



INLAND REGIONAL CENTER

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June 30, 2020

Nancy Bargmann
Department of Developmental Services
1600 Ninth Street, Room 240, MS 2-13
Sacramento, CA. 95814

Dear Ms. Bargmann,

Attached is Inland Regional Center's report on Purchase of Service (POS) Disparities for fiscal year 2018/2019. In 2018/2019, IRC served 15,791 clients of Hispanic ethnicity. In that cohort, 25.3% did not have POS which equates to 4,003 clients. There was a 1.1% decrease in POS disparity from fiscal year 2017/2018. In 2018/2019, IRC served 11,331 clients with a primary diagnosis of Autism. In that cohort, 29.5% did not have POS which equates to 3,345 clients. There was a 2.5% decrease in POS disparity from fiscal year 2017/2018. In 2018/2019, IRC served 7,604 clients whose primary language is Spanish. In this cohort, 22.4% did not have POS which equates to 1,700 clients. There was a 1.8% decrease in POS disparity from fiscal year 2017/2018.

Over the past three fiscal years, IRC has continued to see a decrease in POS disparity among these three cohorts. The decrease in POS disparity is particularly notable because of the continuous challenges IRC faces including continuous growth in cases averaging 150 per month, serving two counties over a large geographic area, locked in median rates for vendors, and a high caseload to CSC ratio. Over the past three fiscal years there has been a 2.6% decrease in POS disparity in the Hispanic cohort, a 3.3% decrease in POS disparity in the Autism cohort, and a 3.6% decrease in POS disparity among the primary language Spanish cohort.

This report will break down the various aspects of IRCs disparity related efforts to close the disparity gap. A few notable activities include IRCs Community Engagement Unit and Training Unit attending 300 outreach and educational events throughout Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. These outreach efforts resulted in connecting with families and stakeholders, training community partners about IRC services and the individuals we serve, building partnerships in the community, the initiation of parent support groups, and the initiation of two interagency monthly groups between the Cultural Specialist and CSCs/ISCs to share and align disparity related efforts and information.

If you have any questions, concerns or input, please feel free to contact me. We are happy to discuss our accomplishments, goals, and activities with you.

Sincerely,

Lavinia Johnson
Executive Director

Inland Regional Center



Diversity/Disparity Data Action Items

The following actions were taken by Inland Regional Center (IRC) to increase attendance and participation in the discussion of diversity and disparity related to Purchase of Service (POS):

- POS Public Input Meeting “We Want to Hear from You!” graphic (Spanish and English) was announced on IRC’s website and calendar on November 21, 2019.
- POS Diversity and Disparity Data were posted on IRC’s website on December 19, 2019.
- POS Public Input Meeting “We Want to Hear from You!” graphic (Spanish and English) was announced on IRC’s Facebook page, Instagram, and Twitter on December 23, 2019.
- Public Input Surveys in English and Spanish were made available to the community on IRC’s website on December 23, 2019.
- Public Input Surveys in English and Spanish were posted on IRC’s Facebook page, Instagram, and Twitter on January 14, 2020.
- On January 15, 2020 Autism Society Inland Empire, State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Office of Clients’ Rights Advocacy, and the offices of Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia and Assembly Member Eloise Gomez Reyes were informed of the POS Data availability as well as the POS Public Input Meetings and were provided with links to the POS Data, POS Survey, and the POS Public Input Meeting “We Want to Hear from You!” announcement. All entities were asked to share the links on their distribution networks and social media platforms.
- POS Public Input Meeting “We Want to Hear from You!” graphic was posted on IRCs intranet page on February 11, 2020.
- POS Public Input Meeting “We Want to Hear from You!” was announced to IRC staff through IRCs interagency newsletter on February 20, 2020.
- POS Public Input Meeting “We Want to Hear from You!” was announced to vendors and the community through IRC’s quarterly newsletter (constant contact email), which also included the Spanish list serv, on February 21, 2020. The newsletter has 7,534 subscribers.
- Total number of Public Input surveys received through all sources mentioned above =

English = 9

Spanish = 0



- The Community Engagement Unit announced and distributed POS Public Input Meeting flyers at the following meetings and events:
 - Rialto parent support group meeting on January 6, 2020
 - Disparity Link at IRC on January 21, 2020
 - Safety and Preparedness event in Rancho Cucamonga c/o ASIE on January 25, 2020
 - Special Education Summit and Resource Fair in San Bernardino c/o Assembly Member Eloise Gomes Reyes on February 8, 2020
 - Rialto parent support group meeting on February 13, 2020
 - Disparity Link at IRC on February 24, 2020
 - Special Education Parent Advisory Committee resource fair in La Quinta on February 26, 2020
 - Announced both English and Spanish POS Public Input meetings at the POS Disparity presentation for IRC Vendors at IRC on February 27, 2020.
 - E-Kamp Conference at IRC on February 29, 2020.
 - Community Relations Specialist posted video on Instagram announcing both English and Spanish POS Public Input meetings on March 3, 2020.
 - Colton Head Start Resource Fair on March 4, 2020.
 - POS Disparity presentation for IEHP in Rancho Cucamonga on March 5, 2020.
 - Rialto parent support group meeting on March 9, 2020.
- POS Disparity Data was presented to IRC Vendors on February 27, 2020 where more than 250 service providers attended.
- POS Disparity Data was presented to the community on March 11, 2020 in English and March 12, 2020 in Spanish. Sessions were held in an open forum where attendees were invited to provide public testimony regarding IRC services.

