

HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER  
Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC)  
February Meeting Minutes  
February 4, 2026

**Opening:**

Harbor Self Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC) was called to order at 6:04 PM on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, via Zoom.

Quorum was established.

**Committee Members Present:**

Deaka McClain – Individual Served, Committee Chair

Tim'an Ford – Peer Advocate, Individual

Kathy Maye – Parent

Miriam Kang – Parent

Maria Elena Walsh – Harbor Regional Center Resource Center, Committee member

Shirlys Gruber – Parent

Mayra Garcia – Parent

Kyungshil Choi – Parent

Jamie Zoellner – OCRA

**Harbor Staff Present:**

Patrick Ruppe – Executive Director

Antoinette Perez – Director

LaWanna Blair – Director

Ricardo Orozco – PCS

Wendy Velazquez – PCS

Kelsey Machado – CSM

Bryan Sanchez – CSM

HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER  
Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC)  
February Meeting Minutes  
February 4, 2026

Jimmy Silvestre – CSM

Maria Suarez – CSM

Griselda Torres – CSM

Maria Rivas – CSM

Maria Magdaleno – CSM

**Visitors:**

Lucy Paz – Interpreter

Albert Feliciano – SCDD Advocate

Sonni Charness – Guidelight Group

Debra Jorgensen – Guidelight Group

Kim Sinclair – ASLA

Preselah Seymore – GT Independence (FMS)

Kayley Proenza – Disability Voices United

Roslyn Gray – The Garden

Kristianna Moralls

Flerida Meza

Erin Bowers

Marleni Pineda

Michael Noel

Jasmine

Linda Wind

Ana Martinez

Oina Enciso

Adelayda Sanchez

Adriana Ortiz

HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER  
Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC)  
February Meeting Minutes  
February 4, 2026

Austyn Perez

Ana Davaa

Alejandra Calderon

Aracely Lopez

Cesilia Ortiz

Lisa Sorenson

Maria Poblete

Reiko Umeda

Reyna Reyes

Rubi Saldana

Shelia Jones

Tamara Pauly

Katherine Rivas

Heidi Swan

Yolaid Roque

Judy Marks

Yolanda Gomez

Silvia Calles

Joana Kent

Jenniferr Prindle

**Abbreviations:**

Harbor: Harbor Regional Center

IF: Independent Facilitator

PCP: Person-Centered Plan

SCDD: State Council on Developmental Disabilities

HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER  
Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC)  
February Meeting Minutes  
February 4, 2026

SDP: Self-Determination Program

DVU: Disability Voices United

FMS: Financial Management Service

DDS: Department of Developmental Services

RFP: Request for Proposal

SDAC: Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee

OCRA: Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy

ASLA: Autism Society of Los Angeles

CSM: Client Services Manager

**Welcome:**

Introductions of committee members and guests via the chat. Present committee members have camera on and introduce themselves verbally.

**Committee Members Responsibilities and Agreements:**

Mission Statement (read aloud by Miriam Kang)

Committee Responsibilities (read aloud by Kathy Maye):

- attend meetings regularly and commit to being on time
- be mindful of participants' time by helping keep meetings on track
- listen attentively
- maintain an open mind towards others
- support the actions and efforts of the committee

Committee Agreements (read aloud by Shirlys Gruber):

- We agree to be respectful of each other
- We agree to respect privacy by not sharing any personal information
- We agree to only ask questions and share comments related to the SDP
- During public comments, raise your hand and wait to speak until called
- One comment per person, unless there is time for additional questions or comments

HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER  
Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC)  
February Meeting Minutes  
February 4, 2026

- If your questions were not answered during the meeting, email your Harbor service coordinator or Harbor PCS team

**Open Forum / Sharing:**

- Preselah Seymore – GT Independence (FMS) – shared about the different FMS models they have and the no cap budget
- Mayra Garcia – where are the IF's that have been trained, there should be follow up to ensure the funds are not going to waste training people who are not practicing. Is interested in the follow up data that is coming.
- Florida Meza – (comment) echoed what Mayra has shared
  - Harbor – followed up about the IF and how we are presenting on data in the future around who is working with harbor individuals and family information
- Shirlys – added to Marya's comments about wanting data

