



EASTERN LOS ANGELES REGIONAL CENTER

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Questions for your Regional Center Service Coordinator (29)

REGIONAL CENTER

What does Regional Center mean?

- The ELARC is a private, non-profit organization under contract to the California Department of Developmental Services. ELARC has supported persons with developmental disabilities in the communities of East Los Angeles, Alhambra, Whittier, Pico Rivera, Rosemead, San Gabriel and other surrounding communities for more than 40 years. ELARC is governed by a Board of Directors which includes persons with developmental disabilities, their family members, service providers and other interested individuals. The regional center serves as a central point for accessing and coordinating services for people with developmental disabilities. We are one of 21 regional centers in the state.

What are the services a Regional Center consumer receives?

- The consumer is to receive services which meet the needs identified and agreed to by the interdisciplinary team at the IPP meeting. The services are “specialized services and supports or special adaptations...directed toward the alleviation of a developmental disability or toward rehabilitation of an individual... towards the achievement of independent, productive, normal lives.” Services are highly varied and present a wide array of paid and unpaid services and supports.[WIC 4512(b)]

How many committees exist within the Regional Center and why are we not informed at our IPP Meetings?

- There are three standing committees: Vendor Advisory, Family Advisory and Consumer Advisory who meet regularly. The meetings are announced through the agency’s e-newsletter and website and posted on the agency’s bulletin board. The Vendor Advisory Committee is the only committee required by law to be part of the Board of Directors and is a non voting member. [WIC 4646.4 (a)(1)(2)(3)(4)]

Is there a service purchasing guide for parents?

- The ELARC Purchase of Service Guidelines (POS) is a publication that is available to everyone and can be found on the ELARC website. While the POS guidelines delineate some of the services that ELARC provides it does not include every service as not every service has a specific guideline. The intention is that they will be used by individuals served by this Regional Center, their families and Service Coordinators.

Why are the Regional Center Board Meetings not translated?

- The Board Meeting are held in English only. If a person wishes to participate in a language other than English, an RSVP to (626) 299-4847 must be made two

weeks prior to the meeting so that the Regional center will make every effort to accommodate and provide interpretation for the individual.

What is the transition process to adult life in the Regional Center?

- ELARC's best practice is for the Service Coordinator to be in a supportive role during the transition process. The transition to adult life starts with the school district through an I.T.P. (individual transition plan). This is part of the IEP process. The ITP should be developed at the age of 16 and continue through the rest of the school services until age 22 yrs or until the student exits the school district. Regional Centers can participate in this process as long as the parent and student invite the Service Coordinator to these planning meetings. The planning should start early enough to address life skills such as travel training, money recognition and purchasing skills, vocational strengths and preferences. At the final ITP, it is important to have representation from the school, Dept. of Rehabilitation, Regional Center and any other agency which may provide support services. The final ITP includes recommendations for transition out of the district and into adult life. The recommendations can include adult education, vocational supports, or options for day programs, and independent living skills training. Depending on the recommendations made by the ITP team and preferences of the student, referrals can be made for intake and assessment to the program(s) of choice. Funding depends on the selection. Vocational supports are typically funded by Dept. of Rehabilitation. Day programs and independent living skills training are typically funded by Regional Center. Adult education or college selection is typically funded by the individual. A student will typically exit the school system by age 22. It is very important that planning for this transition take place early to ensure that options are reviewed and referrals are made in a timely manner to avoid gaps in supports.

What is Medicaid Waiver?

- The Medicaid Waiver Program, also known as the Home and Community Based Services Waiver (HCBSW), was created by the federal government to allow the government to ignore, or waive, some of its own rules so it can pay for certain services that enable individuals with a developmental disability to live at home or in the community rather than in a institution. The cost for these services are funded jointly by the federal government's Medicaid program and the State of California. The program is strictly voluntary and requires the individuals consent. You must have Medi-Cal to be part of the Waiver Program or be eligible for Institutional Deeming to receive Medi-Cal. Whether you are eligible and choose enrollment in the HCBS Waiver or not, you will receive the same person- centered planning opportunities to choose services and be ensured the same quality of care. Benefits to participating in the MW Program include additional federal funding for the regional center system and participants that are minors are exempt from the Family Cost Participation Program and the Annual Family Program Fee.

ELIGIBILITY

What categories are eligible for Regional Center?

