

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2023

Present: Lori Walker, Richard Dier, Jordan Feinstock, Michael Carey, Victoria Berrey, Jon Francis, Wilmary Torres – Client’s Right Advocate, Miriam Erberich, Alex Kopilevich, Socorro Curameng – Committee Members

Denise Juarez, Gabriela Eshrati, Robin Monroe, Silvia Renteria, Xochitl Gonzalez – NLACRC Staff Members

Ivette Kruk, Marianita Mendez, Claudia Cares, Anna Whitlock- Spanish Interpreter, Kristianna Moralls – Disability Voices United, Jacquie, Reiko Umeda, Stella Ramirez, Tami Barmache, Cindy Barry, James, Arlene, Mun, Minutes Services – Guests

Absent: Diana Padilla Garcia, Josephina Romo Gutierrez

I. Call to Order, Introductions, and Housekeeping

Lori Walker called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

Spanish interpretation services were announced by Lori. Anyone with questions was suggested to write them in the chat or send an email to selfdetermination@nlacrc.org or nlacrcsdlac@gmail.com.

Lori Walker welcomed the new committee members Alex Kopilevich, Miriam Erberich, and Socorro Curameng. Everyone on the Board introduced themselves.

Lori Walker stated that as of January 31, 2024, they will have a new Executive Director since Ruth Janka had submitted her retirement.

Action Item: The update for the Executive Director will be shared with the committee.

Jordan asked if the new Executive Director could join their meetings. Lori Walker stated they will definitely be asking the new director to join.

II. Public Input and Comments - Lori Walker

Richard Dier stated the Executive Director position is very important, and it is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to recruit, interview, and hire a replacement. The Executive Committee will host a Special Planning Meeting on November 30, 2023, at 6 pm that anyone can attend to hear about the closing of Ruth’s position and establish how they will proceed. He encouraged everyone to be involved in that decision, as it would have a large impact on the organization as a whole. This announcement was made after some of the final committee meetings for the

year, but the Board should be encouraged to look for and wide. In that process, they may be without an Executive Director for a period of time.

Lori Walker shared resources. The monthly Support Group will meet December 6, 2023, at 4:30-6 pm. The Independent Facilitator Round Table will not meet in December, but the IF Handbook can reviewed, and anyone can respond to its usefulness. The North LA LVAC Training by DBU and NLACRC will be held on December 4, 2023, from 4:30-6 pm. SDP Connect by Disability Voices United will be held on December 13, 2023 from 4:30-6 pm. The DVU LVAC Collaborative will be held on December 13, 2023, from 4:30-6 pm discuss challenges that are being faced.

Lori Walker asked all of the committee members if it was okay to share their emails with Christianna. Committee members independently identified if their email could be shared or not.

Miriam Erberich stated for Person Centered Planning and Training, TriCount provided training on a regular basis. She will send a link to future training sessions.

Claudia Wegner said Cohort #3 for IF training would begin in January.

III. Approval of the October Meeting Minutes

Richard noted that the minutes state Board members, but it should state committee members.

M/S/C (J. Feinstock/A. Kopilevich) To approve Meeting Minutes with the above amendment. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Committee Reports

A. Chair Report – Lori Walker

Lori reported DDS issued a permanent guideline for how SDLAC can conduct their meetings. Since the meetings are less formal, it removes them from Bagley Keen and meetings can be held outside of the committee meeting.

Richard suggested that the committee standards should be incorporated and attached to the Self-Governance document. He will propose a motion to make that change at the next committee meeting.

Lori stated that SDP held their virtual conference, and over 400 people attended. The conference was recorded so people could get access online. There was a lot of good information and discussion about issues going on.

Lori stated the CCP has a section of communication, and the website needed to be updated. She had previously provided feedback, but now they would move forward with improving the SDLAC portion of the website to make it more informative.

B. Board Report Related to SDP – Lori Walker

Lori stated that she and Richard attended the Board meeting. There was a lot of discussion about labor shortages. The VAC wrote a letter to the Regional Center to cover the basic roles needed and provide training for staff. SDP was not discussed at the Board meeting. During public input, they stated that there was not easy access to the agenda, which is legally required. It was also requested that an Executive Session be placed at the end of the meeting so that the public does not have to wait in a separate room for an hour. Finally, the SDP email was shared with the Board members to provide additional information.

Consumer Service Committee members will join the SDLAC meetings in the future. There were also concerns presented about labor shortages and the GT Independence fee.

Alex stated the shortages were an issue across the field, and the trainings was not enough for the work that was being done. This will be important to discuss with the new Executive Director. Lori stated by law, SDLAC has to be involved in SDP training.

Jon Francis asked if they had discussed with GT about the percentage that was not being implemented. Lori stated that Rosie heard but did not verify that an additional 1% was being charged. They will look into that further to confirm if it was right or not. Jon stated it was his understanding that this was not included in the contract.

