

**NOTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST,**  
**AND**  
**RE-SUBMISSION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST RESOLUTION PLAN**

MELISSA SAGE - SERVICE COORDINATOR  
NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL CENTER

**I. Law Governing Conflicts of Interest**

The prohibition against Regional Center employee conflicts of interest has its origin in section 4626 of the Welfare & Institutions Code. Subsection (d) of said section 4626 provides: "The department shall ensure that no regional center employee or board member has a conflict of interest with an entity that receives regional center funding"

That general prohibition is explained in more detail in Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations, section 54526 "Positions Creating Conflicts of Interests for Employees, Contractors, Agents and Consultants," which provides in pertinent part:

- (a) A conflict of interest exists when a Regional Center employee with decision or policy making authority ... or family member of such person is any of the following for a business entity, entity, or provider as defined in these regulations:
- (1) a governing board member
  - (2) a board committee member
  - (3) a director
  - (4) an officer
  - (5) an owner
  - (6) a partner
  - (7) a shareholder
  - (8) a trustee
  - (9) an employee
  - (10) an agent
  - (11) a contractor
  - (12) a consultant
  - (13) holds any position of management
  - (14) has decision or policy making authority. (Emphasis added.)

Section 54505 states that: "Business Entity, Entity or Provider" means any individual or business venture from whom or from which the regional center purchases, obtains or secures goods or services to conduct its operations. These entities or providers include, but are not limited to, residential facilities "

Further, Section 54533 states:

- (a) When a present or potential conflict of interest is identified for a regional center board member, executive director, employee,

contractor, agent, or consultant, the present or potential conflict shall be either eliminated or mitigated and managed through a Conflict Resolution Plan, or the individual shall resign his or her position with the regional center or regional center governing board.

## **II. Potential Conflict of Ms. Sage**

Melissa Sage is a Service Coordinator at North Los Angeles County Regional Center (hereinafter "NLACRC" or "the Regional Center") currently in an Adult Age Unit in the Santa Clarita Valley office. NLACRC Executive Director Angela Pao-Johnson confirms that Ms. Sage is a productive and valued employee. Attached as **Exhibit A** is Ms. Sage's completed Conflict of Interest Reporting Statement. As part of the submitted Conflict Resolution Plan, she will remain in her Adult Age position.

Ms. Sage's sister, Marguerite Casteen, has a potential financial interest in Regional Center operations by virtue of her role as a respite provider for Wood Quality Care, an NLACRC In-Home Respite Services provider in the Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita Valley and San Fernando Valley areas.

This document constitutes a submission of the disclosure of this conflict, a plan of action to eliminate any adverse consequences from this relationship, and a request for waiver of the conflict from DDS.

As set forth below, the plan to mitigate this conflict is for Ms. Sage to continue to remain in the Adult Age division in Santa Clarita where she currently works, since she currently has no consumers on her caseload that use Wood Quality Care. Also, she does not interact with her sister, who works for Wood Quality Care as a respite provider.

## **III. Facts**

The submitted plan of action proposed herein is designed to eliminate any adverse consequences from the conflict. To better understand how the plan will eliminate any adverse consequences, this request will first provide the facts regarding Ms. Sage's duties and responsibilities and any possible interaction with Wood Quality Care, where her sister is a respite worker.

### **A. Ms. Sage's Position and Duties**

As a Service Coordinator, Ms. Sage performs case management for NLACRC's Adult Aged consumers. In this role, she works with numerous vendors offering a variety of services, including behavioral, respite, social skills, and adaptive skill- training. These vendors are funded at least in part by the Regional Center. Her responsibilities

include assisting her assigned consumers in securing services and supports. A copy of her job description is attached as **Exhibit B**.

Ms. Sage's primary duties are as follows:

1. Develops, coordinates and facilitates activities for the Adult Age Unit which results in an increased awareness of the services available and rendered to people with developmental disabilities.
2. Performs various functions such as initiates and responds to consumer, family, service provider, and outside agency communications on topics including service eligibility, regional center service standards, regional center methods, generic agency programs and methods as well as problem resolution. Provides information through a variety of methods. Works collaboratively with consumers, families, others to develop program plans, monitors program results.
3. Provides advocacy services and trains consumers and families in advocacy issues. Schedules and attends interdisciplinary meetings with individuals served, family members, service providers, advocates, etc.
4. Maintains required case records and funding and billing records. Responsible for documentation, completing forms and producing reports.

Under the suggested Plan of Action, Ms. Sage will remain in the Adult unit and accordingly have no role or involvement whatsoever with any matter that might conceivably impact Wood Quality Care or her sister's work as a respite provider.

