

**BEFORE THE  
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**In the Matter of:**

**CLAIMANT**

**and**

**ALTA CALIFORNIA REGIONAL CENTER, Service Agency**

**DDS No. CS0033491**

**OAH No. 2026010951**

**PROPOSED DECISION**

Hearing Officer Christopher W. Dietrich, Administrative Law Judge, Office of Administrative Hearings, State of California, heard this matter on April 23, 2026, by videoconference from Sacramento, California.

DJ Weersing, Legal Services Specialist, represented Alta California Regional Center (ACRC).

Vivian David-Nicolas, PsyD, Independent Facilitator (IF), represented Claimant, who was not present.

Evidence was received, the record closed, and the matter submitted for decision on April 23, 2026.

## **ISSUE**

Is ACRC required to add funds to Claimant's Self-Determination Program (SDP) budget and spending plan to purchase housekeeping services?

## **FACTUAL FINDINGS**

### **Background and Jurisdictional Matters**

1. Claimant is a 12-year-old ACRC consumer who receives services through the SDP. He receives regional center services based upon his qualifying diagnosis of Intellectual Disability (ID) secondary to Down Syndrome. Claimant lives with his mother, father, and younger brother.

### **Request for Housekeeping Services**

2. Claimant's SDP budget and spending plan for January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026, allocated \$32,608.83 in services to Claimant. Claimant was allotted funds to purchase respite services, lifeline emergency monitoring, specialized recreational therapy, social recreational services, and individual or family training.

3. Deborah Born, ACRC Service Coordinator, testified at hearing. She has been Claimant's service coordinator since he was approximately three years old. On October 22, 2025, Claimant's IF sent Ms. Born Claimant's SDP Person Centered Plan (PCP). The PCP included a request to add funds in Claimant's SDP budget to purchase two hours per week of "homemaker services." The PCP, written from Claimant's perspective, explains the need for homemaker services as follows:

Desired Outcome: I want to have a clean and organized home so I can feel calm, safe, and comfortable. When my home is tidy, it helps me focus on school and other activities I enjoy. Having help with house cleaning will also make things easier for my parents so they have more time to spend with me and help me with my goals. I want to learn how to do small chores with support so I can be more independent and help take care of my home too.

Current Level: I currently do not receive [In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)] for domestic services. Because of my disability, I am less able to participate in cleaning tasks, and which creates more cleaning work than my younger brother. For example, fine and gross motor delays mean I have a hard time cleaning up after meals or putting toys and clothing away. Daily routines like putting shoes and backpack away require constant reminders. My toileting needs mean more bathroom cleaning as well as more laundry.

I function best in a clean and orderly home and demonstrate anxiety and sensory overwhelm when things are out of order (e.g., will throw things that are in my way and have trouble concentrating). Keeping things clean helps me remain calm, feel safe, and focus on schoolwork and other routines more effectively.

In addition, parental burnout is a real concern when it comes to housekeeping. My mother is my IHSS parent provider, and my father works long hours with frequent work travel; my mother is my primary care provider when I'm at home. She is also solely responsible for managing all my services, including behavioral interventions, and is the primary person managing my schooling and IEP, while working on herself. The time and mental energy it takes to maintain a clean home makes it harder to focus on my behavioral interventions and development. Reducing this domestic burden would help tremendously in supporting my progress toward my IPP goals.

(Grammar original.)

4. On October 23, 2025, Ms. Born reviewed the PCP at a virtual meeting with Claimant's IF, Claimant's mother, and ACRC Client Services Manager Vanessa Hallgren. Ms. Born prepared a draft SDP budget including housekeeping services and sent the draft to Ms. Hallgren. The draft budget and spending plan were subsequently reviewed by ACRC's SDP staff.

5. On November 20, 2025, ACRC SDP staff requested that Ms. Born provide additional information regarding the request for housekeeping services. Specifically, staff wanted to know the reason Claimant needed this service. Ms. Born sent Claimant an email asking for additional information regarding the requested service.

6. On December 1, 2025, Claimant's IF sent an email to Ms. Born regarding the draft SDP budget and spending plan, including the request for housekeeping

services. Ms. Born discussed the request with Ms. Hallgren. On December 2, 2025, Ms. Born sent an email to Claimant's IF informing her that ACRC was denying the request to add funds to Claimant's SDP budget. Ms. Born offered to review the request for housekeeping services with ACRC's Best Practice Committee. In the email, she proposed removing housekeeping services from Claimant's draft budget and spending plan and adding the service later, if approved. Claimant's IF responded indicating that Claimant did not agree with the denial. She requested that Ms. Born present the request to the committee.

