A Guide to California’s Regional Center Services System

February 2025

Department of Developmental Services

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WELCOME FROM THE REGIONAL CENTER

Dear SARC Community,

I am happy to welcome you to the San Andreas Regional Center, which serves counties of Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz.

Our service coordinators and community partners play a supportive role in your progress and are here to work alongside you to maximize your community success. .

I am always inspired to see our staff's dedication in supporting the families and people we serve. Many of our staff have personal experience with the developmental services system. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with you and support you in reaching your milestones.

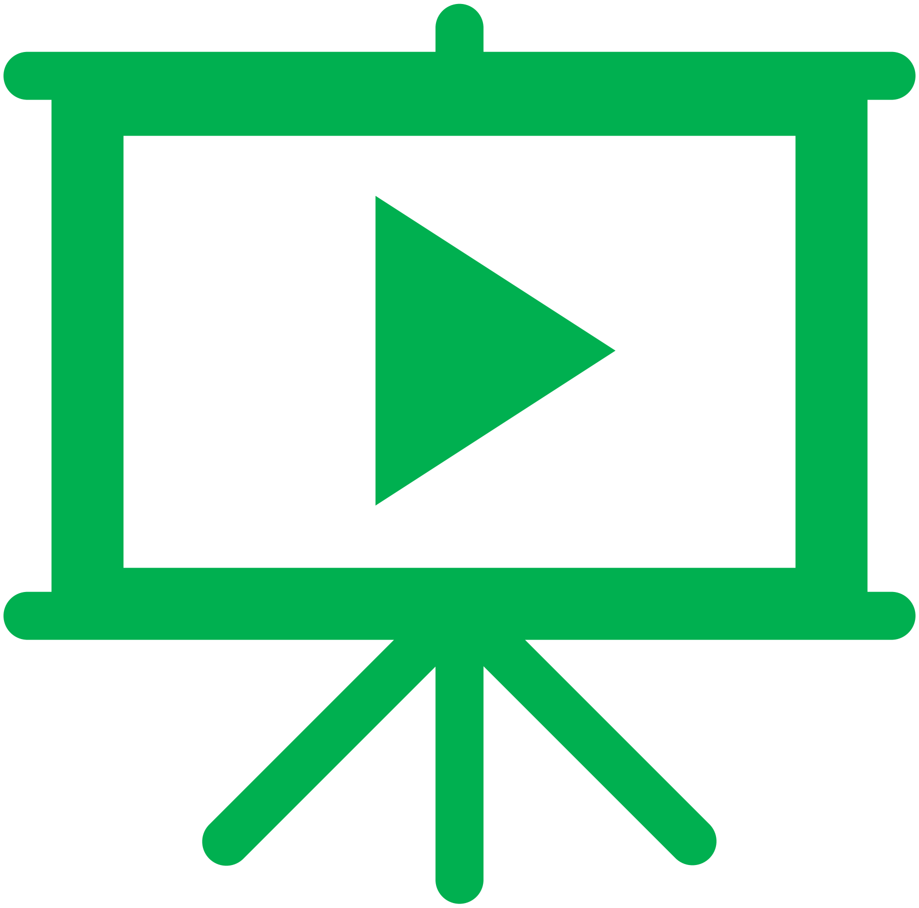
We look forward to working together and supporting your journey.

Please visit our website for additional information and for the complete packet by clicking here:

SARC Website

Javier Zaldivar
Executive Director

GETTING STARTED



Welcome to this guide!
Learn about what’s inside and how it can help you.

This information packet talks about how to get regional center services. It should be helpful for:

- People applying for regional center services
- Individuals served by a regional center
- Parents/guardians
- Other caregivers

The goal is to help you understand how to access services and supports. This includes information about:

- The law
- The regional center system
- Services available from the regional center and the community
- Rights and eligibility for services

The packet is divided into 10 sections. You can read them one by one or just the part that's most helpful to you.

1. **The Lanterman Act**: *Understand the law, values, and principles for providing services and supports.*
2. **Eligibility For Services**: *Understand who can get help, and what qualifies as a developmental disability.*
3. **Applying for Services and Supports**: *Learn the initial steps in applying for services from the regional center.*
4. **Preparing for your First Regional Center Meeting**: *Gather needed papers and information for the intake process.*
5. **The Individual Program Plan (IPP)**: *Learn about creating and using the Individual Program Plan, tailoring support to people's wants and needs.*
6. **Accessing Services**: *Once the IPP is agreed on, learn how to get, and use services.*
7. **Changing Services Throughout Your Life**: *Understand how services can change over time and how you need different supports.*
8. **Resolving Disagreements**: *Learn about the process for solving disagreements and using the appeal process.*
9. **Additional Resources and Supports**: *Advocacy and support organizations, agencies and programs that may help you.*
10. **Commonly Used Terms**: *Definitions of terms used throughout this document.*

1. THE LANTERMAN ACT

Learn about the laws and who needs to follow them.

What is the Lanterman Act and who does it help?

The Lanterman Act is a California law put into place in 1969. It is named after Frank D. Lanterman. He was a California legislator who advocated for people with developmental disabilities and their rights.

The Lanterman Act helps Californians with developmental disabilities. It gives them the right to get services they need to live independent and productive lives in the community. The law created the regional center system. Regional centers:

- Determine eligibility
- Assess needs
- Provide for or coordinate services and supports to people with developmental disabilities and their families

Your services are decided by you and your planning team. Your services should meet your needs and be best for your culture and language. Everyone who gets regional center services should have equal access to quality services.

More information is available for you to learn about the Lanterman Act and related laws. This includes an easy-to-understand resource guide.

What are my Lanterman Act rights?

Your rights include:

- Services and supports in the community or close to your home
- Dignity, privacy, and humane care
- Public education that meets your needs
- Prompt medical care and treatment
- Religious freedom and practice
- Friendships, relationships, and community activities
- Physical exercise and recreation
- Free from harm and to be safe
- Free from hazardous procedures
- To make choices about how to live your life
- Prompt investigation of any alleged abuse

You also have rights about how the regional center provides services. This includes the right to:

- An assessment of your service needs.

- An Individual Program Plan (IPP) based on your needs and choices. You and your IPP team identify your goals and objectives. You also talk about the services and supports to help you achieve your goals.
- Assistance from a Service Coordinator who can help you get the services you need.
- Confidentiality of your regional center records and the ability to have access to your records.
- A way to resolve a disagreement with regional center decisions.
- A way to file a complaint if you believe your rights were violated.

DDS Department of Developmental Services

What is the Department of Developmental Services?

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is the state department that works with the 21 regional centers who coordinate services for people who live in California and have a developmental disability. DDS in partnership with regional centers, helps make sure individuals have the chance to make choices and lead independent, productive lives as members of their communities. DDS provides leadership, technical assistance, and policy direction. DDS contracts with the 21 California regional centers to provide services. DDS oversees how regional centers deliver services. DDS manages the state-operated services

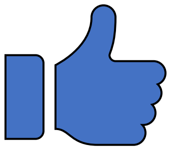
What is a regional center?

Regional centers are local agencies. They arrange services for children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families. There is a regional center in each area across the state of California. You will work with the regional center for the area where you live. Regional centers will:

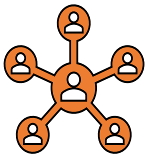
- Assess for a developmental delay or disability
- Determine eligibility to get services
- Assess your service needs and help you get those services
- Work with you to develop your Individual Program Plan (IPP) that lists all your service needs
- Contract with service providers and oversee services
- Follow state and federal policies

All regional centers have similar programs, but each regional center may do things differently. This is because each local community is unique. You can find your local regional center by entering your zip code into the Regional Center Look Up Tool.

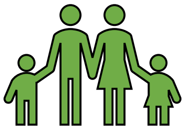
What are the important values of the regional center system?



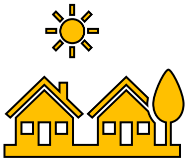
Empowerment and Choice**:** Individuals and their families should be able to make their own decisions on issues that affect their lives. The goal is to have people lead fulfilling and self-directed lives. This happens by making the person the center of service planning and delivery.



