

ALTA CONNECTIONS

The Quarterly Client, Service Provider, and Staff Update Newsletter



More on our featured artist
Jacob Maddox pg. 12

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Executive Director Lori Banales

Employment First is a national systems-change framework that focuses on possibilities within the work space. This premise asserts that all individuals, including those with the most significant disabilities, are capable of working. Supporting individuals served in employment settings requires an adequate and committed workforce. In fact, the entire developmental service system has been impacted with the need to reopen in-person service options while simultaneously balancing the need to attract and hire a new workforce. This has been a statewide issue and one that we hope to address. Over the past several months, Alta California Regional Center (ACRC) has partnered with Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC) to collaborate on a shared vision to attract job seekers to the field of developmental disabilities. Many of the state initiatives support a person-centered focus. This focus is embraced by us all and requires more staff to support more clients in individualized ways.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE - CONT.

Executive Director - Lori Banales

The VMRC/ACRC DSP (Direct Support Professionals) collaboration recognizes the current barriers and comes together in partnership with our local providers to create a way forward. We have secured the talents of a public relations agency to assist us in promoting the Developmental Services System as a professional opportunity for job seekers looking for work that matters. There will be a public relations campaign that will push the public to a website that has been created to host provider agency and regional center summaries with links to directly apply to job postings. This website has the capacity to filter across domains, such as county, zip code and job type, to take a job seeker right to available opportunities in their preferred area. We are inviting all ACRC and VMRC providers of service to participate. Additionally, there will be Job Expos hosted in each regional center catchment area with the hope to attract and hire a new generation of staff that will support the individualized service plans of those we support. While this edition of the Alta Connections centers around the continuum of employment opportunities, we also recognize and support the need to rebuild the workforce capacities across all vendors so that clients of all ages and stages are afforded with service access and choice.



ACRC PARTNERS WITH SIERRA COLLEGE ON DDS EMPLOYMENT GRANT

In 2022, Department of Developmental Services developed a grant program to increase pathways to employment. \$10 million was awarded to projects across the state that will focus on areas such as staff training, transforming current service models, and developing employer relationships. ACRC's catchment area will have several projects designed to expand opportunities for competitive integrated employment for individuals served. Exciting projects in the works include a benefits counseling program, a collaboration with Sierra College, training for Customized Employment, and more. Awardees of the grant are in the beginning stages of implementing their programs. ACRC is excited to see these programs in action and to continue to break barriers for employment.



In collaboration with ACRC, Sierra College was awarded a DDS Employment Grant for their "Learning Independence for Future Employment (LIFE)" Program. The LIFE Program will establish a pipeline for creating long-term, successful employment by establishing supports and curriculum at the community college level to create a pathway for permanent Competitive Integrated Employment. As part of the LIFE program, Sierra College will be vrending with ACRC for their Transition to Independent Living program. This program will be modeled after Taft College's Transition to Independent Living program which provides a comprehensive curriculum that prepares students for independent living and employment by the time they graduate community college. It has been a longstanding vision of ACRC to bring this model to our community. Vendorization of this program is currently underway.

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT FIRST IN CALIFORNIA

This year, California celebrates 10 years of our Employment First policy. On October 9, 2013, California became the 12th state to enact an employment first policy in law. Employment first means that employment is given highest priority for all working age individuals with developmental disabilities. Since California's Employment First policy enacted, we have taken many steps to increase competitive, integrated employment opportunities. As of December 2022, there are 2,120 ACRC clients ages 16-64 receiving earned income. We are proud of the efforts that have been made to increase integrated employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and look forward to the next 10 years of Employment First.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT - CLIENT EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST CARLY SHEARER



My name is Carly Shearer and I was born and raised right here in Sacramento, CA. I have been with Alta California Regional Center since April 2022 and am grateful to work with such amazing people. I began my journey in this field when I was 18 years old by working at a day and behavior program and eventually moved to working in case management with an employment services provider after finishing school. In my role as Client Employment Specialist, I work with Community Services in overseeing ACRC's employment service vendors, conduct outreach activities to connect with potential employer partners, and provide trainings on employment supports that ACRC can offer, including CIE, PIPs, and Tailored Day Services. My favorite part of my job is seeing all of the success stories! In my free time, I enjoy playing games and spending time with my fiancé and our dog Jet.

