

Minutes
ARCA Board of Directors
August 22, 2025

The Sonesta Irvine, Catalina I Ballroom
17941 Von Karman Avenue, Irvine, CA 92614
Zoom Video/Teleconference ([link](#))

Board of Directors Members Present:

Lori Banales, Kelly Pennington, ACRC
Mathew Bahr, Randy Tellalian, CVRC
Gloria Wong, ELARC
Srbui Ovsepyan, Brigitte Sroujeh, FDLRC
Melissa Gruhler, Cali McKinzie, FNRC
Eric Zigman, Marta Guzman, GGRC
Patrick Ruppe, Joe Czarske, HRC
Lavinia Johnson, IRC
Enrique Roman, Tracey Miller, KRC
Gabriel Rogin, Martha Valdez, NBRC
Angela Pao-Johnson, Lety Garcia, NLACRC
Kim Smalley, Mike Sawyer, RCRC
Larry Landauer, Sandy Martin, RCOG
Becky Nanyonjo, RCEB
Cynthia Torres, SCLARC
Javier Zaldivar, Lisa Lopez, SARC
Jesse Weller, Julie Chetney, SG/PRC
Mark Klaus, Terri Colachis, SDRC
Mark Wolfe, TCRC
Leinani Walter, Erria Kaalund, VMRC
Jane Borochoff, Almarietha Mathews, WRC

Board of Directors Members Absent:

Briseida Ramirez, IRC
Frank Paré, RCEB
Dexter Henderson, SCLARC
Omar Noorzad, TCRC

ARCA Advisory Representatives

Christine Couch, VMRC, Co-Chair, Directors of Client Services

Miguel Larios, SDRC

Guests Present:

Pete Cervinka, Dr. Michi Gates, DDS

Jonathan Padilla, RCRC

Diva Johnson, TCRC

Kate Kinnamont, SDRC

Kao Saechao, FNRC

Allen Dickens, FNRC

Vanda Yung, WRC

Alicia Schott, VMRC

Amina Abdul-Hakim

Anh Nguyen

Ami Sullivan

Maureen Fitzgerald

Carmen Silva

Hilda Mendez

Tim Jim

Chinh Nguyen

Gilda Giron

Carmen Silva

Victoria Preciado

Thao Tran

Gail Crenshaw

Mariana Guerrero

Jeroka Robinson

Gabriel Baca

Valerio Baca

Leticia Mendoza

Rosa Hernandez

Michelle DelRosario

Carmen Baca

Miguel Lugo

Ara Lopez

Juana Santacruz

Lizeth Valencia

Maribel

Gabriela Ramirez

Isela Cruz

Shirleys Gruber

Lulu A

Enedina Figueroa

Graciela Marquez

Laura Adjunta

Zenaida Tolentino

ARCA Staff Present:

Amy Westling, Tony Anderson, Lauren Ettensohn, Sidney Jackson, Roxy Ortiz, Vivian Umenei, Darline Dupree, Rick Rollens

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM by Terri Colachis.

Executive Session

M/S/C: To enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues.

During Executive Session, members discussed personnel issues.

M/S/C: To leave Executive Session.

Introduction

Introductions were made around the room.

Approval of Agenda

The Board of Directors agenda was presented.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of June 26, 2025, Board of Directors meeting were presented for approval.

M/S/C: To approve the minutes as presented from June 26, 2025.

Public Comment

Mike Sawyer announced the retirement of Dr. Kim Smalley from Redwood Coast Regional Center.

Gabriel Baca expressed concerns about funding, particularly given the current state of the federal government. He hopes that ARCA supports legislation that benefits the individuals served.

Roxy Ortiz announced that a questionnaire is available at the back of the room for the Board to complete, which will be included in the "Meet the Board" section of the ARCA newsletter.

Terri Colachis noted that some Delegates have suggested adding individuals served to the ARCA Board, as members term out.

President's Report (ARCA)- Terri Colachis

Terri Colachis expressed her deep appreciation for the development of the Delegate report and recommended that everyone take the time to read it. She also acknowledged the dedication of the Legislative Committee to their legislative work. Additionally, she highlighted the Time Magazine cover that features a focus on autism.

