



August 13, 2024

Victor Duron  
Project Manager, Master Plan for Developmental Services  
721 Capitol Mall  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Duron,

The California Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (CCEPD) is a statewide advisory body that seeks to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities and better coordinate programs and services for people with disabilities. The CCEPD makes policy recommendations to the Secretary of the Labor and Workforce Development Agency and the Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency. As part of its work, it also evaluates and promotes best practices to assist with the assessment of policies for people with disabilities. Given the purview of the CCEPD's work, we are excited about the development of the Master Plan for Developmental Services.

The CCEPD commends the recent work of the Master Plan for Developmental Services Committee, and we look forward to following the work of the five recently established workgroups, based on the initial Vision for Success discussions and other committee member and community input. As these workgroups further develop the Master Plan, the CCEPD encourages the workgroups to incorporate the recommendations referenced in this initial comment letter.

**Workgroup 1: Individuals and families experience person-centered service systems they trust.**

To establish trustworthy person-centered service systems, individuals and families must be educated on potential services early and continuously. Gaining employment must be an early topic of discussion with parents and incorporated into conversations before they become young adults. Clients

and their families should be provided information on work incentives and how to manage benefits and employment at each phase of life.

**Workgroup 2: Individuals receive timely, inclusive, and seamless services across all service systems.**

Obtaining seamless services across service systems will require strategic co-enrollment strategies. For this to work adequately, service providers should be cross trained across multiple systems, and service partners should explore partnership agreements or memorandums of understanding whenever possible to ensure roles are clearly identified.

Additionally, employment should be a primary outcome goal of services. While the Department of Rehabilitation is the core vocational rehabilitation Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partner in California, Regional Centers of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and their providers also often perform similar services. Therefore, in collaboration with the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, we urge a partnership agreement between the DDS, Regional Centers, and the California Workforce Development Board to have Regional Centers become partners of regional and local workforce planning units and in California's Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan. Guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor encourages these types of partnerships.

Co-enrollment and information and referral strategies should be explored between the Department of Rehabilitation, Regional Centers, and local workforce development areas for employment and training services. Best practices can be used from Local Partnership Agreements to be scaled for co-enrollment and referrals statewide.

**Workgroup 3: Individuals and their families receive services from a high-quality, stable, and person-centered workforce.**

California can further develop the workforce by using existing models, such as the State Internship Program or apprenticeship model to develop a pipeline for certain positions. The CCEPD recommends reviewing the peer specialist model within behavioral health and whether that model can be used for supporting people with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Lived experience and cultural competency should be at the core of developing a person-centered workforce. Using existing models, California can create a more stable workforce.

As recommended for the previous two workgroups, the importance of cross-training across services and systems is critical for this topic as well. Any cross-training should include an understanding of workforce services and how local workforce areas are structured.

**Workgroup 4: Individuals and their families experience consistent, transparent, accountable, and data-driven systems that focus on outcomes.**

Data should be clear. Employment outcomes with sector and disability information should be more easily identifiable and consistent across systems. All service partners, individuals, and their families, should have the data support they need. This includes a mutual understanding of data definitions, the individual's service needs, and how to obtain clear outcome goals.

**Workgroup 5: Individuals are entitled to life-long services from systems with adequate resources.**

Ensuring individuals receive life-long services and the adequate resources they need will require improved navigation strategies for individuals as they age and needs evolve. These long-term services and supports may include, but are not limited to, healthcare, education, housing, employment, transportation, and safety. A critical service that should be provided to ensure an individual can adequately navigate throughout life's stages is benefits planning. This not only includes education on work incentives and how to manage benefits, but also access to benefits planners. Consideration should be given in using the Medi-Cal Home and Community Based Waivers to help fund or provide additional benefits planning resources. States like Colorado have used this process to provide consistent benefits planning resources.

We look forward to ongoing collaborative efforts with the Master Plan for Developmental Services Committee, and its workgroups. If you have questions, or would like to discuss the CCEPD's comments, please call Maria Aliferis-Gjerde, the Executive Officer of the CCEPD, at (916) 558-5698.

Sincerely,

Taylor Winchell  
Chair, CCEPD

cc: Nancy Farias  
Director  
Employment Development Department

Joe Xavier  
Director  
Department of Rehabilitation

Department Designees to CCEPD