



ROLL CALL: James Kyriaco, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. A quorum was established.

<u>Members present:</u>	<u>Members not present:</u>	<u>Staff present:</u>	<u>Guests present:</u>
Marina Owen	Angela Miller-Bevan	Patricia Keelean	Frank Thompson
Josephine Torres	Alexander Saunders	Grant Carmichael	
Miguel Avila	Hilda Zacarias	Jennifer Macdonald	
James Kyriaco	Roy Lee	Steven DeLira	
Gloria Flores		Xavier Escamilla	
Jeremy Ball		Libby Martinez	
Oscar Gutierrez			

1. WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER

James Kyriaco, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm

2. PUBLIC COMMENT – Members of the public may speak up to 5 minutes each.

The public comment period is reserved for comments on matters within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board of Directors. Each person may address the Board for up to three minutes at the discretion of the Chair, for a total public comment period of no more than 15 minutes.

The CommUnify Chair asked if there were any public comments. None

3. CLOSED SESSION:

a. Personnel Matter: CEO Evaluation

4. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES:

November 12, 2025

Motion to approve all items on the Consent Agenda.

M/S/A

Josephine Torres

Gloria Flores

Approved

5. RECITE COMMUNIFY MISSION STATEMENT/MISSION MOMENT – PAT KEELEAN, CEO:

We serve Santa Barbara County's most vulnerable populations through education and coordinated services so they may achieve economic stability, improve overall well-being and thrive.


6. **CEO REPORT:**

Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP)

- Isabel, a 16-year-old mother, received support from AFLP during her postpartum recovery.
- AFLP provided essential supplies and guidance for her son's medical condition.
- Isabel now feels confident and empowered as her son's advocate.

Mission Moment

Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP)



Building Confidence and Healthy Beginnings

- At just 16, "Isabel" turned to AFLP while pregnant, determined to give her baby a safer, more stable start than she had known.
- After a difficult postpartum recovery, AFLP became her lifeline – providing essential baby supplies, reassurance, and a trusted, caring case manager.
- When her newborn was diagnosed with Flat Head Syndrome, AFLP stood beside her, helping ease her fear and guiding her through referrals and treatment.
- Today, her son is growing stronger each month, and this young mother feels confident and proud as her baby's strongest advocate.

When young parents are met with compassion and steady support, fear turns into confidence—and families begin to thrive!

Head Start Funding Update

- CommUnify Received \$13.7 million in funding for FY 2026-30.
- Payment Management System released funds on January 6, 2026.
- Acknowledgment to the Audacious Foundation Roundtable for their support. The Board members suggested the foundation for next year's champions or for this year's as a special award.

LIHEAP/Energy Assistance

- FY 2026 funding contract of \$1.7 million for energy bill assistance.
- 75% of the funding will be released.

Department of Energy – IIJA Weatherization Assistance Program

- Contract amendment for \$100,000 effective November 1, 2025.
- Contract extended through June 30, 2029.

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)

- FY 2026 contract for \$546,140 is being executed.

- Q1 funding of \$185,688 has been authorized for release.

Financial Updates

- Recovery of \$176,000 in BWell/TAY losses.
- Braggs Foundation awarded \$100,000.
- Executive Committee priorities include updating board bylaws and training.

Fundraising Events

- \$55,000 raised for Family & Youth Services.
- Upcoming events include the 4th Annual 211 Community Day Celebration on February 7, 2026, and the 20th Annual Champions Dinner on June 5, 2026.

7. CFO REPORT:

Cash Flow and Investments

- Total cash and investments as of November 30, 2025, amounted to \$6,955,827, a decrease from \$7,142,014 in October 2025.
- Days cash and investments on hand are 96, indicating a stable liquidity position despite a slight decline from the previous month.
- Significant cash sources include MB&T Operating and Payroll accounts, with total cash of \$5,291,177.

Balance Sheet Analysis

- Total assets are reported at \$9,892,105, showing a slight decrease from \$9,893,028 in October 2025 and an increase from \$9,368,091 in December 2024.
- Current liabilities total \$8,318,842, reflecting a decrease from the prior month, while net assets have increased to \$1,403,263 from \$1,218,908.

