



May 30, 2023

Brian Winfield
Deputy Director
Department of Developmental Services
1600 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Winfield:

This letter is written in accordance with the Lanterman Act [W&I Code §4519.5(f)(1)]. Alta California Regional Center (ACRC) held two online public meetings on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm, and Monday, March 27, 2023, from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm. ACRC hosted both events using the Zoom platform.

The meeting was posted on February 22, 2023 on ACRC's website with flyers translated in Arabic, Farsi, Hmong, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. The meeting information was also posted on social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Email invitations were sent to community partners including Family Resource Centers, State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), Disability Rights of California (DRC), Hmong Youth Parents United (HYPU), Hlub Hmong Center (HHC), Health Education Council (HEC), the Centers for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (CEDD) UC Davis chapter, E-Center Migrant Head start, the Arc, Families for Early Autism Treatment (FEAT), and Communicare CREO Program. These partner organizations distributed the flyers to members of their organizations via email and mailing lists. Spanish and American Sign Language (ASL) translations were provided during the meetings. Contact information to request alternate accessibility accommodations including additional language translations was provided on the meeting announcements.

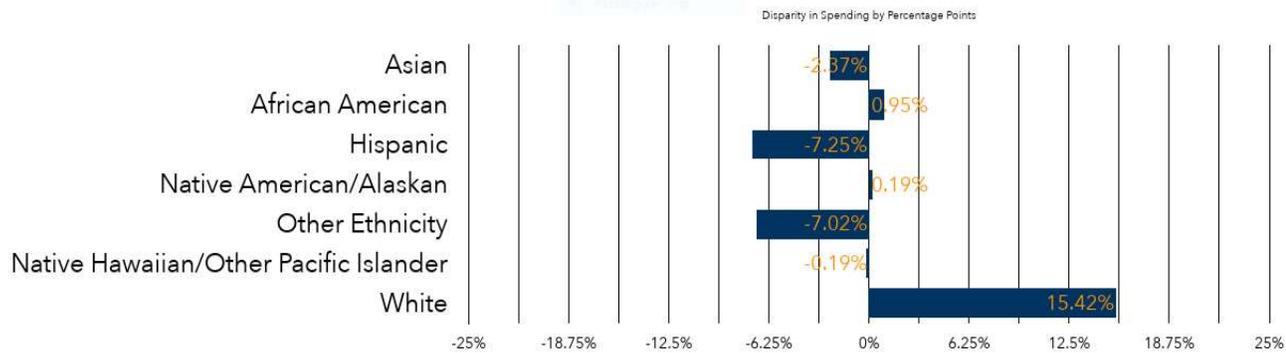
Attendance at the meetings included individuals self-identified as clients, parent/family members, professionals, advocates, and staff persons. Both events were recorded and are available on ACRC's YouTube channel and website. Eighty-eight individuals registered for the March 21st meeting, and forty-eight attended. Seventeen attendees were ACRC staff, and thirty-one were comprised of parents, advocates, vendors, and community members. The second meeting on March 27th had ninety-four registrants, with forty-four attending. Eleven of the participants were ACRC staff, and thirty-three were parents, members of advocacy groups, vendors, and community-based organization (CBO) partners. Hosting the event online allowed clients and families to attend irrespective of their geographic proximity and participate from the comfort of their own homes.

The following items were presented during the meeting:

- ACRC's Executive Director welcomed the participants at both meetings.
- ACRC's Training Manager introduced the meeting presenters.
- ACRC presented an update of grant-related activities. The current video module project by Futures Explored Film and Media Program was discussed, and meeting participants viewed a video in Spanish about ILS services and a video in English on ABA.
- The Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that were recipients of the disparity grant funding for 2022-23 were introduced. Two of the recipients, Hlub Hmong Center – Learning the Hmong Way and Futures Explored Film and Media Program briefly presented about their activities, challenges, and successes.
- ACRC shared additional legislative initiatives and systemic changes including the implementation of ongoing Implicit Bias training, WIC 4511.1; Language Access and Cultural Competency Initiative WIC 4620.4; enhanced 1:40 caseload positions for low to no POS clients in diverse demographics, and evaluation of disparity grant projects statewide. These legislative changes are positive outcomes demonstrated through SAE grant projects conducted throughout the State.
- ACRC shared that in Fall 2022, ACRC was awarded an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Part C Pilot Project. The pilot is specific to the children and families served in Early Start. The purpose of the pilot project is to develop culturally and linguistically sensitive services and to enhance Early Start provider capacity. Community members and stakeholders were acknowledged for helping to inspire this initiative, specifically related to families residing in remote and underserved areas needing more frequent access to services: during non-traditional working hours, and services delivered in native language.
- Presentation of the ACRC population chart by ethnicity and percent of spending followed, as evidenced in the slides below. The Caucasian population comprises 45.86% of the total ACRC population and utilizes 61.28% of ACRC's total POS budget. The Asian population is 8.25% of the total ACRC population and utilizes 5.88% of the POS budget; the African American population is 11.54% of the total ACRC population and utilizes 12.49% of the total POS budget; the Hispanic community is 17.68% of ACRC client populations and uses 10.43% of the POS budget; other ethnicity/multicultural is 15.83% of total ACRC client populations, and they utilize 8.81% of ACRC's POS budget, and the American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders are both less than one percent of ACRC's client populations and also spend less than one percent of POS budget.

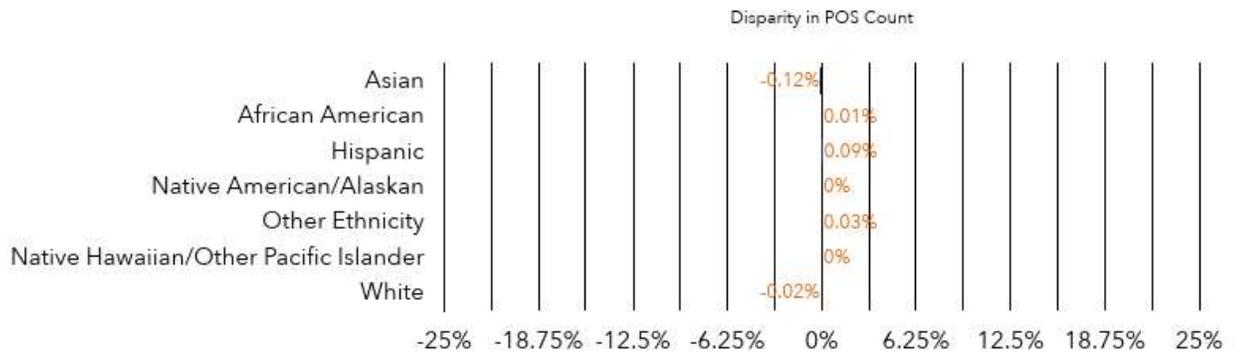
Ethnicity Subgroup	Percent of Client Pop.	Percent of Spending
Asian	8.25%	5.88%
African American/Black	11.54%	12.49%
Hispanic	17.68%	10.43%
Native American/Alaskan	0.45%	0.64%
Other Ethnicity or Race/Multicultural	15.83%	8.81%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.21%
White	45.86%	61.28%

- During this Annual POS meeting, ACRC took a closer look at disparities in spending by percentage points and presented data as shown in the graphs below:



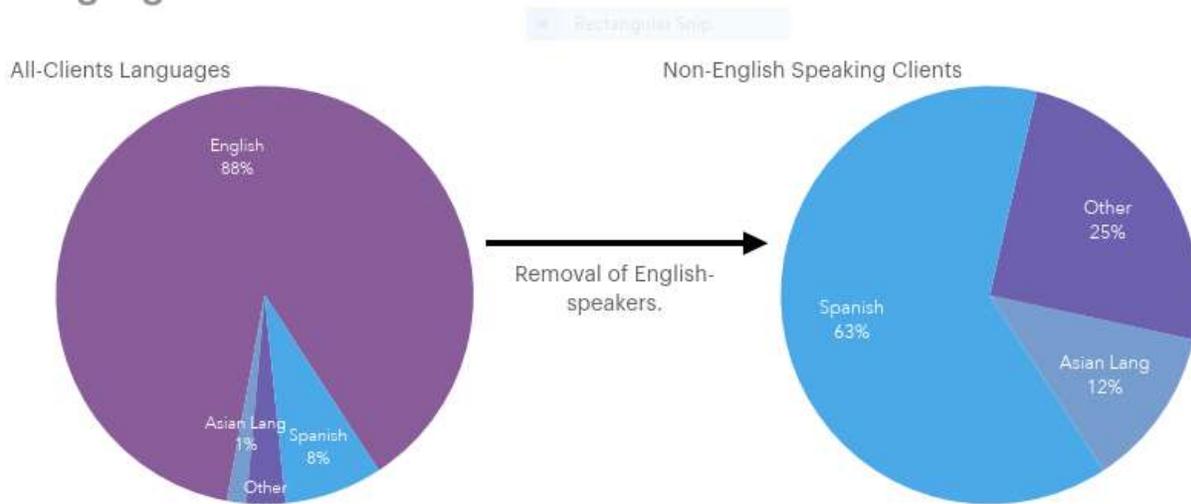
Ethnicity Subgroup	Percent of Client Pop.	Percent of POS by Count
Asian	8.25%	8.13%
African American/Black	11.54%	11.55%
Hispanic	17.68%	17.77%
Native American/Alaskan	0.45%	0.45%
Other Ethnicity or Race/Multicultural	15.83%	15.86%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.4%
White	45.86%	45.84%

(Data summary based on July 2022 extractor. Allow for algorithmic rounding errors to the 2nd decimal)



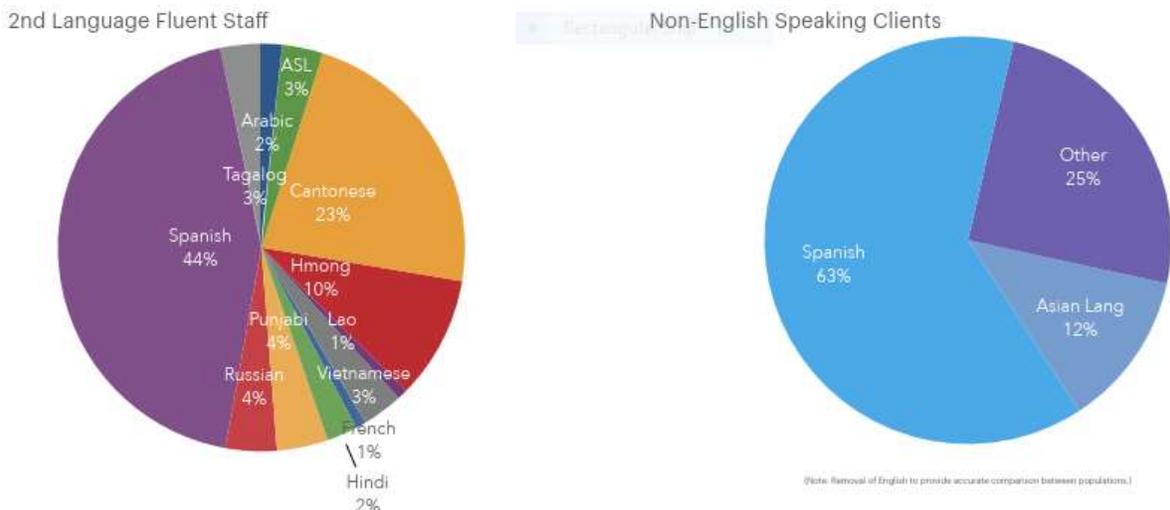
- In reviewing the languages spoken by the clients of ACRC, the pie chart illustrates languages with English included on the left vs languages spoken without English included on the right. The removal of English provides a better comparison related to ACRC’s efforts to hire more staff that speak a second language.

Language



- Much like the State of California, ACRC’s clients, families and employees are diverse. ACRC recognizes the critical importance of bridging gaps in service across our agency. This means ensuring that our employees offer a wide array of languages spoken, and that we have employees who understand the cultural diversity of clients served. The image below depicts the number and percentage of ACRC staff who are fluent in a second language. ACRC has 97 staff who are fluent in a second language with 16% of staff who are bilingual to meet the needs of 11% of our clients who are also bilingual.

