

Regional Center of Orange County
Self-Determination Program Local Advisory Committee Meeting
November 18, 2024
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Virtual Public Meeting

Present

April Lopez, Parent/Committee Chair

Beth Martinko, Parent

Crystal Chavez, RCOC SDP Coordinator

Evelyn Pinto, RCOC Participant Choice Specialist

Hannah Pickett, Disability Rights Clients Rights Advocate

Gihong (Collin) Kwon, RCOC Participant Choice Specialist

Karen Pagano, Parent

Jennifer Montanez, Director of Case Management

Kaitlynn Truong, Comfort Connection Family Resource Center

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

Tina Blabagno, RCOC Participant Choice Specialist

Tina Stang, Parent

I. Welcome and Introductions

Dr. April Lopez, committee member, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Lopez welcomed all attendees of the Self-Determination Program Local Advisory Committee (SDPLAC) Meeting.

II. Approval of October 28, 2024 Meeting Summary

The committee reviewed the minutes from the October 28, 2024 meeting. Ms. Beth Martinko made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 28, 2024. Ms. Kaitlynn Truong seconded the motion. Committee members voted in favor of approving the minutes.

III. Community Input and Barriers to Completing the SDP Process

To allow enough time for community input, Ms. Lopez asked to discuss this agenda item first.

A member of the community shared her concerns and frustrations with the process of updating the Spending Plan. She shared that it took three months for the funds to be updated in the service codes. She noted there is too much back-and-forth of questions on the spending plan from the review committee, which is inefficient and delays the process. She asked if the Service Coordinators are aware of what is needed on the Spending Plan and what questions to ask.

An Independent Facilitator noted that she is waiting for a long time to get an Individual Budget after a meeting with the Service Coordinator. She also noted that it is taking a long time for the Spending Plan to be re-reviewed after a mistake has been identified.

A member of the community who is the fourth year of program shared the same sentiments. She noted these delays have only recently started. She shared that she turned in her Spending Plan and Individual Budget with ample time, yet there were still delays. She spoke in support of RCOC providing timelines and expectations for review of Spending Plans and Individual Budgets so families can plan for how much time they need for changes and to identify roadblocks and bottlenecks in the process.

An Independent Facilitator said she would like clarity from Service Coordinators, Area Supervisors, and Resource Group on the process. She noted some Service Coordinators are able to respond within 24 hours while other Service Coordinators may take up to three months.

A member of the community shared that their Year 2 service period started on November 1, 2024. She said that her Financial Management Service (FMS) changed the FMS model in the middle of year and there were delays with authorization of the Purchase of Service. During this time, her staff were told by the FMS agency that they are not able to work. She said that the uncertainty of not being able to work and getting paid was very stressful for her and her staff

A member of the community shared that they have a good Service Coordinator but it appears her Service Coordinator is powerless in the process. She noted that as the program has grown, there is not enough support or accounting staff at RCOC to review Spending Plans and to authorize the Purchase of Service in a timely manner. She noted a need for enough staff support and set timelines for responses. She shared that when an authorization is not in place, there is insecurity for her and her staff on whether the staff will get paid on time and uncertainty if the staff will continue working with the participant.

Ms. Lopez asked to add to the agenda for the next meeting - RCOC process for Individual Budget and Spending Plan Review. She suggested a flow chart along with timelines.

Ms. Beth Martinko made a motion for these community concerns to be shared with RCOC senior management. Ms Hannah Pickett seconded the motion. Ms. Jennifer Montanez noted she has been taking notes from the discussion and shared that the agency reviews SDP information often. RCOC has hired a third Participant Choice Specialist to work on SDP. She will share community concerns with the RCOC accounting team. Committee members voted in favor of the motion.

Members of the community provided comments in the Zoom Chat. Some of the concerns noted include: the process is confusing and stressful and there is little education on process, issues with authorization completed on time, delays causes SDP services to stop, request to look into streamlining the process, and need for more FMS agencies such as PPL.

An Independent Facilitator suggested reaching out to other regional centers to learn about their processes.

III. Funding to Support Implementation of the Self-Determination Program for Fiscal Year 2022-2023

- a. **Review submitted RFP for PCP Training to develop more Independent Facilitators (IF) - IF training**
<https://www.rcocdd.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf/rfp/04.29.2024PCPTrainingforIF.pdf>

The committee continued the review of applications submitted for the RFP for PCP Training to develop more Independent Facilitators (IF) - IF training

A member of community asked if the RFP is for PCP training or general IF training. Ms. Von Thenen confirmed this RFP was for PCP training. She noted that some of the applicants provide PCP and general IF training.