Income Statement Overview

- Total revenue for November 2025 is \$23,969,790, which is \$2,214,546 below the budgeted amount, primarily due to lower contributions and local government funding.
- Total expenses are \$24,254,781, exceeding the budget by \$2,293,440, driven by higher personnel and administrative costs.
- The change in net assets shows a deficit of \$284,990 for the month.

Fiscal Department Update

- The report highlights a year-to-date deficit of \$284,990, with anticipated funding from the Bragg Foundation and Head Start donations expected to mitigate this shortfall.
- Specific program revenues and expenses are detailed for Head Start and Early Head Start, indicating variances from budget expectations, particularly in federal revenue and employee expenses.



Fiscal Department Update

2025 Nov-YTD Deficit Analysis	Budget
Deficit per Income Statement-Nov	\$ (284,990)
Bragg Foundation Award-Dec	\$ 100,000
Head Start Donation-Dec	\$ 100,000
Program revenues-Dec	\$ 25,000
	\$ (59,990)

Income Statement

- Total revenue for YTD is \$23,969,790, an 8.5% increase from the budget.
- Total expenses are \$24,254,781, resulting in a change in net assets of \$284,990.
 - Grant informed the Board that carryover funds were not approved this year and that the agency is therefore considering fully expending all allocated funds rather than leaving any unspent balance.
 - James and Marina asked whether the rationale for the carryover request could be incorporated more clearly into the narrative to strengthen future requests.
 - Grant explained that the review approach and responses from the funding agency have differed from those experienced under the Head Start Program.
 - James asked whether the agency could plan differently moving forward.
 - Grant responded that the agency's focus will be on fully spending all funds and taking a more strategic approach to planning.
 - **Contingency Planning:** Grant informed the Board that a consultant is assisting with contingency planning and that the consultant was referred to the agency by the Santa Barbara Foundation.

8. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

All matters listed hereunder constitute a consent agenda and will be acted upon by a single roll call vote of the Board. Matters listed on the agenda will be read only on the request of a member of the Board or the Public, in which event the matter shall be removed from the consent agenda and considered as a separate item.

8a. Approval of Minutes:

8a – 1 Executive Committee Minutes

8a – 2 Planning Committee Minutes

8a – 3 Executive Committee – Approval of Action Items Via Email – 12/16/25

8a – 4 Ambassadors Committee Minutes: 11/17/2025

8b. Approval of Grants \$10,000 and Under/Renewal Contracts, MOUs, Resolutions, etc.:

8b – 1 Accept the proposal to revise the CommUnify HR Policy Handbook with the modification of Policy 9.04 Sick Leave Policy to comply with California law effective January 1, 2026.

M/S/A Oscar Gutierrez Jeremy Ball Approved

9. ACTION ITEMS:

9-A Approval to submit a grant to the Edison International Foundation for up to \$20,000 to support 211 Santa Barbara information and referral for Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) preparation.

The board asked for more explanation of this action item.

Pat let the board know that this is for education to let customers know about shut offs.

M/S/A Oscar Gutierrez Gloria Flores Approved

10. 2026 BOARD ELECTIONS: Slate Of Officers

Board Chair: James Kyriaco

Vice Chair: Gloria Flores

Secretary/Treasurer: Jeremy Ball

M/S/A Marina Owen Miguel Avila Approved

11. BRISA ENCINA UPDATE/DISCUSSION

- The center is designed for 49 children, featuring three classrooms in a 3,995 square foot building.
- Final design review is scheduled for January 30, 2026, with working drawings 50% complete.
- A funding gap of at least \$360,000 exists due to the withdrawal of CDBG funds, and potential cost increases may widen this gap.
- Possible additional funding sources include state grants and New Markets Tax Credits, though some options are uncertain or competitive.

Brisa Encina Affordable Apartments Status

- This project has secured multiple funding commitments, including from the County of Santa Barbara and various state programs.
- An application for approximately \$15 million in Low Income Housing Tax Credits will be submitted in early February 2026.

