**Local Partnership Agreement:**

**Redwood Coast Regional Center,**

**California Department of Rehabilitation –**

**Redwood Empire District,**

**Mendocino County Office of Education Special Education**

**Local Plan Area**

# **Intent/Purpose**

This local partnership agreement (LPA) is a collaboration to foster preparation for and achievement of competitive integrated employment with well sequenced support for transition aged youth (16-22 years) with an intellectual or developmental disability, during and following public school enrollment.

Furthermore, the collaboration will also work to promote Employment First options to working age adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities by ensuring seamless transitions, between funding sources, as participants access the discovery process, paid internships, and a full range of competitive integrated employment options.

This collaboration shall be known as the Mendocino LPA.

# **Core Partners**

The Mendocino LPA core partners include:

* Redwood Coast Regional Center (RCRC)
* Redwood Empire District, California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)
* Mendocino County Office of Education Special Education Local Plan Area (Mendocino SELPA) includes 11 school districts:

Willits Unified School District

Fort Bragg Unified School District

Point Arena Joint Union High School District

Anderson Valley Unified School District

Ukiah Unified School District

Potter Valley Unified School District

Laytonville Unified School District

Round Valley Unified School District

Leggett Unified School District

Mendocino Unified School District

Mendocino County Office of Education

* State Council on Developmental Disabilities – North Coast Office

# **Community Partners and Resources**

The LPA Core Partners commit to conducting outreach and education to the Mendocino County community. The following community resources may be accessed and utilized in support of the Mendocino LPA:

* Warm Line Family Resources Center
* Disability Services and Legal Center
* People First Chapters
* Career Point – North Bay
* Mendo-Lake Adult & Career Education (ACE) – Adults with Disabilities workgroup
* Mendocino/Lake Community College District– Fort Bragg, Willits, Ukiah
* Employment Development Department Mendocino County offices
* Service Clubs (including Rotary, Lions, Elks, Kiwanis)
* Chamber of Commerce
* Tribal partners – Pinoleville Pomo Nation
* California Indian Manpower Consortium
* Local Government of Mendocino County
* Mendocino County Behavioral Health
* Mendocino County Juvenile Justice System
* Redwood Community Services
* Art Explorers, Inc.
* Association of Behavior Consultants
* Community Care Management Corporation
* Community Catalysts
* Finance for People
* Goodwill Industries of the Redwood Empire
* Independent Adult Services
* Konocti Bay Payee
* Mendocino Caregivers
* Northern California Living Center
* Northern California Center for Developmental Disabilities, Inc.
* Northstar Services
* Parents & Friends, Inc.
* Trust Management Services
* Tsunami Enterprises
* Ukiah Valley Association of Habilitation

# **Roles and Responsibilities: Collaboration through Person-Centered Processes**

## **Referral and Intake**

The Core Partners have agreed that the IEP (Individualized Education Program) meeting at the student’s age of 16 offers an ideal opportunity to engage in collaborative planning for the student. With the consent of the student’s parents, an invitation for the DOR, TPP (Transition Partnership Program) and RCRC representatives to attend this IEP meeting will allow each partner to join with the student, family and educational staff to mutually engage in the Person-Centered Planning Process. By the age of 16, the Regional Center Service Coordinator will contact Mendocino SELPA for district Local Education Agency (LEA) Special Education Teacher/Case Carrier contact info in order to make connections with the school site, teacher and student/family in support of participating in the student’s IEP meetings whenever possible.

**Mendocino SELPA / Local Education Agency Referral Process:**

Referrals for assessment to determine eligibility for special education and related services may come from teachers, parents, agencies, appropriate professional persons, and from other members of the public. The referrals will be coordinated with school site procedures for referral of pupils with needs that cannot be meet with modifications of the regular instructional program, including referrals from student intervention teams, such as the Student Study Team.

A student shall be referred for special education and services only after the resources of the regular education program have been considered and, where appropriate, utilized.

