

Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB)
Plan of Correction Addressing Caseload Ratios
June 2024

This plan is in response to the letter received by Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB) on April 18, 2024 from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), indicating that we had not met the caseload ratios required in Welfare and Institutions Code 4640.6 (c). The findings were based on the caseload survey submitted by RCEB to DDS on March 10, 2024. There were many areas in which RCEB did not meet the required caseload ratios these included individuals on the Home and Community Based Services Waiver; individuals under 6 years, individuals over 5 years who are non-movers and non-waiver and complex needs caseloads. Since RCEB has not met the required ratios for two consecutive reporting periods, we are required to submit a plan of correction.

RCEB believes that the ability to meet caseload ratios is critical to meeting the promises of the Lanterman Act and to assuring that all persons served can receive the supports and services that are important to and for them. RCEB's inability to meet these caseload ratios is of great concern to our regional center. We know our challenge is due to many factors, some beyond our control, that affect our ability to hire enough service coordinators. We have indicated these factors in previous caseload plan of correction reports and will reiterate them here briefly. RCEB receives funding for most case management positions at a wage based on 1990's salaries. This insufficient allocation means that every time we have growth to substantiate two additional caseloads, we can hire just over one position. While we are benefitting from recent salary augmentations for many new positions, it is not a realistic that we could ever fully meet caseload ratios within the existing formula.

RCEB continues to experience the challenges of being located in a high cost area with a housing market that is increasingly more expensive. This past year, we continued to see a trend of staff moving out of the East Bay to more affordable areas of the state. Staff remaining in the area have taken jobs at significantly higher wages at other social services agencies and at schools. Filling positions that provide direct services to our consumers is our highest priority. We believe that reducing caseloads will contribute to staff retention because people will be more satisfied with their ability to support individuals served. It is an iterative process.

Our efforts toward hiring this year focus on bringing people into the agency and providing them with the support, they need to become good case managers and be able to offer salaries and benefits that are competitive in the Bay Area.

Plan:

Our plan moving forward focuses on continuous hiring to fill vacant and growth positions. It also requires monitoring our caseload ratios every three months. This has been made easier by the more automated reporting system. I am pleased to report that when we ran our numbers in May, our ratios had greatly improved.

			Medicaid Waiver	Age 0-5	Moved from DC w/	All others	Complex	Low/No Pos
5/1/2024	Total	25,454	6,674	5,524	3	13,253	121	240
Actual ratio			87.3	71.7	29.3	92.2	31.0	40.0
Required ratio			62	40	45	66	25	40
3/1/2024	Total	25,246	6,891	5,472	4	12,879	121	239
Actual ratio			97.1	78.3	44.2	103.3	39.8	39.8
Required ratio			62	40	45	66	25	40
Difference (dec)inc	Cases	208	(217)	52	(1)	374	-	1
	Ratios		(10)	(7)	(15)	(11)	(9)	0
	Required		0	0	0	0	0	0

We added a recruitment specialist last year and have invested in a new system to make the onboarding of new employees easier and streamlined so we can focus on getting people into their roles.

At the end of 2023, we completed negotiations on a new contract with our staff represented by SEIU 1021. This increased starting salaries and provided incentives for staff who have been employed long term to continue their employment with us.

Although it was not reflected in the March numbers, the introduction of the Associate Case Manager role definitely lower case loads in our May report. Employees in these positions do not have the degree or experience required for our regular case management positions. For the first six months, these individuals were in training and providing basic case management supports. They learned about the regional center system and case management. Successful completion allowed them to take on case-carrying roles. We had seen this as an investment that would take six months to come to fruition in caseload reduction. Eight of these individuals transitioned to ongoing case management and we are continuing the program with a new cohort.

We also introduced job fairs last year and have developed experience with hiring on the same day pending confirmation of background checks and references. . Tuition reimbursement and public service loan forgiveness have been important hiring incentives. We will be continue encourage those in case management support roles (e.g. intake coordinators) to consider the

Tuition reimbursement program now available so they can receive education to become case managers.

Over the last 3 months, we hired 43 new case managers which is above last year's target of 8 per month. We are targeting for an average of 10 new hires a month for the next year. We are recruiting and adding additional supervisors in preparation for new teams. We will be continuing the strategies that have worked and are optimistic that the increase in salaries has contributed to our success over the last months. The most significant change we are making in the next year is to review the caseloads reports every three months to stay focused on caseload reduction. With a growth of 1500 individuals served this year, we anticipate that we will need to continue at this pace as well as to devote additional resources to training of all staff and a focus on retention.