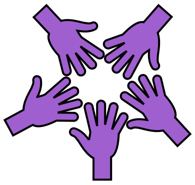
Diversity and Cultural Preferences**:** The regional center system respects the different backgrounds and cultures of the people they help. They offer services in many languages and provide interpreters to help diverse populations. They also offer services that meet the specific needs, values, and cultural preferences of the people they serve.



Family Support**:** Families often know best about what their loved ones needs, especially when it comes to young children. They are usually the ones deciding what happens in their life. Services and supports should focus on family strengths, personal relationships and connections, and community resources.



Community Integration**:** People with developmental disabilities are part of the community. The regional center system should help people to live, work, and enjoy with both non-disabled and disabled community members.



Teamwork**:** Self-advocates and family members are partners with the regional center system. Planning for a positive future is a team effort lead by the individual receiving services.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES

Learn how to see if you can get services from a regional center.

Who is eligible for services under the Lanterman Act?

The following conditions are a developmental disability:

- Autism
- Cerebral palsy
- Epilepsy
- Intellectual disability
- Other conditions that are closely related to an intellectual disability OR that need treatment like a person with an intellectual disability AND is not just a physical disability

Having a mental health diagnosis or learning disability is not enough to qualify you for regional center services. To be eligible for services, you must have a developmental disability that:

- Starts before you are 18 years old
- Will last all of your life
- Makes it hard to do things like walking, communicating, understanding, taking care of yourself, or working

And

Presents challenges to everyday life **in at least three** areas:

- Everyday living skills like eating, dressing, caring for self (self-care)
- Understanding language, talking, and expressing self (receptive and expressive language)
- Thinking and understanding (learning)
- Walking, moving around, being physical (mobility)
- Making choices, taking care of basic needs, using social and emotional judgement, and being independent (self-direction)
- Living in the home you choose with very little help (capacity for independent living)
- Being able to buy food, pay your bills, and have a job (economic self-sufficiency)

The regional center may evaluate you to figure out if you are eligible for services. Family income and immigration status does not affect if you are eligible for regional center services.

I think I might qualify for services, so what should I do?

To be eligible for regional center services, you must have a developmental disability. The signs of a developmental disability may be different based on the age of the person. Signs can show a need for regional center services.

For infants and toddlers, you might notice:

- Premature birth or low birth weight
- Vision or hearing difficulties
- Prenatal (before birth) or postnatal (after birth) exposure to drugs, alcohol, or tobacco
- Poor nutrition or trouble eating (lack of nutritious foods, proteins, vitamins, or iron)
- Exposure to lead-based paint
- Environmental factors, such as abuse or neglect
- A genetic condition associated with a developmental disability (for example, Down syndrome)

For children, teens, and adults, they may need help with:

- Dressing, bathing, eating, and general daily living compared to others the same age
- Planning daily activities, being organized, and setting goals
- Solving problems, looking at things in a different way, and understanding right from wrong
- Learning at school, making friends, and talking with new people
- Understanding numbers, time, or money
- Walking, moving, seeing, and hearing

Anyone can make a referral to the regional center by phone, email or in writing. You do not have to have a diagnosis to see if you qualify for regional center services. The regional center may want to do more evaluations to see if you qualify for services.

In the next section, you will learn more about applying for services.

3. APPLYING FOR SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Learn how to apply for services and supports after you qualify, or find other ways to get help.

The process and timeline for applying for services is the same at each regional center. You can start by locating your local regional center and making contact. You can contact your regional center by calling, emailing, or by filling out an electronic form on the regional center’s website.

How do I apply for services?
If you think you have a developmental disability, here are 3 steps to get you started. These 3 steps are called Intake to see if you qualify for services. More information about each step is below.

1

Referral: Initial contact with the regional center about you and how they may be able to help you

2

Consent: Signed consent is necessary for the intake appointment and activities to begin.

3

Eligibility: The additional assessments or evaluations needed to see if you qualify for regional center services.

1

Referral with the regional center

Once you contact the regional center, the Service Coordinator or Intake Specialist will ask you questions. They will help you through this intake process. The Service Coordinator or Intake Specialist will ask if there is anyone else who knows about you. This could be other family members, doctors, teachers, and social workers. You should share any assessments and diagnoses with the Service Coordinator or Intake Specialist.

If the regional center says you qualify for services, the Intake process is complete.

If the regional center is not sure, they will do more assessments or evaluations to see if you qualify for services. The regional center will decide this within 15 working days of when you contact them.

2

Consent for Assessments or Evaluations

If the regional center needs to do more assessments or evaluations, they need your permission. If you are over age 18, you can sign your consent and give permission for the evaluation to start. If you are under age 18, your parent or guardian, or in the case of a child in foster care, the educational rights holder must sign the consent form. If you have a conservator, they should sign the consent form.

3

Eligibility Assessment

Once the regional center has your signed consent forms, they can do more assessments or evaluations. The person conducting the evaluation will describe what happens at every step of the process. This may take up to 120 days to complete. If there is a risk to your health and safety, the timing may speed up.

An assessment or evaluation to decide if you qualify for regional center services may include:
- Review of records or reports from assessments and diagnoses that happened before
- Diagnostic evaluations by the regional center
- Other evaluations by the regional center

You may also see other regional center staff or other professionals they work with. This includes social workers, psychologists, health professionals, and other specialists. They will work with you as a team in the intake and evaluation process. This team is called an interdisciplinary or ID team and includes at least one doctor, a psychologist, and an Intake or Service Coordinator.

Some children under the age of 5 may be eligible for something called provisional eligibility. The child might not have an eligible diagnosis yet or they may not have a substantial developmental disability.

Children who meet conditions for provisional eligibility can still get regional center service if:
- The child is under age 5
- The disability is not only physical in nature
- The child has significant limitations in two of the following areas of life activities:
    - Dressing and feeding (Self-care)
    - Listening and talking (Receptive and expressive language)
    - Learning, thinking, and problem-solving (Learning)
    - Walking and moving (Mobility)
    - Making choices, telling you what they want, using social and emotional judgement (Self-direction)

It is not a requirement of provisional eligibility for a three or four-year-old child to have been served in Early Start. A child who is determined to be provisionally eligible will have an IPP. Children who receive services through provisional eligibility can receive them until age 5. At that time, they will have to meet the regional center eligibility for continued services. If they don't, regional center services will end. Communication between families/caregivers and the regional center is important during this time. For information about eligibility criteria, see Regional Center Eligibility and Services.

If you are not eligible for services, you will receive a letter from the regional center within 5 working days after they make a decision. If you do not agree, you have 60 days to appeal the decision. For more information, see Section 8: Resolving Disagreements.

The first three steps of intake may take up to 120 days to complete. You can contact your regional center at any time while you are waiting. If the regional center has not decided within this time, you should contact your Service Coordinator or Intake Specialist. Write down things like the day and time you called, the name of the person you talked to, what they said, dates and times you left a voicemail message, or when you sent emails.

If the regional center does not give you a decision on time, you can file a complaint with the regional center director. The notes you have about the regional center will help with your complaint. For more information about how to file a complaint, see Section 8: Resolving Disagreements.

I do not qualify for provisional eligibility or regional center services. What else can I do?

If you do not meet the qualifications for provisional eligibility or regional center services, you have other options. The State of California or federal government may have other programs that can help you.

Find other programs or services

- Your Intake Specialist or Service Coordinator can help you explore possible resources in your community
- You may try other resources, like In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), Social Security benefits, and Medi-Cal
- For school-age students (3-22 years old), you may apply for services through the school district
- For adults (ages 18 years and older):
    - Department of Rehabilitation may help with college and getting a job
    - Your local Independent Living Center (ILC) may have services and resources
    - You can contact your local county mental health department for mental health services
    - You can contact your local Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). They help older adults and those with disabilities find possible local resources.

Appeal the eligibility decision: If you don’t agree with the decision about eligibility, you have the right to appeal it. For more information about how to file an appeal, see Section 8:Resolving Disagreements.

Re-apply: You can apply again later if you still need help in an area of your daily life, you receive a new diagnosis, or if there has been a change in your functional ability. Functional ability refers to meeting your basic needs, learning, growing, making decisions, being mobile, building and maintaining relationships, and being a part of your community.

