



Consumer Advocate Handbook

Developed by Regional Center, Disability Rights California
and Department of Developmental Services Consumer and
Peer Advocates

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Duties of a Consumer Advocate may include:

- Providing information to consumers and their families
- Advocating for what consumers want and need
- Providing support to consumers, their families and friends
- Discussing issues and concerns related to self-advocacy
- Connecting with peers through People First groups, self-advocacy groups and other networking
- Some Consumer Advocates may conduct training sessions for staff, consumers, their families, and community groups on service topics
- A Consumer Advocate may be asked to create publications or make them more user friendly
- Visiting consumers and their families in their community settings
- Assisting with communication between Regional Centers and consumers
- Attending meetings to give consumer perspectives and concerns.
- Attending community meetings and other meetings involving people with developmental disabilities
- Advocating for consumers' concerns
- Assisting consumers and families in preparing for Individual Program Plan (IPP) meetings and/or attending their meetings if requested
- Other duties assigned by your organization



*** Job duties of a Consumer Advocate may vary from regional center to Regional Center and between agencies**

Helpful Skills to Being a Good Advocate

You Should:

- Encourage others to be leaders and become better self-advocates
- Encourage your peers to speak up
- Know about the Lanterman Act and basic rights of people with developmental disabilities
- Have contacts within the community
- Know about people first groups and/or self advocacy groups
- Know about Regional Center services
- Know about the Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
- Be willing to help other people
- Know what you're good at and what your strengths are
- Have confidence in yourself and in your abilities
- Have good work skills and ethics
- Be a good listener
- Have a way to effectively communicate (doesn't have to necessarily be by 'talking')
- Have the desire to always learn more
- Know where to go to learn more, or to get help
- Be able to understand the 'other persons' point of view
- Know what is expected of you as an advocate. Know what your 'passions' are



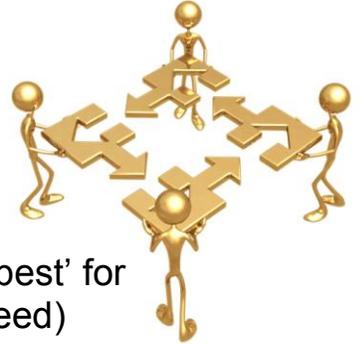
- Have the ability to develop good relationships with many different kinds of people (peers, coworkers, providers, family members of consumers, community leaders, legislators etc.)

- Be patient, but 'tough' with the people you work with when necessary

- Be patient with other consumers

- Be a good problem solver

- Always put what is 'best' for the consumer first (what is 'best' for the consumer isn't always what you think they want or need)



- Not change your position on something you know is right, even when pressured to do so

- Understand why trust is important in a relationship and try to build trust

- Be able to work as part of a team

- Know when you are able to do a task and when you should delegate that task to someone else or get help



- Be able to know when something is best for the group and when something is best for an individual – and caring equally about both

- Be able to speak (whether by voice or other means) in front of groups

JOB COACHES AND THEIR SUPPORTS



The supported employment programs provide job coaches to individual who have disabilities that are being placed in a job in the community. Job coaches are placed at the work site to give you the support and assistance they might need. The role of a good job coach is to provide you, the advocate, with the necessary supports so that you will be able to do your job in an orderly and timely manner. These supports may include assistance with taking notes, accessing and understanding of reading materials and other duties having to do with your job. When you become more confident in your job, your job coach may decrease their time supporting you.

Always keep in mind your job coach is there to help you do your job. They are not there to do your job for you. One of the keys to a solid working relationship between the two of you is communication. Your job coach is there to teach and support you. If they are acting in any way that makes you uncomfortable, let them know right away. At the same time, allow your job coach the freedom of letting you know when they're uncomfortable with you as well.

How do I get a job coach?

