



Redwood Coast Regional Center

Respecting Choice in the Redwood Community

September 7, 2016

Rapone Anderson
Regional Center Branch Manager
Community Services Division
Department of Developmental Services
1600 Ninth Street, Room 340, MS 3-12
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Anderson,

Please find with this letter Redwood Coast Regional Center's response to Brian Winfield's letter of July 25, 2016, regarding *ABX2 1 Funding for Regional Centers to Promote Equity and Reduce Disparities in the Purchase of Services*.

Redwood Coast Regional Center is extremely appreciative of the efforts of the State legislature and DDS to make available funds with which to pursue greater access to services for underserved individuals, families, and communities. We are looking forward to being able to undertake some of the key actions and tasks that have been identified, through meetings with our communities over the past few years, since the inception of the POS expenditure data annual reporting.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our complete support for the proposals recently put forth by ARCA to the Department, recommending that an independent study be undertaken statewide to examine the issues that make up what we have identified as disparity, and that would provide us with significantly increased understanding of those issues, and how to best approach resolving them both statewide and for each of our unique, individual areas.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding our proposals, or need any additional information. I can be reached at (707) 462-3832, ext. 219, or at (707) 445-0893, ext. 317.

Sincerely,

Clay Jones
Executive Director

Corporate Offices 525 - 2nd Street, Suite 300, Eureka, CA 95501 707-445-0893

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Department of Development Services
Reduction of Disparities in Purchase of Service
Regional Center Funding Proposals (Fiscal Year 2016-17)

Regional Center(s): Redwood Coast Regional Center

Regional Center Contact Name/Title: Clay Jones, Executive Director

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Email Address: cjones@redwoodcoastrc.org

Phone Number: (707) 462-3832, ext. 219

I. PROPOSAL

Please attach the proposal for Fiscal Year 2016-17. Proposals must meet the criteria outlined in the application guidelines in Attachment 1. Proposals must also be consistent with information derived from public meetings with stakeholders regarding purchase of service (POS) disparity data. Regional centers may partner with other centers to implement strategies to address areas of disparity in POS authorization, utilization and expenditures.

II. BUDGET DETAIL

- a. Amount of funding the regional center(s) is requesting: \$350,148 (over 3 years)
- b. Estimated number of consumers to be impacted by the service(s): 965

III. DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION

I certify that the information completed above and attached is true and correct.

Director's Name: Clay Jones

Director's Signature: Clay Jones

Redwood Coast Regional Center
Reduction of Disparities in Purchase of Service
Funding Proposals (Fiscal Year 2016-2017)

Identified Disparities in POS and Target Populations – Redwood Coast Regional Center

Demographics in the area served by Redwood Coast Regional Center has remained quite similar since reporting of POS expenditure data began. RCRC serves a four-county (Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino) area which is quite rural, large in overall geographic size, with scattered small centers of population. These factors contribute to challenges in providing services for all eligible persons. Interestingly, the demographics shown by RCRC's data are somewhat dissimilar to those of the State as a whole, but are similar to those of populations served by all California regional centers.

Based on the most current POS expenditure report data, RCRC shows potential disparities between the amount of POS funds authorized for services, and the amount of POS funds actually expended for persons served who are of Hispanic ethnicity. There is a smaller potential discrepancy between funds authorized and funds expended on behalf of Native American populations served. Of a total of 3,693 persons served during last year, 428 persons of Hispanic ethnicity were served, and 224 persons of Native American ethnicity were served. For these reasons, these two groups of individuals and families served are the target populations of these proposals, with a broader emphasis on increasing services to persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

Needs and barriers of these target populations are not completely understood, and a significant share of RCRC's proposals focus on increasing information and understanding of the unique needs and challenges of these populations.

Public Forum Information

A public Forum was held on September 6, 2016 from 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m. simultaneously between Eureka and Ukiah, using videoconference to connect as one group. Prior to the meeting, outreach was done to various locally identified groups of stakeholders, as well as publicly announcing the meeting through strategically placed flyers, web site notification, and targeted emailing.