7. On December 15, 2025, Ms. Born presented Claimant's request to ACRC's Best Practice Committee. The committee determined that ACRC could not approve funding for housekeeping for Claimant because of "generic resources and parental responsibility." Ms. Born emailed Claimant's mother and IF informing them of this decision. Claimant's IF requested that ACRC issue a Notice of Action (NOA) regarding the denial.

8. On January 1, 2026, an Individual Program Plan (IPP) meeting was held with Claimant's mother, Claimant's IF, Ms. Born, and Ms. Hallgren. Ms. Born prepared a written IPP following the meeting. The IPP states a goal for Claimant to maintain good physical, mental, and emotional health. The IPP further states a goal for Claimant to continue to live with his family. The IPP does not state further goals regarding Claimant's home environment or provide for any services or supports to address the cleanliness of Claimant's home.

## **Notice of Action and Fair Hearing Request**

9. On January 2, 2026, ACRC issued a NOA denying his request for funding for housekeeping services. In the NOA, ACRC explained its reason for the denial as follows:

ACRC has determined that housekeeping services are not an assessed need related to the [Claimant's] developmental disability. Housekeeping tasks are routine household responsibilities and are not services that support the acquisition, retention, or improvement of functional skills associated with the [Claimant's] developmental disability.

(Grammar original.)

10. On January 20, 2026, Claimant requested a fair hearing to contest ACRC's denial of housekeeping services and a second NOA regarding a denial of funding to purchase AngelSense monitoring services. On February 26, 2026, at an informal meeting, ACRC agreed to conditionally fund AngelSense services and Claimant withdrew the appeal as to that issue.

## **SDP Directives and Service Definitions**

11. Anne Shayler, ACRC SDP Client Services Manager, testified at hearing. Ms. Shayler is responsible for implementing and training ACRC's Participant Choice Specialists (PCS). PCSs are responsible for reviewing SDP budgets and spending plans to ensure they comply with Department of Developmental Services (DDS) directives, laws, and regulations. Ms. Shayler explained that ACRC must follow DDS directives and

SDP budgets and spending plans can only include services that comply with those directives.

12. On November 25, 2025, DDS adopted a directive titled "Self-Determination Program: Initial Individual Budgets and Spending Plans (D-2025-Self-Determination Program-003). This directive provides that SDP spending plans only include services set forth in DDS's SDP service definitions.

13. Per DDS's SDP service definitions, the service category of Community Living Supports is defined, in relevant part, as follows:

Community Living Supports are services that facilitate independence and promote community integration for participants, regardless of the community living arrangement. Services include support and assistance with socialization, personal skill development, community participation, recreation and leisure, and home and personal care, among others, as further described below.

[¶] . . . [¶]

Support with home and personal care includes services needed to maintain the home in a clean, sanitary and safe environment and provide essential care to the individual. Services include support with household activities, such as planning and preparing meals, money management (personal finances, planning, budgeting and decision making), and laundry. It also includes heavy household chores such as washing floors, windows and walls, securing

loose rugs and tiles, moving heavy items or furniture in order to provide safe access and egress, as well as minor repairs such as those which could be completed by a handyman.

[¶] . . . [¶]

Services will be provided only in cases where neither the individual, nor anyone else in the household, is capable of performing or financially providing for them, and where no other relative, caregiver, landlord, community/volunteer agency, or third party payer is capable of or responsible for their provision.

(Grammar original.)

14. DDS service definitions define the Homemaker service category as follows:

Services consisting of general household activities (meal preparation and routine household care) provided by an individual that has the requisite skills to perform homemaker duties specified in the participant's IPP when the individual regularly responsible for these activities is temporarily absent or unable to manage the home and care for him or herself or others in the home.

(Grammar original.)

## **Claimant's Evidence**

### **CLAIMANT'S MOTHER'S TESTIMONY**

15. Claimant's mother is seeking to add funds to Claimant's SDP budget for deep cleaning, household organization, and other homemaking tasks to maintain Claimant's home environment. Claimant requires constant supervision. Due to his supervision needs, Claimant's mother is unable to complete necessary housekeeping tasks such as cleaning, laundry, and maintaining Claimant's home. Claimant's father frequently travels for work, leaving Claimant's mother as the primary caregiver for Claimant and his sibling.