English session: 5

Spanish session: 3

An on-line livestream option was provided for those unable to attend the meeting in person.

English livestream: 9

Spanish livestream: 12



**Inland Regional Center Disparity Assurance Plan
Fiscal Year 2018-2019
Disparity Presentation Stakeholder Meeting Notes
“We Want to Hear from You!”
Purchase of Service Public Input
March 11, 2020 - English session
5:00 PM to 6:30 PM**

Conference Center
1425 S. Waterman Ave.
San Bernardino, CA. 92408

Attended by:

Lavinia Johnson, Executive Director, Kevin Urtz, Associate Executive Director, Vince Toms, Director Community Services, Merissa Steuwer, Director of Financial Services, Kurtis Franklin, IT Manager, CJ Cook, Community Engagement Manager, Lilliana Garnica, Cultural Specialist, George Gonzalez, CST III, Ismeth Estrada, CST I, Amelia Maldonado, Community Relations Specialist, and Consumer Advocates Cody Williams, Gregory Harrison, and Stephen Donahue.

Stakeholder attendance included: community members, clients, vendors, and parents:

- Number of in-person attendees: 5
- Number of livestream attendees: 9

Session included the presentation of POS data, disparity information, discussed last year’s disparity goals that were met, discussed 2019-2021 disparity related goals, fielded questions, and presenters encouraged and welcomed public input from both in-person attendees and those who joined us via livestream.



**Inland Regional Center Disparity Assurance Plan
Fiscal Year 2018-2019
Disparity Presentation Stakeholder Meeting Notes
“¡Queremos Saber Su Opinion!”
Purchase of Service Public Input
March 12, 2020 - Spanish session
5:00 PM to 6:30 PM**

Conference Center
1425 S. Waterman Ave.
San Bernardino, CA. 92408

Attended by:

Kevin Urtz, Associate Executive Director, Kurtis Franklin, IT Manager, CJ Cook, Community Engagement Manager, Lilliana Garnica, Cultural Specialist, George Gonzalez, CST III, Ismeth Estrada, CST I, Amelia Maldonado, Community Relations Specialist, Daisy Quiroz, Event Developer and Outreach Specialist, and Consumer Advocates Cody Williams, Gregory Harrison, and Stephen Donahue.

*IRC Directors that were not present at this session were on a conference call with DDS regarding the Covid-19 response.

Stakeholder attendance included: community members, clients, vendors, and parents.

- Number of in-person attendees: 3
- Number of livestream attendees: 12

Session included the presentation of POS data, disparity information, discussed last year's disparity related goals that were met, discussed 2019-2021 disparity related goals, fielded questions, and presenters encouraged and welcomed public input from attendees from both in-person attendees and those who joined us via livestream.



Purchase of Service – “We Want to Hear from You!”
March 11, 2020 - English session
5:00 PM – 6:30 PM
Spanish interpreter provided
ASL interpreter provided

Attendees from IRC: Lavinia Johnson, Executive Director, Kevin Urtz, Associate Executive Director, Vince Toms, Director Community Services, Merissa Steuwer, Director of Financial Services, Kurtis Franklin, IT Manager, CJ Cook, Community Engagement Manager, Lilliana Garnica, Cultural Specialist, George Gonzalez, CST III, Ismeth Estrada, CST I, Amelia Maldonado, Community Relations Specialist, and Consumer Advocates Cody Williams, Gregory Harrison, and Stephen Donahue.

Introductions:

CJ, Cook, Community Engagement Program Manager at IRC, announced rules for the meeting and read a disclaimer that covered the livestream and video taping of the meeting. CJ introduced the Executive Management team and the members of the IRC Community Engagement unit.

Presentation:

Lilliana Garnica, IRC Cultural Specialist, provided an overview of the POS data, the previous year’s goals, goals for 2020-2021, IRC growth, barriers, and the results of the efforts related to closing the disparity gap that took place in collaboration with Community Based Organizations who received a grant from DDS. You may watch the meeting at:

- <https://youtu.be/-WseqQsMams>

Community input facilitated by CJ Cook, Community Engagement Program Manager. Community members provided public input and their comments may be viewed at:

- <https://youtu.be/-WseqQsMams>

You may review the POS data at:

- <https://www.inlandrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/POS-Disparity-Data-2019.pdf>

You may review the Power Point presentation at:

- <https://www.inlandrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/POS-Meeting-March-2020-ENGLISH.pdf>
- Wrap up at 6:30pm. The meeting was closed by CJ Cook.



Purchase of Service – “¡Queremos Saber Su Opinion!”
March 12, 2020
Spanish session 5:00pm – 6:30pm
Spanish and English interpreter provided

Attendees from IRC: Kevin Urtz, Associate Executive Director, Kurtis Franklin, IT Manager, CJ Cook, Community Engagement Manager, Lilliana Garnica, Cultural Specialist, George Gonzalez, CST III, Ismeth Estrada, CST I, Amelia Maldonado, Community Relations Specialist, Daisy Quiroz, Event Developer and Outreach Specialist, and Consumer Advocates Cody Williams, Gregory Harrison, and Stephen Donahue.

