



A Virtual Conference on California's Self-Determination Program

Friday, December 2, 2022
On the Whova Platform



Conference Agenda

(As of 12/01. Subject to change.)

8:30 - 9 am Exhibitor Expo

Meet service providers, FMSs, Independent Facilitators, advocates and others!

9 - 9:25 am Welcome and Greetings

ASL, Spanish and Korean interpretation provided

- Sydney Edmond, Poet and Artist, Self-advocate with autism who types to communicate
- Nancy Bargmann, Director, California Department of Developmental Disabilities
- Judy Mark, President, Disability Voices United
- Holly Carmichael, CEO, GT Independence, Freedom Conference Sponsor

9:25 - 10 am Full Conference Session

The Self-Determination Program Changed My Life!

Testimonials from SDP Participants

Hear from SDP participants about the many ways that the program has changed every aspect of the way they live, work, and play in their communities.

ASL, Spanish and Korean interpretation provided

- Chris Benedict, DJ, public speaker, Djofability
- Dylan Bourne, SDP Participant
- Daniel Delgado, Freelance Storyboard Artist, PSA Storytime Videos
- Molly Kennedy, Director, SELF-Start
- Sean McElwee, President and Chief Creative Officer, Seanese T's
- Katya Saldana, Integradora, Integrated Community Collaborative
- Nikita Wang, Student, East LA College, Social Media and Marketing Intern, Academy of Special Dreams

Moderator: Tim Jin, Assistant Director of Communication Rights, Disability Voices United

10 - 10:15 am Exhibitor Expo

Meet service providers, FMSs, Independent Facilitators, advocates and others!

10:15 - 11:45 am Morning Breakout Sessions

Everybody In: Ensuring Equity in Program Enrollment

Your race, ethnicity, disability, or where you live shouldn't affect whether you are able to successfully participate and benefit from the Self-Determination Program. It also shouldn't affect your budget, your services, or how you're treated. This session will discuss the steps we can take to build a program with equitable experiences and outcomes for everybody.

English with Spanish interpretation and ASL

Panelists:

- Rima Cornish, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community Coordinator, Alta California Regional Center
- Cecilia Chang, Co-Founder/Director, Spectrum of Hope Foundation
- Fernando Gomez, Parent Advocate, Co-Founder, Integrated Community Collaborative
- Carla Lehmann, Sr. Independent Facilitator and Founder, Exceptional Connections, Chair, Westside Regional Center Advisory Committee
- Jesse Weller, Executive Director, San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center
- Ikea Wilson, SDP Participant

Moderator: Miguel Lugo, Assistant Director, Outreach and Leadership Training, Disability Voices United

Breaking the Barriers to Building a Spending Plan

Many participants have faced barriers in developing their spending plans - from questions about their goods and services to lack of clarity of the rules. This session will focus on how we can make the rules more clear and make the process easier.

Please note: This session is Spanish only; an English session is available in the afternoon.

Panelists:

- Olivia Gonzalez, Director of Community Relations, Aveanna Healthcare Support Services
- Silvia Renteria-Haro, Consumer Case Manager, North LA County Regional Center
- Carola Camacho Maranon, Parent and Independent Facilitator, Resilience Facilitation Services
- Yadira Morales, Service Navigator, NeuroNav
- Victoria Preciado, Facilitadora Independiente, Programa de Autodeterminación

Moderator: Gladys Lizarraga, Community Integradora/IF, Integrated Community Collaborative, Parent of SDP Participant

10:15 - 11:45 am Morning Breakout Sessions (continued)

Let's Be Included: Keeping Compliant with the HCBS Settings Rule

Join this session to discuss the Home and Community-Based Services inclusive settings rule, and about what counts as an integrated setting. As the entire regional center system is required to meet these rules in March 2023, how has the SDP addressed them?

