



# INLAND REGIONAL CENTER

*...valuing independence, inclusion, and empowerment*

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Mr. Cruz:

Inland Regional Center (IRC) is sending this correspondence in response to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) letter dated July 22, 2024. The DDS letter informed IRC that, based on caseload ratio data sent to the Department on March 13, 2024, IRC did not meet the required caseload ratios for the following categories:

1. Consumers enrolled in the Home and Community-Based Services Waiver
2. Consumers under six years of age
3. Movers within the last 12 months
4. Consumers with complex needs

These caseload ratios are mandated by the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 4640.6(c) and Article IX, Section 2 of the Regional Center Contract. This document serves as the IRC plan of correction as required by Section 4640.6(f) of the WIC.

As in previous years, IRC has experienced tremendous growth in our client population over the past year. By the end of March 2024, IRC had 51,430 clients. On average, IRC increases by three hundred clients on average each month, including new cases, transfers, and reactivations. This growth would theoretically necessitate a fully staffed new unit every 90 days to maintain the required caseload ratios mandated by WIC.

IRC has consistently posted employment opportunities for Consumer Services Coordinators (CSCs) and has actively hired them for these positions. Since June 30, 2023, IRC has onboarded 355 new staff members. However, we also had to fill fifty-four positions due to staff turnover. Despite these challenges, we continue to advertise and hire new employees.

From July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, IRC's Human Resource Department hosted hiring events on the following dates:

- January 26, 2024
- June 28, 2024

As of March 2024, IRC employed a total of 1151 staff members, with 790 dedicated to case management. By July 1, 2024, our total staff increased to 1201, with 815 in case management.

To support newly hired staff, stabilize the workforce, and reduce turnover, IRC's Training and Development Unit created the Division Specialist position to replace the previous New Staff Mentor Program. The Training Department has hired two of the three Division Specialists, who aid with developing, coordinating, and facilitating division-specific curricula. Additionally, the Division Specialist supports various staff development and community partner training initiatives, including curriculum development.

IRC will continue to incentivize our bilingual staff with a monthly stipend upon completion of a competency test. We aim to meet the community's needs and adequately compensate our team for reading, writing, and speaking low-frequency languages, including American Sign Language (ASL), Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin/Chinese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. We believe this stipend will help recruit candidates to support the agency's continued growth and assist in reducing disparities in our Purchase of Services (POS) while reducing our caseload ratio.

IRC's Executive Management Team reviewed and updated all current pay scales, resulting in increased salaries and providing a one-time salary augmentation and a COLA increase for FY23/24 to promote stability and longevity within our agency.

On July 29, 2024, IRC announced on inlandrc.org that clients, families, staff, and community members were invited to share their input on efforts to bring caseloads into compliance. The Community Engagement Team also emailed the notice to DDS and SCDD to ensure their awareness of the upcoming virtual meeting. The notice was also shared across

all IRC social media platforms. Parents, clients, vendors, and community partners were encouraged to attend a Public Meeting on August 12, 2024, at 5:00 pm via Zoom, with the option to submit feedback via email to [community@inlandrc.org](mailto:community@inlandrc.org) until August 19, 2024. Additionally, the Vendor Advisory Committee (VAC) received the notice via email and was encouraged to provide feedback.

IRC staff were invited to submit feedback regarding the caseload ratios letter to [community@inlandrc.org](mailto:community@inlandrc.org) from July 24, 2024, to August 19, 2024. Community partners were also given the same deadline to provide their feedback via email. The following are the common themes identified from the feedback received:

### **Automation of Routine Tasks:**

#### *Theme: Leveraging Technology*

Both internal and external feedback highlights the critical role of technology in automating repetitive tasks. This includes utilizing software tools for data entry, case documentation, and routine monitoring, which frees up staff time for more complex tasks. Automation is viewed as essential for enhancing overall efficiency and reducing the burden of administrative work.

### **Improved Client Self-Service Options:**

#### *Theme: Client Empowerment through Technology*

Enhancing client self-service portals with resources such as FAQs, guides, and tutorials is strongly recommended to decrease the number of cases requiring direct intervention. This approach empowers clients to manage common issues independently, streamlining service delivery and reducing staff workload.

### **Team Specialization:**

#### *Theme: Organizational Structuring for Efficiency*

Organizing teams into specialized groups focused on specific case types is a recurring suggestion. Specialization allows team members to develop deeper expertise, leading to faster case resolution, fewer errors, and overall improvements in service delivery quality and efficiency.