ACRC AND THE COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT (CIE) ROADMAP

What is Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)? CIE refers to employment in a community setting, working alongside individuals without disabilities and making at least minimum wage and earning the same benefits and opportunities as everyone else in that position. Each person's path to CIE is unique. A person-centered plan based on choice and preference will lead to the most fulfilling outcomes. It is helpful and important for planning teams and families to engage in conversations early on about options for their loved ones. For example, a school age child's chores and home and routines at school can help identify their strengths, interests and preferences for employment later in life.

As youth progress through their elementary and middle school years, it is increasingly important to encourage IEP teams, planning teams, and families to have regular conversations about employment opportunities. This conversation will change and grow over time.

Volunteering provides opportunities for individuals seeking and considering employment. Beginning one's journey by volunteering allows individuals to experience different types of jobs, tasks, and settings. For example, does the person prefer working independently or with a group? Indoors or Outdoors? There is immense value in these experiences.

Employment and volunteer opportunities promote self-confidence, pride, respect, value, and belonging.

The CIE Roadmap is designed to help families, clients and teams navigate through important steps as they think about CIE opportunities and is divided into 4 age groups: 12-15, 16-17, 18-21, and 22-64. Each section provides specific tips and resources related to employment planning.

We are committed to this important initiative and to maximizing positive outcomes for our clients. Please review ACRC's website to learn more about the CIE Roadmap and ways that ACRC is promoting our clients at work: <https://www.altaregional.org/post/competitive-integrated-employment-cie>

EMPLOYMENT SPOTLIGHTS

Renee

12 years ago, Renee Minor joined Southside Unlimited in the Work of Art Program. Three days a week, she would enjoy arts and crafts, music, and making connections that turned into friendships. She then transitioned into the employment department, where she worked as a recycling sorter. She also participated in classes and job development activities to prepare her for a long-sought career opportunity. In 2021, upon her return from the COVID shutdown, Renee met with her job coach to discuss furthering her career exploration. "I'm ready to do it! I love the recycling warehouse and everyone here, but it's time." When asked by her job coach what she would like to do for work, Renee enthusiastically responded, "Daycare or preschool." Renee spends time with her great-nephew when he comes home from school. The time spent with him, playing and helping him, reminds her of days spent assisting at her sister's daycare in San Jose.



In May 2022, Renee's Job Coach approached a local preschool, where she spoke with the director to introduce the idea of Renee gaining experience through a paid internship program with supported employment. On June 9, 2022, Renee began her first day at the preschool.

Renee assists in the classroom with children ranging in age from 2 to 5 years. Renee assists throughout the day with cleaning, organizing, and assisting with various activities with the children; she particularly enjoys the circle time when the children are singing and/or dancing.

The songs are fun, and the dancing is energetic. She feels a great deal of appreciation when the children give her a hug when she arrives and/or when she leaves for the day. With the support of Southside Unlimited, the Regional Center, and the guidance of the preschool staff, Renee has been a teacher's aide for nine months. Renee has proven herself and her employer to be a valuable addition to the team, and she hopes to be hired permanently at her position when her paid internship is complete.



