

**Employment for All
Believe it, Achieve it!**

***A guide to managing
my employment or day program
services***



***Department of Community Services
Developmental Disabilities Program***

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Clark County Department of Community Services
Developmental Disabilities Program

Center for Community Health
1601 East Fourth Plain Blvd
Vancouver, WA 98663

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NAVIGATING THE CLARK COUNTY SYSTEM

In Clark County, employment and community connections services are individualized with individual service plans. Individuals, authorized by the Developmental Disabilities Administration, and their families work with the support system to direct their day program services.

We hope that this guide will provide you with information and tools to support you to effectively navigate the system and manage your services. The different sections of the manual will help you to learn about process, services, employment agencies and other service providers, roles and responsibilities.

We hope you will keep this guide and continue to add to it as you explore and find new information and resources.

Roles and Responsibilities

Developmental Disabilities Administration - DDA

DDA Website: www1.dshs.wa.gov/ddd

Vancouver Office:
311 W. 11th St.
Vancouver, WA 98660
360-750-4250

The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) assists individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to obtain services and supports they need for everyday life. DDA determines eligibility and provides case management services. The Administration also provides funding to counties for employment and day program services through allocations from the State Legislature. Funding is limited and needed services are not available for all families.

DDA case management is a key service offered to all eligible individuals. Your case manager will help you and your family to identify your support needs and help with connecting you to, or referring you to, supports. Some of these include:

- Medicaid Personal Care
- Family Support
- Residential Services
- Clark County contracted services including, Employment Services, Individualized Technical Assistance or Community Connections
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation or Department of Services for the Blind for Employment Supports that coordinate with County employment services
- Other community resources

Working Age Adult Policy

This policy, fully implemented in July 2006, promotes gainful employment in integrated settings in the community for adults with developmental disabilities ages 21 to 62.

For more information about eligibility or any of the topics above, please contact your DDA case manager or visit the DDA website.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – DVR

DVR Website: www1.dshs.wa.gov/dvr

Vancouver Office:

5411 Mill Plain Suite 16
Vancouver, WA 98661-7046
360-619-7060

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provides or contracts with employment agencies, which they refer to as Community Rehabilitation Providers or CRPs, to provide services that help people get jobs. DVR and the County contract with many of the same employment agencies. DVR services are short-term and may include assessments, job preparation, job placement and on the job training. When DVR has finished paying for these services, County funding then begins to pay for the long-term support needs. DVR may also fund independent living and assistive technology services if it relates to employment goals.

DVR is funded by the State and Federal government and in order to receive services you must meet the DVR eligibility criteria.

A DVR counselor will meet with you to determine eligibility. Once you are determined eligible, your DVR counselor will meet with you to write an employment plan. It can be very beneficial for you to include on your team, family members and friends to assist you with this process. You will be asked to choose a qualified employment agency if you have not already selected one. This agency can be a strong addition to your team.

DVR is a partner with the County in funding employment. It is important to coordinate with DVR for the short-term employment services and with the County for the long-term job supports.

Department of Services for the Blind – DSB

DSB Website: www.dsb.wa.gov

Vancouver Office:

2214 East 13th Street, Suite 208
Vancouver, WA 98661-4120
Phone: 360-696-6238

The Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) provides or contracts for employment related services for individuals who are blind or have a visual impairment. Their services are similar to DVR. Eligible individuals are assisted with exploring career possibilities, career planning, academic training, alternative skill training specific to blindness, and job placement and follow-up.

**Clark County Department of Community Services - DCS
Developmental Disabilities Program**

Clark County Website: www.clark.wa.gov

1601 E. Fourth Plain Blvd. #A419
Vancouver, WA 98663

Mailing Address: PO Box 5000
Vancouver, WA 98666

360-397-2130

Clark County Department of Community Services, Developmental Disabilities (DD) Program, plans, funds and manages local services for children, from birth to three, and adults, age 21 and over, who have developmental disabilities. DD Program staff work with schools, businesses, parents, advocacy and community groups to help people with developmental disabilities have opportunities in their community. The County uses a citizen advisory board to provide advice and represent the community. Meetings are held every other month (odd numbered months) and open to the public.

Clark County contracts for early intervention services for children from birth to age 3, Individual Supported Employment, Individual Technical Assistance, Community Connections services for individuals aged 21 and older. County staff qualifies and monitors all contracted services.

Your services are provided to you based on an individual Service Plan that you and your family develop with help from your support team. The plan identifies your goals, support needs and the resources and funds available. It is an agreement between you, the service provider you select, and the County. Support services are available to help you with this process.