Gabby stated it was not in the Program Plan Design, so it was brought to the attention of NLACRC and the DDS, requesting an amendment to the contract. Silvia suggested that NLACRC families should not update their plans to avoid that, but it was still charged. They have been in conversation with DDS since it was announced.

Miriam asked if GT could add that fee if they could add to mileage and taxes because it was on her son's list. She asked if, when the Board went into Executive Session, they were following Bagley Keen. Richard stated that they were not under Bagley Keen but another law.

Richard stated he attended the November 3 state-wide meeting about this, and he was unsure why it was taking so long. It was stated that DDS was reviewing this item. He stated he didn't mind since his FMS wasn't being paid a lot, but he wished for transparency on the topic. While he and Lori were at the meeting and made public comments, they were not allowed to speak during the SDP session, and instead they referred to staff. SDLAC can serve as a resource because they have connections across the state.

Claudia Wenger stated this issue has been discussed since it was first laid out. GTI is taking the 1% on their end, whether the plans are updated or not. The money is taken from the monthly report, but so far, everyone has had enough money to cover that 1%. This was put into effect on July 1, 2023.

Jordan stated when he attended the Board meetings, he also was not about to get attention from SDP because it was overlooked. Because the packets are so long, their reports are overlooked. He had fought to talk when he was the liaison, but they did not listen.

C. Best Practice Subcommittee Update- Richard Dier/Lori Walker

Lori stated the subcommittee was created over a year ago to meet with the SDP team once a month. The goal is to create best practices for SDP. In May, Lori created a survey for the service coordinators and the results were received. The Training Subcommittee can work on this, as many coordinators were not confident in the training that they had received. All of the 101 training courses will be added to a resource list for the website or the handout. Recreating trainings that exists would be a waste, so they are collecting those items. The IF Guidebook was also being worked on. 7:34. DDS requested an RFP for the IF Standards but in the RFP, they eliminated a lot of people who have history and experience in the area, so it had been pulled after criticism.

Jon asked how they had eliminated people with experience. Lori stated the RFP was 88 pages, but it stated that 024 or 099 vendors could not apply for it. Since there was a backlash, it was pulled, and they were starting over.

D. Questions/Concerns from Chair to Staff - Lori Walker

Lori stated her concern was difficulties for those entering or in SDP. It is not easy to understand finding employees, the FMSs, etc. She hopes to use this committee to better the SDP experience.

Jon stated that FMSs like GTI adding 1% to amounts that were already increased was very frustrating. The budgets should be made clear so people are not confused about their budgets. If they do not stop it here, it may become a problem later. He hopes they can do something about it.

Jon stated that he had not understood Richard's comment about the budgeting. Richard shared that his son had a huge budget and a complicated program, but they were still only using 80% of it so that it wouldn't take away from his son's care. He was frustrated because he wanted to work with GTI and DDS to make sure that FMSs were being paid properly since they are necessary to make SDP succeed. Adding it without discussion was wrong, and those with small budgets would have a problem since they were carefully budgeting. He stated that the only thing the Regional Centers could do was stop working with them.

Miriam stated she was not opposed to the 1% fee, but the timing was off because the FMS fee had just been increased, and there were no public meetings before the change was needed. She stated they should have waited for a new spending plan this year.

Claudia agreed that the timing was bad, as prices had just been raised, and then they said all spending plans had to be updated in 30 days. That meant that participants had to pay their IFs to make that change so that 1% change took a lot of time to make those updates. Many aspects were not conscientious, and they should have been addressed a while back.

Jordan asked why all IFs weren't doing it and how they came up with the 1%. It reminded him of the CNF fees that are charged in Las Vegas without informing people that it was there. Lori stated she met with the owner of GTI, and they had five years of losses that still were not covered by the 1%. More people were supposed to be in the program, and they were not to not go under; they made that increase. She stated that when it went into effect was bad, and holding meetings after it was implemented was a problem. Jordan stated it was a problem in the field, so other FMSs should do that, too.

Kristianna Moralls stated a 2.19% was also included in Other Fees. Both the 1% and 2.19% were administrative costs, which are meant to be covered by the Regional Center. The wrong people are being asked to pay for it. Employer burdens should be addressed in taxes, sick days, etc. If any other vendor did this, the contracts would be stopped. She stated Disability Voices United was in talks with the Regional Center.

Jordan stated that FMSs have to put up the money first and then get paid back. He does not understand why people would want to go into a field where they will lose on the front in and only make a bit more on the back end. This may not be sustainable, and they may run out of FMSs. Working with disabled people now comes at a price.

Lori asked Kristianna what they could do to impact the change. Kristianna stated that writing letters and adding pressure was important, but the Regional Center was talking with DDS and GTI.