> *“Families need to understand that not qualifying now, it does not mean that the regional center is not an option for you in the future. If you do have more needs, please call us back and talk that through with us.”*
>
> \- Regional Center Professional / Staff Member

Where else can I go to get information, help and resources?

There are other health and social services available to support you and your family if you do not qualify for services through the regional center. These services, such as education, housing, employment, transportation, health, and safety, can benefit anyone. The regional center can connect you to these programs and services.

California Department of Aging (CDA): This state agency helps older adults, adults with disabilities, family caregivers, and residents in long-term care facilities living in California. CDA works with a network of 33 Area Agencies on Aging, who provide services like:

- Getting meals
- Finding employment
- Living as independently as possible
- Promoting healthy aging and community involvement
- Supporting family members as care givers

CDA works with many others on services like transportation, housing and accessibility, emergency preparedness and response, wellness, and nutrition, falls and injury prevention, improving services to persons with dementia, reducing fraud and abuse, and more.

To learn more, visit the CDA website.

California Department of Social Services (CDSS): This state agency provides programs to serve, aid, and protect children and adults who need extra help. You can find information about:

- Cash Aid: Cash programs for low-income people and families
- Food & Nutrition: Programs that help you buy healthy foods
- Child Services: Services to protect children and help families
- Adult Services: Care and assistance programs for adults
- Foster Parents, Youth and Families: Information for foster parents, foster youth, and families
- Adoption Services: Help with adoption, finding siblings and parents, and other adoption services
- More Services: Information for refugees, immigrants, disasters and more

Two programs you might find helpful include:

- In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS): Pay for workers who help with personal care and other services so you can stay in your own home.
- CalFresh: Monthly benefits to people and families with low income to help buy healthy food. You can get an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. Food may be purchased at any grocery store, restaurants, or farmers' market that accepts EBT cards.

To learn more, visit the CDSS website.

Department of Health Care Services (DHCS): This state agency is responsible for the state's Medicaid program, Medi-Cal. Medi-Cal provides health care services to people with low-income and families who qualify. Medi-Cal programs cover physical health, mental health, substance use disorder, services, pharmacy, dental, and long-term services and supports.

To learn more, visit the DHCS website.

Department of Rehabilitation (DOR): This state agency offers employment and independent living services. DOR may be able to help you with:

- Disability and benefits programs
- Job search and interview skills
- Job training and tools
- College and textbooks
- Disability equipment
- Support services like childcare or transportation
- Peer support, skill development, systems advocacy, referrals, assistive technology services, transition services, housing assistance, and personal assistance services

To learn more, visit the DOR website.

211: Many counties in California have a phone number you can call to get help for meeting basic needs like housing, food, transportation, and health care. You can talk to someone by dialing "211" on your phone.

To learn more, visit the 211 website.

Disability Rights California (DRC): DRC is the agency created by law to protect and advocate for the rights of people with disabilities living in California. They can help you understand your rights, provide free legal information, referrals, community outreach and representation. They may help you get services from other agencies like Social Security, the school district, and Medi-Cal.

To learn more, visit the DRC website.

Social Security Administration (SSA): This federal agency provides monthly income for people who are retired or disabled. SSA is responsible for health insurance for people 65 or older called Medicare. SSA can provide you with a Social Security Number which is a set of numbers just for you to be able to work, get some public resources and complete banking or financial services like purchases, sales, and payments.

To learn more, visit the SSA website.

Do I have to pay for regional center services?

Generally, no, but the regional center could ask if your medical insurance or another resource will pay for some of the services. The regional center can purchase or provide services not covered by insurance or other resources. The regional center can help some people get onto health care services like Medi-Cal. Some people who don't receive Medi-Cal may have to pay a small fee for some services. Some parents whose children get out-of-home care may have to pay a fee.

What is the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver?

The HCBS Waiver for people with developmental disabilities is a way to pay for certain services that keep people with a developmental disability living at home or in the community rather than a licensed health facility. Costs for these services are paid for by both the federal government's Medicaid program and the State of California. This waiver is reviewed every year to make sure you still qualify. Some people call this "The DD Waiver." Talk to your Service Coordinator about the benefits of being on the Waiver. One benefit is called Intuitional Deeming where your family's income will not be considered to help you qualify for all Medi-Cal services.

Do I have to be on a Waiver to get regional center services?

No. You get to choose if you want to be included in the HCBS Waiver. Regional centers provide all the state-funded services to the people they serve. You will receive person-centered planning, opportunities to choose services and providers, and quality of care whether you are on the Waiver or not.

How do I qualify for the Waiver?

1) Have a formal diagnosis of a developmental disability or be provisionally eligible and be served by a regional center
2) Have an evaluation that shows you need help in your daily activities and would qualify to live in a licensed health facility, but you choose to live in the community
3) Qualify for full scope Medi-Cal already OR you would qualify if your parents' income (for children) or spouse's income (for married adults) was disregarded
4) Be receiving one waiver-billable service. You can ask your Service Coordinator for a service that counts if you are not already getting one.

> *"Ongoing case management or coordination from Regional Centers are important. If you find yourself running into things you don't know how to navigate, your service coordinator will help you. They want to see your child thrive and give your family support."*
>
> *-Parent*

4. PREPARING FOR YOUR FIRST REGIONAL CENTER MEETING

Find out what to expect and what you should bring to your meeting.

What information is good to share with my regional center?

The regional center uses information about you to see if you qualify for services and supports. This is valuable for the regional center to understand your needs. Below is a checklist of what you should bring to your first meeting with the regional center to make sure your evaluation is correct and complete.

Information About You:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Parent, guardian, or conservator's name
- Disabilities

Medical Records, Hospitals and Clinics:

- Health benefit cards (like private insurance, Medi-Cal, Medicare)
- All doctor's contact information, phone number, addresses, and email (including specialists, psychologists, or other health professional)
- Any hospital or clinic where you received care (including name of hospital/clinic, phone number, and address)

Evaluations, Reports, or School Records:

- Any evaluation reports, screening results, or evaluations completed by psychologists, Early Start/Head Start program, or other health professionals
- Contact information of schools attended including name, phone number, address, type of school (elementary, middle, high), and grades attended/completed
- Individual Education Plan (IEP) from the school if you have one
- Reports or concerns from health clinics, schools, or other service agencies



Are my regional center records confidential?

Yes, records are confidential and must be kept safe. Records cannot be shared with anyone without you saying it's ok unless there is a court order. This is part of a law called the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). You have the right to have this law explained to you.

What if I need information, evaluations, or meetings in a language other than English?

You can let your Service Coordinator know what language you use. You can ask for an interpreter or to have your written information in another language besides English. Your Service Coordinator will make note of what you ask for and will provide alternative communication services as needed.

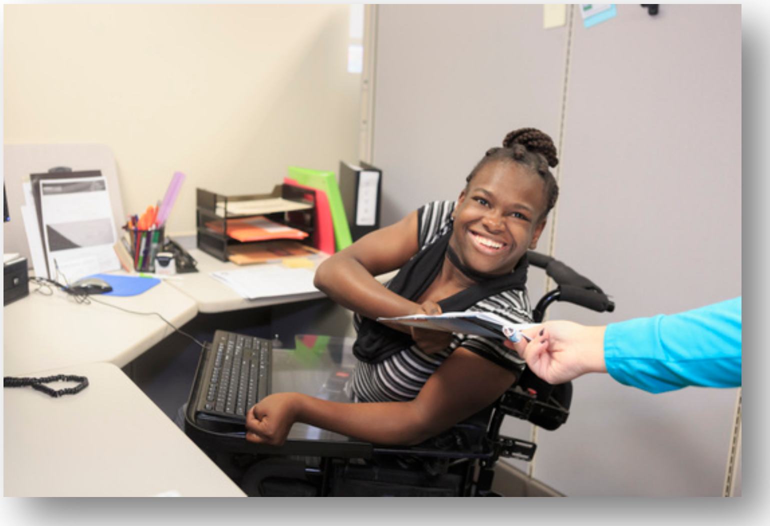
Can I see or make a copy of my regional center file?

You have a right to look at your regional center file. This includes information from people outside the regional center like doctors, evaluators, or other professionals. You can also give someone else permission to see your file, like a friend, teacher, or advocate.