- 1) Talk to your supervisor**
- 2) Talk to your Regional Center Case Manager or Service Coordinator**
- 3) Talk to your Supported Employment Agency**
- 4) Talk to the Department of rehabilitation**

LANTERMAN ACT



The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act is set of laws in California that assures services and supports to people with developmental disabilities and their family members. The Lanterman Act is also an “ENTITLEMENT,” which means AS LONG AS WE HAVE THIS LAW, WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO GET DISABILITY RELATED SERVICES WE NEED.

The Lanterman Act says:¹

- What our rights are.
- How the regional centers helps us.
- That “WE” can define the services and supports we get.
- How the Individual Program Plan (IPP) can help us get the services we need.
- What to do when someone says “NO” about getting a service we need.
- We have the same rights as anyone else

Who can get the services?

People in California with a developmental disability. A developmental disability is a disability that originates before age 18 and continues throughout our life and is one of the following disabilities²: cerebral palsy, mental retardation, autism, epilepsy, or anything that makes you need the same type of support that someone with mental retardation needs.

The Lanterman Act states that we have the right to make choices and decisions about our lives such as:

- Where to live
- Where to go to school
- Being involved in our communities
- Where to work
- Having relationships and who we want to live with

¹ Beginning at section Welfare and Institutions code 4500

² Section 4512 (a)

Regional Center services and supports under the Lanterman Act:

- 1) The regional center is a place to go to get the services and supports we need to live, work, learn, and get connected to our communities.
- 2) The regional center helps find and get services and supports we need.
- 3) Each regional center will get services and supports for us that are “cost-effective.”
- 4) The regional center must give us information that we can understand.

What is an “Individual Program Plan” (IPP)?³

If you receive services from the Regional Center, you must have an IPP. An IPP is a legal agreement (contract) that lists the services and supports you need from your regional center. An IPP team and you must write your IPP. You can invite whoever you want to be part of your IPP team. It is your meeting. You should decide:

What day the meeting should be

Who SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT be there

Where the meeting should be held

What IS and IS NOT discussed at the IPP meeting

And if possible, the consumer should be encouraged to run their own meeting

You must agree with what is written in your IPP and sign it. IF YOU DO NOT AGREE, DO NOT SIGN IT!

Usually, IPP meetings are every three years but we can ask for one at any time if our situation changes

What if you disagree with a Regional Center?⁴

We have the right to ask questions and talk about decisions the regional center makes about us and our lives. If you do not agree with a regional center’s decision, it must be put IN WRITING.

If you do not agree with the regional center, there are three things you can do:

- 1) Develop a new Individual Program Plan

³ Section 4646

⁴ Section 4646 - 4700

- 2) Request a fair hearing
- 3) File a section 4731 complaint

The Lanterman Act also governs other parts of the developmental disability services system, like:

- The Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
- The Area Boards/ State Councils
- Many programs consumers participate in.

For more information about rights under the Lanterman Act, Regional Centers, the Individual Program Plan (IPP) and disagreeing with Regional Centers see:

“A Consumer’s Guide to the Lanterman Act” published by DDS
http://www.dds.ca.gov/ConsumerCorner/docs/LA_Guide.pdf or

“Rights Under the Lanterman Act (RULA)” published by Disability Rights California
<http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/506301coverpages.pdf>

The Lanterman Act is a long and complex set of laws This is a very brief summary. From time to time there are changes to the law. If you have questions about the law you should research the law further.



Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law that makes discrimination based on disability illegal. It gives civil rights protection to people with disabilities and prohibits discrimination in employment, public accommodations, and public services. The ADA was passed by Congress as Public Law 101-336, and signed into law by President George H.W. Bush in 1990.

The ADA has titles like chapters in a book. Title I of the ADA prohibits discrimination in employment against people with disabilities by employers with 15 or more employees.

Who is protected by the ADA?

The ADA protects "qualified individuals with a disability". This means that you must:

Be qualified to perform the essential functions of the job (in other words, with or without a reasonable accommodation). You must have the minimum requirements necessary to perform the job such as the necessary education, experience or licenses; and

Have a disability that is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (such as, caring for yourself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working).

