

**Provider Vendor Advisory Committee  
Regional Center of the East Bay  
Meeting Minutes Friday, April 12, 2024**

**Members Present:** Dan Hogue, Las Trampas; Geneva Carlos-Valentino, Toolworks; Anthony Rowe, Adaptive Learning Center; Jamie Renton, Pleasanton Adult and Career Education; Lindsey Dyba, Futures Explored; Eddie Esquivel, Manos; Marcie Lyn, St John Boys Home;

**Attendees Present:**

Lisa Kleinbub, RCEB; Jason Parks, Las Trampas; Anna Willis, Emerging Horizons; Will Sanford, SC&CS; Sister Marygrace Puchac, East Bay services; Debbie Gallano, Clausen House; Ember Avalos, NIAD Art Center; Lourdes Angel, Elwyn; Jan Cohen, Ability Now Bay Area; Nicole Doubly, RES Success; Deanna Bauchou, Noll Center; Michael Minton, RCEB; Venita Parrish, Aveanna Healthcare; Jennifer Rocha, Strides Program Castro Valley Adult and Career Education; Sirkka Wirkki, Jaqui' Foundation; Darice Tillery, Harambee Community Services; Rafael Parada, RCEB; Erika Gonzalez, 24 Hour Home Care; Karen Lingenfelter, Mt. Diablo Adult Ed.; Jan Behr, Toolworks; Jenica Hadley, 24 Hour Home Care; Caroline Ortiz, Full Circle of Choices; Emily Correia, Enjoy Life More; Ramsay Mashy, California Autism Foundation; Adriana Cazares, Family Works; Chris Candari, Thrive SLS; Armando Valadez, Lucchesi Group Adult Residential; Maria Ramirez, Families United for Equity; Robert Jo, Agape Care Home Inc.; Carlos Cienfuegos, Sentry Living Solutions; Pamela Temple, One Step Closer, Inc.; Maria Mendiola, Royal Palm Residential Home and M & M Residential Care Home; Sylvia Yeh, Friends of Children with Special Needs; B.J. Cottrell, Jaqui' Foundation; Donna Feingold, HireAble and Finding Golden Solutions; Patricia Harris, One Step Closer, Inc.; Louise McClellan, Open House Center; Rosemary Maurilio, Sevita; Laura Guzman, Enriching Lives, Concord Office; Juan Velasquez Jr., Pathway to Choices; Angelique Goldberg, Futures Explored; Gabriela Solval, SCDD Bay Area; Vester Garcia, CIWP Antioch; Brandi Auble, CA Mentor; Candice Elton, Thrive Support Services; Zackery Wheeler, All People of Color; Steve Robinson, RCEB; Eva Munoz, Good Samaritan ARCF; Ike O., North Star Residential Home; Vi Ibarra, Developmental Disabilities Council, Contra Costa County; Megan Benando, Trilogy Adult Services; Juanita Hightower, Clausen House; Amelia Berumen, Creative Growth Art Center; Craig Rose, VistAbility; Joanne Lau, Diversity in Health Training Institute; Teresa Nold, Deaf Plus Adult Community; Ben Chen, Alameda County DDC/ACPHD; Chandra Jackson, Clausen House; Merfe Bailey, A Step Above, LLC.

**65 attendees total**

**Call to Order:**

At 9:34 AM, Geneva Carlos-Valentino welcomed attendees.

**Minutes Approval and Discussion:** The minutes from February and March were reviewed.

- Discussion: Members discussed the content and any corrections needed. Geneva noted the addition of Craig Rose as an attendee in the February minutes. Steve Robinson requested a clarification on the report section from the March minutes concerning HCBS compliance activities, ensuring the description accurately reflected the discussed topics.
- Approval: Following the discussion, the February 9<sup>th</sup> minutes were approved with the requested amendments. The approval was moved by Anthony Rowe and seconded by Lindsey Dyba. The motion passed unanimously among the voting members present. March meeting minutes acknowledged, as there was no quorum of committee members at the March 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Dan Hogue commented that Amanda Eicher, PVAC Secretary is unable to continue taking meeting notes, which raised questions about board requirements.

- Attendees discuss using AI tools like Otter or Zoom's built-in minute-taking feature to streamline meeting record-keeping. Lisa Kleinbub mentions the possibility of pulling out actual points or taking minutes during a meeting. Jamie Renton mentioned that the city of Pleasanton switched to recording meetings with chapters due to ease of navigation. Donna Feingold suggests using AI to provide quick summaries for providers who can't attend meetings.
- Dan asked the group if the closed captioning is okay to stand in as an acceptable written record.

