

**Provider Vendor Advisory Committee
Regional Center of the East Bay
Meeting Minutes Friday, May 10, 2024**

Members Present: Dan Hogue, Las Trampas; Geneva Carlos-Valentino, Toolworks; Anthony Rowe, Adaptive Learning Center; Lindsey Dyba, Futures Explored; Eddie Esquiviz, Manos; Marcie Lyn, St John Boys Home; Ann Pringle; Carlos Cienfuegos, Sentry Living Solutions;

71 attendees total

Call to Order:

At 9:35 AM, Geneva Carlos-Valentino welcomed attendees.

Minutes Approval and Discussion:

A quorum was confirmed, and the April 12, 2024, meeting minutes were reviewed. Corrections or additions were solicited, and with none provided, Anthony Rowe motioned to approve the minutes, and Dan Hogue seconded, leading to their approval.

Reports:

Regional Center/State Report – Lisa Kleinbub, Executive Director

- **May Budget Revise Timing and Expectations:** The May Revise from the governor was due at 11 AM on the day of the PVAC meeting. Lisa noted that Friday announcements typically aim to slow down questions over the weekend.
- **New Hires:** RCEB hired over 24 new case managers in the past month, with an additional 25 to 30 expected soon. This surge in hiring is seen as a positive development, although it poses logistical challenges like running out of office space.
- **New IPP Template:** A new standardized, person-centered Individual Program Plan (IPP) template will be implemented statewide starting in January. The final template will be available by July 1. This template aims to standardize the format and required information across all regional centers.
- **Changes in Data Categories:** As part of the second trailer bill from last year's budget, there will be updates to demographic information categories, including race, ethnicity, language, residence type, and experiences of homelessness. These changes are set to be implemented starting January next year.
- **Standard Respite Policy:** A standard respite assessment policy will be introduced for all regional centers. This will align with RCEB's updated policy, which grants 40 hours of respite per month based on assessed need unless the family requests otherwise.
- **Continuation of Remote IPPs:** There is an ongoing discussion about continuing remote IPPs, which have been beneficial for allowing broader participation without travel. However, there are concerns about ensuring individuals are seen in person regularly. Legislative action may address these concerns.
- **Equity and Inclusion Future Plans:** Additional initiatives include further engagement with community representatives and stakeholders to enhance equity and inclusion across RCEB's operations.

Regional Center HCBS Report – Mike Minton

- **Introduction by Steve Robinson:** Steve Robinson handed over the floor to Michael Minton for updates, acknowledging the hard work in completing the HCBS evaluations.
- **HCBS Evaluations Completion:** Michael highlighted that 51 evaluations were completed by the end of April, surpassing the 50% target. He praised Toolworks for their support in this effort.
- **Compliance Focus:** The focus will shift to compliance rates, with RCEB at 46% compliance. Michael noted that while RCEB is in the middle range statewide, they are doing well compared to other regional centers regarding agency and vendor compliance.

Regional Center Staff Reports – Steve Robinson

- **Ongoing Audit:** RCEB is in the midst of an FHA audit, with nine virtual visits to FHA homes scheduled for the following week. DDS may also conduct in-person visits soon after, and a corrective action plan will be developed based on the audit's findings. Michael Minton mentioned the possibility of in-person visits by DDS. He reassured attendees that the audit was progressing well.
- **Demographic Data Updates:** Changes in demographic data categories, including race, ethnicity, language, residence type, and homelessness experiences, will be implemented starting January next year. These changes are part of the second trailer bill from the previous year's budget.
- **Negotiated Rates:** There were discussions about negotiated rates for CPP homes, confirming that these rates are negotiated and considered standard for such homes.

Coordinated Career Pathways Training

- **Presentation and Overview:** Robinson presented on the Coordinated Career Pathways (CCP) training, which was mandated by a DDS directive on March 25. The directive required regional centers to provide an overview and training on CCP to service providers and case managers within 60 days. The CCP focuses on competitive integrated employment, post-secondary education, and career readiness for individuals with developmental disabilities transitioning from work activity programs or secondary education.
- **Core Elements:** The core elements of the CCP include engaging community representatives, addressing barriers, providing person-centered and time-limited services, and implementing outcome measure reports. The program aims to explore inclusive options such as internships, competitive integrated employment, and college-to-career pathways.
- **Implementation Challenges:** Robinson acknowledged the ambitious timeline for rolling out the CCP by June, given that the directive was only issued in March. He emphasized the importance of case manager training and effective communication to ensure eligible individuals are aware of the services.

