

**GOLDEN GATE REGIONAL CENTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING**

Tuesday, November 18th, 2025, 5:30 PM

**Via Zoom Video Conference
and
In-Person at GGRC, 1355 Market Street, # 220, San Francisco, CA 94103***

- 5:30pm **I. CALL TO ORDER /INTERPRETATION ANNOUNCEMENT AND INTRODUCTIONS (Jacy Cohen)**
- 5:35pm **II. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS (Jacy Cohen)**
- ACTION** A. Agenda
- ACTION** B. Record of October 21st, 2025 Meeting
- 5:40pm **III. PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS (Jacy Cohen)**
- 5:45pm **IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS**
- A. Finance Committee (Michael Bernick)
1. Monthly Financial Statement
- ACTION** 2. Acceptance of Independent Audit
- 6:00pm **V. STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**
- A. Update on SCDD Activities (Sheraden Nicholau)
- 6:10pm **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS (Continued)**
- A. Services Committee (David DeLira)
- a. Approval of POS Guidelines Revision on Page 24
- b. Board Education: *Presentation on Self Determination Program, GGRC SDP Team, Jennifer Walsh and Ken Parekh*
- B. Legislative Committee (Shirley Poitier)
- C. ARCA Update (Marta Guzman)
- a. ARCA Academy Debrief
- D. Board Operations (Lynn Pulliam)
- a. Board Bios for the GGRC Website
- b. Board Members Photography in January (in-person)
- E. Service Provider Advisory Committee (Kate O'Connor)
- F. Executive Committee (Jacy Cohen)

7:00 pm **VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT** (Eric Zigman)

A. Community Resource Development Plan- Approved Projects FY 25-26

7:30 pm **VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION** (if necessary)

* You must RSVP to attend in person or to receive the Zoom meeting information. To RSVP or if you have any questions, please email Aria Alokozai at aalokozai@ggrc.org



Golden Gate Regional Center

Supporting Lives of Liberty and Opportunity

RECORD of November 18th, 2025, 5:30 PM

PRESIDING: Jacy Cohen

DIRECTORS PRESENT: David DeLira
Kate O'Connor
Shirley Poitier
Gita Gupta
Sharon Jones
Lynn Pulliam
Michael Bernick
Brindicy Alcaraz
Jane Diaz

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Mariana Abballo
Marta Guzman

STAFF: Eric Zigman
Lisa Rosene
Brenda Gonzales
Lop Hou
Melissa Wu
Aria Alokozai
Sean Galvin
Amanda Pyle
Skylar Spencer

GUESTS: Calene (ASL Interpreter)
Kate (ASL Interpreter)
Jennifer Carper
Sheraden Nicholau
Chris Aguire
Oscar Arteta (Spanish Interpreter)
Tamara Ranney
Brean Van
Barclay Lynn
Ken Parekh
Jennifer Walsh

CALL TO ORDER (Jacy Cohen)

Jacy Cohen called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. Welcoming remarks and introductions followed. Instructions regarding Spanish Language and American Sign Language interpretations were provided.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS (Jacy Cohen)

ACTION A. Agenda

The agenda for today's meeting was approved.

M/S/C) (Lynn Pulliam motioned/ Sharon Jones seconded)

Discussion : Eric announced that the agenda was revised and sent out prior to the meeting with a

new item under SPAC for presenting a new committee member whom Kate O'Connor will introduce.

ACTION B. Record of October 21, 2025, Meeting

The minutes were approved.

M/S/C (Kate O'Connor motioned /David Delira seconded

PUBLIC COMMENT / ANNOUNCEMENT

Amanda Pyle shared that unfortunately we have lost Alice Wong, a remarkable disability advocate whose voice, and vision shaped the way we understand disability, culture, and community. Alice reminded all of us of the vital importance of listening to those with lived experience in everything we do.

Amanda then read the following letter that Alice left for the Disability Culture Center in San Francisco.

"Hi everyone, it looks like I ran out of time. I had so many dreams I wanted to fulfill and plans to create new stories for you. There are a few in progress that might come to fruition in a few years, if things work out. I never imagined I would live to this age and end up a writer, editor, activist, and more.

As a kid riddled with insecurity and internalized ableism, I couldn't see a path forward. It was thanks to friendships and some great teachers who believed in me that I was able to fight my way out of miserable situations into a place where I finally felt comfortable in my own skin.

We need more stories about us and our culture. You all deserve everything and more in such a hostile, ableist environment. Our wisdom is inclusive and unflinching. I'm honored to be your ancestor and believe that disabled oracles like us will light the way to the future. Don't let the bastard system grind you down. I love you all."

