



# INLAND REGIONAL CENTER

*...valuing independence, inclusion and empowerment*

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April 21, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

Attached you will find Inland Regional Center's (IRC) Purchase of Service (POS) Report and plan to ensure that the services authorized and approved are of the highest quality and available to all Clients no matter the age, language, ethnicity, diagnosis, geographical location, living arrangements, or other identifiable challenges.

We have continued to take a collaborative approach to gathering our input from the community. IRC has continued to work in partnership with Office of Clients Rights Advocacy, Autism Society of Inland Empire, and State Council on Developmental Disabilities to assist with marketing the Purchase of Service Data and meeting dates.

This year, in addition, IRC has pre-recorded the presentation and made it a weekly Monday post with a survey on our social media platforms. Additionally, the presentation was presented to all IRC staff using the pre-recorded YouTube video link. Likewise, the Community Engagement and IT teams were able to live stream the meeting on April 21, 2021. The Zoom live-stream was interactive, and we were able to gather input and answer questions using this format.

The attached report has input from our community, partner organizations, and staff, summarized with a plan to continue to address the disparities in Purchase of Services (POS).

Please feel free to contact me at (909) 890-3400 or via email at [Ljohnson@inlandrc.org](mailto:Ljohnson@inlandrc.org) with any questions, concerns, or additional input. We welcome the opportunity to discuss our activities with you.

Sincerely,

Lavinia Johnson  
Executive Director  
Inland Regional Center



## Common acronyms used throughout this report

<b>ASIE</b>	Autism Society Inland Empire
<b>CAC</b>	Consumer Advisory Committee
<b>CSC</b>	Consumer Services Coordinator
<b>CBO</b>	Community Based Organization
<b>CEU</b>	Continuing Education Unit
<b>CFT</b>	Child Family Team
<b>CLASE</b>	Colaboración, Liderazgo, Abogacía, Servicio y Educación (collaboration, leadership, advocacy, service, education)
<b>CP</b>	Cerebral Palsy
<b>DACA</b>	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
<b>DDS</b>	Department of Developmental Services
<b>DRC</b>	Disability Rights California
<b>EPU</b>	Exceptional Parents Unlimited
<b>ICF</b>	Intermediate Care Facility
<b>ID/DD</b>	Intellectual Disability/Developmental Disability
<b>IEP</b>	Individualized Education Program
<b>IHSS</b>	In-Home Support Services
<b>IPP</b>	Individual Program Planning
<b>IRC</b>	Inland Regional Center
<b>ISC</b>	Infant Services Coordinator
<b>LMS</b>	Learning Management System
<b>NOA</b>	Notice of Action
<b>OCRA</b>	Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy
<b>OT</b>	Occupational Therapy
<b>POS</b>	Purchase of Service
<b>PT</b>	Physical Therapy
<b>RC</b>	Regional Center
<b>SAE</b>	Service Access and Equity
<b>SCDD</b>	State Council of Developmental Disabilities
<b>SDP</b>	Self Determination Program
<b>SSI</b>	Supplemental Security Income
<b>TASK</b>	Team of Advocates for Special Kids
<b>UCR/SEARCH</b>	University of California Riverside/Support, Education, Advocacy, Resources, Community Hope
<b>VAC</b>	Vendor Advisory Committee



## Diversity/Disparity Data Action Items

The following actions were taken by Inland Regional Center to increase virtual attendance and participation in the discussion of service access and equity related to Purchase of Service (POS):

- On December 29, 2020, the POS Data were posted on IRCs website in English and Spanish under the Accountability page.
- On January 11, 2021, the POS virtual Public Input Meeting “We Want to Hear from You!” graphic was announced in Spanish and English on the front page of IRCs website and the IRC calendar.
- On January 11, 2021, the POS Data were posted in English and Spanish on social media platforms including the IRC Facebook page and IRC Instagram.
- On January 12, 2021, the link to IRCs POS Data and the Public Input Meeting “We Want to Hear from You!” announcement was emailed to State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), Autism Society Inland Empire (ASIE), the Vendor Advisory Committee (VAC), and the Office of Clients’ Rights Advocacy (OCRA). All entities were asked to share the links on their distribution networks and social media platforms.
- On January 13, 2021, the POS Data were posted on the IRC/CAC Facebook page.
- On January 18, 2021, the POS Data were sent via constant contact email in English and Spanish to IRCs listserv, clients, and vendors.
- On January 18, 2021, the POS Data were emailed to IRC staff.
- On February 26, 2021, IRCs Community Engagement Program Manager and the Cultural Specialist presented the POS Public Input Power Point and survey to C.L.A.S.E. leaders in collaboration with CBO, ASIE.
- The POS Disparity Data “We Want to Hear from You!” Power Point presentation with a link to the survey was posted in English and Spanish on IRCs website on March 1, 2021.
- The POS Disparity Data “We Want to Hear from You!” Power Point presentation with survey was posted to IRCs social media platforms, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for seven consecutive Mondays: March 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2021 and April 5 and 12, 2021.
- On March 1, 2021, the Community Engagement Program Manager emailed the POS Data Power Point presentation to all IRC Staff, Managers, and Directors. Recipients were invited to watch the presentation, provide feedback by completing a brief survey



available to them at the end of the presentation, and informed them of the April 21, 2021 live/virtual public input session.

