



Golden Gate Regional Center

Supporting Lives of Liberty and Opportunity

RECORD of February 17th, 2026, 5:30 PM

PRESIDING: Jacy Cohen

DIRECTORS
PRESENT:

Marianna Abballo
Michael Bernick
Gita Gupta
Lynn Pulliam
Brindicy Alcaraz

David DeLira
Sharon Jones
Kate O'Connor
Marta Guzman
Jane Diaz

DIRECTORS
ABSENT:

STAFF:

Eric Zigman
Brenda Gonzales
Lop Hou
Ihsan Shagiwal

Lisa Rosene
Sean Galvin
Jennila Worrell
Emma Tynan

GUESTS:

Chris Aguire
Sheraden Nicholau
Jennifer Carper
Breann Van Slooten
Barclay Lynn
Jenica Hadley

Oscar Arteta (Spanish
Interpreter)
Calene Carrano (ASL
Interpreter)
Dane Lentz
(ASL Interpreter)

CALL TO ORDER (Jacy Cohen)

Jacy Cohen called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. Spanish interpreter zoom room was set up. Instructions regarding Spanish Language interpretations were provided. Welcoming remarks and introductions followed.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS (Jacy Cohen)

ACTION A. Agenda

The agenda for today's meeting was approved.

M/S/C (Kate O'Connor motioned / Brindicy Alcaraz seconded)

ACTION B. Record of January 20, 2026, Meeting

A 2025 typographical error was identified in the agenda for the January 20th, 2026, meeting notes. Kate O'Connor notified the group that her last name was misspelled. No other corrections were stated.

The Record of Meeting for January 20, 2026, was approved.

M/S/C (Kate O'Connor motioned/ Gita Gupta seconded)

PUBLIC COMMENT / ANNOUNCEMENT

No public comments & announcements were provided.

COMMITTEE REPORTS
Finance Committee (Michael Bernick)

Monthly Financial Statement: [Financial Status as of December 31, 2025]

Michael Bernick highlighted that they oversee a substantial budget of \$729 million, of which \$678 million is allocated to the purchase of services. Additionally, \$50 million is designated for GGRC's operations budget.

Lop Hou shared the following financial report:

Operations:

After six months of operations, year to date expenditures are under budget by 8.0%. 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 six months of operations, year to date expenditure are under budget by 2.5%. The estimated surplus is projected to be approximately \$5.2 million for this fiscal year.

Eric Zigman added that it is also positive that the surplus this year is much smaller compared to previous years, primarily because service providers lacked sufficient staff to serve the population. Additionally, the rate reform has generally resulted in long-overdue rate increases for providers which has contributed to a decrease in the surplus percentage.

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 allocated and fully expensed.

State Council On Developmental Disabilities Update On SCDD Activities

Sheraden Nicholau, SCDD Deputy Director, shared SCDD updates and information on events, trainings and opportunities including the following:

Press Release: California State Senator Lena Gonzales Introduces SB 1052

Current law allows SCDD to appoint Authorized Representatives for people served by regional centers. This law can be strengthened with clear guidance in critical areas. The proposed legislation would:

- Allow SCDD to make contingent appointments, so families can plan ahead for unexpected events;

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- Establish a clear statutory process for determining when a person's rights or interests cannot be adequately protected without a representative; and
- Provide explicit authority for time-limited appointments, ensuring support remains appropriate and person-centered over time.

By clarifying the law, the bill promotes consistency, transparency, and rights-based decision-making, while giving individuals with disabilities and their families reassurance that trusted support can be in place when it is needed most.

[SB 1052 Bill](#)

Upcoming:

[Regional Advisory Committee Meeting](#)

Members of the public may participate in-person, telephonically, or by Zoom from any location. This is a hybrid meeting.

When: Wednesday, February 25, 2026, Networking from 5:15 PM to 5:30 PM and meeting at 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Featured this meeting: Intergenerational Trauma in Autistic Families Workgroup update; team update from the SCDD Bay Area Office; Airlines Passenger Protection overview / update, and more.

Sheraden touched more on the meeting topic, An Overview of Air Travel Rights & Areas for Traveler Advocacy. There have been concerns about recent changes affecting travelers with accessibility needs. The State Council is dedicating an agenda item to review the major protections, laws, and rights that individuals have related to air travel.

