

**POS (Purchase of Service) Expenditure Data Report**  
Redwood Coast Regional Center  
May 2023

This report is provided to the Department of Developmental Services as required in Article VII: Section 6 of Redwood Coast Regional Center's 2021-2022 Contract.

**Public Meetings Held to Present Purchase of Services Data and Obtain Public Input**

On March 30, 2023, Redwood Coast Regional Center conducted a public meeting to share Purchase of Service Data and obtain public input concerning ways to improve access and equity. The meeting was held via Zoom video/teleconference, allowing community members from all four counties RCRC serves to participate. The meeting was held from 11am-1pm, allocating over an hour for public questions and input. There were a total of twenty-two community members, one representative of the Department of Developmental Services, ten RCRC staff/contractors, six community partners, two representatives of the Board of Directors, and a representative of State Council on Developmental Disabilities in attendance.

Spanish language and ASL interpreters were available at the public meeting. Spanish and English versions of the meeting announcement were posted on the RCRC website, made available at all RCRC offices and other locations, and were distributed by RCRC staff. Public service announcements (English and Spanish versions) were provided to all area media, more than 30 days prior to the meeting dates.

All meeting participants were directed to the RCRC website containing graphs and charts of the POS expenditure data from 2021-2022, in an easy-to-understand format. The graphs and charts were prepared by RCRC and served as discussion guides for the meeting. The charts and graphs contained all required new information regarding expenditures and expenditure trends. An index to the materials was provided as well as explanatory notes and definitions of terms used in the report (Spanish/English), and comparisons to statewide data were available. This information was also available on RCRC's website at:

<https://redwoodcoastrc.org/transparency/purchase-of-services-pos-expenditure-data>

The postings include the data for FY 2021-2022 as well as the POS Expenditure data the past ten fiscal years.

A follow-up meeting was conducted on May 4, 2023 to allow for continued discussion as some confusion was expressed by some attendees.

Dr. Roy, along with input from Dr. Smalley, provided a presentation of the RCRC analysis of POS expenditure data for 2021-22 and part of the vision statement of RCRC was shared, “We envision a culture in which all members of the community are respected, supported, honored and recognized”. Presentation of the data was followed by presentations by Argelia Munoz, Mariana Nava Molina, Amy Benitez, and Alma Ingram on steps that RCRC has been taking and implementation projects to address disparity in the RCRC community.

The following was identified by analysis of the 2021-2022 data:

**RCRC Population by Primary Ethnicity:** Primary ethnicity within the RCRC service area is predominantly white at 73.1 percent, with the next largest population based on ethnicity being Hispanic at 15.5 percent.

**Client Population/Per Person Expenditures:** POS expenditures for Native Americans has increased by 67.1 percent, whites at 40.5 percent, Hispanics at 32.2 percent. The greatest increase in per person expenditure is in RCRC’s Native American Community. The greatest per person expenditure overall based on ethnicity is white. The greatest increase in RCRC client population based on ethnicity is Hispanic.

Analysis of the data of the two largest RCRC groups based on ethnicity, white and Hispanic, showed a per person expenditure difference of \$17,377. Upon further analysis of data, to ascertain why there is this difference, data related to age of the client, their residence and the nature of specific expenditure has shown to have an effect on the total per person expenditure rate. When specifics are taken into account, comparing the same expenditures across race/ethnicity, the difference is reduced. (see below).

RCRC’s next largest population based on ethnicity, the Native American community, shows a cumulative disparity of \$8,478 compared to whites when looking at the total undifferentiated number. This amount is decreased substantially when specifics are taken into account. When comparing the same expenditures across Native American and whites, the amount is more than halved.

**Client Info: No POS/Utilization Rate:** This data shows a decrease in utilization across all groups. This may have been related to the COVID pandemic and individuals staying at home and isolating from others, as well as an ongoing shortage in vendor staffing available, which in turn has an effect on POS and utilization. While the percentage of no POS has increased over the past 10 years, it

is important to note that the RCRC client population has increased by approximately one-third and our vendor pool has not kept pace. Staffing difficulties have delayed and sometimes prevented services.

Our analysis of POS data indicates the lowest percentage of no/low POS authorizations, based on ethnicity, is Hispanic at 15.7%, meaning this population received the highest percentage of authorizations. Additionally, analysis of No POS data reveals that for the category of Hispanic, 75% of persons served by RCRC are under the age of 21 years old. This suggests that many needed services are provided by generic resources, such as school districts, county services such as IHSS and or funded through managed care organizations (behavioral support service providers), instead of through RCRC. RCRC is the “payer of last resort”, so this larger population of Hispanic youth, with costs covered by school and other generics, would result in a decrease in the per person expenditure of RCRC. Upon review of the per person expenditure rate, matched by age and residence, the difference of 3-21 years is significantly less, with a difference of \$481, which is substantially lower than the aforementioned figure of \$17,377.

The native community has the highest no to low POS at 32.5% Again 62% are under age 21 and similarly served by generic resources first. That beings said, when matching for age and residence there is still a difference of \$3007 in per capita expenditures for native youth when compared to whites.

Due in large part to the COVID pandemic in 2021/ 2022, all ethnic groups had low utilization. Based on ethnicity, the greatest utilization rate was white at 51%, with Native American and Hispanic ethnicities at 49.5% and 41.2% respectively.

#### **Client Information Based on Primary Language:**

The largest RCRC population based on language is English. The greatest increase in RCRC clients based on language is Spanish. The greatest per person expenditure based on language is ASL. The lowest per person expenditure based on language, is Spanish. Based on primary language, Spanish has the lowest rate of No POS, with the highest percentage of POS authorizations. The highest rate of utilization is ASL.

