



**Master Plan for Developmental Services Committee Meeting #6 -
Summary**

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

(Pre-meeting presentation 9:00-10:00am)

Hybrid Meeting

In-Person Location: The Painted Table Event Center
5080 North Blackstone Avenue
Fresno, CA 93710

Committee Members in Attendance:

Edith Arias, Yvette Baptiste, Sascha Bittner, Lisa Cooley, Claudia Center, Shella Comin-DuMong, Dora Contreras, Brett Eisenberg, Fernando Gomez, Elizabeth Hassler, Kelly Heung, Barry Jardini, Will Leiner, Mark Klaus, Kelly Kulzer-Reyes, Victor Lira, Judy Mark, Areva Martin, Mark Melanson, Oscar Mercado, Britney Nguyen, Marty Omoto, Joe Perales, Marie Poulsen, Norma Ramos, Eric Ramirez, Sara Speck, Kavita Sreedhar, Elena Tiffany, Kecia Weller, Amy Westling, Gloria Wong, Larry Yin, Sylvia Yeh, Brian Zotti

Facilitators and Presenters in Attendance:

Victor Duron, Jonah Frohlich, Catherine Blakemore, Karin Bloomer, Anna Lansky

Public in Attendance:

Over 270 public individuals attended the meeting. Attendees participated via Zoom, by phone and in-person.

Pre-Meeting Presentation and Public Comment

Victor Duron, Project Director, presented an overview of the master plan process and a recap of prior committee meetings. Victor also provided an overview of the five Master Plan workgroups and their priorities. This was followed by a pre-meeting public comment period. The comments received are summarized in the [Public Comment summary document](#).

Welcome

Welcoming remarks, housekeeping, and review of agenda.

Introductory Remarks by Pete Cervinka

Victor introduced Pete Cervinka, the interim Director of the Department of Developmental Services. Pete then thanked everyone for their efforts and stressed the need for teamwork and diverse opinions in developing the Master Plan. He assured that, despite the recent leadership changes, the work on the Master Plan remains crucial and at top priority.

Review of Public Engagements and Input

Victor Duron reviewed the main themes received in recent community engagements, including:

- A focus group with Ethiopian parents, family members, and people with developmental disabilities;
- A roundtable with Augmented and Alternative Communication (ACC) users and their families;
- A roundtable with committee members of El Arc de California representing the Latino community; and
- A meeting with representatives of state and local entities serving older adults and people with disabilities through the State Alliance Team for Aging

Themes which Victor shared included:

- The need for better tools and training on equity and cultural diversity for Regional Center staff;
- The need to create more opportunities for peer support groups to share experiences and lessons learned;
- The importance of workforce development in the disability field, aiming to improve support, services, pay, and quality of life for those working in this sector, including people with disabilities;
- The need for centralized, consistent, and multilingual resources for early and clear information dissemination as well as improving communication across services such as law enforcement and education;
- Difficulties in finding medical service providers that work with the I/DD community, such as dentists;
- The need to address the significant drop-off in services from K-12 to adulthood;
- Long waitlists and delays for services and inconsistency among regional centers for services offered;
- Ensuring not just provision of assistive devices, but also training and access to peripherals like Wi-Fi;

- The need for a centralized system for navigating public health, Medi-Cal, and healthcare services;
- The importance of believing people with disabilities when they request accommodations;
- The need to create a consistent eligibility process and a minimum set of services across regional centers;
- The importance of holding regional centers accountable for performance standards, with rewards for good performance and penalties for poor performance;
- The need for more support for families in navigating long-term resources, especially for aging individuals with disabilities; and
- The importance of making senior centers accessible and welcoming, and supporting pilot housing options like shared housing.

Some committee members also shared ideas for new ways to engage the community, including a survey to facilitate self-advocate public comment, an opportunity to collect comment on the website via voice note or video, and including agency level stakeholders in future meetings.

Victor expressed gratitude to the committee members for these opportunities to hear input from diverse communities. Victor also shared that input received during public comment opportunities will be analyzed and provided to the workgroups to support their recommendations. Workgroup members asked if they could be told of future public engagement events so that they could participate. Summaries of input received will also be available in the near future on the [website](#).

Break

Overview of Project Roadmap

Jonah Frohlich, Project Consultant at Manatt, presented a visual representation of the Master Plan project roadmap. The intent of this visual was to make the process easier to understand. Some self-advocates mentioned that the visual is difficult to understand. Jonah explained that this visual was a first attempt and asked for ideas to make it more accessible.

Ideas the committee members gave included:

- Making sure the visual displays a commitment from the administration to work on recommendations that come from the Master Plan;
- Creating two versions of the visual. One should have text only, and one should be a flow-chart illustrating the steps linearly; and
- Using more specific icons that help individuals understand their meaning

While providing feedback on the visual, committee members also expressed concern about the timeline of delivering the Master Plan to the legislature in March. Jonah recognized that this was a concern and said the Master Plan Team would discuss with CalHHS.

