

Community Resources & Public Benefits



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This handbook was developed by the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Los Angeles Office. Every effort was made to ensure that the information is accurate as of the date of publishing, January 2020.

This is intended only as a short introduction to various resources and benefits available to people with developmental disabilities and their families. For complete information please use the links and/or phone numbers provided in the Endnotes on the last page of the booklet.

Contents

Introduction	6
Where it all begins - The Lanterman Act.....	9
The State’s Obligation	10
Case Management	11
Pay for services	12
Disputes	12
Special Education	13
Early Start – IDEA Part B.....	13
Regular Special Education – IDEA Part C	15
California Children's Services (CCS).....	16
Family Resource Centers.....	18
Medi-Cal	18
Health Insurers	20
In-Home Support Services	21
Centers for Independent Living (ILC).....	22
Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)	24
Department of Aging and the Area Agencies on Aging.....	26

Transit and Paratransit27

Department of Mental Health (DMH)29

Social Security30

CalFresh31

Section 8 and Other Housing Programs33

College Disability Offices.....35

California Caregiver Resource Centers (CRC)36

Disability Rights California (DRC) – Protection and
Advocacy.....37

The Office of Administrative Hearings39

Assistive Technology (AT)39

Utility Assistance.....40

 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
 (LIHEAP)40

 California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) 41

 California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) .42

 Energy Savings Assistance Program43

 Medical Baseline43

Advance Notice for Power Outages44

Water Assistance44

211 L.A.45

Internet Access45

Appendix A – Lanterman Act Services Eligibility 46

Appendix C – Special Education Eligibility48

Introduction

As an advocacy organization, we talk to many families and people with disabilities. In our collective years of experience two complaints consistently rise to the top:

1. Regional centers don't tell us what types of services are available to us.
2. Every agency tells us that a different agency is supposed to provide a particular service.

We have already addressed the first question in our "IPP Strategy Guide." In the back of that guide are two lists. One is typical services provided to children and the other one is for adults. The lists are also available as separate pamphlets. ^A

The second question is the one we address in this guide. Several questions will be covered:

1. What are the various agencies, service providers, and other entities that provide services for people with developmental disabilities?
2. What kinds of services does each provide?
3. What happens when one of them denies a service?

4. How are they supposed to work together to help me or my loved one?

There are various categories of service entities. First are those that are specifically designated to provide services to people who meet certain criteria of disability. These include:

- The Department of Developmental Services including:
 - Regional centers
 - Developmental centers
 - The Department of Rehabilitation
 - In-Home Supportive Services
 - Social Security's SSI and SSDI programs
 - Protection and Advocacy – Disability Rights California and the Office of Clients Rights Advocacy
- Independent Living Centers

Other organizations and agencies provide services based on different criteria, many of which crossover into the disability community. These include many state, county and city entities that serve low income individuals and families, people with mental illness, senior citizens, minorities etc. Some of these include:

- Department of Mental Health

- Department of Public Social Services
- Department of Housing
- Office of Civil Rights
- Medicaid (MediCal in California)/MediCare

And then there are those that are available to all citizens, including those with disabilities. These are known as “generic” resources. In some cases there are specific requirements regarding how they are to serve people with disabilities. All of them have to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Civil Rights Act, laws specific to the services they provide, and legal decisions that guarantee access and accommodation.

These include:

- Public primary and secondary education - Special Education
- Colleges/universities – Disability offices
- Public parks and recreation facilities
- County Registrar of Voters
- Employment Development Dept.

In this guide our focus will be on those entities that have specific responsibilities to serve people with disabilities.

In this edition we have included information about the impact of a person’s residency and immigration status on their ability to access each resource.

Note: You will find reference to both endnotes, denoted by letters, and footnotes, denoted by numbers.

Where it all begins - The Lanterman Act

California has a unique system that was established when the Lanterman Act^B was passed over 40 years ago. It states that the State of California “...accepts a responsibility for persons with developmental disabilities and an obligation to them...” (Section 4501) It goes on to say, “The complexities of providing services and supports to persons with developmental disabilities requires the coordination of services of many state departments and community agencies to ensure that no gaps occur in communication or provision of services and supports.” And finally, “A consumer of services and supports...shall have a leadership role in service design.”

There are three important ideas in this section that are the backbone of the Lanterman Act:

1. The State of California has an obligation to people with developmental disabilities;
2. Services and supports can be complex and must be coordinated;
3. People receiving supports and services lead how services are designed for them.