**B. Ms. Sage's Sister's Role at Wood Quality Care**

Ms. Sage's sister, Marguerite Casteen, is a respite worker for Wood Quality Care. In this capacity, she only provides respite services for her brothers who reside in the San Fernando Valley. She provides no additional respite services.

Wood Quality Care's purpose is to provide families with In-Home Respite Services. Wood Quality Care serves the Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita Valley and San Fernando Valley areas. As a vendor of NLACRC, it is currently authorized to provide such services.

**IV. Submission of Conflict Resolution Plan**

The Regional Center and its Executive Director, Angela Pao-Johnson, have concluded that Ms. Sage provides great value to the consumers of NLACRC. After consideration of the totality of the circumstances and a careful review of the facts, the Executive Director believes it is in the best interests of the Regional Center to submit the Conflict Resolution Plan to eliminate any adverse consequences from this relationship and seek approval of this plan by DDS.

Initially, the first step in the Conflict Resolution Plan is to allow Ms. Sage to continue to remain in the Adult Age position and she will have no business interaction with her sister, who provides respite services for her brothers. This will eliminate any instance in which Ms. Sage would have to interact with her sister regarding her sister's services or other available services.

The second part of the plan is to insulate Ms. Sage from any involvement whatsoever with any interaction or dealing with Wood Quality Care. She currently does not perform any duties that potentially relate to Wood Quality Care. Ms. Sage manages an entire caseload of Adult Age consumers and works with numerous vendors on a variety of services, none of whom use this vendor.

Additionally, Ms. Sage role as well as the role of other Consumer Services Coordinators as it relates to respite vendors is solely an administrative function in which a list of vendors who provide respite services is given to the family and consumer, it is then their responsibility for selecting a vendor that can best fit their needs. Ms. Sage does not offer any recommendations or opinions in the selection of respite vendors and will continue in this practice.

Further, as the Conflict Resolution Plan details below, when any of the consumers in her caseload desire, require or uses the services Wood Quality Care provides, Ms. Sage will agree to immediately notify her supervisor, Marlene Pinotti-Stutts, who will then reassign the case to another Consumer Services Coordinator.

The Regional Center's and Ms. Sage's submission of her plan of action for resolution of this potential conflict of interest is as follows:

1. Ms. Sage will remain in NLACRC's Adult Age Program in the Santa Clarita Valley Office and ensure that there is no interaction with her sister at Wood Quality Care in a business setting.
2. Ms. Sage will, in every conceivable manner, continue to avoid interacting with Wood Quality Care or those who do interact with Wood Quality Care on any matter regarding Wood Quality Care's business matters.
3. Ms. Sage will not participate in the consideration, preparation, review, presentation, formulation or approval of any report, plan, opinion, recommendation or action regarding Wood Quality Care.
4. Ms. Sage will not participate in referrals or placement to this vendor. For any consumer placed with Wood Quality Care, she will not participate in any internal review of such consumer's Individual Program Plan under Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 4646.4, but rather, such tasks will be delegated to another Regional Center employee.
5. Ms. Sage will not review or participate in any discussions, recommendations, or decisions about Purchase of Service authorizations for this vendor.

6. Ms. Sage will not review or in any way participate in the preparation, consideration, or any follow-up related to Special Incident Reports (“SIRs”) from or about this vendor.

7. Ms. Sage will not create, review, or in any way participate in, any corrective action plans for this vendor.

8. Ms. Sage will not participate in any discussions, recommendations, action, or resolution of any complaints pertaining to this vendor.

9. Ms. Sage will take no part in vendor appeals, or fair hearings involving Wood Quality Care.

10. Ms. Sage will not access vendor files to Wood Quality Care either in their electronic or hard copy form.

11. Ms. Sage shall not participate in developing any Purchase of Service (“POS”) policies that might apply to Wood Quality Care. Instead, these tasks will become the responsibility of her supervisor.

12. Ms. Sage will not be involved in the negotiation, discussion, obligation or commitment of NLACRC to a course of action involving Wood Quality Care.

13. The NLACRC management staff will be informed about this Plan of Action, and they will be informed of the need to ensure that Ms. Sage is not involved whatsoever in any action or business whatsoever involving or affecting Wood Quality Care.

14. NLACRC will communicate to Ms. Sage’s coworkers as appropriate to inform them of the details of this Plan of Action and the need to ensure that Ms. Sage plays no role whatsoever in any action involving or affecting Wood Quality Care.