Lunch Break

“World Café” Small Group Discussions

Jonah Frohlich introduced the “World Cafe” format. This is a flexible format where participants discussed topics in small groups, like a café setting. The goal was to give committee members a chance to share their views on the workgroup ideas that were being developed. Committee members who were in-person chose four workgroup topics they wanted to participate in. The topics to choose from were the areas of focus for the five workgroups. There were four rounds of discussions at four different tables in the room; each lasted 20 minutes. There was a host at each table to welcome committee members and explain the topic and process. Committee members who were participating on Zoom joined a breakout room. Each breakout room had a host who facilitated small group discussions. There were four rounds of discussion, each focusing on a different workgroup topic. Public members in person and on Zoom joined together in a hybrid environment. Hosts facilitated four workgroup topic discussions and requested input from participants.

Themes shared within the discussion among committee members included:

Workgroup 1

- Trust and Cultural Sensitivity:
 - Hiring service coordinators from the communities they serve and giving them training focused on individual needs. This will improve communication and build trust with diverse communities
 - Upholding dignity of the individual
 - Hiring more individuals with lived experiences within the regional centers
- Accountability and Transparency:
 - Regional Centers should be open about their services and payment records to gain public trust and meet community needs
- Consistency:
 - Regional Centers should have standard practices to ensure reliable and predictable services and reduce administrative work
 - Considering legislative change to require uniformity in practice across all regional centers
- Accountability and Evaluation:

- Instituting base performance evaluations of regional centers, program managers, and directors on needs met
- Measuring response time and prioritizing follow-up
- Service Coordinator Responsibilities:
 - Separating out roles/functions so individual has service coordinator only in their corner
 - Moving service coordinator role out of agency to be inter-agency
 - Service coordinator should stay with participant for life
 - Training service coordinators on person-centered thinking

Workgroup 2

- Access to Generic Services:
 - Make generic services more accessible and easier to use, especially for families and individuals with disabilities
 - Clear information and a simple process are essential
- Transportation:
 - There should be more transportation options for individuals with disabilities to access services, employment, and community activities
- Outreach and Communication:
 - Emphasize clear and effective communication through plain language and digital platforms to help individuals and families understand and navigate the system
 - Fix issues with service denial and lack of follow-up to ensure clients receive the support they need
- Collaboration:
 - Create a community task force with multiple agencies for better collaboration
 - Improve communication between regional centers and other agencies
 - Need social workers and better service coordination for IHSS and SLS services

Workgroup 3

- Career Pathways and Training:
 - Create career paths for service coordinators and provide ongoing training, especially in rural areas, to build a skilled and knowledgeable workforce
 - Hire more job coaches for small businesses with fewer clients

- Educate families on how work income affects social security benefits to aid in financial planning
- Provide paid training and utilize existing training programs to enhance staff skills and knowledge
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- Recruitment and Diversity:
 - Recruit a workforce that reflects the communities they serve to improve service delivery and cultural competence
 - Offer job opportunities alongside education to provide a holistic approach to client development
 - Recruit and train individuals in related careers to address staffing shortages
- Pay and Incentives:
 - Update pay models to attract and retain quality direct service professionals. Competitive pay and incentives are crucial for a motivated workforce.
 - Reduce administrative work to retain staff and allow them to focus on client support
- Justice-Involved Individuals:
 - Provide specialized training for providers working with justice-involved individuals and those with complex needs to ensure effective support
 - Consider hiring individuals who have past experience working with justice-involved individuals

Workgroup 4

- Consistency in Service Delivery
 - Provide clear and specific service definitions and standards to ensure consistent service delivery
 - Ensure consistency in regional center services and provide legislative clarity to support implementation
 - Simplify vendor rules and speed up the service approval process to reduce delays
- Create Relationships
 - Promote equity in regional center services and better match clients with regional center coordinators

Workgroup 5

- Medi-Cal and Waiver Programs:
 - The importance of enrolling eligible individuals in Medi-Cal and waiver programs to maximize federal funding and resources.
 - Specifically, the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver allows individuals to receive care in their community rather than an institutional setting
 - This brings more resources to the system and the state, allowing for more comprehensive services
 - Link regional center performance to waiver enrollment to incentivize service improvements
- Information and Training:
 - The need for training parents and individuals about available services and how to access them to improve awareness and utilization
 - Provide more plain language information for families about waivers to aid in understanding and application
- Advocacy and Support:
 - Improving advocacy and support for individuals navigating the system, particularly in accessing generic services, to help them overcome barriers and achieve their goals.
 - This includes understanding rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act in California.

Public Comment

At the end of the meeting, there was an additional public comment opportunity for members of the public to provide feedback. The comments received in writing through chat and Q&A and verbally are summarized in the Public Comment summary document which is available, along with other meeting documents on the [website](#).