## **Reports:**

### **Regional Center/State Report – Lisa Kleinbub, Executive Director**

- **Master Plan on Developmental Services:** Lisa highlighted the state's ongoing efforts to develop a Master Plan to enhance accessibility, quality, and equity within the developmental services system. She noted the plan's intent to break down the silos between different service areas, improving coordination among healthcare, housing, and educational services for individuals served by regional centers.
- **State Legislative Updates and Initiatives:**
  - Lisa discussed upcoming changes, including the standardized Individual Program Plan (IPP), which will be used across all regional centers starting January next year. This new IPP focuses more on individuals' strengths rather than deficits.
  - She mentioned the importance of the DDS's public input session on April 25th concerning the standardized IPP, encouraging stakeholders to participate to understand the new focus on person-centered planning.
  - Updates related to service categories and including new demographic data (such as race, ethnicity, and language) in the regional centers' master files were also covered, highlighting DDS's efforts to align with state and federal requirements.
- **Provider Directory Implementation:** Lisa noted that DDS plans to roll out a statewide provider directory by July 1st. This directory will initially include essential provider information and will later be accessible to service users and families, enhancing transparency and access to services.
- **Staffing and Training Initiatives:**
  - Lisa addressed internal challenges, including hiring more case managers to meet service demands and reduce caseloads. She expressed satisfaction with recruiting 40 new case managers in the past three months.
  - She also discussed ongoing training for current staff, including cultural humility and implicit bias training, to improve service delivery and ensure that services are inclusive and equitable.
- **Advocacy and System Improvements:**
  - Lisa stressed the need for continuous advocacy to ensure adequate funding and resources to support the community's expanding needs, especially considering the impacts of the pandemic on service demands.
  - She proposed a new referral system for supported and independent living services that aims to reduce biases in service referrals by automating the referral process based on specific provider criteria.

### **Regional Center Staff Reports – Steve Robinson**

- **DDS Provider Directory and DDS Updates:** Steve opens by urging attendees to join the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) provider directory email list to receive updates about training materials and online office hours. He notes the projected rollout of these services by Spring/Summer 2024.

- Quality Incentive Program: Steve shares positive news regarding the Quality Incentive Program, specifically about employment capacity incentives. By the end of the month, providers who trained staff for ACRE and Certified Employment Support Professional certifications will receive payments.
- Coordinated Career Pathways Directive: Steve explains a directive from DDS that mandates promotion and training regarding the employment pilot program established by a state budget trailer bill in October 2020. The aim is to transition individuals from sub-minimum wage jobs or secondary education to competitive, integrated employment. Steve mentions that further training will be provided in the next meeting, encouraging attendees to read up on the service requirements and apply to become vendored.
- Service Rate Discussions: Two types of services, Career Pathway Navigator and Customized Employment Specialist, are highlighted, each with different rates. Steve indicates more details can be found on the DDS website, and he invites attendees to contact via email to initiate services.
- Program Design and Hourly Caps: An attendee, Greg, raised concerns about the lack of specified hourly caps or program design guidelines for the new services, leading to a discussion about including such caps in the program design despite DDS not officially setting them.
- Service Implementation and Participant Eligibility: Discussions included how to integrate these new services with existing programs, the feasibility of providing one-on-one services, and the criteria for participant eligibility. Several attendees expressed concerns and suggestions for implementing these services effectively while considering potential participants' varied needs and existing conditions.

#### **Regional Center HCBS Reports – Mike Minton**

- FHA Audit Acknowledgement: Mike acknowledges an ongoing Family Home Agency audit affecting certain providers. Mike appreciates the efforts of those involved in managing additional meetings, document preparations, and submissions throughout this three-month audit process.
- HCBS Evaluations: The main discussion revolves around the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) evaluations for the regional center, which involves evaluating 618 agencies. Of these, 181 evaluations have been completed, constituting 29% of the total. This is behind the expected 50% completion rate set for the end of April. To catch up, 154 evaluations are scheduled before the month's end, equating to about 13 evaluations per day. Mike emphasizes the challenges of this tight schedule and stresses the importance of keeping these appointments, noting the lack of flexibility for rescheduling except in cases of significant emergencies. They highlight the commitment shown so far, with only 17 cancellations from the 181 completed evaluations.
- Scheduling of Quarterly Meetings: Mike mentions the scheduling of Independent Living Services (ILS) quarterly meetings, a new initiative following the success of similar meetings for Supported Living Services (SLS). The first ILS meeting is planned for June 23, which Mike notes to confirm and then share the correct date in the chat.
- Donna Feingold adds that Toolworks will host a review session on what to expect for agencies scheduled for evaluation in the coming months. This session is set for April 24 at 2 PM, offering an opportunity for upcoming evaluated providers to ask questions and prepare.
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#### **Regional Center Board Report**

