

Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center (ELARC)

Fiscal Year 2022/23

Purchase of Services (POS) Data Report

May 31, 2024

- I. Background**
- II. ELARC Demographics**
- III. Attendance**
- IV. Meeting Notes & Recommendations**
- V. Community Presentations & Issues Identified**
- VI. Project Updates & Plan to Continue to Promote Equity**

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). The POS Data Report is based on approved authorizations, actual POS expenditures and the utilization rate of authorized services for all individuals. The data is displayed by consumer age, ethnicity, primary language and diagnosis. Additionally, the data includes the total number of open/active individuals who received POS funding and also individuals that did not have POS expenditures for the reporting fiscal year.

The POS Data Reports are to be posted on the Regional Center website by December 31st. Regional Centers are required to conduct community meeting(s) no later than March 31st to present and discuss the data report with community stakeholders. By May 31st, 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 individuals served by ELARC in Fiscal Year 2022/23. It is important to note that the numbers below are gathered from the POS Data Report dated December 2023.

	Ethnicity	Individuals	%
(1)	Hispanic	11,359	69.8 %
(2)	Asian	2,068	12.7 %
(3)	White	1,359	8.4 %
(4)	Other/Multi-Cultural	1,232	7.6 %
(5)	Black/African American	230	1.4%
(6)	American Indian or Alaska	14	0.1 %
(7)	Native Hawaiian or Other	12	0.1 %
	Total Individuals:	16,274	100%

The two predominant ethnicities served by ELARC are Hispanic and Asians. Collectively,

these two ethnic groups represent about 82.5% of all individuals 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 2023, profile a work force that mirrors and compliments the community. It serves as a component of promoting equity and reducing disparities.

Service Coordinators = 262

Hispanic	83%
*Asian	15%

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

Management = 46

Hispanic	85%
Asian	7%

All Staff = 443

Hispanic	81%
Asian	15%

III Attendance

ELARC hosted a virtual public meeting. In order to maximize attendance, ELARC personally invited the following Community Based Organizations (CBOs) via email, which include the 2023-24 award winners for the Service Access & Equity (SAE) Grant Program, who are part of our catchment area. The CBO’s are 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 regard to CPAD and Fiesta Educativa, they represent the two predominant ethnic groups served by ELARC: Hispanic (69.8 %) and Asian (12.7%). Both parent group organizations have the ability to draw from their established membership and additionally to outreach to other parents/individuals 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, which include the award winners of the 2023-24 Service Access & Equity (SAE) Grant Program that serve our catchment area:
 - 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 13, 2023
 - Meeting was held via Zoom
 - Interpretation services were provided: Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean and American Sign Language
 - Total Attendance: 56

- (2) ELARC Purchase Of Services (POS) Data Listening Sessions:
 - Virtual Meeting on Thursday, March 28th at 10 a.m. (Cantonese/Mandarin Session)
 - Centro Estrella In-Person on Thursday, March 28 at 9:00 a.m. (Spanish Session)
Address: 4701 East Cesar Chavez Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90022
 - YMCA San Gabriel Valley Community Room In-Person on Wednesday, April 3 at 11 a.m. (Vietnamese) *Address: 401 Corto St., Alhambra, CA 91801*
 - Fiesta Educativa In-person session on Friday, April 12 at 10 a.m. (Spanish Session) *Address: 2215 N. Broadway Unit B, Los Angeles, CA 90031*

IV Meeting Notes (Attachment #1) & Recommendations

Included are the raw notes taken at the meeting; a summary of comments, suggestions, inquiries from participants, and the answers to the questions provided by ELARC management. Even though no noticeable general theme or primary concern was presented

during the public meeting, the inquiries from attendees were regarding the POS Data Report and primary related to the issue of White individuals receiving higher POS expenditures, compared to Asians and Hispanics. One participant commented on the ratio of staff to individuals of the African American/Black and White communities. Attendees also showed interest in learning about ELARC services and support, and how to participate in future focus and/or listening sessions. The raw notes are included as “Attachment 1”.

The summary notes reflect comments, suggestions and specific questions raised by the audience and the related response to each inquiry. Overall comments involved:

- Inquiry about ELARC services and supports. Where to locate services and supports information in our system
- Concerns regarding the issue of white individuals receiving higher POS expenditures and approval of services, compared to Asians and Hispanics.
- Comment on matching the ratio of staff to the Black/African American and White individuals
- Questions on ELARC’s current specialized units and forthcoming specialized units

Additionally, please note the various activities undertaken by ELARC as outlined in Section VI of this report. In summary, there were five areas highlighted during the presentation:

- (1) Language Access & Cultural Competency (LACC)
- (2) Ongoing training for regional center staff
- (3) Yearly practice to review and update individuals records
- (4) Reduced caseloads in specialized units for 3 to 6-year-old individuals
- (5) Monolingual workshop series to educate and increase competence

Specific details on these five focus areas are included starting on pages 14 through 16 of this report.

