8.7 4 Community Works

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(fully countable core)

Legal References:

- *RCW 74.08A.250*
- *WAC 388-310-1100*
- *WAC 388-310-1500*

The *Community Works* Section includes:

- 8.74.1 What is Community Works?
- 8.74.2 What are the Community Works referral criteria?
- 8.74.3 Community Works Engagement
- 8.74.4 Worksite Placement
- 8.74.5 Community Works Plan/Worksite Agreement
- 8.74.6 Worksite Supervision
- 8.74.7 Hold Process
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- 8.74.9 Support Services
- 8.74.10 Closing a Community Works Enrollment
- 8.74.11 Community Works - Step-by-step guide

The Department of Commerce contracts with local community-based organizations to provide and manage the Community Works Pprogram for WorkFirst participants.

Participants needing a core work activity that counts towards federal participation can be referred to the Community Works pProgram to coordinate a worksite with a Commerce contracted case manager who designs and manages the work requirement. When the participant is enrolled in an education pathway targeted at a specific career outcome, the worksite will be designed to provide entry level experience in that field. For participants in a more generic education pathway, worksites will be identified based on the individual's identified career goals. Worksites will be co-located on campus when possible. Participants are placed on a worksite and supervised by a Worksite Supervisor who provides daily supervision and work training for a minimum of one (1) months to a maximum of twelve (12) months.

Clients who are enrolled in classes at a community or technical college will be enrolled in the Career Development program instead of Community Works.

8.74.1 What is Community Works?

The Community Works pProgram is an unpaid, work experience program that is structured to provide a core work activity for WorkFirst participants that count towards federal participation and builds work ethics, soft skills and work skills. When a participant is enrolled in an educational pathway, the work experience program is structured to provide core activity that will assist the participant obtain the specific skills, training, knowledge, and experience necessary to obtain employment in their chosen career field.

The Community Works pProgram establishes a nonprofit, tribal or government agency worksite for the participant to obtain the specific skills, training, knowledge, and experience necessary to obtain employment in the participant's chosen career field. Placement into the Community Works pProgram must take into account the participant's education and personal employment goals to determine an appropriate worksite.

8.~7~4.2 What are the Community Works referral criteria?

Community Works counts towards federal participation and is intended to provide employment experience that supports a participant's personal employment goals and ~counts towards federal participation~educational pathway if applicable. See the FLSA/Deeming and Stacking Activities sections for more information about how we use participation in the Community Works ~p~Program to meet participation requirements. See WFHB 1.2.3 for additional information about adding an additional three hours (preferably core activity hours) in the parent's IRP when possible. Don't exceed the FLSA maximum hours for unpaid work activities. You can substitute non-core hours for core hours as needed to stay within the FLSA maximum.

Participants will be enrolled in their work activity for a minimum of one (1) month to a maximum of twelve (12) months. Examples of Community Works referrals are for participants who are:

- Employed less than 32 hours per week;
- Participating in other activities, but need additional hours to meet WorkFirst participation requirements;
- Transitioning between activities;
- Need a beginning level of activity for very hard to serve families whose participation capabilities are limited;
- Need additional support for re-training or additional experience to be competitive in the labor market;
- Have the ability to participate at least five hours per week in Community Works; or
- -Engaged in ~part-time~ an education ~and training~pathway and: ~that is NOT provided by a community or technical college.~
  - Would benefit from a work experience to enhance their educational plan.

    Example: Mary is enrolled in a Business Technology Program to become an office assistant. She is coded for 27 hours per week. A work experience in an office setting would enhance Mary's employability and would build upon her interest in the field. Her FLSA maximum allows her to work in an unpaid position for up to 28 hours per week. To create a full time program that supports Mary's educational pathway, she can be enrolled in the Community Works activity for a minimum of 5 hours per week to bring her participation hours up to full time participation of 32 per week.

  - Needs a core activity that supports their educational track.

    Example: Steve lacks his high school equivalency. This is his only identified barrier to employment. After Steve obtains his high school equivalency, he plans to go to work in the food service industry. He can be referred to the Community Works Program for a core activity. His stacked non-core activity can then be high school equivalency at the community college.

  - Have completed their Work Study and need a core activity.

    Example: Erika is in a 20 hour per week vocational training program and her Work Study has ended. She can be referred to the Community Works Program as the core activity to provide her with additional work skills in the field she is studying.

