A Guide to Navigating the Regional Center of East Bay California

Self-Determination Program



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INTRODUCTION

Take Control of Your Services

Welcome! This handbook was created to help individuals and families better understand the Self-Determination Program (SDP) and how to navigate it with confidence. If you or a loved one receive services from a Regional Center, you have the right to make choices about the supports that best fit your needs, goals, and lifestyle.

The Self-Determination Program gives you more freedom and flexibility in choosing services, while still ensuring that you have the support needed to stay healthy and safe. However, we understand that learning about SDP and enrolling in the program can feel overwhelming.

That is why this handbook was created—to **explain the process step by step** in **simple**, **understandable language**. Whether you are just learning about SDP or are already enrolled, this guide will help you understand your **rights**, **responsibilities**, **and options** so you can make the best decisions for your future.

Who We Are

This handbook was created by the **Independent Facilitator Training Academy** (IFTA), an organization dedicated to **training and supporting individuals**, **families**, and **Independent Facilitators** in the Self-Determination Program.

At IFTA, we believe that everyone deserves the right to make their own choices and take control of their lives. We provide training, advocacy, and resources to help people understand and successfully navigate SDP. Our team has years of experience working with Regional Center services, disability rights, and personcentered planning.



To learn more about IFTA, visit www.iftrainingacademy.com.

Brought to you by:

This handbook was funded by the Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee (SDLAC) for the Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB). The SDLAC works to ensure that individuals and families have access to resources and support to make informed choices about joining and using SDP.

Their support has made this handbook possible, helping more people learn about and benefit from the Self-Determination Program. We appreciate their commitment to making **SDP more accessible, inclusive, and successful** for all participants.

Regional Center of the East Bay

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE SELF-DETERMINATION PROGRAM (SDP)

The Self-Determination Program (SDP) is a unique way for individuals receiving services from a California Regional Center to have more choice and control over their supports. Unlike the traditional system, where the Regional Center chooses service providers, SDP allows participants to design a plan that fits their needs, goals, and lifestyle.

In this section, we will explain what SDP is, its key principles, and how it connects to the Lanterman Act. We will also compare SDP and traditional Regional Center services so you can understand your options. Whether you are new to SDP or thinking about switching, this section will give you the information you need to make an informed decision.

<u>WHAT IS THE SELF-DETERMINATION</u> PROGRAM?

The Self-Determination Program (SDP) is an alternative way for individuals receiving Regional Center services to have more choice and control over their supports. Instead of relying on the Regional Center services providers, participants in SDP can design a service plan that meets their individual needs, goals, and lifestyle. In SDP, participants can:

- Choose their own services and supports.
- Hire the people they want to work with.
- Manage their own budget funds.
- Make decisions about how and where they receive support.

You can work with a Person-Centered Planner and an Independent Facilitator (IF) to create your Person-Centered Plan and Spending Plan. A Financial Management Service (FMS) will help manage payments to your staff and service providers. The Self-Determination Program (SDP) is designed to give you more independence while ensuring your health and safety.

SDP is available to all eligible Regional Center clients and is completely voluntary. If you decide that SDP is not the right fit, you can return to traditional services at any time. Contact your Case Manager to discuss your eligibility.

The Principles of Self-Determination

SDP is based on **five key principles** that give individuals control over their services and supports:

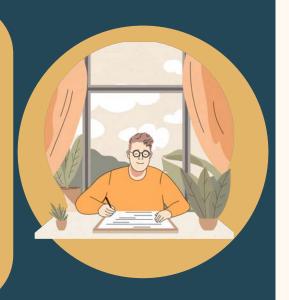
- 1. **Freedom** You have the freedom to make choices about your life, including where you live, how you spend your time, and who supports you.
- 2. Authority You control your Individualized Budget funds and decide how to spend it on the services that meet your needs.
- 3. **Support** You build a Circle of Support, which can include family, friends, and professionals who help you make informed decisions.
- 4. **Responsibility** You take responsibility for making choices that help you live safely and independently.
- 5. **Confirmation** You are the decision-maker in your own life. Your choices must be respected, and services should support your goals.

These principles ensure that SDP is a person-centered program where you have the power to decide what works best for you.

Benefits of SDP

SDP offers several advantages over traditional Regional Center services:

- More choice in service providers You are not limited to Regional Center-approved vendors. You can hire family, friends, or community providers to provide support.
- **Control over your budget** Instead of the Regional Center deciding how much to pay your service providers, you choose how to much to pay your providers and staff.
- Flexibility to fit your lifestyle and culture You can customize your services to match your personal values, traditions, and daily life.
- **Increased independence** You have the freedom to make decisions about how you live and who supports you.
- Support from a trusted team You can get help from Person-Centered Planners, Independent Facilitators, Financial Management Services (FMS), and your Circle of Support.

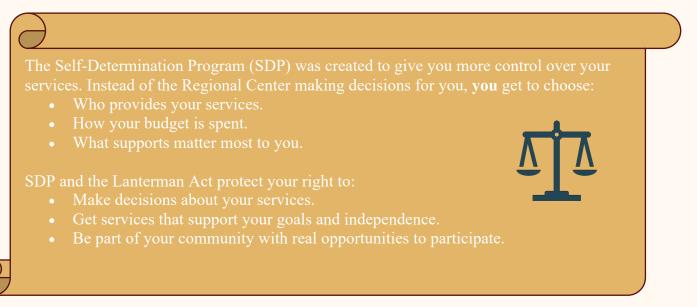


SDP helps you live a more self-directed life that matches your goals, interests, and needs.

How SDP is Connected to the Lanterman Act

The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act is a California law that gives individuals with developmental disabilities the right to services and supports to help them live independently and be part of their community.

This law created the Regional Center system, which provides and coordinates services for eligible individuals. However, in the traditional model, the Regional Center decides what services you receive, and which providers can be used.



SDP helps turn these rights into real opportunities for individuals to take charge of their own services.

SDP VS. TRADITIONAL SERVICES – KEY DIFFERENCES

Below is a comparison of the two models:

Feature	Traditional Regional Center Services	Self-Determination Program (SDP)
Who chooses services?	The Regional Center decides what services are provided and how they are implemented.	The participant decides what services they need and how they are provided.
Who provides services?	Only vendors approved by the Regional Center.	The participant can hire family, friends, or community providers.
Who manages the budget?	The Regional Center controls the budget and payments.	The participant controls their Individualized Budget with support from an FMS.
Flexibility in service options?	Limited to what the Regional Center providers/ vendors offers.	Services can be customized to fit the participant's needs.
Changing providers?	Requires Regional Center approval.	The participant can switch providers at any time.

