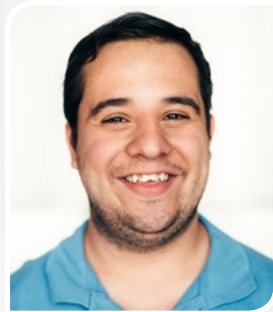


A Guide to Understanding Services



Golden Gate Regional Center
Supporting Lives of Liberty and Opportunity

What are Regional Centers?

This guide is to help individuals and their families learn more about the services offered by Golden Gate Regional Center (GGRC). GGRC wants to make sure that you understand the services that are available for you. Anytime you have questions about regional center services, you should ask your social worker.

In California, the Regional Center system was created to assist persons with developmental disabilities and their families in locating and developing services that meet their needs. Golden Gate Regional Center serves people who live in San Francisco, Marin or San Mateo counties through staff located in each of the three counties. The addresses and phone numbers of the offices are printed on the back of this booklet.

GGRC Mission

To build inclusive communities by connecting and developing innovative services and supports responsive to the needs and aspirations of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families while educating and informing all community members about the rights, value and potential of human diversity.

GGRC Vision

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities lead lives of liberty and opportunity, lives in which they not only contribute and thrive in their chosen communities, but are valued and embraced members of those communities.



The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act is a California law that promises services and supports to people with developmental disabilities and their families.



The Lanterman Act tells you:

- What your rights are
- How the regional centers and service providers can help you
- What services and supports you can get
- How to use the Individualized Program Plan (IPP) to get the services you need
- What to do when someone says you can't get what you need
- How you can make the system better

GGRC Values

Partnership

Our reciprocal partnerships with every person and organization we connect with are built upon having a shared vision and purpose. We strive for understanding and equity – communicating, learning and growing together as we achieve our mutual and united goals for the individuals and families we serve.

Honor

We demonstrate honor by actively listening to others and ourselves, respecting each other's unique abilities and strengths, experiences and diverse cultural backgrounds and heritage. We appreciate and value the mutual and reciprocal responsibilities we have toward one another. The work we have chosen is honorable, as it recognizes the rich tapestry of the contributions and potentials of all those we work with and all those we serve and support.

Person-Centered Thinking and Action

GGRC values each person as a full, robust and unique individual and interacts with each person in a manner that is respectful and responsive. We endeavor to place each person at the center of his, her or their own life. We approach each person as an expert on his, her or their own life and identity with a clear and attentive inquiry into what is important to, as well as important for, that one person (whether coworker or person-served, family member or other stakeholder).

Commitment to Learning and Reflecting

GGRC is committed to continual and intentional learning, development, and growth; to be self-aware and consciously work together to develop and create the type of organization that thrives and helps our community thrive.

Innovation

GGRC is committed to creating and nurturing an environment that values and promotes creativity, ingenuity, originality, and inspired thinking in developing new models of service and support, creating effective/efficient processes and procedures to best meet the needs of the people we serve, our staff, our service providers, and our community.



Who is eligible for GGRC services?

GGRC serves residents of Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo counties who fall into any of the following four categories:

- Is an individual with a developmental disability.
- Is an infant or toddler (up to 36 months of age) who has a developmental delay
- Is an infant or toddler (up to 36 months of age) for whom there are established risk conditions that could lead to a developmental delay
- Is an infant or toddler (up to 36 months of age) at high risk of having a development disability due to a combination of biomedical factors

Individuals with a development disability deemed eligible are served by GGRC's Lanterman Act services program. Infants and toddlers under the age of 3 are eligible under the Early Start program are served by the regional center's Early Start program.

If you think that you or a family member may be eligible for services, contact GGRC to start the application process.

What happens after assessment?

Individuals applying for Early Start program will be informed of eligibility within 45 days of completing the assessment. Individuals who are ages 3 and above (Lanterman) will be informed of eligibility within 120 days.

If you are deemed eligible, you will be assigned a social worker. Your social worker will contact you to schedule a meeting to discuss services with you.

What if English is not my preferred language?

GGRC employs staff members who are bilingual in a variety of languages to work with families for whom English is not the primary language. These languages include, but are not limited to, Spanish, Tagalog, Mandarin, and Cantonese. In addition, arrangements are made as needed to obtain translators/interpreters for languages other than those above. Tell your social worker the language in which you prefer to speak.

Eligibility Criteria



- The disability occurred before the age of 18
- The disability is significantly handicapping
- The disability is possibly lifelong



What is a Social Worker and what will they do?

A Social worker – sometimes called a case manager or service coordinator – is responsible for helping individuals, families, and groups of people identify areas of strengths and help them meet their needs. They assist you in finding appropriate community programs and support resources. You should maintain regular contact with your social worker. Feel free to call and email her/him if you have questions or problems should arise.

What is Person-Centered Case Management?

