

Questions & Answers

About The Community Protection Program



Q. What is the Division of Developmental Disabilities' (DDD) Community Protection Program?

A. It is a voluntary program for persons with developmental disabilities who have committed crimes, served their time and been released or have exhibited behaviors that are inappropriate and therefore they require supervision in public. Developmental disabilities include mental retardation, autism, epilepsy and cerebral palsy. Key features of the program include:

- ▶ Staff present at all times while clients are in their home, and constant staff supervision while outside of their residence, including at work, school and in other public places
- ▶ On-going therapy
- ▶ Support to learn daily living skills such as cooking, banking and working
- ▶ Clients' homes are located following strict criteria. They generally rent or own their homes.
- ▶ If appropriate, the homes have alarms on their doors and windows to alert support people of attempts to leave

Q. What connection does the program have to the Special Commitment Center on McNeil Island?

A. None. The Special Commitment Center treats sexually violent predators and people being evaluated to determine if they are violent sex predators. With one exception involving a former Division of Developmental Disabilities client who went to prison, it has no connection to the Community Protection

Program, which is in the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

Q. What safeguards are used to protect the public from participants in the Community Protection Program?

A. DSHS certified contractors who provide the direct services help the clients find homes following strict guidelines. For example, participants with sexually inappropriate behaviors normally must not live near schools, day care centers, playgrounds or other such facilities. Participants are under constant supervision.

Q. What kind of training do staff receive?

A. They receive a minimum of 32 hours of basic training in the first 6 months of employment plus specialized training in security, dealing with inappropriate behavior, expectations for dealing with therapists, confidentiality and other issues.

Q. When did the program originate?

A. DDD has served clients with these backgrounds for many years. The Legislature began appropriating funds for the Community Protection Program in 1998.

Q. What would happen if a DDD client refused to participate in the Community Protection Program?

A. If participation were part of a client's community supervision agreement, he or she would be arrested. If participation is not a condition of such an agreement, he or she could live without supervision anywhere he or she chooses.

Q. Why do DSHS clients with developmental disabilities agree to such close supervision?

A. These clients have paid their debt to society. They also know they need help in order to live successfully in the community and stay out of trouble. In many cases, the only alternative for the Community Protection Program client is to live without supervision and they elect to remain in the program.

Q. Have clients in the Community Protection Program committed any serious crimes against neighbors or other community members?

A. No. There have been no arrests or convictions for crimes against neighbors or members of the community while participating in the Community Protection Program.

Q. How does a person get into the Community Protection Program?

A. Applicants are assessed by treatment professionals who determine if they need specialized structured programs. If funding is available, they are referred to private companies that specialize and are certified to provide the services. The contractors evaluate the clients to determine if they can be adequately served in the program and if they have a high likelihood of success.

Q. How does DSHS select the contractors who supervise these clients?

A. DSHS solicits proposals from interested private companies and then offers contracts to only the most highly qualified.