

Developmental Disabilities Council of Contra Costa County
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
October 22, 2025

Board and Liaison Members Present: Alicia Jackson, Christine Rottger, Erik Estrada, Estela Nunez, Jason Parks, Karen Lingenfelter, Katherine Kreft, Laura Corbett, Matt Bell, Nickole Bouslog, Nicola Iflill-Friaser, Ramsay Mashy, Ria Mercado, Seth Hendricks, Troy Russell, Will Sanford

Staff: Vi Ibarra

Board and Liaison Members Excused: Christy Lam-Julian

Guests: Caroline Ortiz; Alisa Rosillo; Diane Truong, CCH Title II ADA Program Manager; Donna Feingold, HireAble and Finding Golden Solutions; Christine Burke, Independent Living Resources; Craig Rose, VistAbility; Pam Perls; Jaime Barber, VistAbility; Suzanne Anthony; Renee Perls; Madison Mercado, Open House Center; Tyler Bohon, Kevin Mayo, Nicole Sobel, Rob Norris, Mateo Ibarra, all from Full Circle of Choices; Aimee Vitug-Hom, VistAbility; Janessa Oriol, Congressman DeSaulnier's Office; Rosa Valledor, parent; Lisa Ribitch and Full Circle of Choices SHA trainee team

Welcome, Establish Quorum, and Introductions:

Seth welcomed everyone to the meeting at 10:01 a.m. Today's meeting was hybrid, with Council members and guests attending either in-person at Las Trampas, or on Zoom. Spanish interpretation was offered to those on Zoom. Guests introduced themselves and people on Zoom were asked to enter their names and affiliations in Chat for attendance purposes.

Vi took a roll call of board members and established a quorum.

The meeting minutes for September 24, 2025 were approved unanimously and without corrections (M/ Troy, S/Alicia). There were no changes to the agenda.

UPDATES:

RCEB - Rebecca Nanyonjo

Ronke Sondipo, Director of Client Services, reported on behalf of Dr. Becky:

The Strategic Plan is finalized. Community engagement is a key component, including in-person listening sessions at RCEB San Leandro and also on Zoom. Sessions will be accessible in ASL, Spanish, and with targeted outreach to the African-American community and vendors. Feedback will directly shape plan implementation.

Statewide Updates:

- Work continues to standardize processes across all 21 regional centers, including a new respite assessment tool. RCEB had two staff on the review and pilot team, and DDS is finalizing design with consultants. Next steps are that DDS will review public comments and roll-out the tool to all regional centers.
- The deadline for the new vendorization process is the end of calendar year 2025. ARCA and DDS are having ongoing discussions about implementation.
- Online intake tools are now available on the RCEB website.
- All regional centers will be subject to the Public Records Act as of January 1, 2026. There is funding to help with implementation including training for case managers.

A question was asked about if and when Strategic Plan listening sessions will be held in Contra Costa County. RCEB is reviewing options and will share when there is an update. The DD Council offered assistance in finding meeting space.

SCDD Bay Area Office – Sheraden Nicholau

Vi shared the following on Sheraden's behalf:

- Here is the [Medicaid Watch portal](#), where leaders, advocates, and community members can report pre-emptive cuts or denials (of otherwise what should be eligible services) since the passing of HR 1.
- And here is the full [2025 There Should Be A Law](#) contest report from SCDD.

Council Chairperson – Seth Hendricks

Seth is working with Vi and Christine to check in with all board members. They are looking to connect with two to three members each month.

Executive Assistant to the Council – Vi Ibarra

Vi shared that this year's Council presentation topics are aligned with the three priorities. You can find the presentation schedule on the agenda.

Membership – Troy Russell

Troy reported there are currently four open seats on the Council. See Vi or Troy for applications.

Community Liaison Reports:

Early Start Provider – Christine Rottger

Christine reported that DDS is defining preschool based programs as "facility based" and not community based. With the Rate Reform, this definition will decrease program rates by an average of \$15/hour per child. This is potentially devastating to the children served, their families, and program staff. Many young children with disabilities or developmental delays cannot be adequately supported in "community based" preschools. Most parents are unaware of this issue and a major advocacy push around parent choice is critical.

During a State Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) meeting, efforts were discussed that would connect Early Start with public preschool providers. This is the first such effort being made that will hopefully help to ease transitions.

A concern was shared about the loss of parent-to-parent connections when provider services shift to home-based supports.

HireAble/Local Partnership Agreement – Donna Feingold

If you are interested in attending HireAble's free training on the CalABLE program (Monday, October 27th at 3pm), please [register here](#).

HireAble is vendorized by RCEB for benefits planning, and they can also provide training to provider staff for a small fee. If interested, you can reach Donna at donna@hireable.org.

Questions/Comments:

A question was asked about the impact of the federal government shutdown on benefits. Donna shared that SSI benefits are not affected but the biggest issue is booking appointments with Social Security. She suggested trying online first and expect delays.

Janessa from Rep. DeSaulnier's office added that their office can help to open up an inquiry case with Social Security for people that already have a scheduled court hearing. Every congressional office has case workers that can liaison with Social Security. You can reach the office by phone, email, or through their [website](#). She also shared:

- Their office remains open during the shutdown. They are essential staff and working unpaid.
- They are planning a townhall next week contingent on Rep. DeSaulnier's recall back to Washington DC. Currently there is no vote scheduled but a 48-hour notice is required for DC to reconvene.
- Starting in January, Janessa will be the office's new District Director!

A short break was taken at 10:37 for networking.

Presentation: Expanding Autonomy with Supported Decision Making **With Amelia Ott, Family Resource Navigators**

Presentation

Amelia Ott, SDM Program Manager at Family Resource Navigators shared this [Supported Decision Making presentation](#), and also provided the slides in [Spanish](#). She also shared a link to an [SDM template](#) available from the ACLU.

Here are a few other notes from the presentation:

- Conservatorship is a lengthy and costly process. Supported Decision Making retains decision making rights, is free and can start immediately.

- Verbal agreements are valid in California but it is recommended to have a written document witnessed by two people and notarized to prevent conflicts. For example, federal programs like IHSS, need signed forms due to HIPAA.
- A best practice for financial decision making is to designate two supporters.

Amelia can be reached at (510) 210-5097, or ameliao@familyresourcenavigators.org.

Comments:

- An observation was made about conservatorship. Judges can vary on what they know and how they apply the law.
- Another comment was made – if both conservator and conservatee agree to dissolve conservatorship, it does not have to go through the courts.

Public Comment and Announcements:

- Open House is hosting an open forum event on 10/22/25 with Rep. DeSaulnier on HR1 impacts. All are welcome. Details: www.Openhousecenter.org.
- Come to the Spooktacular House in Concord...if you dare! See flyer from Eric Estrada and Karen Lingenfelter.
- A federal judge issued temporary block on massive cuts including the Office of Special Ed. Pam is monitoring this closely.
- Election reminder for November 4th. Everyone has the right to vote!
- Next meeting is on 11/19 due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on November 19, 2025 At 1025 Escobar, Martinez, CA

Respectfully submitted by,

Aimee Vitug-Hom
VistAbility