- On March 5, 2021, IRCs Cultural Specialist announced the POS Public Input Meeting “We Want to Hear from You!” and survey to “Somos Una Voz”, a Spanish parent support group from Victorville. Attendees were invited to watch the Power Point presentation and or attend the live Public Input session on April 21, 2021. Attendees were encouraged to provide their comments and suggestions via the survey or by email.
- On March 9, 2021, IRCs Cultural Specialist virtually presented the POS Public Input Power Point to IRCs Disparity Link attendees and they were encouraged to invite their IRC families and the community to watch the presentation and or attend the live session on April 21, 2021 and submit their comments and suggestions via the survey or by email.
- On March 18, 2021, IRCs Cultural Specialist virtually presented the POS Public Input Power Point and survey to IRCs CBO Collaborative and they were encouraged to invite their IRC families and the community to watch the presentation and or attend the live session on April 21, 2021. Attendees were invited to submit their comments and suggestions via the survey or by email.
- On March 18, 2021, IRCs Cultural Specialist virtually presented the POS Public Input Power Point and survey at the virtual IRC/CAC “Hang Out.” Attendees were encouraged to provide their comments and suggestions via the survey or by email.
- On April 7, 2021, IRCs Cultural Specialist announced the POS Public Input Meeting “We Want to Hear from You!” to Fiesta Familiar attendees, during a Spanish Facebook Live presentation on “A Tour of IRCS Website.” Attendees were invited to attend the live Public Input session on April 21, 2021. Attendees were encouraged to provide their comments and suggestions during the live public input session, via the survey or by email.
- On April 17, 2021, IRCs Cultural Specialist presented the POS Public Input Power Point and survey at the virtual Employment Conference in collaboration with CBO, Chasing 7 Dreams. Attendees were encouraged to submit their comments and suggestions via the survey or by email.
- On April 19, 2021, IRCs Cultural Specialist presented the POS Public Input Power Point and survey at the virtual VAC meeting. Vendors were encouraged to provide their comments and suggestions via the survey or by email.
- On April 20, 2021, the Community Engagement Program Manager spoke about the Power Point with recorded voiceover available for viewing that covers IRCs 2019/2020



POS data and “all things disparity” related information, during a Grassroots Day meeting with State Assemblyman Thurston Smith and State Assemblywoman Marie Waldron. Both assembly members requested to view the presentation and the Program Manager emailed the link to them.

- On April 20, 2021, IRCs Cultural Specialist announced the live/virtual POS Public Input Meeting “We Want to Hear from You!” to attendees of the Virtudes Especiales Spanish parent support group. Attendees were invited to join the meeting and were encouraged to submit their comments and suggestions during the public input session or via the survey or email.
- On April 21, 2021, the live POS Disparity Data “We Want to Hear from You!” virtual presentation with public input session was delivered to the community.
  - English session 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM
    - Community attendees = 11
  - Spanish session 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM
    - Community attendees = 8
- Total Public Input surveys received from all sources mentioned above:
  - English = 18
  - Spanish = 4



**Inland Regional Center Service Access and Equity Assurance Plan  
Fiscal Year 2019-2020  
Service Access and Equity Presentation Stakeholder Meeting Notes  
“We Want to Hear from You!”  
Purchase of Service Public Input  
April 21, 2021 – English session  
4:00 PM to 5:00 PM**

**Virtually attended by:**

Lavinia Johnson, Executive Director, Vince Toms, Director of Community Services, Treva Webster, Director of Early Start, Intake, Clinical, and FRN, CJ Cook, Community Engagement Program Manager, Kurtis Franklin, IT Program Manager, Lilliana Garnica, Cultural Specialist, Daisy Quiroz, Community Relations Specialist, Kimberly Burns, CSC, George Gonzalez, CST III, Ismeth Estrada, CST I, Gregory Harris, Consumer Advocate.

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

- Number of community attendees = 11

Presentation included information on POS Expenditures, IRC Client and Staff Growth, Community Engagement, Service Access and Equity, the Transportation Grant, current and finalized CBO Service Access and Equity projects, Disparity Data highlights, Barriers related to IRC and the IRC community, Service Access and Equity goals, How to Stay Connected, a Public Input session, and links to the annual POS survey.

You may review the POS data at:

<https://www.inlandrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/POS-Disparity-Data-Reports-English.pdf>

You may review the Power Point presentation at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsRje3\\_1cwM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsRje3_1cwM)



**Inland Regional Center Service Access and Equity Assurance Plan  
Fiscal Year 2019-2020  
Service Access and Equity Presentation Stakeholder Meeting Notes  
“¡Queremos Saber Su Opinion!”  
Purchase of Service Public Input  
April 21, 2021 – Spanish session  
5:00 PM to 6:00 PM**

**Virtually attended by:**

Vince Toms, Director of Community Services, Treva Webster, Director of Early Start, Intake, Clinical, and FRN, Felipe Garcia, Director of Children and Transition Services, CJ Cook, Community Engagement Program Manager, Kurtis Franklin, IT Program Manager, Lilliana Garnica, Cultural Specialist, Daisy Quiroz, Community Relations Specialist, George Gonzalez, CST III, Ismeth Estrada, CST I.

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

- Number of community attendees = 8

Presentation included information on POS Expenditures, IRC Client and Staff Growth, Community Engagement, Service Access and Equity, the Transportation Grant, current and finalized CBO Service Access and Equity projects, Disparity Data highlights, Barriers related to IRC and the IRC community, Service Access and Equity goals, How to Stay Connected, a Public Input session, and links to the annual POS survey.

You may review the POS data at:

<https://www.inlandrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/POS-Disparity-Data-Reports-Spanish.pdf>

You may review the Power Point presentation at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0NuYb19vkY>