Introductions:

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- <https://youtu.be/Zm4Wu6eFuCg>

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- <https://youtu.be/Zm4Wu6eFuCg>

You may review the POS data at:

- <https://www.inlandrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/POS-Disparity-Data-2019.pdf>

You may review the Power Point presentation at:

- <https://www.inlandrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/POS-Meeting-March-2020-SPANISH.pdf>
- Wrap up at 6:30pm. The meeting was closed by CJ Cook.



Issues Identified by Disparity Stakeholder Meetings and Public Input Surveys

Input from English POS Public Input Meeting

Alejandra Rivera, IRC parent and EPU Manager - Alejandra introduced Exceptional Parents Unlimited (EPU) and described their disparity program, “Navigating Systems with Families.” She also provided her contact information for those in attendance who were interested in participating in the program or who have any questions.

Beth Burt, ASIE – Beth commented the need of more innovative programs to serve the community.

Input from Spanish POS Public Input Meeting

Dimpna Rodriguez, IRC parent - Dimpna directed her question to IRC Director, Don Meza. She asked about how IRC is going to integrate prevention mechanisms with IRC clients during this pandemic in high populated programs such as VIP and the adult program in Rialto. Her question was, what is IRC doing to monitor and direct vendors during this pandemic in regard to prevention?

Input from IRC Vendors

Hire new staff who have training in residential facilities.

Parent Support Groups that were personally invited to participate in the POS survey and provide input

- **Support group in Cathedral City**
 - No input received
- **Support group in Victorville**
 - No input received
- **Support group in Riverside**
 - No input received
- **Support group in Rialto**
 - No input received

Input from Surveys (verbatim)

More information, my twins got accepted into the regional in July, it is now January and I am lost, we just started respite, I've been trying to get copay help for all these months caseworker keeps saying she can't find my 1040 form I've sent it to her several times. I feel like besides



respice I don't know what other kind of help regional center offers. I have no clue what is going on. Thank you. So maybe more communication with the worker, better explanation of how the regional center can assist families. Help with SSI and IHHS forms or a class would be nice.

Staff are not knowledgeable of the clients needs because they have had no experience education or training in the field of disabilities to which they are supposed to be helping the consumers with. Although they are employed to bring in money for regional center they are not trained or educated in providing the needs are for filling the needs of the consumers. My recommendations or something probably that regional center wouldn't do because it's been my experience and knowledge that the regional centers are really not into providing for the consumers but for The agency. I would be my recommendation for the state department to employ consumers parents and advocates to oversee and audit the regional centers as well as provide training and knowledge to the caseworkers to which they should spend a minimum of six months studying families and the children and their consumers lives before they ever get into a full-time position to watch the regional centers and then pay the families to train educate the caseworkers so they can better do their job. If the state department offered nursing or care for the disabled children or adults I for one and I know many others would love to work for the state department overseeing the regional centers want to cut down on the cost the fraud and it would create an environment that regional center wasn't doing what they want like they are now because I'm not providing For the consumer they're just implying your friends and family I came back to not one case worker can tell you anything about one of their clients if you were to bring up her name they would have no idea. It doesn't matter what kind of degree they have they have no experience or knowledge about the positions that are in other than the paperwork aspect maybe That's like putting an auto mechanic in to do brain surgery. But this is going to the inland regional Center I'm sure it'll be bypassed because they're not concerned with the consumers.

We moved here from another state. No one told us about the inland regional center. We lived in o.c. for first 4 years we we're here. Our son graduated from high school out of CA. No agency to tell us about any services plus we didn't have a permanent address (semi homeless) first 4 years we lived in California. Need a better system to notify people who are homeless or semi homeless about the inland regional center. Our son is now 28 yrs. Old. We were told by peoe thAt he is too old for services there. Where do autistic adults get services? Slot for children but hardly any for adults. People are usually adults longer than they are children. Need programs for adults. Especially a one stop informational resource for services for adults with autism. Hard to find info. On housing options for high functioning adults with autism. I've been trying to find out about representative payee services for months. What if the parents of the autistic adult pass away? How can they plan for their child to live a semi independent life I.e. in their own apartment with supportive services if you don't know where to go to find out about the services? Some people can't rely on their extended families to help out. There needs to be a "one stop" resource center to offer planning for adults with autism for when their parents or care takers get too old to take care of them anymore. My husband and I are training our son to be as independent as possible.