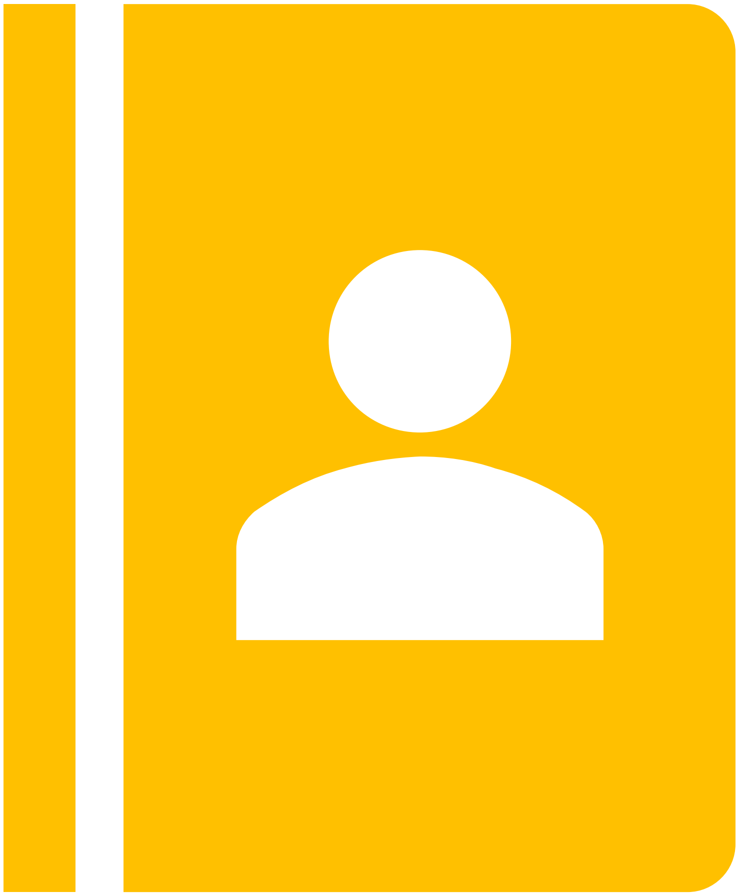
You can ask your Service Coordinator to look at, talk about or get a paper copy of your file. It is a good idea to do this in writing. The regional center must give you access to your file no later than 3 business days after you ask for it. You can decide how to get a copy of your file. You can ask to pick it up, have it emailed or mailed to you. You can also ask the regional center to explain anything in your file that you do not understand. You can request to change anything in your file that you do not agree with.

If you want a copy of your file, the regional center may ask you to pay. If you cannot afford to pay, tell the regional center and they will give it to you for free.

If you file an appeal, you can get access to your file during any step of the appeal process.



5. THE INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM PLAN



Learn how this document helps you plan to reach your goals with services and supports.

I qualify for regional center services. What is next?

After you qualify for services, the regional center will assign you an on-going Service Coordinator. Your Service Coordinator will contact you and set up a meeting to create your Individual Program Plan (IPP) no more than 60 days after they said you were eligible for services. Your IPP describes all areas of your life and will list out the services and supports you need. These are the things you need to meet your goals in your life. These services and supports can be paid for by the regional center or other outside resources. Outside resources could include services offered by your school or the county where you live.

How can my Service Coordinator help me?

You and your Service Coordinator are part of your planning team. Your Service Coordinator is your main contact at the regional center.

Your Service Coordinator can help you:

- Get ready for your IPP meetings
- Find the services and supports you need
- Track your goals and help you meet your goals
- Look for other services with your insurance, the county, public or community resources
- Connect to a family resource center for resources and help
- Answer any of your questions

If your Service Coordinator is not a good fit, you can ask for a new Service Coordinator who is right for you and your needs. Your regional center might have more information for you about the relationship between you and your Service Coordinator.

What is the Individual Program Plan (IPP)?

The IPP is a written plan that you create with your IPP planning team. This document should be person-centered and has information about you. It includes what is happening in your life, what is important to you and lists all your goals and future plans. The IPP will include a list of services and supports that you and your planning team agree will help you meet those goals. You and your planning team will choose and agree on services and start dates. This will include referrals for initial services or an estimated start date if a service provider still needs to be found. IPP meetings can happen as often as your needs or goals change. Your Service Coordinator will watch over this plan.

You may call for an IPP meeting with your planning team at any time by contacting your Service Coordinator.

Who is on my IPP planning team?

You are the most important member of the planning team. Your Service Coordinator or someone from the regional center will also attend your IPP meeting. You can invite anyone you want to attend this meeting and be part of your IPP planning team. You may want to invite the important people in your life like your family members, legal guardian, conservator, authorized representative, a trusted friend, a teacher, the people who provide services, or anyone else you think would be helpful. You may also want a doctor, friend, or advocate to help say what you want, or make sure your rights are followed.

How do I create my IPP?

You create your IPP with your planning team at an IPP meeting. This meeting will happen at a place and time that works for you.

It is important that everyone understands what people say at the IPP meeting. If someone says something you don’t understand, ask them to explain it. You can ask for an interpreter if you speak another language. You can ask for a different way to communicate. You can also ask for your written IPP to be translated to a different language that you know and understand.

The IPP includes information about:

- Your goals and areas of your life that are important to you
- What services and supports you need to meet your goals
- The person or company (called a service provider) that helps with your services and supports
- When the services and supports will start and end
- For how long and how often you will get the services and supports
- Who will pay for the services and supports

During your IPP meeting, your Service Coordinator may ask for your permission to share information about you with a service provider. This is called a referral.

What is the timeline for my IPP?

Your first IPP must be finished within 60 days from the date you are eligible for services. After that, IPPs must be reviewed at least once every 3 years. If you are on the HCBS Waiver or if you live in licensed residential care home, you must have an IPP meeting every year. You can ask for an IPP meeting anytime by talking to your Service Coordinator. This meeting will happen within 30 days.

If you do not agree on some services and supports in your IPP, you can hold another IPP meeting within 15 days, or later if that's what you and your planning team decide. At that meeting, your planning team will help you look at other services and supports to help you meet your goals. If you still don't agree, you can start the appeals process. To learn how to file an appeal, see Section 8: Resolving Disagreements.

You can ask for your IPP to be in the language you know and understand. You will receive a copy of your IPP in the language you ask for within 45 days.

Do I have to sign the IPP?

Yes, you or your legal guardian, or conservator must approve and sign the IPP for services and supports to start. You do not have to agree on all services and supports to sign the IPP. The services and supports you do agree with can start once you sign the IPP. You can then keep working on the things you don't agree with.

After you sign the IPP, you and your planning team will work with your Service Coordinator to choose a provider. Depending on the service or support, you may have more than one provider to choose from. You can ask your Service Coordinator for more information about the referral. New services can start once you, the regional center, and service provider all agree on what needs to happen. This takes time to set up. But you do not need to wait to bring things up until your next meeting. If you need something right away, let your Service Coordinator know.

At the end of an IPP meeting you will get a list of the services you and the team all agreed on. You should sign that list so services can start.

How does the IPP change?

The IPP changes as your needs and goals change. You can request to change the IPP after you have signed it. Contact your Service Coordinator to set up a meeting with your planning team to talk about changes. The IPP planning team will talk about how often you will meet to see how you are doing with goals in your plan and make changes.

> *"It's really important to know what services are available, and even more important to know what your needs are and what you hope to achieve. The clearer we are about what we need, the easier it is for our Service Coordinator."*
>
> -Self-advocate

6. ACCESSING SERVICES

Learn about services and supports available to you and how to get started.

What kinds of services and supports are available from the regional center?

All the services and supports you get will help you meet your goals in your IPP. Regional center service providers can be a person or company. It is their job to know how to help you with your life goals after they meet with you. These regional center service providers may also be called vendors or providers. They must go through an approval process with their local regional center(s). They can give you services and supports that meets your age, culture, language, accessibility, and needs. Some of the services and supports may include:

- Community and day programs
- Employment
- Licensed residential care home (sometimes calls a group home or facility)
- Supported or independent living services
- Respite
- Social recreation and camp services
- Training and classes for individuals and families
- Transportation

You can read more about the commonly used services offered by a regional center.



