



## 2024–25 Lanterman Coalition Public Policy Priorities

We represent tens of thousands of stakeholders in California’s Intellectual and Developmental Disability (I/DD) community. Our top priority is that each person receives the high quality, person-centered services and supports that they choose and that are the core promise of the Lanterman Act. Furthermore, we strongly believe that individuals from all backgrounds and all geographic regions should have equitable access to services to meet their unique needs and choices.

We commend and thank the Legislature, DDS, Administration, and the entire stakeholder community for their partnership, collaboration, and support of people with I/DD. We look forward to working collectively with the I/DD community to address the myriad of current challenges facing the system: re-emergence from the post-COVID-19 pandemic, chronic underfunding, the increased costs of providing services, and workforce challenges.

### The Challenge – Ensuring the Entitlement.

The service capacity in California’s Developmental Services system is not expanding as quickly as anticipated or needed to meet the needs of its growing population. This means thousands of people are not receiving the high-quality services they need and are promised by the Lanterman Act. Causes include:

- A. Regional Center Capacity.** Budgeting for regional center staff is so woefully outdated that it assumes pay for service coordinators at slightly more than minimum wage – half the actual cost of hiring them. This has resulted in regional centers having high caseloads, making it challenging to provide timely support to each person.
- B. Workforce Capacity.** Recent rate increases made progress, but then inflation and wage pressures have caused providers to continue to be woefully understaffed, limiting their ability to serve individuals and placing many who want services on waiting lists. The new \$20/hour minimum wage floor for fast food workers, as well as the new \$25/hour minimum wage for workers in healthcare settings will drive up wages and further exacerbate workforce shortages.
- C. Rate Challenges.** While the Legislature called for and implemented a rate study championed by the Lanterman Coalition, there are crucial areas that must still be addressed to ensure the rates incentivize choice, equitable availability, accountability, and inclusion for people served.

### The Solution – Three strategies to ensure a viable and sustainable IDD system.

Solutions below are aimed at supporting all people with IDD to obtain the wide array of choice driven, person-centered services promised under the Lanterman Act.

- A. Regional Center Capacity.** Update and keep current regional center staff funding to bring California into compliance with federal commitments on caseload ratios.
- B. Workforce Capacity.** Honor the commitment to fully implement the rate models on July 1, 2024. Update the rate models to 2024 costs (including consideration of new state wage floors for competing industries) prior to implementation. Standardize an annual adjustment so that individuals continue to have access to the direct care staff on whom they depend.
- C. Align Rate Structure with Desired Outcomes.** Rate reform is underway and there are areas that need refinement to avoid unintended, potentially harmful repercussions to people with I/DD. Solutions include: 1) Maintaining current billing units instead of transitioning to hourly units; 2) Developing sustainable transportation rates; 3) Incentivizing competitive individual employment; 4) Expanding affordable housing options; and, 5) Including innovative services, maintaining appropriate staff credentials, and fairly measuring outcomes.

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**Lanterman Coalition**

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## Lanterman Coalition Guiding Principles

### Keep the Promise of the Lanterman Act

The Lanterman Act entitles Californians with I/DD to receive the supports and services needed to pursue the goals and lives of their own choosing. It is paramount that the I/DD system retains the protections and responsibilities of the Lanterman Act, which contains important, timeless principles that should continue to be honored.

### Person-Centeredness is the Central Tenet of the Lanterman Act

Person-Centeredness is a critical principle that should continue to drive the system. The Lanterman Act establishes the right of any person to make choices in their own lives just like any other citizen; this must be maintained.

### Promote Flexibility, Innovation, and Collaboration

The I/DD community's ability to pivot under unprecedented circumstances has been on display these past three years. The system demonstrated tremendous resiliency through constant communication and collaboration with many stakeholders to the benefit of those served. A service system that allows for and encourages innovation and flexibility is best positioned to meet systemic challenges and individual needs, now and into the future. Maximizing innovation and ingenuity will inform modernized approaches, services, and funding mechanisms.

### Promote Quality Outcomes, Ensure Accountability

Maintaining a strong commitment to providing high-quality services for every individual in the I/DD system continues to be an area of emphasis, one that pushes for quality outcomes of those served and ensuring a high level of accountability. The pandemic has allowed for new approaches and service programming to develop, and it is critical to maintain the ongoing commitment to develop quality outcomes measured with respect to the person-centered needs and goals of every Californian served and keeping with the metrics of the greater system.

### Commit to Long Term Workforce and System Sustainability

The direct support professional (DSP) workforce is the lifeblood of service for people with I/DD, and service coordinators are the planners of community supports. As individual needs have evolved and changed due to the pandemic, the passion and commitment of DSPs and service coordinators have not waned. The goal of honoring person-centeredness and quality outcomes cannot be achieved without real investment in the staff delivering services every day. The only way to achieve long-term stability and ensure positive long-term outcomes for people with I/DD is to continue investment in the I/DD workforce and the service community writ large.

### Demonstrate Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Practices

We are committed to cultivating and preserving a culture of inclusion and connectedness across race, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, age, language, color, religion, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, and beliefs. This is evidenced in the commitment to help any Californian overcome any barriers to equitable access for high-quality, culturally conscious, and person-centered services, and to hold the system to account when it is not meeting this objective.

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