What does "Essential Job Function" mean?

Essential job functions are the fundamental duties of the job. A job function may be considered essential for any of several reasons, such as:

1. The job exists to perform that function
2. The function requires specialized skills or expertise and the person is hired for that expertise

3. There is only a limited number of employees to perform the function

For example, a bank teller must know how to count money. If you apply for the job you must meet this minimum requirement.

What does “reasonable accommodation” mean?

Title I of the ADA requires an employer to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities who are employees or applicants for employment, except when such accommodation would cause an undue hardship.

If you use a wheelchair, installing a desk that fits your chair would be a reasonable accommodation.

- 1) The ADA does not require employers to hire a set number of people with disabilities. It only requires employers give qualified people with disabilities employment opportunities equal to those given employees without disabilities.
- 2) You must be able to perform the essential functions of your job, either with or without reasonable accommodation to be protected under the ADA.
- 3) Employers are not required to hire or keep a person who cannot perform the essential functions of a job even with reasonable accommodations.

How does Title I of the ADA protect me from discrimination?

Title I of the ADA says:

"No covered entity shall discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability because of the disability of such individual in regard to job application procedures, the hiring, advancement, or discharge of employees, employee compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment." In summary, an employer cannot discriminate against you based on your disability if you are qualified for the job during any part of the application, hiring process and/or during employment.

The ADA makes it unlawful to:

- Use employment tests that screen out or tend to screen out an individual with a disability or a class of individuals with disabilities unless the test, as used by the employer, is shown to be job-related and consistent with business necessity. 42 U.S.C. § 12112(b)(6);

Example: For a radio announcer position, an employer may be allowed to test an applicant on public speaking ability – even if the applicant’s has a disability that affects her speech. However, if that same applicant is applying for a data-entry job, the employer may have to waive any oral testing requirement in the application process as an accommodation for the applicant’s disabilities.

- Fail to select and administer employment tests in the most effective manner to ensure that test results accurately reflect the skills, aptitude or whatever other factor that such test purports to measure, rather than reflecting an applicant’s or employee’s impairment. *Id.* at § 12112(b)(7); and

Example situations where accommodations may apply:

- 1) Because of my learning disability, I need extra time to complete a written test. Does the ADA require an employer to modify the way a test is given to me?

An employer may have to provide testing materials in alternative formats or make other adjustments to tests as an accommodation for you. The format and manner in which a test is given may pose problems for persons with impaired sensory, speaking, or manual skills, as well as for those with certain learning disabilities. For example, an applicant who is blind will not be able to read a written test, but can have it recorded. A person who is deaf will not understand oral instructions, however these could be provided in a written format or through the use of a sign language interpreter. A 30-minute timed written test may pose a problem for a person whose learning disability requires additional time.

When do I have to tell an employer that I need an accommodation for the hiring process?

It is best to let an employer know as soon as you realize that you will need a reasonable accommodation for some aspect of the hiring process. An employer needs advance notice to provide many accommodations, such as sign language interpreters, alternative formats for written documents, and adjusting the time allowed for taking a written test. An employer may also need advance notice to arrange an accessible location for a test or interview.

How do I request a reasonable accommodation?

You must inform the employer that you need some sort of change or adjustment to the application/interviewing process because of your medical condition. You can make this request orally or in writing, or someone else might make a request for you (e.g., a family member, friend, health professional, or other representative, such as a job coach).

For more information, visit:

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>



Boardsmanship



People sit on Boards to speak up on what they believe in or because they have an interest in a particular group. As a Consumer Advocate you may be asked to sit on a board to represent your agency or the people you serve.

Examples of different types of Boards you might sit on:

- Regional Center Board of Directors
- Consumer Advisory Committees
- Disability Rights California Board of Directors
- Department of Developmental Services Consumer Advisory Committee
- State Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Transportation Board
- Other local and community boards

What is a Board of Director?

- Board of Directors set policies for organizations including how the organization is run and the budget.

