

The Department of Developmental Services

Program Summary: The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is the agency through which the state provides services and supports to individuals with ID/DD (intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism and related conditions). Services are provided primarily through contracts with 21 nonprofit organizations called regional centers which help find and access the services and supports available to individuals with ID/DD (including pre-employment and employment support services).

In keeping with California's Employment First Policy, the DDS Work Services Program addresses the employment needs of consumers by providing work and community integration opportunities through Supported Employment Programs (SEPs). Supported Employment (SE) services through the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and regional centers are aimed at finding competitive work in a community integrated work setting for persons with severe disabilities who need ongoing support services to learn and perform the work. Support is usually provided by a job coach who meets regularly with the individual on the job to help him or her learn the necessary skills and behaviors to work independently. The DOR is the main vocational rehabilitation program SE service provider for adults with developmental disabilities. However, if the DOR is unable to provide services due to fiscal reasons, the regional center may be able to help individuals served get a job by funding SE through other means if these services are available in their area.

Work Activity Program (WAP) services through the regional centers include paid work, work adjustment (developing good work safety practices, money management skills, and appropriate work habits) and supportive habilitation services (social skill and community resource training) typically in a sheltered work shop setting. WAPs provide paid work in accordance with Federal and State Fair Labor Standards. Today, several regional centers are beginning efforts to work with WAP service providers to change the service delivery model to be integrated and focused on achieving Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) opportunities. Additional employment preparation services are available through a new sub code of individualized supports within these services known as Tailored Day Services. In Fiscal Year 2016-17, through the enactment of Chapter 3, Statutes of 2016 (Assembly Bill (AB) x2-1), the legislature authorized the development of two new programs to increase CIE opportunities. One program will provide paid internship opportunities leading to CIE. The second is an incentive payment program to service providers who assist consumers to achieve CIE and maintain their jobs.

Client/Service Population: As of January 2016, DDS, through regional centers or developmental centers, provided services to 291,896 consumers, of which 141,207 were of working age (18-61 years old).

Strengths: DDS, through regional centers, is an entitlement program, which provide a large variety of person-centered services. Person-centered individual program planning assists consumers and their families to build on each individual's capacities and capabilities. This planning effort is not a single event or meeting, but a series of discussions or interactions among a team of people including the person with a developmental disability, their family (when appropriate), regional center representative(s) and others. The document known as the Individual

Program Plan (IPP) is a record of the decisions made by the planning team. The IPP captures the services and supports and who will provide those services and supports including those funded by entities other than the regional center and those the regional center will fund.

Weaknesses:

The challenges faced by the DDS system today include meeting the needs of individuals under the entitlement while staying within the allocated resources. To achieve this, regional centers collaborate with agencies in their local communities to coordinate services from a variety of sources. The regional center through the IPP team process can identify the gaps in services and then develop the resources needed to meet the identified gaps. This can create a variation across regional centers, which can be both a strength of the system and a challenge. For example, if a regional center planning-team, along with a client, decided that the client would benefit from a certain community-based service in their area, the regional center could fund that service; however, if that same client moved to a different regional center catchment area, that same community-based service may not be available, which may at least temporarily affect the types of services provided to the client.