Multiple factors - services needed are apparently not funded through IRC. (1) Professional ongoing facilitated social groups for teens and young adults. This is where the help is needed. Many organizations focus on multiple topical issues however, the bottom line is that regardless of how well one does in academics or overcomes sensory issues or how much parent training is given, if a person is unable to get along and be social, they will be at risk for depression, loneliness, and obesity due to inactivity. They may not be able to maintain a job (regardless of how many skills taught) or attend school further after graduation and have a higher risk of getting arrested or having issues in society and yet besides some seminars or conferences with sales and tons of theories being shared there are no actual social groups to simply teach getting along, working together, problem solving, finding common interests in a friend, text etiquette etc and just how to hang out- how to invite friends over to have fun, social thinking etc. I am not talking about a lecture or temporary groups that only last long enough to help graduate students get data but real ongoing 'interactive' hands on indoor, outdoor groups. I also see far and few life and transitional skills classes for this age and those I do see are facilitated by staff that is many times under trained and they work with the client in isolation more focused on the skill and behavior of an individual working 1:1 . While it may have a small group component, it is to work on those life and transitional skills. We need sole social groups, to raise confidence, create a sense of belonging with friends and connections, increase self esteem and to create the ability for safe, successful and meaningful connections within society and the workplace. Not parties, free stuff, parallel non facilitated meet ups where they are put in a room to figure things out or grouped in large age blocks like 10- 25 yr olds or 19-elderly, but instead one with ages that would be seen as an appropriate block of ages if they were NON special needs. (2) When throwing anything just try to remember to ask yourself if what you are putting together would be something you would do, in the same way, for IRC employees, for yourself, your loved ones or NON disabled people, especially when planning a party. Example handing out an oreo cookie and a string cheese on a napkin with a cup of water at a party.... To save money instead of renting a room like at Fiesta Village, when the party wont even have a Fiesta Village ride or arcade component, why waste money on a room when IRC has huge rooms for a party? Maybe more money would have been available for a colored napkin and a fancy cookie? There are ways, small touches & small ways, to make things look or at least feel better and I am sure a big organization like IRC can find a way to do better in that regards. Thank you

The caseworker chose to write only her services on the documents after the 2 hour meeting. I had asked for ABA services, job experience coach, and Daily living services.

Work ability for clients who receive a high school diploma but lack in social skills due to disability (autism). Funding for social skills and independent living skills. Social skills for our autistic community. I understand after budget cuts these are no longer funded. This is a major area of impact for my son that is a cause of his autism diagnosis. Social skills are a genuine challenge and are just as important as behavior challenges. I truly believe Recreational should be reconsidered as a funded service through IRC as a payer of last resort of course.



I would like to get copies of the purchase services that have been for my son Zakry Morelli as I think I was supposed to get that every year and I haven't gotten it for several years which I'd like to go at least three years back to see what was purchased for him how much my regional center used on him and what it was for. Including respite hours and who they got who got paid and how many hours they claimed for the last three years. I've asked several times for my CSC is in these but perhaps maybe I needed to ask it here my phone number is 949-249-0629 you can send them to Zachary's address that is on file 50158 North Preakness Court. Thank you Terry Marley for Zakry morelli.

Strategies for Disparity Assurance Plan Implementation

Cultural Specialist

The Cultural Specialist continues to focus on the underserved populations identified in the Purchase of Service (POS) Disparity Data: the Spanish speaking/Hispanic community and clients with a primary diagnosis of Autism. The Cultural Specialist continues to play a significant role in IRC's Disparity Data process, facilitated community input meetings, presented data findings in both English and Spanish, fostered relationships with IRC Case Management units to help identify trends in POS from the case management perspective, presented information about the newest disparity program from CBO Exceptional Parents Unlimited (EPU) for underserved clients at seven Case Management unit meetings, and attended IRC Board Meetings and Vendor Advisory Committee meetings to stay up-to-date with changes and important discussions.

The Cultural Specialist started a new parent support group in Rialto in collaboration with Rialto Unified School District Special Education Department and maintained the Cathedral City parent support group that inaugurated in December 2018. The Cultural Specialist started two intra-agency groups that meet monthly: the CBO Collaborative and Disparity Link. The Cultural Specialist provided a training to IRC vendors in July 2019 on POS Disparity and Cultural Competency, a training to community leaders participating in CLASE – Community of Practice in September 2019 on the strengths and courage of vulnerability, and presented on IRC eligibility and services at Assembly Member's Eloise Gomez Reyes' Special Education Summit in February 2020. The Cultural Specialist is also the liaison for the CBOs who received a disparity grant from DDS. The Cultural Specialist participated in Child Family Team (CFT) meetings with Riverside County Department of Child Protective Services (Indio office) and served as the liaison for social workers trying to connect with the CSC of a mutual client.

The Cultural Specialist attended the following trainings and conferences in 2019:

- Inland Empire Disabilities Collaborative (IEDC)
- Cultural Competency Advisory Committee with the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)
- Growing up with Autism



- Building Community Partners (BCP) with County of San Bernardino Children and Family Services
- DBH Parent Partner Training
- A Guide to IEP's and the Special Education Process
- Safe Return In-Service
- IEDC Conference
- Suicide Prevention Training
- Intro to Evidence Based Practices
- Med Waiver
- IRC Password Policy In-Service
- CSC Job Shadowing – new family, first IPP
- Role of IRCs Housing Specialist
- IE Resource Network Convening
- Human Trafficking In-Service
- Preventing Sexual Harassment
- C.L.A.S.E. - Employment and DOR Options for Consumers
- Q & A Session with Special Education Attorney
- Cultivating a Creative Mind
- Person Centered Planning
- Employment & DOR Training for EPU staff and DOC
- Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace
- Independent Facilitator Training
- National Organization for Human Services Annual Conference
- Move the Needle Summit
- Residential Programs Training for EPU staff and DOC
- Parent and Community Information Forum – topic: Public Charge

Disparity efforts in collaboration with Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK)

In fiscal year 2018-2019 the Cultural Specialist worked closely with Disability Services Specialists from TASK who provided 215 IRC families living in Riverside County who did not have POS with support, guidance, education, and information related to IRC services, IEP advocacy, and generic resources. They used an in-home one-to-one model. This project was completed in June 2019 and resulted in a POS increase of 34% among the 215 clients referred to the TASK disparity program funded by a grant from DDS.

