

**RCDSC Board of Directors
MEETING MINUTES**

#1 FY: 2024-2025

Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at 6:00pm

BY ZOOM:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84546142191?pwd=TZJSAlYlZDSCXw641ObMRxnuMNjU.1>

Meeting ID: 845 4614 2191

Passcode: 888824

Dial by phone: 1 669 900 6833

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Mike Sawyer (President), Will Lewis (Vice President), Diane Larson (Treasurer), Tamera Leighton (Secretary), Robert Taylor (Client Liaison), Dave Matson, Haley French, Debra Zeno, Kendra Suenram

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Allison Hillix, Teresa Schnacker, Chris Nifong

FACILITATORS PRESENT: Mark Konkler (WL), Brenda Harrington (RT)

RCRC STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Kimberly Smalley (Executive Director), Amy Medina (Director of Administration), Heather Odle (Director of Community Services), Jonathan Padilla (Director of Client Services), Nichole Haydon (Director of Human Resources), Sedona Bowser (Executive Assistant)

OTHERS PRESENT: Jaclyn Balanay (Primary Liaison, DDS Office of Community Operations), Julie Eby-McKenzie (SCDD Northern California Regional Office Manager), Dolores Delgado (Spanish Translator), Mariah Weber, Pamela Jensen, Sam, Adriana Diaz (24 Hr Home Care), Marina Bleich, Claudia Gomez, Trajectory, Anna

AGENDA:

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call/Introductions:**
 - a. Meeting was called to order by Board President M. Sawyer at 6:05pm
 - b. S. Bowser conducted roll call and a quorum was present.
 - c. M. Sawyer read the Points of Order.
2. **Select Timekeeper/ Sharing the Vision:**
 - a. Tamera agreed to be Timekeeper.
 - b. K. Suenram shared the section of the Vision Statement that reads: *"We also subscribe to a vision which represents the highest commitment to excellence. We envision a commitment to honesty, compassion, trustworthiness, flexibility, responsiveness, accountability, accessibility, creativity and a passion for community service."*
3. **Directors' Oath of Office:** Debra Zeno was sworn in to office.
4. **Approval of Agenda:** M. Sawyer called to approve the agenda and asked if there were any changes. Hearing none, the agenda was approved as presented.