16. Claimant's mother explained that Claimant's ID and Down Syndrome cause adaptive functioning delays. Claimant needs regular prompting to complete his activities of daily living and support through transition. Claimant functions best when he has predictable environments and clear structure. He struggles to focus when his environment is messy or disorganized. If his home is not maintained he will become dysregulated and refuse to engage in his typical tasks. When Claimant becomes dysregulated he is more likely to engage in dangerous behaviors such as eloping.

### **DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

17. As of August 18, 2025, Claimant receives 223:09 (hours:minutes) of IHSS per month. He does not receive IHSS for domestic services or related services. He receives IHSS in the category of protective supervision.

18. Claimant receives special education services through his school district. Per his Individualized Education Plan, he receives, among other services, paraeducator

support to implement behavioral intervention, assistance with accessing his curriculum, for visual supports, and safety.

## **Analysis**

19. Claimant bears the burden of proving that ACRC must include funds in his SDP budget and spending plan to purchase housekeeping services. He must establish that he has a need for this service arising from his qualifying developmental disability and that this service is eligible for SDP funding.

20. Claimant established that he benefits from having a clean and organized home. However, the evidence did not establish that this service is necessary to implement the goals stated in Claimant's IPP for him to remain in his home and maintain good physical, mental, and emotional health. Further, Claimant did not establish that his needs are specifically related to his qualifying developmental disability. Housekeeping tasks are a routine household responsibility for all persons regardless of whether they have a developmental disability.

21. Additionally, Claimant did not establish that his request is consistent with DDS's directives and service definitions. Specifically, per DDS's service definitions, housekeeping services can only be purchased as Community Living Supports when "neither the individual, nor anyone else in the household, is capable of performing or financially providing for them." Although Claimant's mother and father are at times unavailable to care for Claimant's home environment, the evidence did not establish that they are incapable of performing these duties. Further, Claimant cannot purchase housekeeping as Homemaker services because the evidence did not establish that "the individual regularly responsible for these activities is temporarily absent or unable to manage the home and care for him or herself or others in the home."

22. Claimant did not establish that ACRC is required to add funds to his SDP budget and spending plan to purchase housekeeping services. Therefore, his appeal must be denied.

## LEGAL CONCLUSIONS

1. The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act (Lanterman Act) governs this case. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4500 et seq.) An administrative fair hearing to determine the rights and obligations of the parties is available under the Lanterman Act. (Welf. & Inst. Code, §§ 4700–4716.)

2. Claimant has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that ACRC must add funds to his SDP budget and spending plan to purchase housekeeping services. (*Lindsay v. San Diego Retirement Bd.* (1964) 231 Cal.App.2d 156, 161 [the party seeking government benefits has the burden of proving entitlement to such benefits]; Evid. Code, § 115 [the standard of proof is preponderance of the evidence, unless otherwise provided by law].) Proof by a preponderance of the evidence means “more likely than not.” (*Sandoval v. Bank of America* (2002) 94 Cal.App.4th 1378, 1387.)

3. Under the Lanterman Act, the State of California is responsible for providing individuals with developmental disabilities with the “treatment and habilitation services and supports” to enable such persons to live “in the least restrictive environment.” (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4502, subd. (b)(1).) To comply with this mandate the Department of Developmental Services contracts with non-profit agencies called regional centers to provide services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4620.)

4. Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 4512, subdivision (b), “services and supports for persons with developmental disabilities” are defined as:

[S]pecialized services and supports or special adaptations of generic services and supports directed toward the alleviation of a developmental disability or toward the social, personal, physical, or economic habilitation or rehabilitation of an individual with a developmental disability, or toward the achievement and maintenance of an independent, productive, and normal life.

5. To determine what services a regional center consumer needs, regional centers are directed to conduct a planning process that results in an IPP designed to promote as normal a lifestyle as possible. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4646; *Assn. for Retarded Citizens v. Dept. of Developmental Services* (1985) 38 Cal.3d 384, 389.) The planning process includes “gathering information and conducting assessments to determine the life goals, capabilities and strengths, preferences, barriers, and concerns or problems of the [consumer].” (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4646.5, subd. (a)(1).) The IPP must set forth goals and objectives for the consumer, provisions for acquiring services, contain a statement of time-limited objectives for improving the consumer’s situation, and reflect the consumer’s particular desires and preferences. (Welf. & Inst. Code, §§ 4646, subd. (a)(1), (2), & (4), 4646.5, subd. (a)(2), 4512, subd. (b), & 4648, subd. (a)(6)(E).)

