

Far Northern Coordinating Council on Developmental Disabilities dba Far Northern Regional Center Minutes

Regular Meeting
Friday, September 29, 2023
9:15 a.m.
Mt Shasta Resort / Zoom

1. **Call to Order:** 9:18 AM by Chair Cali McKinzie
2. **Roll Call**
 - a. Present: Cali McKinzie, Deborah Anderson, Kim Leeseman, Daniel Strauss, Josh Flom, Joseph Culis, Araceli Garcia, Terry M., Andreas Economopoulos, Adrian Hugo, Selene Mercado, Patricia McCarthy, Edna Winkle, William Moore, Lori Childres
 - b. Absent: Timothy Howard, Christine Johnson, Ginger Moyles
 - c. Visitors: James Ford, DDS; Cindi Freshour, We Care A Lot Foundation; Renee Bauer SCDD
 - d. Staff: Mike Mintline, Chief Financial Officer; Audra Feedback, Chief Financial Officer; Melinda Roberts, HR Director; Keith French, IT Manager; Wayne Doering, Associate Director Client Services North; Dr. Christine Austin, Medical Director, Tracy Duarte, Associate Director Community Services
3. **Public Input/Open Forum** *(This section is for members of the public only; and is to provide the public an opportunity to comment and/or present information to the Board on any matter. **Each member of the public will be afforded up to five minutes to speak. If you have additional information you are encouraged to submit it in writing.**)*

No public input
4. **Approval of Agenda September 29, 2023**
 - a. Correction: Action Item #1 should read "Board Meetings 2024" not 2023
 - b. Motion and second Andreas Economopoulos and William Moore. No further discussion, Motion passed

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5. Approval of Minutes from June 23, 2023

- a. Motion and second and Terri M and Lori Childres, Discussion correction page 22b change Father's to fathers, no further discussion, Motion passed

6. Report from Chairperson, Cali McKinzie:

- a. Action Item #1 – The approval of the 2024 Far Northern Coordinating Council Meeting calendar.
Action Requested: It is requested that the Board of Directors approve the 2024 Board meeting schedule as submitted.

Motion and second William Moore and Patricia McCarthy.
Discussed the May 17 date as People First have a meeting that day as well. It was decided the meeting times will work for those involved with People First. No further discussion, Motion passed

- b. Other: Growth of the Regional Center: Far Northern Regional Center has done a tremendous job with outreach and the regional center is now serving over 10,000 individuals. The communities we serve recognize all these efforts.

7. Management Reports

- a. Financial Report:

- i. Operations: Audra Feeback, Chief Financial Officer
The allocations numbers have not been seen since May. About 70% of the allocations have been revealed we are just waiting on the finalization of the budget.

They are looking at each individual regional center and taking into consideration the growth rate before making the allocations. Ensuring that each regional center will have enough to cover expenses at the current growth rate.

For the fiscal year 2022-2023 we will be reverting back to the state \$195,000. This amount seems reasonable taking into consideration the interest earnings we received this year as well.

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Current year 2023-2024 we have been given the go ahead to hire a number of new positions. We are currently actively recruiting for those positions we know will be funded. We are confident that we will receive enough in the allocations to cover our operations.

ii. POS-Purchase of Services –Mike Mintline, Chief Financial Officer

Still waiting on final allocations from the state. More information on these allocations should be revealed at the November board meeting. Currently working on reclassifying expenses so the reports are easier to understand.

We will have more than enough funds to last through the year. Everyone should be able to receive services without restriction.

We currently have 127 clients set up on the Self-Determination Program. We have received 58 requests this month with 15 being new requests. This is a growing program expected to double this year.

The department has put a priority in cleaning up this system to help with streamlining as this program grows.

Larry, Melissa and Mike will be visiting other regional centers in hopes of getting ideas on making the FNRC SDP program more efficient.