The WorkFirst Program Specialist/Social Service Specialist (WFPS/WFSSS) will:

- Code the ~education~ other activity in eJAS for the participant

- Code WC component with the Commerce contractor code
- Determine the number of hours (five hours or more) that a participant can be required to participate in a work activity per week. This information must be included in the referral.
- Enter the scheduled end date (**Note**: End date needs to be aligned with educational pathway component's scheduled end date, if applicable.)

8.~~7~~4.3 Community Works Engagement

Community Works worksites must be coordinated with public or nonprofit organizations and provide job training in the participant's chosen career field.

Participants are expected to make first contact with the contractor within five (5) business days of the referral with a childcare and transportation plan. Contractors will attempt to contact participants by telephone, email if available, or direct face-to-face meeting if the contractor is on-site at the time of referral. First contact is defined as an actual face-to-face meeting between the contractor and the participant.

If first contact is not made within five (5) business days then the contractor will reject the referral on the 6th business day.

Contractors will meet with the participant to review the results of the Comprehensive Evaluation (if applicable), the participant's education IRP and any stacked activities to determine the appropriate work activity and worksite.

Contractors will provide program orientation to participants regarding program policies and participation expectations.

8.~~7~~4.4 Worksite Placement:

Participants will be placed in a work activity no later than 10 business days of first contact. Initial activities can include workplace training and orientation directly related to the worksite. Examples of the training may include safety, workplace competencies, customer service, basic computer skills, work specific skills, etc.

Contractors will establish worksites and ongoing worksite management to include:

- Worksite Agreements
- Worksite Supervisor Training
- Position Descriptions
- Community Works Plan
- Bimonthly Attendance Reporting
- Monthly Evaluations
- Monthly Participation Documentation

8.~~7~~4.5 Community Works Plan/Worksite Agreement

The contractor will work with the participant to develop a Community Works Plan and sign a worksite agreement. The host worksite administrator and the contractor must sign a worksite agreement. A copy of the signed worksite agreement must be on file with the contracting agency.

Work assignments must have a position description that clearly details the work schedule, specific job duties, transferrable skills being obtained, and contact information. The worksite supervisor and the participant must sign the position description. Copies of the signed agreement must be provided to the participant, the worksite supervisor and maintained in the participant's file.

Information regarding the participants work schedule, duties and skills will be entered into the Community Works Plan in eJAS. Participants are required to sign their initial Community Works Plan that is developed with their Commerce contractor. Whenever their program expectations or requirements change, the Commerce contractor will update the plan. Anytime an update is made to the plan regarding a change in the program expectations or requirements, the Commerce contractor will either have the participant sign the most updated plan, or they will get verbal approval from the participant.

- If verbal approval is received, the contractor will enter an eJAS case note under the 'Participation' note type. The eJAS 'Participation' case note will document the specific program expectation or requirement that changed as well as the date the participant verbally agreed to the plan. A copy of the verbally agreed upon plan will then be sent to the participant by the Commerce contractor, which will also be noted in the case note.
- If the participant is present to sign the updated Community Works Plan, the Commerce contractor will provide a copy of the signed plan to the participant and maintain a copy in their files.

The Community Works Plan can be updated by the Contractor; WFPS/WFSSSs have access to view the Community Works Plan by opening it from the link on the participant's main screen in eJAS.

Note: If the participant is involved with the ACP (Address Confidentiality Program), do not enter the worksite information. The Contractor will enter "ACP" instead of the actual worksite name.

8.7~~4~~.6 Worksite Supervision

Worksite supervisors are required to provide an employee evaluation for every participant on a monthly basis. Contractors will report information from the evaluations on monthly participation and progression updates via eJAS.

Worksites will be supervised on a daily basis. The worksite supervisor must maintain daily attendance records. If a participant does not show up for work, the absence must be reported immediately to the contractor.

8.7~~4~~.7 Hold Process

If a participant starts on the Community Works worksite and a situation arises that requires them to be temporarily removed from the Community Works Program, a case staffing should be held with the WF partners.

Once the hold issue has been resolved, the participant should resume their Community Works Program.

8.7~~4~~.8 Reporting

Worksite supervisors will submit attendance records to the contractor every two weeks. The contractor will enter the attendance records in the actual hours reporting screens in eJAS (see Monitoring Participation chapter). Contractors will report attendance issues using the "Immed" column on the Contractor Caseload Screen:

After two absences (regardless of whether they are excused or unexcused) in one calendar month, the WorkFirst partner/provider will:

- Send an immediate notification to the DSHS case manager and document whether the absences are excused and if DSHS case manager action is needed;
- Keep the activity open; and

- If appropriate, contact the participant and case manager as part of the Continuous Activity Planning (CAP) process to discuss next steps, including if it is appropriate to refer the client back and close the activity.

