

Alta California Regional Center
Provider Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 10, 2026
Minutes

Present:

Andrea Croom, InAlliance, Chair
Lindsey Dyba, Futures Explored,
Inc., Co-Chair & Design. Dir.
Beza Admassu, Maxim Healthcare
Services
James Astorga, F&A Astorga Care
Home
Janet Brandon, A.I.M. &
Associates
Garrett Broadbent, Creative
Living Options
Eric Ciampa, UCP of Sacramento
Bonnie Douglas, Turning Point
Kate Halecky, Southside
Unlimited
Joe Jaquez, EGACT
Jay Kolvoord, STEP, Inc.
Antonio Ranit, Antelope Hills
Manor
Carole Watilo, Progressive
Employment
Max Woodford, Learning to Thrive

Absent: (* excused)

Taylor Berry, 24 Hour Home Care
Christa McClure*, Tri-County
Respite Care Service
Michelle Ramirez*, On My Own

Interpreters

Sharon Neumann Solow
Renee Souleret

Visitors

Bakhodir Ahmedov
Rosanna Aragon
Erica Avila
Catherine Carulli
Crisel Centeno

Beth Conn-Ossenfort
Meddie Cueva
Erica Escalante
Maureen Fitzgerald
Pam Haney-Slinkard
NaTasha Harden
Erica Horn
Dawn Horwath
Brett Klaumenzer
Jessica Knuth
Susana Magana
Cody Newport
Nataline Nguyen
Elizabeth Romo
Madeline Ronchetto
Teresa Ruzi
Patricia Soulouque
Sarah Thaopaset
Jasmine Vollenweider
Robert Wiks
Joseph Zeidan

Staff:

Lori Banales, Executive Director
Jennifer Bloom, Director of Client
Services
John Decker, Director of Community
Services
Michelle Duchene, Community
Services & Supports Manager
Jordan Eller, Specialized Services
Manager
Camelia Houston, Director of Intake &
Clinical Services
Mechelle Johnson, Director of Client
Services
Carly Moorman, Client Employment
Specialist
Norma Vidaurreta, Lead Community
Services Specialist
Lisa West, Executive Secretary

The Provider Advisory Committee (PAC) met on Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 9:31 a.m. to discuss: 1) FLSA & their free PAID Program; 2) Board Report; 3) Executive Director's Report; 4) Resource Sharing/Vendor Collaboration; 5) ACRC Vendor Forum Representative Updates; 6) System Reform and Legislative Updates; 7) PAC Committee Reports; and 8) Announcements/Comments. All present provided self-introductions.

Without objection, Andrea Croom made the motion to approve the Provider Advisory Committee meeting minutes of July 9, 2026, as submitted.

1. *FLSA & their free PAID Program*

- Teresa Ruzi and Erica Escalante, with the Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, shared a presentation about the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) which has been in existence since 1938.
 - The current federal minimum wage is \$7.25 – employers must pay the higher of the two (federal versus state). Wages must consider:
 - Suffered or Permitted (working “off the clock”)
 - Waiting Time
 - On-Call Time
 - Meal and Rest Periods
 - Training Time
 - Travel Time
 - Sleep Time
 - Shifts of 24 hours or more
 - Overtime – under federal law, covered, non-exempt employees must receive one and one-half times an employee's regular rate of pay for all hours worked over forty in a workweek.
 - Every covered employer must keep basic records for each worker, with additional requirements for non-exempt workers.
- Payroll Audit Independent Determination (PAID) is a self-audit program for employees to resolve specific FLSA and Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) violations without litigation.
 - Ms. Ruzi encourages service providers to take advantage of this free program. Ms. Escalante noted that there are requirements to be eligible for this program.

2. *Board Report*

- Ms. Dyba shared that ACRC's Board of Directors met on July 23rd.
 - Mr. Ahmad shared that regional centers received their first allocation which equates to approximately 80% of their budgets. 63% of ACRC's service providers are at the full benchmark rate.
 - The Board approved the auditor which will conduct ACRC's annual independent audit.
 - The Client Advisory Committee (CAC) is holding an Open House on October 13th.
 - ACRC has implemented strategies to shorten the timeline for individuals who are in the Intake process.

- The Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) is holding an ARCA Academy on September 25th & 26th for regional center Board members.

3. ***Executive Director's Report***

- Ms. Banales clarified that over the last two and a half years, ACRC has put in place strategies to assist with Intake timelines. We currently have 53 vendored psychologists and continue to grow those resources for the individuals that require comprehensive assessments.
 - 82% of the applicants need a comprehensive assessment due to suspected autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This is one of the pressure points.
 - All our efforts have been reported at Board Committee and Board Meetings. We have made tremendous strides reducing the number of days in the Intake process. Our efforts continue.
- The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has released several Directives:
 - They release regular updates on authorizations by regional center which need to be adjusted to align with the updated service codes.
 - On September 9th, DDS shared guidance on their online learning system entitled Employee Development, Growth, and Education (EDGE), and provided the roles and responsibilities of the department and the expectations of regional centers. EDGE can be used for the Direct Support Professionals University (DSPU) or for non-DSPs that want to get training.
 - DSPU launched in May 2026. On September 9th, the department shared information about the different types of training – Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3. They also provided information about eligibility requirements for non-DSPs. Service providers should take special note of the employer's responsibilities.
- DDS is being transparent in the rollout of the standardized vendorization process. The department is tracking regional centers twice monthly on this process. ACRC continues to lead with 232 vendorizations in just over six months; in comparison, we completed 330 vendorizations last fiscal year.
 - Mr. Decker has also heard positive feedback from the Community Services Specialists who assist with vendorizations.
- Service providers are encouraged to participate in UC Davis's "Improving the Employment Experience of People with Autism" study.
- On September 15th, ACRC is hosting our 2nd Annual Emergency Resource Fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at our Sacramento office.
- ACRC is moving forward with vendoring IntellectAbility for the Health Risk Screening Tool. IntellectAbility will be conducting the assessments. The Planning Team would include this in the client's Individual Program Plan (IPP).

