

**RCDSC Board of Directors
MEETING MINUTES**

#2 FY: 2025-2026

Saturday, September 13, 2025

REGULAR SESSION at 9:00 am

TRAINING SESSION following the Board Meeting.

Hybrid Meeting (In-Person or by Zoom)

In Person:

Best Western Plus Bayshore Inn
(Conference Room Above the Pool)
3500 Broadway, Eureka CA
Phone: (707) 268-8005

By Zoom:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84546142191?pwd=TZSJSAlylZDSCXw641ObMRxnuMNjU.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), Debra Zeno, Kendra Suenram, Trixie Galletti (voted in at the meeting)

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Allison Hillix, Dave Matson, Teresa Schnacker, Chris Nifong, Haley French

FACILITATORS PRESENT: Monique Bickham (RT), Mark Konkler (WL), Noble Cole (DZ), Kristi Patterson (TG)

RCRC STAFF PRESENT: Jonathan Padilla (Interim Executive Director), Amy Medina (Director of Administration), Heather Odle (Director of Community Services), Claudia Gomez (Associate Director of Client Services), Dr. Jacinthe Roy (Director of Clinical Services), Nichole Haydon (Director of Human Resources), Sedona Bowser (Executive Assistant)

OTHERS PRESENT: Dolores Delgado (Spanish Translator), Susan Hernandez (RCRC), Taylor Berry (24Hr Home Care), Zoom User, Mike Bern, Patricia Kamlley, iPhone 13, Monica Star

AGENDA:

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call/Introductions:**

- a. Meeting was called to order by Board President M. Sawyer at 9:14 a.m.
- b. S. Bowser conducted roll call, and a quorum was present.

2. **Select Timekeeper/ Sharing the Vision:**

- a. No Timekeeper was selected.
- b. M. Sawyer shared the section of the Vision Statement that reads: "*We envision a system of services and supports that is determined by the individuals served.*" He shared that no matter what we do or how we do it, our primary objective is about the individuals we serve.

3. **Director's Oath of Office:** M. Sawyer led the swearing in of Trixie Galletti.
4. **Approval of Agenda:** M. Sawyer shared that an amended agenda went out to the board yesterday and copies of the amended agenda were provided at the meeting. The agenda items that were added were:
 - a. Directors' Oath of Office: Swearing in Trixie Galletti
 - b. Approve COLA Increases
 - c. Approve Client Benefit Fund Awards

M. Sawyer called for any additional agenda items. Hearing none, the agenda was approved as presented.

5. **Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 9, 2025 Board Meeting:** M. Sawyer called to approve the meeting minutes and asked if there were any changes or corrections. Hearing none, the meeting minutes were approved as presented.
6. **Welcome Interim Executive Director, Jonathan Padilla:** M. Sawyer shared that Dr. Smalley announced her early retirement. The Executive Committee met on August 7th where they acknowledged her retirement as of September 5, 2025. The committee also voted to ask Jonathan Padilla if he would serve as the RCRC Interim Executive Director, to which he has accepted. An AdHoc committee was formed to establish the process of determining the needs of RCRC in the next Executive Director. This board has a strong commitment to doing it right. M. Sawyer welcomed J. Padilla to the role.
7. **Community Comment/Input:** M. Sawyer called for community comment/input:
 - a. **Community Member 1:** W. Lewis congratulated J. Padilla on his new role.
8. **Executive Director's Report:** M. Sawyer called on the Interim Executive Director, J. Padilla, who shared his thanks and gratitude for the honor of this position following Dr. Smalley in supporting our clients. He then provided the following updates:
 - a. **RCRC 2025 Caseload Ratio Summary** – J. Padilla shared a PowerPoint presentation about the comparison of caseloads ratios with RCRC and statewide. He expressed the regional centers' commitment to hiring service coordinators above every other position, which is reflected in our caseloads.
 - i. Overall, the majority of our caseloads are between 50-79 whereas the bulk of the statewide caseloads is between 60-89, reflecting the Directors team's commitment to keeping our caseload ratios lower so we can be more committed to our clients.
 - ii. For clients on the Med Waiver, we are just over 69, which is below the state average, and we obviously want that a bit higher. Our primary barrier is the core staffing formula. The other struggle is the geography of our rural catchment area which makes our coverage difficult to manage.
 - iii. For clients in early childhood, ages 0 to 5, the goal is a caseload of 40 and we are just under the state average coming in at 46. Again, the barrier is funding.
 - iv. For clients with low or no POS the goal is 40 and we are just above the state average at 39.
 - v. For clients with complex needs, the goal is 25 and we were the highest in the state at 60.83. At the time data was taken we were in transition of moving some individuals who were recently placed on a diversion plan with the criminal courts to a complex caseload, which raised our numbers. We are actively

