



Washington State Department
of Social and Health Services

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2003 DDD DAY AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM PROVIDER SURVEY

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More than 100 agencies providing day or employment programs to persons with developmental disabilities¹ responded to a recent DSHS survey. They reported that most DSHS staff members are courteous and respectful, and cited a number of areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction – as well as numerous suggestions for improvement. The greatest number of positive comments concerned DSHS staff, while the greatest number of negative comments concerned communication.

COURTESY AND RESPECT

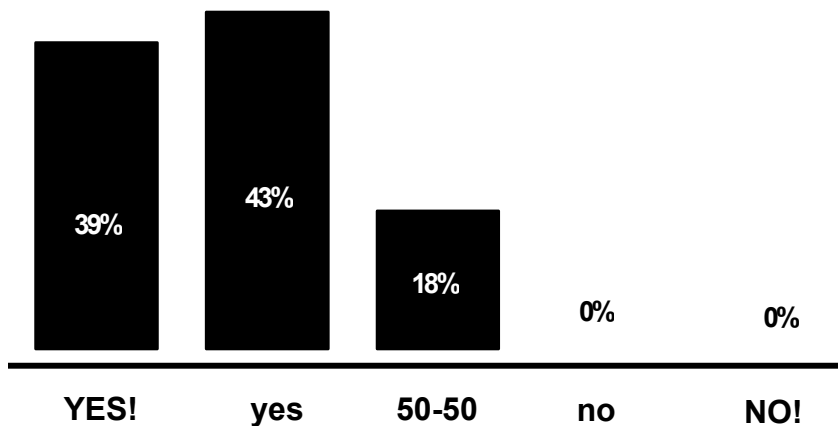
Most providers reported that they were treated with courtesy and respect by DSHS staff:

Question:

Do DSHS staff treat you with courtesy and respect?

Answer:

More than eight out of ten DDD providers said that they were treated with courtesy and respect. None disagreed.



Differences by Type of Provider. More than eight out of ten day and employment program providers answered “YES!” or “yes,” indicating that they were treated with courtesy and respect. Another 18% gave neutral answers to this question. None of the respondents said that they were not treated with courtesy and respect. Five of the 107 respondents did not answer the question about courtesy and respect.

¹ Day and employment program providers are a relatively small subgroup of DDD providers. Day and employment providers receive DSHS monies, but are paid through the counties. A study of the larger group of DDD providers paid through the Social Services Payment System (SSPS) was conducted in 2002. See Fact Sheet Number 11.108a.

The table below shows the percentage of respondents in each DDD provider group reporting they were treated with courtesy and respect.

| Service Provided by Respondent | # Responding | % Yes* |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------|
| Individual Supported Employment | 24 (22%) | 75% |
| Child Development Services | 14 (13%) | 71% |
| Community Access Providers | 9 (8%) | 78% |
| More than One Type of Service | 54 (50%) | 81% |
| Other ² | 6 (6%) | 83% |

*Answer to “Do DSHS staff treat you with courtesy and respect?”
5 respondents did not answer this question.

PROVIDERS SPEAK OUT

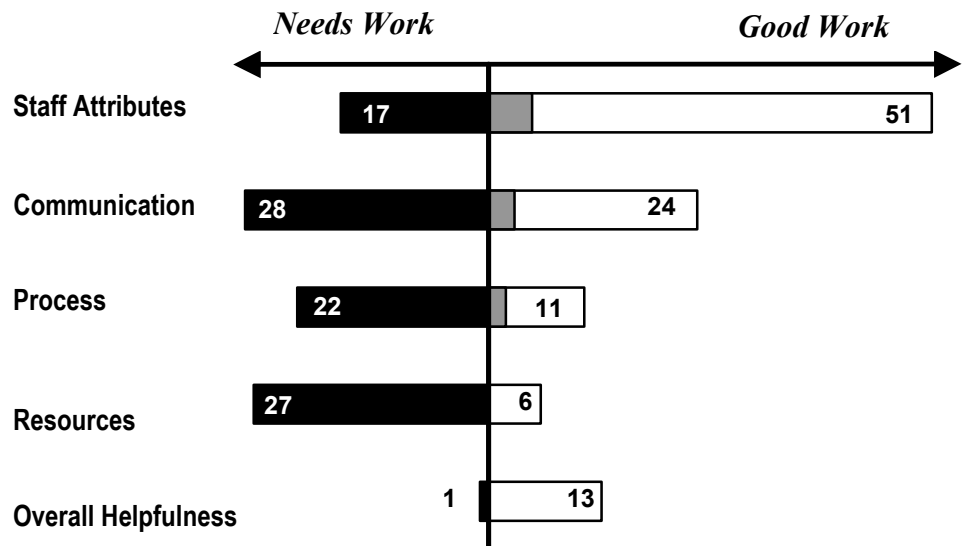
Providers were asked two questions

The survey asked two open-ended questions:

- *What does DSHS do well?*
- *What could DSHS do better?*

Providers’ answers gave valuable insight into areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The table below shows the five major issues identified and the number of providers who made positive comments (Good Work), and critical comments or suggestions for improvement (Needs Work). A small number gave neutral or mixed responses (in gray).

They identified FIVE major issues:

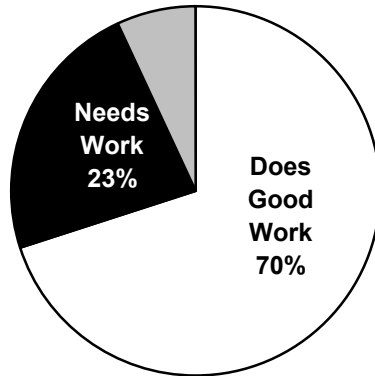


² Adult Day Health, Individual and Family Assistance, Pre-Vocational, Pre-Vocational/Specialized Industry, Person-to-Person, and Group Supported Employment Services.

STAFF ATTRIBUTES

More than half of the 107 providers (59) commented on DSHS staff³. Many commented on both DDD and DVR staff because their agencies deal with DSHS employees from both DDD and DVR. More than two-thirds of the staff comments were positive. Many described DSHS staff as helpful, responsive and respectful. Comments about accessibility were more mixed. Some respondents felt that staff are too busy to be easily accessible and to respond in a timely fashion.

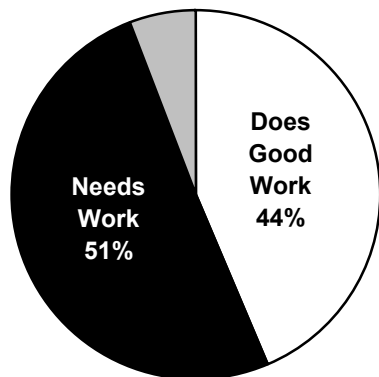
59 Providers commented on staff attributes. In this area, DSHS:



COMMUNICATION

More than 40% (46) of the respondents mentioned communication. About half of their comments were complaints or suggestions for improvement; slightly less than half were positive comments about communicating with DSHS. Respondents were generally positive about DSHS responses to questions, but they would like to be better informed of changes in client situation, case manager assignments, and policy. Ten providers requested that DSHS staff return phone calls in a more timely fashion, although several expressed an understanding that high caseload contributed to slow response.

46 Providers commented on communication. In this area, DSHS:



“The local staff is very knowledgeable, caring and helpful.”

“Be more available. With such large caseloads, DDD case managers can respond only to major emergencies.”

“Helpful, supportive, respectful and interested.”

“Is always willing to help with problems.”

“Caseloads are so large they are unable to respond to your phone calls as quickly as we would like.”

“Most DSHS employees recognize the value of working as partners with community programs.”

“Let vendors know about a change in case managers on or before it happens.”

“They return my phone calls and answer my questions.”

“Caseload changes are not typically communicated to us.”

“Communication is effective.”

“It seems as if many of the case managers are not up-to-date on clients’ activities and needs. I think they have too high a caseload. Sometimes it is hard to contact them or they don’t get back to you promptly.”

³ Some providers made both positive and negative comments on the same issue. Often they also commented on more than one subcategory of a major issue. Thus, one cannot total the subcategories to calculate the total number of providers commenting on a particular issue.

“Better turnaround for eligibility for DDD. DDD often will not let us back-bill, but it takes months to complete eligibility.”

“The staff doing background checks are helpful and efficient.”

“Streamline the paperwork.”

“The move toward the SSP payment system has been handled by DSHS as though their actions could affect others minimally.”

“Keep paperwork to a minimum. It eats up provider time and resources for program services.”

“The case managers are willing to work out issues surrounding the new SSI payment system.”

“Everyone feels challenged by the present system’s lack of resources to support people with disabilities.”

“Have more money to actually implement the services needed.”

“Training sessions would be beneficial.”

