

# DRAFT

To: Alta California Regional Center (ACRC), Department of Developmental Services (DDS)  
cc: Self Determination Program (SDP) Ombudsperson  
From: ACRC Self Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC)  
Date: 12/20/2021  
Re: ACRC SDAC SDP Progress Report and Recommendations

Per section 4685.8(v)(1), the SDAC "... shall review the development and ongoing progress of the Self-Determination Program, including whether the program advances the principles of self-determination and is operating consistent with the requirements of this section, and may make ongoing recommendations for improvement to the regional center and the department."

Accordingly, the Alta California Regional Center SDAC wishes to provide its observations on the implementation of the SDP in the past year, and recommendations for continued improvement:

1. After achieving initial client indications of SDP interest far in excess of other regional centers, the initial phase of Self Determination implementation at ACRC progressed slowly. In hindsight, it appeared that the clients at other regional centers may have been screened for a more committed level of interest. At the same time, ACRC made COVID-19 safety its top priority during this time, emphasizing access to PPP and vaccines.
2. Lori Banales initiated an ACRC decision in the spring of 2021 to **establish and publish guidelines for timeframes for Service Coordinators (SCs) to complete ACRC self determination tasks** ([https://www.altaregional.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/sdp\\_implementation\\_timelines.pdf?1632238054](https://www.altaregional.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/sdp_implementation_timelines.pdf?1632238054) ). This established the turnaround time for SCs to respond to Participant requests for SDP information and tasks such as the initial budget (12 month expenditure report). This effort was a response to input received during an SDAC meeting.  
This implementation enables ACRC to identify bottlenecks, take targeted corrective action, and reduce or even eliminate delays in providing the initial budget to participants. For the months of August, September, October and November, 4-5 ACRC Participants "flipped the switch" each month. This pace accelerated in December 2021 when an additional 12 ACRC Participants flipped the switch. As of December 14, a total of 41 ACRC participants are now in the SDP.
  - Recommendation: The SDAC requests that ACRC provide updates in the turnaround time data, as well as the number of SDP Participants who have indicated a desire to proceed with the SDP, who have completed the spending plan, and who have "flipped the switch" at each SDAC meeting, so that the committee is kept up to date on ACRC's SDP progress.
3. ACRC responded to the SDAC recommendation to **initiate a series of mini-webinars and Q&A sessions for Participants who had completed an orientation**, launching a series of 16 sessions on 8 topics that were hosted between March and June of 2021, just prior to SDP opening up statewide. SDP flyers shared with community in 8 threshold languages: Vietnamese, Tagalog, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Russian, Punjabi, Hmong and Farsi. Topics included person centered planning, HCBS setting requirements, Budget and Spending plan, the FMS, Independent Facilitators, Success Stories, and a general SDP Q&A. One session on each topic was recorded and posted to ACRC's website and YouTube channel, where these can be accessed by new

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Participants just now entering into Self Determination (see <https://www.altaregional.org/post/recorded-video-information>).

