

**Provider Vendor Advisory Committee  
Regional Center of the East Bay  
Meeting Minutes, Friday, December 8, 2023**

**Members Present:** Geneva Carlos-Valentino, Toolworks (Co-Chair); Marcie Hodge, St. John Boy's Home (Membership); Amanda Eicher, NIAD Art Center (Secretary); Donna Feingold, Finding Golden Solutions and HireAble; Mike Pereira, Ala Costa Centers; Ramsay Mashy, California Autism Foundation; Jamie Renton, Pleasanton Adult and Career Education; Craig Rose, VistAbility; Carlos Cienfuegos, Sentry Living Solutions.

**Guests Present/by Phone:**

Lisa Kleinbub, RCEB; Fruc Menchavez, RCEB; Steve Robinson, RCEB; Michael Minton, RCEB; Amy Schwartz, RCEB; Rafael Parada, RCEB; Carin Hewitt, Alift LLC; Ember Avalos, NIAD Art Center; Nicole Doubly, RES; Danyel Rodriguez, Connected Living; Teresa Nold, Deaf Plus Adult Community; Carolanne Forge, Toolworks; Debbie Glen, Clausen House; Armando Valadez, Lucchesi Group Adult Residential; Heather Manes, HATCH; Will Sanford, Community Consultant; Lousie McClellan, Open House Center; Ashley Fernandez, Fitzpatrick Hills Manor; Afiya Wilkerson, VistAbility SEP; Lourdes Angel, Elwyn NC; Lauren Fuentes, VistAbility; Aimee Vitug-Hom, VistAbility; Ann Ratto, Community Consultant; Dr. Gregory Holler, UCS; Adriana Cazares, Family Works; James Mercado, Open House Center; Donna Feingold, Finding Golden Solutions and HireAble; Anna Willis, Emerging Horizons; Zackery Wheeler, Service Provider; Rosa Lugo, Pacific Home Care Services; Ramsay Mashy, California Autism Foundation; Robert Jo, St. Catherine Home; Jan Cohen, ANBA; Jay Gomez, Mission Hope Day Program; Eddie Esquivez, Manos; Karen Lingenfelter, Mt. Diablo Adult Education; Tejal Mehta, Pleasanton Adult and Career Education; Sheraden Nicholau, State Council on Developmental Disabilities; Ben Chen, Alameda County Developmental Disabilities Council; Vi Ibarra, Contra Costa County Developmental Disabilities Council; Alicia Curran : Alicia Curran Compass SLS & ILS; Lindsey Dyba, Futures Explored; Sirkka Wirkki, Jaqui' Foundation; Candice Elton, Thrive Support Services; Nancy Brum, Keystone Adult Learning; Laura Guzman, Enriching Lives; Zixin Ou, District Attorney Office of Alameda;

74 Participants total

**Call to Order:**

Geneva Carlos-Valentino confirmed the quorum at 9:35 AM and mentioned that her co-chair, Dan Hogue, was absent due to vacation. The meeting proceeded with a roll call of members present.

**Inclusion Time:** Geneva focused on cultural celebrations and traditions during the month of December. Geneva shared her experience at Toolworks' annual meeting and encouraged others to share their traditions or observances. Karen Lingenfelter, Jamie Renton, Teresa Nold, and Louise McClellan shared their experiences, including holiday dinner dances, participation in local parades, and various community events.

**Minutes Approval:** Ramsay Mashy motioned to approve the minutes and Craig Rose seconded the motion. The motion carried with the abstention of Geneva Carlos-Valentino, who was not present at the last meeting.

**Action Item:** Geneva announced that there were open positions in the PVAC leading and voting membership due to term completions and leadership team changes, inviting interested parties to consider these roles. Geneva proceeded to discuss nominations for various positions in the PVAC leadership.

- **Criteria for Nomination:** To be eligible for nomination, individuals must be service providers offering services for a regional center, specifically the East Bay. Furthermore, they must have attended at least three meetings within the year to be considered for a position.

