Regional Center
Eligibility and Services

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES
EDUCATION • EMPOWERMENT • EQUITY

California State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Learning goals

- Learn about the Regional Center and who is eligible for their services.
- Find out more about the Individual Program Plan (IPP) and Regional Center services
- Get some hints for preparing for an IPP.
- Explore the self-determination program option.

What is a regional center?

The Lanterman Act is a law that states people with developmental disabilities have the right to receive services and support. It also makes the State responsible for providing these services.

California accomplishes this through organizations called Regional Centers.

Regional Centers are nonprofit organizations that work with the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS). They evaluate individuals for eligibility and assist in finding and coordinating services.

https://www.dds.ca.gov/transparency/laws-regulations/lanterman-act-and-related-laws/

Who is eligible for Regional Center ?

People with a *developmental disability* that starts before age 18, is expected to continue indefinitely, and is a “**substantial disability.**” In California, a developmental disability is one of these five conditions:

cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, intellectual disability and other conditions closely related to a intellectual disability or require similar treatment (called the 5th category).

Who is eligible for Regional Center ?

"Substantial disability" means the person has one of these diagnoses and has major challenges **in at least 3 of these areas.**

- Communication skills (receptive and expressive language)
- Learning
- Self-care
- Mobility
- Self-direction
- Independent living
- Economic self-sufficiency

What is the role of a service coordinator in the regional center?

A service coordinator (case manager)

- is the consumer's (and their family's) main point of contact at the regional center;
- facilitates meetings that are person-centered to create an Individual Program Plan (IPP) for the consumer;
- coordinates all the services provided by the Regional Center and answers any questions or concerns;
- assists in finding services to meet consumer needs in the community (called generic services).

How does the regional center determine services ?

- Regional Centers are required to use a person-centered approach when determining services, which are documented in an Individual Program Plan (IPP).
- Person-centered planning emphasizes a person's future and their goals. The process should be guided by the individual's interests and priorities, focusing on what matters most to them.
- **Part of this process is to record how the adult consumer makes their decisions, so it important to document the use of supported decision making (SDM).**

How does the regional center determine services?

- The planning team decides what services are needed. The team includes the person who will get the services, their family, regional center staff, and any supporters the person wants to include.
- The IPP document lists the services and supports needed to reach goals and who will provide them. It's like a contract with the regional center: once you agree on what's inside, they are expected to follow it.

Regional Center and Generic Services

- Regional Centers (RCs) are the last option for paying for services, the "payor of last resort". If another program can provide a service, the regional center **usually** won't pay for it.
- These services are called "generic services" and include those offered by public agencies, private insurance, and managed care plans. Some examples are school services (IEP), Medi-Cal, In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), SSI, and medical equipment.
- If an adult RC consumer doesn't qualify for these generic services, the regional center can then pay for them.

Regional Center Services for Adults

Regional Centers offer a variety of living options, including:

- **Independent Living (ILS)** for skills training living with their families.
- **Supported Living Services (SLS)** supporting adults living in their own homes.
- **Coordinated Family Services (CFS)** provides system navigation and other supports for adults living with their families.
- **Group Housing** including Community Care Facilities (CCF), Family Home Agencies (FHA), Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs) and Special Needs Care Homes.

Employment Services

There are a variety of services that help adults find jobs and various levels of support to meet their employment needs.

- Day programs that offer employment and group training.
- Focused Employment Services
- Individualized Employment Services

Regional Center Services

- Community Integration Programs
- Communication Training and Support
- Specialized Transportation
- Behavioral Supports
- Nursing Services
- Respite Services
- Day Programs
- Counselling
- Mobility Training
- Adaptive Equipment
- Durable Medical Equipment
- Therapies
- See Cal Code Regulations, Title 17, section 54342 for a comprehensive list

https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/rc-services/

Preparing for an IPP Using SDM

See Disability Rights California, “16 Tips for Getting Quality Regional Center Services for Yourself or Your Child”

Decide which supporters will attend with you and the roles they will have in the IPP process. How your supporters help is entirely up to you!

Review with your supporters your current IPP to identify what is working well and what isn’t.

Preparing for an IPP Using SDM

See Disability Rights California, “16 Tips for Getting Quality Regional Center Services for Yourself or Your Child”

Plan with your team what you want as your goals

Where you want to live (and with whom)?

How you want to spend your days (study, work, do art)?

What do you want to do for recreation?

What is working well in your life right now?

What needs improvement?

What services and supports do you need?

Preparing for an IPP Using SDM

See Disability Rights California, "16 Tips for Getting Quality Regional Center Services for Yourself or Your Child"

- List all the services and supports you think you need to reach your goals.
- Make sure to invite all the people and agencies you want at the meeting.
- The law says that your planning team must make decisions about your services and supports during the meeting. Someone from the regional center who can approve or deny your requests (called a "decision-maker") must be there. Usually, they won't come unless you ask for them.

Preparing for an IPP Using SDM

See Disability Rights California, "16 Tips for Getting Quality Regional Center Services for Yourself or Your Child"

- Make sure the IPP shows: (1) what services and supports you will receive, including the type and amount; (2) who will provide these services; and (3) when they will start. If services can't start immediately, the IPP must say what steps will be taken, who is responsible for each step, and the deadlines. The law requires all this to be in the IPP.
- If you and the regional center can't agree on something, you can have a second IPP meeting within 15 days. At this second meeting, you should be able to talk directly to the decision-maker without waiting for a committee or supervisor. If the first answer is "no," you don't have to have a second meeting, but you can ask for written notice and learn how to appeal.

Another Option:

Self Determination Program

The "Self-Determination' program lets people and their families have more control of the services and supports they receive. In the regular program, a service coordinator from the regional center helps find services. In the Self-Determination Program, you can pick your own services, supports, and providers, using family, friends, or an Independent Facilitator. You will create a budget, make a spending plan, and work with a Financial Management Service (FMS).

https://www.dds.ca.gov/initiatives/sdp/

A couple of Pros and Cons of Self Determination

- Offers independence and empowerment
- A wider range of supports and services is available to consumers and their families.
- Individuals can choose providers and activities that best suit their needs.
- There is more freedom and flexibility, and there can be a quicker timeline.

- Some participants/family members feel that there is a lot of administrative work to manage the program, especially the financial component.
- Parents worry about what will happen to this kind of program when they are not here to manage it.

QUESTIONS ?

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