English only

Panelists:

- Laura Brackin, President/CEO, Brackin & Associates
- Sascha Bittner, Co-Chair, Legislative Committee, Disabilities Caucus Vice Chair, California Democratic Party and Chair, Golden Gate Regional Center Advisory Committee
- Brendali Maldonado, Participant Choice Specialist, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center
- Kim Mills, CEO, A Better Life Together, Inc (ABLT)
- Sheraden Nicholau, Regional Manager, Bay Area, State Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Scott Shepard, Adjunct Faculty, Cal State Northridge, Executive Director, Avenues SLS

Moderator: Mark Melanson, Executive Director, California Community Living Network

Being the Boss: Self-Advocates Running Their Own Self-Determination Program

Learn how to run your own program as a self-advocate - from people like you who are already doing it. What are the strategies to make your own decisions and get support when you need it? What are the barriers self-advocates face?

English only

Panelists:

- Melissa Crisp-Cooper, Associate Director of Participant Experience, The Arc SF
- Tina Ewing, Artist and CEO, Covers and Critters, SDP Participant
- Tim Jin, Assistant Director of Communication Rights, Disability Voices United
- Robert Miland Taylor, Former Chair, Redwood Coast Regional Center Advisory Committee
- Doug Pascover, Executive Director, Imagine Supported Living Services
- Heidi Peratoner, SDP Participant
- Santiago Villalobos, Self-advocate, Phoenix Facilitation, SDP Participant

Moderator: Darlene Hanson, Director of Communication Rights, Disability Voices United

10:15 - 11:45 am Morning Breakout Sessions (continued)

Learning Together: Ensuring Consistent Training for All

Effective, plain language trainings and orientations have been lacking in the SDP for participants and families. But service coordinators and other professionals also need much more training in the SDP. This session discusses what consistent, comprehensive, and understandable training is needed.

English only

Panelists:

- Molly Kennedy, Director, SELF-Start
- Jamie Markey, Director of Community Development, Mains'l
- Kristianna Moralls, Executive Director, Autism Support Community, Independent Facilitator
- Christine Tolbert, SDP Manager, State Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Amy Westling, Executive Director, Association of Regional Centers Agencies
- Rick Wood, Co-chair, Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee

Moderator: Kishan Sreedhar, Member, Self-Determination Advisory Committee, San Andreas Regional Center

Employing Workers the Right Way: Ensuring SDP Participants Follow Labor Laws

SDP participants and their families must follow all labor laws when employing direct staff, but many don't know the rules. This has led to misunderstandings and disagreements with FMSs, participants, and the staff they hire to support them. This session will discuss how we can all get the right information to avoid these problems in the future.

English with Spanish interpretation

Panelists:

- Holly Carmichael, Chief Executive Officer, GT Independence
- Rosie Lasca, Independent Facilitator Mentor, Speaker and Communication Expert, Independent Facilitator Training Academy
- Victor Lira, Region President, Support Services, Aveanna Healthcare
- Kate Murray, President, Applied Self-Direction
- Marleni Pineda, Integradora, Integrated Community Collaborative

Moderator: Alma Morales, Area Vice President, Business Development, Aveanna Healthcare Support Services

10:15 - 11:45 am Morning Breakout Sessions (continued)

The Impact of the New Directives on Independent Facilitators

A recent directive from the Department of Developmental Services lays out new requirements for independent facilitators who assist participants in entering the SDP for the first time. These requirements have led some IFs to say they won't take on new clients after the rules go into effect. This session discusses the impact of the directive and what the future might hold.

English only

Panelists:

- Jamie Cha-McGrath, Service Provider and IF, Life Enrichment Project LLC
- Sonni Charness, Founder/CEO, Guidelight Group
- Elizabeth Gomez, Co-Founder/Director, Integrated Community Collaborative, Parent Advocate
- Sandra McElwee, Independent Facilitator, Empower PCP

Moderator: Ronda Kopito, Resource Specialist, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Streamlining the Process: Getting Participants into the SDP More Quickly

People shouldn't be waiting months or years to get into the SDP. Our panelists will discuss what can be done to make the process quicker and easier.

English with Spanish interpretation

Panelists:

- Dustlyne Beavers, CEO and Founder, First Choice Solutions
- Michi Gates, Executive Director, Kern Regional Center
- Terrasel Jones, Director of State Services, GT Independence
- Jan Opsvig, Independent Facilitator, Empower PCP
- Anne Silcher, Director of Services, Mains'l

Moderator: Linda Chan Rapp, Mentor Parent, Down Syndrome Association of Los Angeles, Parent of SDP Participant

10:15 - 11:45 am Morning Breakout Sessions (continued)

Communication as a Right: Ensuring Non-Speakers Thrive in the SDP

The SDP is for everyone, including people with communication support needs. But are people who are non-speaking able to access and benefit from the SDP or are they facing additional barriers? Hear from expert self-advocates, family members, and communication partners on this topic.

