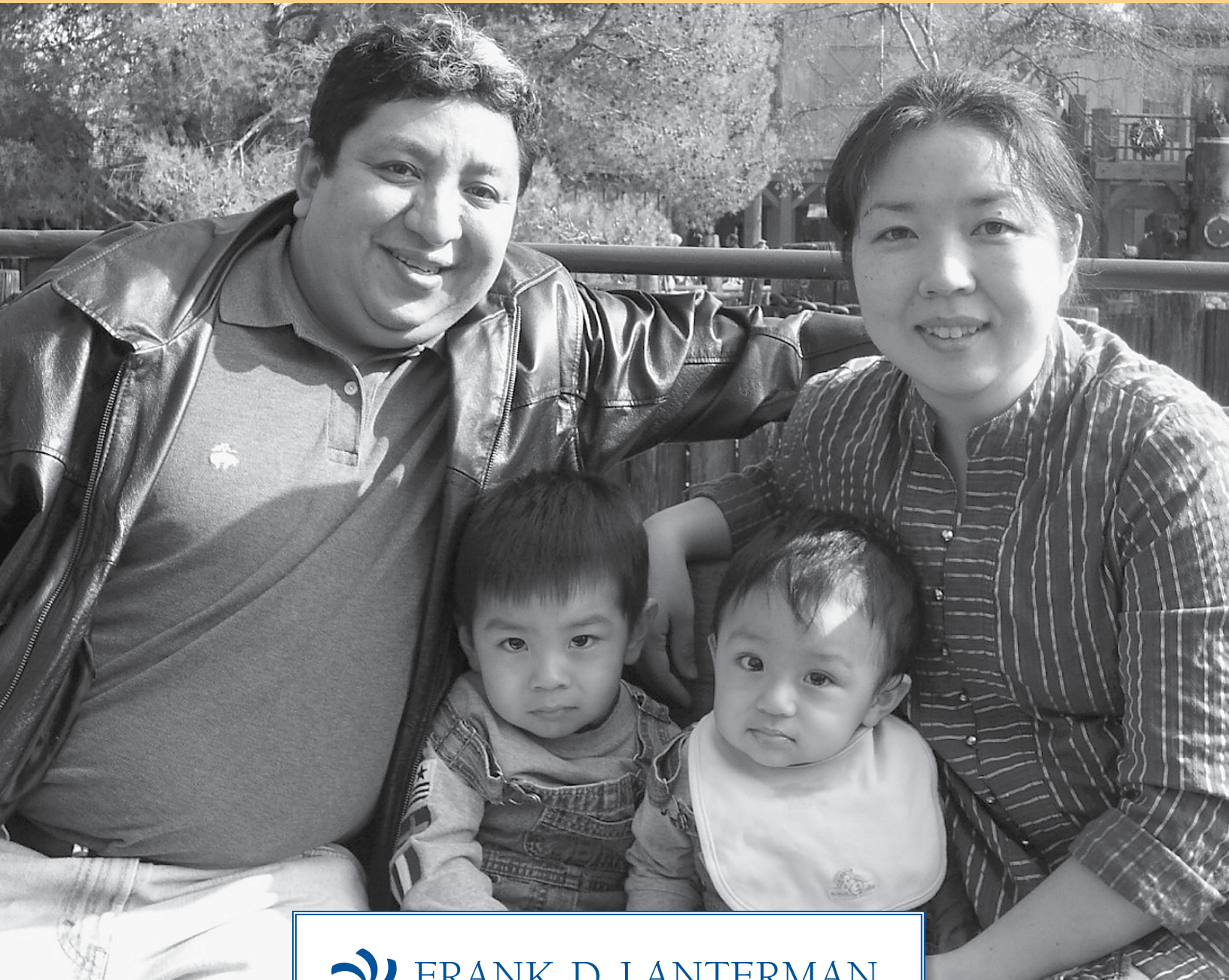


# Guide to Lanterman Regional Center



FRANK D. LANTERMAN  
REGIONAL CENTER

Partners in Lifelong Support



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\*FAQ – Frequently Asked Question



## Our mission is...

To enable people with developmental disabilities to live purposeful lives as active members of their communities.

## Our vision is...

A world where every person is respected and embraced.



## About Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center

Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center is one of 21 regional centers in the state of California that together serve over 240,000 individuals with, or at risk for, developmental disabilities and their families. Established in 1966 as a pilot regional center, Lanterman is a private non-profit corporation that operates under contract with the state of California through the Department of Developmental Services. It is governed by a community-based board of directors that is comprised of individuals with developmental disabilities, family members and community leaders.

The Center serves approximately 8,000 children and adults of all ages in an area that includes Hollywood-Wilshire, Central Los Angeles, Glendale, Burbank, La Cañada-Flintridge, La Crescenta and Pasadena.

Lanterman works together in partnership with our clients and their families, service providers, and communities to provide services and supports that address each client's unique strengths and needs, and create greater self-reliance and independence.

## About the Guide to Lanterman Regional Center

Lanterman is dedicated to helping our families become informed and effective members of the Lanterman community. Throughout the years, your family's journey with Lanterman will be filled with choices, challenges and successes, and this "Guide to Lanterman Regional Center" will help you navigate the path that lies ahead.

Revised in 2009, based on feedback from the Lanterman community, this version of the Guide is written for families with children 3 years of age and older. The Guide focuses on six key areas:

- ❖ The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act
- ❖ Working together in partnership
- ❖ Person-centered planning and its implementation
- ❖ Resolving disagreements about services and supports
- ❖ Legal rights and responsibilities
- ❖ Receiving quality and effective services and supports

The Guide also features "tips" from experienced families and service coordinators, and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs).



## Lanterman's Service Commitment

*We are committed to:*

- Treat people with courtesy and respect, listening attentively to their concerns – with understanding and without judgment.
- Be sensitive to and acknowledge cultural differences.
- Encourage clients and families to make their own informed choices, and we respect and support their decisions.
- Respond to requests as quickly as possible and explain any delays.
- If we make a mistake or misunderstand your request, we respond swiftly to correct the situation.
- Respond promptly and constructively to your concerns. If you feel we have not been responsive or have caused you to be dissatisfied with Lanterman, we will forward your complaint to the appropriate authority to respond quickly and constructively to your concerns.
- Come to meetings and appointments promptly, prepared with the necessary information.
- Explain the regional center service delivery system, as well as what Lanterman's role and relationships are with the many other agencies and service delivery systems, so that it makes sense and you feel able to access these different resources.
- Share all the information we have about the various service options available, offering our recommendations in a constructive manner. We will be honest about what we are able to do and what we are not able to do. If we cannot help you, we try to find someone who can.
- Respect your right to privacy and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service.
- Solicit your ideas and suggestions about how we can improve our services.
- Stay current in our field, and maintain professional standards.