Referrals for assessments to determine eligibility for special education and related services will be made to the school site principal or designee at the student’s school of residence. Referrals may be processed through the school site Student Study Team or other student intervention team to review the referral and document interventions tried prior to referral. All requests for assessments will be submitted in writing. If a parent makes the request verbally the school principal or designee will assist the individual in making the request in writing. The school site administrator or designee will review the referral. If the information is incomplete the referral source will be contacted to request additional information. If the information is complete, the school site administrator or designee will initiate the assessment process, including notification of parent. An assessment plan will be developed. No assessment will be conducted without written parent consent. The district office special education administrator will assist, whenever necessary to process referrals.

**RCRC Referral Process:**

Any resident of Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake or Mendocino County who is interested in receiving services from RCRC may call the local RCRC office and ask for information about eligibility for services. The receptionist will connect the caller to the most appropriate Intake Specialist. Formal application must be made by an adult applicant, parent, conservator or guardian. Community members and service providers may request services for another person if they have permission from the potential applicant to do so.

Once connected with the Intake Specialist, an initial interview will take place within15 working days with the referred individual and their parent or legal representative, as applicable. At that time, the Intake Specialist will provide information about RCRC and community resources, obtain written authorization to receive all available developmental assessments, medical and school records, and begin developing a psychosocial assessment of the individuals unique history and situation. If necessary, the Intake Specialist will arrange for further diagnostic assessments to be completed by one or more of RCRC’s contracted specialists.

Within 120 days of the initial intake all of the information secured during the intake process will be used to determine eligibility for regional center services. This process of eligibility determination is accomplished through a Multi-disciplinary Team comprised of at least one physician, psychologist, and social worker. There is no charge for the diagnosis and eligibility assessment.

**DOR Referral Process:**

There are several pathways to refer an individual for services with Department of Rehabilitation, or for an individual to apply on their own.

Referral sources may contact the Team Manager for assignment of a student with disabilities, ages 16-21, to a Potentially Eligible (PE) staff member. This staff member can attend the student’s IEP or meet with the student to initiate completion of the DR203-DOR-Student-Services-Request and DR260 Consent to Release and Obtain Information forms. Once the student is Potentially Eligible, the staff member can work with that student to determine if and when a referral to VR services is appropriate.

Student with disabilities can also enter DOR services through the Transition Partnership Program (TPP), a cooperative program between DOR and the Mendocino County Office of Education.

Applications for PE or VR services can also be obtained either at the local DOR office or online at [www.dor.ca.gov](http://www.dor.ca.gov). Bi-monthly group orientations are available at the local DOR office, and individual orientations are available upon request.

The DS 1968 form is used for making a referral from Regional Center to DOR for Supported Employment services under the VR program.

### **Eligibility Requirements for Each Core Partner**

**Mendocino SELPA / Local Education Agency**

All individuals with suspected disabilities from birth through age 21 will be identified and referred to the appropriate agency to be assessed. To qualify for Special Education services, you must be diagnosed with one of the following: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, hearing impairment, developmental delay, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, speech language impairment, specific learning disability, emotional disturbance, or traumatic brain injury. Each individual will receive a full and individual evaluation to identify the disability, determine eligibility and identify educational needs. The assessment information will provide the basis for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to ensure the individual receives a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

**RCRC**

Individuals can be deemed eligible for Regional Center services according to a California law which defines a Developmental Disability as a severe and chronic disability that is attributed to a mental and physical impairment that originates before the individual’s 18th birthday and poses a substantial disability. To qualify for services with Redwood Coast Regional Center, you must be diagnosed with one of the four following: These disabilities include intellectual disability (an IQ below 70), cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism and disabling conditions closely related to intellectual disability or requiring similar treatment.

**DOR**

Potentially Eligible Services:Potentially EligibleServices **are** available to any student ages 16-21 with a disability (applies to any student with a disability based on 504 plans and/or IEPs (Individualized Education Program)).

Vocational Rehabilitation Services: VR services from DOR is based on having a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial barrier to employment, can benefit and needs VR services to reach an employment outcome.

## **Coordinating Person-Centered Planning**

The Core Partners are committed to working together through collaboration to ensure well sequenced funding and individualized supports to the people we mutually serve through the development of the following types of ISPs.