Mike gave an explanation on how the budgets are calculated and the guidelines that need to be implemented.

b. Client Services Report, presented by Wayne Doering, Associate Director, Client Services North

- i. Report – Good news things are beginning to slow down. With so many new staff members our current focus is on training. A orientation program is being put together along with a “Master Class” training. These trainings are presented by individuals who are experts on the topic they are presenting. An example would be our Self Determination Program. Those who are

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experts on this program train others who become experts themselves and can then begin training others as well.

The regional center is moving from a small to medium size regional center. We will be adding another Associate Director which will oversee the Children's Unit.

c. Community Services Report: Tracy Duarte, Associate Director of Community Services

- i. Vendorizations are up as we grow and the need for more services
- ii. Department of Developmental Services Directive: "Direct Service Professional (DSP) Training Stipend Program

Beginning this fall, DSPs may receive up to two \$625 (before taxes) stipends when they complete online training courses approved by the Department of Developmental Services (Department). The Training Stipend Program ends June 30, 2024 and all courses must be completed by that date.

Criteria to be eligible for the training stipend:

- Work as a paid DSP an average of 10 hours or more per week;
- Perform direct support tasks like skills development, guidance, and personal assistance to regional center consumers as a regular part of their job duties;
- Spend at least 50% of work hours doing direct support tasks; and
- Are employed by a regional center vendor or by a participant in the Self-Determination Program.

Approved DSP training courses are available in the ARCA Learning Center at <https://provider.arcalearn.org>

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d. Human Resources Report: Melinda Roberts, HR Director

- i. Melinda reported 10 positions have been added since the HR report was submitted on September 12, 2023. We currently have approximately 27 open positions that we are actively recruiting to fill.

The HR department is working diligently on recruiting. Currently researching different tools that can be used during the recruiting process. There is a concern that we are recruiting from a small pool of people.

Turn over is about 10%. The HR department is conducting exit interviews so we as an agency can understand why they are leaving and ways we can help to retain these individuals. Many are referencing training is the problem so we are working hard at planning and putting together new training programs in conjunction with our new Training and Communications, Supervisor.

We are also working at implementing a stronger Onboarding process that will showcase our benefits. Featuring our CalPERS Plan, vacation, and tap into the why they are here and the success stories of those we support. In doing so hopefully this will give people a reason to stay.

Melinda reported surveys are complete and we are conducting analysis to determine areas to be addressed.

8. **State council on Developmental Disabilities:** Renee Bauer, Regional Manager, North State

- i. Regional Activity: Self-Advocacy, Systems change and Capacity building
 - North State Regional Advisory Committee known as RAC, will meet on October 13, 2023. The meeting will take place at FNRC Redding office. Public comments can be submitted via

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email prior to the meeting at northstate@scdd.ca.gov and will be read by the Chair.

- Targeted outreach, focusing on one County at a time. Working more with Tribal Communities and coordinating with FNRC's Tribal Engagement Coordinators.
 - Responder training
 - Keep an eye out for North State training opportunities in October
 - Self-Advocate Peer Support Group meets the fourth Thursday of each month
- ii. Statewide Activity:
- SCDD continues to offer Self-Determination Orientations in a variety of languages.
 - National Core Indicators (NCI) Family surveys should start to reach mailboxes around January 2024. Family cycle is open from October 2023 to June 2024. Surveys evaluate the services and supports received through the regional center and service providers.
 - 2023, SCDD Council voted to prioritize employment as a policy priority in the legislature. Continued movement towards real jobs for real pay. Beginning July 2024, for the first time in history, California will have a dedicated team, "Office of Employment First" who will work to increase the number of people with I/DD in the workforce.
 - Each year, SCDD Legislative Team in conjunction with Council support several Assembly Bills. September's Council meeting

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highlighted the status of various bills in employment, safety, and housing. One bill to highlight is:

*Assembly Bill (AB) 248. Individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities: The Dignity for All Act. This bill will replace outdated terms used in law to describe individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

9. FNRC Board Committee Reports and Action Items:

a. Consumer Committee, Adrian Hugo, Chair

- Professional Boundaries Training-presented by Hannah Schneider from Impact Solution
 - *Three types of Boundaries: Physical, Emotional and Mental –Examples were given for each category.
- Newsletter- presented by Simonne Robidoux, Training and Communication Supervisor
 - *A template of a possible quarterly newspaper format was presented.
 - *Timelines will be discussed at the November Board Meeting
- Reviewed the board packet and action items-presented by Melissa Gruhler, Executive Director
 - *Financial Reports-presented by Mike Mintline, CFO
- Concerns and Announcements
 - *Adrian Hugo-concern about consumers in the rural communities that do not have anywhere to go if something were to happen to their caregivers.