[Alternatives to Conservatorship with American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\)](#)

Learn about alternatives to conservatorship, navigating the legal system, and more in a virtual workshop with ACLU attorney Britt Belwine, followed by a question and answer session.

When: March 11th at 1PM - 2:30PM

[Cal-TASH 2026 Conference](#)

Cal-TASH is honored to be hosting their 43rd Annual Conference. The theme of the conference is Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers.

The conference breakout sessions will include presenters from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities presenting on topics that promote equity, opportunity and inclusion for individuals with disabilities across the lifespan.

When: February 27-28, 2026 in Sacramento.

[University Of California San Francisco \(UCSF\) Annual Developmental Disabilities: An Update for Health Professionals, 2026 Virtual Conference](#)

This unique interdisciplinary conference is created for health providers and others who care for children, youth, and adults with developmental disabilities and complex health care needs.

When: Thursday and Friday, March 5 & 6, 2025

Legislative Committee (Eric Zigman)

Proposed Budget Trailer Bills

Eric touched on the following trailer bills:

- **Employment Access Alignment**
This proposal would reduce the complexity for individuals working with the Department of Rehabilitation and DDS during the support process of finding employment. It would also remove the requirement that employment service providers be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).
- **Federal Access Rule**
This proposal would establish a new grievance process. The new grievance process will streamline some of the ways individuals can file a grievance such as the 4731 and citizen complaint process.
- **Rate Reform/Quality Incentive Program Contract Exemption**
This proposal would continue a contracting exemption for rate reform and the Quality Incentive Program to December 31, 2030. This extension would allow the Department and its current contractor to:
 - continue updating rates,
 - manage the complexity of rate reform,
 - transfer knowledge to department employees, and
 - provide more time to complete the rulemaking process with community input.
- **Regional Center Supported Living Services 40-Hour Work Week**
The Department proposes that employees of regional center vendors who provide supported living services receive overtime pay, following state law. This is the law today, but pending federal regulations could change this.
- **Regional Center Oversight**
The Department is proposing changes to help strengthen how regional centers are governed and overseen, including:
 - Professionalize and provide more training and support for regional center governing boards, so they can better oversee operations and funding, while keeping individuals and families actively involved in shaping priorities that reflect their needs
 - Merge the Department's core regional center contract with the regional center performance contract and the regional center performance measures to clarify expectations across regional centers
 - Authorize funding allocations to regional centers to be done without the administrative process and delays of formal contract amendments

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- Update the authority of the Department to address persistent regional center noncompliance with the terms of contracts with the Department
- Remove an outdated rule that requires service providers to have a physical office within every regional center's area, unless it's needed to deliver a service
- By January 1st, 2027, end the practice called "courtesy vendorization" to simplify the process for service providers who want to expand where they offer services
- Remote Services
This proposal would put into law the authority to provide some services delivered remotely when requested by an individual. Right now, these same services can be delivered remotely under a directive from the Department, which is set to expire at the end of the year.
- Self-Determination Program Administrative Costs Funding
This proposal would remove outdated language regarding the use of historical savings for administrative costs of the Self-Determination Program.

ARCA Sponsored Bills

- The first bill focuses on improving access to dental services. Focusing on dental desensitization for Denti-Cal providers.
- The second is the Workforce Developmental Bill, which will assist individuals who have had to leave school due to caregiving responsibilities by providing support to help them earn school credit and explore the possibility of career options in the human service field.

60th Anniversary Resolution

Celebrating the 60th anniversary of the pilot project that established the Lanterman Act system. Event planning is currently in the early stages. Invitations will be extended to other Northern California regional centers and some DDS representatives who are knowledgeable about the system's history. Updates will be provided in the future.

Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) Update (Marta Guzman)

Marta Guzman shared the following ARCA updates:

- A webinar was held on February 17th, 2026, through Parents Helping Parents, called "How Will the Regional Center Support My Loved One After I Am Gone?" The session emphasized the importance of making advance arrangements for our loved ones when we are gone to ensure their ongoing care and support.
- ARCA Grassroots Day will be held on March 2nd & 3rd 2026 in Sacramento.
 - Kate O'Connor volunteered to serve as the GGRC board member attendee.
 - GGRC Social Worker Emma Tyman will be attending.