University of California Riverside Search Center (UCR/SEARCH)

In May 2019 UCR Search Center hosted the Autism and Intellectual Disabilities: from Identification to Transition Conference in Palm Desert. This project was funded by a grant from DDS. The Cultural Specialist worked closely with UCR/Search to register clients with little to no POS living in Palm Desert and surrounding low desert cities. Transportation barriers are a



common concern for families living in low desert cities. To eliminate transportation barriers, the Cultural Specialist provided registered families a \$25 gas card. The following is data collected related to the cohort who registered for this conference:

- 161 families were registered to attend the conference
- 152 (94%) of registered families received one \$25 gas card (\$3,800)
- 116 families did not show (72%)
- 9 gas cards returned to IRC from no show families
- 98 unreturned gas cards from no show families
- 45 families attended of which 14 had no POS when they attended the conference
- Of the 45 who attended, 16 families (36%), showed an increase in POS since attending the conference

Exceptional Parents Unlimited (EPU)

Exceptional Parents Unlimited (EPU) received a grant from DDS for their Navigating Systems with Families project and is currently working with IRC families living in San Bernardino County. This project provides IRC families with support, guidance, education, and information related to IRC services, IEP advocacy, and generic resources using an in-home, one-to-one, parent mentor/partner model. As of February 29, 2020, IRC referred 168 families to this program of which 159 did not have POS. EPU's project has a cap of 225 referrals. Current data indicates that 36% of these families have shown an increase in POS since participating in the Navigating Systems with Families disparity program. Recent data also shows that 30 families who originally agreed to participate in the program have either declined the program or EPU has not been able to contact the family.

This CBO submitted a grant proposal to DDS to extend the Navigating Systems with Families program to clients with no POS living in Riverside County. Their proposal was approved, and we are very excited to continue our efforts in Riverside County with the collaboration of EPU's passionate and caring Parent Mentors/Partners.

Autism Society Inland Empire (ASIE)

Autism Society Inland Empire (ASIE) received a grant from DDS for their CLASE Community of Practice project. CLASE stands for Colaboración, Liderazgo, Abogacía, Servicio y Educación which in English means collaboration, leadership, advocacy, service, and education. This Community of Practice model brought together community leaders from parent support groups and community agencies that serve the ID/DD community to learn and grow together in one common language. Through months of trainings and collaboration, the CLASE group put together three glossaries: Medical/Health Insurance Terms for Children and Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Common Regional Center Terms, and Common Special Education Terms. These glossaries have become popular among our CSCs who have distributed them to their families. The group received various trainings, one-to-one support, and celebrated their personal growth and teamwork at their graduation in December 2019.



This CBO submitted a grant proposal to DDS for phase two of CLASE Community of Practice and it was approved. We are very excited to work with ASIE in phase two of their project which we are confident will be a success.

We invite you to read IRCs blog on the partnerships with CBOs in relation to disparity initiatives using this link: <https://www.inlandrc.org/2019/04/24/irc-partners-with-community-organizations-on-diversity-initiatives/>

Other Disparity Related Efforts

Exceptional Families Conference 2019

The 2019 Exceptional Families Conference was a great success with an attendance of 227 English speaking families and 178 Spanish speaking families. This conference focused on transition and employment and the keynote speaker was Beth Foraker from UC Davis School of Education and Founder and Director of the National Catholic Board on Full Inclusion. The planning committee for this conference included IRC parents, EPU Manager, Community Engagement Manager, the Director of school age and transition, Secretary V from Case Management, CST I, CST III and Consumer Advocates from the Community Engagement Unit, the Event Planner and Outreach Specialist, and the Cultural Specialist.

We invite you to read IRCs blog related to this conference using this link:
<https://www.inlandrc.org/2019/10/15/2019-exceptional-families-conference-a-photo-essay/>

Transportation Grant 2019

The transportation grant awarded to IRC by DDS has provided IRC with a tool to help reduce transportation barriers for families that attended the Autism Parent Education Program (APEP), two conferences in 2019, Intake and Eligibility related appointments, and for new IRC families wanting to attend IRCs Orientation. The APEP program, which was completed in early 2019, 35 families received two \$25 gas cards (\$1,750) to attend four sessions (16 hours) over a period of two to four weeks. Twenty of these 35 families (57%) showed an increase in POS after attending the APEP program.

We invite you to read IRCs blog on the APEP disparity program using this link:
<https://www.inlandrc.org/2019/10/07/fiesta-familiar-and-apep-what-we-are-learning-from-disparity-programs/>

The May 2019 UCR/SEARCH conference, Autism & Intellectual Disabilities: From Identification to Transition that took place in Palm Desert, 152 of 161 families that registered to attend the conference received a \$25 gas card (\$3,800). There was a high no show number at this conference with only 45 attending (28%) and 116 no show (72%). From the 152 families who received a gas card, 45 attended the conference, nine families returned the gas card and 98 did not. Of the 45 families that attended, 16 (36%) showed an increase in POS after attending the



conference. The September 2019 Exceptional Families Conference that took place in San Bernardino, 13 families received a gas card (\$325). From the 13 families who received a gas card, one family (10%) showed an increase in POS after attending the conference.

