



King County

Developmental Disabilities Division Working Age Adult Policy Task Force Report Executive Summary

Introduction

The State Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) released a new policy, effective July 1, 2004, promoting gainful employment in integrated settings in the community for working age adults with developmental disabilities. This policy gives counties two years to develop and implement a plan that will put working age people with developmental disabilities on a path to community employment. The policy is to be fully implemented by July 1, 2006.

The new Working Age Adult Policy presents many challenges to the Developmental Disabilities service system in implementing the intent of the policy. The policy emphasizes gainful employment as the preferred option for working age adults who are enrolled with State DDD, which is a significant shift in the Developmental Disabilities service system. The policy includes procedures that require the development of an employment plan for each individual that reflects the goals needed for that individual to obtain and maintain gainful employment. It allows for services for persons of working age that do not emphasize the pursuit of or maintenance of employment in integrated settings to be authorized only by exception to policy. The King County Developmental Disabilities Division (KCDDD) recognized that the new policy raised powerful emotions and fears in individuals, families, and providers and that there was a need to convene a group of stakeholders to address these issues.

A King County Working Age Adult Policy Stakeholder Task Force group was formed in February 2005 to help guide the King County Board for Developmental Disabilities (DD Board) and KCDDD in implementing the policy by the July 1, 2006, deadline. The task force conducted six meetings between February and May 2005 to develop a plan to implement the policy.

Purpose of the Working Age Adult Policy Task Force

The Working Age Adult Policy Stakeholder Task Force was responsible for identifying challenges, discussing potential impacts, suggesting ways to overcome the challenges, and developing a strategic plan for the DD Board and KCDDD. In addition, the group was responsible for assisting the County in ensuring that KCDDD solicited input and incorporated the views and perspectives of people from diverse communities.

Selection of Task Force Members

Individuals who were interested in participating on the task force completed an application and all applications were reviewed by KCDDD and State DDD administration. Nineteen individuals representing self-advocates, family members, case managers, schools, and service providers were selected to participate on the task force.

Task Force Members

Candace Airhart	Judy Perry
Virginia Burzotta	Jodi Reimer
Cesilee Coulson	Emily Rogers
Leo Finnegan	Lyle Romer
Kristen Kavaller	Kathy Sellars
Ginger Kwan	Lisa Turner
Elden Lamb	Therese Vafaezadeh
Alison McCormick	Karen Williams
Debbie Meyers	Christopher Willis
Ron Ovadenko	

Task Force Meeting Facilitators

The first meeting was facilitated by David Mank, Ph.D., who is from the Indiana Institute of Disability and Community. The next five meetings were facilitated by David Wertheimer, M.S.W., M.Div., who is a Principal of Kelly Point Partners.

Task Force Vision

The vision of the King County Working Age Adult Policy Task Force is that 100% of persons with developmental disabilities who want to work are either in the workforce or on their individualized pathway to employment.

Task Force Priority Areas

The Task Force members developed a process that organized the implementation of the Working Age Adult Policy into Priority Areas. The following Priority Areas were agreed upon by the entire Task Force:

1. Develop A Shared Vision: Create a common understanding of “pathways to employment”

2. Market The Vision: Communicate the message about work and employment goals
3. Create The Environment: Develop community capacity and will to create, provide, and support full and equal access to jobs
4. Collaborate For Change: Focus existing services, programs, and systems on a full spectrum of employment goals
5. "Show Us The Money!:" Ensure the resources necessary to promote and support employment

Goals for Each Priority Area

Task Force members worked together as a group to develop goals and action plans for the first priority area. Smaller work groups were formed to develop goals and action plans for the four remaining areas. The action plans from these groups were then presented to the larger group for their review and approval. The complete approved action plan documents are included as attachments to this Executive Summary, and represent the core body of work completed by the Task Force. These action plans are centered on five specific goals and related action steps:

1. Develop A Shared Vision

- 1.1. Ensure educators at all levels in King County understand and actively buy into the definition of Pathways to Employment.
- 1.2. All people with developmental disabilities and parents with children with disabilities (from infancy to adulthood) are informed of the Working Age Adult Policy in culturally and linguistically relevant ways.
- 1.3. Ensure that government agencies responsible for funding and managing developmental disability services and those agencies and professionals with which they contract (including direct service providers, residential providers, and others) understand, share, and implement the vision of the Working Age Adult Policy.

2. Market The Vision

- 2.1. Ensure identified stakeholders who understand and support the Working Age Adult Policy, market the vision, and promote positive images of individuals with developmental disabilities working in the community.
- 2.2. Ensure educators and students in King County market the vision and promote positive images of individuals with developmental disabilities working in the community.

