



Proposed Study Questions: Employment and Community Access Services for People with Developmental Disabilities

State of Washington Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee December 2017

Why a JLARC Study of Employment and Community Access Services?

The 2017 operating budget (ESSB 5883) directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to conduct a performance audit of employment and community access services offered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) for people with a developmental disability.

- **Employment services** include job placement and support, such as job coaches. Prevocational services are a type of employment service.
- **Community access** services are meant to promote skill development, independent living, and community integration.

Employment and community access services are available to eligible individuals over the age of 21, subject to funding. Individuals cannot receive both services at the same time.

Within DSHS, the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) is largely responsible for overseeing the services. It contracts with counties, which either provide services directly or subcontract with employment or community access service providers.

Study Objectives

1. What is the process of requesting, authorizing, and receiving employment services, including prevocational services, or community access services?
 - i. What criteria are used to make decisions about authorizing or denying a request for services?
 - ii. What are the roles and responsibilities of those involved, including job coaches?
2. What are the costs of the services? What types of costs are borne by those affected (e.g., individuals, families, providers, employers, the state)?
 - i. Is it possible to quantify all costs with available data?
3. What are the types of benefits (tangible and intangible) of the services? Who receives the benefits (e.g., individuals, families, providers, employers, the state)?
 - i. Can the types of benefits be quantified and/or measured?
 - ii. What approach would be necessary to link benefits directly to the services?
4. What information would be necessary to conduct a benefit-cost analysis of employment or community access services?

Study Timeframe

Preliminary Report: December 2018

Proposed Final Report: January 2019

JLARC Study Team

Project Coordinator:	Valerie Whitener	360-786-5191	Valerie.Whitener@leg.wa.gov
Research Analyst:	Ryan McCord	360-786-5186	Ryan.McCord@leg.wa.gov
Research Analyst:	Melanie Stidham	360-786-5190	Melanie.Stidham@leg.wa.gov
Research Analyst:	Casey Radostitz	360-786-5176	Casey.Radostitz@leg.wa.gov
Research Analyst:	Zack Freeman	360-786-5179	Zack.Freeman@leg.wa.gov

Proposed Study Questions: Employment and Community Access Services

More about Employment and Community Access Services

Within DSHS, employment and community access services are primarily overseen by DDA. Another part of DSHS, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), also helps individuals with developmental disabilities secure employment.

Three types of employment services offered through DDA

DDA offers three types of employment services to adults who are 21 and older and have a developmental disability:

1. **Individual supported employment** helps individuals find and maintain employment in the general workforce. They earn minimum wage or more. DDA may provide additional training or support, as needed, based on the individual's level of disability.
2. **Group supported employment** offers ongoing supervised employment for groups of eight or fewer individuals with disabilities in the same setting. Individuals have opportunities to interact with the public.
3. **Prevocational services** are intended to be short term. Groups of individuals learn skills and receive training to prepare them for employment in the general workforce. Individuals do not have regular interactions with the public at work. Prevocational services are being phased out and will not be offered after 2019.

Community access services available after participation in employment services

Community access services “promote skill development, independent living, and community integration for individuals learning how to actively and independently engage in their community” (WAC 388-845-0600). As of September 2017, DSHS also refers to these services as “community inclusion.”

Individuals can receive community access services after they have participated in employment services for nine consecutive months. If they do not get a job or decide they do not want to be on an employment path, then they can switch to community access. DDA can grant an exception to this rule, allowing individuals to participate in community access services without first trying employment services.

JLARC Study Process