Linguistic Diversity

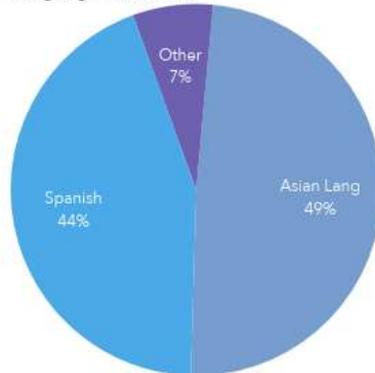


ACRC Staff 2nd Language Fluency: 97 Staff

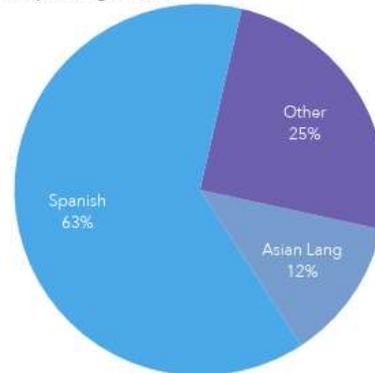
- The slide below represents the same data, and is depicted in the way that the State of California DDS represents the same data with respect to languages. ACRC grouped the data the same way the DDS does for statistical simplicity. It is important to note and acknowledge that the State is making a strong push and there is support to more accurately communicate and share the data in each category. For example, “Asian Language” encompasses a wide array of languages and “Other” does not tell us about the languages spoken specifically. This work is part of language access and equity.

Linguistic Diversity

2nd Language Fluent Staff



Non-English Speaking Clients



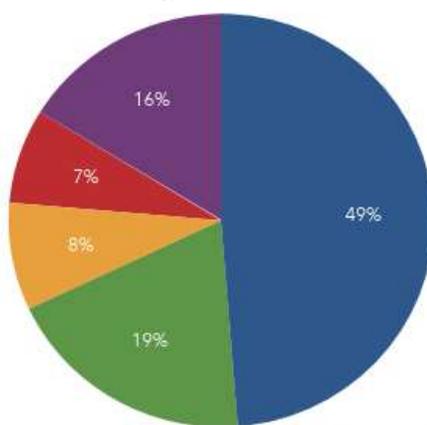
(Note: Removal of English to provide accurate comparison between populations.)

ACRC Staff 2nd Language Fluency: 97 employees/16% of workforce.

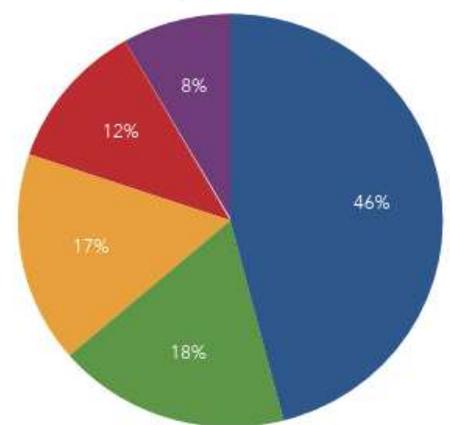
- ACRC’s clients, families and employees are diverse. This pie chart represents ethnic demographics of ACRC staff as compared to that of our clients served. We group the data the same way that the DDS does for purposes of statistical simplicity. “Other” does not fully depict the ethnic demographics of staff and clients.

Ethnic Diversity

Ethnic Demographics of Staff



Ethnic Demographics of Clients



● White ● Hispanic ● Other ● Black/African American ● Asian

(Grouping adjusted to allow like-to-like comparison)

- In Fall 2022, ACRC was awarded an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Part C Pilot Project. The pilot is specific to the children and families served in Early Start. The purpose of the pilot project is to develop culturally and linguistically sensitive services and to enhance Early Start provider capacity. Community members and stakeholders were acknowledged for helping to inspire this initiative, specifically related to families residing in remote and underserved areas needing more frequent access to services: during non-traditional working hours, and services delivered in native language. At the time of the POS Meeting, ACRC had served 142 children with 19 vendors participating in our pilot. Additionally, vendors who hire a new employee who speaks a language other than English and who provides a minimum number of service hours to a child and family, in person, receives a stipend under the Pilot Project.

ARPA - Part C Pilot:

Culturally and Linguistically Sensitive Services & Enhanced Provider Capacity

Rectangular Stip.