## The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act

### Know the History

In the years preceding the advent of the regional center system, the only option for government-funded services for people with developmental disabilities was the state institution. The typical advice given to parents of children with developmental disabilities was to place their child in an institution and “get on with” their lives. This resulted in these individuals and their families living in a shadow world of isolation and denial, virtually invisible to the larger society – with little hope of a future.

In the 1950s, committed parents in California banded together to create their own services in the community, and by the early 1960s, widespread parental dissatisfaction led them to begin agitating for social change through legislation. These parents, along with the professionals working with them in the community, found a sympathetic ear in Assemblymember Frank D. Lanterman. Driven in part by national events and in part by a committed group of fearless parents, professionals and legislators, this spirit of change gathered momentum.

This pioneering group challenged the State over its treatment of people with developmental disabilities and proposed creating a network of regional community-based agencies to provide services rather than building more institutions. Legislation passed in 1965 authorized the establishment of two pilot regional centers, one in Los Angeles and one in San Francisco. The centers were intended to call attention to the unmet needs of people with mental retardation, facilitate the development of services, maintain records, provide systematic diagnosis and follow-up, and assist

state hospitals in moving their residents to the community. In January 1966, the regional center for the Los Angeles area opened its doors at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles.

A 1969 report concluded that the pilot regional centers were successful and that the model should be expanded statewide. Buoyed by this report, Assemblymember Lanterman introduced AB 225, the Lanterman Mental Retardation Services Act of 1969, which extended the regional center network of services throughout California and established area boards for planning and monitoring services. Four years later, AB 846, also authored by Assemblymember Lanterman, extended the regional center mandate to other developmental disabilities, including cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism and other conditions closely related to mental retardation. The name of the act was also amended to the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act. This legislation is commonly known as the Lanterman Act.

The actions of this small and persistent group of parents, professionals and legislators sparked a revolution and created the regional center system that we know today.

### Other Related Organizations

Visit the Web sites of the other state agencies and organizations mentioned in the Lanterman Act to learn more about their role in the regional center system:

- ❖ Department of Developmental Services – [www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov)
- ❖ State Council on Developmental Disabilities – [www.scds.ca.gov](http://www.scds.ca.gov)
- ❖ Area Board 10 – [www.areaboard10.org](http://www.areaboard10.org)
- ❖ Disability Rights California (formerly Protection and Advocacy, Inc.) – [www.disabilityrightscs.org](http://www.disabilityrightscs.org)

## A Shared Responsibility: The Regional Center and the Family

The Lanterman Act established an entitlement to services and supports for persons with a developmental disability and gave the State a responsibility to provide services and supports. At the same time, the State does not bear the sole responsibility. Families are also responsible for helping their children achieve the highest level of self-sufficiency possible, as well as helping them lead productive, independent and satisfying lives as part of the communities in which they live.

The Lanterman Act also requires regional centers to ensure that generic resources are accessed when purchasing services and supports, and to take into account the family's responsibility for providing similar services and supports to a minor child without disabilities.

Lanterman Regional Center is designated as the central coordinating agency in a community network of services and supports that is both large and complex. It works in partnership with families to ensure that their children receive the services and supports necessary to achieve the goals of their Individual Program Plan.

## Responsibilities Designated to Regional Centers by the Lanterman Act

The Lanterman Act assigns to regional centers the responsibility for providing a range of direct services and supports to clients and their families. These include:

- ❖ Assessment and evaluation to determine eligibility for regional center services.
- ❖ Development of an Individual Program Plan (IPP), through a person-centered planning process.
- ❖ Coordination of services and supports to help clients and their families achieve the desired outcomes specified in their IPP.
- ❖ Assistance in finding and using community and other resources.
- ❖ Support and facilitation of the inclusion and integration of children and adults with developmental disabilities with their non-disabled peers.
- ❖ Outreach activities to identify persons who may need regional center services.
- ❖ Development of innovative and cost-effective services and supports that are flexible, individualized and promote community integration.
- ❖ Assurance of the quality and effectiveness of services and supports provided to clients and their families.
- ❖ Advocacy to protect the legal, civil and service rights of people with developmental disabilities.
- ❖ Information, referral and support.

## Excerpt from the Lanterman Act

Section 4501 of the Lanterman Act states: "The state of California accepts a responsibility for persons with developmental disabilities and an obligation to them which it must discharge. Affecting hundreds of thousands of children and adults directly, and having an important impact on the lives of their families, neighbors and whole communities, developmental disabilities present social, medical, economic and legal problems of extreme importance..."

*An entire copy of the Lanterman Act is available online at [www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov) or for borrowing through Lanterman's Koch ♦ Young Resource Center.*







## Funding for Lanterman Regional Center

Lanterman Regional Center is funded through a combination of state general fund tax dollars and federal Medicaid funds. On July 1, the start of each fiscal year, we receive from the State a new contract with a budget that is determined by the Legislature during the annual budget process. Our budget is divided into two parts – Operations and Purchase of Services.

The Operations portion of the budget funds direct services that our staff provide. These services include service coordination, intake and assessment, clinical services, advocacy, and quality assurance. They also cover other costs of operating the Center, such as rent, telephone and supplies.

Purchase of Services funds are used to purchase services and supports for clients from our community service provider network when no other source of funding is available.

There are many client needs in the Lanterman community that cannot be met through the regular state budget. To help address these needs, the Center engages in fundraising activities, pursues grant opportunities, and develops community partnerships to innovatively meet these needs and challenges.

## Lanterman Act's Financial Requirements of Regional Centers

The Lanterman Act requires regional centers to be responsible and accountable stewards of the funds we receive. We are required to:

- ❖ Live within our budget each year.
- ❖ Ensure that the regional center does not pay for services and supports that should be provided by other agencies, such as local school districts, Medi-Cal and Social Security.
- ❖ Secure services from qualified service providers.
- ❖ Only continue purchasing services where there is reasonable progress in achieving the IPP goals and agreement between the family and the regional center that the services should be continued.
- ❖ Locate or develop innovative and cost-effective ways to achieve desired outcomes identified in the IPP.
- ❖ Help families access typical community resources and develop natural supports.
- ❖ Develop and purchase specialized services only if generic services and supports, or typical community resources, do not meet the client's needs as specified in his or her IPP.



