



ALTA CONNECTIONS

The Quarterly Client, Service Provider, and Staff Update Newsletter



More on our **featured artist**
Cindy Benson pg. 8

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Executive Director Lori Banales

Alta California Regional Center (ACRC) is honoring choice and promoting person centered thinking as we roll out the Self Determination Program (SDP). SDP represents a second option for all eligible clients who wish to embrace the freedom to design a service plan that supports their needs while accepting a greater level of responsibility in accessing and managing those services. There are many activities happening across our regional center to support outreach and education about SDP to those who wish to learn more. We are refining our internal systems as we work to transition more clients from traditional service delivery into Self Determination. As we learn more, we are able to develop more efficiencies. This newsletter will provide additional information related to SDP as you read on.

While ACRC has devoted time and energy to support the SDP, we have also been focusing on recruitment and determining how and when our offices will be repopulated with our awesome teams! As the state has moved into the next phase of the Covid-19 response, so too has our regional center. We are embracing a hybrid work schedule as we welcome back our workforce.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE - CONT.

Executive Director - Lori Banales

Many staff continue to work in the office each day to support the core business needs and we are grateful for their commitment over the past two years. Those who have been fully remote will be in their respective offices a minimum of two days per week. Our offices have been open throughout the pandemic, however you will notice the presence of staff as they begin to populate our spaces. We are happy to be moving forward and take our responsibility as a public facing agency to be available to serve you! We are looking forward to hosting meetings and welcoming our community back as we ease into this new normal.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Terry Lipper, Service Coordinator in our Grass Valley unit. Terry has been with ACRC for 16 years. She was hired as a generalist, and held a caseload of residential, children, and adults living independently, which gave her a strong foundation in her role.

Terry demonstrates genuine compassion for others and a sincere desire to help people in need. She believes it is key to develop trust and have open communication with clients and families, and says this is her greatest strength. Terry is a strong advocate and exhibits a collaborative, responsive style, partnering well with school districts, vendors, and other agencies involved with her clients. In a recent multi-agency meeting, Terry was commended for her communication and collaboration as part of a multi-disciplinary team.

Terry expressed that her clients are the reason she has stayed at Alta all these years. She enjoys getting to know people and supporting them in determining their individual goals while encouraging them to reach their full potential. Outside of work, Terry is an avid reader of novels, and has a knack for recommending books and “matching” people with reads they might enjoy.

Terry’s insightful, active-listening approach is appreciated by clients, families, and her peers. She has a delightful sense of humor, is well-liked, humble, trusted, and is dedicated to the work she does. She is a valued member of the Grass Valley unit, and an asset to ACRC. It is an honor to know and work alongside Terry in serving our clients.

WHAT IS SELF-DETERMINATION

SELF-DETERMINATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW



CHOICE, CONTROL
AND RESPONSIBILITY



SERVICES AND
SUPPORTS THAT
FIT YOUR LIFE



DECIDE HOW
YOUR BUDGET IS
SPENT



LOTS OF
SUPPORT



PERSON
CENTERED



SELF-DETERMINATION PROGRAM (SDP)

The SDP Program is in full swing at Alta California Regional Center (ACRC). On July 1, 2021 the Self-Determination Program (SDP) became a second service delivery option for all eligible clients. Prior to July 2021, the SDP service model was only available to clients selected by the Department of Developmental Services to participate in the initial rollout.

The program is quickly growing in popularity. On July 1, 2021 ACRC had 12 clients in the SDP Program. As of March 1, 2022, ACRC has 79 clients who have enrolled in the program. March data confirms 51.9% of client's using the SDP service model represent multiple ethnicities and the remaining 48.10% accessing the program are white. As the number of clients accessing SDP continues to increase, ACRC is increasing program support staff. On March 1st, two Participant Choice Specialists (PCS) were hired and a third applicant is going through the hiring process. PCS staff will provide SDP and participant directed services training and will provide support to Service Coordinators (SC), the planning team, as well as outreach and education to community members. PCS staff will assist planning teams with budget preparation, and understanding of the SDP process, helping to streamline and guide participants through the process.

SDP is built on five principles: support, confirmation, authority, responsibility and freedom. The SDP program offers participants a lot of flexibility. For example, participants may elect to hire someone they know like a family member, friend or someone from the community to provide services. The participant uses a Financial Management Service (FMS) to pay their service provider and may also, dependent on the selected FMS model, determine wages and benefits for their service provider. In the traditional service system, ACRC contracts with vendored service providers to serve clients. Vendored service providers determine wages and benefits for their staff and ultimately bill the regional center to receive payment for services rendered.

