IPP Basics
Stategies to Get Needed Services

(adapted from SCDD Strategy Guide, 2016
and Sofia Cervantes, **Review of Regional Center Services, IPP Strategies, Fair Hearings & Complaints, 2024)**

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES
EDUCATION • EMPOWERMENT • EQUITY

California State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Learning Goals

Discover	Discover the importance of GOALS and NEEDS to the person-centered Individual Program Plan (IPP)
Get	Get tips on preparing for an IPP Meeting using Supported Decision Making (SDM)
Learn about	Learn about advocacy tips and strategies for the IPP

Lanterman Entitlement

- The Lanterman Act came into being as a result of community advocacy in the 1960s.
- The Lanterman Act gives people with developmental disabilities the right to receive services and supports to achieve their goals. If a person meets the eligibility criteria, they are entitled to services.

How the Lanterman Act Works....

- Services are based on a person-centered plan that is based on the individual's goals and priorities. This is the Individual Program Plan (IPP)
- There is **no set limit on how many services a regional center client** (usually called a CONSUMER) must or should receive.

How the Lanterman Act Works….

- **Generic services should be used first** unless they are inappropriate. RC service coordinators are responsible for helping individuals access these generic services.
- **Services are guided by Regional Center (RC) purchase of service policies** (which are usually available on the RC website). But RCs can and do make exceptions to these policies.
- The Lanterman Act requires RCs to purchase services from **the least costly provider** that can meet their needs (BUT the service must be appropriate).
- **Demonstrate progress.** To continue a service, the recipient must demonstrate progress (but progress can be a lack of regression).

How the IPP works….

- The IPP is a **person-centered process;** the **GOALS** of the individual should be the focus. And these goals should be tied to the general goals of the Lanterman Act:
  - to be included and part of the community;
  - to be safe and healthy;
  - to remain in their home;
  - and to maximize their independence.
- The person's **NEEDS** should be established for the specific goals the consumer has in these areas.
- **SERVICES** are those needed to be able to reach these goals.

FOCUS ON GOALS AND NEEDS

- One common issue is that many people submit requests for specific services or supports during the IPP process without connecting them to their goals or needs.
- This can lead to those requests being denied because they do not meet the criteria of the Lanterman Act.

It's important to discuss your goals and needs with your supporters and prepare BEFORE the IPP meeting!

Focus first on your goals

You and your supporters should think through and make decisions on:

- Where to live
- Who to live with
- Where to work or go to school
- Who to have for friends
- What to do for fun
- What to do in the future

Focus first on your goals

- At the IPP meeting, the team will discuss what is needed to help you reach your goals.
- Services that are needed are those that help keep you in your home, integrate you into the community, help keep you safe and healthy and maximize independence with reference to your goals.

AN EXAMPLE: My goal is I want to live outside of my family home, independently of my parents.

This goal relates to community integration, living in the least restrictive setting, and maximizing independence.

What might you need for this goal?