The Office of Clients’ Rights Advocacy (OCRA) provided a letter to ELARC on March 12, 2024, entitled ‘OCRA Comments on Purchase of Service Annual Report and Public Stakeholder Meeting’. The following recommendation was included:

- *Organize a volunteer cadre of Reduced Caseload Project (RCP) parent graduates to mentor other low/no POS parents.*

We will explore this recommendation with the work being carried out through our Language Access and Cultural Competency (LACC) initiatives, the newly created Training Supervisor position, and the ongoing projects addressing individuals with no to low Purchase of Services Expenditures. It is important to note, that ELARC is currently exploring the development of a Parent Leadership program.

V Community Presentations & Issues Identified

(Attachment 2: POS Public Meeting Flyer [3/13/24]; Attachment 3: POS Public Meeting PowerPoint [3/13/23]; Attachment 3: POS Data Listening Sessions Flyer [3/14/24] Attachment 4: Listening Session PowerPoint [Spanish; 03/28/24 & 04/12/24]; Attachment 5: Listening Session PowerPoint [Vietnamese; 04/03/24], Attachment 6: Listening Session PowerPoint [Simplified Chinese; 04/03/24]

The format for the community meeting held on March 13th, 2024 included a formal panel presentation on specific areas of the POS Data Report and included the agency initiatives and projects led by the supervisor of the Enhanced Services & Community Engagement unit, as well as the Training Supervisor. In addition, the Chief of Consumer services, Edith Hernandez, gave an overview of ELARC's specialized units for 3 to 6-year-old individuals as part of the reducing caseload initiatives. She explained that the Service Coordinators who are a part of these units have an average caseload of 40 individuals/families, which is smaller than the caseloads carried by other service coordinators. She explained that the reduced caseload units are intended to allow Service Coordinators additional time to assist families with the understanding of their child's diagnosis, connect the families to generic resources, provide support at Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings, and educate families on how to navigate the regional center system. The presentation concluded with a short video testimonial from a current individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and her mother, who are part of the Specialized Unit for 3 to 6-year-old individuals. The video was included as a testimonial about their experience and their relationship with their assigned service coordinator.

Furthermore, attendees were informed that the PowerPoint presentation for the March 13th will be translated into our 5 threshold languages and will be made available on our website.

The formal presentation, which took place on March 13th, 2024, consisted of:

- An overview and background on the process and reasons for compiling POS data
- Review of ELARC initiatives and projects POS disparities among the various ethnic groups over the last fiscal year
- Video testimonial from a Hispanic mother, who is monolingual, and her daughter served in one of ELARC's Specialized 3 -6 Units
- 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 among the various ethnic groups in ELARC's service area. A comparison of the last year's fiscal years' total annual expenditures and authorized services results in an increase for five out of seven populations. It is important to note that among the three prominent ethnicities (Hispanic, Asian, and White), the Hispanic population was the only one to experience a decrease.

Additionally, ELARC hosted four follow-up listening sessions as an outreach effort to educate, inform, and hear from the top 3 predominant Non-English speaking community members. ELARC solicited their ideas and wanted their input on how to improve access to services and support. The follow-up listening sessions were offered both virtual and in-person. Two of the four listening sessions were hosted in Spanish, one session in Cantonese/Mandarin, and the other in Vietnamese. The PowerPoint used for the listening sessions was translated into the participants' primary language, and reflected the 2022-23 Purchase of Service Data, a general overview of ELARC initiatives to decrease disparities in Purchase of Service, and an opportunity to review/respond to questions. The listening sessions were part of ELARC's outreach efforts to address the needs of the non-English communities served. We are pleased to have collaborated with CBO's; Centro De Estrella, YMCA San Gabriel Valley, and Fiesta Educativa, which provide services to families in underserved areas.

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

Ethnicity	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	Difference	% increase or decrease
Hispanic	\$20,691	\$22,047	+ \$1,356	6.5 % ↑
Asian	\$22,271	\$25,237	+ \$2,966	13.3 % ↑
White	\$54,566	\$59,894	+ \$5,328	9.7 % ↑
Black/African American	\$43,780	\$47,365	+ \$3,585	8.1 % ↑
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$35,955	\$42,587	+ \$6,632	18.4 % ↑
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	\$68,206	\$43,111	- \$25,095	36.7 % ↓
Other Ethnicity or Race/Multi-Cultural	\$16,651	\$15,742	-\$ 909	5.4 % ↓

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 22-23 was \$4,707,544. As this significant expenditure cannot be captured by the individual 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.

