



Summary of Public Comments Received During the Master Plan for Developmental Services Committee Meeting #9- Wednesday, December 11, 2024, 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

This summary reflects the themes and ideas received from public comments provided during the committee meeting's roundtable sessions and public comment period. Public participants were invited to speak and share their comments with the committee and to share their comments using the Zoom chat and Q&A. Themes from public comments included:

Self-Determination Program (SDP)

- Self-advocates and parents shared positive experiences, emphasizing how SDP transformed their lives by providing more control and flexibility.
- Participants voiced concerns about bureaucratic barriers hindering the transition to SDP. They called for a more efficient and less complicated process.
- Participants agreed that processes should be in place to ensure Financial Management Services (FMS) are not overcharging clients.

Regional Center Support

- Participants highlighted the limitations and inefficiencies of the current regional center system. One suggestion for improvement involved creating a 22nd regional center focused exclusively on SDP to improve service delivery and accountability.
- Some participants did not agree with the suggestion of creating a 22nd regional center focused on SDP and expressed concerns that this could lead to segregation of services and service recipients.
- Attendees called for all regional centers to have dedicated SDP departments to better support participants.

Advocacy and Training

- Participants stressed the need for better advocacy support for families and individuals, including training for service coordinators and parents. They highlighted the importance of a strong circle of support, especially for those with high support needs.

Support During Life Transitions

- Attendees emphasized that peer support mechanisms are needed during significant life transitions, such as leaving high school.
- Parents requested that DDS present alternatives to conservatorship when students leave high school.
- Families stressed that providing transition supports well before the actual transition begins is necessary.
- Parents suggested conducting timely assessments and ensuring that regional center funding covers services when school services are unavailable. This includes after-school hours. These are essential steps to ensure a smooth and effective transition for children and their families.

High-Quality, Stable Workforce

- Advocates strongly supported comprehensive training programs, career outreach initiatives, financial incentives, and professional development opportunities for direct support professionals (DSPs)
- They stressed the importance of retaining qualified staff and providing ongoing support for their career development to ensure workforce stability and quality.

Equity and Accessibility

- Participants emphasized the need for equitable access to services and support. They called for transparency, accountability, and the removal of barriers preventing families from promptly receiving the services they need.

Feedback and Communication

- Participants expressed a strong desire for more effective communication and feedback mechanisms. One proposed suggestion was a state hotline dedicated to SDP to gather participant experiences, identify service gaps, and measure program outcomes.

Independent Oversight

- Participants highlighted the need for third-party oversight of Notices of Action (NOAs) and other processes to ensure fairness and accountability. They believed this oversight would help hold regional centers accountable and improve service delivery.
- The community stressed that they actively involved in the vendorization process. Vendorization is the term used to describe the entire approval process involved in preparing to provide services to regional center consumers.