- Person-centered case management means a regional center social worker will listen to you and ask questions about your personal goals, strengths and challenges, and then suggest ways and programs to help you reach your goals.
- You have the right to review your options and make your own choices.
- Person-centered case management means the services you receive are based on what you need. Different people may receive different services, depending on the needs of each individual person.

Person-Centered Thinking & Planning move the focus on what is important “for” the person (health and safety needs) to what is important “to” the person (personal preferences and choices).

Person Centered Thinking strategies will put you, individuals we support, first, gives us the tools we need to listen, the ability to learn what an individual wants, and then, as a team, work together to set goals and create person centered plans. The plan is our guide to help you reach your goals for the life you want. Person Centered practices will enable people who work with individuals supported by GGRC to put you and your strengths first, instead of your disability.

Being “person centered” means we focus on what is important to you, we hear what you are telling us, we respect what you are telling us, and we are responsive to your preferences. Learning what is important to you, what you like or what you enjoy, instead of only focusing on what is important for you, health and safety wise. Balancing what is important to you with what is important for you helps make sure you are happy and safe while living the life you want. Person Centered Thinking promotes positive participation in the community so that strengths and interests can be identified and developed.

Having person-centered meetings means everyone in a meeting can be heard, most importantly, you, the person receiving services.

One approach to person-centered planning used by GGRC is called Person-Centered Thinking (PCT), developed by The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices.



What to expect from Early Start Services

Early Start (Ages 0-36 months or under age 3)

When your infant or toddler is eligible for early intervention services through the regional center, your social worker will develop and implement the Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP). The IFSP is reviewed every 6 months or more frequently as requested by you.

What is the Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP)?

It is a written plan that includes:

- Family resources
- Priorities and concerns
- A statement of your infant's present levels of development
- Identified provider
- Expected developmental outcomes
- Family outcomes related to the developmental needs of your infant or toddler
- Specific early intervention services necessary to meet the unique needs of the infant or toddler and the family
- Identified funding source



If your child is 2 years and 6 months of age, the IFSP will include the transition steps necessary to ensure the transition of your toddler to preschool services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (see section on Rights of People with Developmental Disabilities on page 9).

Lanterman Services (Ages 3 and older)

Lanterman services – sometimes called Ongoing Services – are for people ages 3 and older.

What is an Individual Program Plan (IPP)?

An IPP is an agreement between you and the regional center that identifies services and supports to reach your goals. The IPP should explain the roles and responsibilities, the funding sources, and the services you can expect from the GGRC's community programs.

Who is part of your IPP team?

- You
- Your GGRC social worker
- Your parent or guardian (if you are a minor)
- Your conservator (if you are conserved)
- Anyone else you choose to invite – You might choose to invite service providers, friends, advocates, or other people who support you.



What might you discuss at the IPP?

At the meeting, discuss your interests and goals with your social worker to develop an IPP. The plan will include goals to help you achieve progress, build on existing abilities and next steps.

You will discuss and write down the kinds of programs, training or services needed to help you achieve new skills.

What meetings can you expect?

Meetings are held annually with the individual, possibly their family and their social worker. Other service providers might also participate in the meeting. These meetings are to discuss how services are going, whether there are unmet service needs or other needs that may need to be discussed. Other meetings may be called during the year as needed, by you, your social worker, or your family (if you are under the age of 18 or conserved).

Additionally, you can request a meeting anytime. As you get older, you will be re-evaluated periodically as your needs change.

Around age 22, you will leave the school system. When you meet with your school to plan your transition, think about inviting your social worker. You might want to get a job, attend day services, go to college, move out of your family home, or do a combination of these. Your GGRC social worker can help you figure out what is next for you through person-centered case management services. Which services you receive are determined by your needs and goals, as well as availability in the community. These services may include:

- Day services to develop new skills and friends
- Employment or paid internships
- Independent living skills training
- Supported living services
- Training to access public transportation
- Adaptive skills training and personal assistants
- Adaptive equipment
- Health advocacy services and mental health referrals
- Housing advocacy and family home advocacy
- Supported decision-making and conservatorship information
- Respite services for caregivers and parents



If you are living outside your family home, you will meet with your social worker quarterly.



Purchase of Services

To meet the objectives listed in the Individual Program Plan (IPP) or Individual Family Service Plan, the RC may purchase services identified as needed in the plan for you or a family member.

A wide variety of services and equipment may be purchased, such as:

- In-home respite
- Out-of-home respite
- Residential care
- Infant early intervention programs
- Parent training and behavior intervention
- Adult day programs
- Transportation
- Adaptive equipment
- Supported living services

Limitations to Purchase of Services by GGRC

- The services must be identified in the IPP/IFSP.
- There must be no other available public or private funding.
- The service must be purchased from a regional center vendor.
- The purchase must have a prior written authorization.
- The budget provided to Golden Gate Regional Center by the State of California, Department of Development Services, must be sufficient to meet the costs of the authorized service.



How to Get an IEP for Your Child

The IEP is a document written by the school district to ensure all educational goals are achieved.



