

**Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center (ELARC)**

**Fiscal Year 2021/22**

**Purchase of Services (POS) Data Report**

**May 31, 2023**

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## I Background

As of June 27, 2012, the Lanterman Act was amended requiring the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and Regional Centers to annually collaborate in compiling data on Purchase of Services (POS). POS Data Report is based on approved authorizations, actual POS expenditures and the utilization rate of authorized services for all consumers. The data is displayed by consumer age, ethnicity, primary language and diagnosis. Additionally, the data includes the total number of open/active consumers who received POS funding and also consumers that did not have POS expenditures for the reporting fiscal year.

The POS Data Reports is to be posted on the Regional Center website by December 31<sup>st</sup> Regional Centers are required to conduct community meeting(s) no later than March 31<sup>st</sup> to present and discuss the data report with community stakeholders. By May 31<sup>st</sup> Regional Centers are to submit a written report to DDS that addresses the requirements of Welfare & Institutions Code (WIC) Section 4519.5 on attendance, meeting notes, issues identified in the data and recommendations to promote equity and reduce disparities in POS for the various ethnic groups served by each Regional Center.

## II ELARC Demographics

ELARC serves a diverse population. The three predominant ethnic groups served by ELARC are: Hispanic, Asian and White. The following figures represent the ethnic breakdown for all consumers served by ELARC in Fiscal Year 2021/22. It is important to note that the numbers below are gathered from the POS Data Report dated December 2022.

	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Consumers</b>	<b>%</b>
(1)	Hispanic	10,730	70
(2)	Asian	1,959	12.8
(3)	White	1,350	8.8
(4)	African- American	221	1.4
(5)	Other	1,059	7
	<b>Total Consumers:</b>	<b>15,319</b>	<b>100%</b>

The two predominant ethnicities served by ELARC are Hispanic and Asians. Collectively these two ethnic groups represent about 82.8% of all consumers served by ELARC. Such diverse demographics demand that ELARC's personnel reflect the linguistic and cultural composition of the community it serves. The following statistics, gathered in December 2022, profiles a work force that mirrors and compliments the community it serves as a component of promoting

equity and reducing disparities.

**Service Coordinators = 218**

Hispanic	83%
*Asian	16%

\* Cantonese/Mandarin/other Chinese Dialects/Korean/Vietnamese

**Management = 37**

Hispanic	84%
Asian	5%

**All Staff = 357**

Hispanic	81%
Asian	15%

### III Attendance

ELARC hosted one virtual public meeting. In order to maximize attendance ELARC personally invited the following Community Based Organizations (CBOs) via email: Being Built Together, Vietnamese Parents With Disabled Children Association (VPDCA), USC UCEDD at CHLA, CHLA Parent Navigator Project, California Tribal Families Coalition, Korean American Special Education Center (KASEC), Aveeana Healthcare, Special Needs Network, East Los Angeles Family Resource Center, Disability Voices United, Seesaw Communities, Wayfinder Family Services, Autism Society of Los Angeles, Ability First, Chinese Parent Association for the Disabled (CPAD), and Fiesta Educativa. In regards to CPAD and Fiesta Educativa, they represent the two predominant ethnic groups served by ELARC: Hispanic (70%) and Asian (13%). Both parent group organizations have the ability to draw from their established membership and additionally to outreach to other parents/consumers to promote attendance and participation with an effective parent-to-parent approach.

Notification of public meetings was promulgated by various methods which included:

- ✓ Posting on ELARC website
- ✓ Mass email notifications via E-Notifications system
- ✓ Posting across all Social Media accounts
- ✓ Distributed notices to community partners including:
  - Being Built Together

- Vietnamese Parents With Disabled Children Association (VPDCA)
- USC UCEDD at CHLA
- CHLA Parent Navigator Project
- California Tribal Families Coalition
- Korean American Special Education (KASEC)
- Disability Voices United
- Autism Society of Los Angeles
- Aveeana Healthcare
- Special Needs Network
- Seesaw Communities
- Wayfinder Services
- East Los Angeles Family Resource Center
- Chinese Parent Association for the Disabled (CPAD)
- Fiesta Educativa

Meeting announcements were translated into Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese and Korean for distribution and posting. The public meeting was conducted as follows:

- (1) March 29, 2023
  - Meeting was held via zoom
  - Interpretation services were provided: Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean and American Sign Language
  - Total Attendance: 97

#### **IV Meeting Notes (Attachment #1) & Plan to promote equity and reduce disparity**

Included are the raw notes taken at the meeting; a summary of comments and suggestions have been categorized into one major theme as raised by participants. The raw notes are included as “Attachment 1”. The notes focus on one general theme:

- (1) POS Data Report questions as related to lack of services and lack of information

The summary notes reflect comments, suggestions and specific questions raised by the audience and the related response to each inquiry. General comments on the theme area included:

- Inquiry about ELARC service approval process, and use of generic resources.
- Inquiry regarding the type of Regional Center funded services available to consumers and their families.
- Concerns regarding the complexity of the Self-Determination process.
- Concern expressed about consistency of information provided to families by Service

Coordinators and training received by Service Coordinators.

- Concerns noted about what to do when assigned Service Coordinator is not responsive to consumers/families calls or emails.

Additionally, please note the various activities undertaken by ELARC as outlined on Section VI of this report. In summary there are three focus areas that promote equity and address disparity based on stakeholder meetings and POS Report Data:

- (1) Language Access & Cultural Competency
- (2) Ongoing Training for Regional Center Staff
- (3) Enhanced Service Coordination

Specific details on these three focus areas are included starting on page 9 through 13 of this report.

In addition, the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA) provided a letter to ELARC on April 12, 2023 entitled 'OCRA Comments on Purchase of Service Annual Report and Public Stakeholder Meeting'. The following recommendations were included:

- Have the Enhanced Service Coordinators from the Reduced Caseload Project share their experiences with non-Reduced Caseload service coordinators so that they can learn and develop skills to reduce disparities.
- Hold focus groups with Asian and Pacific Islander consumers and their families in their native languages.
- Create a one-page description of services that briefly describes the Regional Center services that are available for consumers.

We have already begun to address some of the recommendations and with the work being carried out through our Language Access and Cultural Competency Initiative and the newly created Training Supervisor position, we hope to address more recommendations.

Our Community Services Manager met with Alexander Scarlis, Clients' Rights Advocate, on April 7, 2023 to discuss median rate methodology as it relates to inequities in purchase of service. OCRA recommended that information regarding the topic of discussion be further expanded and included in this year's POS Data Report, which can be found on pages 9-10. As always we value the information provided by OCRA and appreciate the time to engage in productive discussions.

## **V Community Presentations (Attachment 2: Flyer [3/29/23]; Attachment 3: PowerPoint [3/29/23]; Attachment 4: Flyer [5/16/23]; Attachment 5: PowerPoint [5/16/23])**

The format for the community meeting held on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 included a formal panel presentation on specific areas of the POS Data Report and included presentations regarding new agency initiatives by the Cultural Specialist, Chief of Consumer Services, Community Services Manager, Supervisor of Enhanced Services & Community Engagement, as well as by

the Career Pathways & Local Partnerships Officer. The presentation concluded with video testimonials from a former Reduced Caseload participant and their former Enhanced Service Coordinator. The videos were included in response to feedback received from community members who expressed interest in gaining a better understanding about the ESC's experience working in the Reduced Caseload Project (RCP) as well as interest in tracking the progress of families who exited the RCP. It should be noted that ELARC hosted a follow-up meeting to the March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 public meeting as a response to some of the concerns raised by our Spanish speaking community. The follow-up meeting was conducted in Spanish via Zoom on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 with English interpretation provided. The format of the May 16<sup>th</sup> follow-up meeting included a presentation by the Cultural Specialist and consisted of a brief summary of 2021-2022 Purchase of Service Data, a general overview of ELARC initiatives to decrease disparities in Purchase of Service, review/response to questions raised by the community during the March 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, and an opportunity for discussion and audience input. During both meetings held on March 29<sup>th</sup> and May 16<sup>th</sup>, attendees were informed that this is the last year ELARC will be holding POS Data meetings remotely. Attendees were also informed of our plan to provide more meeting options next year (which will more than likely also include a remote option). ELARC plans to once again partner with some of its Community Based Organizations to host presentations in Spanish and Chinese out in the community. We are also considering hosting smaller meetings out in the community in languages other than our 3 predominant languages. Additionally, attendees were informed that the PowerPoint presentation for the March 29<sup>th</sup> will be translated in our 5 threshold languages and will be made available on our website.