English with Korean interpretation

Panelists:

- Tami Barmache, Parent and Autism Community Advocate
- Blair Brown, Blair's Angel Team, CEO, Brightly Woven Support, SDP Participant
- Kyungshil Choi, Founder, Korean SDP Network
- Elizabeth & Christian Cuevas, SDP Participant and Parent
- Linda Drattell, Board Member, California Communications Access Foundation, Ability Central
- Elaine Hall, Founder/Artistic Director, The Miracle Project. and TV and Film Access Coordinator
- Neal Katz, SDP Participant
- Zachary, Terry & Ian West, SDP Participant and Parents

Moderator: Diana Pastora Carson, Lecturer, San Diego State University

On Board the SDP Train: Getting Traditional Services Providers Excited About the Program

Part of sustaining the SDP is getting traditional services providers excited about the program. Our panel discusses how we can make that happen.

English only

Panelists:

- Debbie Ball, VP, Employment Services, Easterseals Southern California, Inc
- Harvey Lapin, Dentist, Family Advocate, Parent of SDP Participant
- Soo Lee, PhD, Associate Project Scientist, UCLA/Special Education Consultant, SERAC
- Gabriela Sanchez, Senior Regional Director, Tierra Del Sol
- Maria Nagy, Talent Manager, Jack Medved Animal Kingdom, Parent of SDP Participant
- Rachel Palmer Teefy, Independent Facilitator, Progressive Employment Concepts
- Susie Pittman, Chief Executive Officer, BuildAbility

Moderator: Tony Anderson, Executive Director, Valley Mountain Regional Center

11:45 -12:15 pm Lunch Break and Exhibitor Expo

12:15 - 1:45 pm Afternoon Breakout Sessions

Fixing FMS Frustrations

Using an FMS (financial management service) is required in the SDP. But there have been many issues – from long waiting lists to poor customer service to participants and families not understanding the process to delayed payments by regional centers to the FMS. This breakout session includes a discussion of solutions for many of those issues.

English only

Panelists:

- Jason Bergquist, Director of FMS, Mains'l
- Elizabeth Diaz, Program Manager, Valley Mountain Regional Center
- Terrasel Jones, Director of State Services, GT Independence
- Victor Lira, Region President, Support Services, Aveanna Healthcare
- Gladys Lizarraga, Community Integradora/IF, Integrated Community Collaborative, Parent of SDP Participant
- Vicki L. Smith, Ph.D., Deputy Director, Program and Policy Development Division, CA Department of Developmental Services
- Yvette Torres, Executive Director, Acumen Fiscal Agent
- Claudia Wenger, CEO & Founder, Claudia Cares Consulting, Inc, Independent Facilitator

Moderator: Kelly Kulzer-Reyes, Co-chair, California Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition, SDP Trainer, Disability Voices United

Breaking the Barriers to Building a Spending Plan

Many participants have faced barriers in developing their spending plans - from questions about their goods and services to lack of clarity of the rules. This session will focus on how we can make the rules more clear and make the process easier.

Please note: This session is in English only; a Spanish session is available in the morning.

English only

Panelists:

- LaShaun Golden, Parent of SDP Participant
- Debra Jorgensen, Independent Facilitator and Client Coach, Guidelight Group
- Adrian Jimenez, Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center
- Soo Lee, PhD, Associate Project Scientist, UCLA/Special Education Consultant, SERAC
- Alma Morales, Area Vice President, Business Development, Aveanna Healthcare Support Services

Moderator: Joyce Clark, Director, Family Empowerment Center, San Diego State University

12:15 - 1:45 pm Afternoon Breakout Sessions (continued)

The New Fairer Hearings and the SDP

Fair hearings have long been criticized for being unfair. But a recent change in the law intends to make the process a whole lot fairer. Experts on the new law will discuss how the fair hearing process will change and how it affects the SDP.