## Natural Supports: What are they?

*Excerpt from the Department of Developmental Services' publication, "How to Develop Natural Supports"*

As defined in the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act, Section 4512 of the Welfare and Institution Code, Part (e): "Natural Supports" means personal associations and relationships typically developed in the community that enhance the quality and security of life for people, including, but not limited to, family relationships; friendships reflecting the diversity of the neighborhood and the community; association with fellow students or employees in regular classrooms and work places; and associations developed through participation in clubs, organizations and other civic activities.

What does "Natural Supports" really mean? To answer this question, it may be easier to look at yourself and think about all the people in your life – friends, family, co-workers. Relationships with these people are your natural supports. Who has been instrumental in [crucial] points in your life, or whom can you count on for help?

*The entire publication can be accessed on the Department of Developmental Services Web site at [www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov).*

## Regional Center Responsibility for Purchasing Services

Regional centers are responsible for helping families identify and access the services and supports necessary to achieve the desired outcomes specified in their family member's IPP. The Lanterman Act instructs regional centers to do these things in ways that are "innovative and economical."

One of the most cost-effective ways of meeting service and support needs is through the use of natural supports and generic services whenever they are available and appropriate to the client's needs. Service coordinators work with families to investigate and exhaust all available natural and generic options. For certain services for children, the Lanterman Act also requires families to share in the cost, and when available, to access private insurance. To ensure that this is not a barrier for families, the State has developed cost-sharing guidelines that are determined by the family income.

If one or more of the desired outcomes in a person's IPP cannot be achieved using personal resources, natural supports or generic services, a service coordinator may request authorization for funding from the Regional Center to purchase the necessary services or supports. All purchases must be consistent with the Center's service standards, which are approved by our board of directors and the Department of Developmental Services.

When the Center authorizes funding for a service from a community service provider, the provider receives a written authorization before services begin. The Center only reimburses providers for services that are included in the IPP and delivered after an authorization is received.

In extraordinary circumstances, the Center may make a purchase that is an "exception" to a service standard. A request for an exception must be reviewed and approved by the Center's executive director or his or her designee.

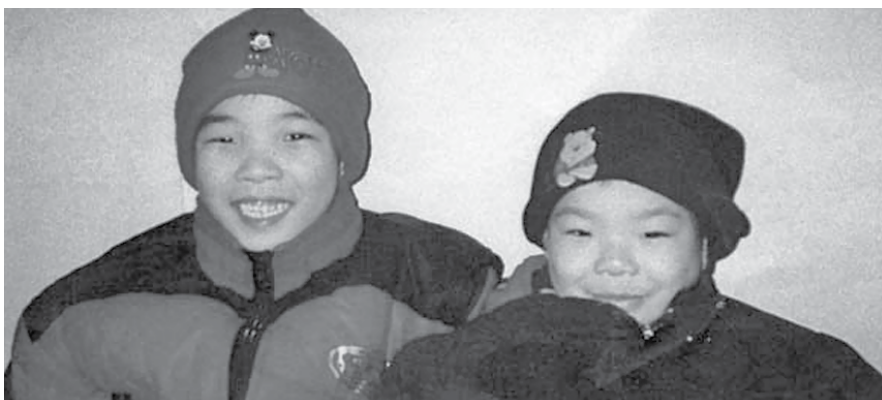
Funding for services and supports is reviewed at the time an IPP is developed or reviewed. If there is evidence that the services and supports are helping achieve or maintain the desired outcomes outlined in the IPP, funding may be continued. In all cases, before funding is initiated or continued, the IPP or an IPP amendment must be signed.

*All of Lanterman's service standards can be viewed on our Web site at [www.lanterman.org](http://www.lanterman.org).*

## Defining Generic Services

There are many public agencies that are legally required to provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities. We refer to these agencies as generic agencies and to the services and supports they provide as generic services. Each of these agencies has its own guidelines for eligibility and services.

Generic agencies include Medi-Cal, public schools, county mental health agencies and the Social Security program.



## Working Together in Partnership

The Lanterman community includes our clients and their families, service providers, staff and the broader community in our geographic area, including other local and state agencies. In order for this partnership to be successful, all community members must actively participate and work collaboratively, while respecting and recognizing individual contributions, roles, strengths and experiences. As the primary source of care and support for the person with a disability, the family occupies a leadership role in this partnership.

## Partnering with Your Service Coordinator

One of the most important partnerships is the relationship between a service coordinator and a family. Your service coordinator is your primary contact and partner at Lanterman. He or she is a professional with experience in the area of developmental disabilities and knowledge about resources, supports and services. Your service coordinator will work with you on the development and implementation of an IPP, which serves as a roadmap toward achievement of desired outcomes. He or she can also provide information and guidance to help you make informed decisions about the plans, services and supports necessary to accomplish goals identified in the IPP.

### *How are service coordinators assigned to families?*

Service coordinators are organized into teams serving specific age groups and geographic areas. Whenever possible, they are also matched with families based on primary language needs.

Every effort is made to ensure stability and continuity for families with their assigned service coordinator. Since Lanterman is organized to support clients and their families around ages and geographic locations, however, all families experience an occasional change in service coordinator associated with specific transitions. These transitions are:

- ❖ When your child turns 3, if he or she continues to be eligible for regional center services, a transition will occur from Early Intervention to one of our School Age units.
- ❖ Around age 14, your child will again transition from School Age to one of our Ongoing units.
- ❖ If your family moves from one geographic area to another but is still within Lanterman's service area, your family member will be transferred to the team serving your new area.
- ❖ If your service coordinator leaves Lanterman or takes a new position within the Center you will be assigned a new service coordinator.

