



October 6, 2020

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

Dear Mr. Winfield:

This letter is written in accordance with Article VII, section 6 (b) (i) of the contract regarding data compilation. Alta California Regional Center (ACRC) held an online public meeting on Tuesday, August 25, 2020, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. In partnership and with the support of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) ACRC hosted the event using the Zoom application. There was significant interest in the meeting this year with 85 registered participants of whom 65 were able to join and participate. 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 meeting flyer was translated into several languages including Arabic, Hmong, Punjabi, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, Ukrainian and Vietnamese and translation services for the meeting were offered upon request. The flyers were posted on ACRC's official website 30 days in advance; information was also shared on social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The translated flyers were distributed to service coordinators (SCs) to share directly with clients and families with whom they work. Additionally, the notices were widely disseminated across our community partners, including Family Resource Centers, State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), Disability Rights of California (DRC), Hmong Youth Parents United (HYPU), Health Education Council (HEC) of the Mexican Consulate, and the MIND Institute. These partner organizations distributed the flyers to members of their organizations via email distribution and mailing lists. Attendance at the meeting included individuals self-identified as clients, parent/family members, professionals, advocates, and staff persons; 16 registrants indicated having a native or preferred language of Spanish. ACRC hired a professional Spanish speaking interpreter for the meeting and offered instruction to access a translated audio channel.

The following items were presented during the meeting:

- ACRC's client demographics across ethnicity/race vs. statewide client demographics
- ACRC's employee demographics, including languages spoken

- Community feedback during 2019 Annual Discussion of POS expenditures with demonstration of DDS reports being available on ACRC's website
- ACRC outreach efforts in 2019 indicating 29 outreaches to public agencies and 19 outreaches to multiethnic communities. The specific outreach history was shared and available on the ACRC website
- ACRC reported on Diversity Grant projects for Fiscal years 2016/17; 2017/18; 2018/19, and 2019/20. Presented during the meeting were completed projects as well as those that are ongoing. The goals and outcomes of each project were shared as well as a demonstration of how to view a description and details on each grant posted on ACRC's website
- Diversity grant projects reviewed included: translations of ACRC materials, cultural competency trainings, electronic interpreting system, targeted outreach/information sessions, service navigator program, ACRC staff-parents-providers workshops and enhanced respite program materials
- Trends for Hispanic and Hmong clients with "No POS" were tracked as they were target populations for ACRC's outreach grant. There was a notable decrease in the number of clients with "no POS" for both ethnicities. The Hmong population of 71 clients with no POS decreased to 31, and the Hispanic population of 81 with no POS decreased to only 12 at the end of the Targeted outreach grant
- ACRC also tracked the "no POS" trends of ethnicities targeted during the four years that ACRC implemented the grant-funded-diversity activities. ACRC saw a decreasing trend of "no POS" among Hispanic, Asian, African-American, and Slavic populations since grant implementation
- Presentation of the service navigator grant outcomes revealed a successful program despite being interrupted by Covid-19. The completion rate was 85% of the targeted 100 clients, and at the end of the grant, participants experienced an increase in access to both generic resources and ACRC services
- Presentation of the 58-page Purchase of Service Expenditures and Demographic Data, which included presentation of total and per capita expenditures for all identified demographic categorizations including age, race or ethnicity, primary language, regional center qualifying condition and residence type
- It was noted that the per capita expenditures for the White population (\$17,193) exceeded the overall average per capita expenditure (\$12,930) by 33%. The per capita expenditures for the Black/African-American population (\$13,033) and American Indian or Alaskan Native population (\$13,909) exceeded the overall per capita expenditure as well, but were within 7.5%. The other ethnic demographics including Asian (\$7,983), Hispanic (\$7,712), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (\$9,740) and Other Ethnicity or Race/Multi Cultural (\$7,686) represented the populations with per capita expenditures below the overall per capita expenditure with a range of 33% to 67% less
- It was pointed out that one of the greatest outliers with regard to per capita expenditure disparity existed within the Community Care Facility (CCF) demographic category of

residence type with 1,775 consumers accounting for \$122,137,222 total expenditures (7% of consumers accounting for 35% of the total budget). The per capita expenditure for this population (\$68,810) exceeded the overall average per capita expenditure by more than 500%. There was discussion as to why per capita expenditures for consumers in a Community Care Facility residence type would be greater than average, including the near exclusive responsibility of regional center funding for 24/7 support in that setting and the reduction of natural support and generic services such as County funded In Home Support Services (IHSS)