Which Option Is Right for You?

- If you like having structured services with guidance from the Regional Center, the traditional model might suit you best.
- If you want more independence and control over your services, the Self-Determination Program (SDP) could be a great choice.

Important Note:

SDP is voluntary. If you try SDP but decides it is not the right fit, you can return to traditional services at any time.

Conclusion

The Self-Determination Program (SDP) gives you more control, choice, and flexibility over your services and supports. It allows you to:

- Decide who provides your services.
- Control how your budget is spent.
- Customize services to match your lifestyle, culture, and goals.
- Take an active role in shaping your future.

Understanding the basics of SDP is the first step. The next section will explain who is eligible for SDP and how to enroll in the program.



PART 2: ELIGIBILITY & ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Who Can Join the Self-Determination Program (SDP)?

The Self-Determination Program is for people who get services from a California Regional Center. To join, you need to meet certain requirements and follow specific steps. This section explains who can join SDP, how the Regional Center helps you sign up, the steps to join, the required orientation, and how to contact the Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB) for support. Knowing these steps will help you and your family decide if SDP is right for you and how to start.

Who Can Join the Self-Determination Program?

To qualify for SDP, you must: ✓ Be a current Regional Center client receiving services under the Lanterman Act ✓ Be willing to manage an Individualized Budget and make decisions about services ✓ Agree to work with a Financial Management Service (FMS) to handle payments and manage the budget ✓ Complete the required SDP orientation before enrolling

Who Cannot Join the Self-Determination **Program (SDP)**?

You cannot join if:

- You live in a licensed long-term care facility, such as a group home, skilled nursing facility, or intermediate care facility. However, if you plan to move into your own home or the community within 90 days, you may become eligible.
- You are in Early Start services (for children under age 3) and are not yet receiving services under the Lanterman Act.

Since SDP requires individuals to take more control over their services and budgeting, it is important to discuss whether this program is a good fit. If you are unsure, speak with your RCEB Case Manager to explore your options.

THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL CENTER IN SDP ENROLLMENT

The Regional Center's role in SDP is different from its role in the traditional service model. Instead of making decisions about services, RCEB provides guidance and support while allowing the participant to take control.

What RCEB Does in SDP Enrollment:

- <u>Checks eligibility</u> Confirms that the individual meets the requirements for SDP.
- <u>**Provides information**</u> Answers questions and explains how SDP works.
- <u>Offers the required orientation</u> Ensures participants understand their **rights and responsibilities.**
- <u>Determines the Individualized Budget</u> Reviews past services and needs to **calculate the budget** for SDP.
- <u>Supports the transition to SDP</u> Helps with paperwork and other steps needed to enroll.

What RCEB Does Not Do in SDP:

- Does not choose service providers.
- Does not manage the participant's budget.
- Does not make final decisions about how the participant spends their funds (as long as the Spending Plan follows SDP rules)

Even though participants have more control over their services in SDP, they can still reach out to RCEB for support when needed.

STEPS TO ENROLLMENT

The enrollment process for SDP involves a few key steps.

Step 1: Notify RCEB of Your Interest in SDP

Once orientation is completed, the individual (or their legal representative) must inform their RCEB Case Manager that they want to enroll in SDP.

Step 2: Attend an SDP Orientation

Before enrolling, an individual must complete an SDP orientation. This orientation covers:

- How the Self-Determination Program works
- The responsibilities of participants
- How to create an Individualized Budget and Spending Plan
- The role of the Financial Management Service (FMS)

After completing the orientation, individuals will receive a Certificate of Completion, which is required to move forward with enrollment.

REQUIRED ORIENTATION

The SDP orientation is mandatory for all new participants. The orientation ensures that individuals and families:

- Understand their rights and responsibilities in SDP.
- Know how to manage their budget and services.
- Are aware of available supports in SDP.

How to Sign Up for Orientation

- Contact your RCEB Case Manager to ask about available orientation sessions.
- Connect with the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) to find approved orientation providers.

Once the orientation is completed, individuals must submit a copy of the Certificate of Completion to their RCEB Case Manager to move forward with enrollment.

CONCLUSION

Joining the Self-Determination Program requires several important steps, but with the right support, the process can be smooth.

This section covered:

- Who is eligible for SDP
- The role of RCEB in the enrollment process
- Step-by-step instructions for joining SDP.
- The required orientation and how to complete it.
- How to contact RCEB for help

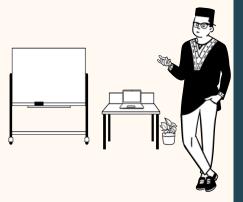
RCEB SDP CONTACTS

For individuals in the Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB) service area, the following contacts can provide support and information about SDP:

- RCEB Self-Determination Program Coordinator

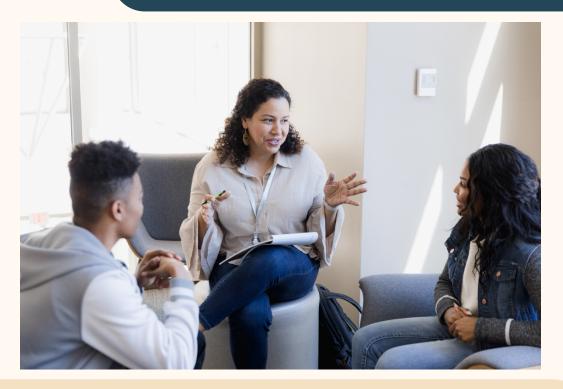
 Email: selfdetermination@rceb.org
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- RCEB Case Managers
 - If already receiving Regional Center services, participants should contact their assigned Case Manager.
- Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee (SDLAC) at RCEB
 - The SDLAC provides resources and advocacy for SDP participants.
 - Email: selfdetermination@rceb.org

For the most up-to-date contact information, visit the RCEB website: <u>https://rceb.org/clients/self-determination/</u>



PART 3: PRE-ENROLLMENT SUPPORTS

Before joining the Self-Determination Program, you may need help understanding the process, creating a Spending Plan, and meeting Financial Management Service (FMS) requirements. This section explains the pre-enrollment supports available, including assistance from a Person-Centered Planner to develop a Person-Centered Plan (PCP) and General Enrollment Support to help with budgeting, provider enrollment, and transitioning into SDP.



The Self Determination Program offers Pre-Enrollment Supports to help you transition smoothly into SDP.