- 2.3 Ensure parents/other family members understand the shared vision and promote positive images of individuals with developmental disabilities working in the community.

3. Create The Environment

- 3.1 Ensure various incentives, information, and training will be available to the broad range of employers, including women and minority owned businesses.
- 3.2 Stakeholders are engaged and committed to employment for every person with a developmental disability.
- 3.3 Ensure qualified employment staff who are committed to providing individual employment services as their career path and provide training and technical assistance to all staff serving people with developmental disabilities.
- 3.4 Ensure a contracting process that allows for expansion and flexibility of qualified service providers who will meet the demand of individuals on career pathways.
- 3.5 Ensure transportation resources that support individual employment needs.

4. Collaborate For Change

- 4.1 Ensure a seamless service delivery system that creates a collaborative environment that supports the individual to obtain and maintain a job on their pathway to employment.
- 4.2 Ensure adults have retirement options after the age of 62 or as appropriate.
- 4.3 Ensure parents with children in the Birth-Three age range preserve the vision of a meaningful life in the community for their children, which includes employment.
- 4.4 Ensure that the developmental disabilities system provides access and flexibility that meets the needs of refugees, immigrants, and communities of color.
- 4.5 Ensure collaboration with rural communities within King County

5. “Show Us The Money!”

- 5.1 Ensure individuals have a clear understanding of pathways to employment.
- 5.2 Ensure all working age adults with developmental disabilities who want to work are being supported to work in integrated settings in the community and earn at or above Substantial Gainful Activity as defined by the Social Security Administration regulations.
- 5.3 Ensure new revenue sources and other resources are leveraged.
- 5.4 Ensure County funds are efficiently used to support the equitable implementation of the Working Age Adult policy.
- 5.5 Ensure all individuals leave school with jobs.

Task Force Recommendations for Next Steps to Implement the Plan

The Working Age Adult Policy Stakeholder Task Force carefully considered strategies to ensure that the goals and action steps detailed in this report and the complete action plans attached to this Executive Summary are implemented in King County. The Task Force also engaged in a dialogue of concerns related to barriers individuals may face that will significantly impact their ability to obtain gainful employment, including a process for communicating these concerns to the state Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities.

The following recommendations are being made by the Task Force in order to prevent the work that has been completed from becoming yet one more report that collects dust on a County bookshelf. The Task Force hopes that these recommendations will be implemented in concert with and in support of the goals of increasing pathways to employment opportunities for working age adults with developmental disabilities.

1. By July 31, 2005, create a Subcommittee of the King County Developmental Disabilities Board that is formally charged with the task of implementing the Task Force recommendations.
2. Promote increased diversity of ethnic and cultural minorities in the process of implementing the Task Force recommendations.
3. Create a staff position at the KCDDD that is focused on the implementation of the Task Force's recommendations that are specifically focused on schools, the educational system, and residential providers.
4. Identify and implement new mechanisms to promote increased involvement of school systems in developmental disability issues.
5. Develop, implement, and enforce general contract language to promote implementation of the Task Force recommendations and to help individuals meet their employment-related goals.
6. Gather and present data related to implementation of the Working Age Adult Policy on a regular basis.
7. Acknowledge and address concerns and fears among various stakeholders related to implementation of the Working Age Adult Policy.

Specific details related to each of these recommended next steps are included in the document attached to this Executive Summary titled "Next Steps and Implementation of Task Force Recommendations."

Model for Delivery of Task Force Recommendations

The Task Force considers the Working Age Adult Policy to be a significant step toward realizing community-based, integrated, gainful employment for every person with a developmental disability who wants to work. Therefore, the Task Force suggests that the delivery of the recommendations related to the Policy should involve the public and private entities, government agencies, and stakeholders who will be integral in ensuring its successful implementation. The following is a four-part model for delivery of the Task Force Recommendations:

1. Transmittal directly to the KCDD Board at their regular meeting on June 15, 2005.
2. A formal presentation of recommendations to the County Executive and the Director of the Department of Community and Human Services by September 2005.
3. A formal presentation to the State Department of Social and Health Services Developmental Disabilities Division, to be accompanied by a dialogue of concerns related to the waiver, the needs of persons who do not want to work, are not yet ready for work, or cannot work, and the commitment to implementing this policy in a manner that addresses the needs of people with the most significant disabilities by September 2005.
4. A presentation of recommendations in the context of a larger event that publicizes the Task Force report and goals that recognizes employers and highlights and honors employment success stories (perhaps during October and as part of Employee Disability Awareness Month.)