The State's Obligation

Because of the Lanterman Act, California must provide the services and supports needed by people with developmental disabilities. This is an *entitlement*, which means that eligible people¹ cannot be put on a wait list or denied the supports they need. The California Supreme Court confirmed this entitlement in the 1980s.²

In order to meet its obligation, California established regional centers through the Department of Developmental Services. Regional centers do several things including:

¹ For eligibility for services under the Lanterman Act, see Appendix A

² Association for Retarded Citizens-California (ARC) v. Department of Developmental Services (DDS) 38 Cal.3d 384 (1985).

- Case management for people eligible under the Lanterman Act;
- Purchasing of services that no other entity is obligated to provide;
- Advocacy to help regional center clients get what they need.

Case Management

One of the primary functions of the regional center is to help you identify what you want and need through the IPP process. This should include all aspects of your life, even identifying what other entities should provide. They should also help you navigate the complex system of services and supports available to you by providing information and assistance. Your service coordinator is your main point of contact, but RCs also have professional staff who are experts in areas including education, housing, mental health, legal affairs, transportation and so forth. Your coordinator may not have all of the answers but he or she has access to people who do. If you need help understanding and navigating any system that applies to you, *the regional center is obligated to provide that assistance.*

Pay for services

Regional centers only pay for services that no other entity is required to provide. This is known as being the payer of last resort. Therefore, if a school district, insurance provider, other government entity or public resource should provide a service, then the regional center cannot pay for that service unless you have been denied by the primary entity. However, if you do need services and supports that no one else has to pay for or you need more than is offered, the regional center is *obligated* to provide that service to you. For example, if your insurance provider will only cover 12 physical therapy appointments but you need 24 of them, the regional center can and should pay for the remaining 12. There are only a couple of exceptions to this rule. ³

At the end of this handbook we'll give a few examples of how all of this should work.

Disputes

Inevitably there will be times when you and the regional center disagree on what you need or

³ Since 2009, regional centers may not fund social/recreational services, non-medical therapies or camp.

who should pay for it. When this occurs you can use the Fair Hearing process to settle the dispute. Usually you will not need an attorney for this. ^{CD}

Any California resident, regardless of legal status, who meets eligibility requirements may access regional centers and their vendors.

Special Education

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal law that establishes the right of children with disabilities to a “free, appropriate public education.”

In California there are two entities that provide special education services under the IDEA. For most children under the age of 3, the regional center provides Early Start services. For children from age 3 – 22, school districts are responsible. Districts are also responsible for children of all ages whose primary disability is blindness, deafness or severe orthopedic impairment.

Early Start – IDEA Part B

For children under three that are receiving early start services by the regional center, the eligibility requirements are different than those for regional center services under the Lanterman

Act. Many more children are eligible under IDEA for early start than are eligible for Lanterman Act services.⁴ Also, the types of services available under Early Start are specific and limited. They include:

- assistive technology
- audiology
- family training, counseling, and home visits
- health services
- medical services for diagnostic/evaluation purposes only
- nursing services
- nutrition services
- occupational therapy
- physical therapy
- psychological services
- service coordination (case management)
- social work services
- special instruction
- speech and language services
- transportation and related costs
- vision services

⁴ See Appendix B for early start eligibility requirements

A child may be eligible for both Early Start and Lanterman Act services concurrently. In such situations, the Early Start services are used first. If there are any services or gaps in services that Early Start won't cover, then Lanterman Act services are used to meet the child's additional needs.

Regular Special Education – IDEA Part C

At age 3 a child will move into regular special education services if he or she is eligible.⁵ This is under the jurisdiction of the local education agency or school district. Special education services must address all of the educational needs the child has related to his or her disability. Since children spend much of their time in school, it is expected that most, if not all services that a child needs will be met through special education. However, if the child is eligible for Lanterman Act services, they can be used in the following circumstances:

1. The need identified is not one that occurs primarily at school;

⁵ See Appendix C for eligibility for Part C Special Education

2. The school denies the service or will not meet 100% of the need.

Most commonly families will get respite services from regional centers when their children are school-aged. However, it is possible to get services from a regional center when either of the above circumstances is met. ^E

If there is a dispute about Early Start or regular Special Education services, Due Process is used as described in IDEA to resolve the dispute. This typically requires an attorney.

While you will obtain most information about schools and special education from your local school district, you can also contact the State Department of Education. ^F

Any California student regardless of legal status who meets eligibility requirements may access special education services.

