

Alta California Regional Center  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Thursday, January 22, 2026  
Minutes

**Present:** Carmen Aguilar, Jackie Armstrong, Garrett Broadbent, EunMi Cho, Tom Hopkins, Dan Lake, Amy Lampe, Kelly Pennington, Akkia Pride-Polk, Steven Sanchez

**Absent** (\* excused): Johnny Deng\*, Anwar Safvi\*, Ceasar Seabron

**Facilitators:** Amy Fulk, Naomi Smith

**Staff:** Lori Banales, Phil Adams, Iqbal Ahmad, Noorullah Baheej, Jennifer Bloom, Tracy Brown, Robin Chronister, Charlotte Clarke, John Decker, Jordan Eller, DeLayna Eskridge-Brown, Camelia Houston, Mechelle Johnson, Brenna Levy, Kristin Lunardi, Jaspreet Mann, Faye McKenzie, Tara Miller, Marijn Peeters, Shelli Spadow, Loril Tochterman, Mari Zapp, Lisa West

**Visitors:** Steve Andrews, Masood Anwar, Jaclyn Balanay, Jameson Jean Baptiste, Jennifer Carper, Rod Chronister, Maureen Fitzgerald, Shaniece Hill, Lara Jolin, Nick Lee, Bill Mattingly, Teyler Mosley, Cody Newport, Nataline Nguyen, Branae Owens, Mike Sawyer, Kitty Sutcliffe, Pushpinder Toor, Brooke Van Bouchaute

1. **Call to Order – Reading of ACRC’s Mission & Vision** – The Board of Directors met at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 22, 2026. Ms. Lampe read aloud ACRC’s Mission and Vision.
2. **Staff Recognitions**
  - ◆ Ms. Banales shared that every four months, during Board meetings, we showcase service awards for ACRC staff. The contributions that are made by our staff are enormous, and we celebrate the extraordinary commitment of these individuals and the value they add to our organization. Ms. Banales introduced Charlotte Clarke, ACRC’s Human Resources Manager, who had the honor of introducing the following:
    - Recognizing five years of service: Noor Baheej
    - Recognizing ten years of service: Brenna Levy, Robin Chronister and Shelli Spadow
    - Recognizing 15 years of service: Jordan Eller
    - Recognizing 20 years of service: Marijn Peeters
    - Recognizing 25 years of service: Mari Zapp

3. **Community Comments/Announcements**

- ◆ Ms. Fitzgerald shared that every year she speaks to the Board about ACRC's Purchase of Services (POS) utilization rate. For fiscal year (FY) 2024-25, it went up to 57% (from the prior FY's 53%).

4. **Consent Agenda – By consensus, the following consent agenda items were approved: a) excused absences of Johnny Deng and Anwar Safvi; b) regular session Board meeting minutes of November 20, 2025; and c) Board Development Committee (BDC), Client Advisory Committee (CAC), Executive Committee, Finance Committee, and Provider Advisory Committee (PAC) minutes.**

5. **New Business**

- ◆ *Approve Revised Resource Development Policy*
  - Mr. Lake noted that this approval will be tabled until the March Board meeting.

- ◆ *Finance Committee*

**Issue 1:** Independent Audit Report

**Discussion and Action:** ACRC's "Financial Statements and Supplementary Information with Independent Auditors' Reports – June 30, 2025" is under Tab 8 of the Board packet.

Mr. Ahmad shared that Paul Stroub, with Devant CPAs, attended the Finance Committee meeting on January 12<sup>th</sup> to provide an overview of the independent audit. Devant CPAs has conducted ACRC's audit for the last three years and can complete our audit for two more years.

ACRC's audit is an unmodified audit, with no material findings; it is a clean opinion. Board members are encouraged to reach out to him if they have any questions. This audit will be posted to our agency's website.

**M/S/C (Pennington) To accept the independent audit report as submitted.**

**Issue 2:** Monthly Financial Report

**Discussion and Action:** The December 31, 2025 financial report is under Tab 9 of the Board packet; minutes are under Tab 5. With 41.7% of the FY elapsed, ACRC has expended 43.4% of Purchase of Services (POS) and 37.1% of Operations (OPS).