## Issues Identified by Service Access and Equity Stakeholder Virtual Meetings and Public Input Surveys

### 02/26/2021 Input from C.L.A.S.E. Leaders:

- Even after DDS sent out the directive for RCs to contact all families, CSCs are still not calling families.
- Lilliana, the annual disparity Power Point voiceover was too fast making it difficult for me to capture and understand the information being presented.
- On IRCs “Common Services List” add the Personal Assistant service.
- I do not understand how IRC spends so much money on services and still has a disparity.
- Parents are still unaware of the services that IRC offers.
- There is a fear related to immigration status or the effects to becoming a legal resident in the United States if IRC services are accepted.
- We need more parent advocates involved in IRCs disparity efforts.
- One of the barriers is not having vendors in some areas where consumers need the services.
- We need family mentoring and parent coaches.
- Organizations that want to become vendors report facing major barriers with the vendor process with IRC.
- I have heard negative comments from organizations in the community as to why they choose not to be IRC vendors but are contracted with other RCs.
- IRC puts up lots of barriers for vendors to become contracted with IRC.
- IRC needs to work on raising awareness and empowerment with the community.
- What is the point of a consumer asking for a service if they are not going to get it?
- Having more generic resources would be helpful.
- Do we know if the parents know how to navigate the system?
- Do parents have the tools to work in a collaborative manner?
- Families are being told that IRC is not taking new clients and not providing services during the pandemic.
- The more parents know and the more they prepare themselves, the more barriers are put up.
- Parents do not know how to report a concern or file a complaint.
- When a directive is put in place, IRC creates a policy to make that directive impossible for families to take advantage of. This is a systemic problem.
- There is widespread wrongful representation across the seven different RCs that I am actively involved with.
- The limit on respite hours was lifted by DDS yet parents are still struggling to get more than 30 hours.
- The Lanterman Act in form of a book is not made available to IRC parents.
- CSCs need to be more prepared and trained to attend IEP meetings to support and advocate. I have brought this up to the Director’s attention. What is he doing about this?



- Parents say one thing and the CSC is writing something else in the IPP.
- CSCs are denying services or holding families back from obtaining services.
- Services are being discontinued without notifying the family.
- CSCs are changed and families are not hearing from the new CSC and have never met the new CSC.
- CSCs are still telling families that the school is the only who provides services during school and transition ages.
- Train the CSCs so they can help us more. It is frustrating.
- The Day Program is not providing anything for my son. The program is adding to his mental health problems that rise from feelings of not having a reason to live.
- CSCs are telling consumers “if you can’t do it don’t worry SSI is going to give you money.”
- A question for managers: Why is it that many families that we serve are not receiving calls to check on how IRC can support them during the pandemic?
- We look for our CSC to get support but in reality, they do not help, or they do not provide more support in the form of services.
- If they go to the IEP meeting instead of helping, they seem to side with the districts.
- Early age transition service coordinators do not know how to help guide families with knowing the IEP, help them know their rights, and the evaluations that must be done.
- The great disparity lies in the coordinators. They play an important role in the life of the client, but unfortunately the coordinators are often only a data entry clerk.
- Thank you, Lilliana Garnica, excellent presentation. Great comments and I am very pleased with your interest.
- Mrs. Burt and Mrs. Garnica, thank you for your efforts to help our community. Our community needs individuals who really care.
- I share everyone’s frustration.
- Thank you so much for your help.
- One family mentioned to me she has not heard from her coordinator in one year.
- There are more barriers among the Spanish speaking families.
- We need more accessibility.

**03/9/2021 Input from “Disparity Link” attendees:**

- CSCs are discouraged to connect their No POS families with SAE programs because the program will inform families about services that are not available in the area they live. This will create situations that CSCs will have to later “fix” and uncomfortable conversations that they will have to have about services that are not available.
- The difference in programs offered by other RCs and those that IRC offers is a barrier and a disservice to consumers and families.

**03/18/2021 Input from the CBO Collaborative:**

- Parents with older consumers do not use electronic devices and prefer to be contacted by phone.



- There is mistrust, fears related to being deported, and how receiving services from IRC can affect their immigration status in the future. This is a barrier in the Hispanic community.
- The Hispanic community misunderstands the relationship between IRC services and how it can affect the consumer's DACA status.

**03/18/2021 Input from "Hang Out" attendees:**

- Bring groups together. Focus on unity.
- Mail out letters to clients and families.
- There is fear in the community about services affecting immigration status.

**04/17 Input from Chasing 7 Dreams Conference attendees:**

- Great presentation. Thank you for sharing this information with us.

**04/19 Input from vendors:**

- Six surveys submitted by vendors. Data received was added to the "Input from surveys (verbatim)" section of this report.

**04/21 Input from the live English POS Public Input Virtual Meeting**

- You mentioned that there will possibly be a support group in Ontario. Do you have an idea on when this will roll out?
- Thanks for your work to address disparities. The barriers identified are challenging to address but continued efforts are necessary to reach families.
- Have you considered partnering up with School Districts to promote awareness?

**04/21 Input from the live Spanish POS Public Input Virtual Meeting**

- What happens to the grant money when it is not used? Does IRC apply those funds to other consumer programs?
- Good afternoon, Inland Regional Center needs to open its doors to the Hispanic community.
- In my opinion it is a regime there is a NO!!! culture. The Inland Regional Center system is impenetrable.
- The community DOES NOT NEED MORE WORKSHOPS!!! We need services!!!
- The Intake department is another impenetrable regime in my personal experience!!!
- There is no sensitivity in the Service Coordinators, the treatment of families is disgraceful, once again it is my experience in the Inland Empire territory.
- How much longer is this regime going to last in the area? How long will the Inland Empire community continue to suffer at the hands of the people that are supposed to help?
- With so many problems in the area I do not understand why only one hour is allotted, as a mother my advice is to get out of the Inland Empire area, what are your clients going to buy in SDP? With the culture of NO! That exists in the Inland Regional Center.



- Please make this information public for the Self-Determination talks and not just to the people who register. Thank you.
- We know exactly how Self-Determination works. The Inland Regional Center is one of the biggest barriers for the Hispanic community.
- How is Inland Regional Center going to help consumers if most of them have no services because the regional center is the one that puts up this barrier?
- I have been denied service since 2013 and have not received service since 2021.
- Mrs. Teresa had 16 hours of respite for years. She asked for more and was sent to hearing. To this day no service.
- And all the other families in the Inland Empire area who is going to help them?
- Hello, my email fran-willi-lys@hotmail.com. My son has not received service since 2013 until now.

#### **Input from IRC Program Managers**

- If families are being told no to a service and are not receiving an NOA, tell them to ask their CSC for one so they can appeal the decision.
- Denying an adult sibling that lives with the consumer as the preferred respite provider is due to the sibling being viewed as a natural support in the home.
- Caseloads are high and it has been difficult to keep staff. Since December 2019 I lost six staff. High turnover rate due to high caseloads makes matters worse. It has been a vicious cycle for my unit.
- The high caseloads are a challenge. They range from 90 to one CSC and in some units, such as Transition Age, 110 cases to one CSC are typical.