California Children's Services (CCS)

CCS is a state program for children with certain diseases or health problems who meet certain income and/or other requirements. ^G Through this

program, children up to 21 years old can get the health care and services they need. CCS will connect you with doctors and trained health care professionals who know how to care for your child with special health care needs.

The CCS program provides diagnostic and treatment services, medical case management, and physical and occupational therapy services to children under age 21 with CCS-eligible medical conditions. Examples of CCS-eligible conditions include, but are not limited to, chronic medical conditions such as cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, cerebral palsy, heart disease, cancer, traumatic injuries, and infectious diseases that result in major medical or physical issues such as polio.

CCS also provides medical therapy services that are delivered at public schools.

For more information, contact the Los Angeles County office of California Children's Services. ^H
Any California child regardless of legal status who meets eligibility requirements may access CCS.

Family Resource Centers

In California, Early Start Family Resource Centers are part of the Early Start Program, funded by the Department of Developmental Services. Staffed by families of children with special needs, family resource centers offer parent-to-parent support and help parents, families, and children locate and use needed services. They offer support services and resources in many languages, which may include newsletters, resource libraries, websites, parent-to-parent groups, sibling support groups, warm-lines, and information and referral for parents and professionals. Many ESFRCs have enhanced funding which allows them to serve families of children over the age of three and individuals with developmental disabilities. ¹

Any eligible family who resides in California may receive assistance from a family resource center regardless of legal status.

Medi-Cal

Medi-Cal is the state Medicaid insurance program that is available to low-income, elderly and

disabled residents. For people with disabilities, there is no income requirement. Any person who qualifies for regional center services, also qualifies for Medi-Cal.

Like other types of health insurance, Medi-Cal must pay for services it is obligated to cover before the regional center will pick up the tab. Regional center, however, is required to assist you to access Medi-Cal if you need assistance in doing so.

Complaints are made to the Office of the Ombudsman at the Department of Managed Healthcare Services. The Medi-Cal Managed Care Office of the Ombudsman helps solve problems from a neutral standpoint to ensure that Medi-Cal recipients receive all medically necessary covered services for which plans are responsible.^J

Many California residents who do not have legal status may be eligible for Medi-Cal if they meet all other Medi-Cal eligibility requirements. Contact your local Medi-Cal office to learn more.^K

Health Insurers

California requires medical insurance providers to pay for the diagnosis and treatment of behavioral and mental health concerns. They are required to provide treatment that is comparable to treatment offered for other types of medical issues. Practically speaking, this means that the burden for behavioral intervention and other similar services shifted from regional centers to medical insurers, however, regional centers still have a role to play. Under some circumstances, regional centers may pay for insurance co-pays, coinsurance and/or deductibles for behavioral health treatment. Also, because insurers may only cover part of a person's needs for treatment, regional centers are obligated to provide services for any unmet need.

If you have a complaint about your insurer, you can find a complaint form on the website for the California Dept. of Insurance.¹ Many health insurers do not require proof of legal status.

In-Home Support Services

IHSS is a program that provides support to low-income disabled individuals allowing them to live in their own homes.

To be eligible, one must be over 65 years of age, or disabled, or blind. Disabled children are also potentially eligible for IHSS. IHSS is considered an alternative to out-of-home care, such as nursing homes or board and care facilities.

The types of services which can be authorized through IHSS are housecleaning, meal preparation, laundry, grocery shopping, personal care services (such as bowel and bladder care, bathing, grooming and paramedical services), accompaniment to medical appointments, and protective supervision for those who qualify.

When a person requires this type of service, IHSS must be used first before regional centers can pay for it. However, IHSS is not the same as supported or independent living services (SLS or ILS) and cannot be used as a replacement. People who receive supported living from the regional center are required to apply for IHSS and may have to use IHSS for some portion of their care, however SLS provides a broader array of supports

than IHSS. For example, SLS providers can accompany the person to social events, provide training in home and self-care, teach advocacy skills, assist with tenant issues and so forth.

Complaints are filed with the California Department of Social Services.^M

In general, only legal residents may receive IHSS.

N

Centers for Independent Living (ILC)

Established in the 1960s, the Centers for Independent Living were borne out of the independent living movement started in Berkeley, CA. They have expanded across the country since then; in California many of them have formed a coalition called the California Foundation of Independent Living Centers. At the local level they focus on empowering people with disabilities to live as independently as possible. On a larger scale they advocate for systems change, conduct voter registration drives, weigh in on pending legislation and seek to impact areas of need for people with disabilities. They

help people with housing, employment, accessing benefits, finding support people etc. While they are under the umbrella of the Department of Rehabilitation, they function as private non-profit organizations. The 28 independent living centers offer five core services.⁶ California added two additional core services, Personal Assistance Services and Housing.

