

Use of Person-Centered Planning Tools in California's Regional Centers

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Overview

The Lanterman Act and federal HCBS require that every California regional center use a person-centered planning process. For California's regional centers, two factors are involved in the use of person-centered planning: (1) a single statewide IPP planning document; and, (2) a varied toolbox of techniques to facilitate planning and the training model that each regional center uses to teach staff as well as others.

A Reminder

California's move to one standardized IPP template was built to support person-centered planning practices, not compete with or replace it. Regional center service coordinators, like their counterparts elsewhere, must fit person-centered planning practices inside a structured planning environment. There will always be differences in a plan developed in a non-structured and one developed in a structured planning environment.

Factor One: One Shared Plan Document

Since January 1, 2025, all 21 regional centers use the same Individual Program Plan (IPP) format. The new IPP has these sections:

- Introduction
- How This Plan Was Developed
- Vision for the Future
- Communication
- Decision Making
- Life Areas
- Emergency Planning
- Services and Supports
- Agreement of Services
- Acknowledgments
- Signatures

Individuals with an existing IPP, move to the new format at their next annual review. All plans must convert by the end of 2027.

Source: DDS, Individual Program Planning <https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/ipp/>

Source: Galt Advocacy, 2025 Changes to California's Regional Center IPPs
<https://www.galtadvocacy.com/special-needs-advocacy/2025-changes-to-californias-regional-center-individualized-program-plans/>

Source: DDS, Community Training – New Statewide IPP https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CommunityTraining_NewStatewideIPP.pdf

Factor Two: The Toolbox and Training

The IPP form is now the same at all regional centers. What still varies is which planning techniques regional centers use, and how they train staff and others. The five following approaches are currently used.

Person-Centered Thinking (PCT) skills

Typically used, are the following facilitated conversations: Important To/For, Good Day/Bad Day, Working/Not Working, Relationship Circle, the Decision-Making Profile, and others. Developed by members of The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices (TLCPCP).

One-Page Profiles

A single-page summary of what people like and admire about the person, what matters to them, and how best to support them. Developed by Helen Sanderson, it is usually built from PCT conversations. It is output of PCT, a portable snapshot that travels with the person to a new provider, classroom, or hospital.

PATH, MAPS and Liberty Plans

All three involve full group-facilitation with a trained facilitator, a graphic recorder, and the person's chosen circle of family, friends, and providers. MAPS builds a shared life story and vision. PATH works backward from a bold vision to concrete next steps. Similarly, Liberty Plans explore a person's gifts, accomplishments and hopes for the future.

Essential Lifestyle Planning (ELP)

Developed by Michael Smull and Susan Burke-Harrison. It remains the gold standard for developing a 'living' plan that details how a person chooses to live and changes as circumstances change. When completed, it provides a clear vision of how services, supports, friends and community can work together to support a person's chosen lifestyle and keep the person healthy and safe.

Charting the LifeCourse

Developed by the UMKC Institute for Human Development, it consists of a series of trajectory-based worksheets and "vision" exercises. The resulting plan is meant to span a lifetime, pulling in family and informal supports, not just paid services.

How DDS Certifies Trainers

DDS sets training policy through the Regional Center Performance Measures (RCPM) program. A December 2022 DDS directive provides funding to regional centers to certify in-house Person-Centered Plan Facilitation Trainers.

DDS recognizes trainer certification from any of these sources:

- The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices (also called Person-Centered Thinking, or PCT)
- Inclusion Press (the source of PATH, MAPS, and Circles of Support)
- Charting the LifeCourse
- Or by meeting five core competencies set by the National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS)

Regional centers must employ one certified trainer for every 10,000 people on their caseload. Centers that exceed this get added incentive payments.

Source: DDS directive, Person-Centered Services Planning – Service Coordinator Facilitation Skills (Dec. 28, 2022) <https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Regional-Center-Performance-Measures-Person-Centered-Services-Planning-Service-Coordinator-Fa.pdf>

Source: DDS, Regional Center Performance Measures overview <https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/regional-center-performance-measures/>

Which Model Each Regional Center Names Publicly

DDS does not publish a statewide list showing which model each regional center chose. The table below reflects what each center states on its own public website or in public documents.

