

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Consumer Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes (Via Zoom)
June 4, 2026

Present: Juan Hernandez, Destry Walker, Elena Tiffany, Bill Abrahamson, George Alvarado–
Committee Members

Lesly Galvan – Support Staff - **Guests**

Santos Rodriguez, Jose Rodriguez, Angela Pao-Johnson, Lindsay Granger, Vipin Gautam,
John Van De Riet – **Staff**

Absent: Pam Aiona, Jennifer Koster

1. Call to Order & Introductions

Committee Chair and Board of Trustees Vice President, Juan Hernandez called the meeting to order at 5:07 pm.

Juan Hernandez read the NLACRC Civility Code and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Agenda

M/S/C (George Alvarado/Juan Hernandez) On a motion made by George Alvarado, seconded by Juan Hernandez, it was resolved to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

3. Public Input

There was no public input.

4. Consent Items

A. Approval of Minutes from May 7, 2026 Meeting

M/S/C (George Alvarado/Juan Hernandez) On a motion made by George Alvarado, seconded by Juan Hernandez, it was resolved to approve the meeting minutes from the May 7, 2026 meeting. Motion carried.

5. May Revise – Belinda Abatesi

John Van de Riet provided the Legislative and Public Policy Update and reminded Consumer Advisory Committee members about the upcoming Annual Legislative Breakfast at Knollwood Country Club. John Van de Riet encouraged members who had not yet registered to do so by the registration deadline. Staff confirmed there was no cost to attend and assisted members with registration questions.

John Van de Riet reported that the Governor's May Revision proposed an overall stable and growing Department of Developmental Services (DDS) budget, with no proposed service cuts at

that time. The proposal included continued funding for regional center operations and infrastructure to support projected caseload growth.

John Van de Riet explained that, while the overall outlook was positive, several proposals would continue to be monitored. These included proposed reductions to Medi-Cal asset limits beginning January 1, 2027, which could affect Medi-Cal eligibility and, in turn, eligibility for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) for individuals with modest savings or assets. John Van de Riet also noted proposed changes to CalFresh work requirements and time limits, while recognizing that exemptions may apply for individuals with disabilities.

John Van de Riet emphasized that the May Revision was a proposal only and that the Legislature and Governor would continue negotiating the final state budget before the June 15 deadline. John Van de Riet stated that NLACRC would continue monitoring the proposals and provide updates as additional information becomes available.

John Van de Riet also highlighted upcoming advocacy and election-related activities. John Van de Riet noted that the June 2 Primary Election had concluded, the General Election would be held on November 3, and NLACRC was partnering with the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA) to provide voter education training for individuals served, families, and community members. Training dates and additional information would be shared once available.

Following the presentation, Consumer Advisory Committee members asked clarifying questions regarding the Legislative Breakfast date, time, and registration process. Staff confirmed the event details and offered assistance with registration. No additional questions or comments were raised regarding the legislative and public policy update.

6. Action Items

A. Approval of CAC Meeting Schedule for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Juan Hernandez presented the proposed Consumer Advisory Committee meeting schedule for the next fiscal year. The Committee discussed continuing to meet at 5:00 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month. Juan Hernandez noted that the schedule could be adjusted or improved in the future if needed.

M/S/C (George Alvarado/Juan Hernandez) On a motion made by George Alvarado, seconded by Juan Hernandez, it was resolved to approve the CAC meeting schedule for fiscal year 2026-2027. Motion carried.

B. Approval of Draft Planning Calendar for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Juan Hernandez presented the proposed Consumer Advisory Committee Planning Calendar for the next fiscal year. Lindsay Granger explained that agenda topics beyond January remained To Be Determined (TBD) because future presentations are scheduled based on committee requests and emerging topics. Lindsay Granger also noted that additional presentations or trainings, including those from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), could be added throughout the year as opportunities arise.

During the discussion, George Alvarado expressed interest in adding future presentations

related to emergency preparedness, including CPR, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, earthquakes, fire safety, and disaster preparedness. Lindsay Granger clarified that CPR and CERT certification courses would likely be offered as external trainings rather than during a committee meeting. Jose Rodriguez suggested coordinating with NLACRC's Emergency Preparedness Specialist to identify appropriate presenters or training opportunities. Juan Hernandez noted that the emergency preparedness topic could be discussed further under a later agenda item.