**Client Information Based on Residence:** The greatest increase by percentage in residence is of those living at home and those in Med/Rehab/Psych (such as the acute general hospital, psychiatric facility, a rehabilitation center, or a community

treatment center). For those accessing these forms of hospitalization, though small consumer counts, these expenditures are also the most costly and skew the cumulative data as discussed above.

**Client Information Based on Ethnicity & Residence:**

There is a substantial increase in per person expenditure for those with ILS or SLS (\$35,083 to \$69,430, equaling an increase in per person expenditure of \$34,347). This increase is in keeping with RCRC's aim to offer adequate SLS & ILS to enable individuals to obtain optimal community integration and reside in homes of their choosing. These services are provided as a valued alternative to congregate living arrangements, and are often more expensive than staff operated, segregated settings. There is also a substantial increase for residential residence (\$47,260 to \$97,859, equaling an increase of \$50,599).

It is noted, that over 80% of RCRC clients who are over age 21 are white. Thus based on ethnicity, the subpopulation that uses SLS/ILS and residential residence the most is white. Given the substantial difference in cost of these residence types, this has an effect on the overall per person expenditure rates of the RCRC client. ILS/SLS & residential residence are the more costly options for residence compared with residing at home (\$69,430 & \$97,859 versus \$12,172 respectively). When comparing RCRC's largest client populations based on ethnicity, Hispanic & white, the percentage of RCRC clients of white ethnicity residing with SLS/ILS and in residential residence (18.5% and 1.8% respectively) is substantially greater than the percentage of RCRC clients of Hispanic ethnicity residing in SLS/ILS or residential residence (1% and 0% respectively). This plays a contributive factor to the overall difference in per person expenditure between the two largest client population groups based on ethnicity.

**Residence No POS/Utilization:** There is a decrease in utilization of POS across all categories except institutions. RCRC has a board policy against placement in institutional settings unless court ordered to do so.

**Client Info: Based on Eligibility Diagnosis:** There has been a significant increase in those found eligible due to an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis and a decrease in persons with an Intellectual Disability (ID) diagnosis. For per person expenditures, there was an increase across disability categories, 30.9%, with the exception of ASD where there was a decrease of 31.3% which is likely due to behavioral purchases for this group being funded by Managed Care organizations starting in 2015 instead of RCRC.

A discussion followed the presentation of the data, with Dr. Roy and Dr. Smalley calling for questions, input, and suggestions. The specific discussion topics/questions may be found in the attached meeting minutes.

Through analysis of the data and public meeting input, the importance of RCRC continuing to improve service access and equity was recognized. RCRC is and has been taking several steps to implement and improve service access and equity including:

1. Holding community meetings to address how the underserved communities would like RCRC to improve service access and equity. RCRC continues to collect and analyze community and client satisfaction, and culturally respectful and accessible data in an ongoing effort to improve the cultural responsiveness of Regional Center services.
2. In response to suggestions from the community, RCRC is providing accessible courses and certification to help build the workforce capacity of bi-lingual, bi-cultural staff, through the Service Access and Equity grant.
3. RCRC provides incentives for staff referrals and stipends to hire more bi-lingual/bi-cultural staff.
4. Supporting the location of RCRC staff and service providers in underserved and remote communities, including travel reimbursement and regular presence in our rural communities. (Due to the rural nature of the RCRC service area, it is often difficult for individuals and families to access Regional Center Services).
5. Continuing participation in community and cultural outreach events to raise awareness of services provided through RCRC and recruiting bi-lingual/bi-cultural staff, overseen by the Diversity Specialist.
6. Support for our Deaf and Hard of Hearing community through RCRC's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist
7. Ongoing meetings to address our internal workforce shortage, high caseload to service provider ratios, challenges of providing services in our rural area, and increasing access for our underserved communities.
8. Continuing to partner with local community based organizations, to support individuals and families to understand and access RC funded services including but not limited to respite, behavioral support, ILS/SLS, speech and augmentative communication services, etc...
9. Enhanced Caseload service coordinators working specifically with underserved communities. These service coordinators have smaller caseloads to allow more time to develop relationships in the native and Latin communities.

10. Developing a Cultural Humility Plan and providing training for RCRC staff and the Vendor community in culturally appropriate practices and services
11. Safely re-establishing services in home as things open up in relation to the COVID pandemic, to help improve utilization rates of services.
12. Outreach and parent support groups, to build leadership and empowerment of community members through the Brighter Futures Hoopa Grant.
13. Continuing to provide services to uphold RCRC's commitment to support individuals to reside in their community.
14. Increasing language accessibility and cultural competency through the Language Access & Cultural Competency Grant, including increasing translation of documents into languages other than English, holding regular community listening sessions, collecting community surveys for ongoing input from the community, and providing outreach to the RCRC multicultural community.

As COVID restrictions were lifted, RCRC aimed and continues to aim toward pre-pandemic rates of POS and utilization. There are challenges related to the ongoing effect of the COVID pandemic, with many local resources having difficulty acquiring and retaining staff needed to serve RCRC clients. Additionally, broadly speaking, over the past 10 years the median rate structure did not allow Regional Centers to pay competitive rates to retain staff for services. RCRC is grateful for the Burns Rate Study increasing rates for some service. However, there are still many services that do not have adequate rates to maintain viability contributing to a reduction of resources available for clients in the RCRC community. This is a particular challenge in RCRC's more rural areas, such as the Native American communities.

Dr. Roy thanked participants in attendance and for their input. Participants were asked to send any additional comments and/or questions by email to:

[Disparitydata@redwoodcoastrc.org](mailto:Disparitydata@redwoodcoastrc.org)