

**Junta Directiva de RCDSC
MEETING MINUTES**

#3 FY: 2025-2026

Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at 6:00pm

BY ZOOM:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84546142191?pwd=TZSJSAllylZDSCXw641ObMRxnuMNjul.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), Haley French, Kendra Suenram, Trixie Galletti

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Allison Hillix, Dave Matson, Teresa Schnacker, Chris Nifong, Debra Zeno

FACILITATORS PRESENT: Jayson Alvarez (RT), Mark Konkler (WL), Kristi Patterson (TG)

RCRC STAFF PRESENT: Jonathan Padilla (Interim Executive Director and Director of Client Services), Amy Medina (Director of Administration), Heather Odle (Director of Community Services), Dr. Jacinthe Roy (Director of Clinical Services), Nichole Haydon (Director of Human Resources), Sedona Bowser (Executive Assistant), Morgan Knight (Family Home Agency Manager)

OTHERS PRESENT: Jaclyn Balanay (Primary Liaison, DDS Office of Community Operations), Julie Eby-McKenzie (SCDD Northern California Regional Office Manager), Bradley Risner, Samantha Bond, Matt Melvin, Lety Mendoza, Adriana Diaz (24-Hour Home Care),

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Introductions:

- a. Meeting was called to order by Board President M. Sawyer at 6:07 pm
- b. S. Bowser conducted roll call, and a quorum was present.

2. Select Timekeeper/ Sharing the Vision:

- a. M. Sawyer agreed to be Timekeeper
- b. T. Leighton shared the section of the Vision Statement that reads: "We envision all members of the support community having access to adequate resources, including funding, in order to provide desired services and supports. We envision a collaboration between members of the community which creates a whole of services and supports which is greater than the sum of its component contributors. We acknowledge that shared learning, communication and planning activities will provide the greatest benefit for those individuals we mutually serve, as well as for our respective members. We envision a culture in which all members of the community are respected, supported, honored, and recognized for their diverse contributions and valued services."

3. Approval of Agenda: M. Sawyer called to approve the agenda and asked if there were any more additions or changes. Hearing none, the agenda was approved as presented.

4. **Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 13, 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.
5. **Executive Director Recruitment:** M. Sawyer shared that a sub-committee of the board has proactively reviewed the job description and implemented a 3-step process for finding the right person for Executive Director for RCRC. The job has been posted and they have been receiving resumes. They will be going over resumes in December and scheduling interviews in January.
6. **Community Comment/Input:** M. Sawyer called for community comment/input:
 - a. **Community Member 1:** M. Sawyer read written comments that were submitted prior to the meeting. These comments are added at the end of these minutes.
 - b. **Community Member 2:** J. Eby-McKenzie shared that SCDD has created a comprehensive list of food resources in all four counties. SCDD has launched a page called Medicaid Watch to inform people how their benefits are being impacted and is a forum to report anything related to an impact to Medicaid funded services.
https://scdd.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bOUlyKKqWCiKgse. Julie also shared that Lake County is participating in A Simple Gesture for people to donate to food banks.
<https://www.asimplegesture.org/our-story> If anyone has any questions, they can email Julie at julie.eby-mckenzie@scdd.ca.gov.
 - c. **Community Member 4:** Lety shared that clients are experiencing vendor payments from RCRC being delivered late from RCRC and participants are being denied services due to non-payment. She asked RCRC to find a solution.
 - d. **Community Member 5:** Brad Risner, a client service support manager for Redwood Transportation out of Ukiah, introduced himself. They serve Mendocino and Lake Counties and are now in Humboldt County.
 - e. **Community Member 3:** Samantha Bond shared that Lake County Social Services is holding another "Feeding Partners Meeting" on Friday 9-10:30am via Teams to address the food needs in Lake County. This is a way for agencies to provide food resources for families to work together to help provide food and services to clients. They provide a monthly list as to where and when food pick up can happen.
7. **Executive Director's Report:** M. Sawyer called on the Interim Executive Director, Jonathan Padilla, who provided the following updates:
 - a. **Regional Center Operations:** We have hired an Associate Director, Claudia Gomez, to help support the adult and transition units. We have a new Intake Manager, Jo Pourian, to help with the intake process and coordinate with staff and families.
 - b. **93rd Annual Capitol Tree Lighting:** DDS is in the process of receiving the last of the community ornaments and we are expecting word from DDS on a timeline where we can go and decorate the large Capital tree.
 - c. **Government Shutdown Impact to CalFresh Benefits:** Although the shutdown is coming to an end it has been encouraging to see how the communities have rallied together. Governor Newsome announced the order restoring SNAP funding and recipients should be seeing funds on their EBT cards.
 - d. **Board Member Emails:** In an effort to better meet the Public Records Act (PRA) requirements, all board members are being issued regional center email addresses to correspond to all board matters. These emails are targeted to be active December 1st. TenisiTech will email board members with instructions and there will be a hotline number to assist members in setting up emails. All existing board documents should be forwarded to that account. Board members are reminded to refer to the PRA training from the state and remember that all records, even those from personal email accounts,

are still discoverable if requested by the courts. M. Sawyer will be meeting with the Executive Committee to help identify what to do with existing emails.