- Mr. Decker appreciates the stakeholder input that ACRC has received over the years to develop our Community Resource Development Plan (CRDP). DDS will be developing the priorities for regional centers moving forward.
- Residential facilities have concerns about DDS' Quality Incentive Program (QIP). Many have lost their 10%. PAC members may want to consider holding a workshop to assist residential providers who are only receiving 90% of their base rate.
 - Ms. Dyba will share this suggestion with the Communication & Outreach Committee.
- Compliance requirements will be ongoing for the QIP. There is an exemption process for the audits (for the remaining two years).
 - Ms. Duchene encourages service providers to take advantage of this.

4. *Resource Sharing/Vendor Collaboration*

- Today's topic is "Attendance Requirement (in-person attendance tracking and exception)."
 - Ms. Croom shared that we are tracking PAC member attendance, both in-person and virtually. Of the seven out of ten required meetings, 50% must be attended in person.
 - If you need an exception, please reach out to Ms. Croom and Ms. Dyba.
 - PAC members should also make every effort to attend the PAC Standing Committee meetings.

5. *ACRC Vendor Forum Representative Updates*

- The Day Services vendor forum was held on July 23rd.
 - The group discussed supporting service providers who will be affected by the June 16th DDS Directive entitled "Day Program: Updates for Length of Day and Corresponding Billing."
- The Transportation vendor forum is scheduled for September 22nd at 11 a.m. This forum is for ACRC service providers – registration is required.

6. *System Reform and Legislative Updates (Resource Development Policy Workgroup, Capital Coalition, CCLN, CDSA, CRA, PAVE, & CaAPSE)*

- Resource Development Policy Workgroup
 - Mr. Ciampa reminded everyone that the PAC created a workgroup who worked with ACRC staff on the indemnification language for ACRC's revised Resource Development Policy. They came to an agreement on language a few weeks ago. The new language represents a compromised position between the regional center and service providers. This policy comes before the Board with the PAC's support.
- Capital Coalition
 - The group is meeting today.

- ACRC is funding the half-day Person-Centered Planning Training with Kirk Hinkleman, with Life Works. They are working to secure a venue and will then open registration for the event.
- CCLN
 - On Monday, the California Community Living Network's (CCLN's) met with legislative staffers to discuss the QIP and the speed of vendorizations across the state. They expressed concern and requested that regional centers have more guardrails on quality.
 - They also met with the Department of Finance about the Medi-Cal tax, which will affect any employer who has 250+ employees that includes employees who receive Medi-Cal. Employers would be charged a \$3,000+ penalty per year. The discussion was focused on how this will affect employers. The Department of Finance is open to looking at alternatives (e.g., moving the threshold up to 1,000 employees, doing a carve out for employers that employ clients, etc.).
- CDSA
 - The California Disabilities Services Association (CDSA) is holding their annual conference later this month.
 - One of their focuses is remote services and advocating so that the legislature and DDS can make an informed decision.
 - They continue to work on their legislative priorities for the next year.
 - AB 2414 is on the Governor's desk waiting for his signature. This bill would standardize DSP definition in code.
- CRA
 - DDS hosted a webinar on the updated respite tool and shared historical information. They have extended their pilot study to include more clients. It is important to note that regional centers are not adjusting respite hours, they are using this tool and comparing it to what Service Coordinators (SCs) are currently using. Even though the tool is calculating the number of hours differently than the assessed need of the individual, DDS is still moving forward with the pilot.
- PAVE
 - ACRC has launched the Person-centered Advocacy Vision Education (PAVE) Pathfinders group. They meet weekly to provide feedback to Dr. Julie Beadle-Brown. We are still gathering a cohort of interested individuals and are providing additional training for SCs.
- CaAPSE
 - The California branch of the National Association of People Supporting Employment First (CaAPSE) is working with the legislature and Disability Rights California (DRC) on the cap issue for Medi-Cal recipients.
 - A few weeks ago, they held a Social Hour to discuss the one-to-one supports that are going away with the new service codes. Some

service providers are stating that they will not be able to remain in business.

- The group met with DDS to discuss access alignment and the Department of Rehabilitation's (DOR's) order of selection notification. DOR is now putting people on waiting lists, including people with the most support needs.
 - DDS holds weekly meetings to review service standards to align with DOR.
 - The Service Standards Taskforce is reviewing DOR's standardization process, since CARF accreditation is no longer a requirement.

7. *Announcements/Comments*

- On September 25th, Futures Explored is partnering with Speed Shuffle to hold a speed dating event from 4 to 6 p.m. Cost is \$10; it is free for Find Love Safely members. Please help spread the word.
- On October 1st, Futures Explored is holding a Drag Queen Bingo fundraiser at MANGOS Nightclub on K St. from 7 to 11 p.m. Cost is \$20. Please help spread the word.

The next PAC meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, October 8, 2026**. The meeting adjourned at 11:29 a.m.

Lisa West
Executive Secretary

cc: ACRC Board of Directors
Lori Banales