

**Regional Center of Orange County
Self-Determination Program Local Advisory Committee Meeting
March 24, 2025
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Zoom Meeting**

Present:

April Lopez, Parent/Committee Chair

Beth Martinko, Parent

Crystal Chavez, Regional Center of Orange County (RCOC) Self Determination Program (SDP) Coordinator

Gihong (Collin) Kwon, RCOC SDP Participant Choice Specialist

Evelyn Pinto, RCOC SDP Participant Choice Specialist

Hannah Pickett, Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA)

Jennifer Montanez, RCOC Director of Case Management

Kaitlynn Truong, Comfort Connection Family Resource Center

Karen Pagano, Parent

Renu Moon, Parent

Scarlett Von Thenen, Orange County Office on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)

Santos Cline, RCOC Self Advocate

Tina Blabagno, RCOC SDP Participant Choice Specialist

Tina Stang, Parent

1. Welcome and Introductions

Dr. April Lopez, committee member, called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. Dr. Lopez welcomed all attendees of the Self-Determination Program Local Volunteer Advisory Committee (SDP LVAC) Meeting. Committee members introduced themselves.

2. Approval of February 24, 2025 Meeting Summary

The committee reviewed the minutes from the February 24, 2025 meeting. Ms. Kaitlynn Truong made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from February 24, 2025. Ms. Renu Moon seconded the motion. All committee members voted in favor of approving the minutes except for Dr. Lopez who abstained due to not attending.

3. DDS Self-Determination Presentation

Ms. Marlene Morales and Ms. Anna Keller from Department of Developmental Services (DDS) provided a presentation on Self Determination Program on behalf of DDS. Ms. Morales reviewed recent DDS Directives discussing funding for the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 for SDP LVAC, the continuation of weekly payments made to Financial Management Services (FMS) as well as the areas of focus within DDS in relation to the Self Determination Program including the standardization of FMS agencies, Independent Facilitators (IFs), Certified Budgets, and Spending Plans.

Ms. Keller provided the contact information for the community to reach out to SDP DDS Ombudspersons office to assist with addressing any individual participant issues:

Email: SDP.Ombudsperson@dds.ca.gov

Phone: (877) 658-9731

A community member requested a copy of the DDS SDP presentation. Ms. Morales stated she will follow up accordingly regarding this request.

A community member shared some barriers experienced by families including lack of standardizations related to SDP processes. A community member shared their experience related to timelines and indicated that staff training would be helpful.

A community member questioned whether the success of the Self-Determination Program (SDP) is being measured solely by participant numbers despite ongoing significant barriers. The community member then emphasized that these statistics should be used to drive systemic improvements. Ms. Morales acknowledged that the figures are just data at this time.

Ms. Moon noted her concerns regarding timelines during SDP yearly transitions and inquired if a 30 Day Extension is possible. Ms. Crystal Chavez confirmed that extensions can be provided.

Ms. Keller provided a link to the directive explaining the ability to extend the current SDP year:

https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SDP_Continuing_the_Individual_Budget_12302022.pdf

A community member raised a concern related to Federal Funding cuts in relation to the Self Determination Program. Ms. Morales indicated that DDS is not aware of any funding cuts at this time.

Break at 7:25 PM

Meeting resumed at 7:30 PM

4. Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee Priorities

Ms. Beth Martinko noted her ability to participate in the Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SSDAC) as a representative for Regional Center of Orange County SDP LVAC. Ms. Martinko requested to discuss what priorities the SSDAC should focus on based on the needs of the local SDP LVACs. Ms. Scarlett Von Thenen suggested utilizing the responses from the most recent survey created based off of the questions and comments noted at the RCOC SDP LVAC Meeting chat from the February 24th, 2025 meeting.

A community member suggested requesting the standardization of the SDP procedure. Ms. Hannah Pickett echoed the request for standardization of procedures. Ms. Hannah Pickett noted that "standardization" was a recurring concern among the community and emphasized that individuals should not experience drastic differences in SDP implementation across regions.

5. Funding to Support Implementation of the Self-Determination Program for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

a. Review of Request for Proposals for the SDP Resource Fair

Ms. Chavez indicated the receipt of two applications for the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the SDP Resource Fair. The two proposal applications were submitted by Public Partnerships LLC (PPL) and Greenfield & Associates LLC. Ms. Chavez shared that both applicants will be presenting their proposals.

Ms. Amanda Lighthiser from PPL presented PPL's application for hosting the SDP Resource Fair.

A community member noted that training materials provided in Spanish are needed, as well the fair being provided at a central location.