ACRC expenditures remain within our allocation. The Accounting and Community Services and Supports (CSS) Departments have completed the implementation of the rate reform this past week. ACRC's system is now updated.

**M/S/C (Broadbent) To accept the monthly financial report as submitted.**

◆ *Committee Updates*

- CAC
  - Mr. Hopkins shared that the CAC met on January 13<sup>th</sup>.
    - Committee members received a budget update.
    - Jacob Miller, one of ACRC's Client Advocates, led a discussion about Strategic Thinking, as the committee begins to develop a plan for their activities for the new year.
- PAC
  - Mr. Broadbent shared that the PAC met on January 8<sup>th</sup> and November 13<sup>th</sup>.
    - The group discussed AB 815 (Ortega) Vehicle Insurance.
      - Jeff Chenu, with Newfront Insurance, and two representatives from the California Disabilities Services Association (CDSA) provided an overview of the bill. This bill is intended to close some of the gaps in insurance coverage for service providers. Their report made it clear that insurance providers will need more guidance in order to apply this bill. Mr. Chenu also believes there may need to be a "test" case to challenge the law.
    - CDSA provided an update on AB 2423 (Mathis) Developmental services: rates. This bill requires the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to update the rate models every two years and publish them on their website. It does not require the department to fund them. The thinking behind this bill was to give service providers a tool to show how much they are underfunded.
    - PAC members, along with ACRC staff, have begun to share resources at their meetings. These discussions assist service providers in making connections at meetings.
    - Members were reminded that one of the roles of the PAC is to provide advice to ACRC's Board of Directors.

◆ *President's Report*

- Mr. Lake expressed appreciation for everyone in attendance today.
- ACRC's Santa Day was a wonderful event – if you have a chance to attend this next year, he encourages you to do so.
- The Board congratulates Ms. Banales on her 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with ACRC.

◆ *Executive Director's Report*

- Ms. Banales expressed her appreciation for the Board's acknowledgement. Her tenure at ACRC has been fulfilling. As Executive Director, it fills her heart with joy to work with the individuals that we serve and our community.
- Ms. Houston shared a presentation entitled "Intake, Assessment & Eligibility Determination – Lanterman Eligibility".
  - This process is voluntary and is explained to the applicant's legally responsible person upon initial contact.
  - Within 15 days, an Intake Specialist makes contact to determine if there is a suspected developmental disability.
    - If determined there is, the individual is assigned an Intake Specialist who completes a Social Assessment.
    - If necessary, a psychological evaluation is completed.
  - Within 120 days, eligibility is determined.
    - To be eligible for regional center services, an individual must have an intellectual disability (ID), Cerebral Palsy (CP), Epilepsy, Autism, or qualify under the "5<sup>th</sup> Category" (other disability conditions found to be closely related to ID or to require treatment similar to that required for ID individuals).
    - A few years ago, Provisional (Lanterman) Eligibility was included in the law. This allows the regional center to provide services and support for children through the Individual Program Plan (IPP), up to their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. The child is re-assessed prior to age 5.
      - The child does not need to have a diagnosis of a developmental disability (eligible condition) for eligibility under this criteria.
      - The child will need to present significant functional limitations in two areas of major life activity.
  - It's important to note that a developmental disability shall not include other handicapping conditions that are solely physical in nature.
  - ACRC's Atlas software program has been instrumental in assisting applicants and their families as they move through

the Intake process. For those that cannot utilize this program, ACRC has staff that assist them.