FNRC Presentation: Tribal Engagement: Strengthening Relations

Kao Saechao, Community Services Supervisor at the Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC), and Allen

Dickens, Tribal Liaison at FNRC, presented on Tribal Engagement. Mr. Saechao introduced the members of the Tribal Relations team and provided demographic information about the tribes in their catchment area. Their outreach efforts included sending letters to Tribal Resources and the social services department, giving presentations to tribal members about the regional center, and participating in tribal-related events. Allen Dickens shared detailed information about several key engagement activities. One major one is trying to have contracts with the tribal communities.

Sidney Jackson inquired if FNRC demographics included Early Start and if they are working together with the Family Resource Center on child-find.

Mr. Saechao replied that it does not include early start and yes FNRC is working with community-based organizations (CBOs).

Mark Wolfe asked in the demographics presented were just for FNRC or statewide.

Mr. Saechao replied that it is only for FNRC.

DDS Report

Dr. Michi Gates thanked Dr. Kim Smalley for her hard work and also praised Tracey Miller for her contributions. She shared that the survey related to the Standardized Individualized Program Plan (IPP) is not getting as many responses as anticipated despite the agreement form including a QR code for the survey.

Dr. Gates mentioned that the Regional Center Performance Measure (RCPM) training letter for service coordinator skills will be sent out soon, along with the 2025-26 RCPM letter.

The Department is meeting with regional centers, providers, and families of children who have high needs to explore needed additions to the safety net. DDS is continuing necessary work to advance lessons learned through a tech project piloted at the Alta California Regional Center (ACRC).

A major focus is supporting compliance with the Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) rules due to the requirement being tied to eligibility for the Quality Incentive Program (QIP).

The Department is working with focus groups to improve the standardized intake process. They are holding separate sessions for Early Start and Lanterman intakes.

Pete Cervinka shared an update on rate reform, focusing on transportation challenges. He hopes to have solutions for the transportation service rate model ready by mid-September. A new law requires the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to update rate models every two years, but it does not require funding for these updates.

The state is entering a time of uncertain revenue. A major issue is the Managed Care Organization (MCO) tax, which brings in about \$20 billion. Of this, \$12 billion goes back to Medi-Cal rates, leaving \$8 billion to strengthen the General Fund. With the passage of HR 1, this source of funding will no longer

be available to California.

He noted it is important to adequately fund regional centers, even if it means phasing in the funding. This is one of DDS's top two priorities, with the other being the modernization of data systems through the LOIS project.

On the federal level, Medi-Cal work requirements will not apply to individuals with disabilities and some caregivers. The Department is looking for ways to lessen the burden on regional centers, individuals, and families to prove disability status. Mr. Cervinka also reported that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a final rule for Medicaid that will take effect on July 9, 2026. This rule introduces a new grievance process. The Department plans to combine some grievance processes to manage complaints more efficiently.

ARCA Executive Director's Report – Amy Westling

Amy Westling shared her appreciation for Kim Smalley and mentioned she has worked in 11 states and was thankful for her long-term support.

A. **Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget Wrap Up**

Ms. Westling acknowledged that the current budgetary environment is challenging, and the last budget cycle was characterized by significant uncertainty. Given the difficulties the state is facing, she expressed relief that DDS is prioritizing regional center operations as a critical component of its investment to support the overall mission. A key message from the Master Plan is the necessity of clearly identifying desired outcomes, along with the funding needed to achieve success.

B. **Major Developmental Services System Updates**

Ms. Westling referred to the attached document, which details the policy areas currently in progress and their respective statuses. She noted that this document can be shared with the board and staff so they can easily see where things currently stand and what the next steps will be.

C. **Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget Priorities**

There has been considerable discussion regarding budget priorities. This year will be significant due to the impact of federal issues, which will require making difficult decisions. For instance, the federal food program, CalFresh in California, has been fully funded by federal resources, and the anticipated state share exceeds \$3 billion.

The Executive Committee recommends ARCA focus its budget priorities in three main areas. The first priority is to advocate for the state to create an intentional employment plan that crosses departmental boundaries, as navigating supports and services can be quite challenging. With the need for competent and accessible benefits counselors. The second priority focuses on replacing the funding formula for regional center operations. The third priority is supporting the workforce of DSPs, as well as family caregivers.

M/S/C: To approve Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget Priorities.

D. Proposed Fair Labor Standards Act Draft Response

Sidney Jackson presented the draft response to proposed changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act. This proposal would exempt domestic workers from receiving overtime pay, which adds to the already heavy burdens faced by the workforce. The Executive Committee recommended submitting ARCA's comments in opposition to the proposal.