English with Spanish AND Korean interpretation

Panelists:

- Pete Cervinka, Chief Deputy, Data Analytics and Strategy, CA Dept of Developmental Services
- Dora Contreras, Integradora, Integrated Community Collaborative
- Vivian Haun, Senior Attorney, Disability Rights California
- Evelyn Rodriguez, Independent Facilitator and IEP Advocate, Exceptional Connections
- Valerie Vanaman, Founder and Managing Partner, Vanaman German LLP
- Soo Yun, Attorney, Law Offices of Soo Yun, Korean SDP Network

Moderator: Nina Spiegelman, Policy Director, Disability Voices United

Making Things Better: Oversight and Accountability over the SDP

Oversight and accountability of the SDP are essential if the program is going to improve and the barriers are overcome. The self-determination law already has lines of oversight, such as the local and state advisory committees, the SDP Ombudsperson, and DDS. Hear from this esteemed panel to discuss how to improve the oversight of the SDP.

English with Spanish interpretation

Panelists:

- Fernando Gomez, Parent Advocate, Co-Founder, Integrated Community Collaborative
- Molly Kennedy, Director, SELF-Start
- Connie Lapin, DD & Family Advocate, Speech Pathologist, Board Member, Disability Voices United
- Suzy Requarth, Self-Determination Program Ombudsperson, Dept of Developmental Services
- Melinda Sullivan, Executive Director, Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center
- Rick Wood, Co-Chair, Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee

Moderator: Allen Erenbaum, President, Erenbaum Legal Strategies, Inc

12:15 - 1:45 pm Afternoon Breakout Sessions (continued)

Beyond the Beginning: Overcoming Barriers to Moving into Year 2 and Beyond

Many participants entering their second or third year in the SDP report concerns about delays and bureaucracy in what should be a standard process. This panel discusses how to ensure a seamless transition to the next year in the program and break down the barriers that exist.

English only

Panelists:

- Diane, Ray & Jeremy Bernstein, Student and SDP Participant, Independent Facilitators
- Holly Carmichael, Chief Executive Officer, GT Independence
- Taleen Khatchadourian, Independent Facilitator & Life Coach, Guidelight Group
- Nestor Nieves, Outreach Coordinator, Integrated Community Collaborative, SDP Participant
- Lori Walker, Chair, North LA Regional Center Advisory Committee, Parent of SDP Participant

Moderator: Carolyn Tellalian, Licensed Clinical Social Work/Adult Transition Navigator, Valley Children's Hospital

Not Just for Some: People with High Support Needs Succeeding in the SDP

We hear reports that people with high support needs are told the SDP won't work for them. Well, this panel will show that, in fact, the SDP allows the flexibility and control that ensures people who need a lot of support can thrive. This panel of experts will discuss the opportunities, as well as the challenges, such as finding and keeping good staff, working with an FMS, ensuring community inclusion.

English only

Panelists:

- Tammi Bradley, Independent Facilitator, Guidelight Group
- Richard Dier, Executive Director, Disability Management Resources, Inc, Parent of SDP Participant
- Killian & Beth Hynes, Student, Loyola Marymount University, SDP Participant and Parent
- Howard McBroom, Advocate, Easterseals Southern California, SDP Participant
- Alison Morantz, James and Nancy Kelso Professor of Law / Director of Stanford I/DD Law and Policy Project (SIDDLAPP), Parent of SDP Participant
- Jeremy Sicile-Kira, Artist, Presenter, Jeremy's Vision, SDP Participant

Moderator: Kavita Sreedhar, PRAGNYA, Independent Facilitator, Parent of SDP Participant

12:15 - 1:45 pm Afternoon Breakout Sessions (continued)

Who's in Charge? Supported Decision-Making, Conservatorships and the SDP

Supported Decision-Making (SDM) and the SDP are both about giving people with disabilities the tools and support they need to make their own choices as to the greatest extent possible. AB 1663, a recent law, recognizes SDM for the first time and reforms conservatorships for people with disabilities. Hear from these experts on SDM and the new law and how it impacts adults in the SDP.