M/S/C (Juan Hernandez/George Alvarado) On a motion made by Juan Hernandez, seconded by George Alvarado, it was resolved to approve the CAC planning calendar for fiscal year 2026-2027. Motion carried.

6. Committee Business

A. Strategic Plan Alignment Workshop

Heather Sims, Co-President of KH Consulting Group, provided an update on the development of NLACRC's Strategic Plan. Heather Sims reviewed the strategic planning process completed to date, including interviews with staff, Board members, committee representatives, vendors,

DDS, ARCA, and other community stakeholders, document reviews, strategy sessions, and stakeholder engagement activities. Heather Sims explained that the planning process was transitioning from information gathering to action planning and encouraged Consumer Advisory

Committee members to participate in the Strategic Direction Survey before the June 8 deadline. Lindsay Granger offered to distribute the survey to all Consumer Advisory Committee members.

Heather Sims presented the four draft strategic priorities that will guide the development of the Strategic Plan:

- Fulfilling and Person-Centered Culture
- Empowered Workforce
- Aligned and Resilient Operations
- Empowered Partners

Heather Sims explained that the committee's feedback would be incorporated into the action planning process for each priority.

During the discussion of Fulfilling and Person-Centered Culture, Consumer Advisory Committee members emphasized the importance of clear, easy-to-understand communication with consumers and families. George Alvarado recommended that staff communicate at a pace that is easy to understand, while Jennifer Koster emphasized providing clear explanations and clarification when sharing information. Committee members also highlighted the importance of patience, kindness, transparency, regular updates throughout service processes, and maintaining respectful communication with consumers and families.

During the discussion of Empowered Workforce, committee members recommended increasing hands-on training opportunities for staff, including shadowing experienced Service Coordinators

and providing job coaching for new employees. Juan Hernandez emphasized the need for staff to have the appropriate technology, tools, and support staff to help manage high caseloads more efficiently, allowing Service Coordinators to spend more time serving consumers.

During the discussion of Aligned and Resilient Operations, committee members suggested developing training videos and incorporating them into staff onboarding to support consistent implementation of new systems and processes. Bill Abramson noted that successful operations should result in consumers receiving services in a timely manner and encouraged measuring outcomes based on the experiences of individuals served. George Alvarado also recommended using clearer wording and communication throughout organizational processes.

During the discussion of Empowered Partners, George Alvarado recommended increasing opportunities for consumers and families to learn about community agencies and service providers through site visits or informational presentations. Committee members also emphasized providing clearer information about available services, how agencies operate, how consumers access services, and the steps involved in connecting with providers. Heather Sims noted that the desired outcomes included timely access to services, reducing waitlists, expanding service availability throughout the catchment area, and strengthening partnerships that improve services for consumers.

Heather Sims thanked the Consumer Advisory Committee for its feedback and encouraged members to share any additional recommendations after the meeting. Jennifer Koster requested that Heather Sims provide her contact information in the meeting chat, and Heather Sims agreed to do so before concluding the presentation.

B. Update on CAC ARCA Representative Role

Juan Hernandez introduced a discussion regarding the ARCA Client Advisory Committee (CAC) Representative role. Lindsay Granger explained that, following recent updates to the Board's bylaws and policies, the CAC ARCA Representative position had been eliminated as an official committee role. Lindsay Granger noted that the discussion was prompted because George Alvarado had served in the role for many years.

Lindsay Granger clarified that although NLACRC no longer has an official CAC ARCA Representative position, the ARCA Client Advisory Committee itself continues to exist. Lindsay Granger noted that not every regional center has a representative on the statewide committee and stated that an updated ARCA CAC roster would be requested. Lindsay Granger also confirmed that George Alvarado had attended the most recent ARCA CAC meeting.

Jennifer Koster asked several questions regarding the impact of the bylaw changes. Lindsay Granger clarified that the elimination of the CAC ARCA Representative role does not affect participation in other ARCA activities, such as the ARCA Academy or Legislative/Delegation events, as those are separate from the ARCA Client Advisory Committee Representative position.