#### **Input from Parent Support Groups:**

- Parents are afraid to report they have COVID for fear of losing their respite hours.
- Parent are expressing that there are too many group trainings.
- Parents want direct support such as one to one trainings and services.
- CSCs are not calling the families.
- CSCs are telling some families yes to an adult sibling being the preferred respite provider and others are saying no.
- Tell the Service Coordinators not to tell parents that “the Regional Centers can no longer provide services, that they are finished.” From my experience, I suggest that the Service Coordinators tell them that because of the Regional Center guidelines, they cannot provide that service, but that they should go to the school districts or insurance companies and teach them the method, or at least redirect them to courses that teach them. The words “there are no more services from the regional center” makes parents just stop looking for services.

#### **Input from surveys (verbatim):**

- Perhaps looking for funds for field research, which can serve as evidence when presenting bills, as well as preparation courses for parents, for advocacy bills, as well as



preparation courses for parents, for effective advocacy, but more practical than theoretical.

- Mine and create strategies and methods by leading the community to work on eradicating disparity, getting this information out and engaging policy makers. Work to educate in an effective and non-superficial way.
- More bilingual staff. More bilingual staff and advocates are needed to accompany parents during IEPs.
- I think that the equity lies in the Service Coordinator. In many occasions they do not help the client they just become a data entry clerk. Inland should train their coordinators to perform qualitative work with their families. If it is a new program, it should be made known, since many times the programs are not requested because there is no knowledge of them.
- Management and total lack of honest transparency with the public. Overall control by corporate attorney over management and board. Fear of being open expressed by staff. Be open and honest.
- Keep all of support programs, after he get COVID-19 vaccine and will be back to Adults' daycare (IBP). My son's social worker (Christina Ochoa) is very nice and gets lots of support. If you can offer more different languages to us, will it be better and more understanding for all of programs and benefits for my son.
- I would like more job training and help with going to a college and a job. Job training and help with college.
- More programs in Temecula, CP support group in my area and age group.
- By, have ot and pt. That they don't mind working and helping and not discriminate because of your color o race.
- Please go to day programs and check them all out, and see if you will like to send your own kids to those programs.
- IRC is doing all the right things to get information into the hands of their consumers through social media, emails, etc. and the CSCs.
- It is important that the center is prepared to go back to being fully staffed. I think IRC is staffed with some amazing people. We consider our case managers to be our family, and I know that when I need support and resources, I can call Maribel Gomez and she will be there for us. Thank you so much for hiring exceptional people. I would like to connect with other parents of children on the spectrum entering their teen years, as there will be new challenges and hurdles in our future.
- I am service provider, not a parent. Listen to caregivers/ parents more. Consider other languages beside Spanish.
- The vendor rates are the lowest of all Regional Centers.
- All Autism related data. This is a group that is most likely to become employed that may be neglected at the moment. IRC should provide information on DDS expectations on Billing and Documentation. Person Centered Planning training for the masses.
- Everything was good information. This was my first time to attend the meeting.



- Services funding programs that are community-based and are intrinsically in line with the values of Home and Community Based Services guidelines. Equitable rates that are inline with State averages so that vendors can sustain their services for the long term.
- Have CSC respond to emails, calls and make sure they follow up with families.
- The data that is important to me is Residential, the day programs as well. Since we all need to be aware of what will be happening if and when our residents will be returning, so thank you for that and the CCLD pins. IRC has always done an amazing job servicing our community and those you do get service from IRC.
- Unused money- Understanding clients are not using what is allocated is frustrating. Parents and clients need to be held accountable. IRC can do a better job with a culture of accountability with staff, clients care providers and parents. I recommend more creative programs once the medium rate is changed.

## **Strategies for Service Access and Equity Assurance Plan Implementation**

### ***Cultural Specialist***

The Cultural Specialist continues to focus on the underserved populations identified in the POS Disparity Data: the Spanish speaking clients, Hispanic clients, and clients with a primary diagnosis of Autism. The Cultural Specialist continues to play a significant role in IRC's Disparity Data process, facilitated the virtual POS Data community input meetings where data findings were presented in both English and Spanish. The Cultural Specialist fostered relationships with IRC Case Management units to help identify trends in POS from the case management perspective and attended IRC Board Meetings and VAC meetings to stay up to date with changes and important discussions.

The Cultural Specialist sustained and grew two intra-agency groups that meet monthly, the CBO Collaborative and Disparity Link. The Cultural Specialist presented an overview of IRC 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 receive an SAE grant from DDS. The Cultural Specialist continued to participate in 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.

### **2020 Cultural Specialist (CS) Highlights:**

- EPU's SAE project for San Bernardino County was completed in December 2020 with a total of 245 referrals generated and a 46% POS increase was noted.
- Coordinated a gift card giveaway with Event Planner/Outreach Specialist c/o In-Roads, for COVID-19 relief for families selected by their CSCs.
- Collected, analyzed, and summarized COVID-19 survey results into a nine-page report.
- Sustained and grew the CBO Collaborative and Disparity Link.
- Strengthened relationships with parent support groups.
- Delivered school back packs to various parent support groups and to the Running Springs community.



- Created a co-signed letter with the Director of IRCs Children and Transition Services regarding EPU's SAE project and mailed out 160 letters to San Bernardino County No POS clients.
- Participated and completed CLASE 2.0 with ASIE 2020-2021
- Attended monthly Cultural Specialist meetings with DDS and when asked to, also attended check-in meetings with CBOs and DDS.
- Started a virtual parent support group called Virtudes Especiales.
- Hosted the quarterly "all things disparity" meetings with the Director of Community Services, the Director of Children and Transition Services, and the Community Engagement Program Manager.
- In collaboration with the Community Engagement Team, the Cultural Specialist created an electronic SAE page for IRCs 2020 virtual Fall Festival.
- Wrote and submitted an SAE/DDS grant for IRCs "Cultural Competency – A Tool for Equity" project.
- Created the English and Spanish POS Public Input Power Points with voiceover for the annual POS public input sessions.