M/S/C: To approve the Proposed Fair Labor Standards Act Draft Response.

E. Respite Tool Draft Response

Ms. Westling noted that under SB 138, there is a requirement for the implementation of a standardized respite tool. DDS has released a draft for public comment. The Executive Committee recommends ARCA develop a framework that supports standardization, emphasizing that the amount of service someone receives should not be influenced by where they live.

M/S/C: To approve submitting a letter that captures feedback from board for the Respite Tool.

F. Board Members Competencies

Tony Anderson provided background on the development of the Board Members Competencies. It includes about 25 topics organized in five categories. This report can be used by regional center boards as well as the California Collaborative for Developmental Disabilities to inform the upcoming ARCA Academy session.

M/S/C: To approve Board Members Competencies.

Treasurer's Report – Gloria Wong

Gloria Wong provided the financial statement and referenced the statements from July. She mentioned that the month ended with a net loss, however staff will monitor for the next quarter and will make adjustments accordingly.

M/S/C: To accept the financial statements for July 2025

Mixteco Animation Project- Diva Johnson, Associate Executive Director TCRC

Diva Johnson, TCRC Associate Executive Director, presented and played a regional center outreach video for the Mixteco community. The comic book will be coming out which will have the TCRC logo removed so it can be used by all regional centers. TCRC has about 400 videos available in about 20 different languages. TCRC will develop a portal to organize these videos.

Legislative Report – Eric Zigman

A. Federal Updates

Tony Anderson noted anticipated cuts were expected this summer, but cuts were delayed due to later dates for policy changes.

B. Legislative Updates

Report yielded due to time considerations.

C. Key Legislation Update

- i. **AB 1172 (Nguyen) Adult Day programs: administration of inhalable emergency antiseizure medications.** The author's office is very optimistic this bill will be signed by the Governor.
- ii. **AB 1099 (Bryan) Developmental services: initial intake: assessment.** This bill is currently in Suspense in the Appropriations Committee, which will meet next week.
- iii. **AB 1208 (Addis) California Developmental Disability Services Quality, Performance, and Outcomes Act of 2025.** This bill is currently in Suspense in the Appropriations Committee, which will meet next week.
- iv. **SB 258 (Wahab) Crimes: rape.** ARCA has been working with groups to resolve their opposition to the bill. This bill is currently in Suspense in the Appropriations Committee, which will meet next week.

ARCA Board Committee Reports

A. Executive Committee – Terri Colachis

Report yielded due to time constraints.

B. Board Delegates Group – Kelly Pennington

Kelly Pennington thanked Vanda Yung for her service as this is her last meeting with the Board. She also welcomed the two new Delegates. Ms. Pennington reminded Delegates to register for the hotel for the ARCA Academy.

C. Directors Group – Javier Zaldivar

Javier Zaldivar provided an update on the Executive Directors' retreat. They had great discussions around supporting Boards, onboarding, and system stabilities.

D. Finance Committee – Patrick Ruppe

Patrick Ruppe shared that the committee met last week, during which DDS provided an update on allocations and cash flow. They also received information on LOIS, noting that the Department plans to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) in early 2027. One significant topic of discussion was generative artificial intelligence (AI).

Additionally, they discussed Public Records Act (PRA) funding. The impact of the provider directory was also a topic of conversation. Last year, some employment numbers were not taken into consideration for the Regional Center Performance Measures reporting. DDS will re-evaluate those figures and publish the updated data in mid-September.

E. Client Advisory Committee – Tracey Miler

The ARCA CAC met on July 25, 2025, during which they discussed recent events at the regional center. The group is planning to present on housing at the Supported Life Institute. The next meeting is scheduled for August 29, 2025.

F. Contract Negotiating Committee – Larry Landauer

The Committee is finalizing three amendments. The first amendment focuses on public health information, specifically addressing what to do when it is compromised and how to handle breaches. The second amendment pertains to emergency planning and preparedness, with the

goal of clarifying expectations in that area. The final amendment is significant, as it incorporates generative AI language that is already included in the contract, particularly related to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

G. Standards & Practices Committee –*Mark Klaus*

The committee is meeting next Tuesday August 26, 2025. They are working best practices in the area of strategic planning and strategic thinking.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Information Sharing

None.

Adjournment/Next Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 12:02 pm. The next meeting will be October 17, 2025.