Juan Hernandez explained that the elimination of the role resulted from recommendations made during the Board's policy and bylaw review process, which included streamlining Board and committee roles based on recommendations from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

Lindsay Granger also informed the committee that additional bylaw revisions may be necessary pending the outcome of the state trailer bill. Lindsay Granger explained that future updates could include renaming the Consumer Advisory Committee if changes to state terminology are adopted. Juan Hernandez emphasized that the committee itself would continue to exist and that any future changes would be limited to the committee's name rather than its purpose or function.

C. ARCA May CAC Meeting Report Out

George Alvarado provided a brief report on the May ARCA Client Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting. George Alvarado shared that one of the topics discussed was the statewide effort to identify a new term to replace the word "consumer." George Alvarado noted that several alternative terms were being considered and expressed support for using terminology centered on the word "person."

George Alvarado also shared that the meeting included discussions about strengthening relationships with community partners, including local fire departments, and continuing efforts to support and improve regional center services.

Following George Alvarado's report, Juan Hernandez thanked George Alvarado for the update and proceeded to the next agenda item.

D. Discuss the CAC July Informal Check-In

Juan Hernandez led a discussion regarding the Consumer Advisory Committee's annual informal July gathering. The committee agreed to hold the event on Thursday, July 2, from 3:00–5:00 p.m.

Lindsay Granger informed the committee that a calendar invitation, event details, registration information, and an RSVP link would be emailed to all members following the meeting. George Alvarado requested assistance completing the RSVP, and Lindsay Granger confirmed that assistance would be provided.

Committee members discussed the event location and agreed that holding the informal gathering at the NLACRC Chatsworth office would be the most practical option. Juan Hernandez noted that the office would provide meeting space, tables, air conditioning, and a comfortable indoor environment during the summer heat. Jose Rodriguez agreed that the office would be the safest and most convenient location.

The committee also discussed making the event a potluck-style gathering, consistent with previous years. Bill Abramson confirmed attendance plans and expressed appreciation that additional event information would be sent by email.

E. SCDD Training Schedule

Jose Rodriguez reviewed the Consumer Advisory Committee's upcoming State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) training schedule. Jose Rodriguez reminded the committee that an SCDD presentation on providing public testimony was scheduled for August and a Building Healthy Relationships presentation was planned for November. Jose Rodriguez noted that September remained open on the training calendar and suggested using the August

presentation as an opportunity to learn about additional trainings offered by the presenter and identify future presentation topics to complete the committee's annual schedule. The committee agreed with this approach.

Lindsay Granger also revisited George Alvarado's earlier request to add an emergency preparedness presentation to the planning calendar. Jose Rodriguez suggested contacting NLACRC's Emergency Preparedness Specialist for recommendations or potential presenters. George Alvarado offered to provide contact information for a representative from the local fire department who could present on emergency preparedness. Jose Rodriguez agreed to follow up once the contact information was received.

F. Upcoming Events and Flyers

Jose Rodriguez reviewed several upcoming community events and informational flyers with the committee. Topics included the Self-Advocacy Academy, which features presentations on continuing education, home support services, online dating safety, and LGBTQ+ topics. Jose Rodriguez noted that sessions are offered in a hybrid format, allowing participants to attend either in person or virtually.

Jose Rodriguez also highlighted the upcoming IHSS Advocacy and Community Summit, encouraging members to attend to learn more about In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), available resources, and advocacy opportunities based on the value of the previous year's event. Additional community opportunities reviewed included the Valley Cultural Foundation Festival, the Independence Day Hiring Spree, and a career fair at the West Valley Occupational Center.

Jose Rodriguez encouraged members interested in employment or community engagement to attend these events and reviewed basic event details, including locations and registration information where applicable.

7. **Review Actions**

8. **Announcements/Information/Public Input**

Juan Hernandez opened the floor for public input and member announcements. No formal public comments were provided.

George Alvarado reminded the committee about an upcoming **CERT/fire department event** and encouraged members to visit the CERT website for additional information about upcoming emergency preparedness activities

No further public comments were raised.

8. **Adjournment**

Juan Hernandez adjourned the meeting at 6:25 pm

Submitted by:
Lindsay Granger
Executive Administrative Assistant