### **Enhanced Training and Development:**

#### *Theme: Continuous Professional Development*

Ongoing training and development are consistently emphasized as essential for boosting team efficiency and effectiveness. Workshops on best practices, innovative technologies, and time management are suggested to ensure staff remain skilled and up to date, enabling them to handle cases more effectively.

### **Regular Review and Feedback:**

#### *Theme: Iterative Process Improvement*

Conducting regular reviews and soliciting feedback from team members are seen as vital practices for identifying inefficiencies and areas for improvement. This iterative approach to workflow optimization ensures processes are continuously refined and adapted to meet evolving needs.

### **Leverage Technology for Case Management:**

#### *Theme: Technological Integration in Workflow*

Adopting case management software to track cases, set reminders, and automate tasks aligns with the broader theme of using technology to boost efficiency. This integration is crucial for reducing administrative workload and ensuring smoother case management.

### **Outsource When Possible:**

#### *Theme: Strategic Resource Allocation*

Outsourcing certain case management tasks to external agencies or specialists is recommended to optimize resource allocation. This strategy allows the internal team to focus on tasks that require their unique expertise, further enhancing efficiency.

### **Technology-Assisted Monitoring:**

#### *Theme: Efficient Monitoring and Communication*

Utilizing technology such as apps and online platforms for client monitoring and communication is suggested to reduce the need for frequent in-person check-ins. This method is seen as an effective way to maintain oversight while saving time.

### **Specialized Roles and Focus:**

#### *Theme: Role Optimization*

Assigning specialized roles within the team to handle specific support aspects is recommended for more focused and efficient service delivery. Specialization helps hone skills and improve outcomes in particular service areas.

### **Organizational and Policy-Level Advocacy:**

#### *Theme: Systemic Change and Resource Allocation*

Collaborating with policymakers and advocating for systemic changes that increase funding and resources is

considered crucial. Such changes could lead to reduced caseloads and better support for clients, improving overall service delivery.

### **Transition Planning:**

*Theme: Proactive Client Management*

Developing robust transition plans for clients moving between life stages or services is seen as necessary for ensuring smooth transitions and preventing crisis-driven workload spikes. This proactive approach can reduce the frequency and intensity of crises.

### **Better Promotion of Services:**

*Theme: Enhancing Awareness and Utilization*

To increase client awareness and utilization of available resources, it is recommended that services such as the Self-Determination Program and Coordinated Family Support Services be promoted and advertised more effectively. This can lead to better service engagement and outcomes.

On August 12, 2024, a Zoom meeting was held. A brief presentation was given, but no public input was received. Representatives from DDS, along with 27 parents, clients, and community members, attended the meeting. The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) did not participate.

### **Action plan:**

#### **Tasks and Responsibilities:**

##### **1. Explore Town Hall Meetings**

- **Responsible Team:** Community Engagement Team and Service Access and Equity Team
- **Actions:**
  - Organize and schedule regular town hall meetings to engage with the community, gather feedback, and address concerns.
  - Develop a communication plan to promote these meetings and encourage participation from a diverse audience.
  - Ensure that discussions from town hall meetings are documented and shared with relevant teams for action.

##### **2. Continue Posting Open Positions:**

- **Responsible Team:** Human Resources Department
- **Actions:**
  - Regularly update and post open positions across multiple platforms to attract qualified candidates.
  - Monitor application trends and adjust recruitment strategies as needed.

##### **3. Onboard New Staff**

- **Responsible Teams:** Training and Development Team
- **Actions:**
  - Provide ongoing support, training, and mentorship for new staff to ensure a smooth transition and high retention rates.

##### **4. Increase PR Awareness Around Specialized Programs**

- **Responsible Teams:** Community Engagement Team and Service Access and Equity Team
- **Actions:**
  - Launch a PR campaign focused on increasing awareness of specialized programs like Self-Determination and Coordinated Family Services (CFS).
  - Utilize multiple channels, including social media, newsletters, and community events, to reach a broad audience.
  - Collaborate with community partners to amplify the message and ensure consistent communication.

##### **5. Continue Seeking Feedback through Focus Groups, Board Meetings, and Online Surveys**

- **Responsible Teams:** Community Engagement Team and Service Access and Equity Team
- **Actions:**
  - Organize regular focus groups to gather feedback from clients, staff, and stakeholders.

- Initiate a PR campaign to boost attendance at the Board of Trustees meetings.
- Develop and distribute online surveys to collect input on specific programs, services, and overall satisfaction.
- Analyze feedback data and use insights to inform decision-making and continuous improvement efforts.
- Provide transparent updates on actions taken in response to feedback to maintain trust and engagement with the community.

Sincerely,

Lavinia Johnson  
Executive Director