



Ten Things You Can Do (Individuals)

The Lanterman Coalition, made up of the 21 major stakeholders in California’s community-based developmental service system, is uniting around a single critical goal. Years of underfunding, cuts, rate freezes, old funding formulas, and inflation have hurt service providers and regional centers’ ability to ensure people with developmental disabilities and their families get the services and supports they need. To fix this, our system needs a 10% across-the-board funding increase now, and 5% increases yearly, until funding for provider rates and regional center services is reformed.

Your advocacy matters! Our system is facing a monumental challenge. It’s big, it’s complicated, and there are a lot of moving parts. But we have to start somewhere, and a 10% budget increase for our system is the first step the Lanterman Coalition is rallying around. To make that – and comprehensive reform – happen, we need you to stand up for people with developmental disabilities, their families, service providers, and regional centers. The system that supports people to live in communities of their choosing needs you. Every voice throws light on a part of this common problem we are facing, and we need you to let your light shine!

1) Connect with your Legislator

Unless you know who represents you, they won’t know they represent you! [Look them up online](#), and you can learn the names of your Senator and Assemblymember. Once you know who to contact, do so! Send an email, write a letter, or make a call. Tell them what matters to you – in this case, supporting the Lanterman Coalition’s budget reform request. If you’re on Twitter or Facebook, consider sharing your message with your representatives directly! Respectful but honest tweets or Facebook posts can provide great ways to help your voice be heard.

2) Ask your Legislator to talk to Senator Beall about his funding request

Looking for a specific request that can help identify supporters of this reform effort? Senator Beall has [authored a letter to Governor Brown](#) asking him to make developmental services funding a priority. Ask your Legislator, whenever you contact them, to talk to Senator Beall about his letter, and ask him how they can help.

3) Meet your Legislator at their district office

You know who represents you, and you’ve told them what you care about. But how much more of an impact does it make when you meet someone in person? A lot more! This can, in an instant, change you from a statistic into a friend – a real person with real stories, not just another person on the other side of a screen. Yes, letters count... but this type of meeting can make a lifelong impression. Contact their office and tell them you’d like to meet with the Legislator. When you get a meeting set, three things will help it be a success: know what you want to talk about (supporting the 10% budget

increase and talking to Senator Beall about his leadership in developmental services), be respectful (of them and their time), and follow up with a thank you.

4) Participate in an event they are sponsoring

Legislators – and candidates – will often have public meetings. “Office hours” at a local coffee shop, town halls, meet-the-candidate forums, and other events are all great places to meet with the people who represent you, and tell them about why Lanterman Act services and supports matter to you. Find out about these events by signing up for their mailing lists, following them on Twitter, or “liking” them on Facebook.

5) Invite them to meet you – have a site visit!

If you are looking for the one way to have the biggest impact, a site visit is it. You’ll get to meet your legislator, talk to them about what our system needs, and show them how Lanterman Act services and supports help people live fuller, more independent lives. This takes a bit more work, but it builds on everything above, and starts with contacting their office to extend an invitation.

6) Tell the press

Letters to the editor may seem old-fashioned, but they still have an impact, and can be done online. By getting your views out to the community, people around you will start to learn about your issues, and then care about them. People with developmental disabilities are our friends, our family, our co-workers, ourselves – and we are all part of our local communities. Write to your local paper and let your community know why something as abstract as a 10% increase for developmental services would have such a concrete effect on you!

7) Contact local journalists

So you’ve written in – but are you talking with, or talk to the local media? Contacting your local media outlets, particularly if there is a story coming up, can be a great way for your stories and lives to be shared with the public. Our issues regularly connect to timely, relevant news stories. When journalists know you, they can talk to you. And when they do, your story can become part of the bigger picture – or it may just become a story of its own!

8) Tell your friends and family

Can you tell ten of your friends, family members, or even neighbors about this effort, and ask them to join in? This message isn’t just about you, it’s about all of us. Something as simple as directly, politely asking someone for their help can have a profound impact.

9) Keep your network informed

Does social media have a place in your life? Share your story, and tell about this campaign, online! Facebook posts, tweets, and even Tumblr or other blog platforms can be a great way to spread the word. A list of Lanterman Coalition members with active Twitter accounts is at the bottom; you can start by connecting with them!

10) Keep yourself – and the community – informed!

Go to www.lantermancoalition.org to get the latest news. Also, while this is a grassroots push, any feedback you have will help us all better focus our work. Have any questions? Get a Legislator to send [a letter like Senator Beall’s](#)? Learn that they have a family member with a developmental disability? Told directly that this isn’t their priority? Sharing the intel will let us ensure everyone – including you – can make best use of their time and talents! Please go to www.lantermancoalition.org/contact and drop us a line!

The advocacy of individuals and families like you is how our system was created. And with that same advocacy, it can be renewed!

P.S. Please keep in touch, and let us know how it went! Go to www.lanterncoalition.org to get the latest news. Also, while this is a grassroots push, any feedback you have will help us all better focus our work. Have any questions? Get a Legislator to send [a letter like Senator Beall's](#)? Learn that they have a family member with a developmental disability? Told directly that this isn't their priority? Sharing the intel will let us ensure that everyone – including you – can make best use of their time and talents! Please go to www.lanterncoalition.org/contact and drop us a line, or email info@lanterncoalition.org!

Links

Legislator Finder – www.legislature.ca.gov/legislators_and_districts/legislators/your_legislator.html

Senator Beall's Letter – www.lanterncoalition.org/docs/Beall.pdf