The formal presentation which took place on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 consisted of:

- An overview and background on the process and reasons for compiling POS data.
- Review of ELARC initiatives as funded by ABX2-1 to ameliorate POS disparities amongst the various ethnic groups over the last fiscal year.
- Video testimonials from former Reduced Caseload participant and their former Enhanced Service Coordinator
- Audience directed questions/comments to ELARC panel presenters, formal responses and content of discussion is included under Section "IV Meeting Notes" of this report.

The community presentation focused on the per capita differences amongst the various ethnic groups in ELARC's service area. A comparison of the last two fiscal years total annual expenditures and authorized services results in an increase for five out of seven populations. It is important to note that amongst the three prominent ethnicities (Hispanic, Asian, and White) the Hispanic population was the only one to experience a decrease.

**Total Annual Expenditures and Authorized Services by Ethnicity or Race  
Per Capita Authorized Services by Fiscal Year (FY) Comparison**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>FY 2020-21</b>	<b>FY 2020-21</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>% increase or decrease</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>\$21,107</b>	<b>\$20,691</b>	<b>- \$416</b>	<b>2.0% ↓</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>\$21,741</b>	<b>\$22,271</b>	<b>+ \$530</b>	<b>2.4% ↑</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>\$53,244</b>	<b>\$54,566</b>	<b>+ \$1,322</b>	<b>2.5% ↑</b>
<b>Black/African American</b>	<b>\$42,915</b>	<b>\$43,780</b>	<b>+ \$865</b>	<b>2.0% ↑</b>
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	<b>\$28,345</b>	<b>\$35,955</b>	<b>+ \$7,610</b>	<b>27% ↑</b>
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	<b>\$119,189</b>	<b>\$68,206</b>	<b>- \$50,983</b>	<b>43% ↓</b>
<b>Other Ethnicity or Race/Multi-Cultural</b>	<b>\$16,580</b>	<b>\$16,651</b>	<b>+ \$71</b>	<b>0.4% ↑</b>

A major factor that continues to impact the above changes in the per capita authorizations for the Hispanic and Asian populations is the utilization of residential placement as a service option which significantly impacts the POS average authorizations for the various ethnic groups. This critical factor will be addressed in more detail in another section of this report.

An additional point to consider is that “contracted services” such as transportation and supported employment group services are not captured as part of the POS expenditure data. For ELARC the total payments made for contracted transportation POS services in FY 21-22 was \$3,520,281. As this significant expenditure cannot be captured for the individual consumers and their ethnic background, it is uncertain what impact and difference it would have on the average per capita POS expenditures for the various ethnicities.

The next table illustrates a comparison of the per capita growth, since the inception of the POS data report in Fiscal Year 2011-12. These figures exhibit an overall growth in authorizations for ELARC’s Hispanic and Asian population over a nine year period, Fiscal Year 2011-12 to 2020-21. Overall the per capita cost comparison shows a consistent increase in POS authorizations over a nine year span for all ages in the three predominant ethnic groups served by ELARC.

**Total Annual Per Capita Authorizations Comparison by Ethnicity or Race  
Over a Nine Year Period  
FY 2011-12 to FY 2021-22**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>FY 2011-12</b>	<b>FY 2020-21</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>\$12,922</b>	<b>\$20,691</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>\$14,848</b>	<b>\$22,271</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>\$28,639</b>	<b>\$54,566</b>	<b>91%</b>

Despite the above noted increases in POS authorization for the Hispanic and Asian groups, ranging over a nine year span, the White population continues to have an appreciable gain in the per capita funding over other ethnic groups.

The following table displays the differences in the per capita authorizations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022.