Clark County Services

Clark County contracts with agencies and individual professionals to plan for and provide employment and day program services. All contractors have been qualified through a Clark County process. They must maintain contract outcomes and are monitored by the Department of Community Services on a biennial basis. Clark County issues a list of the current qualified providers.

When you are interviewing and selecting an employment agency, we encourage you to meet with a number of agencies and ask questions to determine the best fit for you.

If you would like information or have questions or concerns regarding providers or services, please contact Clark County Department of Community Services, DD Program.

Clark County Services

To receive County services, you must be referred by your DDA case manager.

Clark County services support individuals to either move forward on their employment path or connect with people in their community.

Employment Services

Employment services support an individual to prepare for employment, find and get a job and keep it. The County publishes a list with the names of the qualified providers. You can expect the provider to:

- Work with you to assess your interests and skills
- Support you to increase your skills through developing and supporting you in a volunteer job
- Help you to secure resources, including DVR, to move you forward on your employment path
- Work with you to find or develop a job that meets your needs and fulfills your goals
- Support you to secure transportation to your job
- Provide on the job training
- Help you to develop supports from family, friends, your employer and co-workers to assist you to be successful on the job
- Provide long term employment support, including re-training, depending on your needs

Community Connections

Community Connections Services are individualized services provided in typical integrated community settings for individuals in retirement. Services will promote individualized skill development, independent living and community integration for persons' to learn how to actively and independently engage in their local community. Activities will provide opportunities to develop relationships and to learn practice and apply skills that result in greater independence and community inclusion.

The service provider will work with you and your family to develop individualized activities and connections that meet your goals. You can expect your provider to:

- Help you to identify your interests and goals in connecting to your community
- Work with you to find or develop activities, groups, or other ways of connecting you to your the community that fulfill your goals
- Provide support to you to participate in your activities
- Help you to identify and use other sources of support such as family, friends and other community members

Clark County Services

Individualized Technical Assistance

Individual Technical Assistance (ITA) services are available to help you learn more about your employment or day program goals and to develop and implement innovative supports for your unique needs. Services can also help you learn more about your resources including Social Security Work Incentives. Examples of Individualized Technical Assistance include:

Benefits Analysis

This is an analysis and planning service that helps you and your family to learn about and use Social Security benefits to further your employment goals. A trained professional who is experienced in Social Security and SSI regulations will review your benefits and provide information about the impact of employment on cash benefits, medical coverage and work incentives.

Person Centered Planning Services

A facilitator can help you keep identify your day program goal, build a support team, discover and coordinate resources. Finally, they can help you learn how to negotiate and write your County Service Plan with the service provider.

If you have other specific needs related to employment, Individualized Technical Assistance may be able to help you and your employment agency in your pathway to employment. Contact your DDA case manager or Employment Agency if you have questions about Individualized Technical Assistance.

Clark County Services

Benefits Analysis

What is Benefits Analysis? It is an analysis and planning service that helps individuals with developmental disabilities and their families understand and use Social Security benefits to further their employment goals. The goal of benefits analysis and planning is to inform, educate, and support individuals in making informed decisions. Presented with facts and options by the benefits specialist, individuals can make necessary decision and manage their long-term goals.

A benefits analysis is performed for each individual personally based on his/her own set of circumstances. It offers an in-depth review of current benefits status, concerns and future needs. It provides individuals with accurate information about the impact of employment on Social Security cash benefits, medical coverage and work incentives, as well as other public services such as housing assistance, food stamps, etc.

How Does It Work? Information necessary to conduct a benefits analysis is gathered during an initial one hour meeting with the individual and family. The benefits specialist then obtains additional information from Social Security, other funding agencies and service providers. Once all necessary information is collected and studied, a formal, written analysis is prepared which includes a detailed letter, charts, graphs and/or other explanatory materials. The analysis is then presented to the individual in a follow-up meeting which provides the opportunity to obtain answers to questions and make requests for help in implementing options, solving additional problems and developing work incentives. Depending on the specific needs of individuals, additional support and meetings can be arranged.

Every effort is made to provide long range management tools and reference sources to enable individuals to be as independent as possible in managing their benefits.

What Can It Do for You?

- It can help you move toward your employment goals by informing you of the additional resources offered through Social Security work incentives.
- It can simplify and familiarize you with complex Social Security regulations that have a real and substantial impact on your life.
- It can help you address existing problems or SSA overpayment situations.
- Through increased knowledge, you can have greater confidence in making informed decisions about your own welfare.
- It can provide you with a resource for understanding the impact of work on your cash benefits, work incentives and medical coverage.