- Information and Referrals - ILC provides assistance in answering disability-related questions.
- Advocacy - Systemic and personal advocacy is a cornerstone of the ILCs.
- Independent Living Skills - The integration and full participation of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of society is the desired outcome.
- Assistive Technology - Assistive Technology (AT) assists persons with disabilities to live and work as independently as possible.
- Peer Counseling - ILCs provides support and role models for people who want to live more independently.

⁶ Mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Title VII, Chapter 1

- Personal Assistance Services - PAs assist individuals with a wide variety of duties, including personal care, shopping, housework and cooking.
- Housing - ILC offers one-on-one assistance to qualified people in locating affordable and accessible housing, as well as to access programs.

Any eligible person who resides in California may receive assistance from an ILC regardless of legal status.

Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)

DOR is a state agency that assists people with disabilities who are eligible to work in the United States to find and maintain work. For people with developmental disabilities the process usually involves both DOR and the regional center.

Regional centers refer people to DOR for assessment, job development, and getting stabilized on a job. Once a person is stable, regional center pays for on-going job coaching. Not everyone referred to DOR will be eligible for their services or they may be placed on a waiting list. If you are not accepted or on a wait list,

regional center should provide the employment services you need in order to get and maintain a job, regardless of type or intensity of disability you have.

The State of California has an Employment First policy that says that regular, competitive employment should be the first thing considered for people of working age, especially for young adults transitioning out of high school. In addition, the federal Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA) has similar requirements. At this time DOR and other employment entities such as the Employment Development Dept., school districts and regional centers are figuring out how to work together to implement the requirements of WIOA, particularly how to assist people with significant disabilities to find and maintain competitive employment.^o

If you have a disagreement with a decision by DOR, you may request an Administrative Review. If you are still in disagreement after this review, within 30 days you can file for a Fair Hearing with the Office of Administrative Hearings.^p

Department of Aging/Area Agencies on Aging

The California Department of Aging contracts with and provides leadership and direction to Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) that coordinate a wide array of services to seniors and adults with disabilities at the community level and serve as the focal point for local aging concerns. Some programs offered have age, income and/or citizenship requirements; some do not.

The types of services provided by AAAs include:

- Community-Based Adult Services/Adult Day Health Care
- Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
- Family Caregiver Support Program
- Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program
- Legal Assistance
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
- Multipurpose Senior Services Program
- Nutrition
- Senior Community Services Employment Program
- Senior Information and Assistance Program

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education
- Supportive Services Program

Los Angeles County is served by two Area Agencies on Aging, one for the City of Los Angeles and the other for all other areas within the County of Los Angeles. Information and complaint processes may be found on their websites. ^Q

Transit and Paratransit

All regular public transportation is required to be accessible. However, public transportation entities must also provide paratransit services designed to meet the unique needs of people with disabilities who have difficulty accessing regular public transportation. It is a federally mandated civil right for persons with disabilities who cannot ride the accessible public fixed route buses and trains.

Access Services is the para-transit system that serves Los Angeles County. They offer curb-side pick up and take the individual to the curb of their destination. Access also offers door-to-door service for certain eligible individuals. In addition

to Access, cities have para-transit systems called Dial-a-Ride that operate only within the city limits.

Access Paratransit service is available for any eligible individual for any purpose. They may be transported to or from any location within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of any fixed route bus line and within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile around METRO Rail stations. Access Paratransit runs during the same hours that the fixed route systems are operational. Fares are determined by the distance you need to travel.

Unlike regular public transportation, reservations for paratransit services must be made in advance including the destination. Once set, it cannot be changed. Additionally, there is a window in which a person will be picked up and he or she must be available at any time during that window.

There is no citizenship requirement; however, to determine eligibility, you will need to provide a valid photo ID.

You can contact Access Services any time of day or night to file a complaint.^R

Department of Mental Health (DMH)

DMH's services to adults and older adults are focused on those who are disabled by severe, persistent mental illness, including those who are low-income, uninsured, temporarily impaired, or in situational crises. Services to children and youth are focused on those who are seriously emotionally disturbed and diagnosed with a mental disorder. There is no citizenship requirement for most DMH services.

