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The Department of Developmental Services Announces Grants for Enhanced Community Integration for Children and Adolescents

The Department of Developmental Services is awarding more than \$8 million to community groups to bring social recreation opportunities to Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The grants are part of the department's Grants for Enhanced Community Integration for Children and Adolescents Program, and seek to advance equity, diversity, and access in communities.

"These grants bring us closer to a goal we cherish," said **California Health and Human Services Agency Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly**. "Every child in every community deserves the skill-building and development that comes with engaging in social and recreational activities. These grants will empower community groups to deliver on that promise by promoting equitable access to these opportunities."

Studies conducted by universities, research organizations and others over the last two decades have found communities of color are less likely to access services available by DDS and other agencies.

"These grants create opportunities for young people with disabilities to do what should be part of every childhood – play," said **Nancy Bargmann, director of DDS**. "They will bring the joy and the growth that comes with playing with one's peers to playgrounds, parks and gyms, and they will advance our efforts to reduce disparities and increase equity in our service system."

The grants include efforts to improve access to recreational programs focused on the needs of the individuals participating. The efforts will be mindful of the variety of cultures and languages seen in California communities. The grants will also enhance and improve existing community recreation programs while seeking to increase the number of recreational service providers that offer integrated, inclusive programs to children and adolescents with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Budget cuts in 2009 led to the sharp decrease in offered activities such as camping, art, dance, and music classes. Although many of these activities were restored as available services in 2021, rebuilding the pool of authorized providers has been a lengthy process. The grants seek to accelerate this expansion of services and focus on

communities with limited access to resources. Further, the structure of the grants seeks to encourage recipients to continue serving those with disabilities long after the grant funds are expended.

YMCA of Superior California CEO, Sharna Braucks shared, "The YMCA was absolutely thrilled to learn we were awarded this grant, and we are so grateful to DDS and the Alta Regional Center. This funding will make it possible for us to better serve members of our community with developmental disabilities through our swim program. Our aquatics team is already at work adapting our programs to meet the needs of this valuable segment of our community."

DDS received a total of 234 proposals. Grantees will implement a variety of projects that will provide services in more than 21 languages.

[List of recipients.](#)

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About DDS: *Under the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act, DDS is responsible for overseeing the coordination & delivery of services and supports to approximately 400,000 Californians with, or at risk for, developmental disabilities including cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, autism, epilepsy and related conditions. The state's service system is designed to meet the needs and choices of individuals at each stage of their lives, and, to the extent possible, support them in their home communities, providing choices that are reflective of lifestyle, cultural and linguistic preferences*