



# Developmental Disabilities Administration Processes and Staffing

## Legislative Auditor's conclusion

The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) has not analyzed how well key processes serve clients or used best practices to determine case manager staffing levels.

### Key points

- DDA is charged with helping people who have developmental disabilities access services in their community (e.g., help with daily tasks, skills training, employment services, caregiver respite).
- DDA has not systematically analyzed how well its process helps people become clients and access services. Clients say the process can be long and confusing.
- DDA's case management approach prioritizes client assessments and planning over service connection and monitoring.
- DDA lacks adequate procedures, documentation, and quality reviews to ensure its published data is accurate and reliable.
- DDA's approach to determining the appropriate case manager to client ratio is not based on workforce planning best practices.

## Recommendations

1. DDA should develop and use performance metrics to evaluate how well its process works for clients and improve timeliness.
2. DDA should implement quality controls to ensure the reliability and accuracy of data used for reporting and performance management.
3. DDA should use a workforce planning approach to determine the number of case managers and other staff it needs.

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**Full Report:**  
[leg.wa.gov/jlarc/AuditAndStudyReports](http://leg.wa.gov/jlarc/AuditAndStudyReports)

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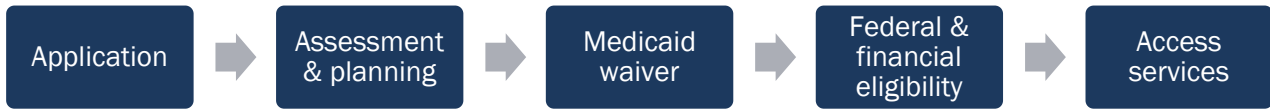
## The 2022 Legislature directed JLARC to:

Evaluate DDA's processes for determining eligibility, assessing service needs, and ensuring clients can access services

Assess how DDA manages its staffing levels

## The process to become a DDA client and receive services has five main steps

Variation in client experience: Many are happy, others say process can be long and confusing



### DDA has not systematically analyzed how well its process helps people become clients and access services

#### DDA has not:

- Set relevant goals.
- Consistently collected performance data.
- Analyzed how well its process performs.

#### As a result, DDA does not know:

- How much time is needed for each step.
- How many clients cannot access services.
- How processes vary based on a client's location, demographics, or preferred language.

## DDA lacks adequate procedures, documentation, and quality reviews to ensure its published data is accurate and reliable

- Formulas used for DDA's *Caseload and Cost Report* have errors.
- DDA has minimal documentation about creating reports, replicating data, and fulfilling data requests.
- Best practice: Policies and practices to ensure data accuracy and reliability.

## DDA based a proposed reduction of its general caseload ratio on inaccurate information

**1:35**

case manager to client ratio

DDA goal based on 2019 report

#### Problems:

- Caseload ratio reflected only one state, not national figures.
- Experts advise against using comparisons to other states to set caseload sizes.

### Workforce planning approach could help DDA achieve optimal caseload ratios and improve performance

Best practices

1. Determine how the case manager position aligns with the agency's strategic plans, goals, and resources.
2. Identify ideal process performance.
3. Assess current structure and process performance.
4. Analyze the gap between ideal and current performance.
5. Create a workforce plan that specifies the tasks, strategies, and resources needed to achieve ideal performance.
6. Implement and monitor the plan.

#### Workforce planning

Method for identifying the size and composition of a workforce needed to achieve goals and objectives.