Person-Centered Planning is an ongoing process used to help individuals plan for their future based on their individualized transition goals. The ultimate goal for the PCP team is to bring together all stakeholders with the individual as the “driver” to support transition to independence and Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). This process assists the individual to develop the skills and resources needed to achieve their goals.

At its best, the PCP process can strengthen the transition to post-school activities by:

* Enhancing the quality of assessment and planning activities for both high school transition services and adult service agencies serving youth with disabilities;
* Fostering positive working relationships between clients and their families and professionals;
* Providing a way for educators and other agencies to better coordinate services for the individual;
* Connecting the student and their families to adult service agencies before a student leaves high school;
* Helping ensure that services support the youth’s goals and lead to successful outcomes; and
* Helping identify and cultivate natural supports in the community.

**Mendocino SELPA / Local Education Agency**

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

Required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and used in K12 educational agencies for individual student planning. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet a child's individual needs. Every child who receives special education services must have an IEP. The IEP describes the direction a student with special needs will be going in the future and how to get there. A student can be directed to the Mendocino Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) at any time for eligibility determination while enrolled in the K-12 for services. The IEP will be developed in collaboration with the IEP team: the student, parents, teacher, psychologist, and others as requested. When a purpose of the IEP meeting is the consideration of transition services for the student, the LEA shall invite the student and, to the extent appropriate and with the consent of the parent or adult student, a representative of any other agency that is likely to be responsible for supporting, providing or paying for the transition services.

The Individual Transition Plan (ITP) is the template in the IEP for mapping out long-term adult outcomes from which annual goals and objectives are defined. Transition language in the IEP (including the ITP) must be based on the student’s needs, preferences and interests and reflect the student’s own goals. Objectives, timeliness, and people responsible for meeting the objectives should be written into the ITP / IEP. Transition language in the IEP must be in place by the time the student turns 16 years of age. If the IEP team agrees transition planning can begin prior to the age of 16. The IEP team, in collaboration with any other representative agency the parent or adult student gives consent to invite, will be a part of the meeting addressing the student’s exit from their IEP and LEA services with a high school diploma or Certificate of Completion by age 22. This is the optimal time to have any agencies present that will be providing or paying for transition services post-graduation, in an effort to support continued person-centered planning and inter-agency collaboration of transition supports.

**RCRC – Individual Program Plan (IPP)**

Each person supported by RCRC has an IPP which is a document that records the decisions made by the individual and their planning team. The individual and their planning team decides what needs to be done, by whom, when, and how, if the individual is to begin (or continue) working toward the goals identified for the future. The IPP is reviewed annually and as needed and agreed upon.

Person-centered **individual program planning** assists persons with developmental disabilities and their families to build their capacities and capabilities. This planning effort is not a single event or meeting, but a series of discussions or interactions among a team of people including the person with a developmental disability, their family (when appropriate), regional center representative(s) and others.

As part of the planning process, this team assists the individual in developing a description that includes: a preferred place to live, favorite people with whom to socialize, and preferred types of daily activities, including preferred jobs. This description is called a preferred future, and is based on the individual's strengths, capabilities, preferences, lifestyle and cultural background.

**DOR**

**Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)**

A term used by the DOR to refer to the contract between the client and the DOR. The IPE contains important information on the client’s employment goal, and what services and supports the DOR has agreed to provide to assist the client in meeting that goal.

The IPE will be developed in collaboration with the individual, the DOR Counselor, and other stakeholders to assist in development of the employment goal when the following are met:

* Have applied for services.
* Completed the assessment process.
* Are found eligible for services.
* Are placed in a disability priority category being served.

The IPE is a written plan listing the individual’s job objective and DOR services the individual will receive to reach his/her employment goal. The individual and DOR counselor will discuss the individual’s unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. The IPE should be developed prior to the individual transitioning from Secondary Education, Alternative Schools, or Post-Secondary Education. The IPE will be developed within 90 days of eligibility determination. The IPE will be reviewed annually, and amendments made upon mutual agreement.

With appropriate releases in place, DOR staff will work collaboratively with MCOE/LEA and RCRC staff to coordinate to the greatest degree possible the goals and activities of the individual’s IPE with those of their IEP and IPP.