A community member indicated they are requesting Spanish translators for each presentation.

A community member inquired how PPL will notify families about this upcoming fair. Ms. Lighthiser stated that PPL will be creating marketing materials to be shared in various languages, as well as request support from RCOC/LVAC to share the information.

Ms. Moon requested to confirm if takeaway materials will be provided and inquired why the budget requested is considerably higher than the allocated funds for the RFP. Ms. Lighthiser explained that understanding that the total cost of putting on the SDP Resource Fair will cost more than what the RFP had allocated and that PPL would absorb the cost outside of the \$15,960.

Mr. Bill Greenfield then presented Greenfield & Associates' application for hosting the SDP Resource Fair.

Ms. Von Thenen shared that she likes the idea of roaming interpreters and inquired how many would be available. Mr. Greenfield stated that 2-3 roaming interpreters for each language would be available as well as a minimum of 1 interpreter for each language during individual breakout training sessions. Mr. Greenfield indicated that most of these interpreters are parents of Persons Served who are in SDP.

Ms. Moon asked for clarification on the phrase "depending on the availability of experts." Mr. Greenfield explained that not all panelists for breakout sessions had been confirmed, and he did not want to commit to providing a service that has not been confirmed.

Ms. Martinko motioned to vote on which vendor to select. Ms. Moon seconded the motion. Discussion was held where Ms. Von Thenen requested clarification if this motion was to vote for a specific applicant. Dr. Lopez noted this motion was set in place in order to then make a motion to vote for the particular applicant. All committee members voted in favor.

Ms. Karen Pagano motioned to vote for Greenfield and Associates to host the SDP Resource Fair. Ms. Von Thenen seconded the motion. Ms. Lopez requested to clarify how Greenfield & Associates will ensure staffing is available. Mr. Greenfield indicated that he will be sure to provide the needed staffing once the specific topics have been identified and confirmed. All committee members voted in favor of Greenfield & Associates to be the provider for the SDP Resource Fair, except for Ms. Kaitlynn Truong.

b. Review of Request for Proposals for the SDP Resource Fair Follow-up

Ms. Chavez noted there was one applicant for the RFP for the SDP Resource Fair Follow-Up, which was PPL.

A community member expressed concern about there only being one applicant for this RFP and inquired if more time should be allowed in order for additional applications to be submitted.

Ms. Von Thenen suggested that PPL be granted this RFP as there has been a history of extending the RFP deadline where no additional applications were submitted and too much time had passed from the Resource Fair to be able to successfully complete the follow up. Dr. Lopez motioned to award the RFP of SDP Resource Fair Follow-up to PPL. Ms. Pagano seconded this motion. Dr. Lopez inquired about the additional funds to cover the RFP as the budgeted amount is \$15,000. Ms. Lighthiser explained that it is similar to the previous application as the funds were intended for PPL to absorb any additional cost outside of the budgeted amount. All committee members voted in favor of

PPL to be the provider for the SDP Resource Fair Follow-Up, except for Ms. Martinko and Ms. Pickett.

6. Funding to Support Implementation of the Self-Determination

Due to time constraints this agenda item was not discussed and will be discussed at the next meeting.

7. Program for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

a. Review of Alternative Options for Funding to Support Implementation of the Self-Determination Program

Due to time constraints this agenda item was not discussed and will be discussed at the next meeting.

1. Training on Labor Laws for SDP participants, including Over-Time Rules – Cost Review

Due to time constraints this agenda item was not discussed and will be discussed at the next meeting.

8. RCOC Self-Determination Activities:

a. Self-Determination Statistics

Due to time constraints this agenda item was not discussed and will be discussed at the next meeting.

9. SDP Case Studies

Due to time constraints this agenda item was not discussed and will be discussed at the next meeting.

10. Community Input and Barriers to Completing the SDP Process

Ms. Kim Sinclair from Autism Society of Los Angeles (ASLA) provided an update on her ASLA Training RFP. Ms. Sinclair shared a link for ASLA for the PCP training in relation to helping develop IFs. Ms. Sinclair indicated that the application period will close on Thursday, March 27th 2025. Ms. Sinclair shared that at this time 57 members have applied and applicants will be notified by April 11th, 2025. Ms. Sinclair shared that the Spanish training will be held on April 26th, 2025 and the English/Vietnamese training will be held on April 28th, 2025.

11. Agenda Items and Date of the Next Meeting

Due to time constraints this agenda item was not discussed and will be discussed at the next meeting.

Ms. Lopez requested for potential meeting dates be e-mailed to committee members in order to schedule the next SDP LVAC meeting.

12. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM