

HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER
Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC)
Meeting Minutes
April 1, 2026

Opening:

Harbor Self Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC) was called to order at 6:05 PM on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, via Zoom.

Quorum was established.

Committee Members Present:

Deaka McClain – Individual Served, Committee Chair

Kathy Maye – Parent

Maria Elena Walsh – Harbor Regional Center Resource Center

Shirlys Gruber – Parent

Mayra Garcia – Parent

Kyungshil Choi – Parent

Miriam Kang – Parent

Tim'an Ford – Peer Advocate

Harbor Staff Present:

Patrick Ruppe – Executive Director

Antoinette Perez – Director

Judy Taimi – Director

Ricardo Orozco – PCS

David Hernandez – CSM

Bryan Sanchez – CSM

Kelsey Machado – CSM

Jimmy Silvestre – CSM

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Maria Suarez - CSM

Erika Castillo - CSM

Maria Rivas - CSM

Marta Gomez - CSM

Visitors:

Lucy Paz - Interpreter

Albert Feliciano - SCDD Advocate

Naomi Hagel - Phoenix Facilitation

Kim Sinclair - ASLA

Preselah Seymore - GT Independence (FMS)

Tina Ewing-Wilson - Disability Voices United

Roslyn Gray - The Garden

Gina Woodruff - AIM Living Services

Jake Woodruff - AIM Living Services

Aastyn Strandberg - IF

Tina Ewing-Wilson - DVU

Raina Killingsworth - IF

Evelyn Rodriguez - IF with Latino Parents mentor LLC

Austyn Perez - PPL FMS

Maria G Santos

Livier Perez

Lourdes Gomez

Aastyn Strandberg

Agnes Pitlik

Ara Lopez

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Camen Silva

Carmyn Wyrick

Carmen Vasquez

Cesilia Ortiz

Flerida Meza

Heeli Kim-Jeng

Irma P

Delia Fernandez

Junko Kubo

Tina Ewing-Wilson

Teresa Hernandez

Letecia Espinoza

Flerida Meza

Adelayda Sanchez

Lisa Sorenson

Marina Roman

Jeanise

Abbreviations:

Harbor: Harbor Regional Center

IF: Independent Facilitator

PCP: Person-Centered Plan

SCDD: State Council on Developmental Disabilities

SDP: Self-Determination Program

DVU: Disability Voices United

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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 Maria Elena Walsh and Shirlys Gruber)

Committee Responsibilities (read aloud by Maria Elena Walsh):

- 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 Deaka McClain):

- 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

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

Open Forum:

- Cesilia Ortiz (Padres for Ninos) – Offering SDP information for free to the community at Tichenor.
- Preselah Seymore (GT Independence) – FMS that is interested in educating the community with SDP, no budge cap, no waitlist.
- Taylor Cheyenne Reynolds (Taylor Care) – Personal Assistance company and Advocacy in education group.

Public Comments

- Lourdes Gomez – comment regarding extensions in SDP budget years when they are transferring into Harbor.
- Marya Garcia – not enough staff to review SDP documents and is requesting more staff be trained to review.
- Shirlys Gruber – timelines around the budget and spending plan and would like more clarity.
 - Timeline document shared in the chat.
- Shirlys Gruber – would like introductions of the staff who are able to make decisions in SDP and who is on the PCS team. Are documents reviewed by age or how they are reviewed.
 - Documents go through the IPP team for review. This is when the needs are discussed and how Harbor can meet the needs.
- Cesilia Ortiz – what is the timeline for a spending plan modification (how long does it take?). Who does harbor work with as 099 to get documents processed?
 - Cambrian FMS, ACE FMS, PPL FMS, and Community Interface Services
- Mayra Garcia – would like to add information to the next meeting agenda.
- Shirlys Gruber – would like the inclusion of a topic in the next agenda regarding timelines and processes for the submission of spending plans, budgets, and coding within the Self-Determination Program.

Committee Chair Statewide Updates:

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

- Deaka, Miriam, and Kathy were able to put together a letter that will be sent to our legislators. The letter was presented during the meeting and emphasized that Harbor staff is not involved in creating the letter. The letter will be submitted by April 8, and will be sent by Monday 4/6/2026.
 - Kathy read the letter aloud regarding the SDP Implementation funds and how they are used. The letter was drafted based on a sample letter template from state counsel (Lanterman RC and North LA RC) and well as DVU.
 - Shirlys – likes that the Hispanic community and disparity is reflected in the letter.
 - Miriam – reviewed the letter in a certain area because of wrong wording.
 - Patrick – the department is not trying to cut the implementation funds they are going to reallocate funds to be put towards primary purpose of the funds (background checks). The current implementation funds were left over funds that are now needed in the upcoming year (26/27) since SDP is growing at a rapid rate.
 - Marya – include all of the members of the committee by name in the letter.