This section will explain the two types of pre-enrollment supports available:

- 1. Support from a Person-Centered Planner (Service Code 024) Assistance with creating a Person-Centered Plan (PCP) to guide service choices.
- 2. General Enrollment Support (Service Code 099) Assistance with developing an SDP Spending Plan, meeting Financial Management Service (FMS) requirements, and completing employee and provider enrollment.

Understanding these pre-enrollment supports can help you make informed decisions and set up a solid foundation for success in SDP.

Support from a Person-Centered Planner (Service Code 024)

A Person-Centered Planner helps you create a Person-Centered Plan (PCP), which serves as a roadmap for your services and supports in SDP. While a PCP is not required, many individuals find it helpful in identifying their goals, preferences, and needs before developing their Spending Plan.

What is a Person-Centered Plan (PCP)?

A PCP is a document that helps you:

- Identify your goals, hopes, and dreams for the future.
- Determine what services and supports you need to achieve those goals.
- Recognize the people and resources in your life that can provide support.
- Ensure that services reflect your cultural values, traditions, and daily routines.





The PCP is developed through a **Person-Centered Planning meeting**, where you work with your **Person-Centered Planner**, family members, and trusted supporters.

This meeting allows you to **explore different service options** and make decisions that align with your vision for your life.

Who Pays for Person-Centered Planner Services?

The Regional Center of the East Bay covers the cost of a Person-Centered Planner under Service Code 024 before an individual enrolls in SDP. This means you can access free support to develop a PCP as part of your pre-enrollment process.

If you choose not to use a Person-Centered Planner, you can still discuss your goals, needs, and preferences with your RCEB Case Manager to help prepare for SDP enrollment.

How to Find a Person-Centered Planner To find a Person-Centered Planner, you can:

- Ask your RCEB Case Manager for a list of approved Person-Centered Planners.
- Contact the Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee (SDLAC) for recommendations.
- Search for independent facilitators and planners with experience in SDP.
- Visit SDPNetwork.org or other similar sites for a list of Person-Centered Planners and Independent Facilitators.

Since Person-Centered Planning is highly individualized, it is important to choose a planner who understands your needs, communication style, and cultural background.

<u>General enrollment support (service code 099)</u>

After completing the SDP orientation, if you may need help completing the enrollment process, General Enrollment Support (Service Code 099) supports with developing an SDP Spending Plan, meeting Financial Management Service (FMS) requirements, and completing the employee and provider enrollment process.

Help with Developing an SDP Spending Plan

The Spending Plan is a required document in SDP that outlines:

- The services and supports you will use.
- How your Individualized Budget will be spent.
- The employees or service providers you will hire.

General Enrollment Support providers can help you:

- Understand what services are allowed in SDP.
- Plan how to divide your budget to meet your needs.
- Ensure your Spending Plan follows SDP rules and guidelines.



General Enrollment

ensure all steps are completed correctly.

Support providers can

assist with this process to

Help with Transitioning into SDP

Once the Spending Plan is complete, you must take additional steps before starting SDP. General Enrollment Support providers can help by:

- Reviewing and submitting required forms to RCEB.
- Helping individuals communicate with their RCEB Case Manager about their Spending Plan.
- Answering questions and troubleshooting issues during the transition.

Meeting Financial Management Service (FMS) Requirements

In SDP, you must use a Financial Management Service (FMS) to:

- Pay employees and service providers.
- Track spending and ensure it stays within the approved budget.
- Manage payroll taxes and other financial responsibilities.

Before starting SDP, individuals must:

1.2.3.Choose an FMS
provider from the
list of approved
vendors.Submit required
paperwork to set up
their FMS account.Understand your
role in working with
an FMS.

Enrolling Employees and Service Providers

Some SDP participants hire their own support staff, such as caregivers, personal assistants, or therapists. Before these employees can start working, they must:

- Complete the required enrollment process with the FMS.
- Provide necessary paperwork, background checks, and tax forms.
- Sign an agreement outlining their job duties and responsibilities.

General Enrollment Support providers can help individuals complete this process to ensure their employees and providers are set up properly.

Who Pays for General Enrollment Support? Who Can Help?

The Regional Center of the East Bay pays for General Enrollment Support under Service Code 099, so you do not have to cover these costs.

Support is available from:

- **Independent Facilitators** Professionals who assist with Spending Plans and the enrollment process.
- **General Enrollment Support Providers** Agencies or individuals approved by RCEB to provide direct assistance.
- **RCEB Case Managers** While they do not create Spending Plans, they help ensure the necessary steps are completed.



CONCLUSION

Pre-enrollment support can help you successfully transition into SDP. This section covered:

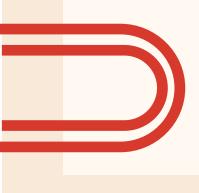
- How a Person-Centered Plan (PCP) can help you plan your services before developing a Spending Plan.
- How to get General Enrollment Support to create a Spending Plan, meet Financial Management Service (FMS) requirements, and enroll employees and providers.
- Who can assist with pre-enrollment and how to access these free services through RCEB.

These supports are not required but highly recommended to make the SDP enrollment process easier.





PART 4: PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING (PCP)



A Person-Centered Plan helps you identify your goals, needs, and the services that will support you in the Self-Determination Program. This section explains how to create a PCP, who can help, and how it connects to your budget and services.

Before joining the Self-Determination Program, it is important to have a clear plan for the services and supports that will help you reach your goals. A PCP is a tool that helps you think about your future, your needs, and what services will best support you.



UNDERSTANDING PERSON-CENTERED THINKING

Person-Centered Thinking is an approach that focuses on you as a person, not just your disability or needs. Instead of others making decisions for you, Person-Centered Thinking puts you in control. **It helps you:**

- Think about what is important to you, not just what others think you need.
- Identify your strengths, interests, and goals.
- Make decisions based on your culture, values, and personal preferences.
- Ensure your services support the life you want to live.

A Person-Centered Plan is built using Person-Centered Thinking, so it reflects your choices, goals, and the supports you need to be successful.



DEVELOPING A PERSON-CENTERED PLAN AND ITS IMPORTANCE

A Person-Centered Plan (PCP) is a written plan that outlines your goals, needs, and the services that will support you. It is different from the Individual Program Plan (IPP) because it focuses on your whole life, not just the services the Regional Center provides.