How can I get services and supports from the regional center?

There are different ways to get services and supports from the regional center. You get to choose the path that is best for you.

- **Traditional Vendored Services**: After you sign the IPP, your Service Coordinator will recommend or offer to you service providers that can help you. If you move or if there is not a service in your area, you may need to use a service provider from a different regional center or area. Your Service Coordinator can help you with that.

- **Self-Direction:** Self-Direction is a way for you to have more choice and responsibility over your services and supports, who provides them, and how. Planning for services happens with your Service Coordinator through a person-centered planning process. Self-directed services and supports can happen in two different ways:

- Participant Directed Services: Gives you the choice in who to hire, when to schedule, and how to supervise the work for some types of services and supports. The services and supports can be used by those who live in their own home, their family home, and some licensed residential care homes.

- Self-Determination Program (SDP): Gives you even more control in creating your service plans and choosing providers to meet your needs and your IPP goals. You work with your planning team to develop a budget and spending plan. You can then purchase services, supports, and goods from qualified service providers, people, or businesses. In SDP you must hire your own providers who meet state and federal requirements, use regional center vendored providers, or pay for some community services. You can learn more about the Self-Determination Program and review the Frequently Asked Questions.

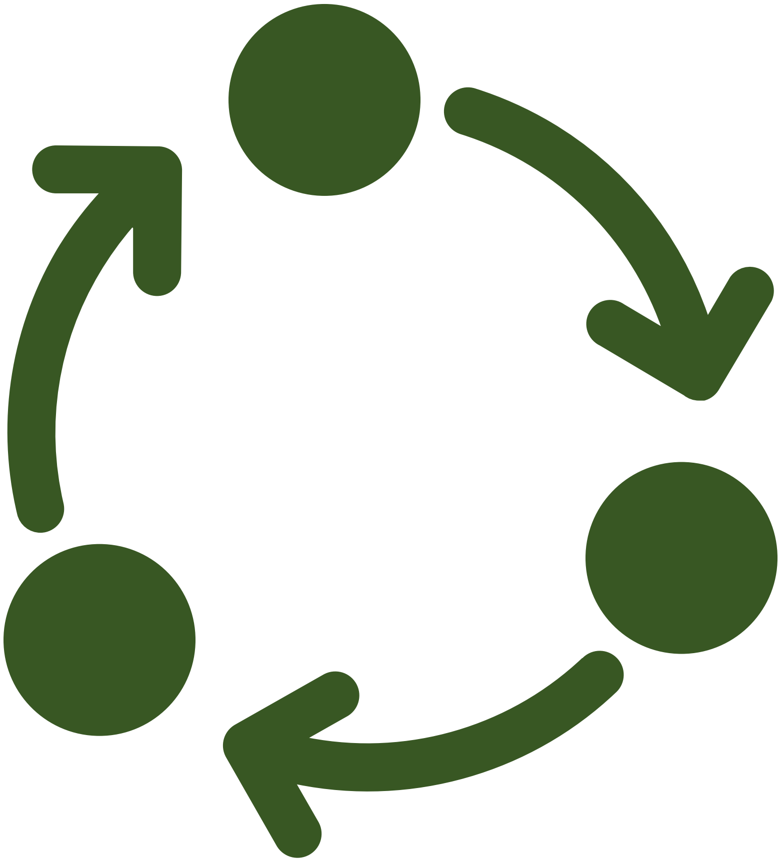
Are there other public and community resources available to me?

There are some resources for basic life needs available to anyone who qualifies. These are paid for by the city, county, state, or federal government. Other agencies might also pay for these resources. Some of these are:

- California Children's Services
- City, County, and State Housing Services (like Section 8 Housing, Rental Assistance)
- Community Legal Services (like Legal Aid)
- County and Federal Medical Clinics (like a Federally Qualified Health Center, Rural Health Clinics)
- County Mental Health and/or Behavioral Health Services
- Education/school (private and/or public)
- Food and nutrition programs (CalFresh, Women Infant and Children Program, food banks)
- Health Care Insurance (Medi-Cal, Medicare or private)
- In-Home Supportive Services
- Local Resources for Older Adults and their Caregivers (Area Agencies on Aging)

The law says individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities have the same rights to access public and community services as other community members. This means regional centers cannot pay for services already paid for by someone else. The regional center will consider the family's role and responsibility in caring for their loved one who is a minor. The regional center will ask to understand how services and supports are different or the same as those of children and youth without a disability in the least restrictive setting.

7. CHANGING SERVICES THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE



Learn how your needs may change as you grow and go through different parts of your life.

How do services change throughout my life?

As you get older, your needs may change. This chart shows who might help you find the right services and supports at different ages or stages in your life.

Age	**Birth to age 3**	**Age 3 to 22**	**Age 22 and beyond**
Stage in Life	*Infants and Toddlers*	*Children, Adolescents, and Youth*	*Adults*
Services and supports from:	• Early Start • Education/School District • Regional center* • Other local, state, federal public programs	• Education/School District • Regional center* • Other local, state, federal public programs	• Regional center* • Other local, state, federal public programs

******A person may qualify for regional center services at any age and services will continue for life.*

These are examples of some life changes:

- You may qualify for Early Start until age 3
- You may qualify for Provisional Eligibility until age 5
- You may qualify for Education Services provided by your local school district until after high school or until age 22
- After school ends, you may want to attend day program or get a job
- You may want supported/independent living services
- You may want to continue to live at home or move into a licensed residential care home
- You may need services to help you as you get older and your health needs change

> *“Give us a big picture and where we're going on this journey. Because I know my son's going to be a lifelong client and I know he's going to be getting different services at different stages of his life.”*
>
> -Parent

What happens for children, adolescents, and youth?

Early Start may have provided most or all the services up to this point. If qualifying for regional center services after Early Start or Provisional Eligibility, the child may get a new Service Coordinator. Now services may be provided by multiple agencies including the school district or the regional center. At least 90 days before the child turns 3, the family and the Service Coordinator will meet someone from the child's school to put together a transition plan. This is called a transition planning conference.

This plan will include:

- How to get services through the school district, if needed
- If the child qualifies for other regional center services
- If your child qualifies for other public services like local community programs, Medi-Cal or Services paid for by another program

School services will include anything that happens during the day at school. This includes things that are education related like going to class, learning new things, and making friends. Regional centers provide services that are needed to live at home or to be part of your community. Some children will continue to be eligible for regional center services, but others will not. You may also check for provisional eligibility at this time.

The child will now have two plans:

- Individualized Education Program (IEP) for school services, provided by the school district
- IPP for services provided by the regional center or community or public services

Some of the regional center services available for children aged 3 and up include:

- Adaptive and life skill training
- Parent trainings and counseling
- Personal care
- Respite
- Social recreation and camp services
- Toilet training help
- Transportation



The services available for children may change as they age. Discuss the needs with your Service Coordinator. If the child qualifies for regional center services, the regional center will continue to provide services and supports that are listed in the IPP.

Before completing high school, there will be another transition. The Service Coordinator will have information about available local resources, services, and options for what happens after high school. Some people graduate from high school at age 18 and get a high school diploma or certificate of completion. Others may want to continue with school like college, vocational training, or continuing education. These education services will continue until you graduate with a diploma, get a certificate of completion, or at age 22.

After completing school, you may receive most of your services and supports through the regional center. Your Service Coordinator will give you choices to help you make life decisions for short- and long-term goals. Some services available after school may include:

- Employment services
- Day programs
- Independent living programs
- Mobility training
- Personal care
- Licensed residential care home options
- Specialized transportation services
- Social and recreational services

<u>What happens for adults?</u>

Along with the services provided after your school years, your Service Coordinator will continue to meet with you as you become an adult to update your short- and long-term goals. Services are available for housing, getting a job, transportation, relationship-building and getting healthcare based on your needs in your IPP.

As you transition to different stages of life your needs and your goals and needs may change. The IPP will be updated to support you with these changes. Some extra services to help you as an older adult might be:

- Geriatric care
- Getting or using adaptive equipment
- Health screenings
- Help with your benefits
- Nursing services
- Planning for aging caregivers
- Relationship-building

8. RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS

Learn about what to do if you don’t agree with a decision and where you can get help.

