

Minutes
ARCA Board of Directors
January 19, 2024
Embassy Suites, Sacramento, and via Webinar

Board of Directors Members Present:

Lori Banales, Kelly Pennington, ACRC
Ed Araim, Randy Tellalian, CVRC
Gloria Wong, ELARC
Melissa Gruhler, Dan Strauss, FNRC
Eric Zigman, Edith Arias, GGRC
Patrick Ruppe, Joe Czarske, HRC
Joshua Souder, IRC
Michi Gates, Tracey Mensch, KRC
Melinda Sullivan, Larry DeBoer, FDLRC
Gabriel Rogin, Rosemarie Pérez, NBRC
Ruth Janka, Lety Garcia, NLACRC
Kim Smalley, Mike Sawyer, RCRC
Larry Landauer, Sandy Martin, RCOG
Lisa Kleinbub, Frank Paré, RCEB
Javier Zaldivar, Lisa Lopez, SARC
Mark Klaus, Terri Colachis, SDRC
Jesse Weller, Julie Chetney, SG/PRC
Dexter Henderson, Jesus Murillo, SCLARC
Omar Noorzad, Mark Wolfe, TCRC
Jane Borochoff, Vanda Yung, WRC

Board of Directors Members Absent:

Lavinia Johnson, IRC
Christine Couch, VMRC

ARCA Advisory Representatives

Andreas Economopoulos, FNRC, Chair, ARCA Client Advisory Committee
Don Meza, IRC, Co-Chair, Directors of Client Services
Pamela Crabaugh, TCRC, Co-Chair, Directors of Client Services
Aaron Olson, CVRC, Co-Chair, Community Services Directors

Guests Present:

Nancy Bargmann, Brian Winfield, Carla Castañeda, Kaitlin Binnewies, Vicki Smith, Susie Crow, Suzy Requarth, DDS
Cristina Preuss, NLACRC
Lori Walker, NLACRC LVAC
Elizabeth Rice, Luane Kashishian, Cal Interpreting & Translations
Tammy Torum, We Care A Lot Foundation
Anh Nguyen
Joe Sichta
Maureen Fitzgerald
Richard Dier
Robin Souder
Scott Rice

ARCA Staff Present:

Amy Westling, Tony Anderson, Darline Dupree, Lauren Etnensohn, Sidney Jackson, Daniel Savino, Vivian Umenei, Sally Williams, Rick Rollens

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 AM by President Mark Wolfe.

Executive Session

M/S/C To enter into Executive Session to discuss ARCA membership.

During Executive Session, members discussed and approved a proposed modification to ARCA's bylaws.

M/S/C: To leave Executive Session

Introductions

Brief introductions were made around the room.

Approval of Agenda

The Board of Directors agenda was presented.

M/S/C: To approve the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the October 20, 2023, Board of Directors meeting were presented for approval.

M/S/C: To approve the minutes.

Public Comment

Lori Walker, of the NLACRC Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee, shared her committee's interest in learning more about SDP opportunities and via these board meetings.

HCBS Animation Project – Diva Johnson, TCRC

Diva Johnson shared a major project completed by Tri-Counties Regional Center, creating a series of short animated films that cover key parts of the Home and Community-Based Services Final Rule. Each topic is presented in two videos, one presenting the responsibilities of service providers and the other describing the rights of individuals served. The videos will be made widely available through the regional center system, and in 20 languages (including ASL).

President's Report

Mark Wolfe stated that, while there are major Budget challenges facing the state and service system, the cohesiveness of the ARCA membership helps ensure the regional center perspective is a consistent part of ongoing discussions. Separately, he congratulated Ruth Janka on her impending retirement from North Los Angeles County Regional Center, and thanked her for her years of service. Jesse Weller also shared his deep appreciation of her work and commitment, and the opportunities to grow professionally under her leadership in his roles prior to joining SG/PRC.

DDS Report

Nancy Bargmann thanked Ruth Janka for her service and collaboration.

The January Budget maintains the vast majority of the many policy initiatives being advanced in the system. For instance, the Quality Incentive Program will be continued. The community's response to the proposed delay in service provider rates is recognized, and will be a part of the ongoing discussions during the Budget cycle.

It is noted that, for next fiscal year, utilization growth is projected to be higher than caseload growth. An additional \$99.4M for regional center staffing, as a result of this, is included in the Budget. Various specialized caseloads will be continued. Funding for the three-year limited-term Participant Choice Specialist positions is not proposed to continue.

The Master Plan for Developmental Services will be started with a reformulating of the Developmental Services Task Force. Underlying this work to craft a long-term plan for the system is a commitment to the entitlement. Applications for participation in this workgroup and subgroups will be opened presently, with meetings likely starting in March or April. The full final report is planned by the end of the calendar year.

Brian Winfield reported that nearly 40,000 direct support professionals (DSP) have completed at least one online training that qualifies them for a one-time stipend; most of those individuals have already completed two and earned the maximum stipend amount. Four regional centers will participate in the first phase of the DSP workforce development internship program; they are ACRC, VMRC, FNRC, and SDRC. The Department is also piloting a test of the bilingual pay differential with one regional center.

Just over 3,800 individuals are currently enrolled in the Self-Determination Program, with approximately 150 new transitions into the program each month. The Department is contracting for the development of system-wide standards related to independent facilitators and financial management services.