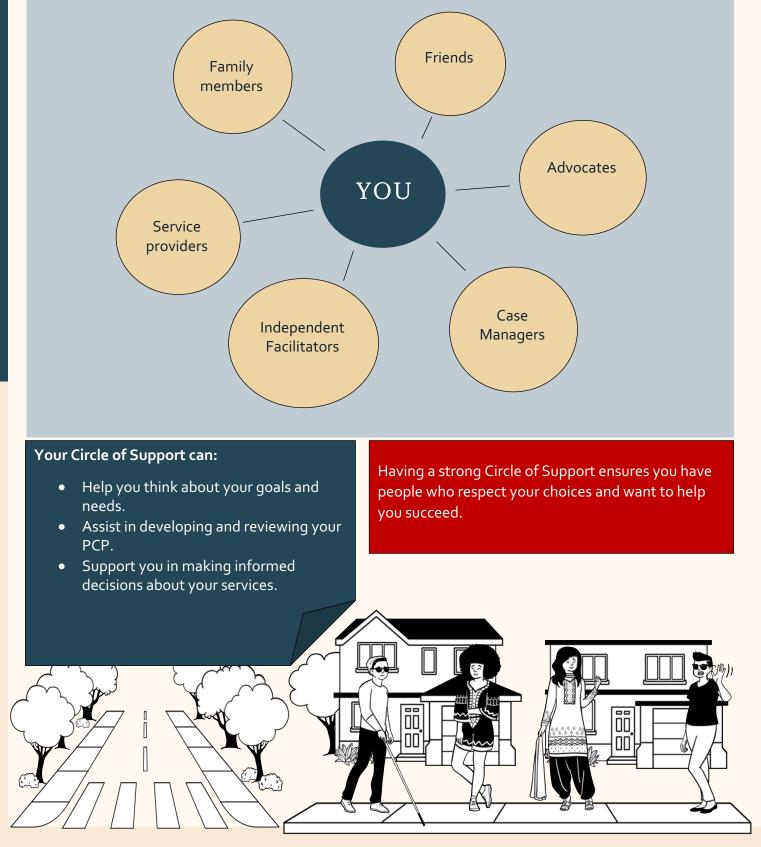
Why is a PCP Important?

- **Gives you a voice** Your PCP is about your choices, goals, and dreams.
- Helps you plan for SDP The PCP helps you decide what supports you need to reach your goals.
- Reflects your culture and values The plan is created based on what is important to you.
- **Guides your support team** Your family, friends, and service providers can use the PCP to better understand your needs and preferences.

The PCP is optional, but many people find it useful when preparing for SDP.

BUILDING YOUR CIRCLE OF SUPPORT WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

A Circle of Support is made up of trusted people who help you reach your goals. This can include:



THE PCP MEETING – CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS & FACILITATION

A PCP Meeting is when you bring together your Circle of Support to discuss your dreams, interest, goals, needs, and services. This meeting should be focused on you and respect your cultural background, language, and personal values.

Key Considerations for Your PCP Meeting:

- You are the leader The meeting should focus on what you want.
- Your culture and traditions matter The plan should respect your values and preferences.
- You can choose who attends Invite only people you trust and who support your goals.
- You can have a facilitator A Person-Centered Planner or Independent Facilitator can help guide the meeting.

The goal of the PCP meeting is to create a plan that truly reflects you and the life you want to live.

What Does a PCP Meeting Look Like and Where Can It Take Place?

The PCP meeting is focused on you, and you must be present and actively involved in the discussion.

You decide who is invited to the meeting. You can choose to include family members, friends, advocates, service providers, their Independent Facilitator, or anyone else you trust.

The meeting should be a safe and supportive space where you feel heard and respected.

A PCP meeting can take place in any location that is comfortable and accessible for you, such as:

- Your home
- A Regional Center office
- A community center
- A library or another public meeting space
- A virtual setting

(Zoom or phone call if in-person meetings are not possible)



The most important part of the PCP meeting is that it is centered around your goals, dreams, and personal preferences.



How an Independent Facilitator (IF) Helps in a PCP Meeting

An IF plays a significant role in helping the participant prepare for and lead their PCP meeting.

The IF's role in a PCP meeting includes:

- Helping you express their goals and needs.
- Making sure the meeting is focused on your wishes; not what others think is best for you.
- Encouraging respectful and supportive discussions
- Ensuring that cultural needs and personal values are considered in the planning process.

<u>What Should Be Included</u> <u>in Your PCP?</u>

The Person-Centered Plan report is a written summary of everything talked about during the PCP meeting. It includes your goals, strengths, and the services you need to live the life you want.

It is based on what you want and your values, making sure your choices are respected. This report helps guide the Spending Plan and makes sure that your needs and wishes are the focus of your Self-Determination journey.

Your PCP should be based on your goals, interest, needs, and the supports that will help you succeed.



If a participant has difficulty communicating, the IF can help make sure their choices are understood and respected. The goal of the meeting is to create a plan that truly reflects the participant's vision for their future while making sure they have the right support to achieve it.



A PCP typically includes:

- Your strengths and interests
- Goals that cover many areas of your life such as educational, community integration, career/ job, personal, family goals, and so much more
- The challenges and barriers you may face in reaching your goals.
- It can include short-term and long-term goals.
- The services and supports you need.
- Goals and activities that fits with your culture and lifestyle.

A PCP is not a legal document, but it can be used to help guide your Individualized Budget, your IPP, and your Spending Plan.

How the PCP Connects to Your IPP and Individualized Budget

Your Individual Program Plan is the plan you develop with your Case Manager at the Regional Center. If you choose SDP, your PCP helps shape your IPP and Individualized Budget.

- The PCP identifies your needs, goals, and preferred services.
- The IPP includes the services that the Regional Center will approve to help you reach your IPP goals.
- The Individualized Budget is based on the services you received in the past 12 months as well as the services that can help you reach your IPP goals.

If you have a clear PCP, it can help your Case Manager understand what you need, connect you with valuable services, and set up your budget in SDP.

Choosing Not to Have a <u>PCP – Alternative to a PCP</u>

A PCP is not required to join SDP. If you choose not to create one, you can still review your goals and needs with your Case Manager who will help develop your Individualized Budget.

Alternative to a PCP:

- Meet with your Case Manager to discuss your hopes, goals, and support needs.
- Work with your Circle of Support to plan for what services and supports will help you live the life you want.
- Use your IPP as a guide to help create your SDP Spending Plan.

Even if you do not have a formal PCP, it is important to think about what services and supports will help you reach your each goals before starting SDP.

What Happens After the PCP is Completed?

