**Developmental   
Disabilities Administration**

**Guidelines for Volunteering within Employment and Vocational Programs**

These guidelines apply to all volunteer activities that occur as part of Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) funded and County Contracted Individual and Group Supported Employment and Pre-Vocational Services. Workplace activities in Washington State are governed by both the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I). The guidance provided in this document is intended to help people with developmental disabilities get jobs in a manner that will not interfere with the protections afforded to employees, and employers under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Volunteer experiences are limited to non-profit businesses or government entities where others also may volunteer. The purpose of a volunteer opportunity is Discovery, Assessment and to a lesser extent, Job Preparation as defined by the *Employment Phases and Billable Activities* and *Employment Activities – Strategies and Progress/Outcome Measures*.

Within DDA employment programs, volunteer experiences may only be used on a time-limited basis as an action step related to achieving an individual’s employment goal. Volunteering as a means of job placement has not resulted in employment for the vast majority of clients participating in this activity. Therefore, the amount of employment service hours that can be utilized to support a volunteer experience is limited to the base hours the individual is eligible for per WAC 388-828-9335. This ensures that the volunteer experience remains as a piece of the individual’s pathway to employment and add-on hours can be used for supports service directly related to job placement.

Individuals currently utilizing add-on hours to support a volunteer experience prior to **1/1/17**, can continue to volunteer as long as the volunteer activity supports the client’s pathway to employment as outlined in the employment plan. Annual employment plans and ISPs will document the transition of support hours from volunteering to job placement.

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If a client chooses to explore volunteering as part of their pathway to employment, the following must be in place and documented prior to beginning any volunteer activities. There must be mutual understanding among the client support team:

1. The reason, purpose, and intended outcome of the volunteer opportunity,
2. That volunteering is time limited and establishes a beginning and end dates, not to exceed six months,
3. That the volunteer opportunity is not a “work trial” and there is no promise of or implied agreement that it will result in an offer of employment.
4. Prior to beginning the volunteer opportunity, an Employment Plan must be in place that includes the following:
   1. The general purpose of the volunteer opportunity (exploration, assessment, training),
   2. The expected outcomes of the volunteer opportunity for both the participant and the contracted service provider,
   3. The schedule of activities which include the start and end dates, the number of volunteer days per week, and the number of hours per day.

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In addition to volunteer experiences, the following activities may also be useful on a pathway to employment:

**Vocational Exploration**

Short-term informational activities that occur at a work place such as job shadowing, informational interviews, and task sampling. This activity is generally less than five hours in duration and is intended to gather information about what a participant might be interested in or what tasks may be a good match.

**Community-Based Assessment**

Time-limited work experience, paid or unpaid, that occurs in a real job environment (usually a for-profit community business) in order to identify skills, interests, and barriers that need to be considered and addressed in a vocational plan. *This service is typically funded by DVR* Based on guidelines established by the Department of Labor, this activity cannot exceed 90 hours per experience.

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Information from these documents were used in the development of these guidelines:

Section 64c08: Students with Disabilities and Workers with Disabilities Who are Enrolled in Individual Rehabilitation Programs <http://transitionresponse.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Wage-and-Hour-Division-64c08.pdf>

Washington State Department of Labor and Industries: Unpaid Internships 101

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/IPUB/700-173-000.pdf>

Employment Phases and Billable Activities <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/DDA/dda/documents/CO%20-%20Employment%20Phases%20and%20Billable%20Activities.pdf>

Employment Activities – Strategies and Progress / Outcome Measures <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/DDA/dda/documents/CO%20-%20DDD%20Employment%20Activities%20Strategies%20Progress%20Outcome%20Measures.pdf>

SELN Unpaid Work and Volunteer: <http://dds.dc.gov/publication/seln-unpaid-work-and-volunteer>