What is an advisory committee?

- An advisory committee is a group of people who give advise to an agency or organization about specific issues and concerns.
- Committee members are also appointed to represent different groups of people.

An effective board or consumer advisory member:

Comes to meetings on time
Does their share of the work
Stays informed
Gets help if necessary
Speaks up
Cooperates with others
Sticks to their point of view when necessary
Asks questions

What if I need a facilitator?

You may ask for a facilitator if you plan to sit on a board.

A facilitator can help you:

- Get to meetings on time
- Go over materials before the meetings
- Assist you in the meeting, for example, making sure you understand what is being discussed.

* A facilitator should not tell you how to vote or what to say.

How do I get a facilitator?

- Ask the Board President or chair
- Talk to your employer/supervisor or Regional Center if they requested you be on the board

People First



How Did People First Get Started?

People First is part of the self-advocacy movement. The movement began in Sweden in 1968 when a Swedish parent's organization for children with developmental disabilities held a meeting. The organization had the motto, "We speak for them," meaning parents speaking for their children. The people at the meeting decided they wanted to speak for themselves and made a list of changes they wanted made to their services. Over the next five years meetings like this took place in England and Canada.

In November of 1973 a North American self-advocacy convention was held in Canada. The theme was "May We Have A Choice". Two staff workers and three residents from the Fairview Hospital and Training Center in Salem, Oregon talked about the possibility of people with developmental disabilities speaking for themselves and organizing a similar convention.

The Canadian convention was organized by professionals and the people from Oregon dreamed of a convention that was planned by people with disabilities, with assistance from helpers only when needed.

The first People First Convention was held in Oregon in October 1974 and 560 people attended. From this convention the idea of self-advocacy began to grow and spread.

What Do We Offer?

People First offers support, a united voice and advocacy to its members. They offer information and help and develop service projects in communities. They offer information and assistance to countries around the world in starting new chapters and participation on DD Council Boards, ARC Boards, Transit Boards and other boards in our community. They talk to our parents, our service providers, our caseworkers, to city councils and mayors and also to legislators and legislative committees, governors and even the President regarding issues concerning people with developmental disabilities.

If you are interested in joining or starting a chapter visit the People First of California website at www.peoplefirstca.org

Regional Center Directory

Regional Center Name	Phone Number	Counties Served
<u>Alta California Regional Center</u> 2135 Butano Drive Sacramento, CA 95825	(916) 978-6400	Alpine, Colusa, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sierra, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties
<u>Central Valley Regional Center</u> 4615 North Marty Avenue Fresno, CA 93722-4186	(559) 276-4300	Fresno, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, and Tulare counties
<u>Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center</u> 1000 South Fremont Alhambra, CA 91802-7916	(626) 299-4700	Eastern Los Angeles county including the communities of Alhambra and Whittier
<u>Far Northern Regional Center</u> 1900 Churn Creek Road, #319 Redding, CA 96002 Mailing Address: P. O. Box 492418 Redding, CA 96049-2418	(530) 222-4791	Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity counties
<u>Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center</u> 3303 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 700 Los Angeles, CA 90010	(213) 383-1300	Central Los Angeles county including Burbank, Glendale, and Pasadena
<u>Golden Gate Regional Center</u> 875 Stevenson Street, 6th Floor San Francisco, CA 94103	(415) 546-9222	Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties
<u>Harbor Regional Center</u> 21231 Hawthorne Boulevard Torrance, CA 90503	(310) 540-1711	Southern Los Angeles county including Bellflower, Harbor, Long Beach, and Torrance
<u>Inland Regional Center</u> 674 Brier Drive	(909) 890-3000	Riverside and San Bernardino