**Questions:**

- Where can the rate update sheet be found – DDS website rate was shared as well as Harbor rates.
- Vendor or non-vendor providers who gets the increase – yes, all budgets will be updated with the new rate.
- Where can they find the agenda for SDAC – it is sent beforehand to the committee members, it is also posted on Harbor's website, and it will be updated before the next meeting.
- How can they add comments to the agenda or comments, do they have an email they can share with the community for people to ask questions – public comments have been moved to open forum in the beginning of the meeting, have everyone share with their community.
- Updates for the RFP – submitted proposals are being reviewed and Harbor will notify the applicants by March 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Committee Chair Statewide Updates:**

Deaka McClain reported the next meeting will take place in April of 2026 and will provide updates accordingly.

HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER  
Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC)  
February Meeting Minutes  
February 4, 2026

- Statewide updates – Town hall meeting on Tuesday February 17<sup>th</sup> @ 1 – 2 pm, flyer can be found on the SCDD website <https://bit.ly/SSDAC-TOWNHALL-2026>

**Approval of Minutes:**

January 7, 2026, minutes were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes made by Tim'an Ford, seconded by Miriam Kang.

Committee member noted she did not see her inquiry reflected in the minutes regarding how past Implementation Funds were spent and how many IF's have been trained and are serving Harbor Families. Committee agreed her inquiry would be reflected in current minutes and that during the scheduled presentations Guidelight and ASLA/Pheonix, we would request that they present this data. They are scheduled to present in March/April. Minutes were approved with corrections.

**Harbor Regional Center Monthly Updates:**

- Rates
  - Harbor shared the minimum wage increase effective January 1, 2026 to \$16.90 per hour and must be paid per hour in the spending plan
  - Milage rates also increased to \$0.725 per mile and it must be reflected in the spending plan
- SDP Implementation Funds
  - Harbor shared an update regarding the implementation funds
  - We would like to increase the number of bilingual IF's in the community
- DDS Ombudsperson
  - As of 2025 DDS is undergoing a structural shift to consolidate
  - It is an independent and neutral office that assists individuals, helps address concerns, and provides information
  - Focus is on fairness, access, transparency and accountability
  - Their purpose is to investigate complaints, compiles reports, data and assist during appeal processes
  - They do not provide legal advice, decide eligibility, or replace the IPP or appeal process

HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER  
Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC)  
February Meeting Minutes  
February 4, 2026

- Assist families by clarifying policies and help families explore options
- Assist the Regional Centers by clarifying concerns, identifying systemic issues, support for consistency
- Contact information provided
- SDP Resource Fair Flyer
  - April 11, 2026 @ 9am – 12pm Harbor Regional Center – Torrance Office
  - Flyers in multiple languages and interpretation will be provided

**Partner Updates:**

- OCRA representative Jamie Zoellner shared updates regarding HCBS Waiver training, general training opportunities, and upcoming Zoom webinars. They provide free legal information to Regional Center individuals and training in SDP, eligibility, IEP, advocacy, assessment questions, IHSS advice and appeal, social security.
- State Council representative Albert Feliciano shared information regarding upcoming orientation sessions and upcoming training sessions on how to give better public comments. They are an advocacy agency that provides training on IPP strategies, anti-bullying, SDP, appeals, and general questions on how to navigate the systems they are entitled to.

**SDP Success Story:**

- Harbor shared a participant success story highlighting the positive impact of the Self-Determination Program.

**Closing:**

- Upcoming SDP Orientation
  - February 18, 2026, from 1 PM – 4 PM (English)
  - February 24, 2026, from 5 PM – 8 PM (Spanish)
- Next SDAC Meeting
  - March 4, 2026, from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM via Zoom.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:17 PM.

HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER  
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February Meeting Minutes  
February 4, 2026

Minutes submitted by: Kelsey Machado (CSM)