- Recommendation: The SDAC and ACRC should regularly solicit public input at SDAC meetings regarding desired future SDP-related webinars
4. The SDAC also collaborated with ACRC to **update the ACRC Self Determination website**, focusing on a format designed to enable a self advocate to easily access an online orientation, find more information about self determination, and participate in SDAC meetings and SDP events hosted by ACRC. SDP websites of other regional centers were reviewed and best practices were identified. Herman Kothe was instrumental in executing a complete redesign of Alta's SDP website. See <https://www.altaregional.org/self-determination-program>. The SDP/SDAC website also added an option for any member of the public to request notifications of SDP information including SDAC meeting notices, and a new link to enable the submission of written public comment to the SDAC, along with an advisory to exercise caution before disclosing personal information. Existing Alta SDP phone numbers and emails enable consumers to confidentially obtain answers to questions or report challenges that they are experiencing in SDP implementation. In December, a link was added to the SDP website to provide access to a recorded SDP training for vendored providers (*see item 6*).
- Recommendation: Continue to update the SDP website as needed, emphasizing ease of use.
5. In recent months, the SDAC has noted an increase in public attendance and input during SDAC meetings, including from SDP providers. The SDAC has prioritized public input during the current statewide rollout phase, also emphasizing that details about specific implementation challenges and potential solutions are most helpful, while disclosures about personal information should be kept to a minimum. **ACRC's efforts, especially from Mechelle Johnson and members of her team, to clearly communicate that they want to know about any and all opportunities to improve** have fostered a cooperative and informative atmosphere. This, in turn, has helped the SDAC to achieve its mission to help to improve the SDP implementation at ACRC.
- Recommendation: Continue to emphasize the importance of all SDP parties providing timely, precise and detailed implementation input with a goal of generating actionable ideas for improved speed, clarity, efficiency and efficacy.
6. At ACRC's suggestion and with ACRC's support, the SDAC and ACRC formed an SDAC Provider subcommittee comprised of providers, ACRC staff and SDAC members. **The initial goal of the SDAC Provider subcommittee was to create a training for vendored providers on how they could participate in Self Determination** under SDP service codes, also addressing common vendor misconceptions about the SDP. Providers, SDAC members and several ACRC Associate Directors, led by Jennifer Bloom with the assistance of Tracy Brown and Johnny Xiong, created a new SDP slide deck that focuses on the business considerations of SDP providers, and key differences between traditional vendored services and SDP services. These trainings began in November 2021. Attendees received a follow up questionnaire on the quality of the presentation, suggested topics for future lunch and learn SDP meetings and any unanswered questions.

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- Recommendation: Schedule follow-up Lunch and Learn sessions for Providers interested in the SDP in early 2022. Create a FAQ for Providers interested in SDP and forward to DDS.
7. In response to input received at SDAC meetings that some service coordinators (SCs) were not up to speed in the SDP, in May **ACRC independently decided to initiate regular online “SDP lunch and learn” meetings for its SCs**, focusing on a series of SDP topics, which serve as mini-trainings and Q&A sessions. These meetings are ongoing.
- Recommendation: consider data collection to track SC SDP trainings, SC attendance and SDP skill acquisition.
8. The SDAC reviewed relevant Lanterman Act and Bagley Keene requirements and collaborated with ACRC to **update SDAC agendas**, notably:  
Each SDAC agenda now includes:
- The website for Alta’s SDP program
  - A website link for the Zoom meeting referenced in the agenda
  - An email address to submit written public comment to the SDAC, along with an advisory to exercise caution before disclosing personal information
  - Contact information for any SDP questions and concerns
  - Action Item follow up, as identified in the minutes from prior SDAC meetings
- Recommendation: Continue to collect input on agenda improvements
9. In summary, the SDAC wishes to express appreciation and gratitude for the collaborative effort with Alta and vendored providers and the considerable gains achieved in the past year in Alta Regional’s SDP implementation. A separate and more complete listing of ACRC’s 2021 Actions and Activities is appended at the end of this report. Though ongoing work is to be expected, the SDAC is pleased with the resulting progress reported by participants. The SDAC expects that the SDP will continue to evolve, and that continued collaboration will be instrumental in keeping Participants, SDP providers, and Alta staff up to speed on new developments.

Lastly, the SDAC recommends that DDS consider and provide guidance on the following SDP issues:

1. The SDAC requests guidance from DDS on:
  - a. How should rate study-based increases, which were signed into law and are scheduled to begin phase-in during April 2022, be addressed in a Participant’s 12 month certified budget?
  - b. How should SDP Participants implement Direct Support Professional (DSP) compliance with new EVV requirements beginning January 2022? Will DDS provide EVV training for SDP employers, and their staff?
  - c. What, if any, significant incident reports should be or could be included as a requirement in a SDP contract between a participant and a service provider?
  - d. How should SDP participants access camp and social rec services that will become available in traditional services beginning in Jan 2022?
2. The SDAC wishes to advise DDS of the following observations:

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- a. Some FMS vendors require providers to submit payroll information earlier and receive reimbursement later than is the case in traditional services with direct RC reimbursement. The resulting working capital impact could lead qualified providers to decline to work with some FMSs, or even exit the SDP.
  - i. This might be alleviated by FMS disclosure of their business terms, so that Participants can assess at the time of FMS selection whether earmarked providers are able to work with a chosen FMS.