San Bernardino, CA 92408 Mailing Address: P. O. Box 6127 San Bernardino, CA 92412-6127		counties
<u>Kern Regional Center</u> 3200 North Sillect Avenue Bakersfield, CA 93308	(661) 327-8531	Inyo, Kern, and Mono counties
<u>North Bay Regional Center</u> 10 Executive Court, Suite A Napa, CA 94558	(707) 256-1100	Napa, Solano, and Sonoma counties
<u>North Los Angeles County Regional Center</u> 15400 Sherman Way, Suite 170 Van Nuys, CA 91406-4211	(818) 778-1900	Northern Los Angeles county including San Fernando and Antelope Valleys
<u>Redwood Coast Regional Center</u> 525 Second Street, Suite 300 Eureka, CA 95501	(707) 445-0893	Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, and Lake counties
<u>Regional Center of the East Bay</u> 500 Davis Street, Suite 100 San Leandro, CA 94577	(510) 383-1200	Alameda and Contra Costa counties
<u>Regional Center of Orange County</u> 801 Civic Center Drive West, Suite 100 Santa Ana, CA 92701	(714) 796-5100	Orange county
<u>San Andreas Regional Center</u> 300 Orchard City Drive, Suite 170 Campbell, CA 95008	(408) 374-9960	Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties
<u>San Diego Regional Center</u> 4355 Ruffin Road, Suite 200 San Diego, CA 92123-1648	(858) 576-2996	Imperial and San Diego counties
<u>San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center</u>	(909) 620-7722	Eastern Los Angeles county including El Monte, Monrovia,

761 Corporate Center Drive Pomona, CA 91768		Pomona, Glendora and West Covina
<u>South Central Los Angeles Regional Center</u> 650 West Adams Boulevard, Suite 200 Los Angeles, CA 90007-2545	(213) 744-7000	Southern Los Angeles county including the communities of Compton and Gardena
<u>Tri-Counties Regional Center</u> 520 East Montecito Street Santa Barbara, CA 93103-3274	(805) 962-7881	San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties
<u>Valley Mountain Regional Center</u> 702 North Aurora Street Stockton, CA 95202	(209) 473-0951	Amador, Calaveras, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne counties
<u>Westside Regional Center</u> 5901 Green Valley Circle, Suite 320 Culver City, CA 90230-6953	(310) 258-4000	Western Los Angeles county including the communities of Culver City, Inglewood, and Santa Monica

Consumer Advocate Directory

Regional Center/Advocacy Agency Name	Phone Number	Address
Alta California Regional Center	(916) 978-6400	2135 Butano Drive Sacramento, CA 95825
Central Valley Regional Center	(559) 276-4300	4615 North Marty Avenue Fresno, CA 93722-4186

California Department of Developmental Services	(916) 654-1494	1600 9th Street P. O. Box 944202 Sacramento, CA 94244-2020
Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center	(626) 299-4854	1000 South Fremont Alhambra, CA 91802-7916
Far Northern Regional Center	(530) 222-8795	1900 Churn Creek Road, #319 Redding, CA 96002 Mailing Address: P. O. Box 492418 Redding, CA 96049-2418
Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center	(213) 383-1300	3303 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 700 Los Angeles, CA 90010
Golden Gate Regional Center	(415) 546-2686	875 Stevenson Street, 6th Floor San Francisco, CA 94103
Harbor Regional Center	(310) 540-1711	21231 Hawthorne Boulevard Torrance, CA 90503
Inland Regional Center	(909) 890-3000	674 Brier Drive San Bernardino, CA 92408 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 6127 San Bernardino, CA 92412-6127
Kern Regional Center	(661) 327-8531	3200 North Sillect Avenue Bakersfield, CA 93308
North Bay Regional Center	(707) 256-1162	10 Executive Court, Suite A Napa, CA 94558
North Los Angeles County Regional Center	(818) 778-1900	15400 Sherman Way, Suite 170 Van Nuys, CA 91406-4211
Disability Rights California	(916) 488-7787	100 Howe Ave. Ste. 200N Sacramento, CA 95825
	(213) 427-8747	3580 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 925 Los Angeles, CA 90010