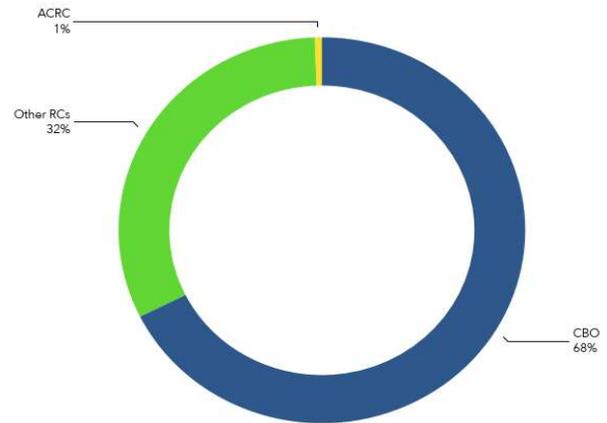
Total Clients Served	142
Total Vendors Program	19
Clients Served in Remote Area	25
Clients Served in Underserved Area	139
Clients Served in Non-Working Hours	121
Culturally Linguistic Clients Served	130

Cultural and Linguistic Diverse Staff Stipend	2
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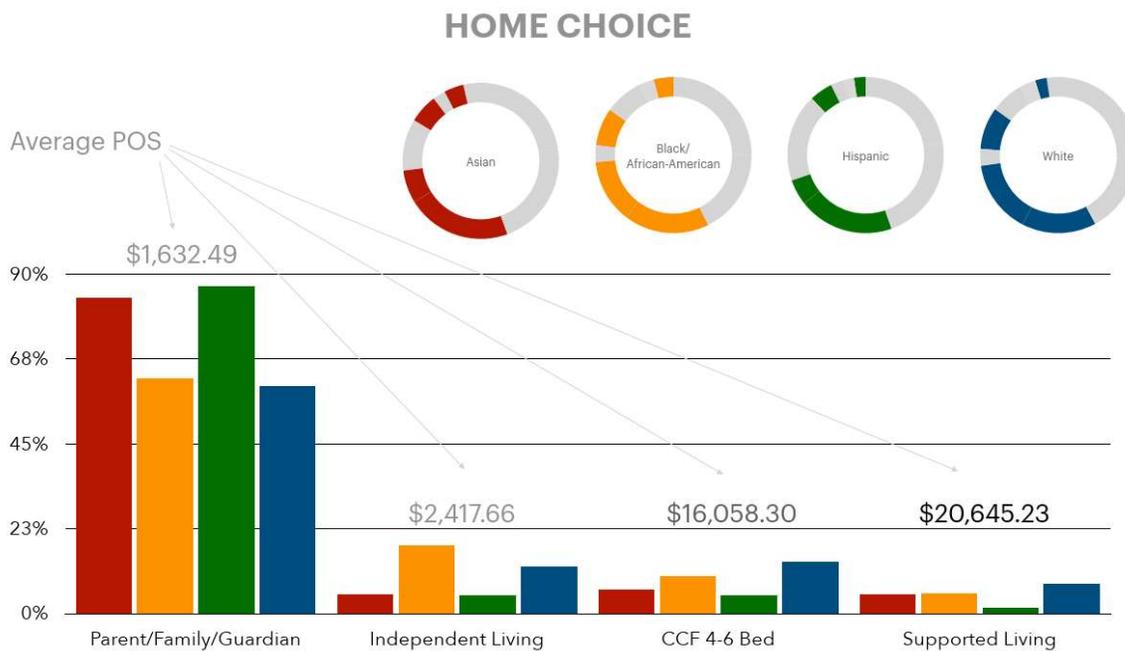
- ACRC presented information about the Service Access and Equity (SAE) Grant and shared that this is an \$11-million annual pot of money awarded to regional centers and community-based organizations for the purpose of implementing strategies to reduce POS disparities and increase access to services. This slide depicts the total amount of funds, by fiscal year, awarded to regional centers, community-based organizations, and ACRC. Service Access and Equity projects are multi-year grants. Of the 88 million dollars that has been spent on grants thus far, CBOs received \$59.5 million (representing 68% of funds spent) RCs received \$28.5 million (representing 32% of funds spent) and ACRC received \$450,000 (representing 1% of funds spent.) We discussed that this is important because the SAE grants are shared between regional centers and community-based organizations and we are work together to make progress. DDS contracted with Georgetown University to assess the effectiveness of Service Access and Equity grants.

