BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of:

CLAIMANT

and

INLAND REGIONAL CENTER,

Service Agency

DDS No. CS0034766

OAH No. 2026030498

DECISION

Abraham M. Levy, Administrative Law Judge, Office of Administrative Hearings, State of California, heard this matter on June 9, 2026, in San Bernardino, California.

Claimant's mother represented claimant, who was present during the hearing. A Spanish language interpreter provided English to Spanish and Spanish to English interpretation services throughout the hearing for claimant's parents.

Hilberto Echeverria Jr., Fair Hearings Representative, represented Inland Regional Center (IRC).

Documentary and testimonial evidence were received, and the matter was submitted for decision on June 9, 2026.

ISSUE

Is IRC required to fund the purchase of a van with modifications and adaptations?[1]

FACTUAL FINDINGS

Jurisdiction and Background

1. Claimant is an 18-year-old conserved female with Cerebral Palsy. She lives in the family home with her parents. She is medically fragile, non-ambulatory, and needs assistance in all respects. Claimant uses a G-tube, a nebulizer, a bathchair, a wheelchair, and a vest to straighten her spine. Claimant receives 100 hours of on-going preferred provider respite a month; 221 hours per month of In-Home Support Services with her mother as her provider, and $1,000 per month in Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Claimant has Medi-Cal and California Children's Services.

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[1] IRC's Notice of Action states that claimant's request for modification and adaptation of the van is denied. IRC in its Position Statement identifies the issue as claimant's request for the purchase of a van with modifications and adaptations. At the start of the hearing the parties did not dispute that the issue to be decided is the purchase of the van with modifications and adaptations.

2. Claimant's family wants a van with modifications to be able to transport her in the community and to medical appointments. Claimant's family identified two vans that they want IRC to purchase. On February 3, 2026, IRC issued a Notice of Action denying claimant's request for vehicle modification and adaptation. On March 5, 2026, claimant filed an appeal.

Summary of Evidence Presented at the Hearing

3. Cheshedt Amaya, claimant's Consumer Services Coordinator, Lilliana Garnica, IRC Program Manager, Michelle Knighten, IRC Staff Physical Therapist, and claimant's parents testified. In addition, the Clinical Review note dated December 22, 2025, claimant's February 23, 2026, Individual Program Plan (IPP), two quotes for two 2018 vans with modifications from Aero Mobility, and a quote from Ability Center for a 2019 Sienna relating to a rear entry modification were submitted as evidence. Sections from the Welfare and Institutions Code, and IRC's guidelines regarding purchases of durable medical equipment were made part of the record. The following is a summary of this evidence.

4. IRC does not dispute claimant's need for a van with modifications for transport. IRC recognizes "the need is there" for this modified vehicle. Under IRC's Compliance Review Guidelines, IRC can approve cost-effective modifications to vehicles that do not exceed the value of the vehicle. A consumer's family also must consider the cost effectiveness of purchasing a converted vehicle with low mileage versus purchasing a new vehicle that requires a conversion. (Compliance Review Procedures, § 6.3.)

5. Claimant wants IRC to fund the purchase of a van with a ramp installed in order to be able to transport claimant. Claimant specifically wants IRC to fund a 2018-

year van with a rear entry conversion with full center cut 12-inch floor, power fold out ramp, emergency cable on the back door for emergency exit, and original equipment manufacturer remount seats.

6. Claimant obtained two quotes from the same dealer, who specializes in accessible vans for persons with disabilities, each with a rear ramp installed: A 2018 Toyota Sienna with 46,375 miles at a total cost of $69,147.75, and a 2018 Sienna with 67,964 miles, at a total cost of 58,927.75. IRC would like claimant's family to obtain three quotes, but claimant's family has not been able to get this third quote.

7. Claimant obtained a quote from a second dealer for a rear entry conversion package. The cost for this conversion is identified in the quote as $15,000 for a 2019 Sienna and incorporated a 10 percent annual depreciation into the cost of the conversion.

8. Ms. Knighten, IRC's Physical Therapist, assessed claimant's needs with respect to a modified van in April 2023. She said at that time, claimant's family said they would try to save money to purchase a van.

9. Ms. Knighten testified that the vehicles with modifications claimant identified, which they want IRC to purchase, are not cost-effective due to their mileage, age, and cost. Under IRC's guidelines, a vehicle must have no more than 36,000 miles and be no more than three years old. Ms. Knighten commented that the vehicles need to be expected to last 10 years. The two vehicles claimant identified do not meet these criteria.

