

# **Valley Mountain Regional Center Service Standards**

## **Living Options: Supported Living Services (SLS)**

Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC) recognizes and supports the fundamental purpose of Supported Living Services (SLS): giving adults with disabilities the assistance they need to live in the community. To that end each individual must have a support system tailored to his/her evolving needs and preferences without having to move from their own home.

SLS are those services and supports which are identified by the IPP planning team (formerly IDT), provided by a vendor, paid for by the regional center and are cost effective.

Once an individual expresses a desire for these services, the planning team must determine if SLS is an appropriate option for him/her and what services and supports will be required (see III and IV below).

For those persons moving toward independent living, opportunities for functional skills development should be explored in other settings such as day programs, independent living programs, residential facilities, planning team meetings, schools, and through other generic community services and agencies.

### **I. Definition**

- A. **Supported Living Services (Service Code 896)** shall consist of any individually designed service or assessment of need for service which assists the individual to:
  - 1. Live in his or her own home, with support available for as often and for as long as it is needed;
  - 2. Make fundamental life decisions, while also supporting and facilitating the individual in dealing with the consequences of those decisions.
  - 3. Building critical and durable relationships with other individuals; choosing where and with whom to live; and controlling the character and appearance of the environment within their home.

### **II. Current Living Situation**

- A. Regardless of where a consumer now lives, if he/she wishes to move into a home of his/her own, an assessment may be completed to identify the need for SLS.  
  
The planning team itself may determine the need for SLS and identify the support and training needs the individual requires, or it may rely on a more formalized assessment to do so.

- B. A move-out date, within 60 to 90 days, will be set as soon as SLS are approved and initiated. The planning team may extend the move-out date further if the individual encounters difficulty locating an affordable place to live.

During this time period, pre-move training and assistance with moving may be required as part of SLS.

### **III. Eligibility**

#### **Eligibility for SLS:**

1. Persons who are 18 years of age or older;
2. The individual is living in a home that is not the place of residence of a parent or conservator of the person (unless there is a move out plan).
3. The individual expresses (independently or through a personal advocate) a desire to live in their own home from the options presented to them as part of the planning team process;
4. The individual's health and safety needs can reasonably be met through SLS;
5. Consumers will not be denied eligibility for SLS solely because of the nature and severity of their disabilities.

#### **The following issues are reasonable for the planning team to consider:**

1. The person's personal objectives can reasonably be met through SLS;
2. The person will, in the judgment of the planning team, benefit from SLS;
3. The individual receives or is eligible to receive financial resources necessary to pay for rent/mortgage, utilities, food, clothing, and all other typical daily living expenses;
4. Appropriate and available generic resources and supports, including In-Home Support Services (IHSS), have been accessed to the fullest extent possible.

### **IV. Assessment**

It is generally expected that persons desiring to live on their own will agree to participate in an assessment by a qualified vendor. This assessment would provide information to the regional center regarding:

- Statement of consumer's strengths and needs related to living independently.
- Health and safety risk.
- Ongoing support needs.
- The person's amenability and motivation to receive services.

- Recommendations for development of a community resource plan (proposed plan for accessing community services and to develop a circle of support).

Although it is recognized that the assessment process is an integral part of SLS and that during this time the consumer and provider begin to develop a foundation of trust and rapport, VMRC may select one vendor to provide the assessment and a different one to provide the identified training.

The planning team will determine the specific areas to be assessed as well as the number of hours the assessment may take. The total number of assessment hours is generally not more than 24 and, depending on the scope of the assessment, may be less.

The planning team should consider the following when determining the number of assessment hours:

- Consultation with referring SC/historical review.
- Interview of consumer.
- Consumer observation/data collection.
- Interviews, meetings with service providers, significant others.
- Identification of community resources and supports including IHSS that would further enhance the consumer's move towards independence.
- Develop proposal for circle of support.
- Follow-up consultation with SC.

In addition, the planning team may feel it has enough information to determine need and may forgo a more formalized assessment.

## **V. Supported Living Arrangement (SLA) Guidelines**

During the first year only of SLS, before SLS is provided to a consumer, the projected annual cost of the consumer's Supported Living Arrangement (SLA), as determined through the consumer's IPP process, shall not exceed the total annual cost of regional center funded services and supports that would be provided if the consumer were served in an appropriate licensed residential facility as identified through the IPP process, provided:

- The total annual cost of services and supports shall include all regional center costs for residential placement (or costs incurred by the State for 24-hour long-term health care), community-based day program, transportation, and other services and supports, and
- The appropriate licensed facility for a consumer who is living in a licensed facility at the time of the cost comparison shall be that licensed facility.

When the consumer does not reside in a licensed facility the projected annual cost of a consumer's SLA shall be deemed to have met the requirements when the cost is within the range of annual SLAs for other consumers who are currently receiving SLS from the regional center.

The projected annual cost of a consumer's SLA shall be deemed to have met the requirements when the consumer is one of a group of consumers receiving, or projected to receive SLS services from the same vendor, provided the aggregate cost to the regional center of the SLAs of the grouped consumers does not exceed the total cost to the regional center that would have resulted had the costs for services and supports for each of the grouped consumers been determined individually.

## **VI. Service Hours**

The planning team can agree to the following:

- New referrals: Up to 24 hours for assessments  
Up to 25 hours for move planning
- Currently living independently: Up to 39 hours per month  
Above 39 hours per month requires an expanded planning team with review by the Program Manager  
Up to 25 hours for move planning, one time per calendar year.

If the planning team agrees that the number of SLS hours the consumer needs exceeds 39 an expanded planning team must also be convened.

If the expanded planning team agrees to the requested number of hours, it will also determine how often the exceptional authorization will be reviewed, up to every six months.

If a final agreement regarding the services and supports to be provided to a consumer cannot be reached at a planning team meeting, then a subsequent expanded planning team meeting shall be convened within 15 days.

## **VII. Service Monitoring and Renewal**

The following schedule will apply to all purchase authorizations:

- Supported Living Services up to 12 months
- Exceptional Purchases up to 6 months

However, each consumer's SLS must be reviewed for progress at least quarterly by the planning team, which includes the service provider.

## **VIII. In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)**

It is important to note that VMRC services cannot supplant those services provided by IHSS, and support services can generally be funded through the IHSS program. Any consumers in need of personal care/home maintenance services **must** be referred to IHSS for an assessment. VMRC will provide temporary emergency services for individuals in supported living for health and safety reasons only. If IHSS is denied or reduced, the planning team must determine whether the decision should be appealed.

## **IX. Exceptions and Appeals Process**

As with all VMRC purchased services, if the planning team determines that sufficient support exists to request an exception to these standards, a Purchase of Service Exceptions request should be submitted.

VMRC recognizes that there may be occasions when a decision is made by VMRC that may not satisfy the consumer or his/her legally authorized representative. When the consumer or his/her legally authorized representative believes a VMRC decision is illegal, discriminatory or not in the consumer's best interest, an appeal can be made to challenge that decision. All processes shall be in compliance with Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 4700-4730.