

**Provider Vendor Advisory Committee
Regional Center of the East Bay
Meeting Minutes October 8, 2021**

Members Present: Sister Marygrace, East Bay Services; Leslie Visbal, Visbal Strategic Consulting; Marcie Hodge, St. John Boy's Home; Craig Rose, VistAbility; Amanda Eicher, NIAD Art Center; Mike Pereira, Ala Costa Center; Carlos Cienfuegos, Sentry Living Solutions; Ramsay Mashy, California Autism Foundation; Will Sanford, CS&SC; Donna Feingold, Adaptive Learning Center; Dan Hogue, Las Trampas

Guests Present/by Phone:

Crystal Warren, ILA Alameda; Eddie Williams, ILA Alameda; Darin Lounds, HCEB and ILA; Lisa Kleinbub, RCEB; Steve Robinson, RCEB; Michael Minton, RCEB; Fruc Menchavez, RCEB; Ben Chen, Alameda County DD Council; Gabby Romabiles, Alameda County DD Council; Vi Ibarra, Contra Costa County DD Council; Alex Mountford, Manos; Amber Avalos, NIAD Art Center; Amy Simons, A Brighter View Day Program; Angelica Sanchez, Clausen House; Anna Willis, Emerging Horizons; Asia Humphries; Barbara Saylor, VistAbility; B.J. Cotrell, Jaqui' Foundation; Carol McCrary, VistAbility; Cecilia Connolly, the Arc of the East Bay; Chris Candari, Thrive SLS; Christine Ibia, Aveanna Healthcare; Darice Tillery, Harambee Community Services; Dominique Mellion, Broadmoor House; Doreen Khan; Emily Correa, Enjoy Life More; Erika Gonzalez, 24 Hour Home Care; Eva Muñoz, Good Samaritan RCF; Jackie Santos, Parkway Village Care Home; Jaynette Underhill-Levingston, Clausen House; Jennifer Carper, Arcadia Home Care; Juan Velasquez Jr., Pathway to Choices; Karen Lingenfelter, Mt. Diablo Adult Education; Keith Nauman, Castro Valley Adult Education; Kelly Ko, FCSN; Kelly Nguyen, Asian Resource Network; Kipi Iscandari, A & K Residential Homes; Lynn Galliano, DABS, Inc.; Maria Mendiola, Royal Palm Residential Home; Megan Benando, Trilogy Adult Services; Melissa Billeci, The Mentor; Monica Cardoza, CIWP Director; Nancy Brum, Keystone Adult Learning Center; Pam Temple; Patricia Harris; Purvi Knopf, RES Success; Robert Jo, Agape Home Care, Inc.; Dr. Sadiq B. Ikharo; Samantha Noorgard; Shelley Crayton, Family Support Services; Sheri Artis, Social Vocational Services; Stephanie Featherstone, CA Mentor Network; Stephen Beard, Alameda County DD Council, Accessibility Specialist Realtor; Sylvia Yeh, FCSN; Vanessa Aguilera.

Call to Order:

Meeting called to order by Leslie Visbal at 9:35 a.m. with corrections to the agenda.

Approval of September 10, 2021 minutes. M/Marcie Hodge; S/Donna Feingold; passed unanimously.

Several corrections were made to the 10/8 agenda: next meeting is on November 12, not 8th, and the reports will be given after, rather than before, presentation by ILA Alameda and Housing Consortium of the East Bay.

Presentation: Independent Living Association High-Quality Housing in the East Bay

Crystal Warren, Program Coordinator, Eddie Williams, Program Manager, and
Darin Lounds, Executive Director
Independent Living Association (ILA) Alameda
Housing Consortium of the East Bay

- Crystal Warren presented on the ILA Model facilitated by HCEB – quality affordable housing in over 40 supportive housing properties across 2 counties.
- Eddie Williams provided the ILA Online Directory via chat: <https://ilacalifornia.org/alameda-county>
- Darin Lounds referenced a conversation with Denise Bradley around licensed vs unlicensed board and care, and ways to provide more options for consumers whose options may seem limited to unlicensed board and care programs.