working on improving that process and do not expect it to be an issue in the future.

- vi. For all other clients, the goal is 66 and we were close at 68 but still below the state average. We look forward to working with DDS and the legislature to advance the core staffing formula to better meet the needs of our geographical area.

J. Padilla shared that during the public presentation there was no community input other than DDS and SCDD than acknowledging that every time we hire, we evaluate the budget and funding for new service coordinator positions.

- b. **RCRC 2025 Performance Plan Summary** – J. Padilla reported that Dr. Smalley presented the plan at the public meeting earlier this month. There were only a few suggested additions, one slide regarding the number and percentage of individuals age 16-64, with earned income:
 - i. RCRC will develop a plan to make an effort to recruit additional service providers.
 - ii. RCRC will regularly participate in interagency transition team meetings in smaller communities to help support our clients' access in either competitive integrated employment or some other paid internship programs or activities that will provide employment opportunities for them.
 - iii. In addition, we will add to the development of informational materials "in plain language" to build better access and enable them to understand the information and opportunities that are available.

9. **Director of Community Services:** M. Sawyer called on Community Services Director, Heather Odle who provided the following updates:

- a. **Rate Reform:** RCRC has been working through the state rate reform plan since Jan 2025. There was a request across the state for an extension of the deadline to switch services authorizations and crosswalk programs, but it was denied so we are holding to the deadline of July 31, 2025. We are actively changing them over to new service codes. There are a significant number of clients who will make these changes which will require IPP addendums to be made by the end of the year. About a week ago DDS released a solution for extraordinary travel, and we are working with a few agencies to test-run this solution to identify if it will work, particularly with our Early Start and Specialized Therapeutic providers. She said services should not change for clients, rather the changes are how the providers are paid. An example is that transportation was previously paid by the mile, but now it is paid per trip.
- b. **Service Provider Directory:** The directory is now available for every regional center in the state which identifies contacts, types of services provided, etc. The directory will be used to standardize the vendorization process as of Jan 1, 2026. The next goal is to have a forward-facing service provider directory for everyone to see and be able to log on to that portal and see all the vendors with any given regional center.
- c. **Community Placement Plan/Community Resource Development Plan (CPP/CRDP):** We completed a needs assessment survey with clients, family members, staff and other stakeholders to identify what is needed in our community. From that plan we identified what is needed and what we can do. We submitted our plan to DDS on Friday asking for funding for the following programs (in order of priority).