This allows the participant to remain in the activity while the service provider, case manager and participant have an opportunity to discuss whether participation in this activity is appropriate.

If it is decided that the activity is not appropriate for the participant, the WorkFirst partner/provider will refer the participant back to DSHS.

Contractors shall report the monthly participation and progression status of each participant using eJAS between the 1st and the 10th of the following month on the previous months' activities.

- Monthly participation reports will include attendance documentation in the actual hours reporting screens in eJAS
- Monthly progression reports will be entered in the Community Works Plan that will include documentation of:
    - worksite supervisor monthly evaluations
    - skills progression
    - interaction with the worksite supervisor

One month prior to the end of the program and/or in the exit narrative the contractor will document recommendations for next steps upon completion of the program. This will provide the WFPS/WFSSS information when they meet with the participant, resulting in a smooth transition between programs with minimal interruption in participation.

8.7~~4~~.9 Support Services

Contractors may provide support services related to work activities. Prior to authorizing support services, contractors will review the eJAS Payment History to ensure the guidelines for the category have not been exceeded.

8.7~~4~~.10 Closing a Community Works Enrollment

Anytime a participant is no longer enrolled the contractor will:

- Close the Community Works Plan in eJAS;
- Enter the date and select the "reason" code on the Contractor Caseload Screen to electronically refer the participant back to DSHS;
- Enter a case note documenting the reason the participant is leaving the program as well as their suggestions for next steps for the participant; and

If a participant leaves the program due to unsubsidized employment, the contractor will create the unsubsidized employment screen in eJAS.

8.7~~4~~.11 Community Works Program - Step-by-step guide

1. The WFPS/WFSSS will:
    1. Refer the participant to the contractor using the WC component code~~.~~
    2. Create the WC component for at least one month, and up to 12 months

3. Enter the number of hours the participant can work per week, which must be at least five hours, in the Scheduled Hours
4. Enter the Contractor Code
5. In the Referral Narrative, include the schedule for any stacked activities that may already be identified or specific information about the upcoming activity if the participant is pending the start of another activity
6. Authorize support services and child care needed for engagement with the program

2. Upon receipt of the referral, the contractor will:
   1. Review the participant's eJAS file (referral information, program recommendation, and if applicable – results of CE and education pathway) for program eligibility.
   ~~1.~~2. Attempt to contact the participant ~~by telephone, or email if available, or a direct face-to-face meeting if the Contractor is on-site at the time of the referral. The contractor will document attempts to contact participants in eJAS case notes.~~ to arrange the First Contact Meeting. The contractor will document attempts to contact participants in eJAS case notes.
   2. ~~Arrange First Contact meeting (actual face-to-face meeting) with the participant within five (5) business days from the referral.~~
   3. Reject the referral if First Contact isn't made with the participant within five (5) business days of the referral. (Note: If the First Contact meeting has been rescheduled 2-3 days after the 5th business day you may document and delay this step as needed.)
   4. ~~Review the referral information, program recommendation, results of the CE (if applicable), and stacked activities to determine if the program recommendation is a good match and identify a worksite.~~
   ~~5.~~4. ~~"Accept" the referral if First Contact is made with the participant within five (5) business days of the referral.~~
   6. ~~Complete the First Contact column on the Contractor Referral Screen and include details about the first contact with the participant.~~
      1. ~~If the referred program does not appear to be the best fit for the participant, the contractor will include their recommendation and explanation in the First Contact Note as well. Additional discussions may be required for both partners to agree. If a different program is agreed to, the WFPS/WFSSS will update the component referral with the new component code.~~
   ~~7.~~5. ~~If First Contact is not made with the participant within five (5) business days the Contractor will "Reject" the referral on the 6th business day.~~

3. During the First Contact meeting, the Contractor will:
   1. ~~Once accepted, the contractor will:~~
   1. Accept or reject the referral as appropriate.
   2. Develop an initial Community Works Plan with the participant outlining their specific program activities including any pre-placement activities.
   3. Develop a work activity for the participant within 10 business days of First Contact.
   4. Create the worksite agreement and the Community Works Plan in eJAS.
   ~~5.~~1. ~~Enter the date the participant starts at a work activity in the Actual Start Date column on the Contractor Caseload Screen.~~

4. Once participation begins at the worksite, the Contractor will:
   1. Enter the date the participant starts at a work activity in the Actual Start Date column on the Contractor Caseload Screen.
   ~~6.~~2. Update the participant's Community Works Plan to reflect the worksite information and requirements as needed.