- In accordance with Welfare & Institutions Code, Section 4512, developmental disabilities include: mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and autism.

Additionally, disabling conditions which are “found to be closely related to mental retardation or to require treatment similar to that required for individuals with mental retardation” (commonly referred to as the 5th Category), are considered. All must originate prior to 18 years of age and constitute a substantial disability.

What is the form or method of evaluation used to determine if a client qualifies for Regional Center services?

- The method of evaluation to determine eligibility for individuals 3 years of age or older, is dependent upon what developmental disability is suspected. For epilepsy and cerebral palsy, neurological/medical records from the applicant’s physician are reviewed by the physician consultant. For mental retardation and autistic disorder, the psychological evaluation is reviewed by the psychology consultant.

Do we have the right to an Independent Evaluation if we do not agree with the results of an evaluation done by the Regional Center’s psychologist?

- You have a right to secure your own independent evaluations. However, arrangements and payment are your responsibility and the results may or may not change the Regional Center’s position as the independent assessments must still be reviewed and given consideration by either the Regional Center clinical team or intake and assessment team. [WIC 4642, 4643, 4646.5(a)(1) ELARC Intake and Assessment and Clinical Team guidelines]

What is the appropriate evaluation to determine if the consumer is no longer eligible to receive Regional Center Services?

- Evaluations for re-determination of eligibility are dependent upon the consumer’s diagnosis(es). Information is gathered and reviewed by the clinical team. For epilepsy and cerebral palsy, medical information is gathered by the service coordinator for review and determination of eligibility by the regional center physician consultant. For autism and mental retardation, the latest, current psychological assessment is reviewed along with any other relevant documentation by the regional center psychology consultant to determine continued eligibility.

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM PLAN (IPP)

What is an IPP?

- The document known as the Individual Program Plan (IPP) is a record of the decisions made by the planning team. It is centered on the individual and the family. The IPP takes into account the needs, preferences of the individual and his or her family. It promotes community integration, independent productive and normal lives and stable and healthy environments. Any person receiving regional centers services shall have an IPP. (WIC 4646)

What are the areas an IPP covers?

- The IPP lists a person’s goals, objectives and the services needed to reach those goals and objectives. It describes who will provide the service and who will pay for it. All services listed in the IPP will be provided either by a generic, private or natural resource, a regional center service provider (a business approved by the regional center). [WIC 4646(d), 4646.5(a)(2)]

When is it appropriate to do an IPP?

- An IPP shall be completed within 60 days of the completion of the assessment following eligibility determination.[WIC 4646(c)] A new IPP is completed at least every three years, however it is reviewed annually. If a consumer / family feels that it is necessary to review or reconvene for an IPP, a meeting may be requested and shall be held within 30 days of the request.[WIC 4646.5(b)]

Can the Regional Center translate the IPP and our children's service evaluations to our primary language, if we request it verbally or in writing?

- Yes, the regional center can translate and prepare the IPP in a form that is understandable to the consumer and his or her family (WIC 4502.1) . However, those evaluations/ reports that are not authored or produced by the regional center will not be translated.

SERVICE COORDINATOR TRAINING

What is the training received by Regional Center Coordinators regarding services and programs provided to consumers?

- When service coordinators start employment at ELARC, they receive orientations that are normally completed within six months. The training includes a basic understanding of the history of regional center, services offered, regulations and policy, the difference in units or divisions in the provision of services, general resources available, how to work with families, how to develop IPPs. etc. In addition, ELARC provides resources and information to service coordinators through committees that meet quarterly. ELARC also conducts in-services to increase service coordinators knowledge on topics like DCFS, DPSS, DOR, APS, Medi-Cal, etc. Service coordinator units are also provided with specific information regarding concerns in the delivery of services through the Service Coordinator Academy. There is ongoing training on policy and services through individual supervision and unit meetings. Service coordinators are regularly receiving flyers, pamphlets, and general information regarding conferences and workshops available.

Do the SC's have a preparation guide for the IPP?

- Yes, service coordinators do receive an Individual Program Planning (IPP) preparation guide book as part of their new staff training curriculum. The curriculum includes 23 other training components in addition to the IPP training. The training components include crisis intervention, a general overview of the Lanterman Act, risk management, special education, cultural sensitivity and individual rights amongst other relevant topics.

