

Speak Up! Purchase of Service (POS) Stakeholder Meetings Are Your Meetings!

1. What is POS Budget and why is it important?

“POS” stands for “Purchase of Service” and it refers to the money regional centers use to pay for services for consumers. It is important to know how regional centers spend their POS dollars so you can see if the money is being spent fairly and appropriately. POS data gives information about how, to whom, and on what the regional centers spend their POS money.

Studies show regional centers spend different amount of money on different groups of people it serves. For example, data show that regional centers generally spend more POS dollars on White consumers than on consumers of other racial and ethnic backgrounds.

2. Do the regional centers have to report how they spend their money?

Yes. By December 31st of each year, the regional centers are required to report and post data (information and numbers) on their websites, on how they spent their POS money. The POS data provides information on how money is spent on different groups, including based on disability, race, and language spoken.

3. I hear the regional centers are required to have a public meeting to discuss the POS data, is that true?

Yes. By March 31st of each year, all regional centers are required to have a public stakeholder meeting or meetings. They have to let the community, and especially the underserved community, know when these stakeholder meetings will take place. At the meeting, regional centers have to explain the data to the community, get input from the community, and give the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) a report of any issues or concerns raised at the meeting and what actions, if any, the regional centers is going to take.

4. Can I speak up and share my concerns at this meeting?

Yes! Of course! That is the purpose of the meeting. You have the right to speak up at these stakeholder meetings. You should let the regional center

know of any problems, concerns, or issues you have and how you think they can improve their services.

You can also ask your regional center questions, including:

- i. Are there disparities on how money is spent on different ethnic and racial groups at the regional center?
- ii. If so, what plans do they have to improve the situation?
- iii. Have there been improvements since the last reporting?
- iv. What have they done in response to these numbers?
- v. What have they done to reach out to different racial and ethnic communities?
- vi. What have they done to inform different communities about the stakeholder meetings?
- vii. Do they plan to get input from the community? How? Hold committee meetings with diverse communities?

5. What else can I do to prepare for the meeting?

You can also do the following:

- a. Get and review the POS data before the meeting.
- b. Ask your regional center to put you on a list to get notice of the stakeholder meeting.
- c. If you don't speak English, let the regional center know ahead of time so they can get you an interpreter for the meeting.
- d. If the meeting takes place at a time that makes it hard for you and others to attend, ask the regional center have a meeting at a more convenient time, place, and location so more people can come.
- e. Attend the meeting and encourage others to attend.
- f. Speak up about your issues and concerns at the meeting but remember it is a meeting about the regional center system as a whole and not a meeting to resolve your individual problem. Tell how your story might be the same for others like you.

- g. Give examples of why you think there may be disparity. Suggest ways to improve services to the underserved clients. You may also want to put your comments in writing and give a copy to the regional center so there is a record of what you said. Example of issues raised by the community in the past, include: Not enough information in a language consumer and families can understand. The need for more services in the family home. Problems with the IPP meeting process. People not knowing/not being told what kinds of services might be available. Service coordinators needing better training. It takes too long to get a decision regarding services.
- h. Going with friends and families that may share similar concerns. If you know of other families who are also not getting services or have similar issues of concerns and problems that you have, invite them to come as well. Sometimes when more than one person face similar issues or have similar concerns, it helps the regional center to see that it may be a system-wide problem rather than an individual problem.
- i. Ask for support from important key figures in your community like the media, elected officials, key donors, and service providers in the community. Ask them to join you in the public meeting to speak up against the disparity in the regional center system. More attention to the problem will help resolve the problem.