15. These restrictions only apply to Wood Quality Care. The bulk of her duties regarding other vendors will remain unchanged, unless work for another vendor would in any way impact Wood Quality Care. This amounts to a reassignment of a small portion of her duties and will not reduce the value and productivity that Ms. Sage provides to NLACRC.

16. NLACRC has provided information to its Board of Directors regarding this waiver.

17. Further, Ms. Sage will continue to be a vital, effective part of the NLACRC team after the elimination of all her duties and any possible role regarding Wood Quality Care. As noted above, her duties will still be considerable and substantial regarding the consumers she provides services for, and with regard to the vendors that she interacts with who are unrelated to Wood Quality Care.

18. If one of Ms. Sage’s consumers needs referral to the type of services Wood Quality Care provides, she will not make any recommendation. If there is any additional information required by the consumer and family, NLACRC will require her supervisor, Marlene Pinotti-Stutts, to take on that task and describe the options available to the consumer and family.

19. Finally, NLACRC will also ensure that Wood Quality Care as appropriate is informed of this Plan to ensure that there is no contact between Ms. Sage and either her sister, Marguerite Casteen or Wood Quality Care on business matters.

**V. Request Approval of Conflict Resolution Plan**

For the reasons provided above, and in accordance with the Conflict Resolution Plan set forth above, North Los Angeles County Regional Center hereby requests that DDS approve the Conflict Resolution Plan in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

By:   
Melissa Sage (Nov 10, 2025 12:00:17 PST)  
Melissa Sage, Service Coordinator

Date: 11/10/25

By:   
Marlene Stutts Pinotti (Nov 10, 2025 12:28:25 PST)  
Marlene Stutts-Pinotti, Consumer Services Supervisor

Date: 11/10/25

By:   
Angela Pao-Johnson (Nov 10, 2025 12:21:27 PST)  
Angela Pao-Johnson, Executive Director, NLACRC

Date: 11/10/25

Reset Form
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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST REPORTING STATEMENT DS 6016 (Rev. 08/2013)

The duties and responsibilities of your position with the regional center require you to file this Conflict of Interest Reporting Statement. The purpose of this statement is to assist you, the regional center and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to identify any relationships, positions or circumstances involving you which may create a conflict of interest between your regional center duties and obligations, and any other financial interests and/or relationships that you may have. In order to be comprehensive, this reporting statement requires you to provide information with respect to your financial interests.

A “conflict of interest” generally exists if you have one or more personal, business, or financial interests, or relationships that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question your impartiality with respect to your regional center duties. The specific circumstances and relationships which create a conflict of interest are set forth in the California Code of Regulations, title 17, sections 54500 through 54530. You should review these provisions to understand the specific financial interests and relationships that can create a conflict of interest.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge. If you find a question requires further explanation and/or there is not enough space to thoroughly answer the question, please attach as many additional sheets as necessary, and refer to the question number next to your answer. If the regional center identifies a conflict involving you, it will be required to prepare a conflict resolution plan. Some relevant definitions have been provided in the footnotes to assist you in responding to this statement.

You are required to file this Reporting Statement within 30 days of beginning your employment with the regional center or from the date that you are appointed to the regional center board or advisory committee board. You are then required to file an annual Reporting Statement by August 1st of every year while you remain employed with the regional center or while you are a member of the regional center board or advisory committee board. You must also file a Reporting Statement within 30 days of any change in your status that could result in a conflict of interest. Circumstances that can constitute a change in your status that can require you to file an updated Reporting Statement are described below in footnote one.

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### A. INFORMATION OF REPORTING INDIVIDUAL

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Name: Melissa Sage Regional Center: NLACRC

**Regional Center Position/Title:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Governing Board Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Director
<input type="checkbox"/> Vendor Advisory Committee sitting on Board	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employee
<input type="checkbox"/> Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Agent	<input type="checkbox"/> Consultant

**Reporting Status:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annual	<input type="checkbox"/> New Appointment (date): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Change of Status <sup>1</sup>	

If a change in status, date and circumstance of change in status:

1. Please list your job title and describe your job duties at the regional center.

Consumer Service Coordinator: Plan, coordinate, and monitor services for person served.

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<sup>1</sup> Change of status includes a previously unreported activity that should have been reported, change in the circumstance of a previously reported activity, change in financial interest, familial relationship, legal commitment, change in regional center position or duties, change in regional center, or change to outside position or duties. See California Code of Regulations, title 17, sections 54531(d) and 54532(d).