In all, three people attended in Ukiah and five people in Eureka, for a total of eight. This is very similar to attendance in prior years for a wide variety of public meetings, including those for the POS Expenditure Data reports.

Proposals Presented by RCRC and Input/Comments Given by Attendees at the Public Forum

1. *Conduct extensive outreach into area Hispanic communities. Arrange small group meetings at local sites used by community members. Arrange translation services and send invitations with information in advance. Consider offering transportation and/or child care services for the meetings.*

All Forum participants agreed this proposal should be carried out as stated. It was noted that it mirrors other successful models in our communities, and that it would enhance success if invitations could be connected with known persons in the community (for example, invitations personally delivered, or signed by a known person who would be involved in the activities). Other feedback included sending invitations both in advance and with follow-up reminders and working to establish an email mailing list of persons interested in being notified of activities.

Outcomes for this proposal include:

- Identifying the specific needs and challenges faced by Hispanic members of the community in accessing and utilizing services offered by RCRC., and creating points of access into the service system through RCRC.

It is estimated that this effort would take six to ten months to complete across all four counties, including arranging for transportation services, childcare needs, providing a light meal, and meeting locations. At a minimum of two meetings per county, it is estimated that the cost of the meetings, not including personnel, would be approximately \$4,860 (\$1,280/transportation; \$2,140/child care; \$640/light meal; \$800/meeting locations). Please refer to proposal #6 below for additional relevant information.

2. *Participate in local events of interest to Hispanic communities, such as Fiesta Educative, Family Resource Center events, Health Fairs, and others.*

All Forum participants strongly encouraged this approach. RCRC intake staff have participated in similar events, such as community health fairs, and found it useful for establishing contacts and providing information. It was noted that bilingual staff participation is essential. No costs apart from personnel costs are identified for this proposal. Please refer to proposal #6 below for additional relevant information.

3. *Advertise for, and hire, more bilingual services coordinators and other regional center staff.*

All meeting participants agreed with this proposal and see it as a need for RCRC. RCRC is currently assessing all agency positions in order to identify those that require bilingual employees, as well as those for which bilingual employees would be preferred. No costs apart from regular Operations personnel costs are identified for this proposal. This proposal will, however, require that additional operations funds for service coordinator and other regional center positions, beyond what has been allocated for FY 2016-2017, are made available.

4. *Institute a pay differential for all bilingual staff.*

All meeting participants supported this proposal. RCRC has already begun to pay a monthly stipend to staff who hold positions for which bilingual language proficiency is required. Currently, six positions qualify, and the employees in those positions are being paid a \$250 per month stipend for providing bilingual skills in their jobs. This change was implemented at RCRC on July 1, 2016. It is estimated that at least six more positions will be identified and added, for a total throughout the agency of twelve FTE positions.

Accordingly, RCRC requests funding for the costs of providing a stipend to employees who are English/Spanish bilingual at a proficient level. These costs would total \$18,000 for the entire FY 2016-2017 for six employees already receiving this incentive, with increasing costs of \$250 per month per new employee as they are hired, beginning at the end of the first month of employment, through the remainder of this fiscal year. We plan to have hired for these positions by no later than the end of FY 2018-2019, and request that funding for these costs be provided for up to a total of twelve positions across five offices, as they are hired into the identified positions. When all positions are identified and filled, the total cost per year for the bilingual stipend differential will be \$36,000. The total cost of this proposal, over the span of three full years, can be projected to be \$72,000, with \$18,000 requested for each of the first two years, and \$36,000 for the third year.

5. *Contact area tribal leadership for Native American communities and request to receive or participate in cultural learning opportunities.*

Outcomes for this proposal include:

- Identifying the specific needs and challenges faced by members of local Native American communities, and invite them to provide RCRC employees and Board members with cultural learning opportunities.