Service Access and Equity Grant

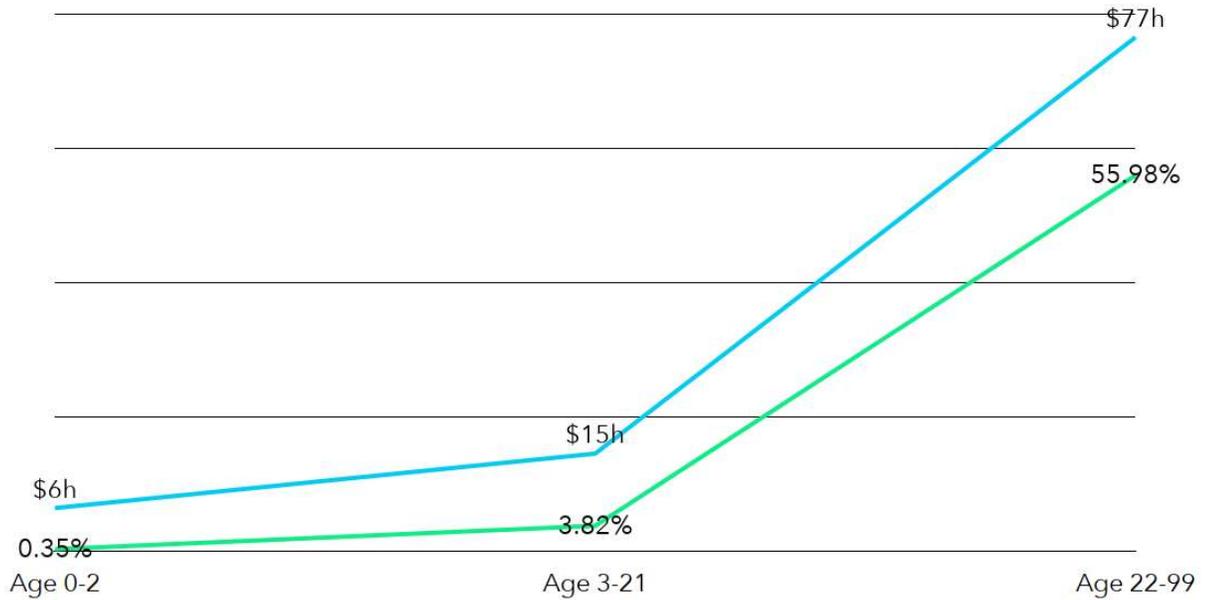
YEAR	CBO	REGIONAL CENTERS	ACRC
16/17	-	\$11 MIL	\$155K
17/18	\$7.3 MIL	\$3.7 MIL	\$59K
18/19	\$7.4 MIL	\$3.6 MIL	\$59 K
19/20	\$8.0 MIL	\$3.0 MIL	\$29K
20/21	\$9.1 MIL	\$1.9 MIL	\$51K
21/22	\$8.9 MIL	\$2.1 MIL	\$0
22/23	\$18.8 MIL	\$3.2 MIL	\$98K
TOTAL	\$59.5 MIL	\$28.5 MIL	\$451K



- Examination of the data and underlying trends suggest a strong correlation with home choice and an increase in overall POS spending. This appears to have a stronger statistical relationship than does ethnic grouping. The relationship between home choice and POS spending is further borne out when the need is examined, juxtaposed with age. When an individual lives outside of their family home, the result is that more POS dollars are spent. This is demonstrative of a causal relationship. At a young age, ACRC clients tend to live at home, minimizing the cost. As they move into adulthood, certain ethnic groups tend toward living out of home, thus increasing POS dollars spent. The graphs below demonstrate this data.