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- * Andreas Economopoulos-concern about the government shut down. Also concerned about consumers that are not old enough for Medicare as Medi-Cal is no longer paying for some services.
- * More discussion will take place regarding these concerns.

b. Finance Committee, Lori Childres, Chair

- Action Item #2 Retired Annuitant Mike Mintline presented by Melinda Roberts, HR Director
Action requested: It is requested that the Board of Directors appoint Mike Mintline to be reemployed by FNRC effective January 2, 2024, for a period of no more than 12 months, in compliance with Government Code requirements. Pending CalPERS exception of the six month wait period. Motion and 2nd Finance Committee and William Moore, no discussion, Motion passed.
- Action Item #3 – Merkey Allos Home, presented by Tracy Duarte, Associate Director of Community Services
Action requested: The Board approve contract PS-2673 with Merakey Allos (HF0690) for Community Crisis Home (CCH) Services. Services effective October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2025 for a total maximum contract amount of \$1,601,714.88. Motion and 2nd Finance Committee and Andreas Economopoulos, no discussion, Motion passed.
- Fiscal Department-presented by Mike Mintline, Chief Financial Officer
Moving forward with staffing allocations that have been received A new format for a dash board was presented. More information to come on this.

c. Executive Committee, Cali McKinzie, Chair

- Action Item #4 Strategic Plan
Action requested: The board to approve the proposal for Strategic Planning. Three proposals were received and considered.

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1. Harvest Business and Leadership Development
2. Leading Resources, Inc
3. Lyons-Newman Consulting

Discussion of the three proposals took place

In showing due diligence Vice-chair Joseph Cullis researched these companies finding Leading Resources, Inc is a clear leader of the three options presented.

The recommendation to the board will be to engage Leading Resources for the task of Strategic Planning, based on their experience, testimonials and results.

Motion and second Executive Committee and Patricia McCarthy, discussion: The team will be working with the Executive staff and the Board members during this process. The suggestion of assigning someone at the regional center to drive this project was discussed. More discussion will take place as this project gets put into place and a person will be appointed. No further discussion, Motion passed.

- d. Service Provider Advisory Committee, Josh Flom, Chair
 - i. Meeting was called to order by Joshua Flom, Chairperson at 1:00 PM.
 - ii. COVID-19-Presented by Melissa Gruhler, Executive Director
 - a) Provider input on how recent COVID-19 cases have impacted agencies and their responses.
 - * Josh Flom, Compass-There have been a few cases; but has been manageable. Following current CDC guidelines.
 - *Anne Silcher, Mains'l-A work program gave directive that clients cannot come back to the program until they have tested negative.

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b) Information FNRC

- *There are some supplies available if needed
- *It is still the same process to get the supplies
- *The nursing team will be providing training and materials. It is recommend for new staff to attend continuing to be conscientious about sanitizing and prevention.

c) The State Council can help resource needed PPE if needed

iii. DSP initiatives- Presented by Melissa Gruhler, Executive Director and Tracy Duarte, Associate Director

a) Workforce Development: DSP Training Stipend Program

- *DSP's can receive up to two \$625 (before taxes) stipends for completing approved training courses; Providers can receive up to \$150.
- *The training program is time-limited; all trainings must be completed by June 30, 2024.

*To be eligible:

1. Must work as paid DSP for 10 hours or more each week.
2. Perform direct support tasks to individuals served by a regional center as a regular part of their job, spending 50% of their work hours on direct support tasks.
3. Employed by a regional center vendor or by a participant in the Self-Determination Program.

*DDS will provide a weekly completion report for the DSP's that completed the courses.