- Ms. Houston noted that there are different phases in our system that utilize ACRC's Clinical Staff (e.g., assessment for Early Start to Lanterman, Lanterman Intake and Provisional Eligibility).
  - Currently, we utilize 42 psychologists across all of these phases.
- For reference, last quarter we had 1,288 (average of 429 per month) applications come through ACRC's four Intake Units.
- Ms. Banales noted that the state is in the early stages of the budget process. There are state legislators that have asked the Governor to release the framework for the May Revise early, so that they have more time in the budget process to prioritize funding and allow for negotiations – whether the state is facing a \$2 billion or \$18 billion deficit. The Assembly has scheduled the hearing covering developmental services for April 15<sup>th</sup>, which is later than normal. The proposed budget is based on caseload growth, not adding new initiatives. Ms. Banales will continue to keep the Board updated as she learns more.
- The Little Hoover Commission held a hearing today on the follow up on the Implementation of the 2023 Recommendations regarding the Developmental Disabilities System and took public comments. There were four presenters: a self-advocate, Judy Mark (President of Disability Voices United), Amy Westling (Executive Director of the Association of Regional Center Agencies [ARCA]), and Pete Cervinka (Director of DDS). Ms. Banales noted that there has been a tremendous amount of work over the past two years to strengthen our system and the testimony walked through those initiatives. Our service system is expansive, and we are doing remarkable work, which needs to be celebrated and applauded. Ms. Banales noted the department's work to standardize processes across all regional centers.
  - It's important to note that there are over 9,000 Service Coordinators (SCs) across the state.
- Ms. Banales shared that Regional Center Performance Measures (RCPMs) are voluntary. Last week, DDS posted the outcomes for FY 2024-25.
  - The Child Find Plan Activities have sunset, but ACRC will continue to do this – ACRC received high performance on this RCPM.
  - For the Early Start Indicators 5 & 6, ACRC participated but did not meet this measure. Ms. Bloom noted that "Indicators 5 & 6" are related to data collection as it pertains to counties and

zip codes. ACRC has provided staff training in data entry and consistency. DDS has also provided training and guidance on this.

- The data will be run in the summer of 2026 for the Employment RCPM.
  - The Equity and Cultural Competency RCPM looks at the number of bilingual staff at each regional center and the top five languages of their community. ACRC staff speak 20 different languages, including Spanish, American Sign Language (ASL), Russian, Hmong and Vietnamese.
  - ACRC trained 331 staff for the Equity and Cultural Competency RCPM (51 to 75% of staff).
  - For the Person-Centered Services Planning RCPM, ACRC held ten-hour-long virtual training sessions, with 441 SCs being trained (76 to 100% of staff).
- Ms. Banales is pleased to release "Alta Reflections End of Year 2025 Summary" and highlighted that ACRC currently has nearly 900 staff.
  - Ms. Bloom shared that Tulips Bloom, a speech and language pathology vendor, held a ribbon cutting ceremony on January 9<sup>th</sup>, for their communication board, which was installed at Regency Park in Yuba City. She and Ms. McKenzie were able to attend.
  - ACRC is pleased to be launching a virtual New Client Orientation designed to provide new clients and families with an overview of the services available through the regional center, connect them with community members that are also new to the regional center, meet ACRC staff and ask questions. Our first session is scheduled for January 28<sup>th</sup>, registration is required.
    - ACRC's Intake and Early Start Departments are promoting this.
  - Ms. Banales and Mr. Decker attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for River Grove Apartments on January 8<sup>th</sup>, in West Sacramento. This development has 37 total units, with 18 set aside units for ACRC clients.
    - We initially had eight set aside units, but because of our Housing Specialist's extra efforts, we were given an extra ten units.
  - ACRC is holding our next virtual Community Meeting on February 4<sup>th</sup>, from 11 a.m. to noon.
  - The 30<sup>th</sup> California Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference is scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>, in Sacramento. This event is widely attended.
- ♦ *ARCA-CAC Rep. Report*
- Ms. Lampe shared that the group is scheduled to meet tomorrow from 11 a.m. to noon.

◆ *ARCA Delegate Report*

- Ms. Pennington shared that the ARCA meetings were held last week.
  - The group discussed Board membership policy issues and the State budget.
  - They also reviewed the ARCA Academy evaluation forms.
    - The next ARCA Academy will be held in October in Southern CA.
  - The group discussed upcoming legislative policy advocacy opportunities.
    - This year's Grassroots Day will be held on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.
  - San Andreas Regional Center (SARC) provided an update on their Dementia Care Home, whose start-up funding came from DDS. More information can be found on their website.
    - Ms. Pennington shared her desire to have ACRC develop one in our catchment area.
- ARCA will hold their next meetings in March.

6. ***Closed Session*** – At 6:22 p.m. the Board adjourned to closed session to discuss legal and personnel issues.

7. ***Announcement of Closed Meeting Discussion*** - At 6:40 p.m. the Board reconvened in open session following a closed session in which legal and personnel issues were discussed.

8. ***Adjournment***

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Lisa West  
Executive Secretary

cc: Lori Banales