Dan Hogue provided a brief update on the recent RCEB board meeting, which he described as unusually smooth, primarily because fewer contracts required approval than usual. However, he highlighted that a significant number of Supported Living Services (SLS) contracts—approximately 45—are expected to be reviewed soon. The board, which has recently taken a more detailed approach to scrutinizing each contract, discussed how to handle this volume efficiently. One proposal suggested dividing the contract reviews across three months (April, May, and June) to manage the workload better. Additionally, these contracts are now set to be renewed on a three-year term, as requested by the board, rather than the previous five-year term.

Dan also mentioned that Board President Frank Pare announced a pending personnel change, noting that Lisa Kleinbub, current RCEB Executive Director, has announced her retirement effective March 2025. Dan acknowledged Lisa's contributions and noted that her retirement would leave a significant gap due to her extensive knowledge and experience.

### **State Council on Developmental Disabilities Report**

Gabriella Solval, representing Sheraden Nicholau for the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD).

- Gabriella highlighted the SCDD's annual and training calendar which includes upcoming statewide trainings such as "Fair Housing Rights for Californians with Disabilities", "Tiger Talks on Self Advocacy and Independent Living", and a "Continued Healthy Use Series". She specifically detailed a two-part free webinar on fair housing laws in collaboration with the California Civil Rights Department. The first part of the webinar, scheduled for April 16, will cover basics like definitions, reasonable accommodations, and how to file complaints. The second part, on April 25, will address specific housing issues like source of income discrimination and tenant disputes.
- Council and Committee Meetings: Upcoming virtual meetings include the State Self-Determination Advisory Committee on April 15 and the Executive Committee on April 16. A Bay Area Regional Advisory Committee meeting is set for April 24, which will feature a panel on health and healthcare equity and offer both in-person and virtual attendance options.
- Grant Proposals and Sponsorships: The Cycle 47 grants from SCDD are due on May 10 to fund community-based organizations that develop and implement innovative programs for the local communities. The deadline for Supported Decision-Making Technical Assistance grants and contract proposals is April 22. Gabriella also mentioned the state council's year-round sponsorship opportunities, which support events promoting self-advocacy, leadership, and education. The sponsorship amount recently increased to \$2,500 per event.

### **Alameda County DD Council Report – Ben Chen**

- Ben announced the addition of a new staff member, Shavon, to the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council. He encouraged everyone to extend a warm welcome to her at future meetings.
- Transition Conference and Resource Fair Recap: Ben reflected on the success of a recent Transition Conference and Resource Fair held on March 23, jointly organized with the DD Council of Contra Costa County. The event saw significant participation with 250 registrants and 60 vendors, marking an improvement from the previous year. The event benefited from sponsorships from the Regional Center of the East Bay and the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, which supported language access and interpretation services, crucial for Spanish-speaking attendees.
- Venue Rotation and Future Planning: Looking ahead, Ben mentioned that the next Transition Conference would be hosted in Contra Costa County as part of a biennial rotation between Contra Costa and Alameda Counties.
- Board Recruitment: The council is actively recruiting new board members, with several vacancies available. Prospective members are required to attend three council meetings before submitting an application. This opportunity is open to service providers, self-advocates, or family members who live or work in Alameda County.
- Upcoming Board Meeting: The next Alameda County Developmental Disabilities Council board meeting is scheduled for May 8, from 9:30 AM to 12 PM. It will be a hybrid meeting at the Public Health Department in San Leandro, accommodating both in-person and virtual attendees.
- Community Events: Ben highlighted several upcoming community events, including the Family Voices of California Health Summit on April 24-25, which focuses on health challenges faced by children and youth with special healthcare needs. He also mentioned events organized by La Familia, specifically tailored for Spanish-speaking community members, covering topics like regional center services, speech and language development, and strategies to support learning at home.

