



Budget Priority Executive Summary

The Lanterman Coalition, made up of the 19 major stakeholders in California’s community-based developmental service system, is uniting around a single critical concern. Years of underfunding, cuts, rate freezes, old funding formulas, and inflation have hurt service providers’ and regional centers’ ability to ensure people with developmental disabilities and their families get needed services and supports.

To fix this, our system needs a 10% across-the-board funding increase now, and 5% increases yearly, until funding for provider rates and regional center services is reformed.

Step 1 - 10% in the Current Year

The developmental services system is in crisis. Service providers are being pushed to the brink. Where new programs once opened, long-serving ones now close, their budgets unable to be balanced with state-mandated rates. Regional centers’ service coordinators are carrying caseloads larger than California has assured the federal government they would. Individuals with developmental disabilities now face a shortage of needed services and case management support. For both service providers and the regional centers, the 10% across-the-board increase for developmental services funding will serve as *a stopgap measure that will mitigate the damage long enough for real reform to occur.*

Step 2 – 5% Annual Investment

Real reform is a complex process that will require the input of many stakeholders, and the careful review of volumes of data. It cannot be rushed. But inflationary pressures will not grant us such courtesies. California’s service system needs the assurance of 5% annual increases while work is ongoing *to prevent the temporary gains of the 10% increase from being eroded.*

Step 3 – Reform

Most service provider rates have been frozen for over a decade. Similarly, most salary levels in the “core staffing formula” used to create regional centers’ budgets have not been updated since 1991. Service provider rates and the core staffing formula must be reformed to guarantee that future funding levels are both adequate and sustainable. Through that comprehensive funding reform, California’s *developmental services will avoid collapse and be able to serve a changing population.*

California has a long-standing philosophical and statutory commitment to, and vision for, providing quality services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities in community-based settings. Community service providers and regional centers have the drive and skills, but the system lacks the resources to make that vision a reality for the majority of people it serves. Thus, the Lanterman Coalition is urging the Administration and the Legislature to adopt this three-step common-sense approach to rebuilding California’s community-based service system for individuals with developmental disabilities.