Contact your DDA case manager if you are interested in a benefits analysis.

Clark County Services

Person Centered Planning

It is important that you can identify and share with others information about your skills, capabilities, resources, support needs and goals in regard to your employment or community activities. It is especially important for individuals in employment to be able to plan for their own individualized employment pathway. A person centered planning process can help you discover your interests, support needs and skills as well as resources in the community that would be useful. As a result of this planning, you will have a clearer idea of what you need and want and be able to clearly state the type of jobs or community activities that will help you to reach your goals.

There are a variety of tools or processes that can be used for planning. We usually refer to these processes as person centered planning. Person centered planning involves finding out about you, including your interests, preferences, strengths, skills and capabilities and helps you to build a vision for your future. Your individual, person centered plan is an essential tool for getting what you really want and need.

It is helpful to go through the person centered planning process with a team of individuals that know you as they can provide ideas and information. The planning process requires a commitment of time and action. Once your dreams and goals are known, they can go into an action plan so they can be fulfilled.

You have a variety of options for help in developing your person centered plan. You could ask a family member, a friend, your DDA case manager or an independent consultant to help you with your person centered planning process. If you would like an independent consultant to help you contact your DDA case manager for a referral to an independent consultant.

Setting up your Planning Meeting

The first step is identifying a team that can help you plan and carry out your vision. The more people involved that know you, the better the plan will be.

- Begin by thinking about who you should invite.
 - People you have spent time with and who know you very well
 - People who can be a resource, are well-connected and know a lot of people
 - People who are creative and have great ideas
 - People who can help you with resources and funding

These people are often your friends, family, former teachers, service providers, your DDA case manager, fellow church members, co-workers and people from where you have volunteered or previously worked. They can provide valuable information about who you are and what you like to do and what resources might be helpful.

The second step is deciding on the place and time for your meeting.

The third step is inviting the identified people to your meeting.

Decide:

- Who will invite people
- How people will be invited

- What the invitation will include – make sure to let them know where, when, how long the meeting will be and the purpose of the meeting.
- Who will confirm and remind the people of the meeting

The Planning Meeting

You will need someone to facilitate your meeting. The facilitator should be someone you feel comfortable with. They should also be someone who can support you in managing your planning meeting, asking the important questions, recording and distributing the information collected.

Your facilitator will ask you and your team a number of questions and record the answers. Often it is helpful to think “outside the box” and be creative . . . dream.

Examples of questions:

- Tell us a little about your life—highlights, important people, places, events.
- What are you good at, your strengths? What do you do well?
- What brings you joy?
- What have you done before, what is your work or volunteer history?
- What are your skills, capabilities and things you know how to do?
- How do you learn? What helps you succeed in new situations?
- What would you like to try?
- What are you concerned about? What are your support needs?
- What are your resources?
- Additional questions about employment or community activities, depending on your service

At the end of the meeting, you and the team will decide on an action plan that includes next steps, team assignments and timeframes. The team may need to meet again so they can gather more information or do their assignments. The facilitator should make sure that this all happens. Sometimes, if there is not enough information about you, the facilitator will spend additional time to get to know you. It may be helpful for this person to visit you at home to observe what you like to do in your personal life. Information should be distributed to all team members.

The results of your planning process will be a plan that reflects who you are and your goals for employment or community activities. After you select a service provider, this will be used to help create your County Service Plan.

Clark County Services

Individuals and Families

The role of individuals and their families is very important to the success of individuals reaching their goals and receiving quality services. It is important that individuals be able to identify their goals, needs and resources to be able to decide on appropriate services, activities and supports. It is also important to learn how to manage and direct your own services.

Actively participate in your services, including:

- Planning for your services and supports
- Selecting your provider
- Writing your service plan
- Directing and managing your on-going services
- Reviewing your service plan and up-dating it - plans may be written for a maximum of one year

Communicate with your team including:

- Keeping your supports up-to-date – including any changes to your contact information such as phone number, address or email address
- Keeping your DDA case manager up-to-date on any changes to guardianship, services or changes to your needs and support levels
- Giving your provider feedback on your service delivery and sharing ideas and concerns

Help with problem solving including:

- Being realistic
- Being open to creative ideas
- Trying something new to see if it will work

My System Partners

My DDA Case Manager is:
Phone number: (360)-750-4250

My Mental Health Counselor is:
Agency:
Phone:

My DVR Counselor is:
Phone number:

My DSB Counselor is:
Phone number:

Clark County DD Program
Phone number: (360) 397-2130

My Employment Agency is:
Service:
Phone number:

My Provider is:
Service:
Phone number:

My Provider is:
Service:
Phone number:

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Knowing and accessing your resources is very important to your success. If you are going through a person centered planning process, your team can help you with this.