8. **Director of Administration:** M. Sawyer called on Administrative Director, Amy Medina, who provided the following updates:
 - a. **FY24-25:** Last month we had \$900,000 left in our allocation. We, along with 8 other regional centers, are underfunded, largely in part to rate reform. DDS is working with all of us to make sure all regional centers are made whole. This will have an impact on our cash flow to make sure our allocations are updated. Our cash on hand is currently comparable to previous years, but we will have a better idea in the next couple of months what we will need.
 - b. **Public Records Act (PRA)** – A. Medina has been focusing most of her time on preparing for the PRA requirements that will be live January 1st.
 - c. **Client Benefit Fund (CBF)** – M. Sawyer commented on the written report regarding the CBF allocation for next year, reminding everyone that the next award is in Feb, but clients can turn in applications throughout the year.
9. **New Business:** M. Sawyer called for any new business.
 - a. **637 Waiver Proposal with Public Input** – Morgan Knight (Family Home Agency Resource Manager) reported that RCRC is seeking a 637 Waiver from DDS, which requires that a Family Home Agency (FHA) home shall be used exclusively as a residence. She explained that if a family member wants to work remotely or have a home business, including selling things through Amazon etc., this request will allow that to happen. This waiver is specific to Mr. Hogue, a Marriage and Family Therapist, who is hoping to transition his practice to his at-home office suite, which has a separate entrance/exit and is completely self-containing with a bathroom, office and counseling room. DDS requires that the family never have contact with clients and that there are no barriers to emergency exits. M. Knight and DDS did a walk-thru of the home to confirm that the home space meets requirements and determined that the clients will be following all of agency requirements and safeguards.
 - i. **M. Knight called for any questions or comments from the public.** T. Leighton, W. Lewis, M. Sawyer, J. Eby-McKenzie, H. French and K. Suenram gave their public support for this request.
 - b. **2026 BOD Meeting and Training Schedule - Board Meetings** - The board meets six times a year, twice in-person. Saturday in May has been conflicting with the People First Conference each year and the board will determine a better date for the board meeting by the January meeting. The November meeting will need to be moved to the 4th or 18th due to Veterans Day. Discussion identified Nov 4th as the preferred date. Board members will send suggestions for locations in Lake and Del Norte counties for meetings. T. Leighton requested S. Bowser to contact her for help to identify a Del Norte meeting. M. Sawyer recognized a couple of potential board members in attendance and will respond to their applications in the next couple of weeks.
 - i. **W. Lewis motioned to accept the 2026 BOD Meeting and Training Schedule; T. Leighton seconded; S. Bowser called for a roll call vote; motion passed.**
10. **Standing Committee Reports:** M. Sawyer called on committee chairs for their reports.
 - a. **Self-Determination Advisory Committee:** R. Taylor shared there was no report.
11. **ARCA Report:** M. Sawyer reported that the next ARCA Academy is Nov 14-15 in Sacramento. We have five board members that will be attending. There is a well-orchestrated program planned to help board members be more effective. There is expected to be about 150 board members from all 21 regional centers. J. Padilla shared we are looking at service access and

equity grants statewide. The department incorporated a community participation component for the providers in terms of partnering with regional centers. We are looking forward to putting forward some recommendation letters for our communities.

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

- a. Lake County - R. Taylor shared that Lake County People First is preparing a holiday food drive. They are coordinating with the food banks and the regional centers. For more information contact Alex Bland, RCRC Client Advocate, 707-462-3832est280 or Rosemary Gonzales 369-215-5459 or cr198@gmail.com.

13. **Community Comment/Input:** M. Sawyer called for additional public comment and upon hearing none (nor raised hands) moved to closing the meeting.

14. **Close the Meeting:** M. Sawyer adjourned the meeting at 7:04pm

Respectfully submitted by:
Sedona Bowser, RCRC Executive Assistant

Draft Minutes reviewed and approved by:
Mike Sawyer, Board of Directors President 12/30/25

Minutes approved by the Board on 01/07/26

Attachment to 11/12/25 BOD Meeting - Public Comment Submitted in Writing

On Public Questions at Board Meetings

The purpose of this statement is to address the right of the public to ask questions during the public comment portion of Board meetings, whether or not those questions are related to matters on the agenda, and the possibility for boardmembers or staff to briefly respond to those questions or ask for clarifications.

