

**Purchase of Service (POS) Public Meetings Summary &
Recommendations and Plan to Promote Equity and Reduce Disparities
Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019**

Westside Regional Center (WRC) held two (2) virtual public meetings for our community to:

- ◆ Learn about the annual Purchase of Services (POS) Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2018-2019;
- ◆ Help us identify barriers that might prevent them and their family from accessing regional center services;
- ◆ Provide suggestions on how to reduce or eliminate these barriers;
- ◆ Learn about Westside’s “Creating Successful Transitions” project for 2020-21

The public meetings were held on Zoom and the recording of these meetings are available on [YouTube](#). All registrants were emailed the PowerPoint presentation in advance. The bilingual (English-Spanish) [PowerPoint presentation](#) was presented in English by the Interim Executive Director and the Cultural Diversity & Community Engagement Specialist, with simultaneous professional Spanish interpretation. A total of **46** individuals attended the 6/24/2020 meeting at 4:00 PM and **35** individuals attended the 8/18/2020 meeting at 1:00 PM. Actions taken to improve public attendance and participation included: [bilingual flyers](#) with simplified instructions on how to join the meeting via Zoom or phone and the purpose of the meeting; bilingual Facebook, Instagram and website promotion; e-Newsletter to WRC families and adult clients; email address (Info-WRC@WestsideRC.org) for submitting questions after the meeting; and the availability of Spanish interpretation services. Service Coordinators were also invited to share the flyers with their clients and families.

A summary of the POS data presented is as follows:

- WRC served **10,464** individuals during the reporting period.
- The ethnic distribution of individuals served range from Hispanic (**34.8%**), White (**26.3%**), Black/African-American (**21.3%**), Multi-Ethnic/Other (**12.8%**) and Asian (**4.8%**) – less than 0% are individuals identified as American Indian or Alaska Native (**n=15**) or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (**n=14**).
- The top three languages spoken by individuals are English, Spanish and Farsi (Persian).
- **82%** of WRC clients live in the home of a parent or guardian.
- When comparing service utilization by ethnicity or race (all ages), the average amount spent per person is higher for Whites (**\$26,775**) than for Blacks/African Americans (**\$24,875**), Asians (**\$19,111**), Multi-Ethnic/Other (**\$15,185**), and Hispanics (**\$13,328**).
- A large amount of all WRC expended services are for adults (ages 22 and up).
- A significant portion of all WRC expenditures are to support out of home living arrangements (e.g. Residential [Group Homes], Independent Living Services, Supported Living Services).
- Based on POS data **9,144** WRC clients have funded services while **1,502** do not have funded services (receive case management only).
 - **588** Hispanic, **364** White, **286** Black/African American, **203** Multi-Ethnic/Other, and **61** Asian individuals did not receive services funded by WRC.
 - The largest population without funded services are between the ages of **3 to 21**.

The presentation also included a section to inform attendees on the results of our efforts to increase equity and reduce disparities. The Enhanced Case Management Project & the Parent Empowerment Project have supported **561** African American/ Black and Hispanic/ Latino clients & their families in: learning how to navigate various systems (regional center, special education, public social services, etc.); accessing **625**

regional center services; and accessing **1,246** public & community services. These families and individuals were identified as having little to no funded services.

We also discussed our efforts to increase access to information about services available through the regional center and public services system as well as processes for receiving those services. The following were mentioned:

- [WRC e-Newsletter](#)
- [Website](#)
- [YouTube Channel](#)
- *Social Media Accounts* ([Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#))
- [Publications](#)

Lastly, the community was informed about WRC’s new project for 2020-21: *Creating Successful Transitions*. The project was developed based on feedback provided by Black and Hispanic underserved families who participated in the Enhanced Case Management project and the Parent Empowerment Project, as well as input collected from the 2017 Accessibility & Satisfaction Survey. The project aims to assist **150** Hispanic, **100** Black and **40** Multi-Ethnic clients of Westside during two transition periods. The Early Childhood Transition workshop series is for parents and guardians of children ages 2 ½ to 8 transitioning out of the Early Start Program. The goal is to prepare families in navigating the regional center, the special education system, and community/ public service system. The High School to Community Life Transition workshop series is for adolescents and young adults (ages 14 to 21) and their families who are exiting the school district into life in the community. The goal is to prepare students for life after high school: college, employment, internships, day services, living independently, etc.