5. **Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 17, 2025 Board Meeting:** M. Sawyer called to approve the meeting minutes and asked if there were any changes or corrections. P. Jensen noted a typo and missing hyphens in the Self-Determination section. Hearing no other changes, the meeting minutes were approved as presented.
6. **Community Comment/Input:** M. Sawyer called for community comment/input:
 - a. **Community Member 1:** Julie Eby-McKenzie, Regional Manager of the north coast office of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) shared that SCDD work is done through grant processes, all posted on their website at <https://scdd.ca.gov/>. She shared that the Supported Decision-Making Technical Assistance Program (SDM-TAP) is an alternative to conservatorships. There are many resources and events available on the SCDD website. Also, in August will be the SCDD regional advisory committee meeting where they will be discussing the impact of the budget reconciliation bill and talking about the state budget and what that means for the developmental disabilities system in California. All are invited to attend. Thirdly, for the 5th year we are hosting a "There Should be a Law" contest where people can submit their ideas of what laws should be made. A few are selected and walked through how to make the law happen. You can go to the website for more information. Email Julie with any questions at julie.eby-mckenzie@scdd.ca.gov.
 - b. **Community Member 2:** W. Lewis, BOD Vice President, shared that he went to the Taboo'D performance and the downtown festival. Dr. Smalley reinforced what W. Lewis said about the Taboo'D performance stating it was fabulous and was met with standing ovations. The month of July has been Disability Pride month since 1990, and this is a time where people with disabilities stand up for themselves, speaking for themselves, and being proud of themselves. Trajectory facilitated the Taboo'D performance and RISE supported it. It is recorded and available to all on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/live/hFF7OrOtEjY?si=p5yzi0dHxk9eZjeV>.
7. **Executive Director's Report:** M. Sawyer called on the Executive Director, Dr. Smalley, who provided the following updates:
 - a. **Regional Center Operations:** As RCRC's client volume continues to grow (approximately 5600 now) we continue to adjust our staffing. RCRC has been exhibiting flexibility and adaptability. We are currently recruiting for an Associate Director of Client Services to primarily work with and support our adult and transition units and work under the Director of Client Services, Jonathan Padilla. We are still trying to hire a psychologist. We recently hired a new Behaviorist/Autism Specialist for the southern offices, Tierra Gilbert, making that three staff with an Autism background. Our Service Coordinator to Client ratio is still lower than most of the state, however our caseload data shows we are off by one in most categories. The state requirements are 1:62 on the waiver and we are 1:69, and 1:66 not on the waiver and we are 1:68. We will be holding a public meeting soon to share our data. The provider directory is now done. Rate Reform is still a priority, and we are working diligently on it. Some families may need to do an addendum to meet the changing rates.
 - b. **Community Concerns:** The May Revise is when the governor looks at the budget from January for potential changes but does not plan ahead for the October budget. For the vendor community, if a vendor negotiated a higher rate than the median rate then they have a hold harmless until June 2026, and in the May Revise that was backed up to February. DDS has been instructed to identify what "cost effective" actually means for Self-Determination, which will likely lead to regular services as well. The Parental Fee Program was eliminated. The way that Self-Determination budgets will change a little bit in the upcoming years. It is fire season, so we are remaining involved and invested in monitoring our clients' and providers' safety. There is a flyer in the packet for the Disability Pride Fest celebration in Eureka on July 19th from 12-5pm and Dr. Smalley encourages people to attend. She

mentioned again about the Taboo'D performance recently held in Eureka and encouraged people to go watch it on YouTube. Dr. Smalley recognizes everyone's concerns about the Medicaid/MediCal changes, admitting it will affect services but how much remains to be seen. Please actively participate in having your voices heard. Some nice things to come out of the May Revise were the number of voices raised, and several of services not cut at this time. R. Taylor asked when the public meeting for Client Ratios will be held. S. Bowser will send out public notice when it is scheduled. He also asked for clarification when we will need to refer to legal representation or management when somebody comes into a client facility wanting information, to which Dr. Smalley stated RCRC will refuse information that does not have client authorization per HIPAA regulations.

8. **Director of Administration:** M. Sawyer called on the Administrative Director, Amy Medina. A. Medina stated that right now, RCRC is still in good standing, and we are just waiting for the October budget. We have a bit of a surplus. All surpluses available are for projects not completed or started yet. In preparation for the times ahead, we are working on implementing additional workflows to help streamline processes within the regional center. We did not pull on our line of credit this year, however, DDS has granted our funding request for \$12 million so we can make sure we pay all of our expenses until we receive our advance next week. A. Medina is still working on identifying the difference in the comparison for what we spent versus what was allocated. It is believed to be due to the Rate Reform changes, but she is still reviewing it. Robert asked what the board is going to do to address the reduction of funds for Self-Determination in the May Revise. K. Smalley corrected that it isn't about Self-Determination but about what "cost effectiveness" means but no reductions have been made, however there is less money in the big pot from the state. He also asked Amy if we will have more days of cash on hand, to which A. Medina said yes, after we get our next allocation. R. Taylor then asked what HAF and WRCF under the Client Benefit Fund means. HAF is the Humboldt Area Foundation (currently used), and WRCF is the Wild Rivers Community Foundation (previously used). Dr. Smalley explained they are two funds that money can be donated into that holds the Client Benefit Fund money which the regional center can issue money for grants. Only the HAF is still being used but both foundations are listed so long as there is information to be reported. W. Lewis asked why both are still being shown, to which A. Medina informed that it is showing the history of fees. T. Leighton added that fees are only being paid once because only one account is still open. A. Medina confirmed the Client Benefit Fund maximum amount per cycle (February and August) for July 2025-June 2026 is \$1,725 with a max \$862.50 per person per cycle. T. Leighton added this amount has doubled from where it started. This is a slow growth account, and the more money there is the more the award amount can be.
9. **New Business:** M. Sawyer called for any new business.
 - a. **Review and Approve Revised "Client Benefit Fund Request Form":** With the revised Client Benefit Fund Policy the application form needed to be updated to reflect the new deadlines, and while doing so the form was updated to include some helpful information and make it an electronic or handwritten form. R. Taylor shared his approval of the changes. D. Larson asked what types of things can be funded, to which M. Sawyer stated that anything that will benefit the client but cannot be purchased through any other means. W. Lewis suggested collecting receipts for purchases. R. Taylor added the receipts should go to the service coordinator. M. Sawyer made a few other suggestions to include adding a line stating that grants may be submitted at any time during the year, and to combine the reason for the request and the benefit to the person on the same line. M. Sawyer called for a board vote to accept the revised form; T. Leighton moved to approve the revised Client Benefit Fund Request Form as amended; D. Larson seconded the motion; S. Bowser conducted a roll call vote; the motion passed.
10. **Standing Committee Reports:** M. Sawyer called on committee chairs for their reports.