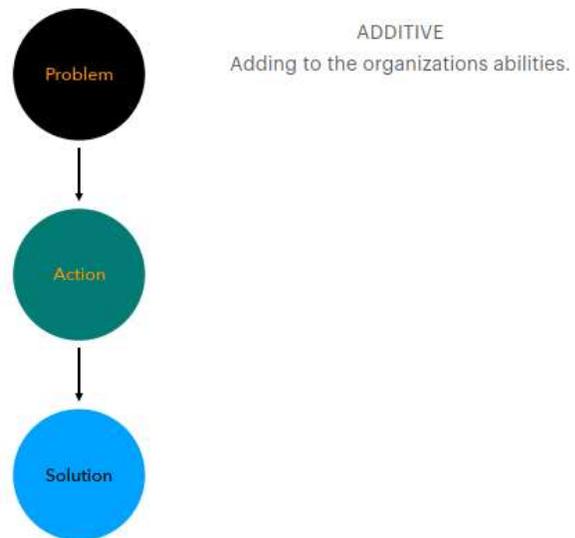


Percentage of Clients Living Out of Home vs. Average POS Annually

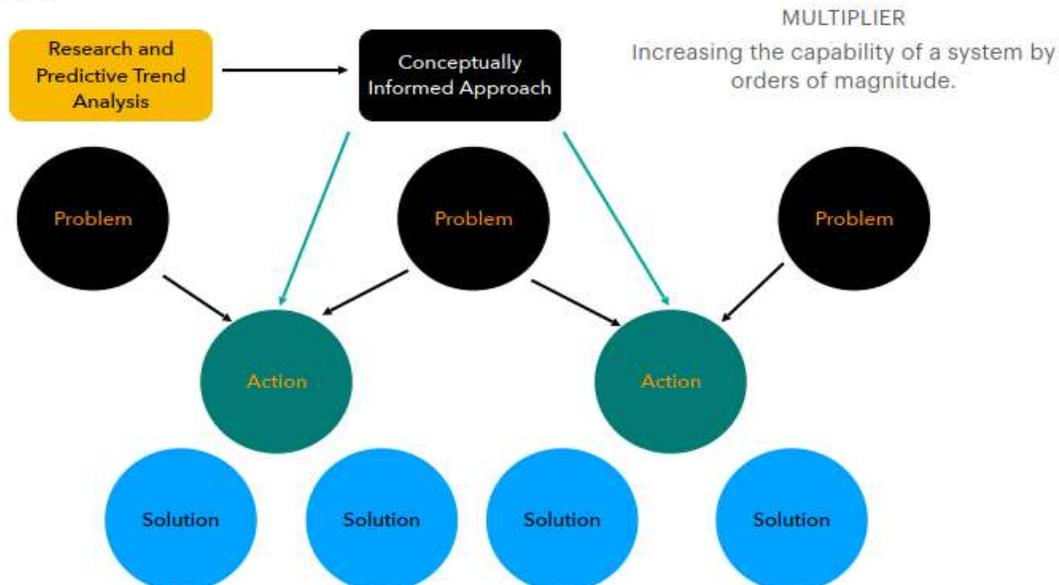


- ACRC recognizes the importance of moving away from our current approach to addressing concerns and needs. The slide below illustrates our approach at this time: a problem or concern is identified, ACRC acts, and implements a solution. While this approach can be effective, it can be seen as one-dimensional.

CLOSING



- A multiplier style of problem solving is proactive and predictive, and based on data and an informed approach. It is a quantitative way to address concerns and needs. This results in systemic change rather than a band-aid or quick fix. The multiplier style allows for tailored and informed decisions based on the unique needs and clients and families served.

CLOSING**Feedback/Proposed Strategies from our stakeholders:**

- One attendee shared that they were thankful for the data that was presented. They made further comments to include:
 - Initial comment – let us know next year how the American Rescue Project assisted with clients/families accessing Early Start.
 - The dollars spent is still a disparity. They said they were happy to see the data broken down into age groups.
 - Suggestion to rename “Housing” something like “Living Supports”, as clients/families may believe that regional centers fund housing; clients need to know that it’s their responsibility to act if they want to live outside their family home.
 - They are hopeful that CFS will assist with disparity issues; they would like to see an emphasis on looking at the data as the service develops. CFS will be helpful when a client/family wants to access SLS – it would be easier to bring a team together to discuss options.

- Another attendee said that they are thankful for the shared presentation information & hopes that it will continue to be posted on ACRC’s website. They said they are confused about some of the numbers for clients with no POS’; and that some of the children’s data may be because they are accessing generic resources.

