

State Issues First Annual Report on Master Plan for Developmental Services, A Community-Driven Vision Highlighting Progress and Work Ahead

What you need to know: Many statewide initiatives are underway to improve experiences and outcomes across the service system for Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in areas of access, behavioral health, developmental services, employment, person-centeredness, and more.

SACRAMENTO — The Department of Developmental Services (Department) released the first annual report on California’s progress to implement recommendations outlined in the [Master Plan for Developmental Services: A Community-Driven Vision](#) (MPDS). The report provides ongoing initiatives and activities from community partners, the state’s 21 nonprofit regional centers, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (individuals) and their families, advocacy groups, service providers, the Department, and other state and federal entities.

“California has made historic investments in our system of community-based developmental services. This first annual report shows how the Master Plan is informing collaboration and shared learning across the system so that our investments lead to meaningful outcomes and consistent experiences for each person, their families, and the workforce that supports them,” said **Kim Johnson, Secretary of the California Health & Human Services Agency (CalHHS)**.

Initially released in March 2025, the MPDS includes 167 recommendations from the developmental disabilities community for strengthening the service system and reducing barriers to accessing services. Over the last year, progress has been made across all six of the MPDS's topic areas. Highlights from this first annual report on implementation include:

- Equity and access to standardized information in multiple languages. The Department has implemented a [Language Access Plan](#) for all vital documents and is developing equity measures with the community. In 2026, the Department plans to officially publish a dashboard of these measures that can be used to monitor progress in addressing inequities.
- The Governor's Budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year continues to fund the development of the [Life Outcomes Improvement System \(LOIS\) project](#) to modernize California's case management and fiscal system for users. The use of modern technology will provide improved access to information for individuals and families and service providers, more efficient case management, improved oversight and monitoring, and many other benefits consistent with major MPDS recommendations.
- Work will conclude in 2026 to establish a statewide definition for "generic services." This is a major step forward in providing a consistent experience for individuals and families seeking access to regional center services. It also will enable a focus on which services are most relied upon by individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and how to improve coordination with those other programs and services to support people to achieve their goals.
- The Administration has proposed statutory changes to improve support and oversight of the developmental disabilities services system, remove barriers to service provision, and increase transparency and focus on the performance and outcomes expected by individuals and families.
- Employment is another prominent theme in the MPDS. Proposed statutory change ([Employment Access Alignment](#)) would require people seeking employment to get assistance more quickly, and have the Department and the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) identify the appropriate payor for the employment supports on the back end. This will reduce stress for people who want to work and accelerate their path to employment.

"The MPDS every day continues to inform the work of our department, regional centers, and community. We are grateful for the contributions of thousands of people working together to improve the experiences of individuals and families and advance their life outcomes. This critical work requires all of us to collaborate, and we see those efforts reflected in this year's implementation update report," said **Pete Cervinka, Director of the Department of Developmental Services**.

Many more progress updates and continued areas for improvement can be read in [the full annual report on the MPDS webpage](#).

Looking Ahead

The full MPDS Committee meets each year in July and December. The Committee will work in 2026 to identify additional changes that may be necessary to implement the MPDS recommendations, for inclusion in the second report in March 2027. For the 2026-27 budget year, the Department expects to focus on continuing efforts, including but not limited to:

- Create workforce development opportunities and resources to improve the capacity and skillsets of people working in our system.
- Address the disparities across the system and our collective understanding of how to evaluate our progress in addressing inequities.
- Continue to enhance Early Start and early intervention services, making sure we are doing so in a culturally appropriate way.
- Advance efforts to educate our community, local educational agencies, and the judicial system on [alternatives to conservatorship](#), including supported decision-making, authorized representatives, and guardianship.
- Standardize the intake process and respite assessments across all regional centers to improve consistency in the experiences of individuals and families and advance equity.
- And so much more!

State law requires annual MPDS reports to the Legislature through 2036. Focus groups and public engagement sessions will continue to gather community input and guide ongoing evaluation, policy updates, and future investments.

About the Master Plan for Developmental Services

The MPDS was developed by a Committee appointed by the CalHHS Secretary in early 2024. Five workgroups, all of which were made up of a diverse group of individuals, family members, advocates, service providers, direct support professionals, and representatives from the state's 21 regional centers, worked for a year, incorporating extensive public input, to develop the MPDS recommendations.

About the Department of Developmental Services

DDS is responsible for overseeing the coordination and delivery of services and supports to over 500,000 Californians with, or at risk for, intellectual and developmental disabilities including cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, autism, epilepsy, and other

related conditions. The State's developmental disability services are designed to meet the needs and choices of individuals at each stage of their lives, and support them in their home communities, providing choices that are reflective of lifestyle, cultural and linguistic preferences.

California is unique among states in guaranteeing regional center services to all residents of the State who have qualifying intellectual and developmental disabilities, after other sources have been exhausted. The Department, regional centers, and community partners are working on several initiatives to deliver on the promise of the Lanterman Act, including the [LOIS project](#), [rate reform](#), multiple [information](#) and [standardization](#) efforts, enhanced [transparency](#), and Direct Support Professional (DSP) [workforce development](#).

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