



May 31, 2024

Ernie Cruz, Deputy Director
Department of Developmental Services
Community Services Division
Office of Community Operations

Re: Expenditure and Demographic Data and Public Meetings per W&I Code §4519.5 and Department of Developmental Services (DDS)/Regional Center Contract for Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Dear Mr. Cruz:

In December, 2023, the *Purchase of Services Expenditure and Demographic Data, Fiscal Year 2022-2023* report labeled as “2022-2023” were posted on [Harbor’s website](#) pursuant to Welfare and Institution (W&I) Code §4519.5, as well as Harbor’s contract with DDS. This report includes data related to purchase of service authorization, utilization, and expenditures, with respect to age, race and ethnicity, language, living arrangement and disability.

In accordance with Welfare and Institution (W&I) Code §4519.5(e), Harbor Regional Center scheduled two Purchase of Service (POS) Expenditure and Demographics Data public meetings for March 25, 2024 and March 27, 2024 at 6:00 pm. The meetings were scheduled to occur virtually on the Zoom platform as interactive meetings with Harbor’s community. Both meetings were scheduled for the evening to allow working individuals and families an opportunity to participate.

Harbor Regional Center created a flyer and a social media graphic, and both of these documents were available in eight languages (English, Khmer, Korean, Japanese, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, and Traditional Chinese). Spanish is the largest threshold language for Harbor’s community, and thus one meeting was presented entirely in Spanish. In addition, anyone requiring interpretation in any additional languages were also encouraged to indicate their preference during the meeting registration process to allow Harbor to secure the appropriate interpreter for the public meetings.

On January 17, 2024, the meeting dates, flyer, and registration information was posted and continuously maintained on Harbor Regional Center’s website. An additional “feature” post that spotlighted the public meeting on Harbor’s Website Homepage was completed to further encourage the community to engage. On January 18, 2024, notice of the public meetings were provided via electronic mail to the Department of Developmental Services, Office of Community Operations. On January 29, 2024 the social media graphic including date, time, and location of the scheduled meetings were posted on Harbor’s Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter/X platforms.

At the public Board of Trustees Meeting on January 16, 2024, Harbor announced the scheduled Purchase of Services Expenditure and Demographics Data meetings. The meeting dates, times, and meeting registration details was shared with Board of Trustee members, and the information was projected on screen for all meeting attendees. In addition, this information was available to the public through the Board Packet, posted on Harbor’s website.

Harbor Regional Center provided and continuously maintained additional public notices in English and

Spanish through the Harbor Regional Center electronic newsletters and shared with individual stakeholders as follows:

- Electronic newsletter (e-newsletter) on January 18, 2024 to 21,306 English and 619 Spanish subscribers.
- Electronic newsletter (e-newsletter) on February 02, 2024 to 21,273 English and 617 Spanish subscribers.
- Electronic newsletter (e-newsletter) on February 16, 2024 to 21,211 English and 616 Spanish subscribers.
- Electronic newsletter (e-newsletter) on March 01, 2024 to 21,165 English and 614 Spanish subscribers.
- Electronic newsletter (e-newsletter) on March 18, 2024 to 21,131 English and 614 Spanish subscribers.
- Social Media posts on January 29, 2024 to Facebook (2.3K Followers) and Instagram (1.5K followers). The posts were “pinned” to Harbor’s feature page on Facebook and Instagram’s grid to allow users to see the information/opportunity as a priority. Graphics were provided in eight languages.
- Social Media posts in English and Spanish on January 29, 2024 on Twitter (530 Followers).
- A reminder of the scheduled POS meetings were provided at the public meeting of the Board of Trustees on March 19, 2024.
- Meeting information and flyer was shared and reviewed with Spanish-speaking support group, Unidad y Fuerza, to 45 participants on February 28, 2024.
- Meeting information were shared via email with Harbor Regional Center’s Black/African American Support Group facilitators on March 4, 2024.
- Meeting information were shared via email with Community Based Organizations, Cambodian Association of America and United Cambodian Community on March 4, 2024.

The two public meetings were held as scheduled on the virtual platform, Zoom. The March 25, 2024 meeting was presented in Spanish, however, English and American Sign Language interpretation was provided, along with live transcription/Closed Captioning. During the March 27, 2024 English meeting, simultaneous Spanish, American Sign Language, Khmer, and Ukrainian interpretation was provided, along with live transcription/Closed Captioning.

Harbor Regional Center’s presentation entitled, *Annual Purchase of Service Meeting | Reunión Annual de Compra de Servicios*, was developed using simplified terminology (plain language), limited text on each slide, simple visuals, colorful graphs, many photographs, along with a second language (Spanish/Khmer/Ukrainian) on the same slides/presentation. This was to ensure that individuals served by Harbor, along with families, and community participants were able to see the data visually, in a manner in which it would be easier to follow and understand. On slides where data was analyzed and shared, graphs were limited to one on each slide. The presentation materials were made available in Khmer and Ukrainian to ensure that those in attendance, who had requested interpretation, would have information in their preferred language. This presentation was projected on the screen throughout the virtual meetings so that participants could follow along. The presentation was posted for viewing/download on Harbor’s website on March 25, 2024, and the presentation file was shared with participants via the chat function during both meetings.

In order to enhance linguistic accessibility, considering Harbor’s community and their varied digital proficiency, a step-by-step visual guide created by Harbor was shared in the chat function so that participants could view and access the interpretation feature, if needed.

