



DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
Olympia, Washington

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TITLE: COUNTY SERVICES FOR WORKING AGE ADULTS POLICY 4.11

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Authority: [Chapter 71A RCW](#) *Developmental Disabilities*  
[WAC 388-850-035](#) *Services – Developmental Disabilities*

**BACKGROUND**

[RCW 71A.10.015](#) states the Legislature “recognizes the state’s obligation to provide aid to persons with developmental disabilities through a uniform, coordinated system of services to enable them to achieve a greater measure of independence and fulfillment and to enjoy all rights and privileges under the Constitution and laws of the United States and the state of Washington.” The legislative intent can be accomplished by providing working age adults the supports needed to achieve gainful employment.

Washington has had much success in providing supported employment services to assist individuals with developmental disabilities in becoming gainfully employed. Participating in gainful employment results in individuals with developmental disabilities earning typical wages and becoming less dependent on service systems. In addition, employment provides the rest of the community with the opportunity to experience the capabilities and contributions made by individuals with developmental disabilities.

In December 2000, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) submitted the *Strategies for the Future Long-Range Plan Phase II Report* to the Washington State Legislature. This report includes the recommendations of the Stakeholder Workgroup regarding adult employment and day program services. The Stakeholder Workgroup recommended persons of working age should be gainfully employed, participating and contributing to community life, using a variety of strategies to reach this status in the community. Specifically, the report states:

“Pathways to Employment: Each individual will be supported to pursue his or her own unique path to work, a career, or his or her contribution to/participation in community life. All individuals, regardless of the challenge of their disability, will be afforded an opportunity to pursue competitive employment.”

The Working Age Adult policy was initiated in July 2004 and counties were given a timeline of July 2006 for full implementation. Between 2007 and 2009 the number of division clients in integrated employment increased by 54 percent, representing an additional 2,555 clients and a total of 7,277 clients in integrated employment.

In July 2011, action by the 2011 Washington State Legislature required revision to this policy to allow division clients to choose Community Access if they are not satisfied with employment services after nine (9) months in an employment program with an unsuccessful job search.

In March 2012, the Washington State Legislature passed legislation to support employment as the first choice for adults of working age; to incorporate the right to transition to a community access program after nine months in an employment service; and to receive only one service option at a time (employment or community access).

### **PURPOSE**

This policy establishes employment supports as the first use of employment and day program funds for working age adults and ensures that after nine months of employment services the person may choose Community Access. The policy establishes guidelines for Field Services staff and Counties to follow when providing services to working age adults.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all DDD eligible working age adults who receive or seek employment and day program services, DDD Field Services staff, and Counties under contract with DDD and their subcontractors.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Day Program** means Community Access service.

**Community Access service** means support to assist individuals to participate in activities that promote individualized skill development, independent living and community integration. Activities must provide individuals with opportunities to develop personal relationships with others in their local communities and to learn, practice and apply skills that promote greater independence and community inclusion.

**Employment program services** means Individual Employment, Group Supported Employment, or Pre-Vocational service (sometimes referred to as Sheltered workshops).

**Employment supports** means services that support individuals to pursue or maintain gainful employment in integrated settings in the community. Key elements of these services include: 1) Supports are tailored to the needs, interests and abilities of the individual; 2) All individuals receive supports to achieve and maintain integrated, gainful employment in their community.

**Gainful employment** means employment that reflects achievement of or progress towards a living wage.

**Integrated settings** means typical community settings not designed specifically for individuals with disabilities in which the majority of people employed are individuals without disabilities and wages are paid at minimum wage or better.

**Living wage** means the amount of earned wages needed to enable an individual to meet or exceed his or her living expenses.

**Maintain gainful employment** means supports required to sustain gainful employment and increase earned income.

**Pursue gainful employment** means employment or other activities that demonstrate steady movement toward gainful employment over time.

**Supported employment** means paid, competitive employment for people who have severe disabilities and a demonstrated inability to gain and maintain traditional employment. Supported employment occurs in a variety of normal, integrated business environments and includes:

- Minimum wage or better;
- Support to obtain and maintain jobs; and
- Promotion of career development and workplace diversity.

**Working age adults** means individuals age 21 through 61 years.

## **POLICY**

- A. Supports to pursue and maintain gainful employment in integrated settings in the community shall be the first service option for working age adults.
1. Counties will develop and make available services that offer support for working age adults to pursue or maintain gainful employment, including support and technical assistance to achieve integrated employment outcomes.
  2. DDD Field Services staff shall authorize services to working age adults that support the individual to pursue and maintain integrated, gainful employment.
  3. Regardless of age, adults over age 21 may continue to receive support to pursue or continue to engage in integrated employment.
- B. Approval for Community Access services to working age clients will be authorized when clients have pursued employment through the division for nine months and are not satisfied with the results.

- C. Case Resource Managers (CRMs), in conjunction with County staff, will provide each DDD enrolled individual with information about all services and service providers and be available to answer questions to assist clients to understand their range of service options.
- D. An individual client may be authorized for only one service option, either employment or Community Access.

### **PROCEDURES**

#### **A. New Working Age Adults**

1. Counties and Regions will negotiate contracts to ensure the availability of services consistent with this policy.
2. CRMs will provide individuals with information regarding services. CRMs will use the Comprehensive Assessment and Reporting Evaluation (CARE) system to complete DDD Assessments prior to referring these individuals to Counties for additional assistance.
3. CRMs, in cooperation with Counties, will determine preferences for gainful employment with clients and their family members. Counties will accept or decline referrals using the ADSA Web Access System.
4. CRMs will use CARE to authorize services for individuals seeking to pursue or maintain gainful employment or who are eligible to choose community access.
5. Approval for services to working age clients that do not emphasize the pursuit or maintenance of employment in integrated settings will be authorized when clients have pursued employment through the division for at least nine months and are unsatisfied with the results.
6. If clients of working age do not want to pursue or maintain gainful employment, and request Community Access the CRM may submit an exception to rule. Review WAC 388-845-0603 for Community Access eligibility conditions.
7. If clients of working age do not want to pursue or maintain gainful employment and are not eligible to choose Community Access, then CRMs, in conjunction with County staff, will provide information about generic community services.

#### **B. Working Age Adults Currently Receiving Employment and Day Program Services**

1. Counties and Regions will negotiate contracts to ensure the availability of services consistent with this policy.

2. Counties will work with service providers to ensure that individuals are gainfully employed or have an employment plan, which reflects the goals needed to pursue or maintain gainful employment. Each individual shall receive supports needed to implement and maintain their individualized plan.
3. CRMs will continue to authorize services for individuals who are pursuing or maintaining gainful employment.
4. After discussions with CRMs, if clients of working age have pursued employment through the Division for at least nine months and are unsatisfied with the results, then CRMs will offer community access services.

**C. Review Function**

1. On a semi-annual basis, Counties will review service providers' progress towards ensuring that:
  - a. Services to working age adults are consistent with this policy;
  - b. Each participant is gainfully employed at client's identified job goal or has an individual employment plan;
  - c. Each participant in Community Access has an individual plan; and
  - d. Each participant has received assistance and made progress on their individualized plan.
2. On a semi-annual basis, service providers will submit progress reports to each client's CRM.

**EXCEPTIONS**

No exceptions to this policy may be granted without the prior written approval of the Division Director.

**SUPERSESSSION**

DDD Policy 4.11  
Issued September 15, 2011

Approved: /s/ Linda Rolfe  
Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities

Date: June 1, 2012