Once the Person-Centered Plan is finished, you can review it with your Independent Facilitator, Circle of Support, and Regional Center Case Manager to make sure it includes everything you need. This meeting is a chance to go over the plan, make any changes, and ensure it reflects your goals and services. After the review, you can submit the final PCP to their Case Manager for review. The Case Manager will look at the plan to identify services that may be included to your Individualized Budget. If any updates are needed, you and your team can work together to adjust or come to an agreement with the budget before moving forward in SDP.



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PART 5: THE INDIVIDUALIZED BUDGET & SPENDING PLAN



In the Self-Determination Program (SDP), you have control over your Individualized Budget and how you spend it. This section explains how your budget is created, how to develop a Spending Plan, and what to do if you disagree with the amount or how it can be used. Understanding your budget and Spending Plan will help you make choices that best support your goals and needs.





When you join the Self-Determination Program, you take control of your Individualized Budget and decide how to use it through your Spending Plan. Your budget is based on the services you received in the past, but it may also include new services that help you reach your Individual Program Plan (IPP) goals, which are influenced by your Person-Centered Plan (PCP).

In this section, you will learn:

- What your Individualized Budget is and how it is created
- What a Spending Plan is, why it is important, and how it is developed
- How your budget and Spending Plan connect to your PCP and IPP goals
- The Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB)'s role in reviewing your budget and Spending Plan
- What to do if you disagree with the budget or Spending Plan

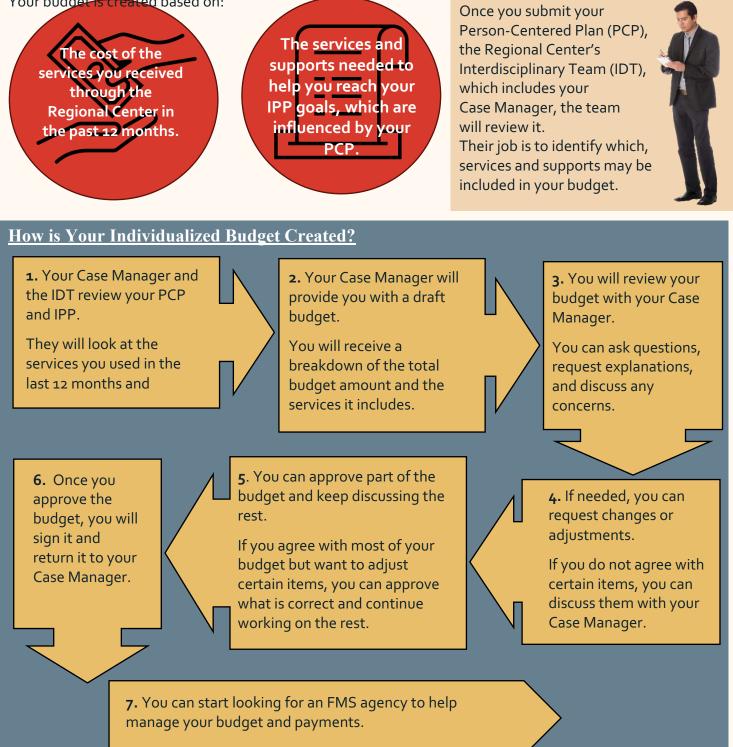
This section will help you successfully manage your budget and make sure you get the services you need in SDP.



What is an Individualized Budget?

Your Individualized Budget is the total amount of money available to you in SDP. Unlike the traditional system, where the Regional Center decides which services you receive and the amount paid to your providers, in SDP, you choose how to spend your budget and how much to pay providers to best support vour needs.

Your budget is created based on:



Can Your Budget Be Adjusted Later?

Yes! If your budget needs change after you start SDP, you can request a budget adjustment. To do this, you must:

- Contact your Case Manager and explain what has changed.
- Provide documentation to support your request (some services may require an assessment report).
- The IDT will review your request to determine if the adjustment follows SDP rules, the Lanterman Act, and your IPP process.

Before requesting a change, it may help to review the RCEB service policies to understand the rules for different services. You can find these on the RCEB website in the "**Getting Started" brochure** <u>https://rceb.org/clients/getting-started-with-us/</u> and **Purchase of Service Policies** section. <u>https://rceb.org/clients/purchase-service-pos/pos-policies/</u>

What is a Spending Plan?

Your Spending Plan is a document that explains how you will use your Individualized Budget funds to pay for services and supports in SDP.



Why is the Spending Plan Important?

- It shows how you will spend your budget funds to meet your goals.
- It lists the services, supports, and providers you will use.
- It helps the Regional Center confirm that your services follow SDP rules.
- It guides your Financial Management Service (FMS) to process payments for your services.

How is the Spending Plan Developed?

- You will collaborate with your team to create a list of all the services and supports you need.
- You will need to identify providers, vendors, or staff who will provide the services and the amount of pay.
- Your Spending Plan must match the goals in your PCP and IPP.
- You will submit the Spending Plan to your Case Manager for review.

Who Can Help You Develop Your Spending Plan?

- Your Independent Facilitator (if you have one)
- A Person-Centered Planner
- Your Case Manager (for guidance, but they do not create the plan for you)
- Pre-Enrollment Support Providers

RCEB provides a Spending Plan template, and most FMS agencies have their own templates that must be completed and submitted to them.

 How the Budget and Spending Plan Connect to the PCP Your PCP helps guide your Spending Plan by identifying: Your goals and dreams The services and supports you need to reach those goals. Who will provide those services. 	If a service, item, or support is not discussed in your PCP, it may not be approved for your Spending Plan. That is why it is important to include all needed services and supports in your PCP before you submit it. Work with your team, Independent Facilitator, and Case Manager to ensure that everything you need is included.
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RCEB's Role in Budget & Spending Plan Development

Once you submit your Spending Plan, RCEB will review it to make sure it follows all rules and regulations, including:

SDP Rules & Regional Center Guidelines

- These rules guide how SDP works, including what services can be funded, how budgets are determined, and what steps participants must follow. They ensure your Spending Plan meets SDP laws and state guidelines.

The Lanterman Act –

A California law that guarantees individuals with developmental disabilities the right to services and supports to help them live independently and be included in their communities.

SB 468 –

The law that created the Self-Determination Program in California. It allows you to control your budget, hire your own providers, and design a Spending Plan based on your needs and goals.

<u>Title 17 & Welfare and Institutions Code</u> (WIC) –

State laws that outline who qualify for Regional Center services, what services are allowed, and how funds can be used. These laws help shape how budgets and services are managed in SDP.