- Latino Equity Summit: A save-the-date notice was issued for the Latino Equity Summit scheduled for May 18 to address equity issues within the Latino community.

### **Contra Costa County DD Council Report – Vi Ibarra**

Vi Ibarra provided an update on several key points during her report:

- Bi-County Annual Awards Event: The event is scheduled for June 6 at the Pleasant Hill Community Center. Vi mentioned that nominations are now open and she would provide a flyer in the chat with links for award nominations and event registration. The ticket price is set at \$30, but reduced prices are available upon request to ensure that cost is not a barrier for attendees. Vi also called for sponsorship from providers who have supported the event in the past and said she would share a sponsorship letter in the chat.
- Artwork Inclusion: The event plans to feature artwork from community artists as decoration and for sale, with proceeds supporting the artists. Vi encouraged programs that haven't yet expressed interest in contributing artwork to contact her or Ben as soon as possible to finalize details.
- Next DD Council Meeting: The next Contra Costa County Developmental Disabilities Council meeting is on April 24, scheduled at Las Trampas in Lafayette. Vi expressed pleasure at the increased in-person attendance, especially from self-advocates, and emphasized the value of face-to-face interactions for networking and strengthening community ties.
- Board Recruitment: Vi announced that there will be many open seats on the board this summer, including for self-advocates, family advocates, and providers. She stressed the importance of having diverse voices and experiences on the board and invited staff members at various levels within service organizations to consider joining. She highlighted the benefits of agency support for self-advocates participating effectively on the board, particularly with logistical aspects such as transportation and meeting preparation.

### **East Bay Legislative Coalition Report – Will Sanford**

- Master Plan for DDS System: Will discussed the ongoing master planning process for the DDS system, which is more condensed compared to other master plans like the Master Plan for Aging. The DDS plan is set to be completed within a year, with meetings already scheduled and efforts to ensure diverse input into the process.
- Legislative Engagements: He highlighted recent and upcoming legislative town hall meetings and visits from key assembly members to various programs, emphasizing the importance of these visits in advocacy. Assemblymember Lee, a significant figure on the assembly budget subcommittee for developmental services, has been actively involved, along with others like Assemblymember Grayson.
- Legislation and Advocacy Efforts: Will discussed AB 106, a budget bill passed by the legislature, noting it did not include proposed deferrals like the rate study implementation delay, which is beneficial for the community. He underscored the ongoing need for advocacy to ensure that developmental services are not subject to funding cuts.
- Minimum Wage Impact and Other Legislative Measures: He noted the recent increase in minimum wage for food service workers to \$20 an hour and urged stakeholders to monitor and communicate the impact of this change on staff recruitment and retention. Will also detailed several bills being reviewed by the EDLC, including AB 2423, which calls for a review of service rates, and other bills aimed at improving access to services and supports for people with disabilities.
- Upcoming Meetings and Events: The next EBLC meeting is scheduled for May 1, with the budget revision expected on May 10. He also highlighted a rally planned by the newly formed Capital Coalition on May 21 or 22, to advocate against delays in implementing the rate study and other cuts.

### **Service Provider Equity Subcommittee Report – Anthony Rowe**

Dan Hogue, reporting on behalf of Anthony Rowe, provided updates from the Provider Equity Committee Meeting held on March 22, focusing on policy changes and other significant discussions:

- **Policy Changes and Updates:** The main topic of the meeting was the introduction of new policies and changes concerning Independent Living Services (ILS) and respite care processes. The Regional Center plans to publish these updates soon to keep service providers and recipients informed.
- **Service Hours Concern:** A specific issue was raised regarding a service provider's assessment for ILS, where the hours recommended by the provider were reportedly reduced by a case manager, leading to a crisis situation for the family involved. The exact details of who raised this concern were unclear, but it is an issue that will continue to be monitored.
- **Staff Training and DEIB Initiatives:** There was also a discussion about the ongoing training for staff, particularly around Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB). It was noted that DEIB initiatives will be integrated into the Regional Centers' strategic planning. Concerns were raised about potential complications due to the unionized nature of the workforce, although specific details of these concerns were not provided.
- **Meeting Dynamics and Future Plans:** The meeting was relatively brief, and Dan effectively summarized the main points. The next service provider equity group meeting is scheduled for April 26, and further discussions and updates are expected.

