

WASHINGTON

DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

1) Employment Services in Washington State during COVID-19

Washington State Developmental Disability Administration (DDA) enabled employment providers to deliver services to clients in essential jobs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Forty-three percent of individuals who reported wages prior to March 2020 continued to work and receive in-person or virtual job coaching services from direct support staff. In 2020, many clients who continued to work saw an average increase of approximately 20% in paid work hours. Employment providers were responsive to individual client needs during this time and provided necessary support to clients, such as pivoting to remote service provision, learning new COVID-19 related policies and procedures, and using technology to complete their work tasks or receive job coaching services. In 2021, we saw an impressive increase of new jobs for clients in employment services. Washington State Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) data show a 14% increase in jobs for clients in employment services between the 3rd quarter of 2020 and 3rd quarter of 2021 from 43% to 57%.

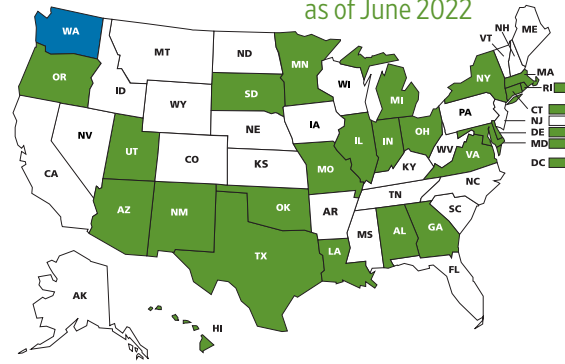
2) Professional Development and Training Investment

In response to COVID-19, Washington DDA worked with county partners, employment providers, and the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment ([Wise](#)) to create robust online professional development training resources for direct support staff. DDA guided acceptable professional development activities so direct support staff could bill for training or professional development time instead of direct client support time (when they were unable to deliver direct services due to COVID-19). Access to training and professional development kept the employment provider pool stable in Washington and resulted in an increase in direct support staff competency. In FY 2021, 28 direct support staff received their Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) certificates, and 191 direct support staff are now Certified Employment Support Professionals (CESP).

3) Job Foundation Project

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Washington rolled out their new [value based payment pilot project](#), Job Foundation. The Job Foundation project is a collaborative partnership with the DDA, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Educational Service Districts (ESD), schools, and counties to connect employment providers to students ages 19–20 in their second to last year of school. The project goal is to work with the student and schools to complete a [report](#) that identifies strengths and supports for success in the key domains of communication, interactive social skills, self-advocacy, task management, work interest exploration, and system navigation. As a result of the report, the team has actionable next steps toward job development activities through DVR for the students' last year of school.

SELN member states as of June 2022



Employment for Individuals With IDD

Nationwide Snapshot



11% In an Individual Job



\$10.46 Average Hourly Wage



26.3 Average Hours Worked For 2 Weeks

Data source: In-Person survey, National Core Indicators Project, 2020–2021. For more information, visit www.nationalcoreindicators.org.



State Employment Leadership Network



The SELN is a joint program of the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston and the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services.

www.selnhub.org

WASHINGTON

[Division of Developmental Disabilities](#)

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Twenty of the 39 Washington counties participated in the project the first year, completing 184 reports with students that exited school in 2022. One element of the project that will begin July 2022 includes outcome payments for successful job placements within the first year out of school for individuals with high support needs. We provided support with training and outreach to counties and employment providers throughout the year. Due to these outreach and training efforts, five additional counties have signed on to the project. We project to complete 203 reports for students exiting school in 2023.

4) Transition from Subminimum Wage Project

Senate Bill 5284: Eliminating subminimum wage certificates for persons with disabilities was passed during the 2021 legislative session. The DDA hired a Subminimum Wage Transition Coordinator. DDA and DVR have worked with these individuals to access supports, such as job development, person-centered planning, benefits planning, and other services as requested. As of July 2021, there were 164 active or eligible DDA clients making subminimum wage. The DDA Subminimum Wage Coordinator did outreach to all to ensure they learned about how subminimum wage certificates are being eliminated and what supports were available to pursue competitive employment. Despite the obstacles during the COVID-19 pandemic, the staffing crisis for employment providers, and individuals who are hesitant to enter their community due to health risks, there are now only 65 DDA clients who are still earning subminimum wage. Thirty-five individuals who were making subminimum wage are now earning Washington state minimum wage or higher.

The Employment Framework

Member states enlist the support of a wide variety of key informants to participate in discussions and workgroups to determine a state's course of action. A direct member benefit is access to guidance that can lead states to a better understanding of priorities while setting that course. The Framework for Employment, developed through extensive experience and research conducted within states, is used to guide the SELN's strategy for system improvements. The elements represent practices and outcomes known to be effective at enabling states to develop and sustain high-performing integrated employment systems.

Elements of a High-Performing Employment System

This graphic demonstrates the factors that, when working together, can lead to better integrated employment outcomes. It is the dynamic interplay of all the elements that can lead to long-term systems change.

Leadership.

Clear and unambiguous commitment to employment in individual community jobs at all levels in the system.

Strategic Goals and Operating Policies.

Employment is supported by program goals and operating practices

Financing and Contracting Methods.

State resource allocation formulas, reimbursement methods, and rate-setting practices support integrated employment.

Training and Technical Assistance.

Investment in the development and maintenance of a strong, competent workforce.

Interagency Collaboration and Partnership.

Building relationships to remove barriers to employment supports.

Services and Service Innovation.

Service definitions and support strategies are structured and aligned to facilitate the delivery of employment supports.

Performance Measurement and Data Management.

Comprehensive data systems are used to measure progress, benchmark performance, and document outcomes.