## FAQs

### *What happens if a client moves out of Lanterman's area?*

If you move from Lanterman's service area to another location in California, services and supports will be provided to you by the regional center that serves your new neighborhood. Lanterman will transfer your records to the new regional center. According to the Lanterman Act: "Whenever a [client] transfers from one regional center catchment area to another, the level and types of services and supports specified in the [client's] individual program plan shall be authorized and secured, if available, pending the development of a new individual program plan for the [client]. If these services and supports do not exist, the regional center shall convene a meeting to develop a new program plan within 30 days. Prior to approval of the new individual program plan, the regional center shall provide alternative services and supports that best meet the individual program plan objectives in the least restrictive setting." [Section 4643.5 (c)]

If you are planning on moving out of California, your service coordinator and the Koch♦Young Resource Center can help you contact the appropriate developmental services agency in your new state and locate other related resources. And with your written consent, we can transfer your records to that state's agency.

### *Can a person lose his/her eligibility for services?*

The Lanterman Act states that a person "who is determined by any regional center to have a developmental disability shall remain eligible for services from regional centers, unless a regional center, following a comprehensive reassessment, concludes that the original determination that the individual has a developmental disability is clearly erroneous." [Section 4643.5(b)]

- ❖ Every year, you will be given an opportunity to formally evaluate your service coordinator's performance. As part of this evaluation, you will be asked whether you wish to continue working with him or her for the coming year.
- ❖ If you become dissatisfied with your service coordinator at any time, you should contact the regional manager for the unit that serves you and discuss your concerns. He or she may try to help you resolve the issues or may assign a different service coordinator.
- ❖ In some circumstances, if you and your service coordinator are just not a good match, the service coordinator may also request a change.

During these times of transition, someone will always be available to help ensure that your service needs are met until you are assigned a new service coordinator. If you need help during a transition period, call the unit that serves your family member and ask to speak to the officer of the day.

## Contacting and Meeting Your Service Coordinator

Your service coordinator can be contacted by telephone, e-mail and regular mail.

### FAQ

#### *What should I do if I don't know or can't remember my service coordinator's name?*

If you don't know or can't remember your service coordinator's name, call Lanterman's main phone number at 213.383.1300 and ask the operator to transfer you to the secretary for the unit that has been serving you. If you don't know the unit, let the operator know the client's age and what city he or she lives in, and the operator will transfer you to the appropriate unit. Lanterman takes our responsibility to protect the privacy of our clients and their families very seriously, and you may be asked questions to confirm your identity.

Service coordinators spend much of their time out of the office meeting with clients and families. They check their voicemail messages regularly, so when you call be sure to leave a message. Voicemails are the best and most effective way to communicate with your service coordinator about regular business and non-emergency issues if you cannot contact him or her directly.

When you leave a message for your service coordinator, be sure to include:

- ❖ Your full name
- ❖ The client's name

- ❖ The phone number where the service coordinator can reach you
- ❖ Good times to return your call
- ❖ The reason for your call

Service coordinators make every effort to return calls by the end of the next business day. If they are not able to return calls within this time period, for reasons such as illness or vacation, their outgoing message will contain instructions about whom to contact in their absence.

Since service coordinators are often away from the office, it's best to schedule an appointment in advance if you wish to have a face-to-face visit. These meetings typically take place at the family's residence, but they can also be held at the Regional Center or another mutually agreed upon location.

## *How to Get Help in an Urgent Situation*

### During Regular Business Hours

If an urgent but not life threatening situation arises during regular business hours, Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., such as:

- ❖ You are at the emergency room and a physician is recommending psychiatric hospitalization,
- ❖ There are behavioral-related issues threatening the health and safety of the client or those individuals providing care for the client, or
- ❖ Your family member is missing,

you should:

1. Call your service coordinator,
2. If you get his or her voicemail, and if your situation cannot wait, press "0" and you will be connected to someone who can help you.

Each service coordination unit has an officer of the day to help if an urgent matter arises that requires same-day attention.

### After Business Hours/Weekend

If an urgent situation arises after business hours or on the weekend, and you need immediate help from the Regional Center, you should:

1. Call Lanterman's main phone number, 213.383.1300, to access our emergency response system.
2. You will be asked to leave a voicemail message and the individual who is "on-call" will be notified and will call you back within one hour.

The on-call responsibility is rotated among the Client and Family Services Division leadership staff, so a knowledgeable person is always available to help with urgent situations outside of regular business hours.



## Service Coordinators' Responsibilities in the Partnership

Service coordinators are responsible for helping clients and their families access information and make decisions and choices about desired outcomes. They also help them develop plans for working toward these outcomes and for identifying and accessing the services and supports necessary to achieve them. This process is what we refer to as service coordination.

Service coordinators assist clients and their families in developing plans and making choices by:

- ❖ Encouraging them to identify and develop a circle of support.
- ❖ Partnering with them and their circle of support to develop an IPP.
- ❖ Periodically reviewing with the client and family the client's progress and discussing any needed changes to the IPP.
- ❖ Reviewing the quality and effectiveness of the services and supports.
- ❖ If necessary, helping the client and family prepare for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting.
- ❖ If the service coordinator's schedule permits, attending the IEP meeting at the invitation of the family.

Service coordinators facilitate access to services and supports in the community by:

- ❖ Helping to identify natural supports in the community.
- ❖ Informing clients and families about cost-effective community resources and services.
- ❖ Helping families obtain services and supports from Lanterman's service provider network.

## Circle of Support: What is it?

According to the Lanterman Act: "Circle of support means a committed group of community members, who may include family members, meeting regularly with an individual with developmental disabilities in order to share experiences, promote autonomy and community involvement, and assist the individual in establishing and maintaining natural supports. A circle of support generally includes a plurality of members who neither provide nor receive services or supports for persons with developmental disabilities and who do not receive payment for participation in the circle of support." [Section 4512 (f)]

In other words, a circle of support is a group of people who play an important role in the life of a person with a developmental disability by providing support in different ways during their day-to-day interactions with that person. Anyone that plays a supportive role in the person's life is part of his or her circle of support. This could be a family member, a neighbor, or a school or work friend.



Service coordinators provide support by:

- ❖ Listening to clients' and families' concerns and respecting their opinions.
- ❖ Actively discussing options and choices, and maintaining open lines of communication.
- ❖ Advocating on behalf of clients with agencies and programs, such as the school district, Social Security and Medi-Cal.
- ❖ Assisting in times of crisis or emergency.
- ❖ Investigating problems, complaints and situations of potential abuse.

## FAQ

### *Why is it important for my service coordinator to visit me in my home?*

It is important for service coordinators to visit clients and their families in their homes rather than another more public setting. Many of the issues discussed at a meeting are personal and private and it is difficult to maintain a desired level of privacy and confidentiality when these matters are discussed in a setting such as a coffee shop or restaurant. Additionally, it is essential for service coordinators to be familiar with a client's home situation so they can make the appropriate recommendations, especially in regards to in-home supports. The more they understand and know about your family, the better they are able to support you.