LEGAL

Can the Regional Center intervene so that a parent that does not have a legal status and has a child that is a Regional Center consumer can be legalized through his child?

- No. The Regional Center would refer undocumented parent of a citizen consumer asking such a question to an immigration advocacy center, Office of Client's Rights Advocacy, Disability Rights or Area Board 10.

Can the Regional Center represent us legally, if our children suffer any abuse in the community, school or foster home?

- Parents of children who are alleged to be abused in the community, school, or foster home may file a police report and if they press charges may have the assistance of the District Attorney's office. Other potential resources who employ attorneys are Disability Rights and Office of Client's Rights Advocacy. Area Board 10 may also be a resource should Regional Center advocacy efforts not be sufficient. Families may hire their own private attorney. The Regional Center will not provide legal representation for matters which should have generic and other private resources. [WIC 4648(a) (8); WIC 4648(b)(2)]

DUE PROCESS

What is the procedure to go through when I am not in agreement with a service that the Regional Center provides?

- Regional Center services are voluntary. When you are not in agreement with the services the Regional Center provides and you are the decision maker (un-conserved adult consumer, or parent/guardian of a minor child), you would inform the Service Coordinator that you do not want the service that is being provided. The Service Coordinator can cancel the service based on your preference. When Regional Center is not in agreement with a service request made by consumer/family, Regional Center can deny the service and provide the consumer or his/her representative a Notice of Proposed Action as part of their due process rights. This would include information about how to file for a fair hearing.

REPORTING ABUSE

Can a Service Coordinator report a parent of a consumer for suspicion of abuse?

- Yes. Regional Center staff are mandated reporters for children, elderly adults and dependent adults. Abuse can include physical, sexual, emotional, neglect or fiduciary.(Child Abuse and Reporting Act, P.C. Sec.11164, Welfare and Institutions Sec. 15610.)

CASE TRANSFER

How long do changes from one regional center to another take?

- There are no standardized timelines for transfers between Regional Centers. Close communication and plenty of advance notice to the service coordinator about a pending move will assist in expediting the case transfer. Prior to case transfer, family may request the Regional Center communicate with the receiving Regional Center to facilitate a smooth transition. Best practice is to transfer the case as soon as the family has moved and provides a new permanent address and telephone number. Generally, cases transferred by the 15th of a month are accepted by the new center on the 1st of the following month. [WIC 4643.5(c); Regional Center Transfers Guidelines]

ROLE OF THE SERVICE COORDINATOR

How long does a service coordinator have to respond to a call and, if the call is not returned, to whom can I talk?

- The ELARC practice is to return phone calls within 24 hours and soon as possible depending on the request being made. If the call is not being returned by the service coordinator, the parent can contact the supervisor.

Is there a limit of conferences to which a service coordinator may attend?

- It is ELARC's practice to encourage service coordinators to attend conferences. These conferences are usually related to topics that will assist service coordinators to better serve consumers in their caseloads.

What is a Service Coordinator on duty?

- The officer of the day responds to urgent calls or requests needing an immediate response when the assigned service coordinator is not available or not in the office to respond to the immediate request. Service coordinators are assigned on a rotation basis to provide the officer of the day coverage.

Can the Regional Center workers attend an IEP?

- Yes. If parent or adult student (consumer) wants the Service Coordinator to participate in the IEP process, they should provide adequate notification to their Service Coordinator, and their Service Coordinator can participate if their schedule and caseload priorities permit. The Service Coordinator presence is not intended to replace the parent or adult student at the IEP.

Can the SC help us complete applications for SSI, IHSS, etc?

- A service coordinator can help advocate for you with community agencies such as social security and social services. This may include helping you complete an application for services as their schedule and caseload priorities permits.

How can RC provide me support through my child's pediatrician?

- Every year during the Individual Program Planning meeting your Service Coordinator will ask for your consent in signing an Authorization for Use And/OR Disclosure of Confidential Medical or Health Related Information form. This form will then be utilized to request medical records in order to keep the consumer record up to date.

What can we do if a Service Coordinator is annoyed when we ask for certain services?

- The Service Coordinator should always maintain a professional demeanor when responding to service requests. If it is perceived that a Service Coordinator demeanor is unprofessional, the consumer/ family may contact the service coordinator's immediate supervisor to report it.