<input type="checkbox"/>	Governing Board Member
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vendor Advisory on Board
<input type="checkbox"/>	Executive Director
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Employee/Other

2. Do you or a family member<sup>2</sup> work for any entity or organization that is a regional center provider or contractor?  
 yes  no -- If yes, provide the name of the entity or organization and describe what services it provides for the regional center or regional center consumers. If the provider or contractor is a state or local governmental entity, provide the specific name of the state or local governmental entity and describe your job duties at the state or local governmental entity.

Wood Quality Care, an agency which provides respite care.

3. Do you or a family member own or hold a position<sup>3</sup> in an entity or organization that is a regional center provider or contractor?  yes  no -- If yes, provide the name of the entity or organization, describe what services it provides for the regional center or regional center consumers, and describe your or your family member's financial interest.

4. Are you a regional center advisory committee board member?  yes  no -- If yes, are you a member of the governing board or owner or employee of an entity or organization that provides services to the regional center or regional center consumers?  yes  no -- If yes, provide the name of the entity or organization and describe what services it provides for the regional center or regional center consumers.

5. If you are a regional center advisory committee board member and answered yes to all the questions in Question 4 above, do any of the following apply to you: (a) are you an officer of the regional center board; (b) do you vote on purchasing services from a regional center provider; or (c) do you vote on matters where you might have a financial interest?  yes  no -- If yes, please explain.

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<sup>2</sup> Family member includes your spouse, domestic partner, parents, stepparents, grandparents, siblings, stepsiblings, children, stepchildren, grandchildren, parent-in-laws, brother-in-laws, sister-in-laws, son-in-laws and daughter-in-laws. See California Code of Regulations, title 17, sections 54505(f).

<sup>3</sup> For purposes of this question, hold a position generally means that you or a family member is a director, officer, owner, partner, employee, or shareholder of an entity or organization that is a regional center provider or contractor. For a specific description of positions that create a conflict of interest in a regional center provider or contractor see the California Code of Regulations, title 17, sections 54520 and 54526.

- |  |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Governing Board Member    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vendor Advisory on Board  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Director        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employee/Other |

6. Do any of the decisions you make when performing your job duties with the regional center have the potential to financially benefit you or a family member<sup>4</sup>? [Note: Governing board members do not have to answer “yes” to this question if the financial benefit would be available to regional center consumers or their families generally].  
 yes  no -- If yes, please explain.

7. Are you responsible for negotiating, making,<sup>5</sup> executing or approving contracts on behalf of the regional center?  yes  no -- If yes, please explain.

8. Do you have a financial interest in any contract<sup>6</sup> with the regional center?  yes  no -- If yes, did you negotiate, make, execute or approve the contract on behalf of the regional center?  yes  no -- If yes, please explain.

9. Do any of your family members have a financial interest in any contract with the regional center?  yes  no  
 If yes, did you negotiate, make, execute or approve the contract on behalf of the regional center?  yes  no  
 If yes, please explain.

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<sup>4</sup> Generally, a decision can financially benefit you or a family member if the decision can either directly or indirectly cause you or a family member to receive a financial gain or avoid a financial loss. For a specific description of the types of decisions that can result in a financial benefit to you or a family member see the California Code of Regulations, title 17, sections 54522 and 54527.

<sup>5</sup> California Code of Regulations, title 17, sections 54523(b)(2) and 54528(b)(2) describes the types of conduct which constitute involvement in the making of a contract.

<sup>6</sup> For purposes of questions 8 and 9, a financial interest in a contract generally means any direct or indirect interest in a contract that can cause you or a family member to receive any sort of financial gain or avoid any sort of financial loss irrespective of the dollar amount. California Code of Regulations, title 17, sections 54523 and 54528 define when financial interests in a contract will occur.

<input type="checkbox"/> Governing Board Member
<input type="checkbox"/> Vendor Advisory on Board
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Director
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employee/Other

10. Do you evaluate employment applications or contract bids that are submitted by your family member(s)?  
 yes  no -- If yes, please explain.

11. Your job duties require you to act in the best interests of the regional center and regional center consumers. Do you have any circumstances or other financial interests not already discussed above that would prevent you from acting in the best interests of the regional center or its consumers?  yes  no -- If yes, please explain.

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**B. ATTESTATION**

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I Melissa Sage (print name) HEREBY CONFIRM that I have read and understand the regional center’s Conflict of Interest Policy and that my responses to the questions in this Conflict of Interest Reporting Statement are complete, true, and correct to the best of my information and belief. I agree that if I become aware of any information that might indicate that this statement is not accurate or that I have not complied with the regional center’s Conflict of Interest Policy or the applicable conflict of interest laws, I will notify the regional center’s designated individual immediately. I understand that knowingly providing false information on this Conflict of Interest Reporting Statement shall subject me to a civil penalty in an amount up to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 4626.