- Examination of the ethnic make-up within this living arrangement subset revealed that while the White population represents 48 % of the overall ACRC consumer population they represent 69% of the residential population. The Black/African American population represents 12% of the overall ACRC consumer population and also represent 12% of the residential population. All of the ethnic populations represented a lesser percentage of the residential population compared to the corresponding percentage of the overall ACRC consumer population
- Discussion as to why disparities between various ethnic populations might exist in accessing this regional center funded resource including attitudes and beliefs toward placement outside of the family home, as well as trust of others caring for a loved one
- Future endeavors to address any existing gaps in POS expenditures continue to target the Hispanic, Asians, Slavic, and African-American populations in its diversity grant proposals and projects. ACRC plans to expand the outreach to the diverse communities through workshops and information sessions online with the discovery that people like participating in online activities due to its convenience and accessibility
- Discussion with the attendees ensued with feedback and proposed strategies
- An email account POSequity@altaregional.org was established and shared to solicit additional feedback that was unable to be shared during the public meeting

Feedback/Proposed Strategies from the stakeholders:

- The community participants appreciated the presentation of grant project outcomes, the demonstration of navigating the agency website to access diversity related information and the presentation of POS expenditure data with the examination of possible contributing factors to existing disparity.
- One follow-up questions/suggestions put forth included ACRC's recalculation of per capita averages with CCF and Medical-Rehabilitation Facilities removed from the equation.
- It was also asked what ACRC might consider to address equitable use of residential services by the diverse communities. In response it was acknowledged that not all consumers would have life preferences to live outside of the family home and some individuals and families may feel insulted at the suggestion or insistence to consider exploring the alternative living arrangements.

- It was emphasized that ACRC will continue to make available residential services when needed by the ethnically diverse communities but will not create a need when none is expressed.
- A meeting participant expressed appreciation for the gains that ACRC has made in the last four years. She reiterated her long history of participation in the annual POS meeting and was happy with ACRC's success in reaching our multicultural and multilingual population.
- ACRC expressed gratitude towards the collaboration and community participation in ACRC's efforts. ACRC acknowledged that there have been challenges to overcome and we are pleased to be in partnerships moving in a positive directions.
- A participant expressed that one possible cause of disparity is that many people do not know about ACRC services. She also thinks that many service coordinators do not know about the benefits either. She expressed that it may be worth knowing why clients and families do not use regional center services, and she would appreciate for ACRC to pass questionnaires to families asking about their ACRC service use.
- Another mother participant indicated that her daughter is now 25 years old, and they were immigrants to the United States. She stated that there was no information available to her initially, and she was not asked about what her daughter needs, but she learned about services from her neighbor. She only saw her daughter's social worker once a year, which is not enough to establish a relationship and not enough time for SC to learn about her family. She expressed that she is still learning how to use technology and she knows of many friends who are struggling with technology. She appreciates the availability of information on ACRC's website
- Another participant expressed her appreciation for the planned collaboration with ACRC. Their non-profit organization has worked with many Hmong SCs and this partnership is continuing. They have surveyed the Hmong community and the results indicated that many Hmong individuals do not know what a developmental disability is. They are active participants in the disparity dialogue because they see this in their community.
- A participant indicated that the website content is phenomenal. She expressed that for the African-American community, transparency is essential, ACRC should demonstrate that the Agency allows an opportunity for everyone. Equality must be a goal across the board, and she is grateful for the demonstrated growth that ACRC exhibited through its data.
- A participant expressed her dissatisfaction with her service coordinator. She felt that SC should know how to talk to people from different cultures. She had an issue with the SC's willingness to provide contact information for the manager.
 - ACRC meeting host indicated that without the full details of the situation it would be difficult to address her concern in this meeting setting. She was encouraged to contact the manager directly and address her complaint.
- A client indicated that she was informed by the California Mentor that her SC is no longer working for ACRC. She wanted to know how to get in touch with her new SC.