SELF-DETERMINATION PROGRAM (SDP) -CONT.

ACRC has been working in Partnership with the Self Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC) to implement the SDP program. The SDAC membership is comprised of clients, family and community members appointed by ACRC and the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. The committee meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Meetings are open to the public, please visit our website to view the agenda and Zoom link. The recommendations and perspectives offered by SDAC are valuable and appreciated. One such recommendation was the suggestion to make our website more accessible for clients and the community. The re-designed format provides easy access to the SDP online orientation, offers users the option to receive notifications when new information is posted and a link was created to enable the submission of written public comment to the SDAC.

In May 2021, SDAC created an Ad Hoc group to collaborate with vendored service providers to create opportunities to serve clients in SDP. The Ad Hoc group delivered two trainings to service providers in November 2021 and recently presented two informational sessions on the topic of FMS and Independent Facilitation. In November 2021, SDAC created a subgroup to help determine the use of SDP implementation fund dollars for ACRC's catchment area and to review proposals. On February 3, 2022, Leap of Faith Family to Family, a non-profit organization, provided two SDP virtual orientations for ACRC clients and families in English and Spanish. The subgroup continues to meet and discuss SDP needs and priorities in ACRC's catchment area.

Clients who want to receive their services through the SDP model must attend an orientation which is accessible on our website. The orientation is available in multiple languages including Spanish, Tagalog, Korean and American Sign Language. ACRC is committed to providing equitable access to services. Please contact your SC if support is needed to access the online orientation.

ACRC'S SELF-DETERMINATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SDAC)



SDAC Members:

- Benita Shaw
- Lisa Cooley
- Kenya Martinez
- Sonya Bingaman
- Peter Mendoza
- Karen Mulvany

Members not pictured

- Carmen Delgado
- Kimberly Terrell
- Meena Kalyanasundaram
- Tracy Lightenberg
- Pam Chueh
- Tom Hopkins
- Kelsey Handcock
- Daniel Meadows
- William Reed

CLIENT CORNER

Hello Everyone! My name is Michelle Rewerts. I am a client of Alta California Regional Center and a member of the Client Advisory Committee. My hobbies are cooking, yoga, dancing, singing, reading, acting and doing arts and crafts. I have lived on my own for the last 23 years.

I enjoy living independently because I am my own person and make decisions for myself. I like volunteering in the community. I attend church and work in the nursery on Sundays. I enjoy working with toddlers and I also assist my Sunday school teacher with activities for children in the 5th and 6th grade. I read bible stories and plan activities for them. I am thinking about returning to Yuba College in the future because I want to learn more about public speaking.

If you are thinking about living on your own, my advice is to be physically, emotionally and financially prepared because you'll need to pay your bills. I learned how to live on my own before I moved out of my parent's house. It took me two years to plan and prepare, I wanted a smooth transition to independent living. My independent living services instructor taught me how to pay bills and become my own payee.

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

Hello World, meet Edison Jun! Edison is a creative, 16-year-old teenager who aspires to give back to his community. Edison's parents credit his success to the many therapies he received as a child including Speech Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Applied Behavior Analysis. The therapies helped Edison connect with people on a deeper level and make real-life connections. Edison, who is in the ninth grade, attends Capital Innovations Academy and he is taking Math and English classes at Sac City College. "My dream job is to become an engineer and environmentalist, to protect the Earth and save our plants from pollution, wildfires and other disasters. The ways that I help are to recycle, use a reusable water bottle and save energy."



"I like to help others too. I volunteered at iCan Bike Camp last year for a week to help Josh, who was a special young athlete, ride his bike. He struggled for a week and eventually he was able to ride his bike with a big smile. I am very proud of Josh. My goal is to help more special young athletes by participating in the leadership group of Special Olympics Northern California and volunteering at the 2022 USA Games Special Olympics." Edison himself is a competitive swimmer, he participates on two swim teams: Special Olympics Northern California and Spare Time Aquatic Sharks. Edison has won a total of 8 gold medals. Michael Phelps is Edison's role model. "Michael is strong and fast, especially in the Butterfly stroke." Edison recently set a personal record of swimming 100-yard freestyle in under one minute. His next goal is to break his own record! "My most impressive swim meet was the South Korean Swim Meet that took place in 2019. I swam in a 50-meter pool. It was so long that I didn't need to do a flip to start another lap."