## **Information Sharing and Documentation Processes**

**Mendocino SELPA / Local Education Agency**

In support of the student’s Individualized Transition Plan and collaboration with agencies mutually serving the student, the district’s Special Education Case Carrier will inform the student/parent/guardian of the benefits of giving consent to invite agencies providing/planning to provide services so a representative can attend IEP meetings, build rapport with family and student’s transition plan, and collaborate effectively with service providers as part of the IEP team. Annually at the IEP meeting, goals will be reviewed, developed and supported based on age appropriate transition assessment. Student-led IEP meetings are encouraged and practiced to emphasize the person-centered planning and their interests, strengths, and developing independence. At this time, the team can discuss what transition activities/opportunities for services may be appropriate that may be coordinated to support competitive integrated employment, training, and independent living as a student nears exit from the education system.

Regional Center students exiting school district’s high school and 18-22 transition programs earning a Certificate of Completion receive their certificate on graduation day of their educational program. During the last two years of the student’s participation in the transition program, it is essential for the RCRC Service Coordinator to be invited, and attend whenever possible, the IEP meeting on behalf of the student in order to identify what post-graduation adult service supports are needed/desired by the adult student. If a student is interested in obtaining Competitive Integrated Employment, the TPP Specialist and Special Education Teacher will collaborate with the RCRC Service Coordinator prior to connecting student to the adult service provider of choice, in order for the Service Coordinator to facilitate a referral to DOR for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment services (form DS 1968).

Upon a student exiting their IEP and transition from the education system, the Special Education Case Carrier will complete with the student a Summary of Performance, also known as a Post-Secondary Exit IEP form, which summarizes the student’s academic achievements and functional performance. This includes documentation of the student’s strengths/interests/learning preferences, functional and skills, cognitive abilities, communication skills, health information, vocational assessments, post-secondary transition goals, and recommendations to support the student in reaching said goals. Any supplementary aids, services, and supports that were used by school personnel, student, or on behalf of student, are included to help other agencies support a streamlined transition. Agencies who have been identified as serving, or responsible for paying for services on behalf of the student are provided with a copy of the Summary of Performance.

If a student is participating with TPP, the TPP Specialist will provide the RCRC Service Coordinator and DOR Counselor with a copy of the student’s Career Portfolio that has been developed over their last two years of school, collaboratively with the district’s Special Ed/WorkAbility/TPP services.

**RCRC**

To promote a seamless transition for students aged 14-22, RCRC Service Coordinators should discuss with Individuals and Parent(s)/Legal Guardian or Authorized Representative during IPP meeting and annual reviews, the importance of them being invited to IEP meetings and other important activities and goals involved in transitioning from school to adult life. To help ensure that the SC’s will be invited to IEP meetings, they will attempt to obtain a release of information for the school that the individual attends from the parent/individual. When obtained, the release will be forwarded to the responsible school case carrier so that the case carrier can invite the SC to IEP meetings.

With release of information approval from the parent or guardian (age 14-18) individual or conservator as appropriate (age 18-22) RCRC may provide copies of the IPP or other essential documents to the schools.

When the individual wishes to apply for DOR services beyond what is provided through WA/TPP, RCRC will obtain a written release of information from the individual or their conservator as appropriate to submit a completed 1968 and necessary referral documents to DOR.

RCRC will also obtain a written release of information to invite RCRC vendored providers as appropriate to IEP meetings and will make written referrals to adult service providers as identified in the IPP for adult services that are needed for the individual transitioning out of school.

**DOR**

While DOR supports the goal of working collaboratively toward a universal release of information, for now the DR260 Consent to Release and Obtain Information is utilized. Parent or guardian signatures are required for those under the age of 18. DOR will make every effort to attend IEP meetings as invited for Potentially Eligible students.

### **Related Resources**

**Transition Teams**

The inland Mendocino Interagency Transition Team (MITT) and coast Mendocino Interagency Transition Team (ITT) are established collaborative groups supporting all young adults with intellectual disabilities, exiting school transition programs with the goal of assisting in their success at becoming contributing members of our community, fulfilling their potential for independence and competitive integrated employment.