- **Specific Positions Open:** Geneva mentioned specific roles that needed filling, including positions for Secretary and Membership Chairs as well as voting members in Licensed Residential, Day Programs, Children and Infant Services, Employment and Work services, and Support Services.
  - Jamie Renton expressed interest in the membership role
- **Nominations from Members:** There were instances of attendees nominating others for specific roles. Geneva acknowledged these nominations and encouraged the provision of contact details to facilitate follow-up.
  - Lisa Kleinbub suggested they consider whether small providers should have a specific category, recognizing that their perspective might differ from larger providers. Geneva acknowledged this idea and suggested that operational guideline changes could be discussed in the upcoming January meeting.
- **Process and Timeline:** Geneva explained that the nominations would be considered, and voting would take place at the January membership meeting. She assured that reminders would be sent out regarding the open positions and encouraged members to think of individuals who could contribute significantly to the community.
- **Encouragement for Involvement:** Geneva encouraged members to consider joining the leadership or voting membership as a way to network, gain understanding of local and statewide community industry developments, and participate in legislative activities.

### **Reports:**

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

- **State Capitol Tree Decoration:** Lisa thanked members for contributing ornaments for a tree at the state capitol, a project involving various regional centers, service providers, and participants.
- **Legislative Updates:** She mentioned ongoing legislative activities, highlighting both fast-paced developments and areas where progress is slower than desired.
- **Self-Determination Services Directives:** Lisa discussed new directives related to Self Determination Services, particularly clarifications regarding remote services by out-of-state providers and operational nuances unique to the program.
- **Minimum Wage Impact:** The impending minimum wage increases in certain service industries, such as fast food and health care, were discussed. Lisa expressed concern about how these increases might affect staffing in disability services, given that some rates for staff in these services are below the new minimum wage levels.
- **Implicit Bias Training:** The state has contracted with an organization to provide implicit bias training to regional center case management staff and intake workers. Lisa mentioned that vendors involved in initial assessments would also be required to participate in this training.
- **Deaf Plus Conference:** Lisa highlighted the success of the first Deaf Plus conference in California, a collaborative event that brought attention to the needs of Deaf Plus adults. She emphasized the importance of considering such events for younger age groups as well.
- **Budget and Funding Concerns:** She discussed the state's budget, noting a decline in state revenue and its potential impact on ambitious proposals for the disability services system. This includes navigating the complexities of funding a living wage in light of the minimum wage increases.

There were no direct questions for Lisa. Mike Pereira shared links regarding revenue shortfall and self-determination remote services directives in the chat.

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

- Quality Incentive Program: Providers who completed a survey will receive payment around December 27-28.
- Extension of remote services until June 30, 2025, for day programs, iOS services, behavioral therapy services, and clinical assessments for eligibility.
- Minimum wage increase: Providers not already paying their staff \$16 per hour were advised to complete a worksheet for certain service codes; this would be the last year they need to do so.
- Mike Minton discussed the HCBS (Home and Community-Based Services) directive from DDS. Providers must demonstrate practical incorporation of HCBS final rule principles.
  - Toolworks' is now contracted to help with technical systems and evaluations regarding HCBS compliance.
  - Providers were invited to volunteer for practice evaluations, and there will be mass trainings in January for all affected vendors.
  - To assist with the HCBS compliance process, Mike Minton sought community input on how to best utilize \$800,000 funding from DDS.

### **Regional Center Board Report: Lisa Kleinbub for Dan Hogue**

As Dan Hogue, who usually gives the report, was on vacation and Geneva Carlos-Valentino did not attend the last board meeting, Lisa Kleinbub provided a brief update.

- The board approved a contract for SLS.
- The board discussed and approved the allocation contract received from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), which is essential for funding and operational purposes.
- An update on the Regional Center's strategic plan was reviewed. Following a completed survey, the board plans to develop this plan further in January.
- The board approved the audit report presented by independent auditors. This report is crucial for financial transparency and accountability.

