



## Department of Developmental Services

### *It Has Not Ensured That Regional Centers Have the Necessary Resources to Effectively Serve Californians With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*

#### **Background**

California's Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is responsible for the delivery of care and treatment to the State's more than 380,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, whom state law refers to as *consumers*. To fulfill this duty, DDS oversees a statewide network of 21 regional centers that coordinate services for consumers and for which the fiscal year 2021–22 state budget allocated \$6.5 billion. As part of its oversight obligation, DDS must monitor regional centers' compliance with their contractual and legal responsibilities by ensuring that the centers accurately bill the State for their claims, properly calculate certain staff caseloads, comply with federal program provisions, and conduct staff trainings, among other things. In turn, regional centers must perform duties such as monitoring the quality and delivery from external service providers (vendors) and tracking the progress and access for the individuals with disabilities that they serve.

#### **Key Findings**

- As a result of DDS's inaction, regional centers have struggled with insufficient staffing.
  - » DDS has not ensured that the regional centers receive adequate funding for critical staff positions.
- Regional centers have not monitored vendors in accordance with state law.
  - » Proper monitoring of vendors is critical to ensuring the quality of the services that they provide and the well-being of the consumers who are in their care.
- DDS and regional centers have not monitored whether consumers have convenient access to services.
  - » Even though best practices call for tracking customer service metrics, DDS had not considered capturing data that would allow regional centers to assess consumers' convenience of access.
- DDS has not provided adequate oversight of how regional centers respond to consumer complaints regarding their rights.
  - » All three of the regional centers we reviewed often failed to complete investigations within the required 20-workday time frame.

#### **Key Recommendations**

To better serve consumers, DDS should do the following:

- Work with regional centers as necessary to update the core staffing formula so that it aligns with actual regional center staffing costs.
- Provide vendor monitoring training so that regional centers understand the statutory requirements for vendor monitoring.
- Establish standards for measuring how convenient it is for consumers to access services.
- Ensure that regional centers provide statutorily required information to consumers about how to file a consumer rights complaint.
- Issue guidance to regional centers and develop best practices to ensure that regional centers complete complaint investigations within statutory deadlines.