What happens if I disagree with the regional center?

Sometimes you or your family may not agree with your regional center's decision and that is okay.

Examples of a disagreement might be:

- Your regional center wants to change the number of hours you get for an IPP service. You want to keep your service hours the same.
- You asked the regional center for a new service. The regional center said the service is not needed.
- You applied for regional center services. The regional center said you are not eligible.
- You already get regional center services. The regional center said you no longer are eligible.

You get a Notice of Action (NOA) when you and the regional center don't agree. The regional center sends the NOA. The NOA tells you about the reasons for that decision. You should tell the regional center how you want to get the NOA. You can choose email, regular mail, or certified mail, where you sign for proof, you got the letter. You will get the letter 5 working days after the disagreement. The NOA tells you the date the decision will happen. The NOA describes your appeal rights, and it provides an Appeal Request form.

If you and the regional center agree on decisions about your services or eligibility, you will not get an NOA. These agreements are called mutual consent. All agreements must be in writing. You may get a letter from your regional center confirming your agreement. This is called a Good Faith Belief letter.

Sometimes you and your Service Coordinator can have a discussion and figure out a solution that works for you. Other times you may want to start an appeal. You submit an Appeal Request form to DDS to start your appeal. Your NOA also provides the Appeal Request form.

What is an appeal?

An appeal is the process that you start when you don't agree with a decision the regional center made. This could be a decision about your eligibility for regional center services or the type or amount of services you get.

> *"Appeals take some time to get through the system. Sometimes it takes a third party, someone not involved, to decide the answer."*
> -Family Advocate

Who can help me with my appeal?
You have the right to have someone help or support you in your appeal. It can be your Service Coordinator or other regional center staff. It can be an attorney or another person. This person may be your authorized representative. If you agree, your authorized representative will get information about your appeal.

You may ask an attorney or someone else to help you prepare for your appeal. You may have an attorney attend any part of your appeal. If you have an attorney attend a mediation or hearing, you must tell the regional center first. More information about having an attorney help you is in the Lanterman Act Eligibility & Service Appeals Process.

Resources can help navigate any part of the process. This includes help with:

- Appeals
- Understanding the law and your rights
- General questions you may have as you learn how to get regional center services

Resources available to help include:

The DDS Ombudsperson Office

Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA)

Family Resource Centers (FRC)

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)

Other Resources

The DDS Ombudsperson Office: Gives information about regional center services, including the Self-Determination Program.

The DDS Ombudsperson Office can:

- Give you information about the appeal process
- Help you understand the forms you get about your appeal
- Show you how to fill out an appeal request form
- Listen to your complaints
- Help you set up a meeting to talk to your regional centers about your disagreement

The DDS Ombudsperson Office cannot:

- Decide who is right and who is wrong
- Represent you in the appeal process
- Give their opinion to a court or hearing officer
- Change a final hearing decision

Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA): Gives free legal information, advice, and representation to people who get services from a regional center. They also help people who are trying to be eligible for regional center services. OCRA helps people in all 21 regional centers throughout California. They can help you understand your rights and get services from other agencies. OCRA is part of Disability Rights California and OCRA is paid for by DDS.

OCRA can:

- Help you get services
- Give you information about rights and services
- Give you information about the appeals process
- Review information you got from your regional center
- Help you fill out appeal forms
- Represent you at meetings and in hearings

Family Resource Center (FRC): Gives support and resources for individuals and families. There are many FRCs throughout California with local resources and support.

Your FRC may:

- Be staffed by parents of children and by adults with developmental disabilities
- Connect you with other individuals or families who are going through the same journey as you
- Connect you with someone who has regional center services or is a parent
- Give you information about developmental delays and disabilities
- Give you information about regional centers and how to get services
- Have information about other local resources that can help
- Have information about the appeal process and the steps you might take to resolve your disagreement with your regional center

The State Council for Developmental Disabilities (SCDD): This is a state agency that works to make life better for people with disabilities and their families. They can help you learn about regional centers. There are 12 regional offices throughout California so you can find an office close to you.

Other Resources: Your regional center may know of other local support groups or community organizations that can help you. Ask your regional center Service Coordinator or another regional center staff for more information.

Information on how to contact these resources can be found in Section 9: Additional Resources and Supports.

What is the timeline for filing an appeal?

You must file your appeal request on time. There are two deadlines you should know. The first one is due in 30 days and second one is due in 60 days.

1. To keep your current services the same during your appeal, you must appeal within 30 days from when you got your NOA and before the action takes place. Keeping your current services during an appeal is called "aid paid pending."
2. If your appeal request is filed 31 to 60 days from when you got your NOA, the regional center's decision will happen while your appeal continues.

What legal rights do I have in the appeals process?

You have certain rights during an appeal. The rights are described in your NOA.

During all parts of the appeal process you have the right to get information in the language you know and understand. This includes your NOA and appeals forms. You also have a right to an interpreter during all parts of the appeal. An interpreter must be able to interpret effectively, accurately, and neutrally. The regional center provides an interpreter at your informal meeting. The Hearing Office provides the interpreter for your mediation and hearing.

You can read more about your rights in Your Rights During an Appeal.

What happens during the appeals process?

The appeals process has three parts. You may use one or more of these parts. Choose the parts you want to use on your Appeal Request form. If you don't resolve your disagreement using one part, you may decide to use other parts.

The three parts of the appeals process are:

1. Informal Meeting: You meet with the Regional Center Director or someone they choose. You and the regional center will try to resolve your appeal.

2. Mediation: You and the regional center meet with a Mediator. The Mediator is an impartial person and does not work for the regional center. The Mediator tries to help you and the regional center make an agreement about the regional center's decision. If you don't agree, you may use other parts of the appeals process.

3. Hearing: Your hearing is with a Hearing Officer. The Hearing Officer does not work for the regional center. The Hearing Officer listens to information from you and the regional center. The Hearing Officer helps you bring out your facts. The Hearing Officer makes the hearing fair and informal. Then the Hearing Officer decides the issues in your appeal.

What are the deadlines for completing an appeal?

Appeals must be completed 90 days after DDS receives your Appeal Request form. These deadlines may go longer if you or the regional center requests a continuance (postponement).

For more information about timelines, please review the Appeals Process Timelines.

Who do I file a complaint with if I believe a regional center or provider has treated me unfairly?

If you think the regional center or a service provider, denied your rights or did not follow the law, you can file a Section 4731 Complaint. Examples of complaints are:

- My confidentially was broken
- I did not get the services listed in my IPP
- I was not given the right to choose service options
- An IPP was not scheduled within 30 days of requesting one
- I did not get a copy of my IPP within 45 days
- I was not allowed to have friends visit my home
- My privacy was invaded

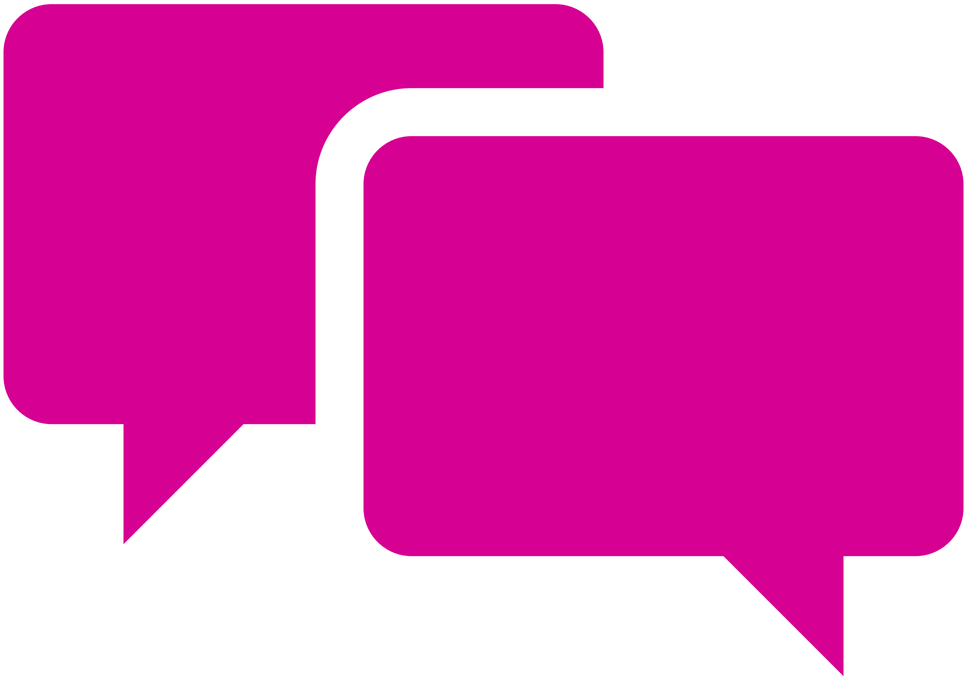
Your 4731 Complaint is filed with your regional center. The regional center has 20 working days to investigate your complaint and give you a decision.

