



# Informing Families *Today and Tomorrow*



Winter Newsletter 2022

The end of 2022 is fast approaching! The 2022 legislative session brought some big wins for our community. For example:

- The Developmental Disabilities Administration got funds to provide more waiver services to people who want and need them.
- Washington will roll out a school-to-work effort. This means more students will be prepared to leave school with jobs.
- DDA will no longer use IQ to determine eligibility in the coming years.

Your work and advocacy were key to these accomplishments. Let's keep these in mind as we prepare for a busy start to 2023! Our legislative session begins on January 9th, 2023 and we have a few areas of focus:

- We need new affordable and accessible housing for people with developmental disabilities.
- We want to set up a system called caseload forecasting so we can better plan and prepare for new people needing DDA services.
- We need to increase the pay for workers who

support people with developmental disabilities in the community.

Please check out the Arc of Washington's Advocacy Notebook to learn more about the issues we will focus on in the coming months: 2023 Legislative Notebook - Washington State ([arcwa.org](http://arcwa.org)).

We hope you will join us for Advocacy Days (weekly on Wednesdays from January 25th through April 5th). Learn about the issues our community faces and how you can get involved: Advocacy Days - Washington State ([arcwa.org](http://arcwa.org)).

If you want to connect with your elected officials to tell them what is important to you, you can find information here: [Legislative Information Center Contacting Your Legislators](http://Legislative Information Center Contacting Your Legislators (wa.gov)) (wa.gov). Please take good care over the holiday season. Rest up, get ready, and we hope to see you in 2023!

Best,

*Brandi Monts*  
Executive Director, DDC



## Waiver Spots are Available!

The Developmental Disabilities Administration offers five Home and Community Based Waivers: Individual and Family Services, Basic Plus, Core, Children's Intensive In-Home Behavioral Supports and Community Protection.

Each of the five waivers provides services tailored to the specific populations they serve. Waiver services provide additional support when Medicaid state plan services and other supports are not enough. DDA waivers offer services such as supported employment, assistive technology, remote supports, respite for the caregiver, habilitation, community engagement and community inclusion.

If you or a family member enroll with DDA, you can request a waiver program at any time. If the individual is already receiving a waiver service but that specific waiver is not meeting their assessed needs, they may request a different waiver. For more information about the waiver program, go to the Services and Information Request form, contact your case resource manager, social worker, or regional office.

For detailed information about all DDA services, please visit the [Informing Families Website](http://Informing Families Website).

## Employment *and* Community Inclusion Services



### ***What is Changing?***

Effective January 1, 2023 Community Inclusion and DDA Support Employment services are available concurrently to eligible clients after 9 months of participation in Supported Employment services.

The goal of concurrent services is to support people with developmental disabilities to access, participate, and contribute to their local community in addition to their work life. As people participate in their communities their presence leads to active involvement and opportunities to connect and contribute.

### ***What is Not Changing?***

Washington is an Employment First state and will continue to be an Employment First state. Improving employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities is a top priority and the nine-month rule will help us focus on achieving a person's employment goal.

### ***What is Community Inclusion?***

Community Inclusion Services are individualized services provided in integrated community settings with other individuals without disabilities. The activities are based on client interests and

provide opportunities typically experienced by the general public of similar age in their local community. These activities are accessible by public transit or a reasonable commute from their home. The goal of the service is to support clients to participate, contribute, and develop relationships with community members.

### ***What are the Eligibility Requirements?***

Starting January 1st 2023, Community Inclusion will be available to clients who have participated in nine months of Employment services and choose Community Inclusion in addition to or instead of Employment services. Community Inclusion is also available to clients 62 years or older without having to participate in nine months of Employment Services. It is available for clients on the Basic Plus and Core Waivers, clients receiving Roads to Community Living, in Skilled Nursing Facilities, and Residential Habilitation Centers. An Exception to Rule can be requested if clients have not or do not want to participate in 9 months of employment services.

## DDA Outreach in 2023

The legislature asked DDA to reach out each year to individuals who are DDA-enrolled but do not receive a service.

