



Tri-Counties Regional Center

Obtaining Supports and Services

Commonly asked questions about Tri-Counties Regional Center

Services

Who decides what supports and services are needed?

You do, along with other members of your planning team, including someone from the regional center. You may invite anyone else you like—including friends, neighbors, and co-workers. The best team members are people who truly appreciate your strengths and understand your situation. “Person-centered planning” meetings usually happen once every three years, but the team can meet more often if necessary. You choose the best place for the meeting. The team sits down to talk about your hopes and dreams for the future. Everyone shares ideas about what outcomes make the most sense. They also decide how to get the things done everyone agrees are important.

How do I find out about what’s available to help me achieve my goals?

First of all, ask the people on your team, including your regional center service coordinator. They will tell you. Or, your service coordinator may give you brochures or booklets to read which contain descriptions and listings of different types of services. Bring up your questions at the planning meeting or call and ask anytime. Regional centers and family resource centers also have libraries of books and tapes you may keep or borrow. Parent support and consumer self-advocacy groups can also help. Often the best way to learn about supports and services is to visit programs and talk with staff. Your service coordinator will tell you who to call.

Who actually provides the supports and services?

When the team is being creative, it will be family members, friends or neighbors. Such helpers, willing to pitch in, are called “natural” supports. They are found close by where people live, work, play, or go to school. Othertimes, the team may decide that a local community agency has the services you need. Some of these community organizations (i.e., public schools, city recreation departments, Mental Health Services) are called “generic” services. They receive public funds and have a legal responsibility to serve all members of the general public, including persons with developmental disabilities and their families. When there are no other choices, the team may recommend that the regional center purchase services from community agencies called “vendors.” Your service coordinator will refer you to generic services and regional center vendors, when appropriate. When deciding on the right supports and services, team members should always keep in mind: “What is the most cost-effective way to help you succeed?”