Additional points to consider that may have an effect on POS expenditure are:

- (1) **Purchase of Service Costs:** This data only shows authorized and paid services by the regional center, and not the individual services paid by generic agencies, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medi-Cal, and local school districts. In addition, the POS cost data only reflects the payments the regional center made for services during FY 2022-23 (07/01/22 to 06/30/23) and is only based on state claim data provided by DDS as of December 2023. Please note that the regional center may still make payments for individual services up to the following fiscal year (06/2025).
- (2) **Purchase of Service Expenditures Contracts:** As previously mentioned, expenditures made by the regional center that are paid to vendors under a “contract”, may not be reflected due to the limitations of the regional center’s uniform fiscal system. As a result, paid services under contract are omitted from the POS data. Typical services under contract in the regional center system are supported employment programs (SEP) services, specialized health & training services, and transportation support.
- (3) **Individuals with Multiple Diagnoses:** There are several individuals in the regional center system that have more than one diagnosis. As a result, the POS expenditure data will count these individuals in every category for which there are diagnoses. For example, the Total Annual Expenditures and Authorized services by Diagnosis. From this data reported, an individual who has Cerebral Palsy and Epilepsy will be counted in both categories. For that reason, the accurate sum of individuals served by the regional center will be more than the total actual number of individuals.

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 ten-year period, Fiscal Year 2011-12 to 2022-23. Overall, the per capita cost comparison shows a consistent increase in POS authorizations over a ten-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 Ten Year Period
FY 2011-12 to FY 2022-23**

Ethnicity	FY 2011-12	FY 2022-23	% Difference
Hispanic	\$12,922	\$22,047	+ 52.1%
Asian	\$14,848	\$25,237	+ 69.9%
White	\$28,639	\$59,894	+ 109.1%

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

The following table displays the differences in the per capita authorizations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2023.

**Total Annual Per Capita Authorizations
Comparison by FY 2022-23**

Ethnicity	Per Capita Authorizations	Difference
White	\$59,894	+ \$37,847 *
Asian	\$25,237	- \$34,657**
Hispanic	\$22,047	- \$37,847**

* Compared to Lowest Per Capita Authorization

** Compared to Highest Per Capita Authorization

The primary contributing factor for this sizable authorization variation in the above table is the continuing higher utilization of residential services by White individuals. 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 2022-23**

Ethnicity	Total Individuals	Living at Home # / %	Residential Placement # / %
Hispanic	11,359	10,661 / 93.8%	289/ 2.5 %
Asian	2,068	1,944 / 94%	86 / 4.1 %
White	1,359	959/ 70.5 %	204 / 15 %

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 Individuals of all ages that are living at home. The following table isolates residential costs and compares POS funding for Individuals of all ages who are living at home.

**Total Annual Expenditures and Authorized Services
For Individuals Living at Home by Ethnicity or Race
FY 2022-23**

Ethnicity	Individuals	Per Capita Authorized	\$ Difference
White	959	\$21,728	0
Asian	1,944	\$17,940	- \$3,788*
Hispanic	10,661	\$15,051	- \$6,677*

** Compared to White ethnicity Per Capita Authorized Services*

The difference in Per Capita Authorized Services for individuals living at home vs all Individuals 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 \$59,894 to \$21,728 a difference of \$38,166. This comparison results in narrowing the POS gap between the White population and Hispanics to \$6,677 and for the Asian population to \$3,788 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 individuals that are living with their families, at a rate of 94% for both races, 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.

As noted in last year’s report, an additional barrier ELARC faces to achieving more equitable outcomes in POS 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 have been 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 state’s requirements. This allows providers to receive the same rate for the same service in the same area consistently across the Regional Centers. However, inequities across communities are 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 in 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 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 is 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 Individuals Living at Home by Language
FY 2022-23**

Language	Individuals	Per Capita Authorized	\$ Difference
English	11,499	\$15,129	-\$2,232**
Spanish	2,720	\$17,361	+\$2,232*
Chinese	598	\$13,850	-\$1,279*
Vietnamese	95	\$10,133	-\$4,996*

**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 \$17,361 compared to their English-speaking counterparts who received a per capita average of \$15,129. 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 on language for individuals living at home. In fact, over the past three fiscal years, this information has remained primarily the same and there has been no disparity for this language group.

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 among the various ethnic groups.