**Total Annual Per Capita Authorizations  
Comparison by FY 2021-22**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Per Capita Authorizations</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>\$54,566</b>	<b>+ \$33,875*</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>\$22,271</b>	<b>- \$32,295**</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>\$20,691</b>	<b>- \$33,875**</b>

\* Compared to Lowest Per Capita Authorization

\*\* Compared to Highest Per Capita Authorization

The primary contributing factor for this sizeable authorization variation in the above table is the continuing higher utilization of residential services by the White ethnic group. Residential services, in its various categories, constitute the most costly of all regional center funded services. The end-result is a substantial disparity in the annual per capita authorization averages among the three ethnic groups as noted in the above figures. The following statistics reflect the residential placement trends for ELARC.



**Residence Type Comparison By Ethnicity  
FY 2021-22**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Total Consumers</b>	<b>Living at Home # / %</b>	<b>Residential Placement # / %</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>10,730</b>	<b>10,040 / 94%</b>	<b>290 / 3%</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>1,959</b>	<b>1,836 / 94%</b>	<b>88 / 4%</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>1,350</b>	<b>941 / 70%</b>	<b>210 / 16%</b>

The differences in the utilization of residential services continue to have a vast impact on the per capita funding for the three predominant ethnic groups. Therefore, it is essential to offset residential costs to reach a more precise POS comparison for ELARC consumers of all ages that are living at home. The following table isolates residential costs and compares POS funding for consumers, of all ages who are living at home.

**Total Annual Expenditures and Authorized Services  
for Consumers Living at Home by Ethnicity or Race  
FY 2021-22**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Consumers</b>	<b>Per Capita Authorized</b>	<b>\$ Difference</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>\$19,388</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>1,836</b>	<b>\$15,654</b>	<b>- \$3,734*</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>10,040</b>	<b>\$14,018</b>	<b>- \$5,370*</b>

\* Compared to White ethnicity Per Capita Authorized Services

The difference in Per Capita Authorized Services for individuals living at home vs all consumers continues to be notable and can be contrasted with the tables on page 8 of this report, which includes residential costs. The Per Capita Authorized Services for the White population changes from \$54,566 to \$19,388 a difference of \$35,178. This comparison results in narrowing the POS gap between the White population and Hispanics to \$5,370 and for the Asian population to \$3,734 as compared to the considerable gap noted on the table on page 8 which does not factor out residential expenses.

This comparative analysis yields a more reliable comparison of the per capita authorization averages. There is an overwhelming percentage of Hispanics and Asian

consumers that are living with their families, at a rate of 94% for each respectively, in contrast to 70% of the White population. With this comparison, which again removes residential costs, the stark gap in POS expenditures substantially narrows.

An additional barrier ELARC faces to equitable Purchase of Service spending is that service equity analysis has not focused enough on the issue of rate methodology, specifically negotiated rates which are bound by median rates. Since 2009, negotiated rates are frozen and cannot be negotiated higher. Currently the Department is implementing rate increases based on a 2019 Rate Study. Rate Models were constructed in consideration of costs providers faced in delivering a particular service consistent with the states requirements. This allows providers to receive the same rate for the same service in the same area consistently across the Regional Centers. However, inequity across communities is not addressed. Because ELARC’s median rates tend towards the lowest in the state, and Los Angeles County, for many services, such as transportation, ELARC loses providers. Thus the entire ELARC community’s POS spending is reduced because we are restricted to spending less. Beyond this, a geographic disparity of services is created within our service area and the larger Los Angeles County community. Those in poorer neighborhoods with more demands on them (work, family, etc.) are the least likely to be able to arrange alternate transportation to services that tend to be outside of their neighborhoods. Providers of services such as ABA, ILS, and other direct services tend to locate in communities such as Pasadena and Whittier, despite attempts to develop resources in East Los Angeles communities. Use of generic transportation resources are not a good fit for all. Additionally, there is the issue of time for many due to Los Angeles traffic. Those who reside in higher socio economic neighborhoods tend to be closer to the services, even the generic ones, and seem to have more flexibility in being able to arrange transportation if necessary and/or adapt their schedules to receive remote services.

Despite some of the barriers noted above, we are encouraged by data comparing per capita authorized spending by language. The following table displays spending for individuals residing at home by language (3 predominant languages).