If you don't agree with the regional center's decision, you can ask DDS to review it. You must ask DDS to review the regional center's decision within 15 working days. DDS has 45 days to respond back to you.

You can get more information about 4731 Complaints and find DDS Appeals contact information on the DDS website for Consumer Rights, Appeals & Complaints.

This document is for information only and it is not legal advice. Please use this as a resource with any additional information provided by your local regional center.

9. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS



This is a place for you to write down important information or how to contact people that may help.

Contacts

To find your regional center, visit the DDS website and type your zip code in the search window. *To search Los Angeles County zip codes, click the ‘LA County’ tab.*

Use this list to keep your regional center's contact information in one place:

My Regional Center

Name:

Phone:

General Email:

My Service Coordinator

Name:

Phone:

Email:

My Service Coordinator’s Manager

Name:

Phone:

Email:

My Local Family Resource Center

FRC Name:

My Contact Person:

Phone:

Email:

The Department of Developmental Services

Website

Phone: 833-421-0061

Email: info@dds.ca.gov

The Office of the Ombudsperson

Website

Phone: 877-658-9731

Email: Ombudsperson@dds.ca.gov

Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy

Statewide Contact Information

Website

Phone: 800-776-5746

TTY: 800-719-5798

My Local Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy

My Contact Person:

Phone:

Email:

Disability Rights California

Website

Phone: 800-776-5746

TTY call: 800-719-5798

State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Website

Phone: (916) 263-7919

Toll Free: (833) 818-9886

My Local Office of State Council on Developmental Disabilities

My Contact Person: Jennifer Lucas

Phone: (650) 714-5168

Email: Jennifer.Lucas@scdd.ca.gov

Local Resources

Resource Name	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
Family Resource Centers	FRC Page	Information of the local Family Resource Centers which offer support and guidance for school age children
Office of Clients Rights	OCR	Offers support and advice for a variety of information
IEP Guide	IEP SARC IEP Page	Information related to IEP developments and how to prepare
Advocacy Page	SARC Advocacy Page	Links to agencies that can support people in various stages of needed support.
Your Rights	SARC Rights Page	Information about various actions a person can take
Mental Health Support	HCS Mental Health	The Mental Health Services Division (MHSD) administers a number of mental health programs for Children and Youth, Adults and Older Adults.
Disability Benefits 101	DB 101	information related to social security benefits.

For more information about transition from Early Start

California Resources:

Resource Name	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
Handbook on Transition from Early Childhood Special Education	California Department of Education Phone: 916-319-0800	Information and resources to navigate the transition from Early Start to special education for preschool-aged children.
Effective Early Childhood Transitions: A Guide for Transition at Age Three — Early Start to Preschool	Department of Developmental Services Phone: 800–515–BABY (800–515–2229) Email: earlystart@dds.ca.gov	Information about smooth transitions and how to support families and their children as they transition from Early Start to other services at age 3.
Transitioning out of Early Start: From the IFSP to IEP/ IPP	Parents Helping Parents Phone: 855-727-5775	A video on transition from Early Start.
Early Intervention	State Council on Developmental Disabilities-San Bernardino Office Phone: 909 890-1259 Email: sanbernardino@scdd.ca.gov	A handout that covers the transition process and timeline.
First 5 California	Phone: 916-263-1050 Email: info@ccfc.ca.gov	First 5 California is dedicated to improving the lives of California's young children and their families through a comprehensive system of education, health services, childcare, and other crucial programs.
Help Me Grow	Heather Little, M.Ed. Systems Director 510-227-6967 heather@first5association.org	A locally developed resource and referral system that identifies a family's child development needs. It gives care coordination necessary to ensure the best and most timely access to appropriate services. It has programs designed to share resources, tools, and best practices for finding education needs early. The programs help families learn about and find their way around California's early childhood system of care.

Resource Name	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
2-1-1	Phone: 211	2-1-1 is a free information and referral service that connects people to health and human services in their community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For more information about school age and adult services

California Resources:

Resource Name	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)	California Department of Aging Phone: 800-510-2020	Services to seniors and adults with disabilities.
California School Directory	California Department of Education	Directory of public and private schools in California.
Family Involvement & Partnerships	California Department of Education Phone: 916-319-0800	Resources and support for parents, guardians, and families of children with disabilities.
Reasons for Concerns	California Department of Education in collaboration with the Department of Developmental Services	Information about reasons for worries and concerns about development and behavior, and how to explain them to your doctor or your regional center.
Independent Living Centers	Department of Rehabilitation Phone: 800-952-5544 TTY: 916-558-5673	Information for people with a disability who want to live more independently.
Find Your Parent Center in California	Center for Parent Information and Resources Phone: 973-642-8100	Links to the Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs). PTIs and CPRCs provide information, resources, and training about special education (including Early Start).
Regional Centers	Department of Developmental Services Phone: 833-421-0061 Email: info@dds.ca.gov TTY: 711	Information about the regional centers and other information on developmental disabilities.

Resource Name	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
Regional Center Services and Descriptions	Department of Developmental Services	A list of services available through the regional centers by age group, in English and other languages, and links to other service-related information.
Self-Determination Program	Department of Developmental Services	General information about Self-Determination Program and Frequently Asked Questions about Self-Determination Program.
Special Education	Disability Rights California (DRC) Phone: 800-776-5746 TTY: 800-719-5798	General resources about special education.
FRCNCA Get Connected	Family Resource Centers	A map of the Family Resource Center (FRCS) network and contact information for each.
Family Empowerment Centers	Seeds of Partnership Phone: 916-228-2388	Training and information for families of children and young adults with disabilities, between the ages of 3 and 22 in California.

National Resource:

Resource Name	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
Parents & Families	U.S. Department of Education Phone: 202-245-7459	Resources for families about special education for the entire United States but not specific to California.

For More information about healthcare and social services

California Resources:

Resource Name	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
Medi-Cal for Individuals	Department of Health Care Services Medi-Cal Helpline: 800-541-5555 Phone: 916-636-1980	Information about Medi-Cal.
Department of Social Services	Department of Social Services Phone: 916-651-8848	Information about a variety of services including In-Home Supported Services.
Mental Health for All	State of California	Information about free mental health support, wellness resources, emotional support, and more.
Family Voices of California (FVCA)	Family Voices of California Phone: (415) 282-7494	Information and support for families to make informed decisions about the health care of their children.

National Resource:

Social Security Administration (Federal)	Social Security Administration Phone: 800-772-1213	Information about Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security.

For more information about your rights

California Resources:

Resource Name	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
Parents' Rights	California Department of Education Phone: 916-319-0800	Information about rights and procedural safeguards.
A Consumer's Guide to the Lanterman Act	Department of Developmental Services	Information about what the Lanterman Act promises, how to be a partner with the regional center and other service providers when making life choices and offers ideas for how to get services and supports needed.
Appeals & Complaints	Department of Developmental Services	Information for consumers, families, vendors, and providers about how to file an appeal or complaint.
Office of the Ombudsperson	Department of Developmental Services Email: Ombudsperson@dds.ca.gov Phone: 877-658-9731	Information for self-advocates and families to access regional center services available under the Lanterman Act.
Office of the Self-Determination Program Ombudsperson	Department of Developmental Services Email: SDP.Ombudsperson@dds.ca.gov Phone: 877-658-9731	Information for self-advocates and families to participate in the Self-Determination Program.
Special Education Rights and Responsibilities (SERR)	Disability Rights California (DRC) Phone: 800-776-5746 TTY: 800-719-5798	How to become eligible for special education, how to request and advocate for special education services, and what to do if you disagree with school districts.
About the Office of Administrative Hearings	Email: DGSOAHFeedback@dgs.ca.gov Phone: 916-263-0550	Requests for mediation and/or hearings are done with the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH). The Hearing Officer gathers information, reviews documents, listens to testimony, and makes a decision.