Redwood Coast Regional Center	(707) 462-3832	1116 Airport Park Blvd. Ukiah, CA 95482
	(707) 445-0893	525 2 nd St., Suite 300 Eureka, CA 95501
Regional Center of the East Bay	(510) 618-6148	7677 Oakport Street, Suite 300 Oakland, CA 94621
Regional Center of Orange County	(714) 796-5100	801 Civic Center Drive West, St100 Santa Ana, CA 92701
San Andreas Regional Center	(408) 846-2038	300 Orchard City Drive, Suite 170 Campbell, CA 95008
San Diego Regional Center	(858) 576-2996	4355 Ruffin Road, Suite 200 San Diego, CA 92123-1648
San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center	(909) 868-7669	761 Corporate Center Drive Pomona, CA 91768
South Central Los Angeles Regional Center	(213) 744-7000	650 West Adams Boulevard, Ste. 200 Los Angeles, CA 90007-2545
Tri-Counties Regional Center	(805) 962-7881	520 East Montecito Street Santa Barbara, CA 93103-3274
Valley Mountain Regional Center	(209) 473-0951	702 North Aurora Street Stockton, CA 95202
Westside Regional Center	(310) 258-4111	5901 Green Valley Circle, Suite 320 Culver City, CA 90230-6953
USC University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities	(323) 660-2450	P.O. Box 27980 Mailstop #53 Los Angeles, California 90027

Area Board Directory

Area Board	Counties Served	Contact Information
1	Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino	505 S. State Street Ukiah, CA 95482 Phone: (707) 463-4700 Fax: (707) 463-4752 Email: ab1@scdd.ca.gov
2	Butte, Shasta, Glenn, Siskiyou, Lassen, Tehama, Plumas, Modoc, Trinity	1367 E. Lassen Ave., #B3 Chico, CA 95973 Phone: (530) 895-4027 Fax: (530) 899-1562 Email: ab2@scdd.ca.gov
3	Alpine, Sacramento, Colusa, El Dorado, Sutter, Nevada, Yolo, Placer, Yuba, Sierra	1507 21st Street, Ste. 220 Sacramento, CA 95814 Phone: (916) 324-7426 Fax: (916) 324-7621
4	Napa, Solano, Sonoma	236 Georgia St., Suite 201 Vallejo, CA 94590 Phone: (707) 648-4073 Fax: (707) 648-4100
5	Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo	1515 Clay Street, Suite 300 Oakland, CA 94612 Phone: (510) 286-0439 Fax: (510) 286-4397 Email: ab5@scdd.ca.gov
6	Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, San Joaquin, Stanislaus	2529 March Lane, Suite 105 Stockton, CA 95207-8270 Phone: (209) 473-6930 Fax: (209) 473-6932 Email: ab6@scdd.ca.gov
7	Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara	2580 North First Street, Suite 240 San Jose, CA 95131 Phone: (408) 324-2106 Fax: (408) 324-2108 Email: ab7@scdd.ca.gov

8	Mariposa, Madera, Merced, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Kern	770 East Shaw Ave., Ste. 123 Fresno, CA 93710 Phone: (559) 222-2496 Fax: (559) 248-2886
9	San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura	7127 Hollister Ave., Ste 7 Goleta, CA 93117 Phone: (805) 685-8395 Fax: (805) 685-4896
10	Los Angeles	411 N. Central Ave., Ste. 620 Glendale, CA 91203-2020 Phone: (818) 543-4631 Fax: (818) 543-4635
11	Orange County	2000 E. Fourth Street, Ste 115 Santa Ana, CA 92705 Phone: (714) 558-4404 Fax: (714) 558-4704
12	Inyo, Mono, Riverside, San Bernardino	13800 Heacock St., Ste. C130 Moreno Valley, CA 92553 Phone: (951) 656-5078 Fax: (951) 656-3129
13	San Diego, Imperial	750 B Street, Suite 1830 San Diego, CA 92101 Phone: (619) 645-3000 1-800-748-2055 Fax: (619) 645-3008