Questions Answered by Community Services Staff

- **Acre Certification and Staffing Challenges:** An attendee raised concerns about the shortage of Acre-certified individuals and the impact on service accessibility and discussed whether an organization could have an Acre-certified individual overseeing services while another staff member provides direct services. Steve Robinson responded that this issue would be raised in an upcoming DDS call.
- **High School Level Discussions:** An attendee asked if the new service option would be discussed at the high school level before transitioning to adult services. Steve Robinson confirmed that there would be training for case managers and efforts to inform high schools about the service.
- **Standardized Participant Survey:** An attendee inquired about the development of a standardized participant survey, to which Steve Robinson replied that DDS would be developing the survey.
- **Billable Hours:** An attendee questioned what constitutes billable hours, particularly when a CPN or CES meets with employers without the individual present. Steve Robinson indicated that DDS would need to clarify this, as current services typically require face-to-face interaction to be billable.
- **Service Eligibility:** An attendee asked about eligibility for the new service for individuals previously employed at sub-minimum wage. Steve Robinson clarified that individuals within five years of their last sub-minimum wage employment would be eligible.
- **Roles of CPN and CES:** An attendee sought clarity on the roles of Career Pathway Navigator (CPN) and Compliance Employment Specialist (CES). Donna Feingold confirmed that CPNs help individuals figure out their paths, while CESs handle customized employment services.

Regional Center Board Report

Dan Hogue provided an update on the activities and decisions made during the RCEB Board meeting held on April 22.

- **Policy Approval:** The board approved the social recreation policy after making suggested changes by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). The changes primarily involved removing outdated language that was no longer relevant to service determination.

- **Non-Discrimination and Complaint Language:** Non-discrimination language was added to the policy, and there was a recommendation to include complaint process language in all policies as they come up for renewal. Lisa Kleinbub agreed to consider this suggestion.
- **DDS Preliminary Contract:** The board approved the DDS preliminary contract, which includes funding allocations for the upcoming period.
- **SLS Contracts:** Compassionate Solutions, Inc.'s new Supported Living Services (SLS) contract was approved. Additionally, the first round of SLS renewal contracts was approved. Due to the large number of renewals, the process was broken down into three groups, which will be addressed in April, May, and June.
- **Strategic Planning Process:** Frank Perrey, the Board President, provided an update on the strategic planning process. Future meetings will focus on key initiatives identified in the strategic plan.
- **Equity Issues:** The equity subcommittee discussed handling issues related to confidentiality and retaliation. At present, these issues are discussed anonymously with Lisa Kleinbub. The subcommittee aims to address equity concerns without compromising the safety or anonymity of those raising them.
- **Executive Director Search:** The Executive Director search committee has begun the process of selecting a search firm to assist in finding a new RCEB Executive Director. The committee met recently to review potential firms and start the selection process.
- **Case Manager Communication:** Concerns about delays in case managers responding to consumers and family members were raised. Lisa Kleinbub committed to addressing this issue with her team before the next board meeting.
- **Line of Credit:** The board deferred the renewal of RCEB's line of credit due to the timing of the contract receipt. This item will be revisited in the next meeting.
- **Service Provider Involvement:** Questions were raised about recruiting service providers to participate in the search process for the Executive Director. There was a discussion on whether stakeholders outside the board should be involved. Dan Hogue advocated for broader participation to enhance the selection process.
- **Community Representation:** It was noted that both the Contra Costa and Alameda County Councils requested representation in the search process. This request will be brought to the attention of the Executive search committee.

State Council on Developmental Disabilities Report

Sheraden Nicholau provided an update on the activities and initiatives of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) Regional Advisory Committee.