- A couple of GGRC vendors, individuals served and our GGRC Dental Coordinator will be in attendance.
- ARCA delegate meeting will be held on March 19th & 20th.

Services Committee (David DeLira)

Sean Galvin reported the following updates on the Future is Now Series:

- Funding from the Language Access and Cultural Competency Plan supported the Future is Now Series to assist underserved Cantonese-speaking families. The project achieved high engagement, with 30 of 34 registered participants attending with the ARC reporting this was a higher turnout compared to the other classes.
- Out of the 30 who attended 100% of those participants found the class to be well organized and easy to understand. In addition, they reported it increased their awareness of resources, and they feel they have made progress on their planning journey.
- There will be a second series of the courses in the future, and the dates will be shared when confirmed.
- Jacy Cohen inquired whether the participants were from the original focus group since during the focus group, it was recognized that this was a need within the Cantonese community. It is hoped that these individuals also participated in this series. Sean and Jacy agreed to collaborate in reaching out to the program to determine whether this information could be obtained.

Sean also shared the following regarding the Community Resource Development Plan:

- GGRC received approval from DDS on 10 projects.
 - Five of the projects pertain to various types and levels of residential housing facilities.
 - There is an RFP out for a new supported employment provider and three Early Start providers.
 - Project regarding an entrepreneurial curriculum for deaf and hard of hearing individuals that may want to start their own business to eventually become a regional center vendor.

Lisa Rosene checked in regarding POS guideline updates with DDS:

- Chris Aguire with DDS will connect with Lisa Rosene later this week on updates regarding the POS guidelines.

Board Education: Challenges & Opportunities Facing GGRC
(GGRC's Senior Directors/Management Advisory Committee)

Eric Zigman facilitated a panel with the GGRC's Senior Directors to share insights with the board members regarding their respective roles, as well as the opportunities and challenges they currently face with GGRC.

- **Lisa Rosene, Director of Regional Center Services.**

Supervises all case management across the three counties for individuals aged three and older. This is the largest department within GGRC, comprising approximately 240 social workers, along with 20 supervisors and managers. The department's responsibilities include case management, forensic services, the Self-Determination Program, and the education and orientation for those individuals that have low or no POS.

- Challenges are the number of demands for service. Each directive from DDS typically has tight deadlines that require immediate attention, often without additional staffing or resources allocated to address them.

- **Lop Hou, Chief Financial Officer**

Currently oversees the following different GGRC departments Accounting, Fiscal, Vendor Unit, IT, Payroll & Medicaid Waiver. These units work to ensure that GGRC staff have the tools for their work, a place to work and the right certifications for Medicaid Waivers.

- Challenges include staff turnover and the effort to fill open positions across each department in order to keep pace with the growing number of social workers, purchase of service authorizations and other workload demands, and DDS directives.

- **Brenda Gonzales, Director of Intake & Assessment, Early Start & Clinical**

Over the past three and a half years of being with GGRC, has seen a significant growth within GGRC's Lanterman and Early Start Programs across all three counties. The Early Start team has doubled in case management – and experiences an increase in referrals each quarter. This increase subsequently affects our Clinical team, which consists of medical doctors, physical therapists, speech therapists, nurses, and psychologists who assist with eligibility determinations and case management.

- Eric Zigman pointed out that with the increase in GGRC referrals received the agency needs more clinical resources to determine eligibility and service needs.
- Challenges include:
 - 1) Growth across RC system, and within our center
 - 2) Increase of referrals leads to higher case management caseloads
 - 3) Complicated needs that require more resources.
- Hoping GGRC will invest in developing solutions and establishing centralized processes. This includes leveraging innovative ideas within one team and expanding their application across other teams.

- **Sean Galvin, Director of Community Service**

Community Service consists of three separate units (Resource Development, Quality Assurance and Community Outreach), which include twenty-eight roles. CSU primarily focuses on resource development by building and maintaining vendored providers and specialists. The Quality Assurance Unit ensures that providers are adhering to regulations and are providing a level of quality in their service. The Outreach Unit is the newest unit and is focused on fostering connections between monolingual and diverse communities to ensure they have equitable access to the resources they need.