EMPLOYMENT SPOTLIGHTS

Sean



Sean has been in a sheltered program for the majority of his adult life. He loved the work he was doing in the sheltered program which consisted of landscaping and groundskeeping, but was ultimately let go. In 2022, Sean was referred to tkMomentum. Sean really wanted to work in landscaping again. However, it was challenging to obtain CIE since Sean does not have a driver's license. In turn, tkMomentum reached out to county/city managed parks to see if they had openings. The county/city managed parks team did not have any job openings, but they were open to doing a Paid Internship Program, until a position opened up to help Sean develop the skills necessary for CIE at their facility. tkMomentum sent all the necessary documents to the Alta Regional support team- Shea Sparkman, Service Coordinator, and Carly Shearer, Client Employment Specialist. Both approved the service in record time. Sean is 6 months into his PIP and he has learned nearly every job task, besides job tasks that require driving. Sean starts work as early as 7am and is extremely productive. He enjoys working and is disappointed when he has to take time off such as days when conditions are unsafe, or when it is raining. Sean takes his job very seriously and he is proud of what he does.

Mitchell

Mitchell has been working with his current employer for over 1 year. Mitchell is a Customer Service Associate/Loader- he helps provide and deliver the right products to customers by safely unloading merchandise from the sales floor into customer's vehicles. Mitchell is great with customer service and enjoys working with his customers. Mitchell also enjoys working with co-workers and participates in all company functions with his team. Mitchell is also very happy with the support from his Vocational Specialist team at On My Own Community Services, they assisted him with his placement and continue to support him to be successful in his current role.

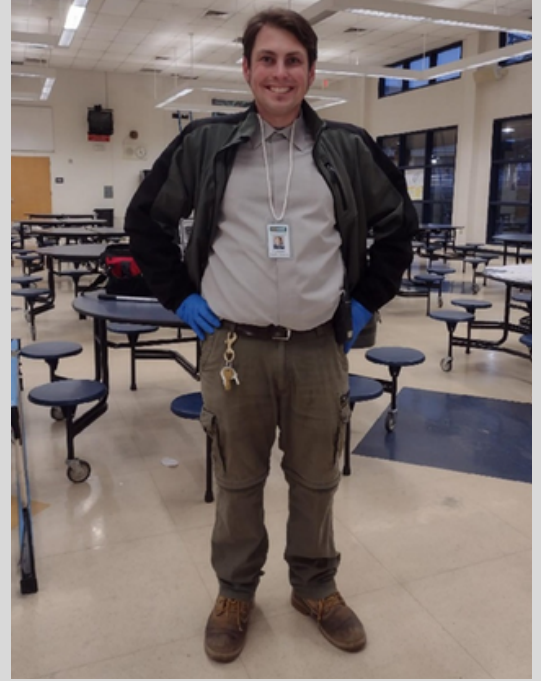


EMPLOYMENT SPOTLIGHTS

Robert



Robert Jungnitsch is one very happy hardworking young man. He doesn't work one job but two jobs! He has a full-time maintenance position with a local company that services a local apartment complex. Robert also works part-time as a Janitor with the El Dorado County School district. Robert states that he loves to work and appreciates the rewards and benefits he receives from his employers. Robert also has networked with his employers and coworkers to make lasting professional relationships.



Kate



It is hard not to smile when you are around Kate. Her fun loving positive attitude brings joy to all who meet her. Kate's many friends can attest to this!

Kate is well known in her local community and around town. She has made many friends and acquaintances through her various advocacy activities, volunteerism, and sharing time with others. It is hard to find a place where Kate is not known by customers and employees alike. And if you don't see Kate in the community you may find her rocking out to her favorite musical artists.

Kate has generously given many hours to her community through philanthropic contributions. She has been the smiling face who greeted families waiting for their loved ones at Mercy Hospital while offering them refreshments. From one waiting room to the next, you would see Kate pushing her refreshment cart to bring some comfort to others. Kate's love for children led her to work in the schools as a classroom aide with Mustard Seed and a presenter with A Touch of Understanding.

EMPLOYMENT SPOTLIGHTS

Kate cont.



