

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Community Relations Committee Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2026

Present: Jeremy Sunderland, Cathy Blin, Nicholas Abrahms, Laura Monge, Jennifer Koster, Jacquie Colton, Lety Garcia, Jennifer Koster, Curtis Wang, Juan Hernandez, Sharon Weinberg – Committee Members

Executive Director Angela Pao-Johnson, Deputy Director Evelyn McOmie, Executive Administrative Assistant Lindsay Granger, Silvia Renteria-Haro, Chris Whitlock, Belinda Abatesi, Sarah Yap – Staff Members

Guests:

Absent: Jason Taketa, George Alvarado

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present Community Relations Committee Co-Cathy Blin called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Co-Chair Jeremy Sunderland read the NLACRC Mission and Vision Statements.

Sharon Weinberg read the NLACRC Board of Trustees Civility Code, reminding attendees that participation in board-related meetings requires treating all individuals with respect and consideration, supporting open and inclusive discussion, and refraining from discriminatory, harassing, bullying, threatening, or intimidating behavior.

Following these opening remarks, Chair Cathy Blin called the Community Relations Committee meeting to order at 5:04 p.m., with a quorum present.

2. COMMITTEE MEMBER ATTENDANCE

3. AGENDA

Absent objection the agenda for the May 20, 2026 Community Relations Committee was approved as presented. Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC INPUT – AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public input regarding the agenda.

5. CONSENT ITEMS

A. Approval of Minutes of the March 18, 2026, Community Relations Committee Meeting

Absent objection the minutes of the March 18, 2026, Community Relations Committee were approved as presented. Motion carried.

6. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Update on 2026 Legislative Breakfast

Belinda Abatesi provided an update on NLACRC's Annual Legislative Breakfast, scheduled for June 12, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Woodland Hills Country Club. This year's theme, "Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: Strengthening the Regional Center System for the Future," recognizes the 60th Anniversary of the Regional Center System.

Belinda Abatesi reported that community registration had reached capacity; however, a limited number of seats remained reserved for Board and Committee members. Jennifer Koster inquired whether a reminder or RSVP link would be sent to Committee members. Belinda Abatesi confirmed that a reminder would be distributed and noted that members of the Legislative Breakfast Workgroup already had reserved seats. Jeremy Sunderland also reminded Committee members that invitations had previously been sent to Board members.

The Committee received the update, and no action was taken.

6.2 Discuss Committee Name

Evelyn McOmie introduced a discussion regarding the Community Relations Committee name. The discussion stemmed from feedback provided by Lety Garcia, who observed that when the former Community Relations Committee and Consumer Services Committee were merged, the resulting committee name reflected only the Community Relations component and did not acknowledge the Consumer Services Committee. Evelyn McOmie noted that the Committee may wish to consider whether the current name accurately reflects the scope and purpose of the merged committee.

Evelyn McOmie further advised that any discussion regarding a name change should take into consideration ongoing statewide efforts to identify a replacement for the term "consumer." She shared that surveys were being conducted among individuals served and community members to gather input on preferred terminology and that future legislative or policy changes could impact naming conventions used throughout the Regional Center system.

Cathy Blin acknowledged the concern raised by Lety Garcia and agreed that the current committee name does not fully reflect both predecessor committees. Committee members discussed whether it would be more prudent to wait for statewide guidance before making a permanent change.

Jeremy Sunderland expressed support for postponing any action, noting that adding the term "consumer" back into the committee name could result in the need for another change in the near future if statewide terminology is updated. He suggested waiting until there is greater clarity regarding the terminology that will be adopted at the state level.

Sharon Weinberg suggested that the Committee could consider a more general title that would not rely on any specific terminology for individuals served. She noted that a broader title could potentially address the concern regarding representation of both committees while avoiding future revisions.

Lety Garcia asked whether there was an anticipated timeline for statewide decisions regarding terminology. Evelyn McOmie indicated that updates could potentially occur through trailer bill language and that additional information may become available by July. Lety Garcia also noted that similar discussions were taking place within the Consumer Advisory Committee regarding alternative terminology.

Angela Pao-Johnson provided additional context regarding statewide efforts to replace the term "consumer." She reported that Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula had introduced legislation proposing the use of the phrase "persons eligible for regional center services" within the Lanterman Act. She also shared that ARCA had distributed a statewide survey seeking feedback from individuals served regarding

preferred terminology and anticipated that preliminary survey results may be available by the next ARCA meeting in June.

Cathy Blin commented that “client” had historically been used by Regional Centers and suggested that it could be considered as a temporary option. In response, Lety Garcia made a motion to rename the committee the Client and Community Relations Committee, which was seconded by Sharon Weinberg.

