

Harbor Regional Center A Parent's Guide to the Family Cost Participation Program (FCPP)

In 2004, the state of California passed a law that requires parents to share with regional centers the responsibility for obtaining needed services for their children. The law does not apply to all families and it applies to only a few services. In addition, it is not intended to be so burdensome to families that it would result in their foregoing needed services for their children.

This new law is called the "Family Cost Participation Program" and it took effect in January of 2005. While the general intent of the law is simple – for parents to share responsibility for obtaining services for their children – details of the law and the way it will be implemented are somewhat more complicated. In this brochure, we attempt to explain the law in a way that will help you decide whether you will be affected by it and, if you are affected, what your general level of responsibility would be.

Q: To whom does the law apply?

A: To begin with, the law only applies to some families. These are families that meet the following criteria:

- The family has a child who is younger than 18 and lives in the family home.
- The child is not eligible for Medi-Cal.
- The child receives one or more of three specific services purchased by the regional center: respite, day care, camp and staff support related to these services.
- The family has an income that is at least four times the Federal Poverty Level. (We explain the Federal Poverty Level below.)

If the family satisfies these criteria, they will be required to assume responsibility for obtaining some portion of the necessary service for the child, but their level of responsibility will increase with the family's income. At the lowest income level (four times the federal poverty level), the family would be responsible for 10% of the service. At the highest income level, the family's responsibility would be for 100% of the service.

Q. What is the Federal Poverty Level?

A. The federal government has income guidelines that it uses to determine who is eligible for some of its programs such as SSI and Medicaid (Medi-Cal). The guidelines define what is usually called the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). They address both income and family size.

California has decided that family cost participation will apply only to families whose annual income is at least four times (or 400% of) the FPL. The table below lists what this amount would be for different sized families.

As you can see, a family of four would need to earn at least \$84,800* each year before they would be responsible for any portion of their child's service.

As we said above, the family's share is on a sliding scale, from 10% up to 100%. So, a family of four whose income is equal to \$84,800 would have the lowest level of participation: 10% of the service. A family of four would have to have an income of 10 times the FPL, or \$212,000*, before they would be responsible for 100% of the service.

Families who have more than one child being served by the regional center would have their level of participation reduced according to how many of their children are clients. For example, a family with two children who are regional center clients would have their share reduced by 25%.

The following table shows the reductions in the level of cost participation for families who have more than one child who are clients of regional center.

A. Number of people in the family	B. 4 times (400%) the Federal Poverty Level*
2	\$56,000
3	\$70,400
4	\$84,800
5	\$99,200
6	\$113,600
7	\$128,000
8	\$142,400

*Based on 2008 FPL

Number of children who are clients	Reduction in level of participation
2	25%
3	50%
4	75%
5 or more	100% (no participation required)

To get an idea of how much a family's responsibility would be, let's look at a simple example.

A family of four with an annual income of \$144,160* is assessed to require 10 hours of respite a month. At this income level, the family's level of participation would be 20%. This means that the regional center would purchase 8 hours of respite and the family would deal directly with the service provider or would make other arrangements to obtain the 2 additional hours.

The law also allows for a reduction in the level of participation for parents who experience “unavoidable and uninsured catastrophic loss” or “significant, un-reimbursed medical costs associated with the care for a regional center child.”

Q. How is my family’s income determined?

A. The family cost participation is based on the family’s Gross Income. You will be asked by the regional center to “self-certify” your income. You may do this by showing the first two pages of your most recent state or federal income tax return. If these documents are not available, you should contact your HRC counselor to discuss alternative types of documentation.

Families who are unable to provide evidence of their income will be required to participate at the highest (100%) level.