10. Ms. Knighten testified that a rear modification to the family current vehicle is appropriate and cost effective, and IRC would fund this conversion. She said the $15,000 cost for the rear entry conversion identified for the 2019 Sienna is cost

effective. Ms. Knighten also testified that IRC would approve the purchase of a "Milford Lift" and a turning seat, which would allow for claimant to be taken out of the wheelchair and safely placed in the family vehicle. Claimant's family declined both options. They believe the options would not work.

11. Claimant's parents testified that claimant's need for the van with modifications is urgent. Claimant's father has difficulty carrying her, and getting her into and out of the family van. They said they cannot afford to buy a van with the modifications consistent with IRC's guidelines for mileage and age of the vehicle. Claimant's mother stated that she thought they can use $40,000 from claimant's Self-Determination Program (SDP) budget to purchase the van. However, claimant is not in the SDP program. According to claimant's IPP, claimant's family was in the process of participating in the SDP program, but decided to not proceed with it.[2]

LEGAL CONCLUSIONS

Standard and Burden of Proof

1. The Lanterman Act (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4500 et seq.) governs this case. The standard of proof is the preponderance of the evidence because no law or statute (including the Lanterman Act) requires otherwise. (Evid. Code, § 115.) A preponderance of evidence standard is met when the party bearing the burden of proof presents evidence that has more convincing force than that opposed to it. (*People ex rel. Brown*

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[2] The Clinical Review team document dated December 22, 2025, identifies that claimant is in the SDP Program. But, as noted, per claimant's most recent IPP, claimant appears to have decided against participating in the SDP program.

v. Tri-Union Seafoods, LLC (2009) 171 Cal.App.4th 1549, 1567.) Claimant has the burden of proof.

Applicable Law

2. In enacting the Lanterman Act, the Legislature accepted its responsibility to provide for the needs of developmentally disabled individuals, and recognized services and supports should be established to meet the needs and choices of each person with developmental disabilities. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4501.) The purpose of the statutory scheme is twofold: to prevent or minimize the institutionalization of developmentally disabled persons and their dislocation from family and community, and to enable developmentally disabled persons to approximate the pattern of everyday living of nondisabled persons of the same age and to lead more independent and productive lives in the community. (*Assn. for Retarded Citizens v. Dept. of Developmental Services* (1985) 38 Cal.3d 384, 388.)

3. The determination of which services and supports will best address a consumer's needs is made through the IPP process. The Lanterman Act gives regional centers a critical role in the coordination and delivery of services and supports for persons with disabilities through the IPP process. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4620 et seq.) Regional centers are responsible for developing and implementing IPPs, taking into account consumer needs and preferences, and ensuring the services and supports provided are cost-effective. (Welf. & Inst. Code, §§ 4646, 4646.5, 4647, 4648.) Regional center services and supports are to be flexible and individually tailored to the consumer and, where appropriate, their family. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4648, subd. (a)(2).)

4. Section 4512, subdivision (b), defines the services and supports that may be identified and funded through the IPP process:

> "Services and supports for person with developmental disabilities" means specialized 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 independent, productive, and normal lives. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 4512, subd. (b).)

Analysis and Disposition

5. Claimant failed to meet her burden of proof to require IRC to fund the purchase of a vehicle with modifications and adaptations. IRC agrees that claimant's "need is there" for a modified and adapted vehicle to allow her to be transported safely in the community and to medical providers. But IRC is not required to fund the vehicles claimant identified due to their cost, age, and mileage. IRC must consider the cost effectiveness of any purchase of durable medical equipment, and the vehicles claimant wants IRC to purchase do not meet IRC's Compliance Review Procedures or the Lanterman Act.

IRC offered options to claimant's family that IRC's physical therapist testified would meet claimant's transportation needs. This includes the purchase of a rear entry modification to the family vehicle, a Milford Lift, and a turning chair. Claimant's family declined these options.

6. At the hearing, IRC indicated it will continue to work with claimant's family to address claimant's need for safe transport in the community and to her medical providers.

ORDER

Claimant's request that IRC purchase a van with modifications and adaptations for claimant's transportation is denied.

DATE: June 18, 2026

ABRAHAM M. LEVY
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings

NOTICE

This is the final administrative decision. Each party is bound by this decision. Either party may request a reconsideration pursuant to subdivision (b) of Welfare and Institutions Code section 4713 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.