**WorkAbility I**

The Mendocino County WorkAbility I program provides services to public middle and high school students in the county with IEPs. At the middle school level, the program provides students with curriculum and experiences that help them explore their interests, abilities and the world of work. In addition to Mendocino County of Education WorkAbility, Willits USD and Fort Bragg USD have their own WorkAbility I program for their high school sites. The high school program provides curriculum and experiences that help students further explore career options and learn skills necessary to be successful in their transition into adult life. WorkAbility also provides job development and placement for temporary WorkAbility-paid and unpaid internship experiences, allowing students to gain work experience in a variety of competitive integrated employment settings. WorkAbility participation is promoted and discussed during the student’s IEP meetings to support the student’s transition plan, and through the WorkAbility Coordinator/Teacher at the school site.

**Transition Partnership Program**

The Mendocino County Transition Partnership Program (TPP), a collaborative program with Mendocino SELPA, the school districts and DOR, serves interested students with disabilities in all of the public high schools in the county. Each school has a TPP team that consists of the Vocational Services Coordinator (the Special Education Teacher/WorkAbility Teacher), TPP School-to-Work Specialist and DOR Counselor. The optimal time for high school students with an intellectual or developmental disability to be referred to TPP is by January of their senior year of high school, in preparation for their transition to 18-22 program through the school district. TPP referral is discussed at the student’s IEP meeting prior to their senior year. During the last two years of school, the TPP Specialist in collaboration with the Vocational Services Coordinator/referring Special Education Teacher and DOR Counselor, provides an array of in-school DOR Student Services which may include job exploration counseling, workplace readiness skills training, work-based learning experiences, counseling on post-secondary education, and instruction in self-advocacy, based on the student’s interests and transition goals within the IEP. Prior to graduation, the Special Education Teacher/ TPP Vocational Services Coordinator coordinates student IEP meetings including the parent, Regional Center Service Coordinator, TPP Specialist, and DOR Counselor when available, if the student agrees to invite, in support of transition and linkage from in-school services to adult employment services and post-secondary vocational training support and other services to help support the student in making a successful transition into adult life.

The school district shall invite to the IEP team meetings a representative that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. If an agency invited to send a representative to a meeting does not do so, the school district’s case carrier shall take other steps to obtain participation of the other agency in the planning of any transition services.

# **Communication**

## Informational

* The Mendocino LPA will hold quarterly meetings to review and update the LPA. The Core Partners will work together to determine how to best share information with community stakeholders
* Core Partners and community stakeholders will share information and attendance at trainings, workshops, and/or related events.

## Functional

* Release of Information/Consent forms will be available to allow Core Partners to communicate and best support the individual.
* Core Partners and stakeholders will continue to identify gaps or barriers impacting individuals in their pursuit of competitive and integrated employment.
* Core Partners will organize and facilitate meetings to update, change, and expand the LPA to ensure that the partnership, and systems remain current. Portions of the meetings will allow and encourage community feedback.
* Core Partners will expand and develop additional community partnerships aimed at providing access to all resources and workforce systems not historically utilized.
* Core Partners commit to assign a school district point of contact for RCRC.
* Core Partners commit to further explore organizational structure within the LPA, to be functional within the local planning area, including the exploration of subcommittees to focus on specific interests.

## System Measures

The Core Partners will work together to determine data collection methods that identify effective methods of tracking progress of the LPA, and to measure growth of competitive and integrated employment outcomes. The Core Partners will identify a mechanism for reporting aggregate data to the individuals served and to the community stakeholders.

The Mendocino LPA will also utilize the systems currently in place that collect data on individuals working in competitive integrated employment, including:

* State Council Data Dashboard
* Department of Developmental Services Data Dashboard
* Redwood Coast Regional Center
  + CIE Data collection
  + CDER
* California Department of Education
  + Workability I database
* Department of Rehabilitation Dashboard
  + TPP annual outcome data

1. Contact Information

See Appendix A.

**Appendices**

1. Directory
2. Multiagency Authorization to Exchange Confidential Information (Pending)
3. RCRC Transition Tool
4. RCRC Vendor List
5. Transition Planning Checklist
6. DOR General Information