Service coordinators help clients and families access information and develop new skills and knowledge by:

- ❖ Informing them about training and educational opportunities provided by Lanterman or other community organizations.
- ❖ Referring them to the Koch♦Young Resource Center.
- ❖ Consulting on their behalf with specialists at Lanterman and in the community.

## Families' Responsibilities in the Partnership

When families partner with Lanterman and become active and informed participants, they are better able to access the resources, services and supports necessary to achieve their desired outcomes.

### *Gather Information*

We've all heard, "Knowledge is Power," and having accurate, timely information helps families make better choices and decisions. There are many ways for families to become better informed:

- ❖ Utilize the Koch♦Young Resource Center.
- ❖ Participate in parent groups, training opportunities and workshops provided by Lanterman and other community organizations.

## Koch♦Young Resource Center

The Koch♦Young Resource Center provides information, education and support for people with developmental disabilities, families of individuals with special needs, Lanterman staff, professionals and the general community.

The Resource Center offers a number of services, including:

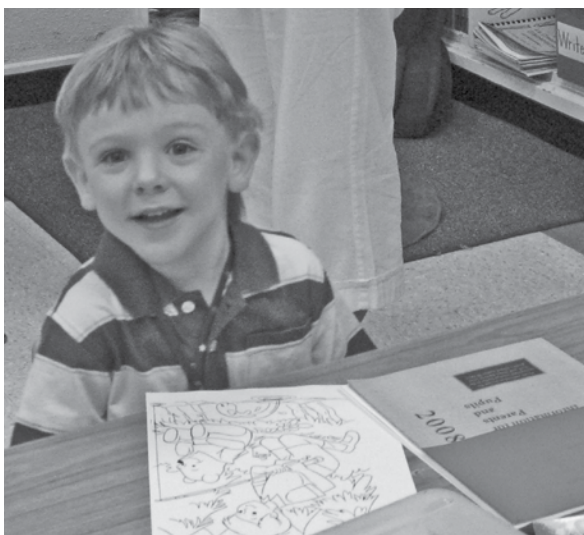
- A Help Desk and HelpLine (213.383.1300, x. 5600 or [kyrc@lanterman.org](mailto:kyrc@lanterman.org)), that link people to community resources related to developmental disabilities, provide information and referral, and do research for unique needs;
- A multimedia multilingual library collection with thousands of disability-related materials that is searchable online at <http://library.lanterman.org>;
- A Network of Care that includes social and recreational resources, health-related resources, and

many other resource categories ([www.lanterman.networkofcare.org](http://www.lanterman.networkofcare.org));

- Support groups, including age, disability and geographic-specific groups;
- A Peer Support Partner Program that offers one-on-one family support from trained and experienced family members ([www.lanterman.org/psm](http://www.lanterman.org/psm));
- Education and training opportunities; and
- Disability-specific information.

In addition to the library and the Help Desk, the Resource Center also:

- Maintains a computer training lab.
- Oversees Lanterman's Assistive Technology Project that offers assistive technology consultations and individual training, conducts workshops, lends equipment, and provides related information.



- ❖ Network with other Lanterman families.
- ❖ Learn more about the Lanterman community by reading Lanterman's newsletter, "Viewpoint" ([www.lanterman.org/index.php/Viewpoint](http://www.lanterman.org/index.php/Viewpoint)), and by visiting our Web site ([www.lanterman.org](http://www.lanterman.org)) and our Network of Care ([www.lanterman.networkofcare.org](http://www.lanterman.networkofcare.org)).

### ***Be Prepared and Actively Participate***

Families have a leadership role in planning, and responsibilities of that role include:

- ❖ Establishing and maintaining an effective working relationship with your service coordinator. You can do this by:
  - ▶ Communicating your needs and concerns.
  - ▶ Helping your service coordinator complete the Client Development Evaluation Report (CDER) and health status review annually.
  - ▶ Reviewing the quality and effectiveness of the services and supports your family member receives.
  - ▶ Sharing both good and bad experiences, including problems that arise and services and supports with which you have been satisfied.
  - ▶ Working together to identify and develop a circle of support.
- ❖ Preparing for meetings by researching options and collecting information.
- ❖ Thinking about goals, plans, and services and supports that you would like to discuss at the meeting.
- ❖ Partnering with the professionals providing services and learning your role in helping your child build skills at home and in the community.
- ❖ Asking questions when something is not clear.
- ❖ Keeping accurate records.
- ❖ Following up on the items for which you have responsibility.
- ❖ Understanding the benefits and outcomes that may come with the choices and decisions you make.

### **FAQs**

#### ***What should I include in my Lanterman Regional Center home file?***

- Basic information about you or your family member, such as special needs or medical conditions, so that others can provide consistent care.
- A list with contact information of all the people, agencies, programs and organizations that are providing services to you or your family member.
- A copy of the current Individual Program Plan and, if applicable, Individualized Education Program.
- Copies of reports from independent assessments.
- Copies of all written communication (including handwritten) to and from all professionals working with you or your family member.
- A list of medications being taken at home, school or work as authorized by the physician. Include the medication name, dosage, time of day taken, and the prescription number and pharmacy. Also note changes in dosage and reactions to the change that you have observed.
- Your notes (dated) about meetings or phone conversations with regional center staff, physicians and other professionals working with your family member. Also, be sure to include the name of the person with whom you spoke or met.

#### ***How should I organize my records?***

It is helpful to divide records in to subcategories, such as health, education and IPP, and organize them by date with the most recent on top.

It also helps to maintain a notebook containing copies of your most recent records that you can take with you to meetings and appointments. This notebook should include, at a minimum, two years of reports, evaluations and program plans.



### *Seek Out Support*

Remember that you are not alone. Many other parents of special needs children share your experiences and feelings. Here are some tips and suggestions that we have gathered from some of our Lanterman families:

- ❖ Never give up hope.
- ❖ Seek out peer support from other families who have “been there.”
- ❖ Identify your own natural support system – family, friends, religious organizations, community.
- ❖ Join a support group that meets your needs.
- ❖ Take time for yourself.
- ❖ Keep your expectations high and set challenging, yet realistic, goals for your child.

