



DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION  
Olympia, Washington

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TITLE: COUNTY SERVICES FOR WORKING AGE ADULTS POLICY 4.11

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

**BACKGROUND**

[RCW 71A.10.015](#) states that 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 people with developmental disabilities in becoming gainfully employed. Participating in gainful employment results in people 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 benefit from the capabilities and contributions made by people 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 included the recommendations of the Stakeholder Workgroup regarding adult employment and community inclusion 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 first issued in July 2004 and counties were given a timeline of July 2006 for full implementation. Between 2007 and 2009 the number of DDD 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 DDD clients to choose Community Inclusion (formerly Community Access) if they are not satisfied with employment services after nine months in an employment program.

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 inclusion program after nine months in an employment service; and to receive only one service option at a time (employment or community inclusion).

In March 2022, the Washington State Legislature passed legislation eliminating the prohibition of concurrent employment and community inclusion services. Beginning in January 2023, eligible DDA clients may access community inclusion after nine months of participation in employment services. Due to the efforts of stakeholders, the Legislature reaffirmed the commitment to “Employment First” in Washington and recognized that concurrent employment and community inclusion services can support clients to work, contribute and build relationships in their local communities.

### **PURPOSE**

This policy establishes guidelines for DDA field services staff and counties to follow when providing services to working age adults.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to DDA field services staff, and counties contracted with DDA and their subcontractors.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Community Inclusion service** means individualized services provided in integrated community settings with other people without disabilities. The activities are based on client interests and provide opportunities typically experienced by people of similar age. The activities occur in the client’s local community and are accessible by public transit or a reasonable commute from the client’s home. The goal of the service is to support clients to participate, contribute, and develop relationships with people who are not paid staff.

**County** means a geographical division of Washington state that administers supported employment and community inclusion services.

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

**Integrated setting** means a typical community setting that:

- Is not designed specifically for people with disabilities;
- Hires a diverse workforce through a typical hiring process; and
- Pays minimum wage or better.

**Living wage** means the amount of earned wages needed to enable a client to meet or exceed their living expenses.

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

**Provider** means the qualified client service vendor who is contracted to provide supported employment or community inclusion services.

**Pursuing gainful employment** means being employed or participating in other activities that demonstrate steady movement toward gainful employment over time.

**Supported employment services** means Individual Employment or Group Supported Employment. These services support clients to pursue or maintain gainful employment in integrated settings in the community. Supported employment occurs in a variety of integrated business environments and includes:

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

**Working age adults** means clients age 21 through 61.

## POLICY

- A. This policy establishes supported employment services as the first use of employment and community inclusion funds for working age adults and ensures that after nine months of supported employment services the client may choose to also receive community inclusion services.

1. Counties must develop and offer supported employment services, including the technical assistance needed to achieve integrated employment outcomes.
  2. DDA field services staff must authorize services that support eligible clients to pursue and maintain integrated, gainful employment.
  3. Adults over age 21 may continue to receive support to pursue or maintain integrated employment.
- B. A client is eligible for community inclusion services if:
1. The client is sixty-two or older; or
  2. The client meets age requirements under [WAC 388-845-2110](#)(1) and:
    - a. Has participated in developmental disabilities administration (DDA) supported employment services for at least nine months; or
    - b. DDA has determined that the client is exempt from the nine-month DDA supported employment service requirement because:
      - i. The client's medical or behavioral health records document a condition that prevents you from completing at least nine months of DDA supported employment services; or
      - ii. The client was referred to and available for DDA supported employment services, but the service was not delivered within ninety days of the referral.

## PROCEDURES

- A. Supporting Working Age Adults
1. The CRM must provide each of their working age clients with information about supported employment services.
  2. The CRM, in cooperation with Counties, must determine the client's preferences for gainful employment by working with the client and their family.
  3. Counties must accept or decline referrals using the ADSA Web Access System.

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4. Counties must work with providers to ensure that each client receiving supported employment services:
    - a. Has an employment plan;
    - b. Is gainfully employed or has goals outlined in their employment plan that reflects the strategies needed to pursue or maintain gainful employment
    - c. Receives supports needed to implement their employment plan.
  5. After discussions with a CRM, if a working age client has participated in employment services through the Developmental Disabilities Administration for at least nine months, the CRM must offer the client community inclusion services.
  6. If a working age client requests community inclusion and does not want to participate in employment services for nine months, the CRM may request an exception to rule under [WAC 388-440-0001](#).
  7. CRMs, in conjunction with County staff, will provide information about community services available within their county.
- B. County Reviews and Progress Reports
1. Counties must regularly review each employment and community inclusion provider's progress towards ensuring that:
    - a. Services to working age adults are consistent with this policy;
    - b. Each client is gainfully employed at client's identified job goal or has strategies to obtain gainful employment outlined in their employment plan;
    - c. Each client in Community Inclusion has an individualized plan with strategies to reach identified goals; and
    - d. Each client has received assistance and made progress on their individualized plans.
  2. On a semi-annual basis, the provider must submit a progress report to each client's CRM.

**EXCEPTIONS**

Any exception to this policy must have the prior written approval of the Deputy Assistant Secretary.

**SUPERSESION**

DDD Policy 4.11  
Issued July 15, 2013

Approved:           /s/: Shannon Manion            
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Developmental Disabilities Administration

Date: January 1, 2023