VI. Committee-Centered Plan

A. Update the Committee-Centered Plan – Lori Walker

Lori presented the latest version of the Committee-Centered Plan, which had 7 Goals. At the last meeting, this was reviewed, but assignments were not made. She read the goals as presented. The meeting in December was recommended to focus on the Committee-Centered Plan and create assignments for everyone to commit to.

Jordan stated he committed to helping with the website.

Alex stated he would be happy to attend a December meeting and help where it was needed.

Jon noted that the VAC was not having a meeting so that they could take their meeting slot.

Action Item: Richard will host the SDLAC Committee meeting on December 7, 2023, via Zoom.

During this meeting, every person will be asked to commit to some of the goals established in the Committee-Centered Plan. The Committee-Centered Goals document will be used as the document to work from.

Jordan asked how involved the committee members would be, for example, with the website. Richard stated when establishing the subcommittees, it was kept in mind that the staff is very busy with a lot of problems, especially with the labor shortage. An agreement was made so that not all subcommittees would be in contact with staff but that the results from the subcommittees would be shared with the staff via himself or Lori. This was especially important as the shift of the Executive Director was upcoming. The members will need to think about what they are willing to do and how much time they are willing to put into it.

Lori noted that the Regional Center staff now only meets with SDLAC because the IF meetings are now held. Richard stated that the Board liaison was removed and now SDLAC was to report at the CAC meetings, but they were not allowed to talk at those events.

Richard shared that DDS has begun discussions to standardize SDP practices. It might be a multi-year process, and he hopes to establish this committee as a part of those changes. In August 2024, new leadership will come in, and a succession plan will be needed to make that transition.

VII. Implementation Updates

A. NLACRC Update – Robin Monroe

The NLACRC Orientation Update was reviewed a presented in the packet
As of November 1st

Participants have completed Orientation: 699

Total number of budgets that are certified: 334

Total number of budgets that are in the certification process: 12

Total number of spending plans that are approved: 265

Total number of spending plans in progress: 67

Total number of PCPs completed: 293 (no increase)

Total number of participants that did not continue after receiving the budget: 2

Total number of participants that have opted out of SDP after enrolling: 2

Total number of Inter-Regional Center Transfers (out): 3

Total number of participants that have fully transitioned into SDP with approved spending plans and active SDP IPPs: 265 (5 transitions this month)

Robin stated that last month, they were slow in bringing in new cases, but so far this month, they have brought in 15 cases. The FMS model had 59 sole employers, 29 fiscal agents, and 177 co-employers.

Robin presented the RFPs for SDP Participation Support Funding IF Training through Claudia Cares had \$5,880 remaining. Joint Training through Disability Voices Unites had \$ 31,950 remaining. Coaching through Claudia Consulting had \$2,533 remaining, and The Legacy Center had \$405 remaining. The Resource Fair with Disability Voices United had gone well, and there was only \$50 remaining. The Translation/Interpreting Services through Disability Voices United had \$3,431 remaining.

Jordan asked how they could raise more money for the Resource Fairs since there was only \$50 left. Robin stated that was what was left for 2023, but more money would come in for the new year.

Jordan asked why no one in SDP with approved spending budgets comes to the SDLAC meetings. Robin stated she did not have the data on that, but the committee could prepare a survey to find out why the participants were not attending the meeting. Lori stated this conversation will be continued during the December 7th meeting.

Lori asked if there was an RFP meeting in December. Robin stated there was no meeting in December.

SDP Orientation is available:

1. Through State Council <https://scdd.ca.gov/sdp-orientation/>
2. Live through NLACRC on the 1st Monday of the month in English and the 3rd Monday of the month in Spanish (unless there is a holiday, the day may change)
3. Virtually available at any time (24/7) through the NLACRC website

Self-Determination Orientation

Next Orientation meetings:

Friday, October 20, 2023 (Chinese) at 3 pm

Tuesday, October 24, 2023 (English) at 9 am

Thursday, October 26, 2023 (ASL/Spanish/English)

- B. RFP Work Spending Update
No update at this time.

- C. SCDD Update - Lia Cervantes-Lerma
No update at this time.

- D. SDLAC Committee Membership Update - Lori Walker

The new members were added to the contact list, and several new members may be added in the coming months.

VIII. SDP Challenges and Successes

Jon stated he was taken aback when Ruth announced her retirement, as she had done a lot for the organization. He thanked the committee for their work and hoped they could continue to do well moving forward.

Richard Dier asked if NLACRC had a Deputy Director. Jon stated they did not. Richard stated they need to pay attention to how the Regional Center responds. He requested that the committee attend the November 30 meeting to discuss this topic.

IX. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Lori stated that on December 7, they will discuss the Committee-Centered Plan in detail.

X. Adjournment

Lori Walker, Committee Chair, adjourned the meeting at 8:28 pm.

Submitted by:
Minutes Services