ILA model provides a resource directory for referrals, and ILA/HCEB is hoping to solidify connections between case managers, consumers, and ILA/HCEB in the East Bay.

Anyone can live in ILA, but they provide a housing model where consumers can receive services. Operators/landlords may provide basic services such as meals, but do not provide services contracted through the Regional Center.

ILA is modeled after the Better Business Bureau, which includes an ILA quality approval process, and an ILA complaint and follow-up process.

ILA is not a regulatory/licensing agency – ILA is a free/voluntary membership association, with membership dependent on quality approval and compliance with complaint/follow-up recommendations.

Crystal provided slides on membership processes, house rules and guidelines, quality approval, peer review, ILA's online directory, and benefits of high-quality housing vs the issues arising with low-quality housing.

Rent for shared rooms are \$755-1000, with all meals and laundry – compare to \$880 average rent in Alameda County. Rental Assistance is available and ILA is actively working to increase access to rental assistance.

CHIP Model – Community Health Improvement Partners came to Alameda County from San Diego/Fresno Counties via Supervisor Miley who heard complaints and helped advocates to bring the model to Alameda County.

ILA/CHIP provides low barriers to housing and rental assistance to consumers entering their homes.

Will Sanford asked how low barrier housing is defined. Darin responded that placement could be same-day, rental history issues do not prevent placements, and entry requirements can be variable – for example, creating households where I/DD is a preferred qualification for entry, and background checks can be processed over time.

Mike Pereira asked what is the average tenure of a tenant placement? Crystal responded that there is no limit to the time people can be placed, but there are some cases where ILA provides a temporary placement.

Steve Robinson asked how often the operators are on site? Darin responded that it varies – some operators are very present and providing the services on-site, and in other homes staff members provide services under supervision of the operators.

Steve also asked what the qualifications are for ILA admissions – do consumers need to have a mental health diagnosis? Section 8 voucher? How does ILA work with case management and consumers? Darin: No particular qualification, and no requirement of a mental health diagnosis. In addition, ILA is working with operators to lower costs for rent and board. Crystal: Section 8 is not required. ILA's website is open to the public, with operator names, location of the home, and information to set up 'preview' site visits for consumers and service providers. Eddie Williams: ILA Operators are supporting residents from a heart drive – looking for ways to support and especially to connect with RCEB consumers and service providers.

Mike Pereira asked the percentage of people with I/DD within ILA versus those with MH challenges, and how long does a typical vacancy last? Darin responded that it is likely a very low percentage of tenants with I/DD who live in ILA homes now, and that they are working to build more housing for individuals with I/DD. Darin also commented that most homes do not have vacancies throughout the year, but since hotel and motel rooms have been made available during the pandemic, there have been some vacancies. As pandemic funding ends, there may be fewer vacancies again.

Will Sanford asked the average number of folks living in ILA homes.

Mike Minton asked what ILA's involvement when there are allegations of substantiated abuse? Eddie and Darin responded that ILA uses the complaint process to address abuse as an issue of housing quality, and they work with APS, law enforcement, and county resources to ensure that tenants continue to receive quality housing.

Mike Pereira asked how ILA collaborates with CCL? Crystal responded that ILA homes are not licensed by CCL, but that ILA works with CCL on processing complaints that may come through about providers who provide services in ILA homes. CCL sits on ILA's work team and ILA maintains a collaborative relationship with CCL.

Crystal encouraged outreach to ILA and warm handoff for home operators who may wish to join ILA, and new consumers who may wish to be tenants in ILA homes. She provided their phone number at 510-365-5508.

Lisa Kleinbub commented that ILA in particular provides a great option for female-only homes, but that ILA is a great way to provide more options for housing for those for whom it may be a good fit.

Mike Pereira, Darin Lounds, and Crystal Warren discussed the intake process for determining a good fit – ILA supports a case-by-case placement process to determine alignment with the tone and group within each home. Mike reiterated Lisa Kleinbub’s observation that ILA fills a certain niche in a very crowded housing market, and Donna Feingold recommended that ILA connect directly with ILS and SLS providers who are always looking for housing options for consumers.