Signature Melissa Sage Date 11/06/2025

**INTERNAL USE ONLY**

Date this Statement was received by Reviewer:

The reporting individual  does  does not have a  present  potential conflict of interest

Signature of Designated Reviewer

Date Review Completed

  
 Angela Pao-Johnson (Nov 7, 2025 15:13:27 PST)

11/07/25



# North Los Angeles County Regional Center

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## Exhibit B

### **CONSUMER SERVICES COORDINATOR**

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#### **The Organization**

North Los Angeles County Regional Center "NLACRC" is a private, non-profit agency that is contracted with the State of California, Department of Developmental Services, to provide services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. NLACRC is one of the largest regional centers in California and has proudly served the San Fernando Valley, Santa Clarita Valley, and Antelope Valley since 1974. We serve individuals across the lifespan from infants and toddlers, school age children, transition-age youth, to adults and aging adults.

#### **Supervision**

Receives supervision from Consumer Services Supervisors/Managers.

#### **The Position and Job Summary**

Provides information, advocacy, and service arrangement for consumers and families.

- Participation in the development of program plans for individuals; monitoring and evaluating these plans and revising them as necessary.
- Identify and coordinate services for individuals and their families.
- Documentation, completing forms and reports in accordance with regulations and NLACRC policies and procedures.
- Serve as an advocate for individuals served by community agencies.
- Schedule and attend interdisciplinary meetings with individuals served, family members, service providers, advocates, etc.
- Identify barriers to service delivery and implement culturally sensitive strategies that embody empathy, trust, and respect; comfort working in underserved and non-traditional office settings to meet our community needs.
- Rotate officer-of-the-day duties with other Service Coordinators; assisting co-workers with special projects and unique situations; provide case-coverage as needed; and providing emergency on-call services when required.

#### **Employment Standards**

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily.

#### **Education & Experience**

Bachelor's degree in psychology, social work, sociology, or related human services field and two years of related experience. A Master's degree in a related subject may be substituted for experience.



# North Los Angeles County Regional Center

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## Skills and Abilities

Understanding of family systems and appreciation for person-centered planning and thinking; empowering individuals to achieve their goals. Knowledge of intellectual and developmental disabilities, good organizational skills, demonstrated ability to work independently and cooperatively as a part of an interdisciplinary team, excellent verbal and written communication skills, and proficiency with MS Word and MS Outlook.

## Essential Requirements

Service coordination is a community-based position that requires meeting with individuals served and their families in their homes, in the community, or in our office location. Must be comfortable working with a high degree of independence. Frequent telephone, virtual, and out-of-office meetings required. Valid California Driver's License and reliable transportation, or acceptable substitute, required.

## NLACRC Offers an Excellent Benefits Package

We offer employees a variety of health and dental plans:

- Health Insurance - NLACRC pays the full cost of coverage for certain Medical plans for employee only. We also provide a generous contribution to additional plans that the employee may select for employee only or employee and dependents costs.
- Dental Insurance – NLACRC pays the full cost of the Dental DMO Plan for employees and eligible dependents. We also offer a Dental PPO plan with a low employee monthly contribution for employees and eligible dependents
- Pre-Tax Flexible Spending Account for eligible health care expenses
- Pre-Tax Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account for eligible dependent care expenses
- No cost Life, Accidental Death & Disability, Long Term Disability Insurance for employees
- No cost Vision plan for employees and eligible dependents
- Retirement plan - NLACRC is a member of CalPERS which is a defined benefit plan that provides a monthly retirement allowance for eligible employees
- NLACRC offers two (2) deferred compensation plans - 457 and 403(b)
- Participate in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program
- Paid Time Off – Eligible for 3 weeks of accrued vacation in the first year, 8 hours per month sick time, education, wellness, and sabbatical time
- Holidays – NLACRC offers 12 paid holidays throughout the year
- Most positions are offered a hybrid – remote option

Please note that benefit costs are pro-rated for part-time employees.

## Professional Development Opportunities & Growth



# North Los Angeles County Regional Center

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NLACRC values the professional development of staff! Variety of career paths for entry-level management positions for those seeking leadership opportunities in the social services field.

## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

At NLACRC, we value and celebrate diversity! In September 2021, NLACRC launched an initiative to enhance and strengthen our commitment to diversity and belonging.

## **Compensation**

This position is a non - exempt.

NLACRC is an equal opportunity employer. Further, NLARC will consider for employment qualified applicants with criminal histories in a manner consistent with the requirements of the City of Los Angeles' Fair Chance Initiative for Hiring Ordinance.