The Intake/Eligibility unit requested a total of 123 gas cards for 91 families with transportation barriers. The Intake/ Eligibility process can require families to travel to IRC up to three times to complete the necessary appointments for eligibility. From the 91 families referred for a gas card, 35 (39%) showed an increase in POS after becoming eligible for IRC services. For IRC Orientation, 74 families received a gas card (\$1,850). It's important to note the significance of IRC Orientation for new IRC families to learn about the RC system, the appeal process, the CSC role, and the services that IRC may be able to offer. Of the 74 families who received a gas card, 35 (47%) showed an increase in POS after attending IRC Orientation.

Here are a few scenarios and circumstances that our families were in when referred by IRCs Intake Department to the Cultural Specialist to receive a gas card. It is important to note that families are asked to attend up to three appointments on separate days throughout the Intake and Eligibility process at IRC.

“A single mother going through a really rough time.” This client lives in Murrieta, an 84-mile round trip to IRC.

“Client was found eligible today, and they live pretty far, and mom is a single parent.” This client lives in Temecula, a 94-mile round trip to IRC.

“Dad is the only one that works in a warehouse with 2 kids and a baby on the way.” This client lives in San Jacinto, a 68-mile round trip to IRC.

“This family lives close by, but I feel mother needs a little hope in her life. There is so much tension in this family since client has so many challenging behaviors that mom, dad, and sister are all fighting. Dad even suggested leaving the home with sister. Both parents are trying to keep full time jobs to support the family, but it has been hard for mom since babysitters quit all the time.” This client lives in Fontana, a 22-mile round trip to IRC.

“Parents are unemployed with 2 kids and living in uncle’s home.” This client lives in San Jacinto, 68-mile round trip to IRC.

“Mom is a single mom and has 2 little ones with no child support. She was crying a while ago since she worries so much about client’s future. It would be good to give her a little gas assistance to help empower her and assist her to attend the appointments. This family has history of abuse, so they all totally melted me, so the gas cards will be tremendous help.” This client lives in Riverside, a 36-mile round trip to IRC.



Parent Support Groups

Support groups allow parents to obtain information related to the RC system and services, IEP advocacy, generic resources, alternatives to conservatorship, and provides opportunity for parents to share and learn from each other's successes and challenges. The Cultural Specialist with the help of the Community Engagement Manager, CST III for graphics and flyers, and the Community Relations Specialist for marketing, started two support groups, one in Cathedral City and one in Rialto.

Cathedral City (Spanish)

The one-year anniversary of this parent support group, Padres Empoderados – No Esta Solo, was celebrated on December 6, 2019. This group started with nine parents and has grown to 17 members. Angel View in Cathedral City is generously providing the space for the monthly meetings. Disability Rights California (DRC), the Community Engagement Manager, and the Cultural Specialist provided this group with various trainings and are scheduled to continue to do so in 2020. As of January 2020, the Cultural Specialist handed this support group to an IRC parent who continues to maintain and grow the group. The Cultural Specialist continues to support this group remotely via phone and email, provides the group with the necessary flyers for marketing, secures the free site at Angel View, contributes with confirming trainings and ideas to sustain and grow the group. IRC continues to promote this support group on its website's calendar, its social media platforms, and at outreach events. In December 2019, the disparity program CLASE Community of Practice, awarded this support group with a laptop as part of their incentive for their participation. This support group was added as a resource for low desert/Coachella Valley families which was composed by CLASE participants.

Rialto (Bilingual English/Spanish)

The Cultural Specialist with the support of the Community Engagement Manager, CST III, and Community Relations Specialist, inaugurated this parent support group on December 2, 2019. This group was started in collaboration with Rialto USD Special Education Department. This is a bilingual English/Spanish support group and Rialto USD is providing the location and interpreters. The Cultural Specialist and attendees chose a logo and a name for the support group and decided to name the group Parent Support Alliance. The first meeting included the participation of seven parents and the attendance is steadily growing. Disability Rights California (DRC) is scheduled to provide various workshops for this support group in 2020. Rialto USD is marketing the support group by promoting the flyer on their communication platforms and IRC is marketing the group on its website's calendar, its social media platforms, and at outreach events.

CBO Collaborative

The Cultural Specialist created the CBO Collaborative, a monthly meeting for the current CBO (EPU Parent Partners), CSCs, and the Cultural Specialist to come together and discuss successes



and challenges related to families referred to EPU's Navigating Systems with Families disparity program. The goal of this collaborative is to join efforts, build trust and communication and a partnership in serving IRC families that do not have POS. The CBO Collaborative met for the first time in October 2019 and is expected to meet monthly with the CBO or CBOs who receive a disparity grant from DDS. The number of participating CSCs remains low from 2-7 CSCs attending monthly. The number of CSCs who have been invited to participate in the CBO Collaborative is 73 which is the number of CSCs whose families are participating in EPU's disparity program. The Cultural Specialist and Community Engagement Program Manager will continue to work on increasing the participation of this group.