**Total Annual Expenditures and Authorized Services  
for Consumers Living at Home by Language  
FY 2021-22**

<b>Language</b>	<b>Consumers</b>	<b>Per Capita Authorized</b>	<b>\$ Difference</b>
<b>English</b>	<b>9,963</b>	<b>\$13,824</b>	<b>-\$2,396**</b>
<b>Spanish</b>	<b>3,246</b>	<b>\$16,220</b>	<b>+ \$2,396*</b>
<b>Asian &amp; Pacific Islander</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>\$13,553</b>	<b>- \$271*</b>

\*Compared to English Language Per Capita Authorized Services.

\*\*Compared to Spanish Language Per Capita Authorized Services.

This past year Spanish speaking individuals received a per capita average of \$16,220 compared to their English speaking counterparts who received a per capita average of \$13,824. We are encouraged by these numbers as they show that our second largest language group is not experiencing disparity in purchase of service when we look at this information by language for individuals living at home. In fact, over the past two fiscal years this information has remained primarily the same and there has been no disparity for this language group. The Asian & Pacific Islander languages received a per capita average of \$13,553, and are receiving \$271 less in per capita authorized services than their English speaking counterparts. This accounts for a 1.9% difference in per capita authorized services. Although a difference remains, the difference has lessened from a 9% difference last year to under a 2% difference this year. These results are encouraging as they indicate that although we have more work to do, the results are leading toward the right path to equity.

ELARC will continue to focus its efforts to curtail the gap in POS funding for individuals living at home with its various projects.

The following section of this report highlights specific efforts and activities being undertaken by ELARC and related general recommendations to achieve funding equity amongst the various ethnic groups.

## **VI Current Projects**

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-'17 Assembly Bill (AB) X2-1 went into effect authorizing the allocation of \$11 million towards the funding of local projects which would promote equity and reduce disparities. ELARC participated in four funding cycles to date. These projects have proven to be valuable tools in ELARC's effort to understand the barriers causing disparity and how to promote funding parity. The goal, over the long-term, is that these activities will yield valuable information which can result in far-reaching outcomes in the reduction of Purchase of Service (POS) disparities.

The following projects highlight ELARC's efforts in promoting Equity in Purchase of Service.

### **(1) Language Access & Cultural Competency:**

Last year the department provided funds to help improve the language needs of the people we serve and to help provide information and access to linguistic and culturally informed services. ELARC's internal plan is a collaboration between the different departments within the agency. Access to Language Access and Cultural Competency funds made the development of new positions possible. Three Community Access Coordinator (CAC) positions were developed and have been filled: a Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Spanish-speaking CAC. The Community Access Coordinators are responsible for carrying out some of the main components of the agency's plan.

In order to gain a better understanding of the cultural and linguistic needs of the various ethnic groups served by ELARC they are responsible for conducting focus groups. They have begun hosting focus groups with Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin-speaking groups, and are working on hosting focus groups with the Vietnamese community. The community has embraced these meetings and ELARC will continue to conduct focus groups with the various ethnic groups served and in different languages.

The CACs engage in various outreach activities. They collaborate with our local Community Based Organizations, specifically the ones awarded Service Access & Equity grants who serve the ELARC community, to conduct outreach and facilitate delivery of information inside and outside of the agency. The CACs participate in various community outreach events and have secured desk days at local libraries. They actively search and secure outreach opportunities in underserved areas, specifically where there is a prevalence of non-English speakers.

An additional component of our Language Access & Cultural Competency Initiative is the translation of vital documents. As an agency we have been providing families entering our system from the Early Intervention department and Intake department the option of receiving their psychological evaluation in their native language. In accordance with the mandated languages provided by the Department we are offering translations in Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Vietnamese. ELARC has always strived to meet the language needs of its community by providing service coordination and written material in an individual's native language, and by offering interpreter services when needed.

It is equally important that the interpretation and translation services provided to our community are quality services that are respectful and culturally informed. Over the past year ELARC has worked with consultants to create a curriculum as part of a training component for our interpretation and translation vendors. Training and screening tools created will help ensure that our providers are culturally competent with our Regional Center terminology.

