



The Department of Developmental Services is responsible for designing and coordinating a wide array of services for California residents with developmental disabilities. These services are provided through a statewide system of 21 locally-based **Regional Centers**. Regional centers are nonprofit private corporations that have offices throughout California to provide a local resource to help find and access the many services available to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Both geographic accessibility and population density were considered when selecting locations for the 21 regional centers. The catchment area boundaries for the regional centers conform to county boundaries or groups of counties, except in Los Angeles County, which is divided into seven areas, each served by a regional center.

Eligibility for Regional Center Services

To be eligible for services funded by the California Department of Developmental Services, individuals must have a developmental disability as defined in [Section 4512 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code](#). The disability must begin before the 18th birthday, be expected to continue indefinitely and present a significant disability. Also, the disability must be due to one of the following conditions:

- * Mental retardation
- * Cerebral Palsy
- * Epilepsy
- * Autism
- * A disabling condition closely related to mental retardation or requiring similar treatment.

Infants and toddlers (age 0 to 36 months) who are at risk of becoming developmentally disabled or who have a developmental delay may also qualify for services. The criteria for determining the eligibility of infants and toddlers is specified in [Section 95014 of the California Government Code](#).

Individuals at risk of having a child with a developmental disability may be eligible for genetic diagnosis, counseling and other prevention services.

A developmental disability does not include other disabling conditions that are solely physical in nature.

Individual Program Plan

Person-centered **individual program planning** assists persons with developmental disabilities and their families to build their capacities and capabilities. This planning effort is not a single event or meeting, but a series of discussions or interactions among a team of people including the person with a developmental disability, their family (when appropriate), regional center representative(s) and others.

As part of the planning process, this team assists the individual in developing a description that includes: a preferred place to live, favorite people with whom to socialize, and preferred types of daily activities, including preferred jobs. This description is called a preferred future, and is based on the individual's strengths, capabilities, preferences, lifestyle and cultural background.

The planning team decides what needs to be done, by whom, when, and how, if the individual is to begin (or continue) working toward the preferred future. The document known as the Individual Program Plan (IPP) is a record of the decisions made by the planning team.