Creativity is Edison's greatest strength. "I like to do stop motion videos. Stop motion is a type of animation where you move your character a bit and take a picture of each frame. When you play all the pictures, you see the animation without moving your hands. "I was the winner of the Climate Change contest for my stop motion video that my sister helped me record and edit. Here is the link 2020 Climate Video Challenge Winner: <https://youtu.be/B0MDsmQuV-Y>. "I share my creations with people so they can see them. The movies will make them laugh and be excited. My positive mindset is always telling me to get over yourself, do your best, do what you feel is right and enjoy it for yourself." To see more of Edison's creations including his TEDx talk, visit this link: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=edison+jun.

COVID RAPID TEST DISTRIBUTION

In early January 2022, ACRC began receiving reports of a surge in COVID cases related to the Omicron Variant. Concurrently, there was a nationwide shortage in COVID rapid tests and delays receiving test results from labs. Some service providers began suspending in person services. ACRC was able to secure a supply of rapid tests from Sacramento County Public Health and ACRC vendored service providers agreed to assist with distribution to smaller providers throughout are catchment area.



In February 2022, the State of California Department of Social Services, Regional Centers and community partners distributed rapid test kits to care facilities. Our Yuba City, Woodland, and Sacramento Offices hosted these events. UCP returned and assisted with this distribution too.

Photos clockwise from upper left. (1) Yuba City SC's Kimberly Day, Trisann Chipchase, Sukhjeavan Dhesi, and CSM Jaspreet Mann, (2) On My Own staff Arthur Richardson and Sarah Forte, (3) UCP drivers Marilyn Wells and Rico Hernandez, (4) State of California Dept. of Social Services Director, Kim Johnson and ACRC Director of Community Services John Decker at CCL giveaway, (5) CCL staff getting set up, (6) Woodland CSM Katherine Weston and Executive Assistant Zach Horch.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Resource changes over the last quarter

New Service Providers

Pediatric Day Healthcare

- *Ridgeline Pediatric Olivehurst*

Individual or Family Training

- *Merakey Competency Resortation Program*

Community Integration Training

- *Prime Adult Development, Inc*

Specialized Recreational Therapy

- *Therapeutic Riding and Off Track Rehabilitation*

Transportation

- *Access Medical Care, Inc.*

Environmental Accessibility

- *Grimes Heating and Air Inc.*

Residential

- *Love and Serenity of Elk Grove II*
- *Edenic Haven #3*
- *Ofodire Care Home II*
- *Pond Brook Home, Inc.*

Special Therapeutic Services

- *Mindset Wellness*



Community Services Spotlight Parenting Support Services



Did you know ACRC offers specialized parenting support services for adult regional center clients that are pregnant or are currently parents? This service consists of training and education to support the healthy development of the children of regional center clients. Based on feedback from service providers and to increase the utilization of this service, ACRC Community Services Specialist, Isabella Vega, hosted a drop-in session on March 9th, 2022, for ACRC's case management staff. Service coordinators learned more about these types of supports and met the service providers.

ACRC has three providers currently offering Parenting Support Services:

- *Passport to Learning* - Serving Yuba City/Marysville, Sacramento, West Sacramento, Roseville, Natomas, Auburn, North Highlands, Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova, Antelope, Carmichael, Davis, Woodland <https://passport2learn.com/parenting-support-services/>
- *On My Own Independent Living Services* - Serving Sacramento, Carmichael, West Sacramento, Elk Grove, Fair Oaks, Citrus Heights, Rocklin, Roseville, Lincoln, Rancho Cordova, Folsom <https://onmyown-web.com/empowered-parenting-program/>
- *Training Toward Self Reliance* - Serving Sacramento, Carmichael, West Sacramento, Elk Grove, Galt, Woodland, Davis, Fair Oaks, Citrus Heights, Rocklin, Roseville, and Rancho Cordova <https://pcpsac.com/our-programs>

Closed Service Providers

Specialized Health/Treatment/Training Services

- *Strategies for Change*
 - *Change in ownership. ACRC exploring vendoring new owner WellSpace Health.*

Residential

- *Hardesty Small Family Care Home*
 - *Have not served any ACRC clients in over four years.*

ACRC BY THE NUMBERS

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

Here is who we serve as of March 21, 2022:

Early Start - 2,348

Lanterman Clients - 24,841

Total = 27,189

PARTICIPANT CHOICE SPECIALISTS

Participant Choice Specialists (PCS) are subject matter experts in regional center service options that increase consumer choice and control through the Self-Determination Program (SDP) and in participant-directed services. For more information regarding these positions, please see the attached November 4, 2021 DDS PCS guidance. ACRC has hired three Participant Choice Specialists. Two Specialists, Cynthia and Samantha, have already started.