In a continued effort to improve equitable access to services and supports ELARC conducted a Language Access & Cultural Competency Chart Day in March 2023. An internal caseload audit was conducted in order to verify and update information regarding language, ethnicity, and purchase of service for every caseload. The updates completed through this coordinated effort provide a baseline of information to ensure accurate reporting and competent outreach to individuals in the community. This effort was also geared to individuals receiving No to Low POS. Service Coordinators were asked to verify that a No POS outcome statement was included in the IPP of those individuals not receiving Regional Center funded services. Taking advantage of lessons learned in the Reduced Caseload Project (RCP), Service Coordinators were also asked to complete a survey to identify if any of the three most common barriers identified in the RCP were preventing or limiting individuals from accessing needed services. This internal audit has allowed information to be updated and a secondary needs assessment to be completed outside of the annual IPP. ELARC plans to implement an annual chart day, and to use the process and information gathered to provide training to service coordinators.

**(2) Ongoing Training for Regional Center Staff:**

In regards to training for regional center staff, a new Consumer Services Training Supervisor position has been created. The Consumer Services Training Supervisor's primary purpose is to meet the training needs of service coordinators. This new position will address concerns voiced from the community in regard to Service Coordinator responsibilities, responsiveness, and competence in providing information regarding access to services. The training supervisor will look to ensure that Service Coordinators understand their roles and responsibilities and have the knowledge and skills needed to successfully carry out those responsibilities. A top priority of this new position is to ensure consistency in the delivery of information across all Consumer Services units, in order for all families to benefit from the same information. The new position looks to ensure that all Service Coordinators are receiving the same information, are following the same processes, and are receiving the support they need. Service Coordinators will receive training that will enhance their cultural competence and promote person-centered practices in daily work. The lessons learned from the Reduced Caseload Project will be incorporated in Service Coordinator trainings to assist Service Coordinators in knowing what questions to ask families during IPP meetings and to better understand the needs of individuals served.

In addition to the development of a Consumer Services Training Supervisor, a Transition Specialist position was also created. The Transition Specialist is responsible for providing support and training to Early Start and Lanterman Unit Service Coordinators, families, and community partners. The purpose of the Transition Specialist is to ensure a smooth transition from Early Start Services. The Transition Specialist conducts outreach and training to school districts and community entities that serve the zero to five age group.

**(3) Enhanced Case Management**

The Budget Act for Fiscal Year 2021-22 provided funding for DDS to establish Enhanced Service Coordination for individuals from diverse communities with low or no purchase of service (POS) expenditures. Service coordinators assigned to Enhanced Service Coordination have caseloads of 40 individuals/families, which is smaller than the caseloads carried by other service coordinators.

The reduced caseload is intended to improve service access and delivery for individuals from diverse communities who face barriers to regional center services, such as those who are non-white, non-English speaking, and hearing impaired. With smaller caseloads, specially trained service coordinators can provide focused support and increased service coordination to the individuals and families who participate in Enhanced Service Coordination.

ELARC continues to provide Enhanced Case Management. Five Enhanced Service Coordinators (ESC) continue to manage a reduced caseload. The ESCs work closely with individuals and families to help improve understanding of and satisfaction with the Regional Center system.

Due to their reduced caseloads ESCs are able engage with their families with more frequency, and gain a better understanding of their needs. They provide support and guidance in navigating the Regional Center services system, and provide individuals and families assistance in accessing non Regional Center services available to them. Participants will be tracked per Department guidelines.

In addition to the Enhanced Service Coordination caseloads, ELARC was able to create six Self Determination Specialized Caseloads (SDSC) at a 1:40 ratio due to funding provided through the FY 22-23 Service Access & Equity grant. Service Coordinators and their assigned supervisor identified to be the subject matter experts (SME) managing these cases with an emphasis on equity among the Hispanic and Asian communities. Our community has voiced concerns about the complexity of the Self-Determination process and challenges they face in understanding the process and receiving adequate support and guidance.

The Enhanced Service Coordination (Reduced Caseload Project) project has now been implemented statewide at all regional centers as a result of SB154. The successful impact the reduced caseload model provided will serve as a template for the Self-Determination Specialized Caseloads (SDSC). Implementing the Self-Determination Specialized Caseload (SDSC) at a reduced ratio of 1:40 will enhance the relationships with the self-determination service coordinators, Independent Facilitators (FMS), Financial Management Services (FMS), the participants and their circle of support. The lessons learned with the Enhanced Service Coordination (Reduced Caseload) project will serve as a catalyst for this project.