Kate enjoys many hobbies: sports, arts and crafts, music, exercising. Her enjoyment of arts and crafts has led her to start her own business, Faith Designs. Kate will create items that are faith based and attend events so others can purchase her creations. Kate has also given back to her community through her business by raising funds to purchase needed supplies for Mustard Seed School.

Kate knows the importance of having a voice to communicate and interact with others. Her strong conviction of making sure everyone has a voice led her to work for CTEC where she mentors her peers who use an AAC device as well as leading a social group called Jazzy Talkers.

Even with Kate's busy schedule, she makes time for what is most important to her. Kate is very close to her family and loves to spend quality time with them either keeping busy or just relaxing at home. Whether Kate is with family, friends or keeping busy, she is always showing her kind, fun-loving personality. So if you are out in the community and meet Kate, make sure to say hi and you will see her eyes brighten with her smile that indicates she is happy to see you.

Jackson and Anna: Developing a Business Partnership - Self-Employment



Jackson and Anna both live in Davis, CA, where they grew up and went to junior high school together. They have busy lives volunteering in their community, and both say that they relate well to kids.

With help from the micro-enterprise coordinator and business support teams, and with regular meetings about self-employment, Jackson and Anna were each able to explore their talents, try out business ideas, and eventually decide to become business partners.

Jackson and Anna both graduated from high school in 2002 with some idea of what they liked to do. Jackson knew he was interested in working with computers and software. He was teaching himself to use Adobe Photoshop for graphic design, and was very good at creating pictures to make people laugh. As Jackson got better with Photoshop, he and his business support team brainstormed on business ideas.

Jackson met every two weeks with the micro-enterprise coordinator and business team for business development planning. His team helped him do a feasibility study by learning if there was a market for selling their art. Meanwhile, Jackson decided to get more training with Adobe Photoshop at Sacramento City College to improve on his skills.

With better computer and Photoshop skills, Jackson used his savings to buy a laptop and camera. He continued his regular business meetings every two weeks, to discuss his progress, keep track of any income he had made from selling his artwork, review whether his ideas had worked or not, and come up with a new list of ideas and tasks.

EMPLOYMENT SPOTLIGHTS

Jackson and Anna - cont

Meanwhile, Anna had a job helping kids build teddy bears at Build-A-Bear Workshop. Similar to Jackson, Anna was working with her business support team on a feasibility study of her own business ideas.

The team considered ideas such as selling stuffed animals from a cart. Then Anna bought beautiful stuffed animals and tried displaying them in the window of a flower shop, but they did not sell.

Because she likes to operate machinery, Anna's support team suggested that she learn how to make buttons and magnets. She liked this idea and bought a button machine with her own funds and had it adapted at a local hardware store so she could push down the lever more easily. But she still needed someone to design the buttons she wanted to sell.

Jackson's team realized that he would be the perfect business partner for Anna. When his team suggested the idea to Jackson, he loved it and they developed the business further through their partnership. Buttons 'n Bears, Oh My! was developed and has been in business since 2008. Along with custom buttons and magnets, customers can buy stuffed animals, appropriate for all gift-giving occasions. Buttons and magnets for Save-the-date for weddings or baby showers are also popular. Businesses also use buttons to honor their staff.

Anna and Jackson, supported by their business team, work with individuals and organizations to find the right design for any occasion. During the infancy stage of the business Anna & Jackson went door-to-door marketing their business landing them in offices of those running for city offices. They laugh saying their buttons do the trick because every candidate that has used their buttons to campaign has won the elections. They also attended several vending events in the community and quickly learnt the better selling events and the least productive. As the business evolved the marketing strategy has been tweaked to meet the market demands. The business has gained customers largely through word of mouth, referrals, selling at events, using a sidewalk advertising billboard and Jackson's growing skills marketing their business through social media.

Jackson and Anna have a busy schedule selling their merchandise from their office in Davis and at local community events, and creating buttons and magnets specific to each event. When Buttons 'n Bears, Oh My! is exhibiting at community events and conferences, Anna and Jackson can always be seen designing and creating their latest work. Campaign button order of 2000 buttons is the largest single order to date.