DDS Directives –

Official instructions from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) that tell Regional Centers how to run SDP. These directives set rules for budgets, spending, and Financial Management Services (FMS) requirements.

Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Rules –

Federal rules that make sure people with disabilities get services in community settings rather than institutions. These rules help ensure that you have choices, independence, and access to the same opportunities as everyone else. The SDP Specialist at RCEB will check that your Spending Plan follows these regulations and may take up to three weeks to complete the review.

If a service is not approved, you can:

- Adjust your Spending Plan to remove or change the service.
- Request a Notice of Action (NOA) and appeal if you disagree.
- Move forward with the approved services while working on the disputed service separately.

Once approved, RCEB will:

- Contact your FMS agency to confirm they are ready for your SDP start date.
- Submit purchase order process, which can take up to two weeks.
- Confirm your FMS has access to your budget funds, and payments can begin.



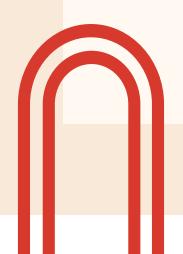
What Happens If You Disagree with the Budget or Spending Plan?

If you do not agree with your Individualized Budget or Spending Plan, you can:

- 1. Talk to your Case Manager and request a meeting to discuss your concerns.
- 2. Request a reassessment if your needs have changed.
- 3. File a Notice of Action (NOA) appeal if a service is denied.
- 4. Adjust your Spending Plan so approved services can start while you work on the disputed services separately.



PART 6: WORKING WITH THE FMS & TRANSITIONING INTO SDP



Once your Spending Plan is approved, you will start working with a Financial Management Service (FMS) to manage your budget and process payments. The FMS plays a critical role in the Self-Determination Program (SDP) because they handle payroll for your employees, process invoices for vendors and providers, track spending, and make sure that funds are used correctly according to your Spending Plan. In this section, you will learn:

- What an FMS does and the types of FMS services available
- Which FMS model might be best for you based on your needs.
- The steps to fully transition into SDP.
- How to change your FMS provider if needed
- How FMS payment processing works and why spending plans may need adjustments when switching FMS providers

Understanding how to work with an FMS will help you have a smooth transition into SDP and avoid delays in getting your services started.



What Is a Financial Management Service (FMS)?

An FMS is an agency that helps you manage your Individualized Budget funds in SDP. You must have an FMS to participate in SDP.

Your FMS:

- Pays your service providers and employees.
- Tracks how your funds are used.
- Makes sure all payments follow SDP rules.
- Handles payroll taxes and paperwork for any employees you hire.

Each Regional Center provides a list of approved FMS agencies for you to choose from. The FMS does not decide how you spend your budget that is your decision, as long as your Spending Plan follows SDP rules.

Services Provided by an FMS: Choosing the Right Model for You

There are three types of FMS models, and you must choose one. Each model has different responsibilities and levels of control over how services are provided.

<u>Bill Payer Model –</u> <u>Best for participants using</u> <u>vendors and agencies</u>

You receive services only from vendors, local businesses, and agencies that provide things like therapy, day programs, transportation, etc. The FMS pays the vendors solely based on the invoices they submit.

You do not need to hire or manage employees; the vendors or business owner provide the services.

<u>Best for:</u> Participants who only use agency-based services and do not want to manage employees.

<u>Co-Employer Model –</u> <u>Best for participants who hire</u> <u>their own staff but want</u> <u>payroll handled for them</u>

You can hire your own employees, such as a personal assistant, caregiver, or tutor. The FMS acts as a co-employer, meaning they oversee payroll, employment taxes, and required paperwork. You are responsible for training, supervising, and managing your employees. You can also use some vendors and agencies in addition to hiring your own employees. **Bost for:** Participants who want to hire their

Best for: Participants who want to hire their own staff but do not want to handle payroll and employment paperwork.

<u>Sole Employer Model –</u> <u>Best for participants who want full</u> <u>control over hiring and management</u>

You become the sole employer of your staff and are fully responsible for hiring, training, and managing employees.

You must follow all employer laws, including background checks and tax requirements. The FMS processes payroll but does not help with hiring or supervision.

You can still work with vendors and agencies if needed.

Best for: Participants who want full control over their staff and are comfortable handling all employer responsibilities.

Choosing the right FMS model depends on whether you plan to hire employees directly or only use vendors and agencies.



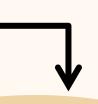
STEPS TO TRANSITION INTO SDP

Once your Individualized Budget and Spending Plan are approved, you need to complete several important steps before you can officially start using your budget in SDP.

WHAT YOU NEED TO FINALIZE PARTICIPATION

1. Choose an FMS Provider:

- Review the list of approved FMS agencies from your Regional Center.
- Decide which FMS model (Bill Payer, Co-Employer, or Sole Employer) works best for your services.
- Contact the FMS, review their process, and complete their enrollment forms.



2. Submit All Required Paperwork to the FMS:

- The FMS will provide a packet of forms that must be completed.
- If you are hiring employees, they must submit employment paperwork, tax forms, and background checks.
- Vendors and service providers may need to complete provider agreements before getting paid.

3. Ensure the FMS Has the Correct Spending Plan:

- Most FMS agencies have their own Spending Plan templates that must be completed.
- Your Spending Plan must match the funds available in your Individualized Budget.



4. Wait for Purchase Orders to Be Processed:

- The Regional Center submits purchase orders to the FMS before they can access your funds.
- This process can take up to two weeks.

5. <u>Confirm the FMS is</u> <u>Ready to Make Payments:</u>

- Once the purchase order is processed, the FMS will begin making payments to your providers and employees based on your Spending Plan.
- Confirm the FMS has received all the participant and employee paperwork.

Once these steps are complete, you are fully transitioned into SDP, and your budget will be available for use.

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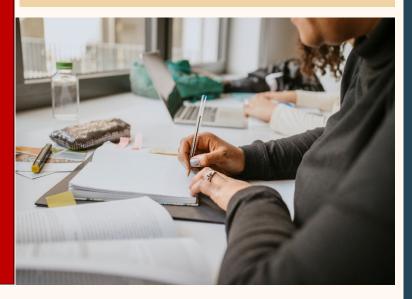
Changing Your FMS Provider

If you need to switch to a different FMS, be aware that this process takes time and has multiple steps.