Mental health services provided include assessments, case management, crisis intervention, medication support, peer support and other rehabilitative services. Services are provided in multiple settings including residential facilities, clinics, schools, hospitals, county jails, juvenile halls and camps, mental health courts, board and care homes, in the field and in people's homes. Special emphasis is placed on addressing co-occurring mental health disorders and other health problems such as addiction. The Department also provides counseling to victims

of natural or manmade disasters, their families and emergency first responders.

In the case of people with both developmental disabilities and mental health issues, the regional center is the primary case manager and works collaboratively with DMH to provide mental health services to individuals who need them. Complaints about DMH may be filed on their website.^S

Social Security

There are two programs available to people with disabilities:

- SSDI – Social Security Disability Insurance
- SSI – Supplemental Security Income

Like Social Security that we collect when we retire, SSDI is based on your or a parent's work record and is intended to replace lost income when you can no longer work.^T

SSI is unrelated to work. If you meet certain eligibility criteria based on a lifelong disability, you are eligible for SSI. It provides a basic income for every eligible person. In California there is a small differential added to it from the state

known as SSP. Any adult who is a regional center client is also eligible for SSI/SSP.

Your local social security office offers benefits counseling and information about the Ticket to Work program, an incentive that helps social security beneficiaries find and maintain employment. ^u

There are many rules about work, savings and resources when it comes to SSI. We recommend the publication, “Why Work is Better” to understand how to work and save money without jeopardizing your SSI and other benefits. ^v

Only individuals with legal status may receive SSI or SSDI.

More information may be found at the Social Security Administration. ^w

CalFresh^x

CalFresh (federally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP) is a program that provides monthly food benefits to assist low-income households to purchase the food they need to maintain adequate nutrition.

The amount of benefits you can receive is dependent on your family size, countable income, and monthly expenses such as housing, utilities, and so forth.

All U.S. citizens or Legal Permanent Resident children may qualify to receive CalFresh benefits, regardless of where the parents were born. Parents may also qualify for benefits if all other program guidelines are met. Individuals with no children also may qualify.

The program issues monthly benefits that can be used to buy most foods at many markets and food stores. These benefits are issued on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card which looks like any other credit card.

Y

ou do not have to be on welfare to get CalFresh benefits. Eligibility for CalFresh assistance, as well as the benefit amount, is based on your household's size and income level.

Previously, SSI recipients were not eligible to receive CalFresh benefits, however, due to a

change in the law, beginning mid-2019, most SSI recipients will become eligible for CalFresh.

Section 8 and Other Housing Programs

Subsidized housing is extraordinarily complex and there are an increasing number of programs coming on-line as local, state and federal entities seek to tackle the challenge of homelessness and high housing costs.

The place where most programs start is with the federal Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The State of California has its own Dept. of Housing and each county and city has housing commissions or committees that make decisions at a local level about what kinds of development they want and how to make that happen. One of the best ways of gaining some understanding of what goes on locally is to attend housing commission meetings. You can find them on the website of the municipality you are interested in. While the primary focus right now is on homeless and veteran housing, disability advocates can lobby at these meetings to include set-asides for people with disabilities in affordable housing developments. Successful lobbying will work

towards increasing housing supply in integrated community settings.

The City of Los Angeles came to an agreement with three disability non-profits settling a lawsuit over accessible housing. The agreement, the largest of its kind in the country, provides that, over 10 years, the City will ensure that at least 4,000 of its affordable housing units meet the highly accessible standards required by federal law, and will enforce policies to ensure that those units are rented to people who need the specific accessibility features. The City committed to spend at least \$200 million during the agreement. Because of this settlement, the availability of affordable and accessible housing should increase significantly over the next decade. While there are no specifics yet on how this will be implemented, advocates should stay involved in the process.

While there are numerous housing departments and authorities, you can find housing information and links to other housing entities at the California Department of Housing and

Community Development.^y The Los Angeles office of the State Council maintains an affordable housing resources list. Contact our office to request one. All Federal programs require the individual to have legal status. State and local programs may vary in their requirements.

College Disability Offices

Colleges and universities must have a Disability Services Department or a person—frequently called the Section 504 Coordinator, ADA Coordinator, or Disability Services Coordinator—who manages the school’s compliance with Section 504, Title II, or both laws.⁷ Postsecondary institutions do not have to comply with IDEA (special education) but do have to provide accommodations so that disabled students can access educational opportunities offered at that institution.