Alice wrote Disability Visibility and several other works, but what truly matters is that she created a space where people with disabilities could tell their stories—raw, honest, and unfiltered. Her influence on contemporary disability rights and culture is immeasurable.

Eric announced that Skylar Spencer has been transferred from his previous role as GGRC Quality Assurance Manger to GGRC Compliance Manager.

Lisa shared that there is an SDP Pragnya outreach at Pomeroy center on Saturday 11/22 at 10am.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee (Lop Hou for Michael Bernick)

Michael Bernick asked CFO Lop Hou to go over the financial report.

Lop shared the following financial report:

Monthly Financial Statement: [Financial Status as of September 30, 2025]

Lop reported GGRC's monthly financial statements as follows:

Operations

After three months of operations, year to date expenditures are under budget by 4.5%. All operations funds are expected to be fully expensed for the fiscal year over the normal course of operations.

Purchase of Services (POS) Excluding CRDP

After three months of operations, year to date expenditures are under budget by 2.6%. The estimated surplus is projected to be approximately \$11.3 million for this fiscal year.

Community Resource Development Plan (CRDP) Funding

Placement funds and Start-Up funds have been approved but have yet to be allocated. These are expected to be fully expensed.

Eric shared that the margins are smaller this year than in prior years, when the organization was 10–20% under budget, a trend that is consistent across the state. This change reflects more accurate budgeting by DDS and the full implementation of rate reform, which increased provider rates and is now being fully reflected in billing. Although the organization remains under budget, the smaller margin is a positive sign because more funding is reaching service providers, allowing them to hire staff and expand service capacity. As an entitlement program, services must be funded, and the state will continue its long-standing practice of redistributing funds among regional centers to ensure adequate Purchase of Service funding.

Lop reported that the annual audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, was completed with a clean, or unmodified, audit opinion. The independent auditors reviewed both the financial statements and the underlying agency-wide records and reported no findings or concerns. The Finance Committee reviewed the audit and met privately with the auditors before approving the report. The audit firm noted that the organization was exceptionally well-prepared and continues to stand out among regional centers for audit readiness and strong financial practices.

ACTION: Acceptance of Independent Audit

On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, Jacy asked for a motion to accept the independent audit. Lynn Pulliam made a motion and Gita Gupta seconded. The Board unanimously voted to accept the Independent Audit report.

MSC (Lynn Pulliam motioned /Gita Gupta seconded)

State Council on Developmental Disabilities Update on SCDD Activities (Eric Zigman for Sheraden Nicholau)

Sheraden shared several upcoming dates, including the statewide [Self-Determination Advisory Committee meeting on December 2](#), the [State Council Bay Area Regional Advisory Committee meeting on December 3](#) in Contra Costa County (with a hybrid option), and the [statewide Self Advocacy Network meeting on December 11](#). Sheraden reported that data collection has been

completed for [California's 2027–2031 State Plan](#) after nearly a year of work, with thousands of survey responses identifying persistent barriers for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, particularly in housing, health and safety, employment, and community inclusion.

These priorities will guide focused work beginning in fall 2026. The State Council has also seen increased requests for information related to federal budget and Medicaid funding, as well as DHS and ICE activity, and is offering support, rights education, and safety tools to community members and organizations.

Sheraden then highlighted outcomes from the [State Council's most recent fiscal year ending September 2025](#). Activities statewide included approximately 16% self-advocacy work, 40% system change and policy efforts, and 44% capacity-building initiatives. Self-advocacy efforts included supporting advocacy groups, grant projects, peer leadership development, and training.

Systems change work involved statewide and regional projects, policy monitoring, collaboration with professionals across industries, and accessibility-focused training. Capacity building included extensive collaboration, leadership development, conferences, and technical assistance provided to more than 9,000 individuals seeking guidance on rights and system navigation.

The work intentionally reached diverse and non-English-speaking communities and involved partnerships with 938 entities statewide. Overall, the State Council directly reached approximately 137,000 Californians through activities and outreach, about 91,000 through training and events, and more than 3 million Californians when policy and broader outreach efforts are included.

Services Committee (David DeLira)

ACTION: Approval of POS Guidelines Revision on Page 24

Lisa highlighted that the first sentence of the second paragraph on page 24 is being deleted. This section previously required specific time limitations and special authorization for each one-to-one service; those requirements would no longer apply.

David Delia asked for a motion to approve the revision of the POS Guidelines on Page 24. Jacy Cohen made a motion and Lynn Pulliam seconded. The board unanimously approved the motion; there was no further discussion.

