



Fact Sheet: Caring for Californians with Developmental Disabilities

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California's system for providing services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities needs reform.

The system is coordinated by a network of 21 nonprofit agencies called regional centers, with oversight from the state Department of Developmental Services. Decades of research has identified persistent and ongoing disparities in the availability and quality of services among racial and ethnic groups and among geographic localities. In addition to these challenges, the Commission's review of this system uncovered inconsistencies in data reporting, technologies, vendorization processes, support for regional center governing boards, and availability of client support.

In its 2023 report, [*A System in Distress: Caring for Californians with Developmental Disabilities*](#), the Commission urgently calls on California to:

- **Increase consistency in client experiences** by creating a standard set of core services and intake process to be used by all regional centers, and using technology to make it easier for people to identify available services.
- **Target and reduce racial and ethnic disparities** by developing standard categories to measure the racial and ethnic characteristics of clients receiving services, conduct robust analyses of existing data, and require consistent reporting.
- **Bolster state oversight** by authorizing the Department to issue general directives over the system of regional centers and conducting an evaluation the system.

- **Modernize technology** used to track financial and client data.
- **Standardize the vendorization process** that service providers undergo to become licensed vendors.
- **Strengthen and enhance support for regional center governing boards** by ensuring that board decisions are independent and made without fear of retaliation, and that board members are equipped to participate fully in board decisions with appropriate training.
- **Improve service coordination** by convening a taskforce to streamline the process of accessing generic services and enhance navigation services for regional center clients through a state-funded competitive grant.

The Commission's recommendations will help state leaders improve the governance and accountability of California's system of services and supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and address longstanding inequities that have made it easier for some to access needed services than others.

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