- Look, listen and list your concerns. Include your reasons and copies of supporting tests or doctors' notes.
- Talk to your pediatrician and/or preschool teacher.
- Request evaluations from your school district to help identify learning difficulties.



Advocacy and Rights

Be Sure to Speak for Yourself

- Be a self-advocate! Express **your** wants and needs.
- Visit and review any programs or living options before choosing one.
- Ask questions.
- You may want to ask advice from trusted people to help support you in making your decision.
- If there is disagreement about services offered by GGRC, you may appeal.



GGRC's staff work closely with you and your family to assure that service providers in schools, day programs, residential facilities and in other agencies provide the services which best meet your needs. For assistance at negotiations, meetings and hearings with other agencies, you may approach GGRC's Consumers' Rights Advocate. A Clients Rights Advocate through Disability Rights California is also available to work with you and your social worker.

Rights of People with Developmental Disabilities

People with developmental disabilities have the same legal rights and responsibilities guaranteed to all other persons by federal and state constitutions and laws, and charges the regional center with advocacy for, and protection of, these rights. Lanterman legislation lists specific rights guaranteed to people with developmental disabilities including but not limited to:

- The right to treatment and habilitation services that meet individual developmental needs in the least restrictive setting
- The right to live as normal, productive and independent a life as possible
- The right to be provided a full measure of dignity, privacy and humane care
- The right to participate in an appropriate, publicly-supported educational program

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), provides federal financial assistance to state and local school districts to develop free and appropriate education programs and services for children with disabilities. States receiving such funds are required protect the rights of children with disabilities and their parents.

GGRC's staff can provide information and referrals to your family/friends on services such as:

- Supplemental Security Income & Medi-Cal
- Long-term planning
- Special needs trust
- End-of-life planning



Other Important Information

Confidentiality

All information received by Golden Gate Regional Center and our service providers is confidential and may not be released to anyone without written consent of the person, legal guardian or conservator. The law allows for very few exceptions to this policy.

Access to Records

The person served and/or their authorized representative(s) have the right to inspect their Regional Center records. They may do so by contacting their Regional Center Social Worker for assistance.

Appeal and Grievance Process

As a person served by the Golden Gate Regional Center, you may disagree with an action of the staff of Golden Gate Regional Center. If you have a problem or are dissatisfied with any service of Golden Gate Regional Center, we encourage you to attempt to resolve the problem first by discussing the situation with your Social Worker. It has been our experience that most problems can be resolved at this level if communication remains open. If, however, a satisfactory solution has not been reached, you have a right to a formal appeal.

The appeal procedure is designed with definite timelines and safeguards intended to protect your rights. If assistance is needed in understanding the appeal procedure, the Golden Gate Regional Center Rights Advocate is available to meet with you and your family and to help explain the procedure and to help locate someone to assist in preparing and presenting your case.

For more information, visit ggrc.org or dds.ca.gov.



Your social worker will connect you with community resources and service providers. GGRC does not directly provide programs and services.



Do I pay for services?

In general, most services are paid for by the regional center and are not based on individual or family income. Evaluations and assessments are at no cost to you. There may be a fee if a minor is placed outside the family home. If you are between the ages of 3-17, receive services and do not have Medi-Cal, there will be an Annual Family Program Fee or up to \$200. Your social worker will give you more information if this applies to you.

Funding of Services

If you or a family member is eligible, your GGRC social worker will work with you to identify payment sources for services. This includes:

1. Accessing private insurance for medically necessary therapy services (speech, feeding, occupational, and behavioral or physical therapies).
2. Exploring generic resources.
3. GGRC is the payer of last resort. Annual Family Program Fee may apply if you are under age 18, receive services and do not have Medi-Cal.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I don't understand my service options?

Talk to your social worker. He/She is available to explain and discuss and clarify the details of the services and programs you are eligible.

What if I have concerns about my service provider?

If you are comfortable, talk to your service provider. Otherwise, call your social worker straight away. If the service provider is not meeting your needs or there's disagreement about services offered, your social worker can help you seek better alternatives.

What does it mean to "advocate for my needs" in an IPP meeting?

"Advocating for my needs" refers to communicating your needs and concerns to your social worker with an understanding of what works best for you. Then, your social worker's job is to identify areas in which GGRC can help you.





San Francisco County (Main Office)

1355 Market Street, Suite 220, San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 546-9222 phone • (415) 546-9203 fax

San Mateo County

3130 La Selva Street, Suite 202, San Mateo, CA 94403
(650) 574-9232 phone • (650) 345-2361 fax

Marin County

4000 Civic Center Drive, Suite 310, San Rafael, CA 94903
(415) 446-3000 phone • (415) 446-3001 fax

Referral/Inquiry Contact Information

Golden Gate Regional Center • ggrc.org
(888) 339-3305 phone • (888) 339-3306 fax • intake@ggrc.org
Early Start (age 0-2) intake referral form available online
Lanterman (age 3 and older) inquiries via phone/fax

Department of Developmental Services • dds.ca.gov

My social worker's name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