#### **The Cultural Specialist attended the following trainings in 2020:**

- April 2020 webinar - The Digital Divide Among Older Adults and Coronavirus' Impact on Disability Communities of Color
- May 2020 - Let's Stay Connected Event: Grief and Loss During the Age of COVID-19
- May 2020 – A Conversation on the Future of Special Education
- June 2020 – Riverside County IHSS-Protective Supervision In-Service
- June 2020 – California's Current Budget Crisis and the Impact to the ID/DD Community
- July 2020 – presenter for Q&A session with parent support group "Padres Excepcionales"
- August 2020 – "Recortes Presupuestarios Estatales y Impacto en los Programas de Discapacidad" (State Budget Cuts and Impact on Disability Programs)
- September 2020 – 34th Annual Children's Network Conference
- September – October 2020 – co-presented with EPU on their SAE Riverside County project to all school-age case management units covering Riverside County
- September – December 2020 – collaborated with multiple CBOs as they prepared their SAE grants for submission to IRC and DDS
- October 2020 - DDS grant writing meeting
- October 2020 – Service Access & Equity Workgroups with DDS
- October 2020 - IPP Strategies Workshop
- November 2020 – Grant Vantage training with DDS
- November 2020 – Jessica Mendoza "Learning Unlocked" webinar
- November 2020 – training with DDS "Un Evento informativo para las Familias y los Auto Defensores" (an informational event for families and self-advocates)
- December 2020 – "An Indigenous Lens to Different Abilities"
- December 2020 – "Overcoming Barriers to Intimate Relationship for people with Disabilities:"



## ***Service Access and Equity efforts in collaboration with CBOs***

### **EPU - San Bernardino County**

The CBO, EPU, received a grant from DDS for a service access and equity project that focused on No POS IRC clients ages 3-24 living in San Bernardino County. The name of their program was Navigating Systems with Families and it was an individualized parent partner model that focused on connecting with IRC families that did not have services paid for by IRC. Once connected with a Parent Partner, the IRC family received one-to-one information and support related to IRC services, generic services offered in their community, guidance with the often-complex systems of IHSS, SSI, the IEP process, and more. The San Bernardino county project ended in December 2020. This project allowed EPU to work with a maximum of 225 IRC families living in San Bernardino County that had no POS from IRC. With the help of a social media push by the Community Engagement Program Manager, direct referrals from CSCs, and calls made by the Cultural Specialist and the EPU team to families with no POS, IRC generated a total of 245 referrals for this program, 83 of those families either declined the program upon being contacted by EPU or EPU was unable to contact them. A total of 162 families completed the program and 75 or 46% of them showed an increase in contracted services paid for by IRC. Qualitative data collected from CSCs reported the following reasons why some no POS families declined EPU's program:

- Consumer works independently at Walgreens.
- Consumer works independently on his own landscaping business during COVID. Consumer will be graduating from Cal Poly College for Landscape Design.
- Consumer attends college in Sherman Oaks. Waiting on mother to complete FMS paperwork for transportation funding.
- Consumer works for Stater Bro's and has a Driver's License. Very independent.
- Consumer attends High School and family will let me know when they are ready for respite services. They do not want services yet.

We are extremely proud to share these results and we thank the EPU team for their passion and dedication. We look forward to continuing this work with their 2021 DDS funded project that focuses on no POS Riverside county Hispanic clients ages 3-24.

### **EPU - Riverside County**

The CBO, EPU Riverside County project, is similar to EPU's San Bernardino County program described above. It is funded by DDS, it is a Parent Partner model, and can work with up to 75 IRC Hispanic clients ages 3-24 that do not have services purchased by IRC. As of April 26, 2021, IRC sent 60 referrals to EPU. We are looking forward to seeing how this project will benefit our No POS Riverside County Hispanic families.

### ***ASIE - CLASE 2.0***

Over the past year CBO, ASIE, completed the second phase of their DDS funded SAE project called CLASE 2.0. CLASE stands for Colaboración, Liderazgo, Abogacía, Servicio y Educación



which in English means, collaboration, leadership, advocacy, service, and education. The CLASE 2.0 project is a Community of Practice Model that brings together community leaders, including IRCs Cultural Specialist, who serve the Latino/Spanish speaking ID/DD community across both Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Participants were provided with curriculum from subject matter experts to increase their knowledge of best practices related to advocacy and collaboration with specific trainings on Person Centered Planning, Stakeholder Advocacy, and Messaging. CLASE 2.0 had a total of 43 participants with a typical attendance of 37 leaders. This project was completed at the end of February 2021. In March 2021, ASIE was awarded a SAE grant from DDS for phase three of CLASE. Phase three will equip participants with the skills to become effective change makers of social injustices and racial inequalities that exist within the ID/DD community. We are looking forward to our continued partnership with ASIE and the positive impact CLASE leaders will continue to make in the IRC community.

## **Other Service Access and Equity related efforts associated with the Cultural Specialist Role**

### ***Transportation Grant***

In 2017, IRC received a 20-thousand-dollar grant from DDS. This grant has been a huge success! It has helped families attend events and eliminate transportation barriers through various projects, as shown in the timeline below, and continues to benefit IRC families today. Inland Regional Center's catchment area includes families living in border cities to Arizona and Nevada. From May 2019 until we exhaust this grant, families with transportation barriers that are going through the Intake and Eligibility process with IRC, which often are required to attend three different appointments, so far 145 families have benefited from this project. An example of a success story related to the transportation grant is one of a family who was heavily affected by COVID-19. This family was struggling financially and had limited resources. The Intake process with IRC was requiring them to drive from Victorville to Murrieta, a 170-mile round trip, for a psychological evaluation with IRCs remote psychologist. The gas card provided by this grant helped the family make the trip to their appointment and the client now has an open and active case with IRC. A big thanks to the Intake department for sharing this success story!