- The question was addressed by the manager of the unit who was in attendance at the meeting. She was provided contact information for the client to call.
- The host of the meeting emphasized to those in attendance who have suggestions or questions but are unable have them heard or answered because of time constraints can submit their questions or suggestions to the email account: POSequity@altaregional.org
- ACRC emailed everyone who registered to attend the Annual Discussion of Services to the Ethnically Diverse Population and asked three follow-up questions:
 - 1) *Is there any additional information that you would like from ACRC?*
 - 2) *Do you have any suggestions on how ACRC can improve service delivery to diverse communities moving forward?*
 - 3) *Do you have any suggestions on how ACRC can improve service delivery to diverse communities moving forward?*
- Responses from the follow-up email survey included:
 - The presentation was great and well worth their time
 - Clients in residential care are dependent on their care providers, and it is harder for them to move out
 - Suggestion to look at new referrals to CCF in comparison to the existing populations in CCF. Clients that have been in the residential setting have been there for decades, and the disparity will not be addressed with a 3-year grant
 - A question if ACRC gives in to requests for residential placement when the family is connected and affluent and a suggestion to review the 4731 complaints to determine demographic information of the complainants
 - Another respondent suggested increase outreach to doctor's offices and school districts.
 - These are routinely conducted by ACRC staff and managers
 - Another suggestion is to connect with the Oak Park initiative and to conduct information session so that the Oak Park initiative can share ACRC's information to their community
 - A respondent stated that she explored ACRC's website and the content is primarily *written* information. She suggested creating videos for families who do not read and can benefit from information about ACRC services in the language of the viewer. The videos do not need to be polished but should contain information relevant to families of a diverse population
 - Another respondent stated that building community capacity has to include coordination of services between races
 - Another respondent stated that she is interested in hearing about findings of the causes of disparities and the role of parents and professionals in the results or conclusion

- Continuing to hire bilingual and bicultural SCs should be a priority of ACRC, and she would like to participate in a follow-up meeting if scheduled
- Additional email responses were received from the group called Racial Disparities Steering Committee (RDSC), a group started by the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD). Below are the suggestions:
 - Continue to employ Zoom or a virtual meeting format to reach and educate a broader audience.
 - Host monthly regional center orientation meetings online for clients with zero POS, including new regional center clients:
 - Include a thorough review of services, and provide samples of how a service is funded to address a specific objective
 - Highlight examples of client use of Participant Directed Service and Employer of Record respite solutions to demonstrate how underserved families and individuals can hire from within a known circle of friends to meet needs and objectives.
 - Role of the service coordinator
 - Testimonials from clients
 - End with a Q&A session
 - Allow participants to submit questions ahead of time, so that they do not have to speak in front of a live audience
 - Tailor to specific underserved communities (culturally appropriate)
 - Create a roadmap that connects the dots between needs, which most individuals and families do understand, and resources/solutions, which many do not understand.
 - These should be tailored to address the cultural differences or preferences of specific communities.
 - For example, there is no such word as “respite” in Spanish.
 - A longer-term goal might be to create an app that would interview individuals and families online about unmet needs and suggest services. (AI?)
 - Create an online library of service navigator videos for underserved communities, tapping videos created via prior disparities grants, or other existing videos from the Kelso Foundation library.
 - Some in our group are aware of families who are afraid to request regional center services for a developmentally disabled family member because they are

homeless, in transitional housing, in housing that may be considered overcrowded, or are undocumented.