MSC (Jacy Cohen motioned/Lynn Pulliam seconded)

Presentation: Education: Presentation on Self Determination Program, GGRC SDP Team, Jennifer Walsh and Ken Parekh)

Eric shared that the Self-Determination Program (SDP) was first created in legislation in 2013, with the state requiring federal approval to cover 50% of costs. After five years, the program launched as a pilot in 2018 using a lottery system that selected about 2,500 participants statewide. Early implementation was challenging due to limited resources at regional centers.

In July 2021, SDP expanded statewide, allowing anyone to choose it as an option. While growth was initially slow, the program is now more stable, widely recognized, and focused on long-term sustainability.

Lisa Rosene shared that at GGRC, SDP is supported by a dedicated team that includes social workers, supervisors, participant choice specialists, and administrative staff. There are currently 382 active participants and about 125 more in the onboarding pipeline. Participation requires attending a state-run orientation, followed by person-centered planning and development of an Individual Program Plan (IPP). GGRC's Self Determination page can be found [here](#).

SDP is an alternative to the traditional service model. Budgets are based on what a person would have received under traditional services over the past 12 months (or an estimated baseline for new participants). Participants then create a spending plan that outlines how their budget will be used. Funds must be managed through a Fiscal Management Service (FMS), which pays all expenses and, if applicable, manages employment-related responsibilities. SDP offers participants greater flexibility and choice in services and providers compared to the traditional system, but in return requires more management and oversight from individuals and families to oversee their services

Jennifer Walsh, Co-Chair of the [Golden Gate Regional Centers Self-determination Local Advisory Committee](#) (SDLAC) highlighted her long-standing leadership in the Self-Determination Advisory Committee and her commitment to empowering individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). She added the Self-Determination Program promotes autonomy, choice, and financial control, enabling individuals with IDD to direct their own lives and resources.

Jennifer added that at GGRC, the committee is structured to ensure balanced and diverse representation, primarily from service recipients and families across Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties. Multiple work groups support program implementation by overseeing membership, assisting participant onboarding, providing training and resources, sharing best practices, and using data to improve transitions and outcomes. Jennifer concludes by encouraging community participation and ongoing collaboration to strengthen the program.

Ken (the other co-chair of GGRC's SDLAC) shared that the Self-Determination Program (SDP) is different from Supported Decision-Making, which is a separate initiative being rolled out. SDP is an alternative way for individuals to access and manage resources for needed services. He highlighted the strong and positive partnership between GGRC, service providers, and the SDP team, noting that this collaboration has been key to the program's success. Ken added that the committee's role is to raise awareness about SDP as an option—recognizing it may not be right for everyone, but that it represents an effective and promising approach to delivering services.

Barclay Lynn shared a success story about her son, explaining that he never fit well into traditional programs due to attention-seeking behaviors. The Self-Determination Program allowed him to receive personalized support in employment, day programs, and social activities tailored to who he is and where he is in his life—opportunities that would not have been available in the same way under the traditional service model. She encouraged others to ask questions, connect with an independent facilitator, and reach out for more information, noting that while SDP involves significant decision-making, it can be highly rewarding when supported by knowledgeable and experienced people.

Ken emphasized the importance of surrounding yourself with knowledgeable support to navigate the Self-Determination Program, describing it as a “game changer” after two years of

participation. While noting that SDP is not for everyone, he encouraged learning more through available resources and upcoming SDLAC meetings. He also highlighted a collaborative effort between GGRC, Regional Center East Bay, and San Andreas Regional Center to share information and provider resources as a best practice in their creation of a Bay Area SDP Website. Finally, He stressed the ongoing need for broader outreach and storytelling to better inform communities and address remaining access gaps.

Q and A followed.

Legislative Committee/ARCA Report (Shirley Poitier)

Shirley shared that there was limited legislative news to report this month, but Proposition 50 passed, which is positive news for the community.

Q and A followed.

Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) Update (Eric Zigman for Marta Guzman)

Eric noted that upcoming legislative efforts by regional centers are likely to focus on dental services and workforce development, with more information to be shared after Marta's next ARCA meeting. He also reported on the recent ARCA Academy, which he, Amanda, Marta, and Kate attended. The event brought together about 150 board members from regional centers statewide for an intensive day-and-a-half of training, collaboration, and networking. In addition, ARCA hosted a retreat for board delegates. He described the Academy as an excellent and engaging experience, strongly recommending it for board members as a valuable opportunity to learn, connect, and build statewide relationships. Eric hopes to see more senior directors and other executive staff from regional centers attend the ARCA Academy next year. Although it was previously designed for board members, the Academy now has many senior staff of various regional centers attending.