The table below demonstrates the impact of what eliminating transportation barriers can do for IRC families in relation to connecting them to services paid for by IRC. For the Autism Parent Education Program, 20 out of 35 families, or 57%, who received a gas card, obtained contracted services from IRC. For the UCR/SEARCH conference, 16 out of 45 families, or 36%, who received a gas card, obtained contracted services from IRC. For the Exceptional Families Conference, 1 out of 13 families, or 7.7%, who received a gas card, obtained contracted services from IRC. For the 74 families who received a gas card to help them attend the IRC Orientation, 35 or 47%, obtained contracted services from IRC. And lastly, our ongoing gas card project in collaboration with IRCs Intake and Eligibility unit, data shows that as of January 31, 2021, 39 out of 107, or 36% of families who received a gas card, obtained contracted services from IRC.

<b>GAS CARDS</b>	<b>Autism Parent Education Program (APEP)</b>	<b>UCR/SEARCH Conference</b>	<b>Exceptional Families Conference</b>	<b>IRC Orientation</b>	<b>Intake/Eligibility</b>
# of families	35	45	13	74	107
POS Increase	20 (57%)	16 (36%)	1 (7.7%)	35 (47%)	39 (36%)

***Rialto – bilingual support group for parents and guardians.***

This support group inaugurated in January 2020, was named Parent Support Alliance, was put together by IRCs Cultural Specialist in collaboration with IRCs Community Engagement Unit and Rialto USD Special Education Department who graciously offered the location for the meetings and Spanish interpreters as needed. Due to the pandemic, the support group was postponed in March 2020 until further notice.



***Virtual – Spanish support group for parents and guardians.***

This support group inaugurated in October 2020, was named Virtudes Especiales, and was put together by IRCs Cultural Specialist in collaboration with IRCs Community Engagement Unit. The following trainings were arranged and confirmed for attendees of this support group:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
October 20, 2020	Inland Regional Center	DRC
November 17, 2020	Special Education	DRC
January 19, 2021	IRC 101	Ruth Armstead – IRC
February 23, 2021	Transition	Anthony Duenez, PM - IRC
March 16, 2021	How to Advocate for your Child in the IPP	Ruth Armstead – IRC
April 20, 2021	Employment and Transition Service Options and Processes	Beth & Andrew – IRC
May 18, 2021	How to Talk with Your Child about Sex	Ruth Armstead - IRC
June 22, 2021	IHSS	DRC
July 20, 2021	Alternatives to Conservatorship	DRC
August 24, 2021	SSI	Laura Miller
September 21, 2021	Cal Able	DRC
October 19, 2021	Department of Rehabilitation	DRC

***Support Group Collaborations***

The Cultural Specialist collaborates with multiple parent support groups throughout both Riverside and San Bernardino counties, refers parents to the support groups, shares resources with group leaders, and when invited, presents Q&A sessions to the groups. The following are the names and locations of each support group:

- Padres Empoderados – Coachella Valley
- Somos Una Voz – Victorville
- Padres Con Poder – Corona
- Angeles Especiales – Fontana
- Angeles con Futuro – San Bernardino
- Broad Spectrum Broader Minds – Moreno Valley
- Padres Excepcionales – San Bernardino

***CBO Collaborative***

The CBO Collaborative was created by IRCs Cultural Specialist, inaugurated in October 2019, and remains active on a virtual platform today. The CBO Collaborative is a monthly meeting that brings together Service Coordinators, the Cultural Specialist, and the CBO who is working a



project with a grant from DDS to connect with IRCs underserved families. The collaborative serves as a team building platform to share success stories and discuss solutions to barriers that affect underserved families.

### ***Disparity Link***

Disparity Link was created by IRCs Cultural Specialist, inaugurated in January 2020, and remains active on a virtual platform today. Disparity Link is a team of IRC staff from various departments including Intake, Early Start, School Age, Transition, and Adult Service Coordinators, and the Cultural Specialist. Disparity Link meets monthly to discuss “all things disparity” including updates and service access and equity news. This team shares resources and discusses solutions to barriers affecting IRCs underserved families. Each attendee is tasked with sharing the information discussed at Disparity Link with their colleagues and Program Manager.

### ***“All things Disparity” quarterly meeting***

The IRC Director of Community Services, the Director of School Age and Transition, the Community Engagement Program Manager, and the Cultural Specialist began meeting on a quarterly basis in August 2020 and are scheduled to continue to meet until further notice. The quarterly meeting provides a platform for the Cultural Specialist to share service access and equity news and updates, answer questions related to disparity projects and goals, and obtain feedback and suggestions related to challenges that impact service access and equity related efforts.

### ***Riverside County Children and Family Services***

Since May of 2018 until further notice, the Cultural Specialist has responded to requests from the Riverside County Department of Social Services Children’s Services Division to attend Child Family Team meetings that involve a possible or potential IRC client. The Cultural Specialist connects the family, the foster parents, and the rest of the team with CSC contact information if applicable and information related to IRCs Intake and Eligibility phone and electronic process.

## **Outreach and Training**

### ***Community Engagement Unit***

IRC has a community engagement unit. This team attends outreaches throughout both Riverside and San Bernardino counties. January through March of 2020, this team attended 27 in-person outreach events, March through December of 2020, they attended 50 virtual events due to the pandemic.

### ***IRC Website, Newsletter, and Social Media***

IRC has an English and Spanish website that is managed, updated, and overseen by the Community Engagement Unit. The website averages 250k visits annually. We invite and encourage everyone to view IRCs website using these links:

- English – <https://www.inlandrc.org/>



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

The IRC quarterly newsletter was postponed in July 2020 and is currently being remodeled and rebranded. The quarterly newsletter is scheduled to resume in July 2021. IRCs social media is up by 143%. Average response time to direct messages is one hour with 100% response rate. IRCs constant contact has 8,250 subscribers.