* Regional Centers will reimburse Providers within 30 days; Providers will need to pay DSPs within 90 days.

*Stipend is taxed

*It is separate from E-billing

*Authorization will cover the number of DSP each provider sends in a request per contract

b) DSP Internship Program

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- *Pilot program-FNRC is piloting
- *All Is Well is a consultant firm that is partnering with the regional centers for the internship program
 - *They are responsible for the engagement
 - *Need agencies to mentor interns for the internship program
 - *FNRC is advocating for agencies that have indicated that they have the capacity to mentor individuals in the program.
- *The internships are set for 90 days
 - *The mentoring agency may hire the intern at any time during the 90 day period.

- iv. Rate Implementation Plan-Presented by Melissa Gruhler, Executive Director and Tracy Duarte, Associate Director
 - a) Should be completed in July
 - b) Many service codes may need to be changed or redesigned
 - c) Providers will be contacted if changes are needed
 - d) Provides who need to make changes, support will be provided
 - e) ILS rate is still on track to happen in January
- v. NCLI-Presented by Melissa Gruhler, Executive Director
 - a) Wrapping up this cohort series in the Spring-celebrating success
 - b) Will open next cohort series-May possibly have key agencies take on mentor roles for newer agencies.
- vi. HCBS-Presented by Tracy Duarte, Associate Director
 - a) All agencies are in compliance with HCBS on paper
 - b) Working with providers to become compliant in practice
 - c) Service Coordinators will be asking questions during visits for HCBS compliance.
 - d) FNRC will provide technical assistance plans when needed to help remove any barriers that the provider may be facing.
- vii. Success Stores-Shared from several people
- viii. State Council on Development Disabilities – gave a report

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- ix. Office of Clients Rights Advocacy- no report
 - x. Provider Updates and Announcements
 - a) Discuss SPAC Membership and Vote New Chair Holder
 - *Held until the next meeting
 - b) Anne Silcher-Reminder about Rual Education Institute
 - xi. Next SPAC meeting:
 - a) November 15, 2023
10. **Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA): Daniel Strauss, ARCA Representative**
- i. Board Update
 - AB 1147 (Addis)
 - Family Support Services
 - Service Provider-Quality Incentive Program (QIP)-standards, transparency
 - Note: Medicare and Medicaid (Medi-Cal) will **not** be affected if there is a federal government shutdown
 - ii. AB 1147 (Addis) update
 - This bill would make a lot of big changes to the regional center system.
 - ARCA is only opposed to 3 out of 18 sections.
 - We oppose making regional center boards weaker.
 - We oppose increasing bureaucracy and expenses with records.
 - ii. Family Support Services
 - ARCA recently sponsored a webinar titled “Family Support Services” Covering several services such as:
 - Respite- Tailored to fit the family’s needs
 - a) Provides relief to primary caregivers.

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- b) Supports families to keep their loved ones at home.
 - c) Ensures person's safety when family members are absent.
 - Personal Assistance- Support, care and supervision for individuals to succeed at home and in the community
Focuses on safety and direct support
 - a) Assistance with personal care
 - b) Help with medication, appointments, and routine reminders.
 - c) Support for attending college and after-school programs
 - Daycare-Specialized care and supervision for children in their family home. Parent must be engaged in employment or educational activities leading to employment
 - a) Assist with basic self-help needs and daily activities, promoting interaction, socialization, and maintaining routines.
 - b) Support parents who are working or going to school by caring for their child.
 - To view: [ARCA Public Webinars | Cal Collab \(cal-collab.net\)](https://www.arca.org/public-webinars)
- iii. Service provider Directory- Will enable the digital, comprehensive, statewide collection of service provider data, to be utilized in several ways:
- Accountability-greater insight into provider networks and corporate structure
 - Access and Equity-more closely monitor the availability of a variety of service providers across the state
 - Increased Transparency-plans to publish a statewide provider look-up tool for individuals and families
 - Streamline Quality Incentive Payment Process-access to current & complete provider data
 - Standardize Vendorization-create a consistent starting point for new providers statewide

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- iv. Thank you for commitment to ensuring that Far Northern Regional Center can continue to work to meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities.