- i. Dental Desensitization Clinic and Dental Services Expansion: We would like to partner with behaviorists and registered dental hygienists to teach clients about dental care, that it is safe and that it is needed to avoid hospital dentistry. We decided to start with the dental desensitization plan first and then we can expand and find a registered dental hygienics advanced practice (RDHAP) person so someone can drive out in the community doing services. We currently have one RDHAP in Ukiah (Jody Todd) and one in Eureka/Crescent City (Darla Dale). Our next step is to hire a mentor dental hygienist to provide mentorship for about a year before we seek a van purchase. Part of our plan is to go down to CDRC and look at their fairly new dental desensitization clinic and recently purchased van.
 - ii. Training Activities: We are focusing on training our community on how to support individuals with disabilities. Last year we provided some great in-person training focused on our supported living providers. We want to provide online training for our countywide catchment areas. Upon DDS approval, we plan to pay the trainers and offer stipends for those SLS agencies who want to send their staff to a training as well.
 - iii. Housing Navigation and Support Services: We have a housing navigation support agency in Mendocino County but not in Humboldt County. We have three multifamily housing projects in development right now in Humboldt County and will need support. There is a statewide initiative to develop a roommate matching app and we would like to provide a navigator. The navigator would take information about various individuals and try to match people together for a good fit.
 - iv. Mental Health Clinician: A continuation of last year's project, we hope to have a mental health counselor specializing in supporting people with disabilities that will mentor four mentees, one for each county. So far, we have not been about to find a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) or Marriage Family Therapist (MFT) in Lake County.
- d. **Self-Determination:** In July 2025, DDS issued some new directives requiring statewide standardized processes and procedures and timelines related to Self-Determination support. For new people enrolling in the program, their budget is what the most current year of their purchase of service included (SLS, day services, mental health care, etc). The regional center is also required to certify spending plans, making sure that we are actually purchasing what is in the plan, that those purchases match the IPP goals, and that those items are not available through a generic resource or eligible for federal financial assistance. If a client chooses to switch to Self-Determination, they will be able to keep their service coordinators and in addition they will have their Independent Facilitator.
- e. **Person Centered Thinking (PCT):** We offer in-person PCT training every three months. We had one in Humboldt in July and Mendocino is having one in October. We typically have about 20-30 participants, regional center staff, vendors and community members are all welcome. These training courses are held as a group but if individual training is needed a person can contact H. Odle and make a request. R. Taylor requested training be held in Lake County and H. Odle will email Sheila Keys the request.

10. **New Business:** M. Sawyer presented two items for board approval.

a. **Proposed COLA Increases and One-Time Lump Sum for RCRC Employees**

- i. M. Sawyer shared the proposed RCRC COLA increase, which is employee compensation that has no effect on the purchase of service (POS) funds. Money cannot be transferred to or from POS for the COLA. There is a pay system the regional center uses, compensation based on grades and steps. Cost of living shifts those amounts. RCRC is proposing grades 100-400, a 5% increase, and grades 500 and above, a 3% increase. M. Sawyer confirmed with A. Medina that the changes were within the overall budget. In addition, a one-time lump sum payment of 5% to the employees at the end of the fiscal year.

M. Sawyer asked for questions or comments.

D. Zeno asked how the amount is determined. M. Sawyer explained that based on years of service they would move up a step in pay rates and the percentages are based on their current pay rate.

T. Leighton asked who was not eligible. A. Medina said all current employees are eligible for the COLA, and the lump sum is available to all staff employed as of the end of the fiscal year and is based on wages earned up to June 30, 2025.

T. Leighton asked why we didn't have this information in the board packet, and it was just received this morning. A. Medina said we were waiting for the B-2 allocation to come through and that just came last week, and since staff workloads have been particularly hard with the new IPP and Rate Reform we would really like to give them this as a morale boost before the holidays.

T. Leighton moved to approve COLA increase as presented. D. Larson seconded. A roll-call vote was held and the motion passed.

T. Leighton moved to amend her motion to approve the COLA increase and the one-time lump sum payment proposal. D. Larson seconded. All board members agreed this did not change their vote and the motion passed. The board agreed that in the future the vote would be on the item on the agenda and not be broken into multiple votes.

b. **Client Benefit Fund (CBF) Awards**

- i. The timing was previously changed and the second cycle ended August 15th. The CBF committee met and reviewed 10 requests, including one that was a carryover from the previous period, and approved 7 requests for a total of \$1,725.

M. Sawyer called for questions. W. Lewis asked if we were approving layovers. M. Sawyer explained the February cycle had a miscalculation, resulting in a payment deduction from the August cycle.

T Leighton motioned to approve. D. Larson seconded. A roll-call vote was held and the motion passed.

- c. **California Public Records Act (CPRA) Training** – Effective January 1, 2026, the regional center system will come under CPRA requirement, and all board members need to attend a training on it. The next training course is on September 18th in the afternoon. If you cannot make it, they will record one of the sessions so you can always do it that way. As a board member, the impact is that our communication becomes public record. A. Medina is working on some ideas to assist the board with communication options.

11. **Standing Committee Reports:** M. Sawyer called on committee chairs for their reports.