Regional Center	Instrument / Model Named	Status*	Source
Alta California RC (ACRC)	Person-centered planning process (general); names Planned Facilitation, Liberty Plans, and MAPS for Self-Determination Program participants choosing an independent facilitator	General	altaregional.org/post/person-centered-planning

*“Named model” means the center's own materials name a specific training model. “General” means the center describes person-centered planning without naming a model. “Not confirmed” means this review found no public page naming a model. This does not mean the center does not have one.

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Central Valley RC (CVRC)	Person-Centered Thinking (PCT)	Named model	cvrc.org/person-centered-resources
Eastern Los Angeles RC (ELARC)	Person-Centered Thinking (PCT), 2-day training	Named model	elarc.org events calendar
Far Northern RC (FNRC)	Person-Centered Thinking (PCT®), 2-day trainings	Named model	farnorthernrc.org training flyer
Frank D. Lanterman RC (FDLRC)	Person-Centered Thinking, described as FDLRC's service model	Named model	lanterman.org/person-centered-planning-and-you
Golden Gate RC (GGRC)	Person-centered planning informs the IPP (general)	General	ggrc.org/about-us/what-is-a-regional-center
Harbor RC (HRC)	Person-Centered Thinking (PCT); partners with Helen Sanderson Associates (developer of the One-Page Profile)	Named model	harborrc.org/resources/current-initiatives/person-centered-thinking-pct
Inland RC (IRC)	Not confirmed on IRC's own materials; a vendor's HCBS grant proposal under IRC referenced PCT trainer certification	Not confirmed	dds.ca.gov – IRC HCBS concept form (vendor proposal)
Kern RC (KRC)	Full Person-Centered Thinking (PCT) skills library — Important To/For, Good Day/Bad Day, Relationship Circle, Working/Not Working, Decision-Making Profile, Communication Charts, and more; One-Page Profile templates	Named model	kernrc.org/clients-families/person-centered
North Bay RC (NBRC)	Person-Centered Thinking values, mindset, and tools (general)	General	nbrc.net/who-we-are/our-mission/person-centered-planning
North Los Angeles County RC (NLACRC)	Not confirmed in public sources reviewed	Not confirmed	—
Redwood Coast RC (RCRC)	Person-centered planning team process (general)	General	redwoodcoastrc.org FAQ
Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB)	Person-Centered Thinking (PCT) curriculum	Named model	rceb.org/resources/person-centered-practices
Regional Center of Orange County (RCOC)	Person-Centered Thinking; 2-day training required for every employee, not just service coordinators	Named model	rcocdd.com client services resource index
San Andreas RC (SARC)	Not confirmed in public sources reviewed	Not confirmed	—
San Diego RC (SDRC)	Person-Centered Thinking (PCT); certified PCT trainers on staff	Named model	sdrc.org person-centered-practices

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Regional Center	Instrument / Model Named	Status*	Source
San Gabriel/Pomona RC (SGPRC)	Not confirmed in public sources reviewed	Not confirmed	—
South Central Los Angeles RC (SCLARC)	Not confirmed in public sources reviewed	Not confirmed	—
Tri-Counties RC (TCRC)	Person Centered Thinking (PCT); all staff trained; organizes the entire IPP process	Named model	tri-counties.org person-centered-practices
Valley Mountain RC (VMRC)	Person Centered Thinking (PCT); all staff trained	Named model	vmrc.net/person-centered-thinking
Westside RC (WRC)	Person-Centered Thinking (PCT); uses One-Page Profile (OPP) tool	Named model	westsiderc.org PCT community of practice

Sources

[DDS – Individual Program Planning \(IPP\)](#)

[DDS – Regional Center Performance Measures](#)

[DDS – Person-Centered Services Planning directive \(Dec. 2022\)](#)

[DDS – Regional Center Listings](#)

[DDS, Community Training – New Statewide IPP](#)

[Galt Advocacy – 2025 Changes to California's Regional Center IPPs](#)

[The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices](#)

[Inclusion Press – PATH, MAPS, and Circles of Support](#)

[Charting the LifeCourse \(LifeCourse Nexus\)](#)

[Kern Regional Center – Person-Centered Practices](#)