6. The Self-Determination Program provides regional center consumers “an individual budget, increased flexibility and choice, and greater control over decisions, resources, and needed and desired services and supports to implement” a consumer’s IPP. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4685.8, subd. (a).) Self-determination is designed to give the

participant greater control over which services and supports best meet their IPP needs, goals, and objectives. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4685.8, subd. (b)(2)(B).) One goal of the SDP is to allow participants to innovate to achieve their goals more effectively. (*Id.* at § 4685.8, subd. (b)(2)(G).) DDS is empowered to implement program directives regarding the SDP. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4685.8, subd. (p)(2).)

7. “Self-determination” means “a voluntary delivery system consisting of a defined and comprehensive mix of services and supports, selected and directed by a participant through person-centered planning, in order to meet the objectives in their IPP.” (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4685.8, subd. (c)(6).) “Individual Budget” means the amount of regional center purchase-of-service funding available to the participant to purchase services and supports necessary to implement the IPP. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4685.8, subd. (c)(3).) The regional center can adjust the individual budget if it determines it is necessary due to a change in circumstances, needs, or resources that would result in an increase or decrease in purchase of service expenditures or if the IPP team identifies a prior unmet need that was not addressed in the IPP. (*Id.* at § 4685.8, subd. (m)(1)(A)(ii).)

8. The SDP requires a regional center, when developing the individual budget, to determine the services, supports and goods necessary for each consumer based on the needs and preferences of the consumer, and when appropriate, the consumer’s family, the effectiveness of each option in meeting the goals specified in the IPP, and the cost effectiveness of each option. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4685.8, subd. (b)(2)(H)(i).)

## **Conclusion**

9. As discussed above, Claimant did not establish that ACRC must add funds to his SDP budget and spending plan to purchase housekeeping services. Housekeeping services are a routine household responsibility rather than a specialized service or support for Claimant's developmental disability. Further, Claimant did not establish that nobody in his household is capable of performing housekeeping tasks, as required by SDP service definitions. Therefore, Claimant's appeal must be denied.

## **ORDER**

Claimant's appeal from Alta California Regional Center's January 2, 2026 Notice of Action denying his request to add funds to his SDP budget and spending plan to purchase housekeeping services is DENIED.

DATE: April 28, 2026

CHRISTOPHER W. DIETRICH  
Administrative Law Judge  
Office of Administrative Hearings

BEFORE THE  
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of:

Claimant

OAH Case No. 2026010951

Vs.

**DECISION BY THE DIRECTOR**

Alta California Regional Center

Respondent.

ORDER OF DECISION

On April 28, 2026, an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) at the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) issued a Proposed Decision in this matter.

The Proposed Decision is adopted by the Department of Developmental Services as its Decision in this matter. The Order of Decision, together with the Proposed Decision, constitute the Decision in this matter.

This is the final administrative Decision. Each party is bound by this Decision. Either party may request a reconsideration pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 4712.5, subdivision (a)(1), within 15 days of receiving the Decision or appeal the Decision to a court of competent jurisdiction within 180 days of receiving the final Decision.

Attached is a fact sheet with information about what to do and expect after you receive this decision, and where to get help.

IT IS SO ORDERED on this day May 19, 2026.

Original signed by

Katie Hornberger, Deputy Director  
Division of Community Assistance and Resolutions

BEFORE THE  
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of:

Claimant

OAH Case No. 2026010951

Vs.

**RECONSIDERATION ORDER, DECISION  
BY THE DIRECTOR**

Alta California Regional Center,

Respondent.

RECONSIDERATION ORDER

On May 26, 2026, the Department of Developmental Services (Department) received claimant's application for reconsideration of a Final Decision issued by the Director on May 19, 2026.

The application for reconsideration is denied. A review of the Final Decision and record does not support a finding of factual or legal error that would change the Final Decision. The Final Decision remains effective as of May 19, 2026. All parties are bound by this Reconsideration Order and Final Decision.

Each party has the right to appeal the Final Decision to a court of competent jurisdiction within 180 days of receiving the Final Decision.

IT IS SO ORDERED on this day June 3, 2026.

Original signed by

Katie Hornberger, Deputy Director  
Division of Community Assistance and Resolutions