English only

Panelists:

- Marie Bergum, Advocate and SDP Participant
- Stephen Hinkle, Graduate Research Assistant, Chapman University
- Sherry Johnson, Eligibility Worker, LA County Social Services, Chair, South Central LA Regional Center Advisory Committee
- Will Leiner, Managing Attorney, Disability Rights California

Moderator: Suzanne Bennett Francisco, President/CEO, Exceptional Rights Advocacy

Ensuring Successful Partnerships with Independent Facilitators

A good independent facilitator can be your biggest ally, but we hear reports of IFs not having enough training or giving up on their client in the middle of the process. There is also a shortage of experienced IFs. This session offers perspectives on finding qualified IFs and building good partnerships with them.

English only

Panelists:

- Sonni Charness, Founder & CEO, Guidelight Group
- Cindy Cox, CEO, Community Integration Specialists
- Samantha Husman, Owner/Independent Facilitator, Husman Associates
- Michele Poaster, Valley Mountain Regional Center
- Ronnie Wexler, Management Assistant, HOPE Services, SDP Participant

Moderator: Rosie Lasca, Independent Facilitator Mentor, Speaker and Communication Expert, Independent Facilitator Training Academy

12:15 - 1:45 pm Afternoon Breakout Sessions (continued)

Ch-Ch-Changes: Unmet Need, Rate Increases, and Other Discussions About the Individual Budget

Changing the individual budget to reflect unmet need and a change in circumstances has been made very complicated and burdensome. This panel will discuss how this process can be made simpler for all involved and how we can ensure fairness within and across regional centers.

English with Spanish and ASL interpretation

Panelists:

- Iris Barker, Independent Facilitator, Parent of SDP Participant
- Katie Dempsey, Self Determination Program Manager, San Diego Regional Center
- Caroline Garrett, Service Navigator/Independent Facilitator, NeuroNav
- Josefina Romo, Independent Facilitator, Integrated Community Collaborative
- LaNair Slaughter, Founder, Limitless Destiny LLC

Moderator: Helen Reese, Person-Centered Planner and Independent Facilitator

iDile al mundo! Informing the Spanish-Speaking Community about the SDP

Latinos, particularly those who speak only Spanish, are not enrolling in the SDP at the same rates as other groups. Join this Spanish-only breakout session to listen to strategies for informing Spanish-speaking communities about the SDP and helping to break down the barriers to participation.

Spanish only

Panelists:

- Marlene Benites, SDP Parent, Change Maker Community
- Elizabeth Gomez, Co-Founder/Director, Integrated Community Collaborative, Parent Advocate
- Lourdes Gomez, Independent Facilitator, Alcanzado Sueños
- Carla Lehmann, Senior Independent Facilitator and Founder, Exceptional Connections
- Miguel Lugo, Assistant Director, Outreach and Leadership Training, Disability Voices United
- Rubi Saldana, Area Manager and Co-Founder, Integrated Community Collaborative, Independent Facilitator
- Cynthia Salomon-Ponce, Manager, Office of the SDP Ombudsperson, DDS

Moderator: Gilda Giron, Director, Outreach and Leadership Training, Disability Voices United

1:45 - 2 pm **Exhibitor Expo**

Meet service providers, FMSs, Independent Facilitators, advocates and others!

2 - 3:30 pm **Final Full Conference Panel**

Here's the Plan: How We Sustain the Self-Determination Program

This is the crux of the whole conference: we know the implementation of the SDP has problems, and we also know that when the program works, it truly allows people to direct and live their own best lives. That's worth saving and sustaining for years to come. So how do we do it?

Join us for our final panel where we have an impressive group of speakers to help answer that big question.

ASL, Spanish and Korean interpretation provided

Panelists:

- Aaron Carruthers, Executive Director, State Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Sonni Charness, Independent Facilitator, Guidelight Group
- Elizabeth Gomez, Co-Founder/Director, Integrated Community Collaborative, Parent Advocate
- Tim Jin, Assistant Director of Communication Rights, Disability Voices United
- Suzy Requarth, SDP Ombudsperson
- Victor Lira, Region President, Support Services, Aveanna Healthcare
- Amy Westling, Executive Director, Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA)
- Rick Wood, Co-chair, Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee

Moderator: Judy Mark, President, Disability Voices United

3:30 - 4:30 pm **Wonder Room Connections** **and Exhibitor Expo**