For more information, contact: Buttons 'n Bears, Oh My! Email: buttonsnbearsohmy@gmail.com Website: www.buttonsnbears.com



Justin

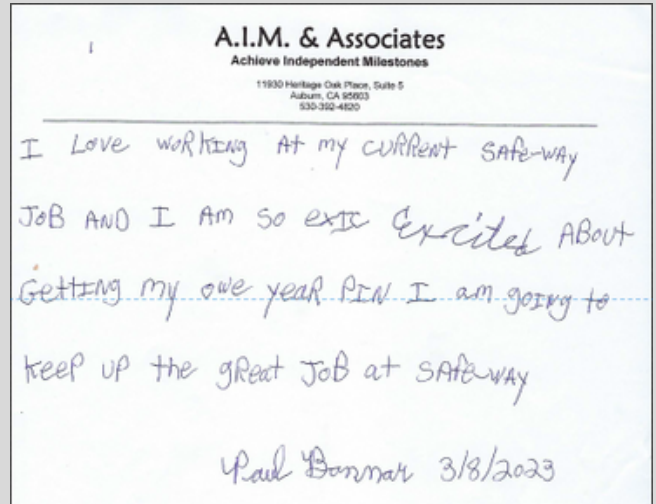
Justin (JJ) Ortiz started work at PRIDE Industries in October of 2017. JJ quickly learned the jobs and knew what he liked to do. JJ was placed in a Supported Employment Group at Beal Air Force Base at a Food Service location, and worked there for several months. It was a good experience learning about employer expectations, as well as keeping a large kitchen clean, and all the requirements the military has. Justin continued to learn different jobs and had experiences in the community at Eskaton, Nevada County Fairgrounds and other non-profit organizations through PRIDE until 2019. Due to the pandemic, JJ was active on Zoom, and enjoyed interacting with his friends while keeping up on job related topics. In the fall of 2022 JJ was using his skills to get a job and found a part-time dishwashing job at a local Grass Valley restaurant. He was also added to another Supported Employment Group through PRIDE. JJ is very proud that during the pandemic he studied and was able to get his driver license and a car. He enjoys the freedom that he has to go places, and recently took a trip on his own to Hawaii.

EMPLOYMENT SPOTLIGHTS

Paul



**Paul
Bonner
wrote us
a note -
Congrats
Paul!**



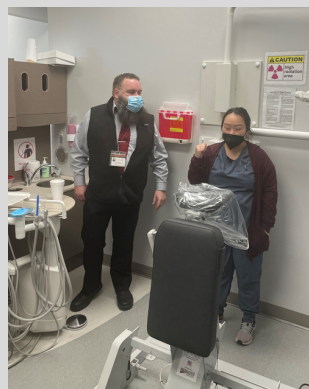
Nathan - State Employment Initiative

My name is Nathan Martin, I was born and raised here in Sacramento, I have Autism, and I work for the State of California, which I got through the State Employment Initiative through ALTA California Regional Center. I was diagnosed with Autism at the age of 4 and I have been a client of the regional center for as long as I can remember. After graduating from High School, I went on to attend the Los Rios Community Colleges, mainly Sacramento City College. In 2011, I moved closer to Sacramento City College, into my own apartment through the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, where I have lived ever since. I really enjoy having my own one-bedroom apartment, but what I wanted was to become fully self-sufficient, and that meant leaving SSI, getting a job, and getting a degree of some kind. I struggled to find the correct major for me in college as I was a Special Ed student for most of my life and I was never given the choice to see what I wanted. I was always told that I was never going to be employed, I was going to live on SSI for the rest of my life, that I was a drain on resources. After taking, passing, dropping, failing so many classes in college, I finally settled on my major, which was Anthropology. Right around the same time, I started attending a support group for Autistics like myself and I was introduced to a wonderful business called Progressive Employment Concepts, based out of Citrus Heights. Becoming involved with this organization was a life-changing experience. They gave me information and training on how to keep a job, how to act with co-workers and supervisors, and gave me the courage to go to a job and feel like I had a purpose.