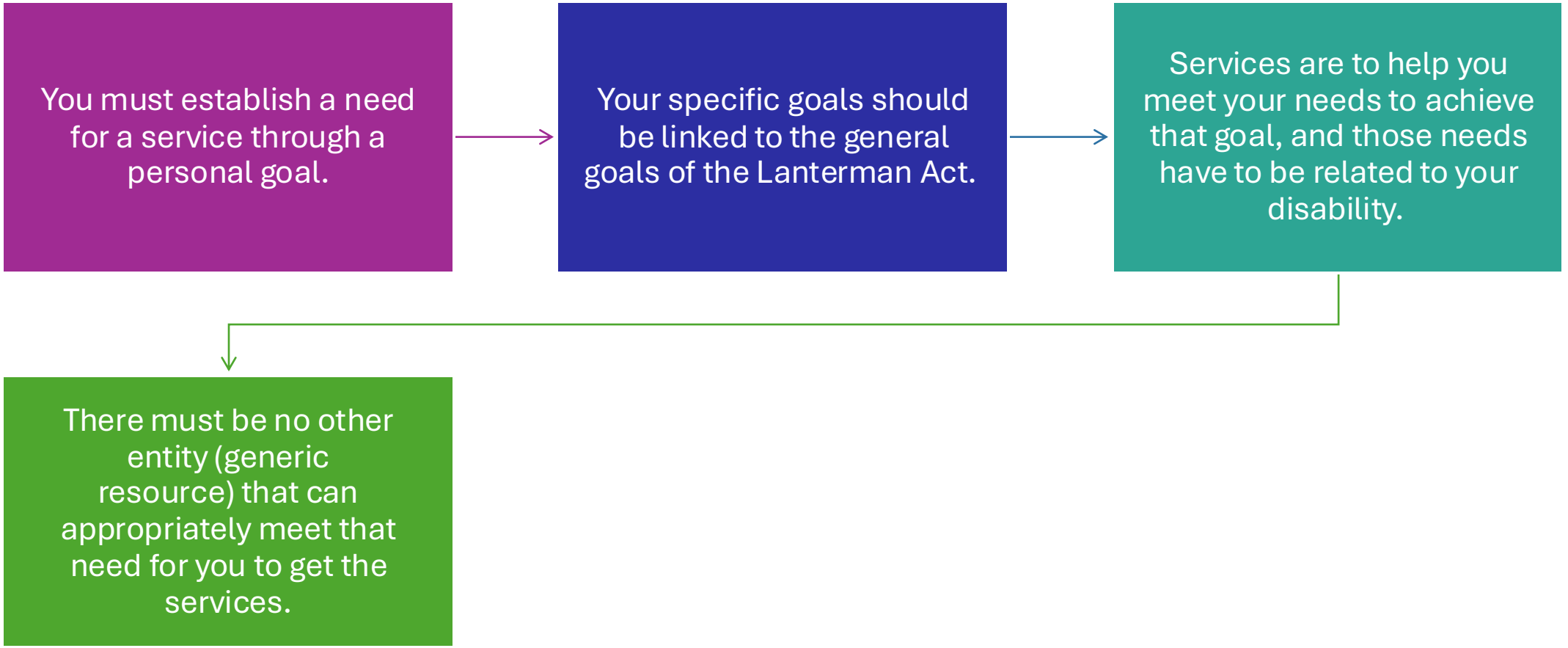
You may need to find a place to live, possibly roommates and make a budget, learn to pay your bills, set up utilities or even just set up a bank account.

You may need to learn to how to do laundry, wash dishes, make grocery lists, prepare meals and clean your place.

You may need to transportation to go to your activities and do food shopping.

Many of these could be goals supported through Independent Living Services (ILS).

The logic behind IPP services



Preparing for IPP Advocacy

Make a plan with your SDM team to figure out how your supporters will assist you as the decision maker in the IPP process – this can include helping you write up you/your family concerns (which you can ask to be included in the IPP), document your needs and goals, and communicate in the meeting.