Disparity Link

The Cultural Specialist created Disparity Link, a monthly meeting for CSCs and ISCs assigned by Case Management Program Managers and the Cultural Specialist to gather and discuss disparity news and updates related to disparity programs and projects. Currently there are 13 CSCs/ISCs appointed by their Program Managers to participate in Disparity Link. The goal of Disparity Link is to align efforts related to advocacy and disparity, bridge the gap of missing and inaccurate information across the agency related to disparity related efforts including the services that CBOs can provide for IRCs underserved families, and share information beneficial for clients and families related to conferences, parent support groups, generic resources, and more. Disparity Link attendees and the Cultural Specialist are also working on putting together a list of FAQs. Once the FAQs are completed they will be reviewed and approved by IRC Directors and shared in both English and Spanish with the IRC community through its community partners, parent support groups, at outreach events and trainings, on the IRC website, and social media platforms. The number of CSCs/ISCs who are participating in Disparity Link is currently low, from 11-12 attendees. There are over 40 Case Management Units at IRC. Disparity Link started in January 2020 and the Cultural Specialist and Community Engagement Program Manager will continue to work on increasing the participation of this group.

Outreach

IRCs Community Engagement Unit and Training and Development Unit attended or provided 300 outreach and educational events throughout both Riverside and San Bernardino counties. These events provided IRC the opportunity to connect families and professionals with information about who IRC is and serves and the types of services clients and families may be eligible to receive. Outreach was geared toward known areas of both counties where IRCs disparities exist.

Training Unit

The Training Unit offered IRC staff multiple CEU trainings on a monthly basis. New staff trainings took place on the first full week of every month. The Training Unit offered multiple trainings for the community including IRC Orientation in English and Spanish which was scheduled monthly and Sex Education for IRC clients. One of the 2019 goals related to disparity



was to offer one Cultural Competency training for IRC staff; however, this goal was not accomplished. In July 2019 the IRC Quality Assurance Unit in collaboration with the Community Engagement Manager and Cultural Specialist, delivered a Disparity, Self-awareness, and Cultural Sensitivity training to more than 250 IRC care providers.

IRC Website, Newsletter, and Social Media

Inland Regional Center has both an English and Spanish website. In 2019, IRCs website had over 325,000 visits and its quarterly newsletter, also in English and Spanish, had 7,534 subscribers. The websites can be viewed using these links:

English – <https://www.inlandrc.org/>
Spanish – <https://www.inandrc.org/es/>

Inland Regional Center’s social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter and all posts are written in English and Spanish and can be viewed using these links:

Facebook @inlandregionalcenter
Instagram @inlandregionalcenter
Twitter @InlandRegional

In 2019, IRCs social media visits from the community increased by 54% from 27% in year 2018. The table below breaks down the activity on IRCs social media platforms:

Social Media Platform	Likes / Follows	Follows
Facebook 100% response rate	9477	9674
Instagram	1549	N/A
Twitter	1070	N/A

Community Partnerships

- Autism Society Inland Empire (ASIE)
- State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)
- Angel View – Cathedral City
- Office of Clients’ Rights Advocacy (OCRA)
- Disability Rights California (DRC)
- Exceptional Parents Unlimited (EPU)
- University of California Riverside SEARCH (UCR Support, Education, Advocacy, Resources, Community and Hope)
- Exceptional Families Conference
- In-Roads Creative Programs
- Chasing 7 Dreams
- Parent Support Groups



- Padres Empoderados – Cathedral City
- Somos Una Voz – Victorville
- Padres Con Poder – Riverside
- Angeles Especiales – Fontana
- Angeles con Futuro – San Bernardino
- Parent Support Alliance - Rialto
- Rialto Unified School District Special Education Department
- Riverside County Department of Child Protective Services – Indio office
- Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)
- Victor Valley High School (VVHS)
- San Bernardino County Sherriff’s Department
- Prep it Forward

We invite you to read IRCs blog on ASIE and IRCs partnership with law enforcement agencies using this link: <https://www.inlandrc.org/2020/02/03/autism-society-and-irc-partner-with-law-enforcement-agencies/>

Grassroots Day

In April 2019 IRC attended the annual Grassroots Day organized by ARCA in Sacramento. Inland Regional Center attends Grassroots Day every year. The IRC Grassroots team included the Fair Hearings and Legal Affairs Manager, the Community Engagement Manager, the Vendor Advisory Committee Chair, a Consumer Advocate, and the Cultural Specialist. We met with various legislators and advocated for the reinstatement of the Social Recreation Program and Camp, a change to the antiquated median rates, and an 8% rate increase for regional centers to sustain Regional Center operations particularly related to service coordination and service provider rates to allow them to recruit the necessary staff to care for RC clients.

Aktion Club

The Aktion Club, a club for adult IRC clients supported by IRC and the Kiwanis Club of San Bernardino, continued moving forward in 2019. The Aktion Club was used to teach leadership skills and to increase employability of IRC adult clients. The Aktion Club continues to assist in addressing disparities in the community by providing adult clients with skills and tools necessary to advocate for themselves and for the services they need. The Aktion Club continues to work on creating leaders with the intent that they use those skills to help other clients.