#### **Day Providers Subcommittee Report – Mike Pereira**

Geneva Carlos-Valentino delivered a report on behalf of Mike Pereira concerning updates within the day program provider group:

- **Coordinated Career Pathways:** Mike emphasized the importance of discussing the new service-coordinated career pathways, echoing some details previously mentioned by Will. Specific questions were submitted to the Regional Center Board (RCB) seeking clarity on this initiative, highlighting the need for further discussion and resolution.
- **Ongoing Discussions and Information Sharing:** Mike's update included information on several ongoing topics:
  - The DDS service provider portal which continues to be a key tool for information sharing and communication.
  - The upcoming 2023 DSP workforce survey, with a note that registration is required for access to the survey set to be released on May 1.
  - The process of HCBS in-person site visits and the experiences of vendors with this process, which is being managed by Toolworks and RCB.
- **Grant Opportunities and Surveys:** Mike also pointed out the availability of grant opportunities through the Department of Aging relevant to licensed aid programs, and the CPC IDD surveys for DSPs, which are due to close on April 22. He planned to provide the necessary links for these in the chat for easy access.
- **Regular and Troubleshooting Meetings:** The day program provider group holds regular Zoom meetings every Friday (excluding PVAC Fridays) at 11 AM, and additional troubleshooting sessions on Wednesdays at 2 PM. Mike noted that while these sessions are titled for day program providers, they are open to all providers, reinforcing the inclusive nature of these discussions.

#### **HireAble Subcommittee Report – Donna Feingold**

- **"What Comes Next - The Value of Work" Series:** Donna shared details about the final series of virtual sessions as part of the DDS employment grant. These sessions are scheduled for April 29, May 7, and May 14, and aim to educate students, family members, and educators on employment resources available in the community. These follow successful in-person sessions held during a transition fair in March.
- **Upcoming HireAble Meeting:** Scheduled for April 22 at 3 PM, this meeting will feature a presentation on employment incentives available through the regional center, addressing potential billing confusion and POS issues. Tom Hines will provide a provider perspective on these challenges. Additionally, Donna mentioned that there might be related questions for Lindsay at this meeting, suggesting a possible overlap with topics for the upcoming Pvac meeting.

- Presentation by Dan Middleton from Candlelight: This presentation will introduce an app developed to assist neurodiverse individuals, particularly those on the autism spectrum, in their career paths. Attendees of the meeting will receive a free app, enhancing the practical value of the session.
- DD Council Award Event: The joint DD Council award event is set to be held at the Pleasant Hill Community Center, a venue praised for its aesthetics. In addition to awards given out by the two councils, HireAble will present two awards to businesses from Alameda and Contra Costa counties that have significantly contributed to employing individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Donna has shared a nomination link for these awards in the chat, encouraging nominations for businesses that have made a positive impact by hiring people with IDD.

### **PVAC Membership Report – Jamie Renton**

Jamie Renton Jamie Renton provided an update regarding the need for nominations for vacant positions within PVAC's voting membership.

Jamie highlighted that there are vacancies in two specific service categories that have been unfilled for some time: the transportation category and the children and infant services category. The PVAC bylaws require at least one member representative from seven different service categories, and these two are currently lacking representation.

Jamie encouraged self-nominations or nominations of others to fill these positions. Nominees must be RCEB (Regional Center of the East Bay) member vendors and service providers who have attended at least three meetings in the past year. Membership term is for three years.

Jamie mentioned a need for a new secretary, emphasizing the role's importance in meeting documentation and organization. Jamie reiterated the importance of filling these positions to comply with the PVAC bylaws and ensure proper representation across service categories. She encouraged regular meeting attendees to consider representing their service categories, particularly those in children and infant services or transportation.

**Call for Nominations** <https://forms.gle/a11hcSXLwJBpzBZ27>

### **Public Comment**

Dan announced that he has been awarded the O2 Sabbatical and will be taking a sabbatical in October, November, and December of this year. He mentioned that Geneva has agreed to cover many of his responsibilities during his absence. However, details of how this will be managed are still pending, as they await confirmation from Frank, the board president, on the specific arrangements. Additionally, Dan emphasized the importance of ensuring provider representation on the EDA selection committee, particularly because it coincides with his sabbatical period, which might involve key activities such as interviews.

**Next meeting is scheduled for May 10 at 9:30 AM at the RCEB San Leandro Offices and on Zoom.**

Meeting Adjourned at 11:34 M.

Respectfully submitted for review by Geneva Carlos-Valentino, Co-Chair