- a. **Self-Determination Advocacy Committee:** R. Taylor shared that one new person started SDP in June, and one or two others are expected to start August 1st. There is one new Independent Facilitator (IF) working on being vendored in Humboldt County and three new IFs in Mendocino/Lake counties, two of which are bilingual in Spanish. The SDAC is addressing ways to handle mileage costs for IFs travel costs and one option may be using the LAC funding if the client is Spanish, Native American or of an underserved community. We now have 20 FMS providers and the DDS webpage for RCRC FMSs is up to date. The IPP structure change has impacted SDP so that now all services in the spending plan must be documented and included in the IPP; any additions mid-year will require an update to the IPP so it is recommended that all potential needs be included at the beginning of the IPP year.
 - b. **Self-Determination Testimonies:** There were no presenters in attendance.
11. **ARCA Report:** M. Sawyer reported that ARCA has two parts, ED and BOD delegates. Board delegates started looking at a framework for the boards to use as a guide for better onboarding for new board members to effectively do their jobs. M. Sawyer shared a PowerPoint showing Five Categories for Successful Onboarding and Board Competencies: 1) Mission, strategy and evaluation; 2) Leadership; 3) Legal compliance and ethics; 4) Finance, operations and resource development; 5) Public awareness, engagement, and advocacy. M. Sawyer will be sending out an anonymous questionnaire to the board members so ARCA can work to develop better guidelines for board members. The survey closes July 31st, 2025. The next training academy is scheduled for November 14-15, 2025 in Sacramento and any board members who are interested in attending the training are encouraged to reach out to M. Sawyer for more information.
12. **County Liaison and Connection Reports:** M. Sawyer called on board members from counties. W. Lewis is working with some people to try and get new board members. R. Taylor shared that the Lake Transit system has a new group called Transportation Concepts. To find out more information you can go to <https://laketransit.org/> or <http://transportation-concepts.com/>.
13. **Community Comment/Input:** M. Sawyer called for community Input.
- a. **Community Member 1:** D. Matson asked when then next in-person board meeting in Eureka will be. M. Sawyer shared it will be September 13th.

M. Sawyer called for additional public comment and hearing none (nor raised hands) moved to closing the meeting.

14. **Close the Meeting:** M. Sawyer adjourned the meeting at 7:29pm

Respectfully submitted by:
Sedona Bowser, RCRC Executive Assistant

Draft Minutes reviewed and approved by:
Mike Sawyer, Board of Directors President 07/24/25

Minutes approved by the Board on September 13, 2025