REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Community Respite Services for Adults

Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5092
Chapter 334, Laws of 2021
(partial veto)
67th Legislature
2021 Regular session, Section 203(1)(t)

January 1, 2026

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Executive Summary

In the 2015-2017 biennial budget, the Washington State Legislature appropriated funds to the Department of Social and Health Services' Developmental Disabilities Community Services for the development and implementation of eight Overnight Planned Respite Services beds for adults ages 18 and older with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As this service does not receive Medicaid match, additional General Fund-State funds were appropriated in the 2017-2019 biennial budget to allow for full implementation of the eight respite beds. Funds were appropriated for five additional planned respite beds in the program in the 2019-2021 biennial budget, for a for a total of 13 beds.

In April 2022, Overnight Planned Respite Services implemented a 4% rate increase to attract and retain providers, prevent families from needing long-term residential programs and allow more individuals and families to use community respite services. However, providers shared that the 4% increase was insufficient to operate their programs. To facilitate a 19% rate increase for each bed without needing an additional funding allocation for the program providers, Developmental Disabilities Community Services reviewed the budget and reduced the contracted bed capacity from 13 to 12 contracted beds, effective July 1, 2022.

In FY2023, client usage increased by 14%. FY2024 data noted an increase of 32% in the number of clients accessing overnight planned respite beds in comparison to FY2023. In FY2025, utilization of overnight planned respite services decreased by 14%. This expected decline correlates with the July 2025 closure of two respite beds in Spokane.

Overnight Planned Respite Services Overview

Biennium	Legislative Action	Cumulative # of funded beds	# of beds contracted
2015-2017	Funded 8 OPRS beds	8	4
2017-2019	Carry forward capacity	8	8
2019-2021	Funded 5 additional OPRS beds	13	11
2021-2023	Carry forward capacity	13	11
2021-2023	19% rate increase – effective July 1, 2022	12	9
2023-2025	Carry forward capacity	12	9
2025-2027	Carry forward capacity	12	7*
2025-2027	17% rate increase – effective July 1, 2025	12	7

*Spokane duplex closed 10/2024

Background and Context

Legislative Charge

In 2015, the Washington State Legislature passed ESSB 6052 which funded eight community-based overnight planned respite beds statewide. Developmental Disabilities Community Services began offering the overnight planned respite services in January 2016. The service is available to eligible clients aged 18 and over.

Developmental Disabilities Community Services offers short-term overnight planned respite services in partnership with a contracted and certified provider. This service offers a critical break for caregivers from the daily responsibilities of caring for a client while providing individualized supports and activities for the individual during their respite stay.

Developmental Disabilities Community Services, in accordance with ESSB 6052, is required to submit an annual respite utilization report to the legislature. The report must include:

- The number of people who have accessed overnight planned respite in the community each fiscal year.
- The location and number of days per month that each bed was occupied.

Additionally, ESSB 5092 (2021 legislative session), 5268 and 5693 (2022 legislative session) requires the completion of a series of community and respite stabilization reports to assess client needs and consider barriers to these services.