Preparing for IPP Advocacy

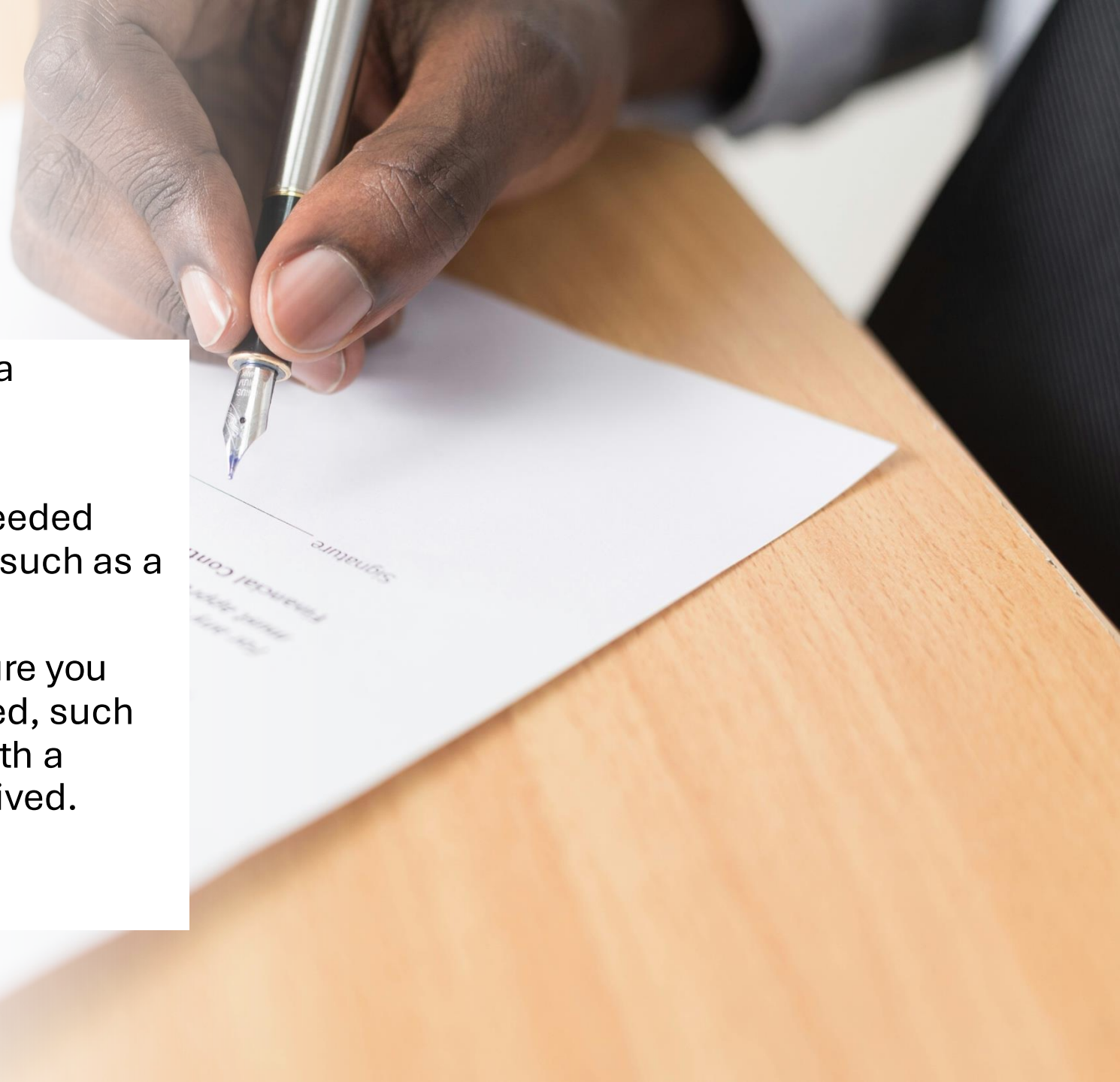
Let the service coordinator know that you plan to record the meeting (you must let the regional center know at least 24 hours in advance.

Develop your own agenda (alone or with your family and/or supporters) for the meeting with your goals and needs. Ask for it to be included with the IPP document.

Ask for a decision maker to attend the meeting. Generally, a regional center manager will come to the meeting to make decisions on behalf of a RC.

IPP Advocacy

- Make sure you have a record, either a recording or notes, of agreements, disagreements or next steps.
- If the regional center denies you a needed service, ask for the denial in writing (such as a notice of action of NOA).
- When you document in writing, ensure you can prove the document was received, such as by registered mail or a drop-off with a timestamp. Email is not always received.