- **Tiger Talks:** Nicholau highlighted the upcoming "Tiger Talks" sessions. These sessions are designed to provide insights and updates on various topics relevant to the developmental disabilities community. The talks are part of the SCDD's efforts to keep stakeholders informed and engaged with current issues and best practices .
- **Employment First Committee Meeting:** The Employment First Committee meeting was also discussed. This committee focuses on promoting competitive integrated employment as the preferred outcome for individuals with developmental disabilities. The meeting aims to bring together stakeholders to share strategies and discuss policies that support this goal.
- **Advisory Committee Engagement:** Nicholau emphasized the importance of local advisory committee meetings. These meetings are crucial for gathering feedback from the community and ensuring that the voices of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families are heard. The advisory committees work closely with local stakeholders to address specific regional needs and challenges.
- **Community Participation:** The update stressed the need for increased community participation in these meetings. By engaging more individuals and families, the advisory committees can better advocate for necessary changes and improvements in services and supports.
- **Training Programs:** The SCDD has been organizing various training programs to educate stakeholders on relevant laws, budget processes, and effective board membership. These trainings aim to build capacity within the community and enhance the effectiveness of local boards and committees.
- **Legislative Advocacy:** Nicholau also mentioned ongoing efforts to advocate for legislative changes that benefit the developmental disabilities community. The SCDD is actively involved in monitoring legislative developments and advocating for policies that promote inclusion, equity, and access to services .

Alameda County Developmental Disabilities Council – Ben Chen

Siobhan Burgos presented the update on behalf of Ben Chen, detailing the council's recent activities and upcoming events:

- The DDC met on Wednesday of the previous week, featuring a presentation on housing. The next meeting is scheduled for June 12 and will be entirely virtual.
- The East Bay Legislative Coalition on Developmental Disabilities will hold a special session on May 15 to discuss the May Budget Revise.
- An educational event on the value of work for students, teachers, and families is scheduled for May 14, from 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM, where individuals with disabilities will share their work stories and successes.
- A climate preparedness session will be held on June 5, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM, at the Hayward Library, focusing on preparedness for wildfire and heat season.
- The Joint Councils Award event is scheduled at the Pleasant Hill Community Center on June 6, from 3:30 PM to 6:30 PM. Registration is required in advance, and sponsorship opportunities are available.
- The council is partnering with the Autism STAR Committee to host focus groups during June. These will be conducted in person, virtually, and via telephone to gather feedback from individuals with recent autism diagnoses and their families.

Contra Costa County Developmental Disabilities Council – Vi Ibarra

Vi Ibarra provided updates on the activities and initiatives in Contra Costa County:

- A health fair was scheduled for the following day (May 11th) in Pittsburgh, featuring free entry, lunch, a DJ, raffles, and school immunization vaccines, as well as COVID and flu shots at no cost to the community.
- The Joint Council Awards Event on June 6, at the Pleasant Hill Community Center was highlighted again. Transportation from the Concord BART station to the event will be available, provided by Futures Explored. Attendees needing shuttle service must contact Ben Chen or Vi Ibarra by the end of the following week.
- Sponsorship opportunities for the Joint Council Awards Event include a number of tickets for attendees. Programs are encouraged to consider sponsoring the event, with discounted or free tickets available for self-advocates or families facing financial barriers.
- The next DD Council meeting in Contra Costa is scheduled for May 22 in Martinez. It will feature a presentation from Wayfinders at Fresno State University. The meeting has seen increased attendance from self-advocates as part of their programs.

East Bay Legislative Coalition Report – Will Sanford

Will Sanford provided a legislative update focusing on budget revisions, service rates, funding, and upcoming legislative review meetings.

- **Governor's Budget Proposal:** The Governor's budget proposal from January remained largely intact with minor adjustments. The main focus was on addressing a projected revenue shortfall.
- **Revenue Shortfall:** The projected revenue shortfall was approximately \$27.6 billion, slightly lower than earlier projections but still significant. This shortfall necessitated strategic adjustments and cuts in various areas to balance the budget.
- **Supported Bills:**
 - **AB 2423 by Mathis:** Requires the Department of Developmental Services to review and post new rate study rates for transparency. This bill is currently in appropriations.
 - **AB 2510:** Focuses on increasing dental care access for individuals with disabilities. This bill is also in the appropriations and suspense phase.
 - **AB 2021 by Grayson:** Supports post-secondary education for students with disabilities. It is in the appropriations phase as well.
- Sanford noted that in years with tough budgets, bills with significant price tags often face difficulties progressing. The legislative environment this year is particularly challenging due to the revenue shortfall.
- A significant advocacy campaign was conducted by the Lanterman Coalition, with over 6,325 total advocates making 65,000 interactions with officials. This included 57,000 emails and 6,100 tweets. Despite the large-scale campaign, there is a strategic pivot due to the pessimistic outlook on the budget rejection. Future actions will focus on budget chairs and administration negotiations. Sanford emphasized the importance of community

presence and engagement with local legislators. Community efforts have driven historical legislative actions, highlighting the need for continued advocacy.