Some examples of accommodations you might receive include:

- Early registration
- Note taking

⁷ These laws and statutes describe requirements for accessibility and accommodations.

- Recording of lectures
- Extra time on tests or quiet location for tests
- Accessible residential accommodations
- Sign language interpretation
- Materials in Braille or large print
- Course substitutions

This is not a complete list and accommodations are made based on your specific situation. Colleges are not required to modify course content.

Every college must have a grievance procedure if you feel your rights have been violated or if you have a dispute with the school. For more information, go to the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights website.²

California Caregiver Resource Centers (CRC)

CRCs offer information and support services to family caregivers in California including:

- Specialized Information
- In-home Assessment of Caregiver Needs
- Family Consultations and Care Planning
- Education

- In-person and Online Support Groups
- Counseling
- Legal and Financial Consultation
- Respite Care

Care Recipient Eligibility: Anyone age 18 or older who has an adult-onset cognitive impairment (e.g., Alzheimer's Disease, Stroke, Parkinson's Disease, Traumatic Brain Injury).

Caregiver Eligibility: Anyone caring for someone who meets care receiver eligibility regardless of legal status.^{AA}

Disability Rights California (DRC) – Protection and Advocacy

Disability Rights California is California's Protection and Advocacy system. Established by Federal law, they work to bring about fairness and justice for people with disabilities. They focus on:

1. Filing lawsuits on behalf of individuals or groups;
2. Investigating charges of abuse and neglect;
3. Building self-advocacy groups;
4. Forging community partnerships;
5. Advocating for change in laws, regulations, and public policy, and

6. Providing information to those who may not know about their rights.

DRC has various contracts to provide advocacy and protection to people. For people who are served under the regional center system, DRC has the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA). Clients' Rights Advocates (CRAs) are typically attorneys who help people who have developmental disabilities and their families get the services they need. Such services can include representation in administrative hearings, training about their rights, and investigation into denial of rights in facilities.

Every regional center has a CRA assigned to assist clients of that regional center. While they may be housed at the regional center, they are not employees of it. As attorneys, they are able to provide legal advice and assistance to regional center clients.^{BB}

There is no requirement for legal residency to access DRC services.

The Office of Administrative Hearings

The Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) is a state agency that hears administrative disputes. Established by the California Legislature, OAH provides independent Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) to conduct hearings for over 1,500 State and local government agencies. Their jurisdiction includes disputes regarding special education, Department of Developmental Services, including regional centers, and the Department of Rehabilitation.

OAH maintains all forms related to hearings for these divisions on their website.^{CC}

Assistive Technology (AT)

The Department of Rehabilitation, in conjunction with Assistive Technology (AT) users, AT providers and state agencies, coordinates California's efforts to expand and improve access to AT under the Tech Act of 1993.

Ability Tools, funded by the Dept. of Rehabilitation, is California's AT program. They maintain a database of AT resources and providers in California, and can help locate sources of AT for specific disabilities. Referrals are made to groups that provide guidance about

AT and to potential AT funding sources. Ability Tools has an AT exchange marketplace, lending library, reuse program and digital access project.

Low Interest Loans

Ability Tools can assist you with an Assistive Technology Loan Guarantee Program to purchase AT devices. This program provides loans at moderate interest rates to individuals with disabilities and parents or guardians to purchase assistive devices and aids. This program offers loans from \$500 - \$15,000.^{DD}

To access Ability Tools services, you must be a California Resident. For the loan program, there are other eligibility requirements.

Utility Assistance

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program^{EE} (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP is a federal program that provides assistance to eligible low-income households to manage and meet their immediate home heating and/or cooling needs.

LIHEAP offers several kinds of services to help low-income households meet their home energy needs. These services include:

- The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) provides one-time financial assistance to help offset an eligible household's energy costs (utility bill).
- The Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP) provides assistance to low-income households that are in a crisis situation.
- LIHEAP Weatherization provides free energy efficiency upgrades to low-income households to lower their monthly utility bills, while improving the health and safety of the household's occupants.
- Energy budget counseling, education on basic energy efficiency practices and instruction on the proper use and maintenance of installed weatherization measures.

California Public Utilities Commission^{FF} (CPUC)

The CPUC has several programs for eligible low-income households. These programs are

accessed through your local utility and telecommunications companies.

- **California LifeLine:** The CPUC provides discounted basic telephone (landline) services to eligible California households. You may also be eligible for one cell phone and cell service for your household. People who receive certain public benefits or meet income requirements are eligible.
- **Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP):** DDTP provides assistive telecommunications equipment, speech generating devices, and relay services to consumers with hearing, vision, speech, cognitive, and mobility disabilities.