- Total project costs are estimated at \$36.87 million, with funding sources aligned to cover these expenses.
- Frank stated that he had received first payment from the state, he clarified that the county will not be granting HUD funding and the gap is significant. He stated that completion of the project is estimated by 2028.
- Frank stated that he had applied for the Tax Credit application in August 2025 and expected to apply again in February 2026 and that he would be filing the application by next week this month.
 - James asked what the contingency was if not approved or if he was not ready?
- Frank stated that Tax Credit is available and that he expects to be granted the application. He also stated that the Housing Authority is sponsoring his project.

Board Feedback after Brisa Encina Presentation:

- Jennifer expressed concerns regarding the ability to maintain 100% enrollment.
- Pat noted that both the number of units and the target population have changed.
- Pat asked Frank about the estimated cost per unit.
- Frank responded that the cost is approximately \$700,000 per unit, largely driven by wages and materials.
- Jeremy stated that there is limited expendable income among the target population.
- Jennifer informed the Board that there are not many eligible families.
- Pat added that there is limited community support for the proposed development.
- James asked whether state funding could be a possible option for the development.
- Jennifer stated that pursuing state funding is not feasible.
- James expressed concern about the rising costs of construction and asked at what point the agency would determine not to participate in the development. He also noted that the Tax Credit application process is extremely competitive.
- Following discussion, Board members recommended that the agency withdraw from the project.

12. PRESENTATIONS/TRAININGS:

11a. Familias Seguras Presentation – Steve DeLira, FYS Director, and Xavier Escamilla, Program Manager.

Familias Seguras is a community violence prevention program in Santa Maria, focusing on supporting vulnerable youth and their families.

Familias Seguras Program Vision

- Aims to reduce violence by addressing root causes through family-centered services.
- Targets fifth to eighth-grade students in Santa Maria-Bonita School District.

- Provides wraparound services to vulnerable families for healthier futures.

Program Enrollment

- Over 200 youth families approved for referral.
- 180 youth enrolled in case management.
- 165 referred to education/mentoring programs.
- 100 referred for cognitive behavioral therapy.

Secure Families Highlights

- Collaborated with various agencies for youth resources and prosocial activities.
- Engaged families through events like Thanksgiving drives and Christmas food distributions.
- 90 families served through SMBSD partnership.

Youth Demographics

- 75% female, 24% male, 1% genderqueer.
- 84% housed with parents, 10% with relatives.
- 96% identify as straight.

Adult Demographics

- 75% female, 25% male.
- 96% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 2% White.
- 59% have household income above \$106k.

Protective Factors

- Significant improvements in academic motivation, self-esteem, and family functioning.
- Community support rated at 2.87, with other factors showing similar improvements.

Risk Factors

- Significant improvements in anxiety, depression, PTSD, and drug use.
- Family conflict and somatic pain showed improvement.

Success Story Second Chance Through Secure Families

- Supported six youth expelled from traditional schools.
- All six improved attendance and behavior, transitioning back to regular schools.

Next Steps

- CALVIP 4 ends December 31, 2025.
- RFP for CALVIP 5 submitted, with award notice in February 2026.
- Exploring collaboration opportunities with SMBSD.

Key Partners Supporters:

- List of partners and supporters involved in the program: Santa Maria Bonita School District, Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley, County of Santa Barbara – Social Services Department, City of Santa Maria, Family Service Agency, Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness, UC Santa Barbara, Santa Maria Police Department, Santa Barbara County Probation Department.



Success Story: A Second Chance Through Secure Families

- Over the past year, the Secure Families Program has proudly supported a group of six youth from the Santa Maria Bonita School District who faced significant challenges early at their schools. These students had been expelled from their traditional school settings and were enrolled at Fitzgerald Court and Community School due to behavioral issues, poor attendance, and other disciplinary concerns.
- However, through the comprehensive support provided by the Secure Families team, each of these youth experienced support in their lives. With the guidance of dedicated case managers, consistent mentorship, and access to mental health therapy, these young individuals were given the tools and encouragement to turn their situations around.
- The transformation didn't happen overnight, but the results have been inspiring. All seven students demonstrated improved attendance, consistently arriving to school on time at Fitzgerald. Their behavior stabilized, and they avoided further disciplinary actions.
- Thanks to their hard work and the support system around them, all Six were approved to transition back into the Santa Maria Bonita School District. This opportunity not only allows them to reintegrate into their school communities but also gives them a chance to walk the stage, promote, or graduate alongside their peers, a milestone many of them feared they might never reach.