### ***IRCs Training and Development Unit***

In response to the pandemic, IRCs Training and Development Unit began offering virtual trainings to new and current IRC staff, IRC Service Providers, and Consumers and families. The following is a list reflecting these efforts:

- Virtual Service Provider Trainings
- LMS portal for Parents - live with SDP Orientation
- Virtual all staff training and new staff orientation
- Virtual Parent/Family/Consumer Trainings

### **Other Outreach Efforts**

#### ***Community Partnerships***

IRC strives to build relationships with Community Partners that serve the ID/DD community in both Riverside and San Bernardino County. The following is a list of IRCs community partners:

- Autism Society Inland Empire (ASIE)
- State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)
- Angel View
- Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA)
- Disability Rights California (DRC)
- Exceptional Parents Unlimited (EPU)
- Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK)
- University of California Riverside/SEARCH (UCR/SEARCH)
- Prep it Forward
- Rialto USD Special Education Department
- San Bernardino County Sherriff's Department
- Chasing 7 Dreams
- Parent Support Groups
  - Padres Empoderados – Coachella Valley
  - Somos Una Voz – Victorville
  - Padres Con Poder – Corona
  - Angeles Especiales – Fontana
  - Angeles con Futuro – San Bernardino
  - Broad Spectrum Broader Minds – Moreno Valley
  - Padres Excepcionales – San Bernardino



### **Aktion Club**

The Aktion Club met quarterly in January 2020, March 2020, June 2020, Sept 2020, and from October to December 2020, the Aktion Club collected 700 pairs of socks for clients in ICF's and the local homeless shelter as a leadership project. The focus was leadership training and skills.

### **“Hang Out”**

Hang Out began in response to the COVID 19 pandemic. It is a virtual gathering led by one of IRCs Consumer Advocates and the group meets weekly for 1.5 hours. Hang Out began in April 2020 and continues with great attendance today. The average attendance has been 100+ clients. The considerable benefit was Blythe and Coachella Valley clients who have been able to join the weekly meetings. Hang Out topics and conversations have focused on socialization in a pandemic and have created their agendas based on the wants of attendees.

## **Challenges and Barriers related to SAE**

### **No POS data highlights**

For the past four years IRCs service access and equity efforts have focused on three major areas: clients with a primary diagnosis of Autism, clients whose primary language is Spanish, and clients of Hispanic ethnicity. Data shows that these three groups of clients have the largest disparity gaps. Every year we see a change in disparity data among these groups.

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>19/20</b>
<b>Diagnosis</b>					
<b>Autism No POS %</b>	28.30%	32.80%	32%	29.50%	29.60%
No POS total	2,184	2,903	3,242	3,345	3,690
Total consumers	7,720	8,863	10,128	11,331	12,474
<b>Language</b>					
<b>Spanish No POS %</b>	25.40%	26%	24.20%	22.40%	21.50%
No POS total	1,646	1,815	1,788	1,700	1,658
Total consumers	6,468	6,970	7,398	7,604	7,721
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
<b>Hispanic No POS %</b>	26.50%	28%	26.40%	25.30%	26.10%
No POS total	3,632	4,042	4,046	4,003	4,167
Total consumers	13,729	14,447	15,321	15,791	15,988

The 2019/2020 data shows that IRC had 12,474 clients with a primary diagnosis of Autism, 29.6% did not have IRC services which equals to 3,690 clients. When compared to data from 2018/2019, there was a client growth of 1,143 new clients in one year and the disparity gap increased by 0.1%. Although there was a small increase in disparity, we would like to shine light on what a success this is in relation to closing the disparity gap, particularly because of the daunting growth of over 1,100 clients with a primary diagnosis of Autism in one year. We



would also like to highlight our partnership with Autism Society Inland Empire and how their input and collaboration with innovative and creative services has helped make a difference in service access and equity for clients with Autism. The 2019/2020 data shows that IRC had 7,721 clients whose primary language is Spanish, 21.5% did not have IRC services which equals to 1,658 clients. When compared to data from 2018/2019, there was a client growth of 117 new clients in one year and the disparity gap decreased by 0.9%. The 2019/2020 data shows that IRC had 15,988 clients of Hispanic Ethnicity, 26.1% did not have IRC services which equals to 4,167 clients. When compared to data from 2018/2019, there was a client growth of 197 new clients in one year and the disparity gap increased by 0.8%. IRC recognizes that there is a lot of work to be done in relation to underserved families and IRC will continue to gear its service access and equity efforts towards closing the disparity gap.

#### Autism Diagnosis:

- 12,474 (client growth of 1,143)
- 29.6% No POS = 3,690
- 0.1% increase in disparity

#### Primary language Spanish:

- 7,721 (client growth of 117)
- 21.5% No POS = 1,658
- 0.9% decrease in disparity

#### Hispanic ethnicity:

- 15,988 (client growth of 197)
- 26.1% No POS = 4,167
- 0.8% increase in disparity

### **Expenditure data highlights**

In 2019/2020, IRC authorized more than 664 million dollars. The total amount used was over 531 million dollars which equals to 79.9% of authorized services being utilized. This also means that over 113 million dollars were unused funds. According to POS data, the largest disparity group that IRC serves is of Hispanic ethnicity ages 3-21. Hispanic clients ages 3-21 per capita expenditures were \$5,534 compared to \$6,425 per capita expenditures for White clients, a difference of \$891 per client. The Hispanic cohort utilized 72% of their authorized services compared to 65.5% utilization of authorized services by White clients; however, Hispanic clients ages 3-21 per capita authorized services was \$7,682 compared to \$9,816 per capita authorized services for White clients, a difference of \$2,134 per client.

### **Staffing, Client Growth, and Caseload Ratio**

In December 2020, IRC had a team of 779 staff members. In February 2021, IRC had 762, a reduction of 17 employees. Financial issues due to COVID-19 put IRC in a situation where vacant positions had to remain temporarily open; however, now that we have a better understanding of the upcoming budget, IRC is currently hiring to replace all vacant positions.



In December 2019 IRC had 39,737 open cases throughout both Riverside and San Bernardino counties. In December of 2020 IRC had 40,101 open cases. This was a growth of 364 new cases in one year, an average of 30 cases per month.

The caseloads range from 90 to one CSC in most case management units and in some, such as Transition Age, 110 cases to one CSC are typical.