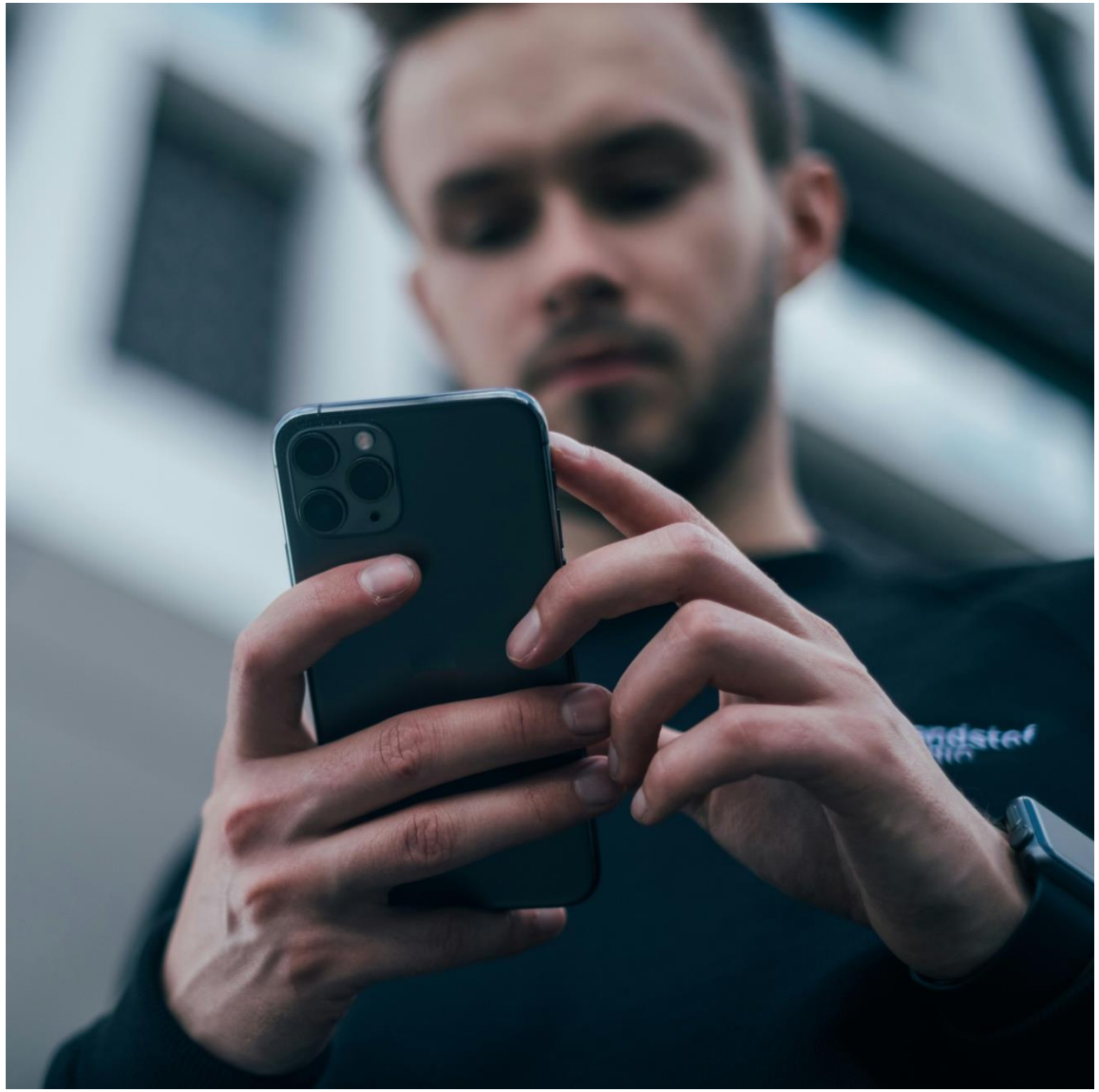
IPP Advocacy

- If you're writing a letter that summarizes a conversation, always end it with a statement like this: “If anything in this letter is incorrect, please contact me within a reasonable period of time.”
- Request your regional center records regularly, usually once a year. You have the right to access all of your records. In particular, make sure that your request includes the service coordinator’s chart notes or entries.

If you disagree

You can start with by talking to the regional center ombudsperson:

Email: Ombudsperson@dds.ca.gov
Phone: 877-658-9731



How can they help?

- The Ombudsperson assists regional center clients and their families in obtaining the services they are entitled to under the Lanterman Act. They provide information, help resolve disagreements, and complaints.
- They cannot represent a consumer/family or overturn a hearing decision.
- They might suggest you file a grievance (a 4731 complaint) with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). After you file, DDS staff will review the complaint and, within 60 days, provide an informal response and propose a resolution.

Right to a hearing

- The Fair Hearing Process is how you can challenge decisions about the services you get or want from the regional center, including whether you are eligible. If you disagree with a decision made by the regional center about your services, you can use this process to appeal.
- In the fair hearing process, you can choose an informal meeting, a mediation or a hearing.

Right to a hearing

- The Office of Clients Rights Advocacy (OCRA) provides free legal information, advice, and representation to regional center clients and can help with this process.
- To contact your OCRA office, call:
- Northern California 1-800-390-7032 (TTY 877-669-6023)
- Southern California 1-866-833-6712 (TTY 877-669-6023)

Tips for IPP Advocacy

Always try to resolve issues at the lowest level. Communicate your needs clearly to the regional center staff first. Since consumers often work with different service coordinators over time, this process will happen repeatedly.

Always be reasonable. If someone overheard your conversations, read your letters, or saw your requests based on your needs, they should see you as respectful and fair.

Documentation is your best friend – it can show what you need and what has happened so far. Make sure you record and document.

Be organized; having all of your information readily available can make it easier to advocate.

QUESTIONS ?

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This work is made possible through a grant from SCDD and SDM-TAP