### *Be Actively Involved in the Lanterman Community*

There are many opportunities to get involved and actively partner with Lanterman Regional Center:

- ❖ Become a support group facilitator or a Peer Support Partner.
- ❖ Seek out opportunities to partner with Lanterman in the development of plans, policies, legislation and strategies for service delivery.

- ❖ Participate in regional center work groups, committees and possibly the board of directors.
- ❖ Become an advocate for your family by calling, visiting and writing legislators and government officials on the local, state and federal levels to inform these leaders about issues important to our community.



## **Tips for Forming a Successful Family-Professional Partnership**

- Sign and return your Individual Program Plan documents, amendments and agreements promptly. Your signature on these documents is necessary for the funding authorization process for the services and supports outlined in the IPP.
- Plan ahead. The funding process takes time, so give your service coordinator ample time to request services. Service coordinators must follow an approval process and may have to research specific funding criteria. On average, the approval process takes about two weeks.
- Request timely and up-to-date progress reports and evaluations for yourself from anyone working with your child, whether the service or support is funded by Lanterman or you are paying for it yourself. Be sure to maintain a file of these documents and to share them with your service coordinator. He or she will keep a copy of them on file since they will be important when a renewal or reauthorization of funding is requested.
- Provide your service coordinator with a copy of your child's Individualized Education Program. Schools cannot release the IEP to regional centers, so families are a service coordinator's only source of this document.
- Keep your service coordinator up to date about what's going on with your family. Let him or her know about hospitalizations, suspensions from school, if you have a family crisis, or if you suspect abuse.
- If you need assistance from your service coordinator for a meeting such as the IEP, let your service coordinator know as soon as you are notified. The more notice you give your service coordinator, the better he or she will be able to support you. And remember, your service coordinator may only attend the meeting at your invitation.
- Be proactive – do your own research, and if there's a resource or training that you or your family member are interested in, give information about it to your service coordinator.

## Person-Centered Planning

At its core, developing and implementing a person-centered plan is about providing services and supports that are individualized and flexible over time, are built on strengths and needs, and respect the choices and preferences of the person with a developmental disability and the family.

Person-centered planning is an approach to determining, planning for and working toward the preferred future of a person with a developmental disability. It provides a framework for planning and making decisions, and takes into account a variety of factors that affect a person's life. It is not a collection of methods or procedures.

A person-centered plan reflects a process:

- ❖ That is respectful of the person with the disability, their family and those who support the individual.
- ❖ In which the necessary time and effort are spent to be sure that the “voice” of the person with the disability is heard, regardless of the severity and nature of the disability.
- ❖ That focuses on learning what is important to the person and to those who know and work with the person, and ensuring that any issues of health and safety are carefully considered.

The resulting plan is:

- ❖ A written description of what is important to the person.
- ❖ A description of how any health or safety issues will be addressed.
- ❖ What supports are needed for the person to achieve his or her desired future.

## Individual Program Plans (IPP)

Person-centered planning is used to develop an Individual Program Plan (IPP) for every client 3 years of age and older who receives services and supports from Lanterman. A person's initial IPP is completed within 60 days of the person being determined eligible for regional center services.

The purpose of developing the IPP is to identify and document the person's desired outcomes and to state clearly how the team will work toward achieving these outcomes.

The IPP addresses the individual's life in four major areas: living, education and work, social, and health. Within each area, the plan includes:

- ❖ Long-term goals, which describe preferences for the future and include outcomes that may take a long time to accomplish.
- ❖ Short-term goals, which outline the steps and actions that need to be taken and are usually time limited and stated in terms that allow progress to be measured.

- ❖ A schedule of services and supports, which lists the type and amount of services and supports needed to achieve the objectives, as well as who will provide them.

All services and supports – whether they are generic; provided by the family, friends or neighbors; or provided by the regional center – are listed in the plan.

The Lanterman Act requires regional centers to ensure the cost-effective use of public resources when making decisions about purchasing services. As discussed earlier, we are required to make use of generic resources and natural supports when they are available and can meet the client's needs as described in the IPP. Furthermore, if two services or supports are available and would be equally effective in meeting the needs of the client, the regional center is required to purchase the less costly alternative.

## Developing a Plan

A group of people called a planning team develop an IPP. The members of the planning team include the family, client and service coordinator, as well as friends and other people who provide support and care.

### *Meeting Preparation for Families*

Before coming to a planning meeting, think about the following areas in respect to your child:

- ❖ Life goals
- ❖ Capabilities and strengths
- ❖ Interests and accomplishments
- ❖ Concerns and needs

Come to the meeting prepared with information about what financial and other resources (such as private insurance) are available to you and your child.

Identify the personal skills, knowledge and abilities you possess that may help your child take steps toward achieving desired outcomes. Think of other people in your child's life who can provide assistance and support. Additionally, think about what type of training you may need to help support your child, as well as what professional services or supports your child may need to achieve desired outcomes.

### *Meeting Preparation for Service Coordinators*

Just as families need to prepare for meetings, so too do service coordinators. Your service coordinator will spend some time getting to know your family's unique situation prior to the meeting. He or she will do the following:

- ❖ Review the client's record.
- ❖ Obtain information and recommendations from service providers.
- ❖ Begin completing the health status review for discussion and completion at the meeting.

## What Happens at a Team Meeting

All members of the planning team are equally respected and are given a chance to speak and be heard during the meeting.

Person-centered planning meetings work best when:

- ❖ They are held in a place where everyone feels comfortable.
- ❖ Everyone knows the meeting may take a long time.
- ❖ Someone, usually the service coordinator, acts as the team facilitator.
- ❖ When possible given his or her age and ability, the client is afforded an opportunity to provide input about desired outcomes.
- ❖ The needs of the client and the preferences of the client and family are discussed and presented along with other information needed to make choices about desired outcomes.

The steps below are typically followed as the planning team develops the IPP:

- ❖ Discuss the client's needs.
- ❖ Define and come to agreement on the desired outcomes and how progress will be measured.
- ❖ Identify and discuss the kinds of supports needed to reach desired outcomes.
- ❖ Reach a consensus about desired outcomes and how they will be achieved.
- ❖ Develop the plan document that includes:
  - ▶ Desired outcomes.
  - ▶ Kinds of services and supports the individual needs.
  - ▶ Who will provide each service and support, how much will be provided, when it will begin and who will pay for it.
  - ▶ How the services and supports will help the individual reach the desired outcome.

