

**Developmental Services Task Force
Service Access & Equity Work Group**

April 28, 2020

Discussion Themes

Question: What are some best practices and innovations in response to COVID-19 you have learned about?

- RC Services
 - service coordinators making direct contact with families frequently
 - increasing respite automatically
 - using web platforms to disseminate information broadly (e.g. Facebook Live)
- Connecting people with food banks, partnering with universities and colleges to provide food for seniors, ready-made meals
- Tele-services, webinars, online support groups for diverse communities in multiple languages
- Free legal clinics to prevent individuals and families from being evicted and provide needed legal support

Question: What are the most pressing challenges facing underserved communities as a result of COVID-19?

- Disparities have been magnified by the crisis
 - Loss of income; inability to social distance in essential jobs
 - Housing instability, living in smaller spaces
 - Food insecurity and lack of resources to access food
- Needing accessible materials in native language and plain language
 - Increased need for easily to understand information about public health precautions and tenant protections as a result of COVID
 - Directives and public health information needs to be translated into non-English languages, so people get the basic information to protect themselves
 - Variety of interpretations of DDS directives making it difficult to obtain services
- Limited technology and supports
 - Access to the internet is a critical component of physical and emotional health

- Need for smart phones and other electronic devices and hot spots to access quickly changing information
- Need for service flexibility
 - Provide information about available flexibilities for regional center services
 - At-home services and respite services are key for families to cope with increased stressors, with appropriate safety measures like PPE and flexibilities like participant directed services
 - Maintaining support systems for individuals and families is critical to address mental health concerns due to isolation
 - Preparing to have services in place if an individual living in the family home or a caregiver is infected; and new care needs for individuals/families served by RCs

Question: What are recommended solutions to some of these challenges?

- Communication
 - DDS to clarify intent of directives and waivers so it is understood that services are essential when they can be safely provided
 - Simplify communications, decrease response times for new service approvals.
 - Distribute information broadly – some RCs using Facebook Live to disseminate information Communication and collaboration between regional centers and community-based organizations and parent groups
- Responsiveness
 - Expedite vendorization processes so vendors with capacity vendored by other centers can provide services such as participant-directed services
 - Participant Directed Services