During discussion of the motion, Angela Pao-Johnson shared that “client” was not a preferred term among participants in recent Consumer Advisory Committee discussions. Lindsay Granger reported that the most favored alternatives identified during those discussions were “individuals served” and “participant,” with “individuals served” receiving the strongest support.

Following this discussion, Lety Garcia withdrew her motion to rename the committee. The Committee then discussed procedural options, including postponing consideration of the matter until additional statewide guidance becomes available. Sharmila Brunjes provided parliamentary guidance regarding the process for tabling a motion and recommended postponing further consideration until the Committee has more information regarding statewide terminology.

Committee members agreed that revisiting the issue after receiving statewide survey results and potential legislative updates would allow for a more informed decision regarding a future committee name change.

M/S/C (Sharmila Brunjes/Cathy Blin) On a motion made by Sharmila Brunjes, seconded by Cathy Blin, it was resolved to table the committee name discussion until the August Community Relations Committee meeting, pending additional guidance regarding statewide terminology for individuals served. Motion carried.

ACTION: This item will be added to the August Community Relations Committee meeting agenda.

7. ACTION ITEMS

7.1. Review and Approve Planning Calendar for FY 2026-2027

Cathy Blin introduced the action item and invited Lindsay Granger to present.

Lindsay Granger presented the proposed Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Community Relations Committee Planning Calendar and reviewed the reports, activities, and action items scheduled throughout the year. Lindsay Granger noted that the calendar remains largely consistent with the prior fiscal year while incorporating several updates based on recent committee discussions and reporting practices.

Lindsay Granger explained that the Self-Determination Program Report and Liaison Report were removed from the calendar because those reports will no longer be presented through the Community Relations Committee. Lindsay Granger also highlighted that the Semi-Annual Notice of Action (NOA) Report by Ethnicity, Location, Services, and Age Range was shown in italics to indicate that the report remains tentative due to ongoing challenges related to data collection and report production.

Lety Garcia asked whether the reporting challenges were new, noting that the Committee had historically received the report. Lindsay Granger explained that similar issues had affected previous NOA reporting and contributed to delays in producing both quarterly and semi-annual reports. Cathy Blin clarified that the italicized formatting was intended to indicate that the report may not always be available until the underlying data and reporting issues are resolved.

Lindsay Granger reviewed recurring reports and activities scheduled throughout the year, including quarterly disparity reports, quarterly intake data by location reports, semi-annual expenditure data reports, semi-annual competitive employment reports, semi-annual social recreation, camp, and non-medical therapy reports, semi-annual diagnostic data reports, and semi-annual Section 4731 reports.

Lindsay Granger also reviewed several scheduling updates. The annual Board and Vendor Advisory Committee Legislative Training remains listed in October. Although the training has not yet been formally scheduled, Lety Garcia and Cathy Blin agreed that October remains the appropriate timeframe based on historical practice and should remain on the calendar.

Lindsay Granger reviewed the addition of a semi-annual Deputy Director Report in November and May, which was added in response to a prior Committee request for operational updates similar to those provided at Vendor Advisory Committee meetings. Cathy Blin expressed support for including the report on an ongoing basis.

Additional planning activities include distribution of nomination forms for the Ginny Ratzinger Community Service Award, formation of a Legislative Breakfast Workgroup in January, and planning activities related to ARCA Grassroots Day and NLACRC Grassroots Week. Lindsay Granger noted that Grassroots Week did not occur during the current year and is being reevaluated; however, the activity remains on the calendar in anticipation of future implementation. Cathy Blin agreed that the activity should remain included.

Lindsay Granger explained that the quarterly disparity report and quarterly intake data by location report were moved from March to May. Because the Committee meets before the end of March, presenting the reports in May will allow for inclusion of complete reporting-period data, including March information. Cathy Blin agreed that the adjustment would provide a more comprehensive review of the data presented to the Committee.

M/S/C (Curtis Wang/Jennifer Koster) On a motion made by Curtis Wang, seconded by Jennifer Koster, it was resolved to approve the Community Relations Committee Planning Calendar for FY 2026-2027 as presented. Motion carried.

8. REPORT OUTS

8.1 Legislative Update

Cathy Blin introduced the Legislative Update Report and invited Belinda Abatesi to present.

Belinda Abatesi provided a legislative and budget update, highlighting key developments from the Governor's May Revision and other statewide advocacy efforts. Belinda Abatesi reported that the Governor's May Revision, released on May 14, proposes a \$21.6 billion Department of Developmental Services (DDS) budget and currently includes no identified cuts to DDS services. The proposal also includes funding to support regional center operations and infrastructure in response to continued caseload growth, with DDS projecting that more than 39,700 additional individuals will receive services during the next fiscal year.