- Challenges are navigating high volume of complex changes with rate reform and how providers are vendorized. CSU is currently working on a new standardization of vendorization by utilizing a provider portal. GGRC has dedicated vendors and staff and has a great opportunity to come together and come up with solutions.
- **Ihsan Shagiwal, Director of Human Resources and Organizational Services**
GGRC's HR department collaborates with various departments within the organization, and provides support to staff in many areas, including employee benefits, recruitment, training, and compliance with labor laws. HR's primary focus is on supporting our staff to ensure they can effectively serve the individuals we support.
 - One challenge is that GGRC is located in one of the most expensive areas in the state, which presents difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff due to compensation competition from other organizations.
 - The HR department has made several positive changes, which include improvements to staff training and onboarding processes. Efforts to streamline trainings and onboarding have been made by leveraging technology to better support GGRC staff.

Jacy inquired about the process for providing new hire training to new staff members.

- Ihsan explained that the training program is a combination of in-person and online sessions. Social workers participate in a boot camp training during the first three weeks of starting. In addition, each social worker's group supervisor and lead social worker are involved on a daily basis, providing shadowing opportunities. Online LMS Training is also provided. Each department within GGRC provides additional initial and ongoing training.

Board Operations (Lynn Pulliam)

Lynn Pulliam reminded everyone to complete the mandatory Board of Directors training if they have not yet done so.

ACTION E. Election of Board Secretary

David DeLira was approved for the Board Secretary position.

M/S/C (Jane Diaz motioned / Brindicy Alcaraz seconded)

Lynn also reminded everyone that the Board of Directors will be holding another retreat in April. If anyone has suggestions, please send them to Jacy. Jacy will follow up with Amanda to inquire about the possibility of using the Disability Cultural Center as a potential venue for the board retreat.

Service Provider Advisory Committee (Kate O'Connor)

Kate O'Connor provided an update on the Quality Incentive Program (QIP) surveys, noting that some agencies are successfully completing them, while others are experiencing difficulties.

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A reminder was also provided that all GGRC Board Members are welcome to attend the SPAC meetings, which occur twice a month on Zoom. These meetings offer an excellent opportunity for team members to come together, seek assistance, share concerns, and ask challenging questions.

Executive Committee (Jacy Cohen)

Jacy Cohen informed us that she authored a letter on behalf of the board of directors to Jesse Gabriel, Chair of the Assembly Budget Committee. The letter pertains to the governor's January budget proposal, which includes a recommendation to eliminate \$1 billion in funding for the Medi-Cal Dental Program. The letter urges the committee chair to reject this proposed reduction and to support the preservation of dental care services for our most vulnerable children and adults.

Furthermore, Jacy explained that this will have significant consequences, with approximately 50% of surveyed dentists planning to withdraw from the MediCal Dental program and the remaining 50% needing to reduce their capacity.

Jacy would also like to acknowledge the efforts of GGRC's Dental Coordinator, Jessica Jorquera, and IEC Director, Brenda Gonzales. Jessica did a great job reaching out to the GGRC community and sharing important information.

Kate reminded the group that if there are additional opportunities to advocate for rejecting Prop 56, they can send those to her, and she will share them with the vendors.

Brenda recommended inviting Jessica to one of the upcoming board meetings so she can address any questions the board may have regarding this matter.

Directors Report (Eric Zigman)

Update on Early Start Program

Eric Zigman provided an update regarding the ongoing plan of correction for the Early Start program. He informed the board that a detailed update is shared with the Executive Committee on a monthly basis, highlighting efforts such as increased staffing, the establishment of a new assessment unit, revisions to policies and procedures, updates to training programs, and the development of a comprehensive training plan. Additionally, Early Start is collaborating with Dr. Ingrid Lin, a developmental pediatric professor at Stanford University, who is conducting eligibility assessments in partnership with the Health Plan of San Mateo.

GGRC's Early Start has also implemented a new technological platform for intake processes to enhance efficiency. The team continues to hold regular meetings with DDS. A subsequent review audit was completed in January, and the Self-Assessment Model (SAM) is scheduled for completion in September. Lastly, at the end of last year, five new vendors successfully completed the vendorization process.

Human Resources Update

In the interests of time, it has been decided that the human resources update will be presented at the March Board of Directors meeting.

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The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:26pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennila Worrell on behalf of David Delira, Board Secretary