California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE)

Low-income customers that are enrolled in the CARE program receive a 30-35 percent discount on their electric bill and a 20 percent discount on their natural gas bill.

Energy Savings Assistance Program

This program provides no-cost weatherization services to consumers who meet the CARE income limits.

Medical Baseline

All residential customers are billed a certain amount of their natural gas and electricity use at their utility company's lowest residential rate. This is called the "Baseline Allowance" and it is set depending on what climate zone your home is in and whether it is the utility's "winter" or "summer" season. Extra allowances of natural gas and electricity are billed at the lowest rate for customers who rely on life support equipment, or those who have life threatening illnesses or compromised immune systems. The extra allowances are called Medical Baseline. This includes all types of respirators, iron lungs, hemodialysis machines, suction machines, electric nerve stimulators, pressure pads and pumps, aerosol tents, electrostatic and ultrasonic nebulizers, compressors, IPBB machines and motorized wheelchairs.

Baseline allowance is also available to people who are paraplegic and quadriplegic, people who have multiple sclerosis, scleroderma, and people being treated for a life threatening illness or who have a compromised immune system.

Advance Notice for Power Outages

Southern California Edison and several other utilities offer advanced notices of power outages. If extreme heat poses a health risk for anyone in your home and your living space must be kept at a constant temperature, sign up for advance notification of rolling blackouts. They will provide notification calls in case of state-directed power outages that could affect customers who are vulnerable to extreme temperatures.

Water Assistance

Depending on your household income, you may qualify for discounted water services.

Any California resident who meets the eligibility requirements may receive utility assistance.

211 L.A. ^{GG}

211 LA provides a listing of agencies that provide information and referral services to people in need. 211 L.A. County has Community Resource Advisors on duty 24 hours a day to communicate in English, Spanish, and more than 140 other languages.

Internet Access

The California Emerging Technology Fund is a non-profit that was created to help Californians bridge the digital divide and find low-cost broadband Internet access. Having broadband access in the home ensures children have access to the Internet for homework and research. Searching for employment or applying for public benefits can all be done more efficiently online. Go to <http://www.cetfund.org> for more information. *The Digital Access Project* links non-profit community partners with people with disabilities to find low-cost internet access. They also have a network of training centers to help people learn digital literacy skills. Many California Independent Living Centers provide this assistance. To see if you qualify and find a local community partner, go to <https://digitalaccessproject.org>

Appendix A – Lanterman Act Services Eligibility

California law defines a developmental disability as a disability that starts before age 18, is expected to continue indefinitely, and is a “substantial disability” for that person.

The developmental disabilities for which you can receive regional center services are:

- cerebral palsy
- epilepsy
- autism
- intellectual disability
- other conditions closely related to intellectual disability or that require similar treatment

The person must also have challenges in at least three of these areas:

- Communication skills (receptive and expressive language)
- Learning abilities
- Self-care
- Mobility
- Self-direction
- Independent living skills
- Economic self-sufficiency

Any California resident who meets eligibility requirements can receive regional center services.

Appendix B – Early Start Eligibility

Infants and toddlers from birth to 36 months may be eligible for Early Start services if, through documented evaluation and assessment, they meet at least one of the criteria listed below:

1. **Developmental Delay** - A delay of 33% or more in one or more of the following developmental areas.
 - cognitive
 - communication
 - social or emotional
 - adaptive
 - physical and motor development including vision and hearing
2. **Established Risk Condition** - An established risk condition exists when an infant or toddler has a condition which has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay.
3. **High Risk Factors** - An infant or toddler with a combination of two or more risk factors that requires early start services based on evaluation and assessment. Risk factors include but are not limited to severe prematurity, extensive medical intervention at birth, prenatal exposure to illegal drugs, alcohol, or other toxic exposures, failure to thrive and other risk factors.

High Risk for developmental disability also exists when a multidisciplinary team determines that the parent of an infant or toddler has a developmental disability and the

infant or toddler requires early start services based on evaluation and assessment.

Appendix C – Special Education Eligibility

Federal and state regulations establish eligibility criteria for students seeking special education services. In order to qualify, the assessment must demonstrate that the student’s impairment adversely affects her educational performance and requires special education. The qualifying areas of impairment set out in state eligibility regulations are:

- Hearing impairment
- Both hearing and visual impairment
- Speech or language impairment
- Visual impairment
- Severely orthopedically impairment
- Impairment in strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems (other health impaired)
- Exhibiting autistic-like behaviors
- Intellectual disability
- Serious emotionally disturbance
- Learning disability
- Multiple disabilities
- Traumatic brain injury

Any child who resides in California and meets eligibility requirements can receive early start and special education services.

