

An Effective and Growing System, Serving Hundreds of Thousands of Individuals *Increased funding needed to improve caseload ratios*

California's developmental disabilities services system serves ~400,000 individuals (approx. 1% of CA's population). Through 21 community-based regional centers, funded with state and federal dollars, individuals and their families have access to professionals who connect them to services and resources to meet their unique needs. The regional center is where service starts, making them a vital link between individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and the services they need.

Given that critical role, the state must support regional centers with realistic, stable funding to provide the services needed and to address the shortfall of hundreds of service coordinators.

FUNDING SHORTFALL

The state recognizes this funding need, and has taken some positive steps. But is not enough to meet the rapid growth of the system and address the significant shortfall of hundreds of service coordinators. Prior funding increases only covered part of the shortfall. More work is needed to ensure effective and efficient service to all individuals and families served.

A [recent State Auditor report](#) noted a root cause of some challenges the system faces today is a funding shortfall, which has led to a severe shortage of service coordinators. This dynamic impacts efforts to continuously improve on the delivery of consistent, efficient, and timely services to children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Regional centers "are not adequately funded" and that the "fiscal issues are dramatic."

- Former Assemblymember and current Little Hoover Commission member Dion Aroner



SHORTAGE OF SERVICE COORDINATORS

Service coordination is the core of regional center work. Each person served is paired with a service coordinator to plan to meet their needs, based on diagnosis, age, support needs, preferences, and cultural values. The hallmarks of successful service coordination include trusting relationships, individualized plans, and securing needed resources to make goals into realities. In recent years excessive caseloads have made it harder for service coordinators to give needed time to those they serve.

Average caseload ratios are higher than best practices, state law, and an agreement with the federal government require. Prior state investments highlight this truth. But even as centers work to hire new service coordinators, a comprehensive solution is still lacking. New expectations and old funding formulas mean that even if every dollar already promised was spent, the system would still be short hundreds of service coordinators.

Individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and regional centers need the Governor and the Legislature to address this funding problem in the 2023-24 budget. ARCA will be working with all stakeholders to educate elected officials and secure the necessary financial commitment and state support to bring regional center funding levels to sustainable levels as they continue to serve a growing and deserving population.