Through Progressive Employment Concepts and the Department of Rehabilitation I was admitted into the State Employment Initiative, which helps people with developmental disabilities find jobs in state service. It took many months, but we managed to find a department for me to work in. After finding this job, things started looking up for me. I managed to transition off of Social Security, I was awarded my Associate's Degree in Anthropology (as well as 3 others I have accumulated) in 2019 and I got my driver's license in 2021. I really enjoy working at my department and if it were not for the efforts and dedication of ALTA California Regional Center, Progressive Employment Concepts, Best Buddies, and the Department of Rehabilitation, I would not be where I am today. I am eternally grateful for these businesses which went above and beyond to include people with disabilities such as myself in jobs that significantly improve our lives, our finances, our stability, and our outlooks. My main goal is to stay a State Employee permanently until the day I retire, and maybe one day buy a car and a house or condominium of my own.

ACRC BOARD MEMBERS TOUR MIRASOL VILLAGE AND DENTAL CLINIC

On February 14, 2023, ACRC Board Members visited Mirasol Village ACRC's first multifamily housing development and the dental clinic. Both of these projects were developed with Community Placement Plan and Community Resource Development funds. More on the dental clinic in our next edition.



CLIENT SPOTLIGHT- SHELBY WRIGHT

Hi, I am Shelby Wright and I am 24 years old. I am an independent adult and I live at home in a community that I love, with my supportive family. I have lots of interests and enjoy meeting people. I know many people in my community and they know me too. I have been working with my team to build a monthly schedule that is geared toward doing the things I love, interacting with lots of people, and participating in community events. It is important to me to have a meaningful schedule that offers me opportunities to increase my communication and self-advocacy skills. I continue to explore new social and recreational activities and to enhance community engagement. I am happy the summer months are coming up, as there are so many more things to do.



My family and my team help me identify events and activities that I will enjoy. I have memberships to many places in the community like the Crocker Art Museum, Funderland, and the Sacramento Zoo. I love going to the Saturday Farmer's Market downtown where I see lots of people who know and recognize me. I expect to see them, and they expect to see me!

Music and swimming are some of my favorite activities. I enjoy listening to live music at the Torch Club in Sacramento every week, and love concerts in the park when the weather is nice. I enjoy drumming and music therapy. I especially love swimming at the gym in my community about 3 to 4 times per week. I have lots of people who know me there too!

One of my goals is to teach others about how I communicate through my iPad-Touchchat and how I incorporate music into my style of learning. I sometimes participate in Jazzy Talkers meetings, an AAC user social group where I communicate on my own with my friends. I just started weekly lessons to learn more words so I can say more things through my device. I have a lot to say! I am learning more about what I want to do, and as you can see, I have many interests! I think I am off to a great start, many young people my age are beginning their journey and thinking about employment. I think it is important to explore many options before deciding about employment. I have tried a few different jobs but haven't found my perfect fit yet. I am thinking about volunteering and will be exploring more places to try to find the job that is right for me. It would be great if it included music and lots of people! This is a great starting point for me and it might be a good idea for you, too. I want to keep meeting people and balance my experiences to build up my self-determined and inclusive life! I hope if you see me out in the community you will come over and say hello.

ACRC BY THE NUMBERS

Did you know that ACRC is growing by approximately 1000 clients annually?

Here is who we serve as of March 15, 2023:

Early Start - 2377

Lanterman Clients - 25,858

Total = 28,235

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Resource changes over the last quarter

New Service Providers

INDEPENDENT FACILITATOR

Earl Gage Jr.