Approval of Minutes:

March 4, 2026, minutes were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes made by Miriam Kang, seconded by Maria Elena Walsh.

- Shirlys – at the end of the minutes would like to know who voted in favor and against.
 - Will add the names of committee members
- Mayra – how many people have graduated SDP and any institutions where they have had IF graduated.
 - Not part of the past SDAC meeting and will be reviewed during this meeting in the implementation funds portion.

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Minutes were approved by all committee members in attendance: Deaka McClain, Kathy Maye, Maria Elena Walsh, Shirlys Gruber, Mayra Garcia, Kyungshil Choi, Miriam Kang, Tim'an Ford.

Harbor Regional Center Monthly Updates:

- SDP Proposed Standards for FMS Vendors
 - Why new FMS Standards
 - Slow and poor customer service, late payments, incorrect budget reports, lack of clear guidance
 - Goals for FMS Standards
 - Ensure quality services, provide clear roles and expectations, improve financial accountability, reduce stress for families, ensure timely payments, accurate budget tracking, timely payments, provide more education to participants about their responsibilities as an employer.
 - SDP FMS Standards
 - 16 total standards
 - Eligibility, Financial Solvency, Qualification, General Compliance, Grievances and Complaints, Customer Service, Enrolling the Participant and Service agreement, Individual Budget and Spending Plan, Establishing the Participant-Employer, Establishing the Participant's Service Providers, Establishing the Participant's Employees, Transferring or Terminating Participants, Worker's Compensation, Payments, Billing, Paying and Filing Taxes and Other Tax Responsibility.
 - QR code shared to access the Proposed Standards for FMS Vendors.

- SDP Orientation Survey
 - July 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025
 - 6 orientations were held by harbor during that timeline (3 English and 3 Spanish)
 - Background Information on what SDP is.
 - In 2018 for 101 individuals selected from a lottery system.
 - Harbor Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026

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- Improving the experience and satisfaction of the orientation.
 - A QR code link is provided after every orientation held at Harbor.
 - A reminder email will be sent one week after the orientation.
 - 100 attendees to the orientations, only 30 surveys were complete.
 - Review of survey data.
 - General Impressions and Next Steps
 - Response rates can be higher.
 - Will continue to make improvements.
 - Final words
 - Value the feedback and like to know what is working and what is not working.
 - Continue to share feedback so we can continue to improve.
- Best Practices for an Independent Facilitator (Tabled for next SDAC Meeting)
 - Deaka called for a vote – motion provided by Miriam Kang, second by Mathy Maye.
 - All committee members present voted in favor.
 - Deaka McClain, Kathy Maye, Maria Elena Walsh, Shirlys Gruber, Mayra Garcia, Kyungshil Choi, Miriam Kang, Tim'an Ford.
- SDP Resource Fair Flyer
 - April 11, 2026, @ 9am – 12pm Harbor Regional Center Torrance
 - Flyers in multiple languages and interpretation is provided
 - 20 providers will be present
 - There will be an FMS and Independent Facilitator presentation
- SDP Implementation Funds (Tabled for next SDAC Meeting)
 - Deaka called for a vote – motion provided by Miriam Kang, second by Mathy Maye.
 - All committee members present voted in favor: Deaka McClain, Kathy Maye, Maria Elena Walsh, Shirlys Gruber, Mayra Garcia, Kyungshil Choi, Miriam Kang, Tim'an Ford.

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Partner Updates:

- OCRA
 - Jamie Zoellner shared a link to upcoming trainings on conservatorship, social recreation, and the fair hearing process.
 - <https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/events>

- State Council (SCDD)
 - Albert Feliciano shared more information about SCDD providing SDP orientation (provided link to register and more information).
 - <https://scdd.ca.gov/sdp-orientation/>
 - Broken up into two parts (Part A and Part B) based on feedback from the community. Each part is two hours long. Will receive a certificate after each part is complete.

- ASLA
 - Kim Sinclair – shared data on the last eight module long training.
 - Worked with past IF's that had missed certain modules and were not able to gather their certificate at the end. Now more IF's are becoming certified based on the modules now being complete.

SDP Success Story:

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

Closing:

- Next SDAC Meeting
 - May 6, 2026, from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM via Zoom.

- Meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Minutes submitted by: Kelsey Machado (CSM).