***Challenges and Barriers as an Agency***

As an agency, in addition to the caseload ratio, IRC faces barriers such as the continuous growth in new and transfer cases, making it challenging for IRC to hire enough staff to cover the over 40,000 active cases we currently have. The large geographic area that IRC covers, which includes both Riverside and San Bernardino counties, a total of over 27,000 square miles, is often challenged by a lack of contracted vendors to provide services in rural and less populated areas. COVID-19 has also exacerbated these barriers, from vendors closing their businesses to having to switch to virtual or phone meetings with families, and the various restrictions and or complete shutdown of programs that our clients and families benefited from. Median rates continue to be a barrier in relation to vendors willing to provide services in rural and less populated areas and a barrier for vendors to hire staff with the proper experience to work with IRCs diverse population. IRCs rates fall below the statewide median rates. This is particularly discouraging and challenging for new vendors and vendors with innovative programs. Other regional centers can offer higher rates to service providers, resulting in many vendors providing their services in other counties, outside of IRCs coverage area. These examples show how much lower IRCs rates are than statewide median rates. The last time rates were updated was five years ago in 2016.

Service Code	Type of Service	2016 Statewide Median Hourly Rates	2016 IRC Hourly Rates
062	Personal Assistant	\$16.16	\$12.61
110	Supplemental Day Services Program Support	\$13.08	\$10.28
605	Adaptive Skills Trainer	\$45.26	\$17.29
642	Interpreter	\$40.86	\$28.62
880	Transportation – Additional Component	\$22.22	\$9.97

***Challenges and Barriers in the Community***

Inland Regional Center understands and acknowledges the importance of considering barriers that the community faces when creating new programs and projects. The barriers the community has shared with us include, lack of understanding IRC services, lack of understanding the Regional Center system, and the lack of understanding the eligibility criteria



and the appeal process. Transportation continues to be a barrier for families living in rural areas and those facing financial hardships. Childcare is another common barrier, particularly with families where the client has siblings of childcare age. Reports of families having difficulty communicating with their CSC is a barrier particularly among families that do not speak English or that do not use email as a form of communication. COVID-19 has exacerbated these barriers and resulted in unfortunate situations including, but not limited to, unemployment, housing and food insecurity, mental health concerns, client regression, and challenging client behaviors. Many IRC families face the challenge of not having the proper technology such as a laptop, tablet, phone, or good Wi-Fi service due to financial barriers and therefore cannot take advantage of alternative and remote services during the pandemic. Inland Regional Center is waiting on a response from DDS about a grant from the Community Resource Development Fund that will help address this. The input from clients has helped IRC advocate for this grant which goes to show how important it is for stakeholders to share their thoughts. We look forward to implementing the necessary strategies to address these barriers and challenges with the grant from the Community Resource Development Fund.

### **2021/2022 Projected Goals Related to Service Access and Equity**

The Cultural Specialist will continue to grow support groups in the community including one in the city of Chino or Ontario, and one in collaboration with San Bernardino Unified School District. IRC will continue attending outreach events and providing trainings to the IRC community and community partners. IRC will continue to build new partnerships throughout its catchment area that focus on connecting with current and potential IRC families. The Community Engagement Team will continue to ensure bilingual communication in English and Spanish through IRCs website, social media platforms, and the electronic newsletter which is currently being rebranded and scheduled to resume in July 2021. The Cultural Specialist will continue to host and grow the CBO Collaborative and Disparity Link. The Grassroots Team plans to take an IRC parent to Grassroots Day in Sacramento in 2022. IRCs Community Engagement Team will continue to offer a voter's registration class every year in February. A support group for adult clients being organized by one of IRCs Consumer Advocates, is scheduled to launch in May 2021. The name of this support group is C.O.N.N.E.C.T (Clients Overcoming Negativity to Nurture Empowerment and Creative Trainings). IRCs partnerships with CBOs who have been awarded a grant from DDS for an SAE project will broaden outreach efforts directed to connecting, informing, and empowering Black/African American clients and their families. In March 2021, IRC was awarded a Service Access and Equity grant from DDS for a project named "Cultural Competency – A Tool for Equity." This project will allow IRC to put together cultural competency trainings and offer them to the different groups of individuals that are a part of a client's life such as parents, service providers, IRC staff, and the community. The goal of this project is to surround clients with culturally competent individuals and raise awareness to the importance of cultural competency when providing services. In June 2021, the Cultural Specialist in collaboration with IRCs Training and Development Unit, will begin delivering an overview on disparity called "Service Access and Equity" to all newly hired staff.



Additionally, once a year, all IRC staff will be offered a CEU training on ‘all things disparity’ called “Equity 101.”

## **Conclusion**

Inland Regional Center continues to strive to ensure service access and equity for the Autism, Hispanic, and Spanish speaking clients. The diverse needs of each IRC family must be taken into consideration while simultaneously acknowledging and addressing the challenges and barriers that make it difficult to connect with the most vulnerable families. Some of those challenges and barriers are exacerbated by, but not limited to, socioeconomic status, cultural and language barriers, literacy, the unique and diverse needs of each individual client and family, COVID-19 related consequences, service provider median rates, caseload ratios, mistrust, fear, and barriers associated with communication and the understanding of the RC system and appeal process. IRC will continue to work closely with CBOs who received SAE grants from DDS, the grant awarded to IRC that will allow for the formation and delivery of cultural awareness tools and trainings and looks forward to the positive impact resulting from these projects. IRC staff will continue to attend virtual outreach events throughout both Riverside and San Bernardino counties until deemed safe enough to resume in-person events, to raise awareness as to who IRC is as an agency, who it serves and how. IRC will continue to connect with the community including IRC parents and caregivers, paraprofessionals and professionals who serve mutual clients of IRC, by providing virtual trainings, building partnerships, and strengthening existing collaborations. IRCs bilingual website and social media communication will continue to serve as a tool to share information in both English and Spanish. These efforts will be communicated and reinforced at the intra-agency level through the monthly CBO Collaborative and Disparity Link meetings attended by CSCs, ISCs, Program Managers, Directors, and hosted by IRCs Cultural Specialist.