~~4.~~5. Once the Contractor enters the **Actual Start Date** ~~in the Contractor Caseload Screen~~, the WFPS/WFSSS will:
   1. ~~Resolve~~ Fix the discrepancy between the **Scheduled Start Date** and **Actual Start Date** on the Component/~~Contractor~~/IRP Update ~~Caseload~~ Screen ~~and the Actual Start Date on the Contractor Caseload Screen~~ by changing the **Scheduled Start Date** to match the **Actual Start Date** and the **End Date** to be 12 months from the **Actual Start Date**. ~~This will remove the black triangle~~

~~from the Contractor Caseload Screen that explains that the Scheduled Start Date does not match the Actual Start Date.~~This will ensure the component will remain open for the correct timeframe.

~~5.~~6. For the duration of the program, the contractor will:
1. Enter monthly participation and progression status reports in eJAS between the 1st and the 10th of the following month on the previous month's activities.
    1. Participation reporting will include attendance documentation in the eJAS actual hours reporting screens.
    2. Progression reporting will be entered in the Community Works Plan that will include information from the worksite supervisor monthly evaluations, skills progression, and contact with the worksite supervisor.
2. One month prior to the end of the program and/or in the exit narrative the contractor will document recommendations for next steps upon completion of the program.
3. Notify the WFPS/WFSSS of attendance issues using the "Immed" column on the Contractor Caseload Screen if the participant has more than two absences within a calendar month.
4. Document issues related to the work activity in eJAS case notes. Contractors will attempt to resolve worksite issues with the participant. Contractors will involve the WFPS/WFSSS immediately when issues arise that the contractor is unable to resolve or the issue is not related to work but is affecting the participant's ability to participate.
5. Provide support services related to the participant's work activity. Support services will be documented in eJAS.

~~6.~~7. At the completion of the program (or anytime the participant leaves the program), the contractor will:
1. Close the Community Works Plan.
2. Update case notes with exit information including the reason for leaving the program and suggestions for next steps for the participant.
3. Enter the date and select the "reason" code on the Contractor Caseload Screen to electronically refer the participant back to DSHS.
4. Create an Employment Screen if the participant obtains unsubsidized employment.
5. Send an e-message to the WFPS/WFSSS notifying them that the participant is no longer enrolled in the program.

~~7.~~8. At completion of the program, the WFPS/WFSSS will:
1. Close the component and the contractor code by entering the actual end dates in the Actual End field in the Component/Contractor/IRP Update screen.
2. Determine the participant's next activity.

Hold Process

1. Upon agreement with the WF partners to place the participant on hold, the Contractor will:
    1. Electronically refer the participant back to DSHS by entering the date and selecting the "Issue Resolution" reason code.
    2. Complete the Hold section of the Community Works Plan.
2. The WFPS will:
    1. Close the WC component and the contractor code by entering the actual end dates in the Actual End field in the Component/Contractor/IRP Update screen (if applicable).
    2. Refer to appropriate activity and component while in Hold status (If applicable)
    3. Reinstate his/her WorkFirst grant (if applicable).
3. Upon agreement with the WF Partners to return them to the Community Works Program, the WFPS will:
    1. Close the active Hold component (if applicable)
    2. Repeat Steps 1 and 3 above to create WC component referral.
4. Upon receipt of the Community Works referral, the Contractor will:
    1. Repeat Steps 2 and 4 to accept the participant back into the Community Works ~~program~~Program.

2. Complete the Hold section in the Community Works plan.
3. Re-evaluate current Community Works plan and update.
4. Connect the participant back to a worksite.

Once the participant is re-engaged from the Hold, steps ~~5~~ 6 through 8 above should be followed.

Resources

Related WorkFirst Handbook Sections

- 3.3.1 Individual Responsibility Plan
- 3.3.2 Stacking Activities
- 3.9.2 Documenting and Reporting Participation
- 6.5 Family Violence
- 8.1 Paid & Unpaid Employment - Overview

Other Resources

- The Department of Commerce