- a. **Self-Determination Advocacy Committee:** R. Taylor shared there is an assembly bill 143 (AB143) section 8 and you can look at it on California Assembly website. DDS has developed statewide processes and procedures and timelines to use Self-Determination supports and the individual budgets have to be the total amount of the most recent available year's purchase of service and authorizations. The regional centers have to certify the spending plans and verify the goods and services satisfy the spending plan criteria. Participants' IPPs also need to identify the desired outcomes in their spending plans for items that cannot be purchased through generic resources, and they have to be eligible for federal financial participation. Person Centered Thinking training will be done once per quarter, with the next one being done next month in Mendocino County.

R. Taylor introduced Monica Star, his new Independent Facilitator (IF) located in Humboldt, who has been working with him in Self-Determination. Monica shared her pleasure with working with R. Taylor and as an IF. R. Taylor added that she helps him with financial management in Self-Determination and keeps him on his toes, and he keeps her on her toes. M. Star also brought some bio sheets to be given to clients who may be looking for an IF. She has been working with clients in Self-Determination for the last few years, but she was recently certified in January. The biggest challenge she sees is the regional center's timeline for getting purchases in place and not causing gaps in services when they make their transitions.

D. Larson asked R. Taylor what clients would be good to recommend to Self-Determination. M. Star responded that people who are verbal but have trouble getting their services where they are as Self-Determination can let them hire their staff directly where they are and then meet their needs in more creative ways. A non-verbal person can also benefit if they have someone close to them that can help support them in the process, or get an IF, because it is like managing a business and they oversee hiring their own staff and need to be active in the hiring process. H. Odle shared that Alex Ostell (Humboldt/Del Norte) or Sheila Keys (Mendocino/Lake) at RCRC could also give a brief orientation on Self-Determination. She also indicated that a client doesn't have to hire staff but can work through their Service Coordinator if they agree to it.

12. **ARCA Report:** M. Sawyer reported that the ARCA Academy is a training program for board members and there will be a training Nov 14-15 in Sacramento. RCRC will pay for board members who would like to attend. R. Taylor, D. Zeno and T. Galletti indicated they would like to attend. Financially it is like going to a board meeting and you will need to provide your transportation. In the communications it references Nov 13th but that is for the ARCA Board. We will look into options for another hotel booking on the 15th because that was not reserved already.

J. Padilla added that ARCA continues to work with DDS about the bilingual stipend and the direct support professional university. Those programs are both reliant on the Learning

Management System (LMS) that is currently contracted with Sacramento State. They anticipate the software system to go live this December. DDS will be providing training on the LMS and will be identifying formats for training within the LMS to prevent having to create entirely new curriculums from scratch. Regarding the PRA, DDS is working with ARCA to identify some software that will help to reduce/eliminate some of the staffing workloads. DDS is continuing to move forward with standardizing the Intake process statewide. They are in the process of holding a number of individual and family focus groups to learn about their experiences to help improve efficiency of the process and make it more family friendly.

13. **County Liaison and Connection Reports:** M. Sawyer called on board members from counties.

- a. **Lake County** – R. Taylor reported it has been a bad year for wildfires, with four consecutive fires, some requiring evacuations. He recommends everyone to get in touch with Ron Lee at RCRC who can help with emergency preparedness. He reminded everyone there are several systems that help keep us informed about what fires are going and ways to be prepared and access resources.
- b. **Del Norte** – T. Leighton added to the evacuation discussion stating that they have had several evacuation notifications and everyone seems to be doing a great job with it. She appreciates the emergency preparedness that the regional center is doing, stating it is really helpful.
- c. K. Suenram stated that she really appreciates the vendors as well as the regional center for reaching out to everyone.

14. **Community Comment/Input:** M. Sawyer called for community Input. No input provided.

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

15. **Close the Meeting:** M. Sawyer adjourned the meeting at 11:00am

Respectfully submitted by:
Sedona Bowser, RCRC Executive Assistant

Draft Minutes reviewed and approved by:
Mike Sawyer, Board of Directors President on October 3, 2025

Minutes approved by the Board on November 12, 2025