

**California History of Developmental Programs**

A developmental disability is a “*severe mental or physical impairment* beginning *before the 18th birthday* and is expected to continue *indefinitely*.” Developmental disabilities include autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and intellectual disability. Disabling conditions closely related to intellectual disability or requiring similar treatment are also included.

The ***Lanterman Act*** (1969) established a system to provide individuals with developmental disabilities the right to community-based services and supports. Each individual has an Individual Program Plan (IPP) developed, which specifies the services and supports the person is entitled to receive. The needs of an individual are assessed and services and supports are identified for each consumer.  The purchase of services under the IPP is the responsibility of the ***21 independent*** *Regional Centers statewide* under contract with DDS to provide localized intake and assessment, to conduct each consumer’s individual program planning meetings, provide ongoing monitoring and quality assessment reviews, coordinate the actual purchase of services and pay service providers. California’s commitment to individualized service planning and consumer choice is *unique*.

**California Department of Developmental Services (DDS)**

**Developmental Centers Program.**The department currently operates three developmental centers (DCs) with proposals to close all state owned and operated developmental centers by 2021. The Department also operates one smaller, state-operated community facility (CF) licensed as an ICF/IID facility.

**Community Services Program.** This program provides community-based services to clients through the 21 independent regional centers (RCs). The RCs are responsible for client assessment and diagnosis, the development of an individualized program plan, case management, and the coordination and purchase of various services, such as residential, supported living, and day program services. Day program services include early intervention services for infants and young children and daytime activity programs for adults. The state's Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act ("Lanterman Act"), first passed in 1969 and significantly amended in 1977, provides the basis for the state's commitments to fund community services for persons with developmental disabilities. The Lanterman Act establishes the state's responsibility for ensuring that persons with developmental disabilities, regardless of age or degree of disability, have access to services that sufficiently meet their needs and goals in the least restrictive setting. In order to deliver services to persons with developmental disabilities, the Lanterman Act specifies that the state contract with RCs, which are nonprofit agencies that coordinate and develop services within their community.

**Eligibility.** The RCs provide services to individuals who have been diagnosed with mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, or a disabling condition requiring treatment similar to that required for mental retardation.

To qualify for services, individuals' disabilities must have originated *before* the age of 18, and they must constitute what is considered a substantial handicap. Unlike most health and social services provided by the state, eligibility to receive both case management and community services does not depend on a "means" test or determination of financial need that is based on income level or assets. Further, with a few minor exceptions, services are provided without any requirement that those benefiting from the services, and who have the ability to contribute, pay a share of cost. Under the Lanterman Act, RCs must assist each client in developing an individual program plan (IPP), which identifies a person's needs and goals, and the services necessary to meet those needs. The IPP becomes the general basis for determining the community services to which an individual is then entitled.

**Special Needs of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities**

“Each person is a human being, deserving respect, caring and acceptance. Each person has the right to live life to its fullest, to be independent, to make choices, and to reach their maximum potential. Each person has the right to live in the community, to enjoy a home, to have a job or other meaningful productive activity, and to be included in the life of their community.”

**TODAY WE HAVE:**

**Real Homes**

Clients with all levels of disability are living in homes in the community. The large institutions are planned for closure.

**Real Jobs**

Community employment is supported in this environment. Vocational rehabilitation techniques and job accommodations such as assistive technology are offered.

**Real Schools**

Integration of individuals with disabilities into community classrooms. Continued building on learned skills in the home environment through the use of individual, structured programs.

**Real Friends**

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged / supported to form meaningful relationships/friendships, to date and to marry. Educational and support is provided.

**Real Fun – Real Activities**

Individuals with disabilities are no longer routinely confined only to recreational activities where they live. Individuals are able to participate in leisure activities in the community with increased access.