It is understood that no action may be taken by the Board on anything not on the agenda, nor can there be discussions about anything not on the agenda. Nonetheless, given certain statements included in recent Board meeting packets, it seems important and timely to seek clarification as to compliance with the Brown Act and other relevant laws. The following passages of California Government Code are provided for reference and consideration:

Chapter 9. Meetings

Section 54950.8:

This chapter shall be known as the Ralph M. Brown Act.

Section 54953:

(a) All meetings of the legislative body of a local agency shall be open and public, and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting of the legislative body of a local agency, except as otherwise provided in this chapter.

Section 54954.2.(a)(3):

No action or discussion shall be undertaken on any item not appearing on the posted agenda, **except** that members of a legislative body or its staff may briefly respond to statements made or **questions posed by persons exercising their public testimony rights under Section 54954.3**. In addition, on their own initiative or **in response to questions posed by the public**, a member of a legislative body or its staff **may** ask a question for clarification, make a brief announcement, or make a brief report on their own activities. Furthermore, a member of a legislative body, or the body itself, subject to rules or procedures of the legislative body, may provide a reference to staff or other resources for factual information, request staff to report back to the body at a subsequent meeting concerning any matter, or take action to direct staff to place a matter of business on a future agenda.

In 1998, California Attorney General published the following Opinion:

No. 97-1207:

Members of the public are permitted not only to attend the meetings but are granted the right to directly address the legislative body **on any item** within its jurisdiction. (§ 54954.3.)

Per the above referenced Code and the Attorney General's opinion, it is clear that the public has a

right to ask questions during Board meetings, about anything in the Board's jurisdiction, and that boardmembers or staff may respond to those questions (though there is no requirement to do so). Restricting the public's ability to ask questions during Board meetings seems to directly conflict with California Code, as does limiting those questions to items on the agenda and not allowing for the possibility of a response from the Board or staff.

Please now review the following passage from the 5/17/25 Packet's Points of Order for RCDSC Board of Directors' Meetings:

"There is an approved agenda that the Board will follow, and the public is given two opportunities to make statements **regarding that agenda** - one at the beginning and the other at the end of the meeting.

These periods are for statements, they are not for questions and questions will not be answered."

This passage appears to conflict with California Code as well as the Attorney General's opinion. The revised Points of Order included in the November meeting packet has somewhat modified these restrictions; however, the new language does not clearly state an outright correction to the previous restrictions, nor state the possibility for the Board or staff to briefly respond, as is allowed by Code.

Thus, it could be very helpful for the public if the Board were to consider making an explicit statement of clarification. As a suggestion, a statement that reflects the Board's active, full, and supportive compliance with Section 54954.2 and the Brown Act could be: "RCDSC supports the public's right to submit comments, including questions, during the public comment portion of Board meetings. Public comments and questions may or may not be related to items on the agenda, so long as they pertain to RCDSC jurisdiction. The Board or its staff may respond to such questions though they are under no obligation to do so, and the Board cannot take any actions nor hold any discussions that are not on the agenda."

Lastly, a respectful and modest request for the Board to read and reflect upon the initial part of Government Code Chapter 9, which defines laws for government meetings:

Section 54950:

In enacting this chapter, the Legislature finds and declares that the public commissions, boards and councils and the other public agencies in this State exist to **aid in the conduct of the people's business**. It is the intent of the law that their actions be taken openly and that their deliberations be conducted openly.

The people of this State do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them. The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed **so that they may retain control** over the instruments they have created.

The individuals supported in our community benefit from the assistance of champions in their pursuit of their best lives, setting and accomplishing their goals, and fulfilling their dreams - we recognize that the leadership and staff of RCDSC are those champions. You achieve amazing results in this critical

mission of ensuring equity for the individuals we serve. We, the public, recognize your efforts and the value that you bring to the table. We know you work with limited resources and face tough challenges, and we likewise value your time. We, the public, also ask that you share this leadership role - to give us our rightful place at the table in those 3 minutes set aside for each member of the public's input - to ask our questions, to comment on RCDSC matters whether they are on the agenda or not, to feel heard, and to hear answers or give clarifications when appropriate. As the Legislature says, these meetings are for all of us to conduct and collaborate on what they call "the people's business."

Thank you very much for all you do, and for your time in hearing this statement.

References:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=54950.&nodeTreePath=6.2.1.22&lawCode=GOV

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=54950.5.&nodeTreePath=6.2.1.22&lawCode=GOV

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=54954.&nodeTreePath=6.2.1.22&lawCode=GOV

<https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/opinions/pdfs/97-1207.pdf>