## FAQ

### *Why are my child's services and supports different from those received by others?*

Each person's plan is based on individual needs and preferences. Because of this, your family member's goals and objectives will be different from those of other individuals. Your family member's services and supports may also differ from those received by other people, even if those other people have similar goals and objectives.

Once finalized and signed by the client or their legal representative and Lanterman's representative, the IPP document becomes a legally binding document. For this reason, it is very important that the document accurately reflects the agreements that are made by the people at the planning meeting and others involved in the planning process. The Lanterman Act states in Section 4646 (g): "If the [client] or, where appropriate, his or her parents, legal guardian or conservator, does not agree with all components of the plan, they may indicate that disagreement on the plan. Disagreement with specific plan components shall not prohibit the implementation of services and supports agreed to."

There will be times when agreement about the goals, services and supports included in the IPP cannot be reached at a planning meeting. In most instances, issues that cause the delay can be resolved in a timely way by a subsequent telephone call since they are most often due to a need for additional information. According to the Lanterman Act, "If a final agreement regarding the services and supports to be provided to the [client] cannot be reached at a program plan meeting, then a subsequent program plan meeting shall be convened within 15 days, or later at the request of the [client] or, when appropriate, the parents, legal guardian, conservator or authorized representative, or when agreed to by the planning team." [Section 4646 (f)] Additional program planning meetings beyond the second meeting may also be held.





## Examples of IPP Goals and Supports

Following are some age-specific examples of IPP goals and their respective support.

### *Health Example for a Young Child*

Goal	Jane will have good oral health.
Objective 1	Jane will brush her teeth twice a day.
Objective 2	Jane will see her dentist at least semi-annually.
Support	Parents will provide hand-over-hand guidance to Jane during tooth brushing. Family will schedule semi-annual visits and will use dental insurance for routine and necessary dental care. Service coordinator will invite parents to upcoming dental fair.

### *Socialization Example*

Goal	John will maintain relationships with peers.
Objective 1	John will participate in sports and attend Sunday school.
Support	Family will attend the annual Social Recreation Fair. John will attend weekly soccer practice at [location]. Family will take John to Sunday school.

### *Adult Living Independently Example*

Goal	Jill will live independently in an apartment within six months.
Objective 1	Jill will prepare simple meals.
Objective 2	Jill will keep her home clean.
Objective 3	Jill will do her own laundry.
Objective 4	Jill will open a savings account and make regular deposits.
Support	Lanterman will fund for 16 hours per month of independent living skills training from [provider] from [date] to [date]. Her parents will help her open the savings account and help her make regular deposits.



Monitoring and Amending the IPP

Service coordinators are required to monitor the IPP by conducting face-to-face visits with the client. During these visits to the client’s home, the service coordinator reviews the plan with the client and family and reports on the progress the client has made in achieving the desired outcomes.

If the plan needs to be changed, one of two things can happen:

- ❖ If the changes are minor, the team can determine that an amendment to the plan is sufficient.
- ❖ If the changes are major, a new plan is written.

In preparation for this face-to-face visit, clients and their families should think about whether the services being received are making a difference to them in their efforts to achieve their desired outcomes.

A new IPP may be requested at any time and the Regional Center will provide one within 30 days. Typically requests for a new IPP are in response to critical life transitions, such as school to employment, or if there are significant changes in a client’s living situation, health status or level of independence.

	Face-to-Face Visits in the Client's Home	IPP Review	New IPP
<i>Client Lives at Home with Family</i>	At least annually	At least annually	At least every three years
<i>Client Lives in Residential Home</i>	At least quarterly	At least quarterly	At least every three years
<i>Client Lives Independently</i>	At least quarterly	At least quarterly	At least every three years

FAQ

What is active status?

A client’s status with Lanterman is active as long as the client is receiving services from Lanterman, including service coordination and maintaining a current Individual Program Plan.

A client’s status becomes inactive either when the client or family chooses to no longer receive services from the Regional Center and asks for the status to be changed, or if we lose touch with the client.

It is very important that clients and families keep Lanterman informed of their current address. If we are unable to contact a client by mail and phone, we visit the last known address. If these attempts fail, we designate the client’s status as inactive. The client or family may ask for the case to be reactivated at any time.



## Resolving Disagreements About Services and Supports

If you disagree with a decision Lanterman makes about initiating, changing or terminating a service or support, you should discuss your concerns with your service coordinator to be sure you understand the reason for the decision. If after this, you still disagree with the decision, you have the right to receive the regional center decision in writing and file a request for a fair hearing. Under the fair hearing process, disagreements may be about services, eligibility, or any decision or action of the Regional Center with which you disagree.

You may request a fair hearing within 30 days after being notified that a service or support has been denied, or that an existing service or support is being changed or terminated. If you want a current service or support to continue during the fair hearing process, you must request a fair hearing within 10 days of being notified of the change or termination.

### Appealing a Decision

You must put your request for a fair hearing on a fair hearing request form and send it to Lanterman's executive director. The form and information explaining the fair hearing process, as well as information on available advocacy assistance organizations, including the clients' rights advocate at the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy, will be sent to you when you are notified about any change or denial of a service. The form and information is also available on the Department of Developmental Services Web site at [www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov).

Once Lanterman receives your fair hearing request form, it will be forwarded to the Office of Administrative Hearings. The Office of Administrative Hearings will then set dates for a hearing. If you wish to have access to your regional center record to prepare for the hearing, contact the Center's appeals coordinator to arrange for access to your record at a time that is convenient for you. You can contact the appeals coordinator by calling the main Lanterman number at 213.383.1300 and asking the operator to connect you.

### Options in the Fair Hearing Process

There are three steps in the fair hearing process:

- ❖ A voluntary informal meeting with Lanterman's executive director, or a staff person who is unfamiliar with your case and denial and who is chosen by the executive director.
- ❖ Mediation with an independent mediation officer.
- ❖ A formal hearing with an administrative law judge from the state Office of Administrative Hearings.

### *Voluntary Informal Meeting*

The purpose of the voluntary informal meeting is for you to talk to Lanterman representatives about your disagreement and to try and find a solution. If you decline the voluntary informal meeting or disagree with the decision following an informal meeting and you have not already requested mediation, you may either request mediation or proceed directly to a fair hearing.