California Resources, Continued:

Resource Name	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
Rights Under the Lanterman Act (RULA)	Disability Rights California (DRC) Phone: 800-776-5746 TTY: 800-719-5798	Help with understanding rights to supports and services under the Lanterman Act, rights with the regional center and service providers.

National Resource:

Resource Name	Contact	What Will I Find Here?
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund	Email: info@dredf.org Phone: 510-644-2555	Information on training, education, and legal advocacy for people with disabilities and parents who have children with disabilities.

10. COMMONLY USED TERMS

Learn about words and phrases that you might hear or see a lot.

Advocate:
An advocate is someone who represents your interests. This person may help and support when needed, like attending a meeting or writing a formal request letter and give suggestions. Anyone can be an advocate, but often this person is not an attorney and does not offer legal advice.

Advocacy:
The act of supporting a self-advocate or family's interests and rights.

American Sign Language (ASL):
ASL is a visual language that uses movements of the hands and face.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):
A federal law that prohibits discrimination based on a person's disability.

Appeal:
A written request to DDS for a change in a regional center decision.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA):
A common behavioral intervention for people with autism. ABA is a general term for using behavioral modification strategies to improve social and practical behaviors. The term ABA is used for both the behavioral intervention and the measurement of progress.

Adaptive Equipment:
Any device, tool, or machine used to help with any task of daily living.

Assistive Technology:
Any item, piece of equipment, or means used to increase, maintain, or improve your skills.

Assessment or Evaluation:
A way to decide if you are eligible for services and how much of a service is needed through the regional center. These are coordinated by the regional center's intake staff. This can be a way of collecting information about your learning needs, strengths, and interests. You may be evaluated for your:

- Unique needs and strengths and the services needed
- Resources, priorities, and concerns
- Services and supports needed to improve your life

Autism (also called Autism Spectrum Disorder or ASD):
A complex developmental disorder that affects how a person communicates and interacts with others. Autism Spectrum Disorder or ASD is a term commonly used instead of the word 'autism' in recognition that autism affects people differently. This is considered a 'spectrum' disorder.

Cerebral Palsy (or CP):
A developmental disability with some type of trauma or injury to the brain before, during, or shortly after birth that results in difficulties with muscle control and coordination.

Communication:
Is more than talking! It is any form of message sent from one person to another, through sounds, words, or physical hints, like body language.

Confidentiality:
The right that your personal information is not released without your permission (verbally or in writing) or only when permitted or required by law.

Consent or informed consent:
The permission you give to a program or agency, usually in writing. Consent is always voluntary and may be canceled at any time.

Consumer or Self-Advocate:
A person with a developmental disability who receives regional center services.

Consumer Advocate:
A person with a developmental disability who works for the regional center. They can:

- Talk with you to see if you are happy, healthy, and safe
- Support and advocate for you
- Provide peer training

Developmental Disability:
In California, a person with a developmental disability is anyone who has a substantial disability like autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, an intellectual disability, or similar condition, that started before age 18, and is likely to need services for life.

Early Start:
Early Start helps infants and toddlers, from birth to 3 years, who have developmental delays or disabilities. Early Start services are intended to help eligible children learn new skills, overcome challenges, and increase success in life.

Eligibility:
The requirements a person must meet to get services from the Lanterman Act program. There are different eligibility requirements for regional center services including Early Start, and Provisional Eligibility through regional centers.

Epilepsy:
A developmental disability that affects activity in the brain and causes seizures.

Functional Ability:
Refers to meeting your basic needs, learning, growing, making decisions, being mobile, building and maintaining relationships, and being a part of your community.

Generic Services and Natural Supports:
Resources from local, State, or Federal agencies. These include services like education services, In-Home Supportive Services, Medi-Cal, and Social Security.

Geriatric Care:
Services and supports for those over the age of 60.

In-Home Respite:
A service designed to give the family or caregivers a break and is provided in the family home.

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS):
A state program that will help pay for services so that a person with a disability can remain safely in their own home.

Individualized Education Program (IEP):
A written plan for education services.

Individual Program Plan (IPP):
A written plan that lists your goals in areas like community participation, housing, work, school, and leisure time. The plan will include services and supports to help you meet your goals.

Institutional Deeming:
Refers to rules that may help you qualify for Medi Cal through your parents if you are a child or through your spouse.

Intake:
A process used by regional centers to decide if you are eligible for their services and what services are needed.

Intellectual disability:
Also called 'cognitive disability', intellectual disability is a preferred term to describe a condition where people learn at a slower rate than others.

Interpreter and Translator Services:
A person who speaks, writes, and understands a different language. They can share the information from English to the language you choose.

Lanterman Act:
A California law that establishes the rights of people with developmental disabilities to services and supports they need and choose. This law is administered through the Department of Developmental Services and services are provided through the California regional center system.

Least restrictive environment:
The law and the courts say all people have the right to get help in ways and in places that allow independence and have the right amount of supervision.

Mediation:
A meeting to resolve disagreements between you and a regional center.

Medi-Cal:
California's public program that pays for health and long-term care services for low-income Californians, as well as others with very high medical expenses.

Notice of Action (NOA):
An official letter from the regional center that tells you a decision about eligibility or a change in, or denial of, services.

Nursing Services:
Services to help prevent health problems and promote health and development and may include giving medications or other treatments prescribed by a doctor.

Out of Home Respite:
A service designed to give the family or caregivers a break and is provided outside of the person's home.

Participant-Directed Services:
Services that give you a choice of who to hire, schedule, and supervise certain types of services listed in the IPP.

Payor of last resort:
A requirement not to use regional center funds for services if another public or private source is available to pay for these services.

Peers:
Another person who is equal to you. They may be the same age or culture as you. They may have the same interests you do.

Person-Centered Planning:
A process where a planning team works with you to help you with your goals and the services and supports needed to meet those goals. Person-centered planning means focusing on your strengths, capabilities, and needs to have an independent, productive, and satisfying life.

Physical Disability:
A condition of your body or mind that makes it hard for you to do things in your life or limits your daily activities and interactions.

Provisional Eligibility:
Some children under the age of 5 may be eligible for something called provisional eligibility. The child might not have an eligible diagnosis yet or they may not have a substantial developmental disability. Children who receive services through provisional eligibility can receive them until age 5. At that time, they will have to meet the regional center eligibility for continued services. If they don't, the regional center services will end.

Public Agency:
An agency, office, or organization that gets money from the government to help people in the community who cannot pay for basic needs like housing, food, transportation, and health care.

Purchase of Service (POS):
The way regional centers pay for your services and supports.

Referral:
Sending you to a different place or person for more information, help, or action. This can be a person or group with the skills to help you.

Regional Center (RC):
Regional centers are local agencies. They arrange services for children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families. There is a regional center in each area across California. You will work with the regional center that's in the area where you live.

Self-Advocate:
A person who takes an active role in improving their own life by speaking up for themselves and the things that are important to them, including their own health and safety.

Self-Determination Program (SDP):
A voluntary program that gives you more control in creating your service plans and choosing service providers to better meet your needs and help you meet your IPP goals. You work with your planning team to develop a budget and spending plan to purchase services, supports, and goods from qualified service providers, individuals, or businesses.

Service Coordinator or Case Manager:
Your Service Coordinator is your primary contact at the regional center. They are a professional and know about resources, supports, and services to help you meet your goals.

Service Provider or Vendor:
Regional center service providers can be a person or company. It is their job to know how to help you with your life goals after they meet with you. These regional center service providers may also be called vendors or providers. They must go through an approval process with their local regional center(s). They can give you services and supports that meets your age, culture, language, accessibility, and needs.

Transition:
When you move from one stage of life to the next. This could be Early Start to Preschool, high school to post-secondary education, education to employment, or community programs.