Amanda reflected that the training covered many details that might not be encountered in day-to-day work, making it particularly valuable. The material was presented clearly and in accessible language, providing practical knowledge that will have a positive impact on her work.

Board Operations (Lynn Pulliam)

Board Retreat Feedback

Lynn shared that Board member biographies will be revised and eventually posted (with board member permission) on the new GGRC website. Lynn encouraged all board members to attend the January board meeting in person so their photos can be taken for the new website on January 20th between 4-4:30pm in GGRC San Francisco Office.

Service Provider Advisory Committee (Kate O'Connor)

Kate announced the Service Provider Advisory Committee (SPAC) voting member nomination of Alisha Krupinky, currently Director of Programs and Operations at Lifethouse, a Marin-county based service provider with a long history of service provision in our area. Alicia has extensive experience, having previously served as a program manager.

Kate expressed gratitude for the active participation of regional center staff at SPAC meetings and highlighted discussions on several topics:

- New service development initiatives and startup funding opportunities.
- Provider surveys tied to a 10% quality incentive rate; three surveys are distributed at the beginning of the month and due at the end of January. Providers had questions about the process, as completion affects reimbursement.
- A presentation by Bob Barrios from Community Integration Services in Granada Hills on a California pilot program focused on aging preparedness for older adults with IDD. This pilot was shared with SPAC members and highlights their proposals for new strategies for supporting older adult with developmental disabilities.

Executive Committee Updates (Jacy Cohen)

Jacy debriefed the Early Start Compliance Meeting on October 27, 2025, regarding Early Start timeline compliance issues. She added that as of July 2025, GGRC did not meet 100% compliance and the department is concerned. She highlighted that Early Start policies and procedure revisions, due in March 2025, were submitted on 10/22/25. Jacy emphasized that the Board's role is oversight: holding Eric and his staff accountable, asking questions, and monitoring progress, while implementation of improvements is the responsibility of Eric, Amanda, and Brenda. Jacy added that progress updates will be a standing agenda item in monthly Executive Committee meetings and reported to the full board on a quarterly basis

Eric highlighted the following on Early Start 45-Day Timeline progress.

- Focus Area: Completing eligibility determinations and Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) within 45 days of referral for children aged 0–3. This is the primary area needing improvement compared to other regional centers.
- Actions Taken:
 - Redesigned work processes.
 - Significantly increased staffing in the program and created a dedicated Early Start Assessment unit.
 - Expanded clinical resources and staff training.
 - Learned from best practices at other regional centers.
- Next Steps:
 - Progress updates will be provided at the January Executive Committee meeting.
 - Board members may contact Eric, Amanda, or Brenda for additional details.

Eric recognized Brenda, GGRC's Director of Intake, Early Start and Clinical Services, for her remarkable leadership in developing the structure and processes that have driven these improvements.

Executive Director's Report (Eric Zigman)

Community Resources Development Plan- Approved Project FY 25-26

Eric reported that the Community Placement Plan originated from efforts to close state institutions and fund new community-based services for individuals transitioning out. With all the general treatment institutions now closed in California, the Community Resource Development Plan (CRDP) has provided funding for new programs. Currently, a Request for Proposals (RFP) is posted on our website, inviting submissions in several key areas, including Early Start services like speech therapy, ABA therapy, and timely assessments.

Sean Galvin, Director of Community Services, provided further details.

He stated that we are excited to launch the RFP for a Provider Incubator, an entrepreneurial program for individuals with lived experience. The curriculum helps participants explore becoming service providers, define the type of business they want to start, and navigate the process of becoming a vendor, with support along the way. Additionally, several homes and Early Start programs are in development. We're thrilled to have \$1.4 million allocated for these startup initiatives.

Amanda shared that the Provider Incubator for adult services exemplifies the work of the Community Services leadership team and their collaboration with state initiatives. DDS approached us to pilot the program, working with GGRC and two other regional centers, leveraging partnerships Sean has developed. This is a great opportunity to test a "proof of concept" and explore whether it could support broader service delivery growth.

Eric discussed using 2026 to strengthen our focus on employment opportunities for the individuals we serve. While we rank among the top regional centers in employment outcomes and average wages, there is still significant room for improvement. We look forward to collaborating with our providers, DDS and Community Services team, to make meaningful progress in helping more people achieve employment.

Jacy thanked our guest speakers and all Board members and adjourned the Board meeting at 7:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Aria Alokozai