



# TRI-COUNTIES REGIONAL CENTER

Enhancing the Quality of Life for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

## Policies & Guidelines

Policies and Guidelines – 7101

Approved by DDS: 8/9/2013

### SERVICE POLICY GUIDELINES

#### Initial Intake and Eligibility Services

Tri-Counties Regional Center will ensure that any person believed to have a developmental disability, any person believed to have a high risk of parenting a developmentally disabled infant, and any infant having a high risk of becoming developmentally disabled will have the opportunity for initial intake and eligibility services at Tri-Counties Regional Center.

Tri-Counties Regional Center will provide initial intake and eligibility services to the following persons upon request:

- Any person believed to have a developmental disability as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code Section 4512 and in Title 17, California Administrative Code Part II, Chapter 3, Sub-Chapter 1, Article 1 and Section 54010 of Title 15, California Administrative Code, Part II, Chapter 3, Sub-Chapter 1, Article 2.
- Any person believed to have a high risk of parenting a developmentally disabled infant.
- Any infant believed to have a significant developmental delay; any infant believed to have an established risk condition; and/or any infant having a high risk of becoming developmentally disabled.

Individuals are accepted for initial intake and eligibility services without regard to religion, ethnic origin, sex or degree of disability. Financial resources of the applicant and/or the applicant's family are not a factor in eligibility for Tri-Counties Regional Center services. No individual referred may be denied initial intake and eligibility services without adequate documentation that the individual does not have a developmental disability.

Every reasonable effort will be made to provide all services in a person or family centered, culturally sensitive manner and in the language which can be best understood by those seeking services. Accordingly, every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that the initial intake and eligibility process is adapted to the individual's and/or family's interests, cultural background, language, and ethnic origin of the applicant and family.

For purposes of establishing eligibility for regional center services, a developmental disability will not include disabilities or conditions that are:

- Solely psychiatric disorders where there is impaired intellectual or social functioning which originated as a result of a psychiatric disorder or treatment for a psychiatric disorder, even where social and intellectual functioning have become seriously impaired as an integral manifestation of the disorder.
- Solely learning disabilities, manifested as a significant discrepancy between estimated cognitive potential and actual level of educational performance, which is not a result of generalized intellectual disabilities or other developmental disability.



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- Solely physical disabilities including congenital anomalies or conditions acquired through disease, accident, or faulty development which are not associated with a neurological impairment that results in a need for treatment similar to that required for intellectual disabilities.

The intake process is a comprehensive process designed primarily to establish eligibility for regional center services and to provide an initial data base for planning for ongoing supports and services and to help formulate the Individual Program Plan (IPP).

An initial intake shall be performed within fifteen (15) working days of the initial application for services. Initial intake shall also include a decision to provide assessment. In emergency situations, the eligibility intake process will be completed as soon as possible and in no event more than 60 days following initial intake where any delay would mean an unnecessary risk to health and safety, a significant delay in development, or an imminent risk of a more restrictive placement.

The evaluation process will be completed in a timely manner and within a maximum of 120 days following initial intake. In unusual circumstances and at the request of the individual applying for supports and/or services and/or his/her family, an extension may be requested and granted. Whenever available, eligibility assessments will be funded by existing generic resources. In the event that funding from generic agencies is not available, regional center may fund the eligibility evaluation. A determination of eligibility clinically based on assessment data will be made by an Eligibility Team consisting of a Tri-Counties Regional Center physician, psychologist, intake service coordinator, and the Services and Supports Manager or designee, as needed.

Each infant or toddler from birth through two years of age referred for evaluation will have a timely and comprehensive, multi-disciplinary evaluation of his or her needs and level of functioning in order to determine eligibility for early intervention services. Evaluations of children for early intervention services will be completed in 45 days in accordance with Federal Part C regulations.

Tri-Counties Regional Center will not authorize any eligibility assessment or evaluation as a part of the intake process that is considered experimental, optional, or elective in nature. The expected result from the provision of initial intake assessment and/or evaluation services must contribute to an eligibility decision. The provision of the eligibility assessment and/or evaluation service must be both clinically and fiscally an effective use of public funds. An applicant who is determined by TCRC not to be eligible for regional center services will be advised in writing of the decision, given the statewide fair hearing procedures, and provided with a list of advocacy resources.

### Exception Policy:

Tri-Counties Regional Center recognizes that some individual needs are so unique that they may not be addressed in this Service Policy and may require an exception. Such requests for an exception to a Service Policy will be made through the Planning Team process.

### Clarification of Terms:

Initial intake and eligibility services refers to the activities of Tri-Counties Regional Center that lead a person into the regional center service system. The intake process covers activities from the initial request for service through case opening, diagnostic assessment, determination of eligibility, and the identification of support and service needs.



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A developmental disability is a disability that is attributable to an intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, or other conditions similar to an intellectual disability that require treatment similar to that required by an individual with an intellectual disability. The developmental disability must originate before age eighteen, must be likely to continue indefinitely, and must constitute a substantial disability for the individual.

A substantial disability is a condition that results in major impairment of cognitive and/or social functioning. Since an individual's cognitive and/or social functioning is many faceted, the existence of a major impairment must be determined through an evaluation performed by a trained professional. Professional review of diagnostic impressions regarding the developmental disability will determine the acceptability of the substantial disability. Cognitive as used in this policy means the ability of an individual to solve problems with insight, to adapt to new situations, to think abstractly, and to profit from experience.