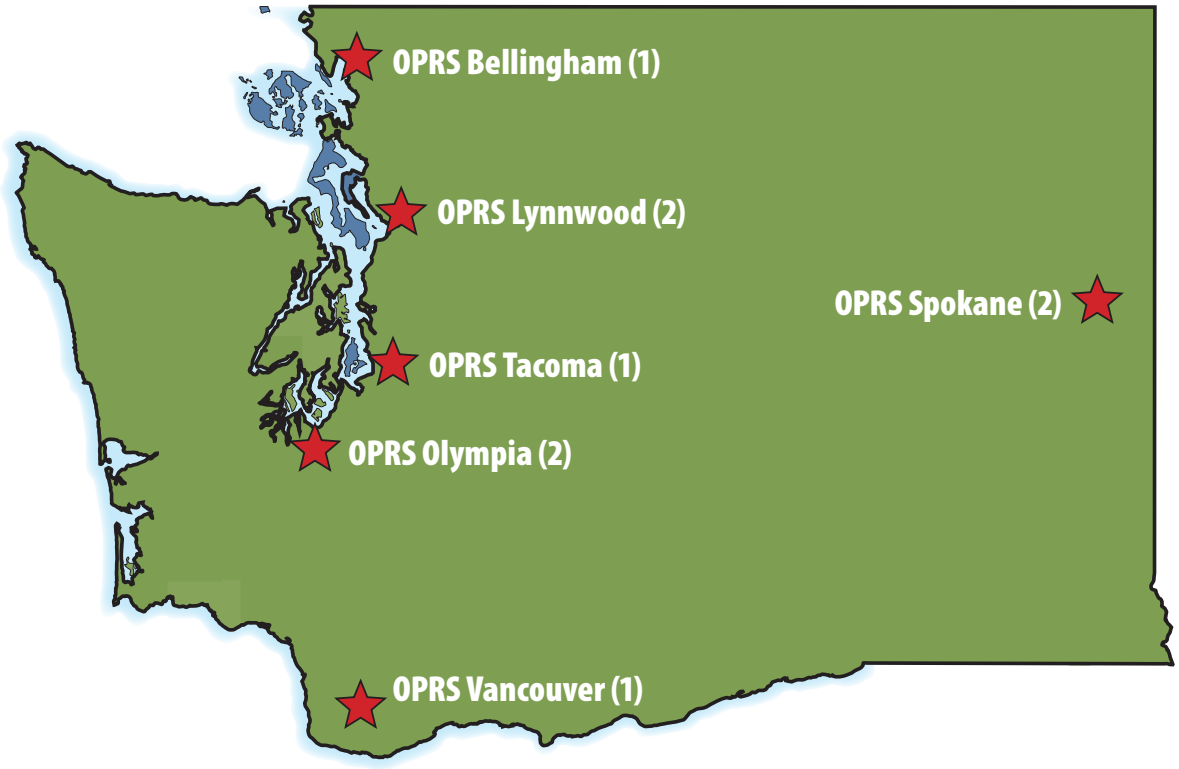
- Oct. 1, 2022: the community respite and stabilization preliminary report was submitted.
- Oct. 1, 2023: report submitted with initial recommendations and next steps to enhance quality service delivery and expansion.
- DATE 2024: the final Community Respite and Stabilization Services report was developed to include feedback from those with lived experience. This report presented final recommendations on service enhancements (including suggested geographical locations for additional beds, length of service, and other considerations to improve access to these services).

Overnight Planned Respite Services

This is a community-based respite service for clients age 18 and older who live with their primary caregiver per WAC388-829. The service is intended to provide primary caregivers with a break in caregiving while providing person-centered support, care and planned activities for the client in a contracted and certified residential setting. Providers are certified by DSHS to ensure quality and compliance with laws and regulations, and employ staff trained to support clients. Each respite setting serves one person at a time, and clients may access the service for up to 14 days in a calendar year.

In July 2023, WAC 388-829C-230 was updated to allow people residing with companion home providers to access to these services.

Provider Locations



Respite Services Data Review

Overnight Planned Respite Services Current Service Use

In FY2025, 310 adults accessed overnight planned respite services, a 14% decrease from FY2024, during which 360 clients utilized this service. These numbers include clients who accessed the services more than once during the 12-month period. Due to the closure of two respite beds in Spokane, the decrease in overall number of individuals accessing the service was expected. However, the remaining occupancy rates remained consistent with those reported in FY2024, which was what?.

In FY25, there were seven total overnight planned respite beds offered by three DDCS contracted providers. The Olympia and Vancouver locations continue to have the highest rates of bed occupancy while the Tacoma location had the lowest. Providers continued to experience challenges in maintaining staffing levels sufficient to meet the needs of individuals referred, however all beds remained online and available for referrals throughout the last fiscal year.

With the closing of The Arc of Spokane's two overnight respite beds in Spokane, the need for overnight respite service providers in eastern Washington became even greater. We are targeting several geographic areas for expansion, including the Tri-cities, Walla Walla, and Spokane areas. We are actively meeting with prospective providers who are open to pursuing contracts for overnight planned respite in this area with the goal of establishing two to three respite beds on the east side of the state. We are also evaluating a proposal for one overnight respite bed in Lewis County.

**Data note: Prior reports counted additional, intermittent staff time required for some clients as an additional stay. This has been corrected, resulting in a slightly lower number of clients who accessed this service.*

OPRS FY2025 Bed Occupancy Rates by Location

Location	Quarter 1 Jul-Sept	Quarter 2 Oct-Dec	Quarter 3 Jan-Mar	Quarter 4 Apr-Jun	Total Year
Spokane Bismark	59%	0	0	0	N/A
Spokane Lidgerwood	47%	0	0	0	N/A
Bellingham	66%	33%	24%	45%	42%
Lynnwood Duplex A	64%	63%	43%	67%	59%
Lynnwood Duplex B	32%	49%	22%	48%	38%
Tacoma	75%	29%	22%	37%	41%
Olympia Duplex A	76%	57%	76%	63%	68%
Olympia Duplex B	67%	71%	66%	88%	73%
Vancouver	96%	70%	42%	88%	74%
Quarterly Statewide Average	67%	53%	42%	62%	

