



**TOWARD MAXIMUM
INDEPENDENCE**
TRANSFORMING LIVES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

MEDIA CONTACT

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COMPANY OVERVIEW

Headquartered in San Diego, Toward Maximum Independence (TMI) was formed in 1981 to provide independent living services as a vendor with the San Diego Regional Center. In 1986, the agency incorporated as a California nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

Over the following decades, TMI expanded its services to include employment, supported living, and family support for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In 2000, TMI began serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) community, and in 2020 expanded to support veterans with disabilities.

What began as a small sole proprietorship operated out of a home office has grown into a regional agency supporting more than 1,100 individuals, with office locations in San Diego, Escondido, Temecula, El Centro, Corona, and San Jacinto.

ACCREDITATION & RECOGNITION

- CARF Accreditation: TMI has been continuously accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) since initial accreditations began in 2001.
- Community Honors: TMI was nominated for Best Nonprofit/Community Service Organization by the East County Chamber of Commerce and Best Service Organization by the Temecula Valley Chamber of Commerce.

GOVERNANCE & VENDORIZATIONS

TMI is governed by a Board of Directors and supported by a staff of more than 440 dedicated professionals. The agency holds multiple vendorizations through the San Diego and Inland Regional Centers, including:

- Independent Living Services
- Supported Living Services
- Community Integration Training Program
- Family Focused Services

Additionally, TMI supports youth through its licensed Resource (Foster) Family Program and maintains an active agreement with the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) to provide Supported Employment services.

MISSION & VISION

- Mission Statement: To provide personalized services to those who require support, enabling them to make informed choices regarding how they live, work, and function productively and independently in the community.
- Vision Statement: Achieving valued roles, making critical life-defining decisions, gaining the respect of others, and contributing to the life of the community are opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

CORE VALUES

- Respect: Having a valued place and role among a network of family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors.
- Choice: Having autonomy in decision-making in both small everyday matters and major life-defining issues.
- Competence: Having the opportunity to perform functional, meaningful activities or work with whatever level of assistance is necessary.
- Full Inclusion: Sharing ordinary spaces with a growing network of personal relationships and actively contributing to community life.

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PRINCIPLE BELIEFS DRIVING OUR WORK

- Community Living Services: Anyone can live in a home of their own if given the support and assistance needed to be successful.
- Employment Solutions: All people are capable of performing real work for real pay.
- Family Support Services: All children belong in families.

HUMAN RIGHTS & SERVICE COMMITMENTS

TMI works to ensure that the human rights and dignity of all persons served are fully preserved across all programs:

- Personalized Support Plans (PSP): To ensure clients remain in control of their services, individuals participate to the greatest extent possible in developing and signing their PSPs.
- Confidentiality: Clients sign state and federal regulatory-compliant release forms prior to staff sharing information with outside agencies.
- Quality Assurance: Internal Quality of Service Reviews, Regional Center evaluations, licensing reviews, Area Board Life Quality Assessments, and third-party accreditations are conducted regularly.
- Stakeholder Feedback: Input from service recipients and stakeholders is continuously solicited through annual program evaluations.
- Zero Tolerance for Abuse: Physical and psychological abuse—including corporal punishment, humiliation, exploitation, and adverse procedures—is strictly prohibited.

Through these principles, adults who previously resided in state hospitals or group homes are now empowered to live in their own homes and hold meaningful jobs. Children once placed in institutions or group homes are reunited with their families or supported in loving alternative family settings.

AGENCY QUALIFICATIONS & GRANT HISTORY

- Deaf Plus Parent Advocacy Support Group (2025): Awarded a \$200,000 grant from the Inland Regional Center (IRC) to establish a support group for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) parents and clients. Key objectives include:
 - Providing education and resources to help families navigate the regional center system.
 - Creating a safe space for parents to share experiences, challenges, and advocacy strategies.
 - Strengthening parent advocacy skills and fostering community connections.
 - Directing feedback to service funders and partners, including IRC, DOR, and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).
- EPWHID Grant (2010): Awarded \$405,000 by the California Department of Rehabilitation for Employment for People with Hearing Impairment and Deafness, expanding TMI's DHH program.
- Project SEARCH Grant (2006): Awarded \$118,000 by the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities to replicate the national model initiated at Cincinnati Children's Hospital.
- Financial Integrity: TMI undergoes an annual external financial audit and has successfully passed without issue every year since formal auditing began in 2008.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT & CONTINUOUS EDUCATION

All supports provided by TMI are designed to enable individuals—regardless of age or level of disability—to live in real homes and fully participate in family, school, work, and community life.

To maintain service quality, TMI prioritizes ongoing staff training through:

- A comprehensive, regularly updated in-service training curriculum.
- Professional incentives encouraging attendance at external workshops and conferences.
- Regular staff retreats and specialized skill-building seminars.