- The new \$20 per hour minimum wage for fast food workers was discussed for its potential impact on the labor workforce within the disability services sector.
- The next meeting of the East Bay Legislative Coalition on Developmental Disabilities is scheduled for May 15 to discuss the May budget revise.
- Further legislative updates are anticipated once the full budget details are available.

Service Provider Equity Subcommittee Report – Anthony Rowe

Anthony Rowe provided an update on the activities and initiatives of the Service Provider Equity Subcommittee, focusing on efforts to address disparities in service provision and enhance equity among service providers.

- **Establishment of Grievance Procedure:** Rowe discussed the subcommittee's concern for the need of a clear grievance procedure for service providers to address concerns without fear of retribution. This is particularly relevant for client referrals in residential, supported living services (SLS), and independent living services (ILS) operated by people of color. This initiative aims to address longstanding frustrations and ensure that providers have a formal mechanism to voice concerns and seek resolutions. The grievance procedure is seen as a critical step in promoting transparency and accountability within the service provision framework.
- **Mason Tillman Report Status Update:** An attendee sought updates on the status of the Mason Tillman report. This report is significant as it provides insights and recommendations on addressing disparities in service provision. Lisa Kleinbub noted that a draft of the report had been completed, with plans to share it after review. Rowe emphasized the need for timely updates and actionable steps based on the report's findings to ensure that equity goals are met effectively.
- **Identifying Disparities:** Rowe highlighted the subcommittee's efforts to identify and address disparities in service provision. This involves analyzing data to pinpoint areas where inequities exist and developing strategies to mitigate these disparities. The goal is to ensure that all service providers receive fair treatment and that individuals with developmental disabilities have equitable access to services. Engaging with the community and gathering feedback is key to this process. The subcommittee actively seeks input from service providers, families, and individuals with developmental disabilities to understand their experiences and challenges. This feedback is crucial for shaping effective equity initiatives.
- **Ongoing Projects:** Rowe mentioned several ongoing projects aimed at promoting equity among service providers. These projects include training programs, policy reviews, and advocacy efforts designed to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all stakeholders.

Day Providers Subcommittee Report – Mike Pereira

Mike Pereira provided an update on the activities and initiatives related to day services for individuals with developmental disabilities. The discussion covered budget considerations, staff surveys, a new provider portal, and upcoming surveys targeting various stakeholders in the community.

- **Staff Stability Surveys:** Earlier in the week, emails with unique links to the Direct Support Professional (DSP) surveys were sent to registered organizations. Each organization completing the 92-question survey will receive an \$8,000 stipend. The importance of answering all questions was emphasized, as the survey provides critical data about workforce challenges and organizational efforts to address them .
- **Provider Portal:** A new provider portal, part of the performance incentives components, is set to be established in the spring or summer. This portal will allow service providers to update programming information about the services they offer. Providers are encouraged to join the portal to be part of the listserv and stay updated.
- **Surveys by the Center for California Policy Center for IDD:** Several surveys are being conducted by the Center for California Policy Center for IDD, including ones for DSPs, service providers, self-advocates, and family advocates. These surveys aim to gather data on workforce conditions and challenges. The next survey for service providers is expected to be released in the coming weeks.
- **Impact of Wage Increases:** There was a discussion about the impact of the new \$20 per hour minimum wage for fast food workers on the labor workforce within the disability services sector. This change is expected to have a significant effect on workforce dynamics, making data collection and advocacy even more crucial.

HireAble Subcommittee Report – Donna Feingold

Donna Feingold provided an update on the activities and initiatives of HireAble, an organization focused on employment advocacy and support for individuals with developmental disabilities.

- Concerns were raised about the availability and scope of customized employment services. It was highlighted that there needs to be a more inclusive approach to ensure that individuals who do not meet specific requirements for certain programs still have access to customized employment opportunities.
- Donna Feingold emphasized the importance of benefits planning to reassure individuals that working can often be more beneficial than relying solely on benefits. HireAble, a vendored service by the Regional Center, offers benefits planning and training to clients. Donna provided her contact details for those needing assistance with benefits planning, highlighting the accessibility of HireAble's services.
- The next HireAble meeting is scheduled for May 20 at 3 PM. Representatives from the Orange County Local Partnership Agreement (LPA) will discuss their initiatives related to employment services in their region.
- On May 14 at 4 PM, a panel of self-advocates will discuss their employment experiences. Donna Feingold is available to provide links to these meetings upon request.