Reports

RCEB Update – Steve Robinson

- Steve reminded all providers of alternative services that they are required to engage with all recipients of alternative services by November 1; engagement guides are included in the DDS Directive of August 12: https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Enclosure_EngagementGuide_08132021.pdf
- Steve mentioned that all staff are required to sign in to EVV when working with consumers in their homes. All providers will need to sign up via SanData, and information has been requested by RCEB to provide to DDS – if providers haven’t signed up yet, they can still sign up through the emails sent in prior months, and monthly presentations are ongoing.
- Steve mentioned that a survey has gone out to assess funding needs in the community. A specialized residential facility for consumers who are deaf and hard of hearing and a facility for Cantonese speakers has been recommended: <https://www.rceb.org/news/crdp-priorities-for-the-2021-2022-fiscal-year/>

RCEB/State - Lisa Kleinbub

- Lisa mentioned the CDPH state public health order relating to vaccination mandates. People providing services within the system must be either vaccinated for COVID-19 by November 30, or have a medical or religious exemption and be tested once weekly to ensure they are not COVID-19 positive when at work. This excludes a small population who work only with one person in the home where they live or provide services to one family.
Re: questions about enforcement, Lisa mentioned there was little information on enforcement but that there was detailed information about records keeping for compliance. Lisa suggested that enforcement might come through Cal-OSHA. She addressed staffing concerns and loss of staff; however she also noted high Bay Area vaccination rates and that challenges might be lower as a result.
Re: medical exemptions, the qualifications are going to be very narrow, while religious exemptions may be broader. As an employer subject to Cal-OSHA, Lisa encouraged providers to discuss exemptions with legal counsel rather than with RCEB or another quality assurance entity.
- Mike Pereira mentioned in the chat that the most common medical exemption is allergic reaction to the vaccine.
- Lisa mentioned a DDS Directive on Social Recreation and Non-Medical Therapies requesting Regional Centers develop a plan for sharing information on resumption of these services and the requirements to ensure that everyone including underserved communities know how to access services. Since these are often in-person services, Lisa predicted a slow return to these services, and indicated there will be a need for providers in these areas.
- Lisa stated that at the state level, there are a number of work groups happening regarding legislation for this year. Two of interest include: 1) service incentives (RCEB has a representative on this work group) and 2) rate reform implementation. There isn’t a lot of information yet about how rate reform will be implemented, and there is a lot of work to do before April.
- There is a call for proposals for Service Access and Equity Grants – looking to improve outcomes for underserved communities in innovative ways. Purchase of service data indicates underuse of

services for monolingual and other language-specific communities; RCEB encourages applications from providers.

- Mike Pereira asked where the DDS Notice regarding Social Rec was posted, and Will Sanford responded that there was no posting yet.
- Early Start
- Performance Contracts: Aiming to have participation from families and people served who are Black and African-American to determine service needs. /
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RCEB Update – Fruc Menchavez

- Exciting time as HCBS funding is upon us.
- Outcomes orientation along four categories: Community Integration, Individual Rights, Choice, Collaboration
- Priority will be given to providers identified as needing to be in compliance by 2023, and providers identified as out of compliance in last year's assessment.
- Non-priority providers can still apply, but attention should be given to four categories above.
- Timeline will be very similar to last year's, and three 2-hour workshops will be listed on RCEB's website: <https://www.rceb.org/providers/hcbs-final-rule/>
- Disability Thrive Initiative will be presenting a webinar on October 13, 3-4PM around Alternative Services and the Final Rule.
- Will Sanford asked about feedback from DDS consultants on site visits in advance of HCBS funding round for this year.

RCEB Board – Sister Marygrace

- Sister Marygrace stated that because the Social Recreation suspension has been lifted, needs should be discussed with consumers at the level of planning team conversations.
- RCEB grew this year – Lisa provided that RCEB grew by 1,000 this year.
- Sister Marygrace reported on committees working on growth.
 - Communication
 - POS Expenditure/Disparity
 - Data
 - Consumer Advisory Committee: what is important to you?
- RCEB Board received a letter stating that the board does not comply with ethnic representation, and Sister Marygrace concurred that the Board needed membership that represented the Asian and Latinx communities in particular, and noted that the Board is in need of legal expertise. However, the Board voted two representatives who are parents of RCEB consumers onto the Board in the last meeting: April Qi Lee, a very active parent advocate, and Sadiya Muntez, an attorney representing Asian/South Asian communities.