Important Things to Know About Switching FMS Providers

- The new FMS treats it as a new case, meaning you must start a new enrollment process.
- The process can take up to **three months**.
- A new FMS package must be completed, and all employees and providers must reenroll with the new FMS.
- The current FMS must finalize all invoices and payments before the switch is complete.
- Each Regional Center has different FMS payment processing dates. Some process payments weekly, while others process payments biweekly.

If an invoice is submitted after the FMS processing deadline, the payment may roll over to the next week. For example, if the FMS processes payments on Mondays and Wednesdays and you submit an invoice on Thursday, it may not be paid until the following week.



How Your Spending Plan is Affected When You Change FMS Providers

- Your budget stays the same for the 12-month period, but your Spending Plan must be adjusted to reflect what has already been spent.
- The new Spending Plan must match the remaining budget after the previous FMS has paid for services.

Example: If your total budget was \$100,000 and your first FMS already spent \$50,000, your new FMS will require a Spending Plan for the remaining \$50,000.

• If your needs change or you have unmet needs, your budget may be adjusted with approval from your Case Manager. You can discuss changes based on new circumstances or services that were not previously included.

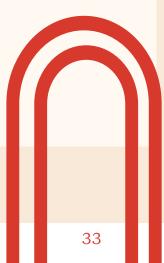
Switching FMS providers is a detailed process, so it is best to plan ahead, communicate with both your old and new FMS, and work closely with your Case Manager to avoid service disruptions.



By understanding how to work with an FMS, choosing the right model, and planning ahead for any transitions, you can successfully manage your budget and services in Self-Determination.



PART 7: SDP RENEWALS & YEARLY SDP REVISIONS



Each year, you must review and update your budget and Spending Plan to make sure your services still match your needs. This section explains how to renew your Individualized Budget, update your Spending Plan, and work with your Case Manager and FMS to prepare for the next year of SDP.

Each year, you need to renew and update your **Self-Determination Program (SDP)** budget and Spending Plan to make sure your services still fit your needs and goals. This includes reviewing your **Person-Centered Plan (PCP),** Individualized Budget, and Spending Plan and working with your Case Manager (CM), Financial Management Service (FMS), and the **Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB)** to prepare for the next year.



UNDERSTANDING THE ANNUAL RENEWAL & REVISION PROCESS

Each year, you must review and update your budget and Spending Plan. Your budget does not roll over, which means any leftover funds from this year will not carry over into the next year.

When to Start the Renewal Process: It is best to start at least four months before your new budget year begins. This gives enough time for reviews, approvals, and any needed changes.

Timeline for the Renewal Process:

4 Months Before the New Budget Year:

- Meet with your Case Manager to review your PCP, services, and any unmet needs.
- If your needs have changed, talk to your Case Manager about adding or removing services

2 Months Before the New Budget Year:

- Review your budget to see if you need to make changes.
- Start working on your Spending Plan for next year.

1 Month Before the New Budget Year:

- RCEB starts processing your Purchase of Service (POS) authorizations.
- Your FMS reviews and gets ready for the new budget year.

If the renewal process is delayed, **you may get a 6o-day temporary extension** so services can continue while approvals are completed. However, it is still important to submit everything on time to avoid delays.

REVISING YOUR INDIVIDUALIZED BUDGET

Once you submit your updated PCP (if needed), your Case Manager and Regional Center team will review your services to see if you still need them or if any new ones need to be added.

Key Points About Budget Revisions

- Your services do not automatically carry over, each service is reviewed to see if you still need it.
- If you have new goals or needs, you may be able to add new services.
- If your needs have changed, some services may be removed or added.

Budget Adjustments

If your needs change, you can ask for a budget adjustment by:

- Talking to your Case Manager to start an assessment.
- Providing documentation (some services require an assessment report).
- The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) at RCEB will review your request based on Lanterman Act guidelines and your IPP goals.

Budget reviews take time, so start early to avoid service delays.

REVIEWING & FINALIZING THE NEXT YEAR'S SDP SPENDING PLAN

Your Spending Plan must be updated every year to reflect changes in services, providers, or supports.

Important Steps for Spending Plan Revisions

- Your Spending Plan must match your budget fund total and follow SDP rules.
- Submit your Spending Plan on Mondays to allow enough time for processing.
- If you plan to stop a service or provider, you must give at least two weeks' notice so payments can be adjusted.
- Late invoices and timesheets may delay payments, as RCEB submits payments mid-week and FMS agencies process invoices weekly.
- Spending Plan revisions can take 1-2 months to process, so plan ahead.



INCLUDING AN INDEPENDENT FACILITATOR (IF) IN YOUR SPENDING PLAN

If you plan to have an Independent Facilitator (IF) help you, you must include their hourly rate and the number of hours they will support you throughout the year. What to Include for Your IF:

- Monthly IF Support: Example 2 hours per month = 24 hours per year
- Services they will provide: Help with progress tracking, spending plan review, and provider support.
- **Cost calculation:** (Hours x Rate) for the year
- **IF contract:** Make sure you have a valid yearly contract with your IF. This should list the cost, services, and expectations for the next year.

If you want your IF to hold a new PCP meeting, write a new PCP, or help with developing or updating your next year Spending Plan, you must include these costs in your Spending Plan as well.

WORKING WITH THE FMS FOR THE NEW BUDGET YEAR

Once your budget and Spending Plan are approved, your FMS will prepare to process payments for the new budget cycle.

Switching FMS Providers During Renewal

If you want to change your FMS, keep in mind:

- A new FMS treats this as a new case, which means you must re-enroll and complete all paperwork again.
- The process takes about three months.
- You will need to submit a new FMS package and re-enroll employees and providers.
- Your current FMS must finalize all payments before the switch can be completed.
- Each Regional Center has different FMS payment schedules. If you submit an invoice late, it may roll over to the next week.

Budget Considerations When Changing FMS

- Your budget remains the same for 12 months, but your Spending Plan must be adjusted.
- Any money spent with your old FMS must be accounted for in your new Spending Plan.
- Example: If your budget was \$100,000, and you spent \$50,000 with your first FMS, the new FMS will require a Spending Plan for the remaining \$50,000.

Key Things to Know About FMS Processing

- RCEB submits payments to FMS midweek, and invoices are processed weekly.
- Late invoices or timesheets can cause delays in payments.
- If you plan to stop a service or provider, you must notify RCEB and your FMS at least two weeks in advance.

If your needs change, talk to your Case Manager about adjusting your budget.

By starting early, working with your Case Manager, FMS, and RCEB, and following these steps, you can ensure a smooth transition into the next year of SDP without delays or service interruptions.