Harbor’s bilingual Manager of Diversity and Inclusion, Erika Segovia, and bilingual Community Outreach Specialist, Edgar Marroquin presented at both meetings. Demographic and purchase of services expenditure information from Fiscal Year 2022-2023 was shared at each meeting; along with demographic information about Harbor’s diverse employees; and information about Harbor’s current initiatives in support of cultural diversity. In addition, future plans on how Harbor is working to address disparity, including activities within Harbor’s Strategic Plan and Language Accessibility and Cultural Competency (LACC) Plan were also shared

with the community. Harbor continued to designate “questions/preguntas” periods throughout the entirety of the meetings, after sharing data and information, to allow for the public’s input and opportunities to discuss or clarify any questions that participants may have had. The chat feature was also enabled to allow for those who wish to share their questions, suggestions, and input, as well as foster opportunities for community interaction and dialogue.

On March 25, 2024, there were 87 participants in attendance, including 54 individuals served/parents/community members; one (1) call in participant; one (1) representative from State Council on Developmental Disabilities; one (1) representative from Disability Rights California; one (1) representative from DDS; two (2) language interpreters; several community partners; and Harbor Regional Center staff. On March 27, 2024, there were 66 participants in attendance including 27 individuals served/parents/community members; one (1) call-in participant; one (1) representative from State Council on Developmental Disabilities; two (2) representatives from Disability Rights California; three (3) representatives from DDS; four (4) language interpreters; several community partners/service providers; and Harbor Regional Center staff.

Harbor Regional Center reviewed expenditures by ethnicity, living arrangement, and age. A review of the data suggests that there were reductions in disparity, growth in expenditure utilization, but disparities still exist, especially when looking at data for individuals who reside in an out of home setting versus those receiving in home services and supports. The data also suggests that in FY 22-23, 75% of individuals are receiving purchased services compared to 25% of individuals who do not have purchase of services. This percentage is consistent between ethnicities.

Several self-advocates, family members, service providers, community partners, and community members, including those who do not reside or receive services within the Harbor catchment area submitted comments throughout both presentations. We received one email submission with input on April 4, 2024 from the Office of Client’s Rights Advocacy.

Recommendations and Plans:

Harbor Regional Center remains committed to meeting the needs of *all* individuals served regardless of age, ethnicity, language preference, or diagnosis. As such, this past year, Harbor Regional Center continued to address several focus areas related to enhancing service coordination, improving the satisfaction and experience of those served by Harbor, increasing the number of resources that are developed to meet individual needs, as well as strengthening Harbor’s presence within the community in order to build trust.

In addition to the Purchase of Service Expenditure public meetings, Harbor has continued to expand opportunities to hear and learn from self-advocates, family members, circles of support, and community partners about their experiences related to accessing services. Regular community forums and smaller listening sessions were held throughout the year to hear from various cultural and language-specific communities. These avenues have allowed Harbor to solicit input, feedback, ideas, and recommendations regularly. Key themes and feedback received from participants of stakeholder groups through listening sessions will be reviewed and help inform Harbor’s plan to further address challenges or barriers that may be preventing service access and utilization. This year, Harbor plans to build upon this work by implementing focus groups to help develop and inform several aspects of service delivery.

In an effort to decrease disparities with purchase of service expenditures, employees of Harbor Regional Center have participated in numerous trainings to enhance their knowledge and skills when working with culturally

and linguistically diverse members of the community. Some trainings have included Implicit Bias, Cultural Humility, Person-Centered Thinking, and all new staff receive training and information on Diversity and Service Access and Equity within their second week of employment, which includes current data on Harbor's Purchase of Service Expenditures. We are always working to hire diverse, skilled employees who are reflective of the community we serve.

Enhanced Service Coordination supported 264 individuals (more than 80% of individuals identified as Hispanic/Latino) in accessing over 200 regional center funded services and 80 generic, community-funded services.

Furthermore, through Harbor's Language Accessibility and Cultural Competency (LACC) Plan, Harbor has continued to implement several programs and initiatives that promote cultural diversity and celebration, as well as address linguistic needs. Harbor's Parent Mentor Program is available to support parents and caregivers navigate the different, and often times complex, service systems that serve individuals with developmental disabilities. The Parent Mentor Program started through a Service Access and Equity Grant with DDS, the Parent Mentor assists with connecting individuals and families to services and resources (both generic and regional center-funded). Our goal in supporting families is to increase understanding, reduce barriers to accessing services and build closer relationships with Harbor and the service coordination team. The value and impact that the mentors have provided to families have been instrumental in improving service access. Harbor is looking to expand Parent Mentor Clinics in this next year.

To better support individuals with various communication needs, we are equipped with a few new devices that will allow us to communicate with individuals served, families, and community members who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. We are working on sharing more information in a wide array of methods in order to improve service access for those with differing communication needs.

Harbor Regional Center will continue to develop and provide information and resources in a variety of languages, in formats that are more simple and easier to access, as well as collaborate with community partners to provide information, trainings and workshops in-language for our community.

Sincerely,



Patrick Ruppe
Executive Director

Enclosures: Website Notice and Announcement
Annual POS Expenditure Meeting Flyers Posted Online
Annual POS Expenditure FY 22-23 Presentation
Attendee Reports from Meetings: 3/25/24 and 3/27/24
Public Comments/Chat from Meetings: 3/25/24 and 3/27/24
Email Comment submission