### **State Council on Developmental Disabilities Report: Sheraden Nicholau**

- Supported Decision Making Technical Assistance Program: Sheridan mentioned an upcoming webinar on December 14th to discuss grants and contracts available for enhancing supported decision-making in various settings. She encouraged Bay Area representation in applying for these grants.
- Statewide Self Advocacy Network Meeting: Scheduled for December 12th, focusing on self-advocacy for individuals with disabilities.
- Self Determination Statewide Advisory Committee Town Hall: Set for December 18th to gather feedback on Self Determination Program (SDP) experiences.
- Self Advocacy Chat: Scheduled for December 27th, along with other meetings highlighted in the general meeting calendar.
- Antigen Test Program: Sheridan discussed the free antigen test program, noting its end in February 2024. She encouraged community groups and service providers to order tests while they are available and highlighted the limited expiration dates on these tests.
- University of New Hampshire's Disability Stats: Sheridan shared a link to annual disability statistics and reports, useful for supporting work in the disability community.
- Policy Work and "There Should Be a Law" Program: Sheridan discussed the submission of bill ideas and highlighted a report summarizing these submissions. The winning submission focused on the need for greater access to mental and behavioral health services for people with disabilities.

Sheridan's report was followed by a brief discussion on the logistics and expiration dates of the antigen tests, emphasizing the importance of these resources for community safety.

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

Ben Chen shared several resources and upcoming events related to emergency preparedness, free iPad distribution for seniors and adults with disabilities, and training sessions for Spanish speakers. He also mentioned the council's recruitment for new board members and an upcoming board meeting focusing on mental health services.

Ben Chen mentioned that the next ACDDC board meeting would be held on Wednesday, December 13, from 9:30 am to 12 pm, with a panel presentation on mental health services.

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

Vi Ibarra mentioned that their board does not meet in December and is sharing information about a recruitment drive by the Care Parent Network for a bilingual Spanish-speaking staff member. Vi reported that the next CCDDC meeting will be on January 24, 2024.

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

- State Revenue Shortfall: Will highlighted the report from the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), which projected a significant revenue shortfall of \$68 billion. This shortfall poses challenges for state funding and could impact various programs and services.
  - Will discussed the options available to the legislature and administration to manage this financial challenge. These options include reducing future one-time spending that had been previously allocated but not yet spent.
  - The revenue shortfall could potentially affect funding for programs and services.
- Legislative and Administrative Responses: Responses to the revenue shortfall would require careful consideration by lawmakers and administrators to balance budget constraints with the needs of various state-funded programs, including those for individuals with disabilities.
- The next EBLC meeting will be held on January 3, 2024. An additional meeting to review the Governor's Proposed Budget will be held on January 17, 2024.

#### **Service Provider Equity Subcommittee Report: No Report**

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

- Mike discussed the current challenges faced by day programs due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the flu season. He emphasized the need for continuous vigilance and precautionary measures to ensure the safety of both staff and clients.
- Mike addressed concerns related to funding and reimbursement, particularly how these aspects are being managed in the current fiscal climate. This point underscored the financial pressures day programs face, especially with additional health and safety requirements.
- Mike highlighted the ongoing staffing challenges within day programs. These challenges are likely related to recruitment and retention difficulties, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

- He discussed the adaptations and changes day programs have had to make to continue operating effectively under the current conditions. This likely includes modifications to program delivery, adherence to health guidelines, and possibly the integration of virtual or remote services.
- Mike pointed out the need for continued advocacy and support for day programs, signaling the importance of these services in the community and the need for adequate resources and recognition from decision-makers. Mike also touched on the importance of collaboration and communication among providers, stakeholders, and regulatory bodies to navigate the ongoing challenges effectively.

#### **HireAble Subcommittee Report: Donna Feingold**

- Donna discussed the ongoing efforts and activities of HireAble, a collaborative initiative aimed at increasing employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Donna highlighted the engagement of various organizations and shared success stories, demonstrating the impact of HireAble's work in the community.
- Donna also addressed some challenges faced by the program and the strategies implemented to overcome them, emphasizing the continuous commitment to improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

#### **PVAC Membership Report: Marcie Hodge**

- Membership Updates: Marcie provided an update on the current membership status of PVAC, including the number of active members and any recent changes.
- Recruitment and Retention Efforts: She discussed efforts to recruit new members and retain existing ones, outlining strategies to ensure a diverse and engaged membership base.
- Member Engagement and Participation: Marcie emphasized the importance of member participation in PVAC activities and the role of members in influencing the committee's direction and initiatives.
- Future Membership Plans: She also shared plans for future membership drives and initiatives to strengthen the PVAC community further.

#### **Public Comment**

- **Next meeting is scheduled for January 12, 2024.** Well wishes to everyone a great holiday season.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:32 AM.

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