- Board members asked what age groups are served by the program.
 - Xavier responded that the program serves students from middle school through high school.
- Pat informed the Board that UCSB is conducting independent evaluations of the program, which have demonstrated significant positive outcomes in participants' lives.
- Xavier and Steven reported that children referred to the program are Tier III students from schools and that all participants have benefited from their involvement in the program.
 - Jeremy inquired about the possibility of expanding the program to serve the Lompoc area and surrounding communities and offered assistance in support of a potential expansion.

11b. Head Start/Early Head Start Update, Jennifer Macdonald, Children's Services Director

Maintaining Full Enrollment

- Head Start aims to serve low-income families, promoting school readiness and self-sufficiency.
- Programs must fill vacancies quickly to maximize federal funding and serve families in need.

- Effective ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance) systems are crucial for timely enrollment and maintaining full capacity throughout the year.

Planning and Monitoring for Success

- Targeted strategies are necessary to identify and address community and family needs.
- A robust community assessment process, regularly updated, is essential for understanding demographic shifts and family requirements.
- Creating a supportive environment helps retain staff and families, contributing to sustained enrollment.

Adapting to Change

- Programs may need to adjust to demographic changes through ongoing monitoring and self-assessments.
- Data-driven decision-making is vital for evaluating services and planning improvements to meet evolving community needs.
- Enrollment services should be integrated into overall program planning and evaluation to ensure responsiveness and effectiveness.

Maintaining Full Enrollment

Head Start's mission is to serve the neediest children and families, promote school readiness, and foster the self-sufficiency of low-income families. Programs must maintain their funded enrollment level and fill any vacancy as soon as possible. Any unenrolled slot is a lost opportunity for a family in need and does not maximize federal funds.

THE GOAL

Ensure Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) systems are in place to enroll the neediest families in a timely manner and maintain full enrollment throughout the program year.

- Board Member Gloria asked about the challenges related to staff retention.
 - Jennifer responded that compensation levels are a primary challenge, noting that wage rates offered by school districts and fast-food employers are difficult for the agency to match.
- Board member, James asked how many of the staff members have a second job.
 - Jennifer replies that not many staff members disclose that information.
- Board Member Jeremy asked whether there are any areas within Head Start that could utilize private subsidies to make the program more attractive.

- Jennifer responded that she is not aware of this approach being used.
- Jeremy went on to ask how many teaching positions are open.
 - Jennifer stated that there are 15 open positions.
- Board member, Marina asked that CommUnify partners up with CapSLO and Community Bridges of Santa Cruz to be a stronger community.
 - Pat let them know that she has a meeting scheduled with Senator Limon regarding federal funding.

13. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS: Upcoming Meetings/Events

- a. Planning Committee Meeting: January 9th @ 9-10am (Zoom)
- b. Head Starters/Ambassador's Committee Meeting: January 19th (3-4pm) In-Person (Location: TBD)
- c. Children's Services Policy Council Meeting: January 21st (5:30pm -7:30pm)
- d. Management Team Meeting: January 30th @ 9:15am – 3:15pm (Location: The Grange Hall, Alamo Pintado)
- e. Planning Committee Meeting: February 6th@ 9-10am (Zoom)
- f. 211 Community Resource Day: February 7th @ 11am – 3pm (Location: Dick DeWees Community Center, Lompoc)
- g. Executive Committee Meeting: February 4th@ 12 – 1:00pm
- h. Personnel Committee Meeting: February 18th @ 12-1:00pm (Zoom)
- i. Finance Committee Meeting: February 27th@ 12 – 1:00pm
- j. Board Meeting: March 4th @6 – 7:30pm (Location: The Landsby Hotel, Solvang)

14. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:21pm.