

## About the Developmental Disabilities Council

The mission of the Developmental Disabilities Council of Contra Costa County is to promote the coordination, improvement, and growth of services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, and to advocate for their needs.

Membership is comprised of over 500 individuals, agencies and organizations that represent over 8,000 individuals with disabilities and their families from all economic, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.

Governed by an elected board of 21 directors, the Council meets the fourth Wednesday of most months from 10:00 a.m. to noon. The Council takes pride in community partnerships as well as offering presentations on current issues. More information can be found at [www.cchealth.org/ddc](http://www.cchealth.org/ddc).

## What is a Developmental Disability? Data and Demographics

Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. These conditions begin during the developmental period, may impact day-to-day functioning, and are expected to last throughout a person's lifetime.

Per the Centers for Disease Control, developmental disabilities occur among all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. Recent estimates in the United States show that about one in six, or about 17%, of children aged 3 through 17 years have one or more developmental disabilities, such as:

- ADHD (Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)
- autism spectrum disorder
- cerebral palsy
- hearing loss
- intellectual disability
- learning disability
- vision impairment
- and other developmental delays

Per the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, as of 2015, Contra Costa County had a disability prevalence of 10.9%. People self-identified as having a disability based on responses to a series of six questions asking about having difficulties with vision, hearing, ambulation, cognition, self-care, and independent living. If we apply that percentage to the current population estimate, we have 118,603 residents with disabilities.

California has a unique entitlement for a subset of that larger disability population. The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act, known as the "Lanterman Act," is an important piece of legislation that was passed in 1969. This is the California law that says people with developmental disabilities and their families have a right to get the services and supports they need to live like people without disabilities.



Individuals eligible under the Lanterman Act are served by the 21 regional centers across the state. Contra Costa County residents are served by the Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB), whose catchment area also includes Alameda County. Once eligibility is established at or after age 3, services are provided throughout the lifespan. Lanterman entitled developmental disabilities include intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and autism. Also included are disabling conditions closely related to intellectual disability or requiring similar treatment.

Using this narrower definition of developmental disabilities, we have 9569 county residents currently being served by RCEB. Age and ethnicity data for those residents is shown below.

Contra Costa County age and ethnicity demographics of RCEB clients					
Ethnicity	Under age 3	Age 3 to 22	Age 23+	Total	% of total
Black	78	619	757	1454	15.2%
Asian	106	709	421	1236	12.9%
Multi	190	725	249	1164	12.2%
Latino	288	1267	641	2196	22.9%
White	203	1192	1757	3152	32.9%
Other	36	178	153	367	3.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>4690</b>	<b>3978</b>	<b>9569</b>	

Much of the work of the Developmental Disabilities Council is focused on the needs of this narrower definition of developmental disabilities, but the following information can be generalized to the larger disability population.

Services under Lanterman Act entitlement must help consumers/clients stay in their local communities and lead lives like everyone else. There is a misconception, at times, that the regional center provides all services that a person with a disability requires. That is not the case. They have a limited [list of services](#) they can provide. And all of California's regional centers are required to be the "payor of last resort" for any service or support that a person with developmental disabilities might need. This means that if a service is available through another source, including "generic resources" that – like public schools – are mandated to serve the general population, the regional center is prohibited by law from paying for that service.

## Community Needs

Over the past few years, the Developmental Disabilities Council has done a community needs survey as well as an annual strategic planning session where our board members meet to discuss what we see as our biggest priorities for the coming year. There are five main categories that continually are identified in those processes, and which may be somewhat alleviated through potential Measure X funding. Those categories are:

- Workforce Development
- Mental Health
- Employment
- Transportation
- Housing



## Workforce Development

Direct support professionals are the backbone of support needed by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Direct support professionals which we call DSPs can include in home support to help with feeding, dressing, and toileting. It can include support to help people get out into the community, go grocery shopping, go to doctor's appointments, or other necessary errands. DSP support could be needed to assist accessing social opportunities. It also could include job coaching or other kinds of support a person would need in order earn money through micro-enterprise or self-employment.

The caregiving workforce and livable wages are vital to supporting the Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD) community. This issue was likely shared at the May presentation on the needs of our aging population. There is a caregiver gap, there are not enough family members to provide care for their aging parents. To support the needs of our disabled population, we need to create more caregivers, more direct support professionals.

Potential use of Measure X funding: Consider the Health Career Pathways program, a partnership between Ombudsman Services, Opportunity Junction, Adult Education and skilled nursing facilities to train the skilled nursing facilities-based direct care workforce. Allocate Measure X funding to be used to create a similar structure for our I/DD direct care workforce. A program as such could partner with the adult day programs to support a trained workforce which would also benefit In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) workers and family caregivers.