## **VII Plan to Continue to Promote Equity**

ELARC is committed to improving service access for all individuals served. ELARC has implemented an array of projects over the years to promote equity. Most notably, we implemented the Reduced Caseload Project in 2017 which, due to its success, is a program that is now being modeled and replicated across all 21 Regional Centers and has transitioned to “Enhanced Service Coordination” which was established by the Department in the Budget Act for Fiscal Year 2021/22. Enhanced Service Coordination will continue to be an integral part of our Agency’s Plan to promote equity in POS. Latino and Asian (Cantonese and Mandarin speaking) Individuals and their families will continue to be the Racial/Ethnic groups served in the upcoming Fiscal Year, however, as we move forward the targeted groups may vary.

ELARC’s plan to promote equity will be largely guided by information contained in the Purchase of Service Data Report. An annual assessment will be conducted and information gathered will inform the Agency Plan related to which Racial/Ethnic, Language, Age, etc. groups will be targeted for intervention. The intent is to benefit as many individuals and families as possible. It is important to note that efforts may also extend to underserved communities not noted on the Data Report.

Other groups not served through Enhanced Service Coordination will be targeted for intervention in a variety of ways. Part of the Agency Plan for the upcoming Fiscal Year (2023/24), will include

the continued implementation of the various components of the Agency's Language Access and Cultural Competency initiative.

One of the components includes providing training and orientations for individuals and families in their native language. We plan to implement these trainings in collaboration with Community Based Organizations currently serving the targeted ethnic groups. The goal is to provide individuals and families with knowledge on how to navigate the regional center system in order to increase access to services and supports.

As an agency we are also looking to conduct internal periodic reviews of cases with Low to No Purchase of Service. The development of a Review Committee that would require Service Coordinators to present on cases with Low to No POS. This process would hold Service Coordinators and their Supervisors accountable for ensuring that efforts are made to identify individual and family needs as well as barriers to services. It would ensure that these cases are being monitored and follow-up is being completed.

The following are some of the initiatives that we are continuing to implement in order to provide training and targeted outreach efforts to underserved communities receiving Low to No purchase of service:

- (1) Health and Safety Waiver- The Budget Act of 2021 provided specialized funding to facilitate the application for Health and Safety Waivers for non-English speaking individuals. Our Health and Safety Waiver Specialist is the subject matter expert who provides support, guidance and technical assistance to families, Service Coordinators, and vendors. This process seeks to encourage all providers, individuals, and families served to consider utilizing this process as an option to reduce risk. Our Health and Safety Waiver Specialist will continue to engage in outreach efforts with individuals that live at home with their families in underserved communities.
- (2) Coordinated Family Support Services Pilot Program- Implementation of this program began in January 2023 and will continue through December 2023. The program is available to adult consumers who chose to live at home with their families, and is designed to help coordinate services and supports that allow the person to continue to do so. ELARC's Coordinated Family Support Services Specialist has started providing training to Service Coordinators, presenting at unit meetings, and is holding information sessions for all service coordination staff. The Coordinated Family Support Services Specialist will partner with Enhanced Service Coordinators and with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist to do targeted outreach to individuals and families served in those specialized caseloads and to their support community. Outreach efforts will also be made to promote the Coordinated Family Support Services to potential service providers.
- (3) Mental Health Specialist- Due to Service Access and Equity funding we have been able to develop a Mental Health Specialist position to support Asian and Hispanic families in navigating the mental health system. The intent is to increase awareness, education, and

support about mental health and mental illness among our Hispanic and Asian communities. Our Mental Health Specialist will be developing culturally appropriate materials to better serve individuals including screening tools and surveys. The Mental Health Specialist will conduct focus groups in order to determine areas of need, and will provide individual consultation with staff as well as with families, in languages other than English. Training with Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin speaking individuals and families will be provided.

These are only a few ways that ELARC plans to continue to work towards an equity driven, culturally respectful, and language focused approach. We are always looking for grant opportunities that allow us to implement additional plans to address the needs of our community.

Progress on the Agency Plan will be reported during next year's Purchase of Service Data Report Community Meeting.