### *Mediation*

Mediation is the second option available to you in the fair hearing process. Mediation is also voluntary and may be declined by either you or Lanterman. Mediation is a meeting where you and representatives from Lanterman meet with an independent trained mediation officer to explain your respective positions. The mediation officer attempts to negotiate a settlement between the two parties. Either you or Lanterman may withdraw at any time from the mediation and proceed to a fair hearing. If you or Lanterman declines mediation, or if mediation fails to resolve the issues, the matter will proceed to a fair hearing.

### *Fair Hearing*

When the Office of Administrative Hearings receives the request for your hearing, they will send you a letter telling you the time, place and date of the hearing. It will be held at a time and place reasonably convenient for you. The fair hearing is more formal than mediation and is conducted by an administrative law judge from the Office of Administrative Hearings. At the hearing, the judge will listen to and receive evidence from you and Lanterman. He or she will make a decision based on the evidence presented at the hearing. Both parties must obey this decision. If either you or the Regional Center disagrees with the decision, however, it may be appealed to the appropriate court of law within 90 days of the decision.

*The Department of Developmental Services Web site has an appeals, complaints and comments section that features publications related to the fair hearing process. Visit [www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov) to access additional information about the fair hearing process, timelines, your rights during the fair hearing process, the three options in the fair hearing process, and details about what is included in the administrative law judge's decision on the fair hearing.*





## Legal Rights and Responsibilities of People with Developmental Disabilities

People with developmental disabilities have the same basic rights and responsibilities as all other legal residents of the United States and the state of California. California law also gives people with developmental disabilities some additional special rights. These rights include:

- ❖ A right to treatment and habilitation services and supports in the least restrictive environment. These services and supports should foster the developmental potential of the person and be directed toward the achievement of the most independent, productive, normal life possible. Such services shall protect the personal liberty of the individual, and shall be provided with the least restrictive conditions necessary.
- ❖ A right to dignity, privacy and humane care. To the maximum extent possible, treatment, services and supports shall be provided in natural community settings.
- ❖ A right to participate in an appropriate program of publicly supported education, regardless of degree of disability.
- ❖ A right to prompt medical care and treatment.
- ❖ A right to religious freedom and practice.
- ❖ A right to social interaction and participation in community activities.
- ❖ A right to physical exercise and recreational opportunities.
- ❖ A right to be free from harm, including unnecessary physical restraint or isolation, excessive medication, abuse or neglect.
- ❖ A right to be free from hazardous procedures.

- ❖ A right to make choices in their own lives, including, but not limited to: where and with whom they live; their relationships with people in their community; the way they spend their time, including education, employment and leisure; the pursuit of their personal future; and program planning and implementation.
- ❖ A right to have relationships, marry, be part of a family, and to parent if they so choose.

People with developmental disabilities who reside in a residential group home have additional rights:

- ❖ To wear their own clothes.
- ❖ To keep and use their own personal possessions, including toiletry articles.
- ❖ To keep and be allowed to spend a reasonable sum of their own money for personal expenses and small purchases.
- ❖ To have access to individual storage space for private use.
- ❖ To see visitors each day.
- ❖ To have reasonable access to telephones, both to make and receive confidential calls.
- ❖ To have ready access to letter writing materials, including stamps, and to mail and receive unopened correspondence.
- ❖ To refuse electroconvulsive therapy.
- ❖ To refuse behavior modification techniques which cause pain or trauma.
- ❖ To refuse psychosurgery.
- ❖ To make choices in areas including, but not limited to: daily living routines, choice of companions, leisure and social activities, and program planning and implementation.

## Client Rights Complaint Process

The law provides a formal process for dealing with a situation where you believe that Lanterman or a service provider has violated or improperly withheld a right to which your family member is entitled under the law. This process is usually called a “4731” complaint because it is described in section 4731 of the Welfare and Institution Code.

If you believe such a situation exists, you should contact your service coordinator and attempt to resolve the situation. If you cannot resolve the situation, contact Lanterman’s complaint coordinator and make a complaint. You can contact the complaint coordinator by calling the main Lanterman number at 213.383.1300 and asking the operator to connect you. The complaint coordinator will forward the complaint to our executive director.

The executive director has 20 working days to investigate the complaint and send you a written proposed solution. This document will include a telephone number and mailing address for you to use to refer the issue to the director of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) if you are not satisfied with the proposed resolution. If you do not refer the complaint to DDS, Lanterman’s proposed resolution will become effective on the 20<sup>th</sup> working day following your receipt of the resolution.

*The appeals, complaints and comments section of the Department of Developmental Services Web site features publications related to the client rights complaint process. Visit [www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov) to access additional information about this process.*

**Note:** This complaint process is not to be used if you disagree with the nature, scope or amount of services you are receiving or are requesting the Regional Center to provide, including eligibility for regional center services. The fair hearing process should be used to deal with these types of situations.



## Receiving Quality and Effective Services and Supports

Lanterman is committed to providing services and purchasing services from our network of community service providers that are of high quality, achieve the desired results, and are cost-effective.

### Regional Center Direct Services and Supports

We take pride in the quality of the services our staff provide directly, and are responsive to you if you ever have any comments or concerns about our services. Give us your comments – both positive and negative – by e-mail, a phone call or a letter.

And, if there is some aspect of our service that does not satisfy you or if you have a complaint, give us an opportunity to address your concern or correct the problem by talking to us directly.

The first person you should contact is your service coordinator. He or she will help you or direct you to someone else who can. In the event the situation is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should request to speak with the manager of the department involved. If the manager is unable to help you, ask to speak with the director of that department. Finally, if the matter is still not resolved, you may request to speak with our executive director.

### Purchased Services and Supports

The Center maintains a formal quality assurance program to monitor the quality of services and supports offered by our service providers. Trained Lanterman staff members conduct site visits at programs and residential facilities to assure compliance with standards and expectations.

At the same time, we rely on our partners – families, clients, service providers and other involved individuals – to help us in these efforts. Our families play a very important role by sharing comments and suggestions about quality and effectiveness of the services and supports their family member is receiving.

### FAQ

*What can I do to ensure the quality of the services being provided to my family member?*

Get informed by attending meetings and asking questions. Visit and observe services or programs working with your child. If you are pleased with the progress and results, let the provider and your service coordinator know. If you observe anything unusual, are concerned about the quality of the service, or do not think that the service is achieving the desired outcome, you should share your concerns with the provider, but definitely share them with your service coordinator as soon as possible.







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