11. Report from Executive Director, Melissa Gruhler

- i. Growth: Preparing for additional growth positions
Many of these positions are within our Children's Unit
Current growth is at about 10%.

- ii. Consumer Advisory Committee: This committee held a meeting in Susanville (Lassen County) in August.
A handful of individuals brought the perspective of the community to our committee.
We were able to receive information about events that we as a regional center could participate in such as a job fair. We utilized this opportunity and shared the importance of direct care careers.

Representatives of the community were able to bring their struggles as well. Such as limited programs and the need for more care givers.

This was a successful event and we are looking forward to our next meeting being held in Alturas (Modoc County) on October 11th.

- iii. DSP Training Stipend Program: Far Northern Regional Center has volunteered to take part in the first roll out of the DSP internships. The Department is working with regional centers in recruiting individuals to move into a direct services profession. Our present focus is day program internships. As long as they have the ability to provide a mentor they can participate.

It has been identified that Job Coaches are essential for success. Jane Work is working on a program reaching out to individuals that may be retired or no longer working but have expertise and knowledge to share with individuals that are looking for

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employment. Matching up those individuals with knowledge and those seeking to learn more.

- iv. Long Term Support Services Committee: Working to establish supports for individuals and caregivers. Currently working with two agencies to provide network facilitation. Working with the parent and anyone who really knows that individual who can pass on important information.

The Alice Carroll Foundation offers support to do advanced health care directives and the end of life plan.

Outside of this committee we as the Regional Center would like to develop a policy for end of life planning and what should be considered and how we can support individuals through this process. The Regional Center is often called on to make these hard decisions. The clinical team along with Dr. Austin our Medical Director are working on a draft establishing an end of life policy. We will continue to be proactive in putting this policy into place.

- v. Self Determination Program: Local advisory committee did a movie. This video includes families currently using the SDP program. After the showing of the movie there will be time for individuals to ask questions to those families in the movie regarding their experiences.
- vi. Northern California Learning Institute(NCLI) session just ended and was successful. We will be looking at ways to keep this going.
- vii. Healthy Living: Ways we can support individuals with a healthy lifestyle. Dr Austin and the clinical team are reviewing a program that was implemented at the Orange County Regional Center. Upon review of this information they will be looking at ways this can be implemented in our catchment area.

12. Announcements, Reports, Questions and Answers, Summary Comments: All Board Members

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- i. William Moore gave a report of the Chico chapter People First meeting. They are currently working on their Christmas party. This chapter will be donating \$200 to the Maui Fire victims.
- ii. Teri M. gave a report of the Red Bluff chapter People First meeting. Meeting mostly consisted of brainstorming for next year.
- iii. Adrian Hugo recommended that prizes for the Tribal Engagement Program be geared more towards adults such as T-shirts.

13. Recognition/Success Stories: Siskiyou County Opportunity Center

- i. Fourteen individuals were present to accept the recognition. Expression of gratitude to the Opportunity Center in how their team supported individuals that were in transition from the Shasta County Opportunity Center. This team stepped up with absolutely no fear in regards to their ability to support these individuals. Thanks to this team things went well during a really hard time.

14. Transition to Executive (Closed) Session, W & I 4663 (a),

- (1) Real estate negotiations.
- (2) The appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, or dismissal of a regional center employee.
- (3) Employee salaries and benefits.
- (4) Labor contract negotiations.
- (5) Pending litigation

Motion and second to move into close session Andreas Economopoulos and William Moore, No discussion, Motion passed

- i. Closed Session

Motion and second to move out of closed session Araceli Garcia and William Moore, No discussion, Motion passed

15. Next Meeting: November 16 and 17, 2023, Gaia Hotel, Anderson, CA

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- 16. Adjournment:** Motion and second William Moore and Patricia McCarthy, No discussion Motion passed
Meeting adjourned 12:45 PM

Respectfully submitted by:

Shelly Nickle

Administrative Assistant

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