As government resources and funding diminish, it is important to look at other sources for funding and support. Resources can be a variety of things. Think creatively.

Resource ideas:

- Your team --- their contacts/network is one of your most valuable resources
- County DDA funding
- DVR or DSB
- Residential staff time
- Social Security Work Incentives
- Medicaid Personal Care
- Work Study students through a local college
- Support from a supervisor, coworker, volunteer or friend in the workplace or community
- Pay a co-worker a little more money per hour for support
- Family support
- AARP—A program that pays older people to contribute in the community
- On the Job Training Dollars (OJT)
- Tax Credit to employers
- Private donations and foundations
- Small Business Association (SBA)
- Community Resources such as Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary
- WorkSource programs and resources
- Community Centers and volunteer programs
- Public transportation, carpools

Once you have identified your potential resource, it is important to check them out. Find out how to access the resources or develop them if not presently available. Also find out what level of support or funding they have available so they can be included in you plan to support you in reaching your goals.

My Resources

Do you receive SSI? **Yes** **No**

If yes, \$_____ per month

Do you receive SSDI? **Yes** **No**

If yes, \$_____ per month

Are you on a DDA Medicaid Waiver? **Yes** **No**

If yes, which Waiver are you on? **Basic +** **Core**
Circle One

Have you completed a Benefits Analysis? **Yes** **No**

Have you applied for DVR or DSB services? **Yes** **No**

Do you have an open case with DVR or DSB? **Yes** **No**

Do you have personal resources you can contribute?

*** Funding** **Yes** **No**

*** Connections to employers or community activities** **Yes** **No**

*** Adaptive technology** **Yes** **No**

*** Communication devices** **Yes** **No**

*** Other resources - list:** **Yes** **No**

CHOOSING A SERVICE PROVIDER

Before you receive services, you will need to pick a provider. Begin by reviewing the list of County qualified providers. You can receive the current list of qualified employment agencies by contacting your DDA case manager. You may want to interview a number of agencies and select the one who you think will be most successful for you. If you would like help with this process, contact your DDA case manager.

In order to make your interview time the most valuable, develop a list of questions to ask the providers. A list of interview questions has been included to get you started. You will also need to be prepared to state your expectations, goals and what you are willing to do to help. Remember that this is a partnership between you and the provider. It is important that you can work well together.

After you make your decision, immediately notify the employment agency, and your DDA case manager.

We encourage you to always try to work through any issues you have with your present employment agency. Each agency has a grievance procedure and wish to address your concerns in a timely manner. If these strategies do not work, you may choose to change providers. If at any time you wish to change providers, please contact your DDA case manager.

Interviewing

It is important to prepare for interviewing providers. Think of and write down questions you want to ask. Gather information to help you with your questions. When you call to schedule the interview, there may be some initial questions you want to ask at that time. When you meet for the interview, be sure to share with the provider information about yourself and your expectations.

Decide on the questions you want to ask. The following ideas might help you get started.

- If needed, would you be willing to interview with us at our home?
- Can I meet the person who will be working directly with me? Prior to choosing a provider?
- What kind of activities will you do with the individual to better acquaint yourself with them?
- Would your agency be willing to negotiate your fees if I wanted to private pay for additional services beyond what the County and State fund?
- Who specifically will be working with me? How long have they been with your agency? How long doing this type of work?
- How many individuals does this staff member work with?
- If my staff person becomes ill, who will support me?
- Do you help support or develop transportation services for the individual when a placement has been determined?
- Can you describe ways that you keep your customers informed about services?
- How many people have you worked with, that have my specific disability or support need?
- How is your service different from other providers?
- What do you do in case of an emergency?
- What are your expectations of me?
- Do you provide training for employers, employees or family members?
- How many people does this agency serve?
- How does your agency develop job leads for people?
- With which companies have you placed people and in what types of jobs?
- What is your marketing approach with a new, prospective employer?
- What data do you have to share with me regarding placement, wages, and hours individuals are working?
- What type of feedback on job development and training do you provide for the family? How often?
- When you are doing job development, will you provide transportation for me, if necessary?
- Will the job developer also provide the on the job training or will another individual be hired to do so (i.e. job coach, natural supports set up, co-worker trainer, etc.)?
- How long do you usually provide job coaching for a new worker and will you set up natural supports on the job site as part of the on the job training?
- Describe some of the factors you consider when matching an employment site and the individual?
- What volunteer jobs do people with your agency presently have?
- Describe some of the factors you consider when matching a volunteer site to your customers.
- What are the indicators of a successful volunteer job placement?

