

GRANT AWARDED FOR CRITICAL NEW WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM TO BENEFIT CHILDREN 0-3 YEARS OLD

Los Angeles area nonprofit, Special Needs Network, to Receive \$6.5M

Los Angeles, CA (1/9/2023) – Using \$6.5 million in one-time federal American Rescue Plan Act funds, the Special Needs Network will address critical shortages in diverse professionals providing services to children with autism and other developmental disabilities who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups.

The first 3 years of a child's life is a critical time for development. If a child shows delays in how they play, learn, speak, act and move, or is at risk for developmental delays, early intervention services can help children learn new skills and overcome challenges. The challenges faced by children from racial and ethnic minority groups are especially unique and are best served by professionals who come from similar backgrounds.

However, there is a critical shortage of developmental disability professionals with racially diverse backgrounds. Expanding the racial and ethnic diversity of professionals who work with this target population reduces the unacceptable wait times experienced by those families seeking assessment and treatment.

The funds will allow SNN to train 200 eligible program participants and connect them with agencies that provide critical early services for children with developmental disabilities in communities of color. The program, Creating Opportunities and Resources for Equity in Early Intervention (C.O.R.E.), is recruiting college graduates and current students in human services fields including sociology, psychology, child development, speech language pathology, occupational therapy, behavior analysis, communication disorders, or related fields. Participants will receive a range of training, benefits, and support including Diversity, Equity, Inclusion training and certification, professional subject matter and leadership training, and a paid training stipend.

The Special Needs Network is an LA-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing autism and other developmental disabilities in under-served communities. SNN's founder and president, Areva Martin, described the grant as a significant step for the group and for Southern California families.

"We have experience in recruiting and training professionals to meet the needs our community faces," Martin said. "Our expertise, combined with this vital funding through the Department of Developmental Services, will allow us to have a significant impact on the current behavioral health workforce."

The grant is awarded by Frank D. Lanterman and Kern Regional Centers. The two centers are among 21 that deliver services overseen by the California Department of Developmental Services.

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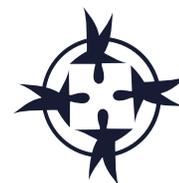
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“We have a long history of partnering with regional centers and community-based organizations to address service disparities,” said Nancy Bargmann, director of DDS. “This unique initiative expands the department-wide focus on increasing the diversity and accessibility of our service providers.”

SNN is actively recruiting BIPOC fellows in Los Angeles and Kern counties for the C.O.R.E. program effective immediately. Interested individuals can visit www.snnla.org or call (323) 291-7100 to learn more about the program.

About Special Needs Network (SNN)

Special Needs Network, Inc. (SNN) is a nonprofit grassroots organization responding to the crisis of autism and other developmental disabilities in underserved communities. The organization recognizes the intersectionality of individuals with disabilities and that their fight for disability rights is inextricably tied to the fight for racial justice and the civil rights of all people. SNN focuses on raising public awareness, impacting public policy, and increasing education and access to resources for families, children, and adults.

About Early Start Services

The Early Start program is California's early intervention program for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. Early Start services are available statewide and are provided in a coordinated, family-centered system.

About Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center

Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center is one of 21 private, non-profit corporations that operate under contract with California's Department of Developmental Services. The Center serves over 9,000 children and adults with developmental disabilities, who have or are at risk for a developmental delay or disability, and who are at high-risk of parenting an infant with a disability.

About Kern Regional Center

Kern Regional Center is one of 21 private, nonprofit regional centers contracted by the State of California through the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to coordinate community-based services and support for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. KRC serves over 10,000 clients in Kern, Inyo and Mono Counties, covering approximately 22,000 square miles with a population of over 945,000 people..

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