- Address potential family fears around home visits from SCs or others who are mandated reporters and could theoretically report economically disadvantaged families to APS, CPS:
 - Fear that children might be taken away from multigenerational family homes (families who cannot afford to rent more bedrooms)
 - Fear of being reported to ICE among undocumented families
 - Language barriers often increase fears and distrust
- In the era of COVID-19, many families, especially families of color, have lost jobs, income and savings.
 - Ensure that these financially impacted families will not be penalized with the loss of their dependent family members if they apply for regional center services.
- With a goal to close disparity gaps, hold weekly informal Q&A/office hours on Zoom for specific underserved communities
 - Ideally attended both by a family navigator who is embedded in the community as well as an ACRC service coordinator
- Certify ACRC SCs who are multilingual as interpreters
- Email suggestion/recommendations received in the POSequity@altaregional.org email account include:
 - Respite should provide access to a website containing respite providers' profiles so parents can navigate and choose a better Fit for its Children's needs
 - Being sensitive to Hispanic cultural values, respite should let parents choose a respite provider among family members and Friends without penalizing them with less hourly rate and no mileage.
 - Respite denies hiring a friend just because you know him/her. They prefer give you a totally stranger. Why to take the risk to let someone you don't know not your house when you know People you trust? For ex. I've a friend just graduated as RN with moral principles and experience taking care of kids. I wanted her to provide services, instead I got a young lady with little experience.
 - It's important to create a questionnaire for ALTA clients to really know if they don't know about services, misinformation/lack of update of ALTA worker about services, or clients are mistakenly discouraged by their own workers to request services for which they qualify, lack of enthusiasm, poor communication, among others.

ACRCs Recommendations and Plans to Promote Equity and Reduce Disparities

- ACRC followed up on the suggestion to investigate referrals for clinical consultations which often entails convening a multidisciplinary team to address complex needs of a client. The data will be reviewed for its ethnicity composition and to find out if disparity exists. If it does, the diversity team will plan for a methodology to address the disparity.
- ACRC will also investigate the ethnicity of 4731 complainants and review the data for representation of the culturally and linguistically diverse population.
- ACRC will review reported Needs Assessment data to determine if disparities exist between ethnic populations and plan a course of action
- ACRC will continue to provide community outreach, targeting diverse populations and communities.
- ACRC will explore an online quarterly community meeting about services and supports for families for English-speaking culturally diverse populations as well as limited-English and monolingual populations. ACRC will utilize bicultural and bilingual staff to conduct these sessions.
- ACRC will perform updates to its website and explore resources such as videos from community partners such as UC Davis CEDD, ARCA, LUNAS, and fellow regional centers that might be useful to ACRC's ethnically diverse communities.
- ACRC will continue to collaborate with the Hmong Youth and Parents United (HYPU) to enhance connections with the Hmong population
- ACRC will continue to track and monitor POS expenditure data through the DDS grant projects.
 - ACRC received approval to continue the service navigation program through fiscal year 2022. The program provides intensive assistance to the Early Start populations and Transition and Adult clients of African American, Hispanic, and Slavic populations. The Slavic populations that will be served is the Russian-speaking clients and families
 - A resource for Workshops has been obtained for topics such as child development, social-emotional development, processing grief, resilience, sensory integration, and the importance of self-care. These workshop topics will be conducted in Spanish for our Hispanic-Latinx populations
 - In the present covid-19 environment, majority of services are provided in a remote setting. To address a frequently expressed difficulty by the culturally and linguistically diverse population about the challenge of technology and unavailability of data plan to participate in online workshops, ACRC will request from the department to alter its workshop grant deliverables for allow for a purchase of chrome books available for families to access and borrow

- ACRC will provide training on the use of technology to those clients and families expressing a need in that area. The training will be provided in participants identified native or preferred languages
- Enhancement of respite services and dialogue with the target populations to make the service culturally and linguistically responsive. Materials about respite services are now available in Hmong, Punjabi, Spanish, and Russian.
- ACRC will collect success stories from the families impacted by its outreach efforts, service navigation, and collaboration with partner agencies and include these stories in its reporting to DDS, other stakeholders, and during Annual POS meetings
- ACRC will continue to explore innovative activities and partnerships geared towards enhancement of the diverse populations' participation in the greater developmental disability community, that could be funded under future grants from DDS

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Lori Banales at 916-978-6424 or lbanales@altaregional.org.

Sincerely,



Lori Banales
Deputy Executive Director

Attachment: Power Point: ACRC POS Public Meeting

cc: Phil Bonnet, Executive Director
Rita Walker, Board President