

2020 COVID-19 Survey Fact Sheet



For Immediate Release:

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Falling Through the Cracks

Regional Centers are supposed to help provide a safety net for people with developmental disabilities, but many are not meeting client needs during the pandemic - causing people with developmental disabilities to fall through the cracks.

- 40% of respondents report they asked their regional center for additional services to help cope with COVID-19, yet almost half of them were either denied services or didn't get a response. These services include having an aide in the home to assist with basic health and safety, personal care/bathing and respite for the parent.
- Ethnic and racial minorities are disproportionately impacted - particularly **Spanish-speaking Latinos – who were twice as likely to report that their needs are not being met by regional centers during COVID-19.**

Wasted Resources

State dollars are being wasted and spent on “services” that are not being delivered during COVID-19.

- 134 of the respondents said they (or their family member) attended a group day program pre-COVID-19, but 93% of those day programs are now closed.
- California continues to pay for these programs and expects the program providers to deliver services in modified ways.
- However, 51% of survey respondents who attended these programs pre-COVID say they are now **receiving no services from these programs, despite the fact California has continued to pay for them, wasting precious financial resources.**

Racial & Ethnic Discrimination/Disparities

People of color with disabilities are among the most vulnerable during the pandemic and are more likely to face multiple challenges beyond disability services.

- Spanish-speaking Latinos reported highest job losses, with nearly 60% reporting lost jobs in the household.
- Latinos, African-Americans, Asian Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans are also losing employment and are much more concerned about their ability to buy food and pay rent than whites.
- Many respondents do not have Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), in the home, especially Latinos who report **just 51% have necessary masks and gloves.**
- 40% of Asian Pacific Islanders report experiencing discrimination since COVID-19 began.

Special Education Unacceptably Deficient

Not enough students with disabilities have access to special education services.

- Almost half of the respondents who have a child in special education report that **they are not receiving education since schools have closed.**
- The reasons include “no direct teaching, even remotely,” “teacher only sends worksheets,” and “student can’t sit for long time.”
- 30% of students who are non-speaking and use technology to communicate also report not being able to participate in their educational program because of lack of support.

Fear Factor

A majority of respondents (54%) expressed **concerns about having needed support workers in their homes**, which leads to more suffering. Their concerns include:

- The person with a disability is too medically fragile
- They have NO personal protective equipment
- Fear of being exposed to virus
- The person with a disability won’t wear mask
- Staff not knowledgeable

Unprepared and Ill-equipped to Deal With COVID-19

Many people with disabilities and their families are not prepared for COVID-19.

- Almost 4 in 10 respondents say that they don’t know what they will do if someone in their household gets infected and 56% say they have no one to care for them or their family member.
- Two-thirds of respondents are concerned about accessing medical care if they get infected because of their disability.

Survey Background

- Disability Voices United conducted an extensive survey questioning Californians with disabilities and their families about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 435 people responded to the survey, which was conducted April 10 – May 18.
 - 13% of respondents report having a disability
 - 87% of respondents state they are a family member of a person with a disability
 - The majority (84%) of respondents are people with developmental disabilities (autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, Down syndrome or intellectual disabilities) or their family members. They are also clients of state-funded regional centers, which arrange services for people with developmental disabilities.
- Respondents roughly reflect the demographic makeup of people with disabilities in the State of California in their race/ethnicity and living arrangements.

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