



# Tri-Counties Regional Center

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## The Developmental Disabilities Service System

SERVING PERSONS WITH

intellectual disability  
autism  
epilepsy  
cerebral palsy

MEETING NEEDS FOR

service coordination  
residential care  
early intervention  
behavior support  
transportation  
healthcare coordination  
day programs  
employment  
family support  
individual training & support



Visit ARCA at [www.arcnet.org](http://www.arcnet.org)

## what are regional centers?

Regional centers are non-profit private corporations that contract with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to provide or coordinate services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities. Twenty-one (21) regional centers in California serve more than 290,000 individuals with diagnoses including epilepsy, cerebral palsy, autism, intellectual disability and related disorders.

## the role of DDS

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is the agency through which the State of California provides services and supports to children and adults with a diagnosed developmental disability. Services were originally provided through state-operated developmental centers, but today DDS contracts with twenty-one nonprofit agencies called regional centers, through which most treatment and services are provided in the community.

## association of regional center agencies

The regional centers are supported and represented by the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA). The function of the Association is to support the purpose, intent and mandate of the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act. ARCA also facilitates communication among members, conducts research and analysis of issues related to California's developmental disabilities service system and provides public information about developmental disabilities and regional centers to the state and federal administrations, the state Legislature, Congress, state and national advocacy providers, and various stakeholders.

## the role of regional centers

Regional centers provide diagnosis and assessment of eligibility and help plan, access, coordinate and monitor the services and supports that are needed because of a developmental disability.

## how regional centers work

Once eligibility is determined, a case manager or service coordinator is assigned to help develop a plan for services, communicate available services and assist with access. Many services are provided at no cost to the family or person served. Families are required to share costs for certain services, one example being 24-hour out-of-home placements for children under age 18. Services are funded through a combination of state general funds (approximately 2.6 billion dollars) and federal reimbursements (approximately 2.0 billion dollars).

## primary services & supports provided

- Information and referral
- Assessment and diagnosis
- Counseling
- Lifelong individualized planning and service coordination
- Purchase of necessary services included in the individual program plan
- Resource development
- Quality assurance & monitoring
- Provider payments

- Outreach
- Assistance in finding and using community and other resources
- Advocacy for the protection of legal, civil and service rights
- Early intervention services for at risk infants and their families
- Family support
- Planning, placement, and monitoring for 24-hour out-of-home care
- Training and educational opportunities for individuals and families
- Community education about developmental disabilities

## history of the developmental services system

The history of the Department of Developmental Services can be traced to the 1880's when the first state hospital was opened in Sonoma. A service system began to take shape; but, it was not until the 1970's that landmark legislation and organizational structure facilitated the development of policies for delivery of services and supports. The Lanterman Act was created and amended, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) formed from the Department of Health and the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) was established. From grassroots beginnings of heartfelt advocacy through the years of refinement of entitlements and service delivery, a complex network developed with key roles played by DDS, ARCA, regional centers, service providers and other stakeholders.

## the lanterman developmental disabilities services act

The Lanterman Act is part of the Welfare and Institutions Code that regulates supports and services to the developmentally disabled. It states that individuals with developmental disabilities have a right to services and supports to help them live independent and productive lives.

## a broad system

The service delivery system is a collection of interdependent organizations, departments and groups, with a firm foundation in the Lanterman Act. Regional centers play a critical role. They are funded and monitored by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and guided by a Performance Contract with DDS.

### Developmental Services System

#### State Services System

- Legislature
- Governor
- Health & Human Services Agency
  - Social Services
  - Healthcare Services
  - Developmental Services:
    - Regional Centers
    - Developmental Centers
  - Rehabilitation
  - Mental Health
  - Public Health

#### State/Local Education System

- Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Department of Education
- Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPAs)
- Local School Districts

#### Federal Planning & Advocacy System

- State Council
- Area Boards
- Disability Rights California (DRC)

## how legislators can make a difference

Protect the Lanterman Act and allow members of the service delivery system to fulfill the state's responsibility to people with developmental disabilities.