- These questions are only a general guideline developed to assist you with preparing yourself for the interview process. As you prepare, you will begin to think of questions that may be more specifically related to your particular needs. Don't hesitate to ask any question you may have during the interview process.
- As you begin to interview providers, the process will raise additional questions that you may have never thought of. If you feel the need to do second interviews to complete a more specific comparison of services, take the extra time to re-interview.

Share with the potential employment agency during the interview

- Share your capabilities, skills, needs and goals.
- Tell the potential provider about your expectations for services.
- Ask the provider if they can meet your expectations.

In making your decision, consider the following:

- How did the agency staff answer your questions?
- Did they treat you with respect?
- Do you like and trust the staff members?
- Do they present themselves in a professional manner?

SERVICE PLANS

Once you have selected an agency, you will need a Clark County Service Plan. You and a family member, a friend, your case manager, your service provider or anyone else you pick can help you write the Plan. The Clark County process needs to be followed in doing this work.

A County Service Plan needs to be created when:

- This is the first time you have had services in Clark County
- You are changing services -- such as moving from Community Connections to employment services
- You are changing service providers
- You are changing your plan -- revising your goals
- At least every year

The Clark County Service Plan is an agreement between you, your service provider and the County. The Plan includes the activities, outcomes and timelines the provider agrees to in order to help you reach your individual goals. Plans may be for one year or less depending on your situation. Your provider cannot receive funding from the County for your services unless a signed Plan is in place.

To create a Service Plan, you need to have a clear understanding of your goals and resources.

Suggestions for developing your draft Plan:

- Be clear on what you want and need
- Be specific about what services you are purchasing
- Include timelines and measurable outcomes
- If you want reports on a regular basis, be sure to request it in writing. Your service provider will send these at a minimum of every six months.
- Make sure the draft Plan reflects what you want such as:
 - Type of job or community activities you want
 - Hours you want to work or be involved in your community activities
 - Days of the week, locations and rate of pay & benefits for employment services

When negotiating your Plan with a service provider:

- Bring a family member, friend or Case Manager
- Be clear about your priorities – explain what you want and do not want
- Ask the provider what they can do for you
- Be realistic – resources are limited so be thoughtful of their use
- Work as a team to make things happen

DIRECTING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Directing your own services and supports takes time and sometimes it can be hard work. You, your service provider, the County and your DDA case manager are partners in helping you to successfully reach your employment and community participation goals. Your involvement and follow through is essential. The following suggestions can help you to manage your services.

Communicate

- Keep your DVR counselor and DDA case manager informed
- Let your team/family/friends know what you need and how things are going
- Keep your service provider informed – be sure to tell your provider if you are having problems at work or at your community activities
- If you are employed, be sure to keep your employer informed
- Ask questions if you do not understand something
- Talk to your employment agency about receiving service reports if you want more information
- Make sure you are receiving the services agreed upon in your County Service Plan. If you are not, ask your service provider to discuss the plan and services. You may need to change your plan, clarify expectations, or review whether or not this service provider can meet your needs. You can get help from the County or your DDA case manager.

Keep Records

Make sure you keep copies of all important documents. File them in your notebook so that you can easily find them.

- Clark County Service Plans - know the dates of your plan and the services agreed to
- DVR plans and contracts
- Reports from Service Providers- keep track of progress and the services you receive
- Assessments and/or evaluations
- Notes from meetings
- Your Person-Centered Plan
- Email and correspondence

Do your Part

- Go to all your appointments – be sure to call if you cannot be there
- Be on time and find out if you need to dress in something special
- Be clear about what you want
- Follow through on what you agreed to do

Dealing with Problems

If there is a problem with your services, whether it is a government agency or a service provider, be sure to talk with them about it. All of these agencies have a grievance procedure that you should follow. Use your team/family/friends to help identify the problem and figure out possible solutions. If you find that the problem is not being worked out, call the appropriate system partner for help. For problems or issues regarding the following, call the contact indicated.

- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation - contact the local, region or state DVR office
- Department of Services for the Blind - contact the local, region or state DSB office
- Division of Developmental Disabilities - contact the local, region or state DDA office
- Employment Agency – contact Clark County DD Program

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

It is important to learn about and understand the policies, and processes that affect the services you receive. You can contact your DDA Case Manager, DVR Counselor, Clark County DD Program and other partners for copies and explanations of policies and procedures.