Data source: DDCS Stabilization and Short-term Services Unit, Date: August 2025

Overnight Planned Respite Services - Individual Stays

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
FY2020	96	99	71	0	266
FY2021	78	56	29	76	239
FY2022	101	52	36	54	243
FY2023	68	78	54	76	276
FY2024	90	97	78	95	360
FY2025	111	75	53	71	310

Source: DDCS Stabilization and Short-term Services Unit, Date: August 2025

** Data note: Each client stay is counted separately, regardless of how many times a single client accesses this service. The above counts for FY2025 represent the number of individual stays which includes repeat utilization during the calendar year.*

Barriers to accessing overnight planned respite services

Some OPRS locations provide 1:1 staff support during daytime hours but rely on shared staffing overnight. This shared overnight staffing model does not adequately ensure supervision for adults with medical, behavioral, or mental health needs that require enhanced support. Staff currently provide only periodic check-ins throughout the night, which may not meet the level of care required.

Access to overnight respite services is currently limited to a handful of geographical locations, creating challenges for families and caregivers who are responsible for transportation to and from the respite location.

Some clients with high medical acuity are unable to be supported in OPRS when their medical needs cannot be met or appropriately delegated. In certain cases, the nurse delegator may determine that the complexity of the required tasks and level of care exceed that can be safely delegated, further limiting access to respite services.

Overnight planned respite beds are reserved according to client and caregiver preference; however, availability is not guaranteed for requested dates. During periods of high demand, such as summer months and holidays, bed availability may be limited. This can create a barrier to caregivers and families seeking respite services.

OPRS rates are insufficient to support 2:1 staffing even when identified as necessary through the client's assessment. OPRS continues to experience increasing requests for services for clients with complex medical and behavioral needs, many of whom require additional staffing to ensure safety and to provide adequate levels of support.

> *Wish we were given more respite days during the year. This respite is necessary and should be 21 days per year." – legal representative of an OPRS client*

Survey Feedback – Overnight Planned Respite Services

From July 2024 through June 2025, 40 OPRS surveys were completed by clients' primary caregiver, parent and/or legal guardian. Average scores and comments are summarized below. Survey ratings reflect overall satisfaction with services and support received during the client's stay measured on a five-point scale with "1" being low and "5" being high.

Overnight Planned Respite Survey Results Comparison

Survey Metrics	Fiscal Year 2024	Average Scores
Rate how well were you and your family member treated.	July-Dec. 2024 Jan.-June 2025	3.53 3.75
Rate the comfort and cleanliness of the home.	July-Dec. 2024 Jan.-June 2025	3.53 3.70
Rate the provider staff's understanding of your needs.	July-Dec. 2024 Jan.-June 2025	4.26 4.30
Rate the level of communication you received from the provider before and during the stay.	Jul-Dec 2024 Jan-Jun 2025	3.79 3.80
Do you feel the service met your needs?	Jul-Dec 2024	73.68% - Yes 21.5% - Somewhat 5.26% - No 0% - N/A
Do you feel the service met your needs?	July-Dec. 2025	89.4% - Yes 0% - Somewhat 10.53% - No 0% - N/A
Were appropriate medication and health care supports provided?	Jul-Dec 2024	84.21% - Yes 15.79% - Somewhat 0% - No 0% - N/A
Were appropriate medication and health care supports provided?	Jan-Jun 2025	75% - Yes 0% - Somewhat 10% - No 5% - N/A
If you have accessibility needs, did the home meet your needs?	Jul-Dec 2024	36.84% - Yes 10.53% - Somewhat 0% - No 52.63% - N/A
If you have accessibility needs, did the home meet your needs?	Jan-Jul 2025	50% - Yes 0% - Somewhat 5% - No 45% - N/A

Source: Survey Monkey, September 2025

Client and Family Testimonials

- The service is important to our family.
- She really enjoyed her stay- safe and accommodating.
- The organization is amazing!
- I have confidence in them.

Summary

Feedback received from clients, primary caregivers, and families who accessed overnight planned respite services was overall positive. Respondents indicated a high likelihood of utilizing this service again in the future. Primary caregivers and families continue to express a need for more overnight planned respite service beds in a greater variety of locations, including rural communities. DDCS is committed to expanding locations and improving access to this service across Washington state.