Questions, Comments & Responses from the Meetings

The following represents some of the questions and comments raised by those in attendance at the meetings:

Questions/Comments	Responses
How do you classify “residential”?	Click here to listen to WRC’s response
Can you summarize in general how numbers have changed from last year to this?	Click here to listen to WRC’s response
What type of classes do you offer and how old do they have to be?	Click here to listen to WRC’s response
If a client gets transferred to Westside from another regional center will that client get services right away? Or how does that work?	Click here to listen to WRC’s response
Do you have to be disabled to attend any trainings or classes offered by the regional center? Is it free or do you have to pay? Do you have to be a regional center client?	Click here to listen to WRC’s response
How can I apply to receive regional center services?	Click here to listen to WRC’s response
The Hispanic population is the majority than other races but regardless they continue to have the least amount of access to services and they continue to encounter more barriers to access those services.	Click here to listen to WRC’s response
How do services compare with the population at large who can be eligible for said services across ethnicities?	Click here to listen to WRC’s response
Why is it that expenditures such as psychological evaluations requests by the regional center can’t be included in the self-determination budget?	Click here to listen to WRC’s response
Still the parents can receive the POS for their son or daughter with the IPP?	Click here to listen to WRC’s response

Identified Disparities

According to the Purchase of Services (POS) Expenditure and Demographic Data from Fiscal Year 2018-2019, there are currently 1,502 clients (all ages) who are only receiving case management services (no purchased services) at Westside Regional Center. Not accounting for non-white consumers, there are a total of 1,138 minority consumers identified as underserved: Hispanic (588), African American/Black (286), and Other Ethnicity or Race/ Multi-Cultural (196), Asian (61), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (5) and American Indian or Alaska Native (2).

When comparing services that were utilized by minority groups by all ages, the average amount of per capita expenditures is higher for Whites (\$26,775) than for Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders (\$8,426), Hispanics (\$13,328), Other Ethnicity or Race/ Multi-Cultural (\$15,185), Asians (\$19,111), and Black/African Americans (\$24,875). It was not higher for American Indian or Alaska Natives (\$42,982) but it is helpful to point out that there were only 13 AI/AN clients compared to 2,796 Whites. Furthermore, POS data indicates that even when clients of all age groups were approved for services identified through their planning meetings, on average the utilization of those services were low. Data from “Total Annual Expenditures and Authorized Services by Ethnicity and Race” showed an average of \$5,580 worth of approved services per person were not being utilized.

In order to understand why consumers were not accessing regional center services, we have identified the following barriers: breakdown in communication between the Service Coordinator and the client/family when it came to providing instructions on how to access an approved service as well as difficulty in communicating with vendors (completing applications provided by the provider and getting the service started); lack of support in finding or obtaining a service provider; personal barriers such as immigration status, homelessness, medical issues, financial, transportation, as well as schedule conflicts with parents/guardians to assist meetings, supports groups, trainings; cultural barriers including stigma of having a special needs child or themselves having a disability, feelings of exclusion, not trusting the system, not questioning authority; and language barriers in communicating with a service coordinator, service provider or in accessing regional center documents in their native language.

Recommendations and Plans to Promote Equity and Reduce Disparities

Westside recommends the development of new trainings targeting case managers, program managers and service providers. What we have learned from our Enhanced Case Management project is that there is a need to include the entire client-facing personnel at Westside in our efforts to reduce barriers to accessing and utilizing services. These personnel already have a working relationship with the identified underserved populations (which can take new project staff several contacts to establish trust). Westside plans to develop a training for service coordinators, management and vendors on how to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the utilization of services funded by the regional center. The purpose of the training is to assist client-facing personnel in engaging families and adult individuals with Intellectual/ Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) in meaningful conversations to understand their current unmet needs and how they can coordinate services that may meet those needs.

The training curriculum would seek to assist client-facing personnel in developing a better understanding of potential cultural and environmental barriers to service access and navigation. The trainings would focus on teaching behavioral strategies that utilize core concepts from the evidence-based practices taught with motivational interviewing. For example, this would involve having service coordinators and vendors engage individuals in a conversation to understand individual thoughts and perceptions that may lead to resistance to accessing community supports and services. Subsequently service coordinators could then help individuals

recognize potential discrepancies in their thinking that would motivate them into being more receptive to consideration of engaging with support services.

This training would also focus on educating client-facing personnel about how this population is easily marginalized within a system that is already beyond capacity. Furthermore, it would help develop the understanding that our population with little to no POS is easily overlooked in case management within a burdened system since these individuals are “quiet” on the caseload. Finally, it would help teach client-facing personnel strategies for reinforcing effective case management.

This training would further educate service coordinators and vendors on existing educational resources and social media venues that would assist families in developing a broader understanding of service options. Partnered with a greater receptivity to considering these service options this would ideally result in their willingness to identify potential resources that may be of use to them and their family.

Closing Statement

WRC appreciates the opportunity to present the feedback from our POS meetings to DDS. We will continue to support, educate, and serve all people with developmental disabilities.