While noting the overall stability of the developmental services budget, Belinda Abatesi highlighted several proposals that could impact individuals and families served by Regional Centers. These included the proposed reinstatement of Medi-Cal asset limits effective January 1, 2027, which would reduce allowable assets to \$2,000 for an individual and \$3,000 for a couple. Belinda Abatesi noted that because eligibility for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) is tied to Medi-Cal eligibility, the proposal could create challenges for individuals with modest savings or assets. Belinda Abatesi also discussed proposed changes to CalFresh, including modifications to time limits and work requirements, while noting that certain exemptions may apply to members of the developmental disabilities community.

Belinda Abatesi emphasized that the May Revision remains a proposal and that negotiations between the Governor and Legislature will continue until adoption of the final state budget. Belinda Abatesi also highlighted upcoming advocacy opportunities, including the California Disability Leadership Alliance (CDLA) Day of Action at the Capitol, and encouraged participation in advocacy efforts. Additional

advocacy resources, legislative tracking information, and upcoming events were provided to Committee members. Belinda Abatesi further reported that the first annual report on California's Master Plan for Developmental Services had been released and that implementation efforts are now underway, with ongoing work focused on identifying policy, funding, and operational changes needed to advance the Master Plan recommendations.

Belinda Abatesi concluded the presentation by highlighting the upcoming June 2 Primary Election and reminding attendees of voter registration deadlines and available election resources.

During discussion, Lety Garcia asked what support NLACRC was providing to assist individuals served with voter participation and whether any voter education workshops or trainings were planned. Belinda Abatesi reported that voter information and registration resources had recently been distributed to community members through email communications and stated that additional educational opportunities could be explored. Lety Garcia encouraged NLACRC to consider partnering with organizations that have historically provided voter education and election support to individuals with disabilities and emphasized the importance of maximizing voter participation among individuals served.

Evelyn McOmie informed the Committee that Service Coordinators complete annual National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) training and are provided with voter registration materials and information to share with individuals served. Cathy Blin expressed support for providing as much individualized assistance as possible to help individuals register, access polling locations, complete ballots, and participate in elections. Jennifer Koster emphasized the importance of continuing these efforts during every election cycle, including the upcoming November General Election.

In response to a follow-up question from Lety Garcia, Evelyn McOmie confirmed that staff would explore additional voter education and training opportunities, including potential partnerships and resources that could further support civic engagement among individuals served.

No additional questions were asked.

ACTION: Staff will explore additional voter education and training opportunities and potential partnerships and resources.

8.2 Social Media Update

Chris Whitlock presented a social media update covering analytics and engagement trends for NLACRC's Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube platforms from February through April. Chris Whitlock reported steady growth across the organization's social media channels and explained that staff are increasingly focused on creating content strategically rather than simply increasing posting volume. Efforts are being directed toward identifying which content generates the highest levels of engagement, interaction, and community reach in order to guide future communications.

Chris Whitlock highlighted Instagram as an example of this approach, noting that April generated the highest level of engagement despite having fewer posts than some previous months. Chris Whitlock explained that staff are evaluating content performance and working to consolidate information across English and Spanish platforms where appropriate to improve accessibility and audience engagement. Chris Whitlock also reported significant growth on LinkedIn and noted that staff are placing increased emphasis on strengthening NLACRC's professional presence through the platform. Additionally, YouTube remains an area of focus, with ongoing efforts to increase viewership and engagement through continued content development and platform-specific improvements.

During discussion, Lety Garcia confirmed that NLACRC podcasts are being posted on YouTube and suggested that additional cross-promotion between social media platforms could help increase awareness and utilization of YouTube content. Lety Garcia also noted that some Instagram posts

promoting public meetings appeared to contain non-functioning registration links. Chris Whitlock thanked Lety Garcia for identifying the issue and stated that staff would review the links and take steps to ensure users are directed appropriately in the future.

Chris Whitlock agreed that cross-promoting content across platforms is an important strategy and noted that staff are actively evaluating opportunities to improve visibility and engagement by connecting content across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Cathy Blin commended the steady growth across the platforms and expressed appreciation for the team's focus on content quality, audience engagement, and continuous improvement of NLACRC's social media presence.

9. BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEMS/ACTION ITEMS

Cathy Blin asked whether there were any items requiring referral to the next Board of Trustees meeting. Lindsay Granger reported that there were no items requiring Board action and noted that pending matters discussed during the meeting would instead be brought back to the Community Relations Committee at its August meeting.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS / PUBLIC INPUT / INFORMATION ITEMS

There were no announcements or public input.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Community Relations Committee will be on August 19, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes 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.



Submitted by:
Lindsay Granger
Executive Administrative Assistant – Board Relations Liaison