End Notes – Resources

^A To request any publication from our office, please call the SCDD Los Angeles Office at 818-543-4631

^B Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act, Divisions 4.1, 4.5, and 4.7 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code

^C Fair Hearing Forms: www.dgs.ca.gov/oah/Home/Forms.aspx

^D To fully understand the process of getting what you need from the regional center and how to file for a fair hearing please go to www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org and look for their publication, “Rights Under the Lanterman Act.”

^E For comprehensive information on special education, go to www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org and look for the publication, “Special Education Rights and Responsibilities.”

^F CA Dept. of Education: 916-319-0800
For on-line contact information: www.cde.ca.gov/re/di/cd/

^G *Eligibility for California Children’s Services:*

- *Child is under 21 years old*
- *has a health problem that is covered by CCS*
- *is a resident of California*
- *and has one of the following:*
 - *family income of \$40,000 or less*
 - *out-of-pocket medical expenses expected to be more than 20 percent of family's adjusted gross income*
 - *a need for an evaluation to find out if there is a health problem covered by CCS*

- was adopted with a known health problem that is covered by CCS
- a need for the Medical Therapy Program
- Medi-Cal, with full benefits

For more information:

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs>

^H LA County California Children’s Services office: 800-288-4584

^I Los Angeles area family resource centers

<http://familyresourcenetworklac.org> 626-300-9171 X104

^J MediCal complaints:

www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medical/Pages/MMCDOofficeoftheOmbudsman.aspx 1-888-452-8609

^K MediCal:

<http://dpss.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dpss/main/programs-and-services/health-care/> or (866) 613-3777

^L Health Insurance complaints: www.insurance.ca.gov 1-800-927-4357

^M IHSS complaints: www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/PG22.htm
1-800-952-5253

^N For more information, go to www.Disabilityrightsca.org and find In-Home Supportive Services Nuts & Bolts Manual

^O Find your local DOR office: <http://dor.ca.gov/DOR-Locations/index.asp>

^P Dept. of Rehabilitation complaints:

www.dgs.ca.gov/oah/Home/Forms.aspx

DOR Mediation and Fair Hearings: (916) 558-5860

^Q City of Los Angeles Area Agency on Aging: <http://aging.lacity.org>
(800) 510-2020

County-wide Area Agency on Aging: <http://css.lacounty.gov>
(800) 510-2020

^R Access Complaints:

accessla.org/riding_access/access_riders_guide/improving_access.html 1-800-827-0829

^S Dept. of Mental Health Complaints:

http://dmh.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dmh/our_services

Look under Forms/Grievance and Appeal Forms and Procedures

^T For complete information about SSDI and other benefits, go to www.db101.org and click on your state

^U For Ticket to Work information: <https://choosework.net/>

^V See A above for ordering information

^W For Social Security information: 1-800-772-1213 or www.ssa.gov

^X CalFresh Website:

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/CalFresh>

For issues or complaints send an e-mail to Public Inquiry and Response piar@dss.ca.gov or contact them by phone at 1-800-952-5253.

^Y California Dept. of Housing and Community Development:

www.hcd.ca.gov

^Z Dept. of Education Office of Civil Rights:
www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html or 1-800-421-3481

^{AA} Caregiver Resource Centers:
www.caregiver.org/californias-caregiver-resource-centers
800-445-8106

^{BB} Disability Rights California, Protection and Advocacy:
www.disabilityrightsca.org 800-776-5746

^{CC} Office of Administrative Hearings:
www.dgs.ca.gov/oah/Home/Forms.aspx
Phone for Los Angeles Office: 213-576-7200

^{DD} For more information about Ability Tools:
800-390-2699 800-900-0706 TTY
website: <http://abilitytools.org/>

^{EE} LIHEAP Contact: <http://www.csd.ca.gov/ContactUs.aspx>
Main Phone: (916) 576-7109

^{FF} California Public Utilities Commission: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov>
Los Angeles Office: 213.576.7000
800.848.5580 (Toll Free)
Info for low income programs: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/igap/>

^{GG} Contact 211 L.A. County by dialing 2-1-1 or 1-800-339-6993
www.211la.org

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