Ms. Von Thenen made a motion to award RFP to Autism Society Los Angeles (ASLA) as they are able to provide training in the languages requested in the RFP. Ms. Beth Martinko seconded motion. During the discussion, Ms. Truong asked for clarification if the motion is for the entire RFP which includes English, Spanish, and Vietnamese or just the English and Spanish option. Ms. Kim Sinclair of ASLA noted that the committee would need to decide if they would like to choose the RFP that is inclusive of translation of materials into Vietnamese or if they do not want to include that in the Vietnamese translation.

Ms. Von Thenen confirmed her motion is to award the entire RFP for \$65,000 which includes all three language. Ms. Beth Martinko seconded the motion. All committee members voted in favor of awarding RFP to ASLA.

- b. **Review submitted RFP submissions for SDP Resource Fair Follow-Up**
<https://www.rcocdd.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf/rfp/RFP-FollowuptoResourceFair.pdf>

Ms. Beth Martinko provided a summary on the RFP. This RFP is to provide individualized follow-up to all Resource Fair attendees to help them with the transition into SDP.

The first proposal submitted was from Karate for All. Ms. Scarlett Von Thenen noted this application does not align with the RFP and refers to the RCOC Resource Fair at the Santa Ana Zoo and not the SDP Resource Fair.

A member of the community noted that the SDP Resource Fair was one year ago and it is no longer useful to follow-up with attendees of this Resource Fair. She suggested to plan another Resource Fair.

The second application is from Greenfield and Associates. Mr. Bill Greenfield shared that he attended the resource fair and said it was an excellent resource fair. He suggests creating a “Quick Start” and flow chart with the process to get into SDP, readiness tools, and links for resources. He would like to create a small team to follow-up with all attendees. He will also identify persons served by the regional center, people who identify as BIPOC, and people who speak English, Spanish, and Vietnamese to be on this team. This team will reach out to attendees and find out where people are in the process and if they are interested in moving forward. After the project, he will make a presentation to the committee.

Ms. Martinko made a motion to move forward with the application submitted by Greenfield and Associates. Ms. Lopez seconded the motion. The motion did not pass due to majority.

Ms. Truong suggested a new RFP which includes another Resource Fair and a follow-up component. She noted that people who attended the Resource Fair a year ago will not remember what happened at that time. Ms. Truong made a motion to rewrite the RFP to focus on a Resource Fair and then to include Resource Fair follow-up. Ms. Martinko seconded it. All committee members voted in favor. The motion passes. Ms. Martinko noted she can revise the RFP for review by the committee.

c. Review of Alternative Options for Funding to Support Implementation of the Self-Determination Program – Coaching for Individuals

There was no discussion regarding this agenda item.

IV. Review DDS Directive regarding non-employer burden

<https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Self-Determination-Program-Employer-Burden-and-Other-Employment-Related-Costs.pdf>

Ms. Crystal Chavez provided an overview of the DDS directive which provides guidance regarding allowable employer burden costs and employment-related costs. The directive notes that the SDP participant’s spending plan shall only cover the costs of the services and supports

listed in their spending plan, including the employer burden and employment-related costs identified in this directive. No other costs shall be included in an SDP participant's spending plan. The employer burden rates and costs are standardized and available on DDS website upon submission by FMS and review by the regional centers and DDS.

V. RCOC Self-Determination Activities. Current listing of all the Regional Center's Self-Determination Participation Status

a. Current listing of all the Regional Center's Self-Determination Participation Status

There are currently 374 people actively receiving services through SDP. In regards to the demographics of the 374 people active in SDP, the ethnic/race breakdown is: Asian (98), Black/African-American (15), Hispanic (67), Native-American (3), Other or Unknown (54), and White (139). Of the 374 people who are active in SDP, 130 people are from the West Area Office while 244 are from the Central Area Office.

VI. Community Input and Barriers to Completing the SDP Process

a. SDP Case studies

This agenda item was discussed at the beginning of the meeting.

VII. Agenda Items and Date of the Next Meeting

A member of the community asked if there will be a meeting in December so that that the concerns brought up by the community can be discussed and addressed. Ms. Lopez noted it may be difficult to schedule with the upcoming holidays. She asked Crystal to send a poll in regards to next meeting date.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31pm.