VI Current Projects & Plan to Continue to Promote Equity

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 has 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:

The department continues to provide Language Access & Cultural Competency (LACC) 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. The LACC plan continues to fund three Community Access Coordinators (CAC) positions who are bilingual: 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 and listening sessions. They have begun hosting these focus/listening groups with Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, and with the Vietnamese community. The community has embraced these meetings and ELARC will continue to conduct these 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 the agency. The CACs participate in various community outreach events and have secured desk days at local libraries. They are actively in search and securing outreach opportunities in underserved areas, specifically where there is a prevalence of non-English speakers.

An additional component of our LACC 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 with 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 materials 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.

Furthermore, ELARC staff is currently completing an agency wide training session on Cultural Competency and Humility funded by the LACC plan. This four-part training series is providing tools, strategies, and awareness to ELARC case management to better serve the diverse individuals and their families in our catchment area.

(2) Ongoing Training for Regional Center Staff:

In regard to training for regional center staff, the Consumer Services Training Supervisor plays a vital role in supporting all new and ongoing Service Coordinators. The Consumer Services Training Supervisor's primary purpose is to meet the training needs of the service coordinators for both the Lanterman program and Early Start. This unique position addresses previous concerns voiced by the community in regard to Service Coordinator responsibilities, responsiveness, and competence in providing information. The training supervisor looks 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 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 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 continue to receive training that enhances their cultural competence and promotes person-centered practices in their daily work.

Furthermore, the Consumer Services Training Supervisor focuses on streamlining, revising, and translating vital forms the Services coordinators use during the individual and their families Individual Program Plan (IPP) annual process. The centralizing and simplifying of ELARC's annual IPP forms has provided Service Coordinators additional time to build rapport with the individuals they serve and assist the families in understanding/navigating the regional center system.

(3) Yearly Practice to Review and Update individuals Records:

In a continued effort to monitor low to no POS and improve equitable access to services and support, ELARC conducts Chart Days. A Chart Day is an internal caseload audit conducted by the SC's in order to verify and update information regarding language, ethnicity, individuals' emergency contacts, CDER Errors/Updates, and the purchase of services 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 towards individuals receiving No to Low POS. Service Coordinators were asked to verify that a No POS outcome statement was included in the IPP for those individuals not receiving Regional Center-funded services. This internal audit has allowed information to be updated and a secondary needs assessment to be completed outside the annual IPP. ELARC plans to continue the annual Chart Day, and to use the process and information gathered to provide training to Service Coordinators.

(4) Reduce Caseloads in Specialized Units for 3 to 6-year-old individuals:

Service Coordinators (SCs) assigned to ELARC's reduced caseload units for 3 to 6-year -old individuals have a caseload ratio of 1:40. The reduced caseload is intended to allow Service Coordinators additional time to assist families with understanding of their child's diagnosis, connect the families to generic resources, provide support at Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings, and educate families on how to navigate the regional center system. SCs also encourage and connect families to ELARC's ongoing parent training. The SCs accomplish this goal by conducting quarterly check-ins to monitor each individual's IPP objectives and progress.

The 3 to 6-year-old reduced specialized units improve service access and delivery for new individuals from diverse communities who face barriers when learning about the regional center services and with understanding/accepting their child's diagnosis. Furthermore, having a reduced caseload enables SCs to engage with families more frequently, and gain a better understanding of their service needs. Lastly, the specialized units allow for SCs to be trained in resources and supports specific to this age group, allowing them to provide focused support and increased service coordination to the individuals and families. Participants will be tracked per Department guidelines.

(5) Monolingual Workshop Series to Educate and Increase Competence:

“Enseñame El Camino” is a workshop series developed to provide information, guidance, and support to families who have an individual registered at ELARC. The aim is to increase the competence and confidence of families when navigating the regional center system. The series will be available in the following languages: Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese.

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.

Due to its success, the program is now being modeled and replicated across all 21 Regional Centers and has transitioned to Enhanced Service Coordination (ESC). The ESC 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. Currently, ELARC will be launching a reduced specialized unit for individuals who are part of the 55 + population. SC’s part of these upcoming units will have a reduced caseload ratio. The reduced caseload is intended to allow Service Coordinators additional time to assist individuals in this age group to navigate generic services and support available to them.

Part of the Agency Plan for the upcoming Fiscal Year (2024/25), 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 continue conducting 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. The program is available to adult Individuals 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 and maintain 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 continues to develop 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.
- (4) Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Specialist- The DHH Specialist position supports individuals and their families with navigating the regional center system and helps create resources for them in their primary language, American Sign Language (ASL). The intent of this position is to increase awareness and education not only to

the individuals but to service coordinators and community members. The DHH Specialist provides training on preferred terminology use in the DEAF plus community, highlights the supports needed for a DHH individual, and provides knowledge on the social norms to case management. The DHH Specialist in collaboration with ELARC management will continue to explore ways to improve DHH services and supports. Our goal is to be all-inclusive to everyone we serve.

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.