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## Timeline of 2021 ACRC SDP Actions and Activities:

### Client/Family/Community Engagement:

- February 9<sup>th</sup>, Tracy Brown, Associate Client Services Director Participated in a Webinar with GT Independence, vendored FMS agency,
- March 16 – June 22, ACRC Launched Self Determination Question & Answer (Q&A) Sessions for our community; two sessions per month, each session offered at 12 noon or 5PM. SDP flyers shared with community in 8 threshold languages: Vietnamese, Tagalog, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Russian, Punjabi, Hmong and Farsi. Session Themes: Person Centered Planning, Home & Community Based Services, Financial Management Services, Independent Facilitator, Success Stories and an Open Session for Q&A.
- April 23, ACRC SDP Timelines Document created after discussion with SDAC Committee. Document outlines the steps in the transition from traditional service delivery to SPD and offers a suggestion about how much time should be spent in each step. ACRC also recognized that each SDP participant and planning team may choose to their own timeline for moving through the steps.
- May, ACRC obtains list of clients on DDS SDP interest list (1800 clients) and conducts outreach to assist clients with signing up for SDP Orientation.
- May, Lori Banales, Deputy Director continuing to encouraging Provider Advisory Council (PAC) Members to attend the SDAC Meeting. SDAC Ad Hoc is created to collaborate with our vendored service providers to help create opportunities outside of their approved program designs to serve clients in SDP. Collaborating in this area will support both the clients and the service providers with opportunities to reinvent service options related to individual service needs outside of traditional services.
- May, Alta revises SDP content on website. Recorded Q&A Sessions are available for the community.
- June 22, Jen Bloom, Associate Client Services Director, was a panelist at the Statewide SDAC Meeting. Her topic was *What role is the local SDAC playing in the rollout of SDP?* She shared how ACRC has SDP Q&A sessions. Jen highlighted that ACRC's SDAC inspired us to create the SDP timeline and is excellent at sharing honest feedback and personal experiences as well as their collaborative communication.
- July, 201 SDP Orientations have been completed by clients/families.
- July 30<sup>th</sup> California Self Determination Network requests to meet with ACRC Associate Directors to share their SDP Marketplace website for SDP providers, Participants and Independent Facilitators.
- November Launching 3 SDP Presentations, for ACRC Providers as to what to expect in the SDP Process. Sessions scheduled on 11/2 (AM and PM sessions) and 11/16 (PM Session).

### Staff Engagement:

- Monthly SDP discussion topic in unit meetings across the agency.
- Monthly SDP discussions at ACRC "Team Unity" Management meetings.
- January 14, Self Determination Service Coordinator Forum

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- May 13, Self Determination Q&A Sessions for Service Coordinators implemented, Every Thursday from 3-4pm. Q&A sessions are ongoing, no end date. Over 100 Service Coordinators attend each week.
- May, Various SDP Webinars are being shared with Service Coordinators.
- July, ACRC Client Service Managers and Associate Directors are conducting individual staffings as additional support to Service Coordinators.
- August, SDP Tracking spreadsheet developed to capture data for ACRC & DDS.
- October created a dedicated SDP committee for SC to access for case presentations and support.

## Ongoing Statewide Collaboration

- ACRC Directors engage with the DDSSDP Departmental Liaison monthly
- ACRC Directors participate in the ARCA Statewide SDP Meeting Group monthly

## SDAC Implementation Fund Projects

- **People Planning Together**- Two clients are going through the Person-Centered Planning certification. They will offer peer to peer support and in-kind services to our client population.
- **Progressive Employment**- funding for Independent Facilitator training and Person-Centered Planning. They are offering Person Centered trainings for clients who live in the Alta catchment.
- **Person Centered Thinking Certification**- Two parents/SDAC members going through person Centered Planning thinking training. They will offer trainings to parents and professionals in our catchment area.