Cynthia James



Samantha Carr



Coming Soon

The third PCS
will join ACRC
in mid-April
2022

FEATURED ARTIST PROFILE

Name: Cindy Benson Multimedia & Digital Artist, Weaver, Potter, Jewelry Designer

From Cindy: My name is Cindy Benson I enjoy being part of the Neighborhood Center of the Arts. I enjoy drawing flowers and sceneries, working with jewelry and most of all, weaving. I have my artwork for sale in our Etsy shop, on TeeSpring, and at a local Coffee shop in Grass Valley. When I earn a pay check from selling my artwork I feel pretty good. I don't work for the money though, I work because it is fun and I love to be with my NCA staff and friends.

From Neighborhood Center of the Arts: Cindy ambitiously creates vibrant art with purpose. She exclusively creates things you can wear or use in daily life. Her jewelry and weaving designs are progressive yet display a vintage class only found in hand made artwork.

How can we buy your work? <https://www.ncagrassvalley.org>
(has link to Etsy shop)



DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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November 4, 2021

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: PARTICIPANT CHOICE SPECIALISTS

The 2021 Budget Act included \$7.2 million to fund three-year limited term Participant Choice Specialists for each regional center. These positions are intended to be subject matter experts in regional center service options that increase consumer choice and control in participant-directed services and the Self-Determination Program (SDP), and shall not be case carrying.

Participant Choice Specialists should be fully dedicated to supporting regional center service coordinators, assisting consumers and families with timely transitions to SDP, and building regional center institutional knowledge regarding participant-directed service options, including SDP. Consistent with statute and regional center contract, it is the Department of Developmental Services' (Department) expectation that regional centers facilitate SDP-related information sharing (e.g., enrollment activity, barriers to enrollment, Department guidance, regional center best practices) between each regional center and the Department. The regional center may choose their Participant Choice Specialists to help accomplish this task. Participant Choice Specialists are intended to assist the regional center in carrying out certain responsibilities related to SDP and participant-directed service options. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Making accurate information available to regional center staff, consumers and families about all participant-directed service options, including state and federal regulations that determine allowable and non-allowable use of SDP funds.
2. Providing training to service coordinators, regional center staff involved in the fair hearing process and other regional center staff, as needed, about the principles of self-determination, how services are obtained through SDP and the rights of SDP participants. Training may be provided in conjunction with the local volunteer advisory committee. [Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code section 4685.8(r)(9)]
3. Meeting SDP enrollment targets and benchmarks. [W&I Code section 4685.8(r)(1)]
4. Expanding awareness of participant-directed service options through efforts to identify concerns and barriers to enrollment, reduce identified barriers and by providing information and training to consumers, families and providers about participant-directed service options.

“Building Partnerships, Supporting Choices”

Regional Center Executive Directors
November 4, 2021
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5. Developing and implementing an outreach and training plan for diverse communities and obtaining input from stakeholders about the effectiveness of the outreach and training and other strategies. The plan shall encompass information about all participant-directed service options, including SDP. [W&I Code section 4685.8(r)(2)]
6. Completing additional review of participant budgets which exceed a specified threshold and using the information in aggregate to identify additional training, program guidance, and verification of compliance with state and federal requirements. [W&I Code section 4685.8(r)(5)]
7. Working with eligible consumers and their families to apply for Medi-Cal. [W&I Code section 4685.8(r)(4)]

Consumers, family members, or providers should contact their local regional center with questions regarding this program directive. Questions from regional centers may be sent to sdp@dds.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:

BRIAN WINFIELD
Chief Deputy Director

cc: Regional Center Administrators
Regional Center Directors of Consumer Services
Regional Center Community Services Directors
Association of Regional Center Agencies
Nancy Bargmann, Department of Developmental Services
Maricris Acon, Department of Developmental Services
Tim Travis, Department of Developmental Services
Erica Reimer Snell, Department of Developmental Services