You may receive a phone call in 2023 from a DDA outreach staff or case manager to discuss your needs, interest in services, and to make sure that your contact information is correct. You may also receive a link to take a survey that will ask about your needs and interest in services now or within the upcoming year. The information that you provide helps us plan for future services.

It is important for DDA to be able to reach you to keep your enrollment active. If you have recently moved, or have a new phone number or email address, please contact your local DDA office to update your information: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda/find-dda-office>. If you would like to request services or information now, please follow this link: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda/service-and-information-request>.

We look forward to catching up with you soon!



## PREPARING FOR WINTER STORMS

Winter is here and can cause emergencies in many forms from power outages to road closures, it is important to be prepared. Individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities are often at higher risk if they rely on others for care and support.

### ***Be aware that storms can:***

- Last from a couple hours to a week.
- Turn off heat, power, and communication services in your home.
- Place older adults, young children, individuals with disabilities at greater risk for harm or injury.
- Set alerts for winter storm warning.

### ***What is a winter storm warning?***

This warning is issued by the state when hazardous winter weather in the form of snow, freezing rain, or heavy sleet. This warning is usually issued 12 to 24 hours before the weather is expected to begin.

### ***What are some steps to prepare?***

- Gather supplies in case you need to stay home for multiple days without power.
- Create an emergency supply kit for your car in case you need to travel.
- Learn the signs of frostbite and hypothermia and basic treatments for them.
- Prepare your home for cold weather. Have battery backups for devices.

### ***Why is it important for individuals with disabilities to prepare for winter storms?***

- Those with disabilities are at increased risk for winter hazards due to mobility barriers, medical conditions, and communication barriers.

The Washington State Department of Health has a webpage with steps to prepare for winter storms. This information is available in seven different languages. Visit <https://doh.wa.gov/emergencies/be-prepared-be-safe/severe-weather-and-natural-disasters/cold-weather>.

Visit <https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather> to learn tips on how to stay safe during the winter weather. This webpage covers topics from generator safety to COVID-19 considerations.

Check out the Developmental Disabilities Administration Emergency Preparedness care provider bulletin at <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/DDA/dda/documents/Emergency%20Preparedness%20Alert.pdf>.



Did you know that funding was provided to purchase 4,394 phones to share with DDA clients and providers? The purpose is for clients and providers to have access to the technology needed to engage fully in remote services.

DDA currently has approximately 2,800 iPhones with a 2-year service plan (depending on when you receive the phone) with unlimited data, text, and Wi-Fi hotspot capability, waiting to give out to clients and providers who may not otherwise have access to participate in remote services. When the service plan has ended, T-Mobile will unlock the phone so you can continue using the phone with any carrier.

If you are in need, please contact your DDA Case Resource Manager to request a phone as soon as possible. These phones will be given out on a first come first serve basis.

State of Washington  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
Developmental Disabilities Administration  
P.O. Box 45310  
Olympia, WA 98504-5310

## Winter Resources



### Low-Income Energy Assistance Program

The Low Income Home Energy assistance program can help households stay safe and warm this winter by providing assistance with home heating bills. To learn more about the program and eligibility visit [energyhelp.us](https://energyhelp.us)

### Affordable Connectivity Program

The Affordable Connectivity Program is an FCC program created to assistance households financially with internet services they need for work, school, healthcare, and more. To learn more visit <https://www.fcc.gov/acp>

### COVID-19 At-Home Test

Say Yes! COVID Test are offering free, rapid, at-home COVID 19 test to eligible community members. To learn more on eligibility visit <https://www.sayyescovidhometest.org/>



### DDA News and Information

Get instant updates from the Developmental Disabilities Administration:

- News and Announcements
- Provider Information
- Resources
- Training and Events!

How to Sign Up:

- Text "DDA" to 468311
- Visit [dshs.wa.gov/dda](https://dshs.wa.gov/dda) and then scroll down the home page and click on the GovDelivery envelope and sign up link for news and information.