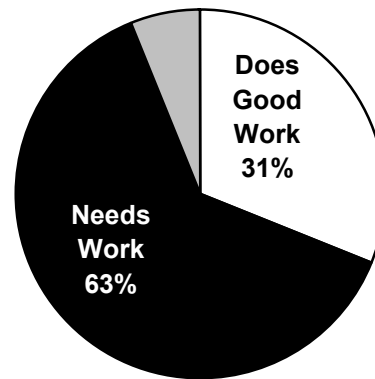
“Stop increasing workloads and expectations of providers with no additional funding.”

“Have smaller caseloads so that they can respond to clients and agencies faster.”

PROCESS

Less than one-third of the DDD providers (32) addressed the ease or difficulty of working with DSHS business processes and procedures, including paperwork, bureaucracy, and efficiency. Nearly two-thirds of these comments were complaints or suggestions for improvement. Several respondents requested less paperwork and bureaucracy. They made both positive and negative comments on transition to new payment systems, eligibility processes, referrals, background checks, coordination of services and general organization. Pay issues did not appear often, although the effect of slow eligibility determination on vendors’ financial status was mentioned.

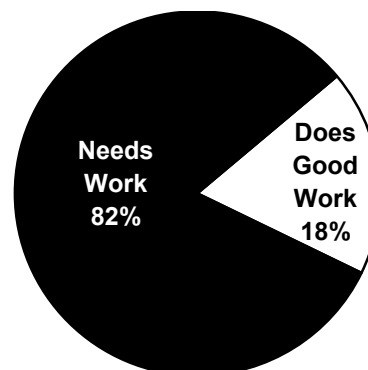
32 providers commented on DSHS processes. In this area, DSHS:



RESOURCES

Less than one-third of the DDD providers (32) commented on needs for more resources from DSHS. Most comments in this area were suggestions for improvement. Eighteen providers discussed the need for more DSHS staff, often stating that high workloads and frequent staff turnover contribute to decreased responsiveness and effectiveness. Respondents would also like to see more training, respite support, client benefits, and stable funding. The few positive comments about resources addressed existing training and benefits offered to clients.

32 providers commented on needed resources. In this area, DSHS:



OVERALL HELPFULNESS

Slightly more than 10% of the respondents (13) made more general comments about how they liked or disliked DSHS, or about how DSHS did or did not help them. None of these comments was negative. The comments ranged from “No problem” to “Good job.”

“DSHS does the best they can with the available resources.”

“DVR is great. They understand our limitations related to current economic situation.”

ADMINISTRATION AND RESPONSE RATE

The standard questions for DSHS provider surveys were added to the DDD Day Program Provider Survey, which was sent to all day/employment providers active July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2002. The survey was mailed to 202 day/employment program agencies in December 2002. All agencies that did not respond within one month were sent a second survey. Additional telephone follow-up occurred for agencies that still had not responded.

139 agencies returned the Day Program Provider Survey, for a response rate of 69%. Only 107 of these agencies were included in the analysis of this survey. Most of the other 32 agencies were pulled from the analysis because they also provided residential services. Residential service providers were not included in this survey because they had already been included in an earlier DDD provider survey that was part of the same 2002-2003 series of provider surveys.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Provider Type. Half of the responding agencies provided more than one type of day or employment program. Among those who provide only a single type of service for DDD clients, the largest group provided Individual Supported Employment. The table at the top of page 2 provides a complete list of provider services.

All of the day and employment program providers were agencies, rather than individual providers. The average agency had about 10 employees; 86% were small organizations with less than 20 employees, while 14% were agencies with 20 or more employees.

Location. More than one-third of the completed surveys were returned by agencies located in three Washington counties: King (18 respondents), Spokane (11), and Whatcom (9). No other single county had more than 5 responding agencies.

The majority of the responding agencies (65%) are located in Western Washington. Most of the remainder (35% of the total) are located in Eastern Washington.

The typical respondent:

- Part of an agency
- Provides day and/or employment programs
- Located in an urban county

For questions or comments on this report contact: Nancy Raiha, PhD, DSHS Research and Data Analysis at (360)902-7667 or raihank@dshs.wa.gov

This fact sheet, other provider survey reports, and complete lists of provider comments are available from the ***RDA website***: www-app2.wa.gov/dshs/rda

Additional copies of this fact sheet and future reports may be obtained from Department of Social and Health Services, Research and Data Analysis Division, P.O. Box 45204, Olympia, WA 98504-5204, or request by telephone: (360)902-0701, please refer to Fact Sheet Number 11.108f.