The Service Access and Equity grant program has received 135 proposals for 2023-24; given Budget limitations, 33 proposals are being approved.

In follow-up to the recent directive related to social recreation and camp services, an updated directive is being developed that is responsive to feedback related to Purchase of Service policies, the actual purchase of these various services, usage of subcodes, and other matters.

Successful Employment Transitions – Diana Anderson

In early 2023, a major supported employment resource, the Shasta County Opportunity Center, was scheduled to be closed with little advance notice. The sudden loss of employment affected 125 individuals served by Far Northern Regional Center. Over the course of four months, in the run-up to the closure date, the center worked to transition as many individuals as possible into new work, with 122 securing paid employment paying at least minimum wage.

Treasurer’s Report – Omar Noorzad

Omar Noorzad noted a one-time overage in consultant costs that was balanced by lower-than-budgeted salary expenditures. The total financials continue to report a modest and planned loss, intended to draw down reserves.

M/S/C To accept the financial statements for November and December 2023

ARCA Executive Director’s Report – Amy Westling

Employee Handbook Update

Recent changes in state law authorize employee leave related to reproductive loss. Conforming changes to the employee handbook are needed.

M/S/C To approve the change

Human Resources Consultant Contract

Sally Williams, ARCA's Office Manager, will be retiring at the end of the fiscal year. Her work related to human resources, given ARCA's size and the scope of the duties, can be more cost-effectively transitioned to a consultant instead of in-house staff. A potential consultant has been identified.

M/S/C To approve the contract

CalTASH Conference Sponsorship

Cal-TASH is the California chapter of TASH, a disability advocacy group with a long history of focusing on the needs of those with significant support needs. They host an annual conference, which has sponsorship opportunities. It is recommended that ARCA join as a Gold-level sponsorship.

M/S/C To approve Gold-level sponsorship of the conference

ARCA Position on Governor's Proposed FY2024-25 Budget

Based on conversations with the Board Delegates, Executive Directors, and Executive Committee, a series of recommended positions on the various parts of the January Budget has been developed.

Major points include:

- Oppose the cut to provider rates
- Support the Self-Determination Program and the infrastructure to support it
- Support funding for DSP Workforce Training and Development
- Advocate on multiple core tenets during the work of the Master Plan for Developmental Services, including but not limited to:
 - Preservation of the Lanterman Act entitlement
 - Increase service equity
 - Maintain sustainable funding
 - Promote workforce development
 - Advance Employment First

These and other points, as described comprehensively during the meeting and shared previously via email, are recommended as ARCA's formal position on the January Budget.

M/S/C To approve the proposed Budget response

Legislative Report – Eric Zigman

Legislative and Budget Update

Budget hearings are being set, with initial hearings next week, and subcommittee hearings likely in February and March. New bills continue to be introduced, with the final deadline being February 16th, but none of major significance to the developmental services system are in print yet.

ARCA Co-Sponsorship of Blue Envelope Program Bill

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department has asked ARCA to join on a bill to create a statewide "Blue Envelope program." It will let a driver choose to use a standardized blue envelope to store their license/registration/insurance, and hand it to a police officer at a traffic stop. This standard structure will let the officer know someone in the car may need disability-related accommodations (*e.g.*, behavioral). A similar program has been successfully implemented in San Diego County.

M/S/C To co-sponsor the bill

Grassroots Day

This year's in-person Grassroots Day is set for Tuesday, April 2nd.

Federal Updates

No report.

Committee/Task Force Reports

Executive Committee – *Mark Wolfe*

Tony Anderson was welcomed as ARCA's newest employee, in the role of Associate Director.

Board Delegates Group – *Tracey Mensch*

The committee met and talked about the Cal TASH conference, the State Budget, and the Master Plan for Developmental Services. They took action on a recommendation the Group will be making regarding the need for revision to the Core Staffing Formula. They have also appointed Tracey Mensch, Frank Paré, and Edith Arias to the standards committee. Daniel Savino gave an update on the ARCA Academy and announced Tony Anderson will be the staff to the Board Delegates committee and the ARCA Academy efforts. The Group also talked about the "Meet Your Board" campaign and announced the next meetings.

The Group approved a motion to ask DDS to create a workgroup or committee to address the Core Staffing Formula. The Group also requests that a discussion of Core Staffing Formula advocacy be brought forward at the next Board of Directors meeting.

Directors Group – *Gabriel Rogin*

The Group received updates on the HCBS assessment tool, remote IPP meeting flexibilities, stakeholder engagement opportunities, and the Budget. Separately, the Group has identified Lori Banales, Jane Borochoff, and Omar Noorzad as participants in the Standards and Practices Committee.

Finance Committee – *Lisa Kleinbub*

The Committee met with DDS last Friday and discussed various Budget issues. They also discussed an ongoing transition of the I-series IBM computers to a cloud-based modality.

Client Advisory Committee – *Andreas Economopoulos*

Several members of the CAC participated in an ARCA-sponsored public webinar on advocacy and affordable housing.

Contract Negotiating Committee – *Lisa Kleinbub for Larry Landauer*

No report

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Information Sharing

Tracey Mensch has been voted President of Kern Regional Center’s board.
Andreas Economopolous has joined the board of People First California.

Adjournment/Next Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 PM. The next meeting will be held on March 22, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. at the Embassy Suites, Sacramento.

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