

Redacted Membership Application

MM-732

Name: REDACTED

Address: REDACTED

County of Residence: **Los Angeles County**

Email : REDACTED

Phone: REDACTED

Race: Hispanic or Latino

I am a: person with a developmental disability

Are you currently employed by, or a member of the governing board of an organization providing services to persons with developmental disabilities?:

No

Are you a member of a nongovernmental agency that does not receive regional center funding?

No

Do you want to serve on the State Council: Yes, I want to apply to serve on the State Council

Do you want to serve on a Regional Advisory Committee: Yes, I want to apply to serve on the Regional Advisory Committee

How did your interest in, or knowledge of, the developmental disability field and service system develop?:

I [REDACTED] have a autism diagnosis and had been served by Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center since I was three years old. My mom [REDACTED] attended board meetings and committee meetings and was a great advocate for me when I was younger and I had got the services I needed even though some were harder to get. I have a positive experience with my service coordinators and know that the regional center is there to help the consumers it serves. I was even on ELARC's board of directors from 2015-2022 until I could no longer serve on the board. I work with a community based organization called "Integrated Community Collaborative" and have interacted with people served by different regional centers throughout California and their families. I know many families have good relationships with the regional center and many families also fall through the cracks and are not given the services they need. I worked on different projects to address purchase of services disparities in the regional center system and know that services that are available to families are impacted by where they live and some areas lack vendors such as rural areas and areas in the city that are less accessible. The whole developmental service system has a problem with lack of staff, there are not enough services coordinators to work with families, regional centers are out of compliance for caseload ratios, and many people providing therapies

and services have waiting list or limited availability due to lack of staff, even though under the Lanterman Act people with developmental disabilities are entitled to services, the reality does not always reflect that due to staffing problems and sometime barriers to accessing services that some families face like lack of transportation, or material not translated in their language, or not really knowing how to describe a problem and get the adequate services they need. I know life in general is getting harder for many families because of inflation and increase cost of living. People have to work harder and are receiving less and may be to exhausted to navigate different systems and get the help they need many families just do the best they can. Self-Determination is a program that is important and families have fought for it to have more control over the services they get and who they hire, but bureaucracy gets in the way just like the traditional service system. I want to be in the state council because I want to know all things that are developing that could address the many problems the developmental service system has and it will give me greater insight which will give me tools to be a better advocate and help people and families I work with whether it is with my community based organization or on a personal level.

What are your areas of interest in the developmental disability field and service system?:

I want to know more about what we can do to address POS disparities, staffing problems, bureaucratic inefficiencies, the navigability of developmental service systems, and I also want to see how we could bring back area boards because families need advocates that work with them to get what they need for their developmentally disabled children. I also want to be in the loop of different laws being proposed and I also want to know how effective are different employment programs because that is something the developmental disabled community want and need to have a job or career and contribute back to society that give them what they need. I also want to see how we can help with socialization and having regional center consumers feel their lives are fulfilling and meaningful. Many want to better integrate to the wider community and feel like they belong to something and I have experience with those feelings and wanting more with my life and I do not see my autism diagnosis as something that bars me from living the life I want. The help people will need though will differ depending on their diagnosis and support system.

Please explain why you wish to serve on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, or on one of its Regional Advisory Committees:

I want to be in a better position to make changes that are needed in our developmental services systems and I want more inside knowledge of new developments such as statutory changes, restructurings, or changes in the laws themselves.

What strengths would you bring to the State Council and/or Regional Advisory Committee?:

I was on a regional center board or directors, have been on many different committees, and have worked with people from all over California through my job at the community based organization: Integrated Community Collaborative. I also have the experience of having Autism and growing up with different challenges as well as helping my family with my brother who has an even more severe form of Autism. I am also a hard worker and want to make change and be a better advocate. I want people served by our system to imagine more possibilities and not to think that they are lesser because of their diagnosis, we are different but can contribute to society to and better our communities. I have two jobs and can travel using public transportation, and I know how to drive and I know with the right supports more people can do the same. The only doubt I have is whether I could own my own house one day due to real estate being so expensive, I know many have the dream of being independent and I want to make that more or a reality for myself and others. I have passion and once I get started on something I will not give up on it.