



# Acorns to Oak Trees

**Improving Cultural  
Competency in I/DD Outreach  
in Tribal Communities**

# Acorns to Oak Trees: Target Population

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Our target population is those underserved individuals with I/DD and their families in the Pala Reservation

This is in a remote southern California area, approximately 40 miles northeast of San Diego and 30 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean

It is home to more than 1,100 enrolled Cupeño and Luiseño Indians, also known as the Pala Band of Mission Indians (PBMIs)





# **Acorns to Oak Trees: Project Description**

We designed a program to help build sustainable capacity in our tribal community so that they have local resources to access culturally competent, disability-related, and community-based information, supports and services.

We developed culturally and linguistically competent outreach and training materials in print, online and video to connect with Native families.

We conducted sessions to provide knowledge and tools to individuals with I/DD, their families, and tribal community leaders in Pala.





# **Training Trainers & Community Leaders**

**Acorns to Oak Trees:  
Implementation &  
Outputs**

Acorns to Oak Trees invited the Pala community, identified key leaders, and invited them to attend 4 regional center and IEP workshops.

Our goal was to identify potential trainers to recruit and provide the community an opportunity to get in-depth training and technical assistance, as well as provide the necessary resources and tools to help their families and others within the community.

We had a total of 23 participants attend our workshops, which were hosted in-person and via ZOOM. We had 1 tribal leader, 5 tribal social workers, 2 tribal tobacco prevention workers, and 16 parents participate in our workshops.

# Acorns to Oak Trees: Implementation

A pre- and post-test survey was created to collect data on workshops and designed to measure participants' knowledge of:

- The regional center system
- Navigating the IEP process
- How supported they felt in getting questions answered
- Whether people felt like they had a community of support through other parents who have a child with I/DD





## **Acorns to Oak Trees: Outputs**

# **Community Events and 1:1 sessions**

- Organized and attended **8** events
- Offered outreach and IEP toolkit materials to attendees
- Provided immediate technical assistance (TA) for families with questions about the regional center system or the IEP process or concerns about their child's development

# Acorns to Oak Trees: Outcomes



**12** families were referred into the regional center system

**2** families received additional IEP review and assistance



1. A presentation for workshop leaders that can be used for future workshops with information about Part C and Part B eligibility and services under the IDEA

## **Acorns to Oak Trees: Deliverables**

**Training and outreach materials  
in print, website, and social media**

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2. An IEP toolkit for families with sample letters to request an IEP or appeal an IEP decision
3. A culturally tailored developmental milestone tracker and materials to help families get to the proper regional center - included in the tracker and for outreach events



# **Acorns to Oak Trees: Deliverables (Cont.)**



**Culturally Tailored Developmental Milestone Booklet**

**Storytelling Video: The Important of Culturally  
Competent Services and Outreach in Tribal  
Communities**

**IEP Resource Kit**

# Acorns to Oak Trees: Barriers



The primary challenges were due to the grant process and the length of time for reimbursements. Our organization is small and still new, so it required us to pay for labor and services up front, which created a burden for the organization, resulting in the delay of project activities.

In the future, we will consider these factors when deciding on program activities and also factor in the potential for an extended length of reimbursement time.



## Lessons Learned

- Be mindful of project timelines
- Ensure that deliverables that may be a large cost are not scheduled to be completed in the 1st quarter, or
- Make arrangements with Contractor for a 30-day 'grace period'

# Acorns to Oak Trees: Current and Future Status

We are partially funded through the DDS Service Access & Equity Grant, which funds our Community Navigator Program



Ours is a replicable model that can be used for other Tribal communities across the state.

We currently use materials created under this grant in our Community Navigator Program.



# Questions?