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Dorcas Liriano Roa, PHD
The Blooming Mind, LLC

SPECIALIZED THERAPEUTIC SERVICES (3-20)

Psychwest
MMW Psychological Service

SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES

Hands United, LLC

SPECIALIZED THERAPEUTIC SERVICES (21 & up)

Psychwest

Adult Residential Facility

Marysville-Yuba Care Home
Wellcare Homes 4 - Engle

PARTICIPANT DIRECTED PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

Janny D Kenyon

SOCIAL RECREATION REIMBURSEMENTS

22 reimbursements processed this quarter.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES

E&E Agency

Closed Service Providers

INDEPENDENT LIVING SPECIALIST

Pamela La Pask

SPEECH PATHOLOGY

MOTOR MOUTH SPEECH
TALK WITH ME THERAPIES

MONEY MANAGEMENT

C&J PAYEE

FEATURED ARTIST PROFILE - JACOB MADDOX



Jacob Maddox is a skilled artist with a big imagination and a desire to create. His talent can be seen in the visual art he creates in the Ceramic, Drawing, and Three-Dimensional classes. He also possesses great musical abilities- writing his own song lyrics and playing acoustic guitar. He may be a man of few words, but Jacob expresses himself through his art and it's clear he has a lot to share!



Sales inquiries can be sent to mariew@placerarc.org or 916-781-6911 and more information on Studio 700 can be found on the Arc of Placer County's Facebook page and at www.placerarc.org.

Coordinated Family Support Services Request for Proposal

Project Type: Coordinated Family Support Services (CFS)

Description of Project: CFS providers will coordinate and provide items identified below for adults who reside in the family home. CFS shall be tailored to the unique needs of the consumer and their family and provided in a manner that respects their language and culture. It shall be primarily provided in a person's home. CFS may include, but is not limited to:

- Identifying and providing supports necessary to successfully reside in the family home.
- Provide assistance and training for the consumer, and their family, in navigating comprehensive services and supports that are tailored to meet their unique needs including creating pathways to overcome barriers to accessing generic and other resources.
- Providing additional information or resources on the consumer's diagnosis and identified supports.
- Coordinating consistency in training across providers specific to the needs of the consumer and their family.
- Assisting with scheduling of service delivery including medical and other appointments.
- Identifying transportation options or services.
- Identifying backup providers/supports and providing those backup supports when the plan fails.
- Providing futures planning for the consumer, including those living with aging caregivers.
- Providing training with the consumer which maximizes their independence.

CFS shall not replace or duplicate any regional center service coordination, generic service or other regional center funded service that the consumer and their family are receiving. CFS may not be provided by an individual who resides in the same home as the consumer. At minimum, the need shall be assessed annually, with progress being reported quarterly.

Those that met the eligibility criteria below are encouraged to respond to this Request for Proposal.

Qualifications for Direct Service Provider:

CFS Direct Support Coordinator: Associates-level degree in a human services field of study or 3 years of experience in the developmental disabilities service delivery system;

The ability to communicate in the primary language of the consumer and their family;

Knowledge of the Regional Center system.

CFS Supervisor: Bachelors-level degree in a human services field of study or an Associates-level degree in a human services field of study and at least 3 years of experience in the developmental disabilities service delivery system.

Exceptions to the minimum qualifications, along with the justification, shall be submitted to the regional center for the Department of Developmental Services' review and determination.

Scope of Service: Within the first 30 days of working with a consumer and their family, CFS providers shall provide training to their staff and supervisors on the service delivery systems including, but not limited to, behavioral health services and local Area Agencies on Aging.

Utilize and leverage existing community resources to enhance and develop supports that are person-centered and individualized.

Costs for Proposal Submission: Applicants responding to this Request for Proposal shall bear all costs associated with the development and submission of their RFP Application Packet. No costs shall be charged to Alta California Regional Center, the Department of Developmental Services, or the State of California.

Submit to: Jason Scantlebury Community Services Specialist (916) 978-6336 jscantlebury@altaregional.org