SCDD Regional Advisory Committee – Sheraden Nicholau

- Sheraden Nicholau was not in attendance at this meeting.

DD Councils –

- Alameda County – Ben Chen
 - Ben shared an update on mask requirements that came out 10/8 to update a mandate from August. <https://covid-19.acgov.org/covid19-assets/docs/press/joint-release-2021.10.07.pdf>
 - Based on three weeks of Alameda County being in the yellow tier, low and stable hospitalizations, and high vaccine rates, mask mandates are changing. Tracking is here: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

- Spotlight on employment in new newsletter section – please recommend spotlights!
 - Conferences – learn about postsecondary opportunities for continuing education for individuals with I/DD
 - Bay Area Urban Security Initiatives – Golden Eagle exercise focuses on transportation in the event of a major disaster
 - Next DD Council Board Meeting: October 19, 12:30-2:30PM
- **Contra Costa County – Vi Ibarra**
 - Vi mentioned the announcement around rapid test kit availability for kits expiring in October.
 - Vi also mentioned that a provider was looking for N95 fit testing, and Logistics team was able to provide fit test supplies to providers.
 - Vi encouraged providers to contact logistics with supplies requests; quite often they can provide supplies that are hard to access.
 - Sensory-friendly vaccination clinic will be offered by Open House Center every Friday until November 19, and a link to appointments is here:
 - Vi gave an update on Covid-19.
 - CCHHealth.org is still the site to visit for the most current information.
 - If information can't be found on the site, Vi asked that people reach out to her.
 - Vi thanked all the people who attended the Joint Award Meeting, and expressed gratitude to the sponsors and agencies who donated resources.

East Bay Legislative Coalition – Will Sanford

- Will mentioned that the governor has until November 10 to sign all bills; including SB phasing out subminimum wage for all employees in California including ways to mitigate challenges for folks who might lose employment because of the new legislation.
- Big news is at federal level – no new legislation from legislators; Senate extending the debt ceiling until early December, and the extension is now in the House.
- Other federal legislation: \$3.5 trillion in the house, with \$4 billion for disability sector. Reducing to \$2 trillion with Harris vote splitting the difference in the Senate and Manchin and Sinema in the House.
- Federal changes proposed to SSI, raising the payment level to federal poverty minimums; also increases assets for individuals and ends marriage penalty for couples.
- EBLC has put together a scorecard on state budget tracking – rate model implementation, service quality, etc.
- EBLC also preparing for annual leg breakfast via Zoom – November 3, 10AM-12Noon.

Day Service Providers – Mike Pereira

- Mike mentioned Day Program subcommittee continues to meet weekly at 11AM on Fridays via Zoom.
- Items raised include CDPH order questions – are participants recognized as employees in employment services context? Lisa responded that if they are paid, then they are employees.
- What about employees who provide services remotely? Lisa responded that it does not say Direct Services, but simply Services.
- Re: Contractors, Lisa advised that if they are providing services to consumers, they should be vaccinated. However, if consumers are paid under contract, they likely would not be required, although soon enough we'll probably see requirement for everyone in the system to be vaccinated.

- If people live in the same home with consumers, they would not be required to be vaccinated at this time.

Membership – Marcie Hodge

- Marcie Hodge and Leslie Visbal thanked Craig Rose for his many years of service as PVAC Secretary, and the group appreciated Craig.
- Marcie Hodges moved to vote Amanda Eicher as the new secretary of PVAC for the coming four-year term. M/Marcie, S/Mike Pereira, and Craig Rose. Unanimously passed.
- Marcie asked attendees to place their name and organization in the chat, and welcomed attendees to become members – after three consecutive meetings, new members are welcome to join.

Announcements

- No announcements

Meeting Adjourned at 11:23 PM

Respectfully submitted for review by Amanda Eicher, Secretary