PVAC Membership Report – Jamie Renton

Geneva Carlos-Valentino reported for Jamie Renton.

- **Open Slots:** Geneva noted that there were still open slots for transportation vendors and children's services. These positions were encouraged for nomination from attendees participating in at least three meetings.
- **Nominations:** Attendees were encouraged to nominate individuals for the open positions. It was emphasized that filling these slots was crucial for ensuring diverse representation and the effective functioning of the committee.
- **Encouragement for Involvement:** Geneva stressed the importance of active participation and consistent attendance in PVAC meetings. Engaging more members helps in making informed decisions and advocating effectively for service providers and individuals with developmental disabilities.

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

Public Comment

- There were inquiries about a new staff person and questions regarding services for Black and African American providers and families. Geneva Carlos-Valentino and Lisa Kleinbub stated that efforts are being made to gather a Diversity & Equity Specialists panel to introduce themselves and discuss current initiatives at the July PVAC meeting.
- Joanne Lau, Project Manager at the Diversity and Health Training Institute (DHTI), provided an update on the Asian Resource Network project. Her comments focused on the following key points:
 - Joanne reminded the attendees about the services offered by the Asian Resource Network, which aims to improve the quality of life for Asian individuals and families navigating developmental disabilities.
 - She highlighted the project's focus on training bilingual Asian language speakers to work at service provider organizations and providing monolingual and bilingual resources to Asian families who speak languages such as Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese.
 - Joanne encouraged attendees to complete an online profile on the Asian Resource Network's free directory, which helps promote service provider organizations to the community.
 - Organizations that complete an online profile can receive referrals of bilingual Asian language-speaking students for job openings.
 - These organizations will also be among the first to know about upcoming workshops, such as the upcoming Bridge Cultural Understanding Workshop Part Two, which focuses on the cultural nuances of working with Asian families.
 - Joanne announced a free workshop for service providers scheduled for May 30. The workshop will feature speakers, including an Enhanced Case Manager from the Regional Center of the East Bay and a Bilingual Case Manager from Golden Gate Regional Center, discussing communication styles, sexuality, and mental health topics relevant to the Asian community.
 - Dan Hogue shared his positive experience of serving as an internship site for students getting their certification through DHTI.

- He emphasized that this partnership helps in acquiring highly qualified staff who come with pre-training, reducing the burden on service providers.
 - Dan also mentioned the importance of having staff who can speak multiple Asian languages, which helps diversify the services offered and better serve the community.
 - Mike Pereira echoed Dan's sentiments, noting that hiring staff from DHTI has been beneficial as they are already introduced to the service community and possess foundational training.
 - He stressed the value of DHTI's program in providing direct support professionals who are well-prepared to meet the specific needs of diverse communities.
 - Mike encouraged other service providers to consider signing up for the provider list to access quality staff and highlighted the importance of language diversity in service provision.
- Eddie Esquiviz, Manos Home Care Director of Community Engagement, emphasized the importance of being aware of local rallies and encouraged active participation. He highlighted the need for collective action in response to proposed budget funding delays and mentioned the goal of amplifying community voices to create more statewide media attention.
 - Eddie offered to leave his contact information (eddie@manoshomecare.com) in the chat for those interested in joining or learning more about these advocacy efforts.
 - Eddie mentioned coordination with the May 21 Capitol Coalition rally but noted potential challenges in aligning with this specific date. He suggested organizing a meaningful rally within their catchment area and encouraged staying tuned for further details.
 - Other participants echoed Eddie's sentiments, emphasizing the need to show up and make their voices heard, especially during budget discussions. They highlighted that past successes in legislative action were largely driven by community efforts and presence at rallies.
 - There was mention of organizing efforts for the May Day Rally on May 21. Participants discussed the logistics of gathering at the Capitol and marching to the swing space to deliver materials to legislative offices. The importance of bringing as many people as possible, including DSPs, family members, and board members, was emphasized to ensure a strong presence.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 14 at 9:30 AM virtual only on Zoom.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:38 AM.

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