles in handling vacant cases, with Silvia providing clarification about their functions.

## **CSC Caseload Management Updates**

Robin explained that the IF processing time typically takes two weeks for CSC to complete IPP planning, followed by 4-6 weeks for payment once proper documentation reaches accounting. Angela reported that vacant caseloads at NLACRC improved significantly from 81 cases in late March to 42 cases in late April, with ongoing efforts to recruit and train qualified service coordinators. The team discussed handoff procedures for transitioning cases, with Silvia noting that new service coordinators review all charts during training to ensure understanding of cases, and Robin emphasized the importance of proper training and supervisor support during the transition process.

## **Service Coordinator Availability Concerns**

Diana raised concerns about service coordinator availability, noting that her current coordinator is consistently unavailable on Fridays and frequently on vacation, leading to communication issues and email chain escalation. Silvia clarified that service coordinators should be full-time and available Monday through Friday, with only every other Friday being a flex day, and confirmed that IPP signature pages should be provided immediately after meetings rather than requiring a two-week waiting period. The conversation ended with updates on the May state budget revision showing no cuts and increased funding, and the allocation of \$133,446 in LVAC implementation funds across various support areas including participant coaching, IF support, and training initiatives.

## **Orientation Terminology and Access Concerns**

Miriam raised concerns about terminology used in the orientation, specifically the lack of reference to "independent facilitator" and the use of "general SD supports" instead, which she found confusing for participants. Jon reported on the North LA Board of Trustees meeting where he highlighted efforts against proposed cuts to self-determination funds. DJ clarified that while different trainers conduct the orientation sessions, the content remains consistent, and he noted feedback about scheduling challenges, particularly the long wait times between Part A and Part B sessions. Miriam suggested offering more sessions and making recordings available to increase accessibility.

## **Best Practices Subcommittee Meeting Updates**

The Best Practices Subcommittee met on May 14 to discuss two monthly documents: the SCLAC to-do list and SCP website feedback form. The team reviewed RFP-related items and addressed issues with the encumbering process at San Diego Regional Center. Miriam presented survey results showing nine out of ten committee members responded, with positive feedback on improved quality of life and service coordination, while concerns were raised about processes, insurance requirements, and service delays.

Rita and Victoria shared updates from recent meetings, including budget changes, potential consolidation of regional center policies, and the introduction of a new LOIS system for family access to information.

### **Self-Determination Program Resource Discussion**

Victoria presented a Padlet resource she created for the self-determination program, demonstrating how it could gather and display information about SDP including workbooks, orientations, and best practices. The committee discussed concerns about low attendance at meetings, with Jordan noting that only about 1% of the approximately 700 SDP participants were attending the monthly meetings. The group agreed to explore alternative methods for participant feedback, including allowing written submissions of experiences to be read aloud at meetings. Silvia reported on current SDP funds and contracts with various providers, while DJ announced two openings for SCDD committee members.