Goals

Fiscal Year 2019/2020 Goals to Promote Equity and Reduction of POS Disparities

- Continue growing current support groups in Cathedral City and Rialto



- Start a new parent support group in Chino or Ontario
- Start a parent support group in collaboration with San Bernardino USD
- Continue outreach and trainings focused in the underserved areas of both counties
- Build new partnerships in the community
- Continue providing bilingual English and Spanish communication: website, social media platforms, and the quarterly newsletter
- Sustain and grow the CBO Collaborative
- Sustain and grow Disparity Link
- Add an IRC parent to IRCs Grassroots team and have him or her attend Grassroots Day in 2021
- Provide a voter’s registration class for clients and parents
- Provide a Census overview focused on concerns from undocumented individuals
- Record a podcast on the 2020 Census
- Add ID clients to our area of focus for disparity related efforts in fiscal year 2021/2022

Challenges and Barriers

Disparity

IRC areas of focus for equity and POS increase include clients with a diagnosis of Autism, clients whose primary language is Spanish, and clients of Hispanic ethnicity. Fiscal year 2018/2019 POS disparity data is the following:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism Diagnosis
11,331
29.5% no POS =
3,345 clients | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish Language
7,604
22.4% no POS =
1,700 clients | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hispanic Ethnicity
15,791
25.3% no POS =
4,003 clients |
|---|--|---|

Disparity related efforts that initiated in 2017 have shown a decrease in disparity among all three cohorts over the past three years.

Cohort with NO POS	Fiscal Year 15/16	Fiscal Year 16/17	Increase from 15/16 to 16/17	Fiscal Year 17/18	Decrease from 16/17 to 17/18	Fiscal Year 18/19	Decrease from 17/18 to 18/19	Total decrease in disparity
Autism	28.3%	32.8%	+4.5%	32%	0.8%	29.5%	2.5%	3.3%
Spanish	25.4%	26%	+0.6%	24.2%	1.8%	22.4%	1.8%	3.6%
Hispanic	26.5%	28%	+1.5%	26.4%	1.5%	25.3%	1.1%	2.6%



Staffing, Client Growth, and Caseload Ratio

Staffing has been a challenge for IRC with over 100 new staff employed in 2019 yet netting a total number of new staff of 13 over a year. In February 2019 IRC had 766 employees and in February 2020 HR reported a total number of staff of 779. With the continuous growth in new and transfer cases, IRCs caseload ratio continues to be high. Data shows that in January 2019 IRC had 37,821 active cases and January of 2020 IRC had 39,700 open cases. That's a growth of 1,879 new cases in 12 months averaging 157 new cases per month. This rate of growth and attrition is a challenge for IRC and a barrier to providing high quality, consistent, and sustainable case management services.

Median Rates and Large Geographic Area

Median rates continue to be one of IRCs greatest challenges. The antiquated rates do not attract vendors willing to serve border towns of Arizona and Nevada and other rural areas of both Riverside and San Bernardino county. The median rates that IRC is mandated to offer do not allow for vendors to hire enough staff and staff with the training, education, experience, and versatility that clients need, particularly those with Autism and cohorts of diverse cultures. Median rates discriminate against innovative and creative programs that IRC clients need, deserve, would greatly benefit from, and which would enhance independence, inclusion, and empowerment.

Challenges and Barriers in the Community

The following challenges and barriers have been collected as qualitative data at outreach events, trainings, parent support groups, phone conversations, from CSCs, and emails:

- Lack of understanding of IRC services.
- Lack of understanding the RC system, eligibility criteria, and appeal process.
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Communication with CSC: through the Parent Partner model delivered by EPU's Navigating Systems with Families disparity program, we have found that families often do not share with their CSC the challenges they are facing with their son or daughter (IRC client) or on a personal level as an individual or as a family. This becomes a barrier for CSCs to connect IRC services if the needs are not discussed. Families are speaking freely with Parent Partners and with a different level of trust than with their CSC during the IPP appointment.



- Fear of receiving IRC services and the effects that might have in relation to immigration status.
- Incorrect or disconnected phone numbers, unable to leave voicemail due the voicemail not being setup or voicemail being full.
- Messages left but no call back from family.

Conclusion

Inland Regional Center continues to strive to close the POS disparity gap among the Autism, Hispanic, and Spanish speaking clients. In order to make a difference among the families that are more challenging to reach, particularly the most vulnerable families due to socioeconomic, cultural and language barriers, and the diverse needs of each individual client and family, the approach we are taking is multi-faceted and includes various projects. To connect families and community partners with information, tools and empowerment, IRC is working closely with Community Based Organizations who received disparity grants from DDS, attending outreach events throughout both Riverside and San Bernardino counties, educating parents and caregivers, paraprofessionals and professionals who serve mutual clients of IRC, providing trainings through conferences and workshops, the creation of parent support groups, bilingual website and social media communications, and reinforcing such efforts internally through the monthly CBO Collaborative and Disparity Link meetings attended by CSCs/ISCs and managed by IRCs Cultural Specialist. We look forward to working on our goals related to disparity efforts and seeing the impact these goals will make among our families with little to no POS.