## Mental Health

As of 2018, in Contra Costa County, there were 796 Regional Center clients who also had a mental health designation and are Medi-Cal eligible. The following breaks down in which part of the county they reside.

West		Central/South		East			
El Cerrito	5	Alamo	3	Antioch	144	Other	26
El Sobrante	21	Clayton	2	Bay Point	13		
Hercules	8	Concord	108	Brentwood	43		
Kensington	2	Crockett	1	Discovery Bay	6		
Pinole	16	Danville	8	Knightsen	1		
Richmond	113	Lafayette	16	Oakley	39		
Rodeo	7	Martinez	27	Pittsburg	61		
San Pablo	42	Moraga	3				
		Orinda	5				
		Pacheco	4				
		Pleasant Hill	23				
		San Ramon	24				
		Walnut Creek	25				
	214		249		307		26

This number, 796, does not include individuals with an undiagnosed, and Regional Center-eligible, disability. These 796 dually diagnosed residents are only from the pool of 9569 total RCEB clients in Contra Costa. If we expand the pool to consider all 118,603 estimated residents with disabilities, certainly this number increases.

Our neighbors in Alameda have created a specialty mental health clinic that served the mental health care needs of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, [The Schreiber Center](#). The clinic is sustainable because virtually all clients are supported by Medi-Cal and many are dually eligible (Medi-Cal/Medi-Care). The Schreiber Center was modeled on another successful project, [The Puente Clinic](#), in San Mateo.



While the brief presentation to this committee did not allow time for many stories, please consider the following. This is a sampling of vignettes illustrating some of the challenges experienced by our dually diagnosed residents.

- Young man, early 20s, with Asperger's and with well-defined and disruptive anxiety and related intrusive thoughts. He and his family have not been able to locate appropriate medication management, nor therapy that can meet his learning and communication needs. Family has called down a long list of providers, from private health insurance, and all on the list are either not accepting new patients or are not comfortable with or experienced in serving patients with an intellectual or developmental disability. Lack of consistent treatment in this area has led to this young man's lost jobs, lost apartments, and physical illness. Family feels helpless, and regional center has not been successful in locating appropriate services.
- Man in late 20s-early 30s, with an I/DD, starting to show increased symptoms of schizophrenia. Symptoms mistaken for 'behaviors'; he has suffered punitive consequences in his personal and professional life. He has Medicaid services, but is having trouble with referral. And that's after years of no identification of what these symptoms were.
- Woman in her 40s, with I/DD, dealing with significant depression which is affecting quality of life, health, etc. When seeking care, her medical providers will address her physical health concerns, but pay little attention to her mental health needs. She becomes more and more reclusive and withdrawn, with physical health declining in response to the lifestyle changes. She has ILS services (Independent Living Skills, a support provided by RCEB) advocating for her, and still has difficulty having her mental health care needs recognized and addressed appropriately.
- Homeless man with I/DD bouncing between friends' and relatives' homes and dropping in and out of regional center services. Significant mental health needs are suspected, but not diagnosed or treated. Often caseworkers in various systems respond in a way to indicate that 'help is here when you are ready', but likely greater intervention is needed as it's not clear what level of comprehension and executive functioning is possible between his I/DD, his mental health, and potential substance abuse.

## Employment

Data on employment for people with disabilities is bleak, and the reasons many. Looking at data from the 2019 American Community Survey, the unemployment rate for non-disabled people is 29.8%. For disabled people, it's more than double that: 70.1% in Contra Costa.

Consider how Contra Costa County can improve employee diversity by employing people who reflect the diversity of our county residents. Community partners have expertise and willingness to work with any departments that endeavor to improve accessibility and have access to an additional hiring pool. The Developmental Disabilities Council can assist with making those connections.

Additionally, Measure X funding could be used to provide incentives to employers in our county to hire people with disabilities. Incentives would encourage employers to give people with disabilities that chance "to get their foot in the door". With that encouragement, employers could better understand the benefits of hiring a more diverse workforce and understand how people with disabilities can make meaningful contributions to their business.



## Transportation

Accessible transportation means the difference for many adults with disabilities between isolation and community integration. The recent Accessible Transportation Strategic Plan includes recommendations to improve transit in our county. We ask that you support the cost of implementation of recommendations of that plan.

## Housing

There is a critical need for affordable housing for people with developmental disabilities. Over 75% of people with I/DD live in their family home, many with aging parents and caregivers. Our ask would be for creation and preservation of affordable rental housing for vulnerable populations. Specifically, for the County Housing Authority to identify people with developmental disabilities as a priority population. Beyond that, please keep the needs of our very low-income residents with disabilities as you consider projects proposed to alleviate the overall housing crisis in our county.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to provide any further information as needed.

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