PART 8: DIS-ENROLLMENT FROM SDP

SDP is voluntary, which means you can leave the program at any time and return to traditional Regional Center services. This section explains your right to disenroll, the steps to return to traditional services, and what to expect during the process.

The Self-Determination Program (SDP) is completely voluntary. You can leave at any time and return to traditional Regional Center services if you feel SDP is not the right fit for you. The process to dis-enroll is simple, but there are important steps to follow to make sure there is no gap in your services.



<u>CHOOSING TO LEAVE SDP –</u> YOUR RIGHT TO RETURN TO TRADITIONAL SERVICES

You have the right to leave SDP whenever you choose. Some reasons why people decide to return to traditional services include:

- Feeling that SDP is too much responsibility.
- Wanting more Regional Center support in managing services
- Difficulty finding service providers.
- Deciding that traditional services better meet your needs.

No matter the reason, you can always re-enroll in SDP later if you decide to return.

STEPS TO DIS-ENROLL FROM SDP

If you decide to leave SDP, you must follow a few important steps for a smooth transition back to traditional services.

Step 1: Inform Your Case Manager

- Let your Case Manager know that you want to leave SDP.
- You may be asked to explain why you are leaving, but you do not have to provide a reason.

Step 3: Notify Your FMS and Providers

- Inform your Financial Management Service (FMS) that you are leaving SDP.
- Your FMS will finalize any outstanding payments to providers before closing your account.
- If you hired your own employees, you will need to notify them and process their final payments through the FMS.

Step 5: Officially Exit SDP

- Once your new IPP is in place, your Case Manager will submit your official disenrollment from SDP.
- You will no longer use your SDP budget, and your services will be managed directly by the Regional Center.

Step 2: Work with RCEB to Transition Back to Traditional Services

- Your Case Manager will work with you to reassess your needs and create a new Individual Program Plan (IPP) for traditional services.
- Some services in SDP may not be available in traditional services, so you may need to adjust your service plan.

Step 4: Wait for Your New Services to Start

- Your Case Manager will set up your services under the traditional model.
- If any services change, your Case Manager will explain what is different and help you adjust.

RETURNING TO SDP IN THE FUTURE

Leaving SDP does not mean you can never return. If you decide later that SDP is the right fit for you:

- You can contact your Case Manager and ask to re-enroll.
- You may need to attend another SDP orientation if you have been out of the program for a long time.
- You will go through the enrollment process again, including setting up a new PCP, budget, and Spending Plan.

If you leave the Self-Determination Program. you have to wait 12 months before you can join again. This rule helps keep the program stable. If you want to sign up again, talk to your regional center for help and to see if there are any exceptions.



RCEB CONTACTS

RCEB Main Office | San Leandro, CA

Creekside Plaza 500 Davis Street, Suite 100 San Leandro, CA 94577

Main Line (510) 618-6100 Fax: a (510) 678-4100 Videophone: (510) 394-1835

Over 3 Intake Referral Line: (510) 618-6122 Early Intervention Referral Line (510) 618-6195



RCEB Concord Office | Concord, CA

1320 Willow Pass Road, Suite 300 Concord, CA 94520

Main Line (925) 691-2300 Fax: (925) 674-8001 Videophone: (866) 460-4535



If your case manager or another staff has not responded to you within three business days, please email: oncallcasemanager@rceb.org

After Hours Assistance

If you need assistance on weekends or holidays, or before 8:30 am or after 5 pm on weekdays, call the numbers below and follow the instructions for after-hours assistance:

Alameda County: (510) 618-6100

Contra Costa County: (925) 691-2300 / (925) 798-3001

For the Staff Directory click here: <u>https://v6q.90e.myftpupload.com/about-us/staff/</u>

If you do not know who your case manager is or have not heard back from your case manager within three days, please email <u>oncallcasemanager@rceb.org</u>.

SDP Team & Specialists

Contact your Case Manager and request the name and contact information of the SDP specialist assigned to the case.

Visit the RCEB SDP webpage to:

- Download the SDP brochure
- Join the next SDP Committee meeting.
- Find valuable resources

Visit: https://rceb.org/clients/self-determination/

Have questions or experiencing challenges with navigating the Self-Determination Program? Submit a question by visiting: <u>https://rceb.org/clients/self-</u> determination/troubleshoot-self-determination/

Budget Concerns

If you are having budget concerns, contact your Case Manager or their Supervisor. If you are not able to contact their case management team, call the RCEB main line (925)691-2300 and ask for the supervisor of the day.

Office of the Self-Determination Program Ombudsperson

If you require support or clarity regarding the Self-Determination Program process, you can email the ombudsman office for SDP at <u>Ombudsperson@dds.ca.gov</u> or visit the DDS website <u>https://www.dds.ca.gov/initiatives/sdp/</u> office-of-the-self-determination-ombudsperson

Appeals & Disputes

For RCEB service dispute or denied, please click here to read about appeal process here <u>https://rceb.org/clients/appeals-process-for-persons-served/</u>.

When your service request is denied, your case manager will send you a denial letter with details regarding the denial and an appeal package. If you have not received a denial letter, please contact your Case Manager or their supervisor.



RESOURCES

La Familia Counseling Services (La Familia)

1525 B Street Hayward, CA 94541

Phone: (510) 887-0661 Fax: (510) 887-0663 Website: <u>www.lafamiliacounseling.org</u> Directory: <u>La Familia office directory</u> State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)

Self-Determination Program information: https://scdd.ca.gov/sdp-home/

State Council statewide orientation and training <u>https://scdd.ca.gov/sdp-orientation/</u>

Department of Developmental Services

- Self-Determination Program (SDP): <u>https://www.dds.ca.gov/initiatives/sdp/</u>
- Self-Determination Program Frequently Asked Questions: https://www.dds.ca.gov/initiatives/sdp/frequently-asked-questions/
- Regional Center service details: <u>https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/</u>
- DDS Wellness Toolkit: https://www.dds.ca.gov/consumers/wellness-toolkit/

Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA)

OCRA provides free legal information, advice, and representation to regional center clients. <u>www.disabilityrightsca.org</u>

The Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB)

We coordinate lifelong services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

RCEB works in partnership with many individuals and agencies to plan and coordinate services and supports for people with developmental disabilities, family members and community leaders in the Alameda and Contra Costa counties.



Regional Center of the East Bay ·

Creekside Plaza 500 Davis Street, Suite 100 · San Leandro, CA 94577

(925)618-6100

selfdetermination@rceb.org