Costs would include fees for invited speakers and associated travel costs. It is estimated that a minimum of four trainings, one per county, will be needed. At an estimated cost of \$500 per training, a total of \$2,000 is requested for this proposal.

6. *Hire a full time English/Spanish bilingual Outreach Coordinator to conduct outreach on a four-county wide basis, with emphasis on underserved populations and communities.*

This proposal was strongly supported by participants at the public forum. Participants offered their thoughts on how such an employee could assist in connecting underserved individuals and families to RCRC, to other generic resources, and to supports and services that may be currently underused or not used. Ideas included this individual being the primary person responsible for carrying out proposals #1 and #2 above, as well as establishing and maintaining outreach activities through the publication of a regular newsletter, use of local media, including radio, television, and newspapers oriented to specific communities, connecting regularly with Family Resource Centers, and assisting regional center staff with communications and protocol in working with individuals and families. Additionally, it was suggested this person would be able to assist in re-making the RCRC web site into a welcoming place of information and connection as a bilingual English/Spanish site, with information available in other languages upon request.

The person hired for this position would be responsible for all of the above duties, and would have experience in prior outreach and community development work. RCRC proposes to advertise for and fill this position no later than April 30, 2017. The total annual estimated cost for this position, for which RCRC requests funding, is \$78,170 for combined salary/benefits (salary @ \$53,184/year and benefits @ \$24,986/year), and an additional

\$6,426 estimated per year for travel expenses due to the unique nature of the position. Funding is requested over three years, for a total overall expense of \$253,788.

7. *Contract with a translator/interpreter to translate all remaining significant RCRC documents into Spanish over the next 18 months (January 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018).*

All participants at the public forum indicated they see this effort as essential and overdue.

Outcomes for this proposal are:

- To make available all of the same documents to individuals/families whose primary language is Spanish as are available to all other RCRC clients and others.
- To assist Spanish speaking clients in becoming better informed about service options and how to access them.

Time available to respond to the disparity funding proposals has not been sufficient to establish a reasonable estimate of the cost of this proposal. We would like to start with a funding request of \$7,500, expecting that to be significantly less than needed, and to be allowed to obtain estimates from area translators who could evaluate the total work involved and provide us with a cost estimate for the total work to be done. We would expect to have such an estimate no later than December 31, 2016.

8. *Contract with a translator/interpreter to translate the RCRC web site into Spanish in its entirety (approximately 40 pages) and prepare it for publication on the web site in order to have all web site publication available in both English and Spanish. Statements in other languages will also be posted indicating that the material on the web site can be made available in that language upon request.*

Input from forum attendees was universally the same as for #7 above, with the added input that this would make the most easily available information more accessible. Additional input was made to put an emphasis on accessible language as well, whether English or Spanish, or other.

A rough estimate for these services has been obtained: the cost proposed is \$5,000 for the translation services and \$5,000 for implanting the updates onto the web site through the commercial host services used. A total of \$10,000 is requested for this purpose, with a timeline of completing the proposal by October 31, 2017.

Redwood Coast Regional Center will begin implementation of the above plan within 30 days of notice of approval of the plan, as described above.

Effectiveness of the plan will be monitored through continued conversations with our underserved communities, through contractual oversight in the use of any outside services, and most of all, through ongoing review and comparison of subsequent annual POS expenditure data, and how service authorizations match up with actual service utilization. Regular reports of progress on this plan will be kept on a quarterly basis for internal and external monitoring of plan implementation

and goals. The quarterly reports will summarize all aspects of tracking, monitoring, and measuring progress for each of the above individual proposals. Fiscal and timeline accounting will be done through the use of Excel worksheets/workbooks or comparable software. Outside, independent satisfaction surveys with clients and families may also be conducted.

Total amount of funding requested: \$350,148 over three years

Estimated number of clients to be impacted: 965