- One attendee shared their appreciation around 1:40 caseload sizes.

- ACRC informed the group that anybody could continue to send their input through the posequity@altaregional.org email box. Lori Banales announced another meeting scheduled for March 27th and invited everyone to come to the second meeting, as this gives the audience a few days to review the shared data. Hearing from our communities moves us forward. The grant is one lane that we navigate. There are

other initiatives that ACRC is working on that complement DDS's efforts to understand the variance in POS expenditures.

- It was announced that this meeting would be available for public viewing on ACRC's YouTube channel: [3.21.23 Meeting](#) and [3.27.23 Meeting](#).
- Lori Banales welcomed and encouraged attendees to join the second meeting on March 27, 2023.

ACRCs Recommendations and Plans to Promote Equity and Reduce Disparities

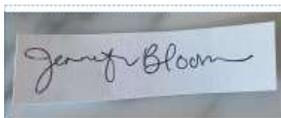
- ACRC will continue to explore the diversity-related proposals to continue to address the needs of the ethnically diverse communities.
- Improve access to ACRC's intake process through the Intake Navigator position as a result of the SAE grant.
- Continue to promote and support the Diversity Outreach workgroup composed of ACRC employees to engage community partners across diverse populations.
- ACRC will coordinate and collaborate with the grant recipients for 2022-23 in implementing their specific activities in their approved projects. ACRC's deaf and hard of hearing specialist and cultural diversity specialist will work with the CA Hands and Voices, and Norcal Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the implementation of their approved grant.
- ACRC will focus on ensuring that we are empowering client and family choice by providing open access to cultural and language specific specialists. These actions help to inform choice. We will provide targeted outreach to the communities we serve to build system fluency. We will build a robust and data driven public facing needs assessment in developing services for our clients.
- ACRC will collaborate with Level Up Norcal in training and outreach activities to the diverse communities. The Hmong Youth and Parents United (HYPU) and Hlub Hmong Center (HHC) both received funding to continue information and outreach regarding developmental disabilities and "learning together" for a mutually beneficial conversation between ACRC staff and Hmong families.
- ACRC maintains its Lending library and makes available to its clients the Chromebooks obtained from previous grant years. Service coordinators who have clients needing to participate in remote programming, ACRC's committees, zoom meetings, and virtual schooling benefit from the Chromebooks loaned to them
- ACRC will implement the Early Start Part C ARPA pilot project to enhance the service availability during non-traditional work hours for families with children enrolled in the Early Start program. This effort will be in collaboration with the Early Start Units of ACRC and the Community Services and Supports.
- ACRC and DDS will work together to implement the Implicit Bias training (WIC 4511.1) and other related training under the initiative. The frequency of the training, the trainer qualifications, and other logistical requirements are still being worked out.

- ACRC continues to receive funding for WIC 4620.4 for our language access and cultural competency initiative. This mandate and the corresponding funding will allow ACRC to do the following:
 - Identify documents and website content for translation, as well as points of public contact in need of oral and sign language interpretation services
 - Conduct orientation/information sessions with ample and publicized question and answers, scheduled at times considered most convenient for working families and in consultation with community leaders
 - Conduct regular and periodic language needs assessments to determine threshold languages for document translation
 - Coordinate and streamline interpretation and translation services
 - Implement quality control measures to ensure the availability, accuracy, readability, and cultural appropriateness of translations.
 - ACRC also intends to implement culture-specific training, competency, proficiency, sensitivity, and humility trainings with staff and vendors.
 - ACRC's long-term goals include conducting surveys on the housing needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) communities; conducting focus group discussions for prioritization of resources for the CLD communities, and future surveys for topic or issue-related ideas.

- ACRC's Service Access and Equity policy will incorporate system-wide perspectives of cultural humility, promoting the communities served as experts in their own lived experiences.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Jennifer Bloom at 916-978-6572 or jbloom@altaregional.org.

Sincerely,



Digitally signed by Jennifer Bloom
DN: cn=Jennifer Bloom, c=US,
o=Alta California Regional Center,
email=jbloom@altaregional.org
Date: 2023.05.30 12:00:39 -07'00'

Jennifer Bloom
Director of Client Services

cc: Lori Banales, Executive Director
Dan Lake, Board President