



King County

Department of Community and Human Services Developmental Disabilities Division

Working Age Adult Policy Stakeholder Task Force

Next Steps and Implementation of Task Force Recommendations

The Working Age Adult Policy Stakeholder Task Force has carefully considered strategies to ensure that the goals and action steps detailed in this report are implemented in King County. 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 (DD).

- 1. By July 30, 2005, create a Subcommittee of the King County Developmental Disabilities Board that is formally charged with the task of implementing the Task Force Recommendations**

The *Working Age Adult Policy Subcommittee of the Developmental Disabilities Board* should be comprised of approximately 10 members, with two additional at-large representatives. Membership would include the following:

- Persons with developmental disabilities who are employed;
- Parents of persons with developmental disabilities;
- Representatives of ethnic and/or communities of color;
- A current member of the King County Developmental Disabilities Board;
- Individuals who served on the Working Age Adult Policy Stakeholder Task Force;
- A member of the King County Developmental Disabilities Division staff;
- A Department of Social and Health Services/Division of Developmental Disabilities (DSHS/DDD) case manager;
- Representatives from a school district operating within King County (perhaps Federal Way and/or Kent);
- A representative from the Puget Sound Educational Services District;
- Representatives of businesses, employers and non-DD employment agencies that hire or place people with developmental disabilities;

- A vendor providing employment services to people with developmental disabilities;
- A vendor providing residential services to people with developmental disabilities;
- A representative of the media; and
- A public relations/marketing expert.

Members of the Subcommittee would be selected using a formal application process by July 31, 2005. The Subcommittee would meet monthly for the first year of its operation, providing a monthly report or update to the King County Developmental Disabilities Board. After one year, it could switch to a schedule of quarterly meetings. The Subcommittee would publish an annual report detailing progress made towards the goals and action steps identified by the Working Age Adult Policy Stakeholder Task Force.

The Task Force recognizes that recruitment of individuals to this subcommittee that do not identify a primary affiliation with the developmental disabilities system will be challenging. In order to promote involvement in the subcommittee, a number of potential recruitment and incentive strategies have been identified to stimulate committee participation. These include:

- Provision of stipends to support participation by community representatives, including persons with developmental disabilities, family members and support persons;
- Provision of resources to school districts that are active participants in the Subcommittee's work to help link specific students to employment activities and opportunities in the community; and
- Recruitment efforts targeting business community members through existing Rotary groups and other civic and business organizations that may not know of the potential for employment of persons with developmental disabilities.

2. Promote increased diversity of ethnic and cultural minorities in the process of implementing the Task Force recommendations

- Make a concerted effort to include ethnic and cultural minorities in the process of reviewing and commenting on the Task Force recommendations.
- Ensure adequate representation of ethnic and cultural minorities as members of the newly created Working Age Adult Policy Subcommittee of the Developmental Disabilities Board.
- Use existing and newly created stakeholder relationships in the community to recruit participation by ethnic and cultural minorities in ongoing activities related to employment and workforce development.

- Provide incentives (e.g., stipends) for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families who participate in ongoing planning activities and work groups.

3. Create a staff position at the King County Developmental Disabilities Division that is focused on the implementation of Task Force recommendations that are specifically focused on schools, the educational system and residential providers

This staff position, which would be full time, would work both with and within the educational system and developmental disability residential providers and be assigned the following responsibilities:

- Serve as a liaison with the Educational Services District and targeted school districts, working specifically with school administrations (principals, etc.), school boards, teachers, special education programs and others who come into contact with persons with developmental disabilities in educational settings;
- Keep all systems informed about activities and events of relevance to promoting employment opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities;
- Collect feedback and suggestions from all relevant stakeholders;
- Promote employment linkages and opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities who are finishing school;
- Participate as staff to the newly created Working Age Adult Policy Subcommittee of the Developmental Disabilities Board;
- Ensure that a representative group of residential providers, employment agencies, case managers and King County staff are convened in a work group to address promoting implementation of the Working Age Adult Policy Task Force recommendations among residential providers; and
- Link the Work Group to the Working Age Adult Policy Subcommittee of the Developmental Disabilities Board to promote the effectiveness of the Work Group and inform them of ongoing efforts of the Working Age Adult Policy Subcommittee.

4. Identify and implement new mechanisms to promote increased involvement of school systems in developmental disability issues

- Create and support a forum or work group for ongoing, monthly communication between the County, DD service providers, schools, special education directors and parents of school-age children about employment pathways and job goals for persons with developmental disabilities.

- Help schools to identify the benefits of their participation in this work, including: Stretching of existing resources, promoting ease of transition for persons with developmental disabilities, ensuring better outcomes for students finishing school, increasing the percentage of students leaving school who enter the workforce, etc.
- Solicit feedback from key stakeholders about issues that are emerging and/or in need of clarification.
- Ensure that accurate and consistent information about employment issues and persons with developmental disabilities is circulated and shared across systems.

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

This contract language should seek to:

- Promote a stable environment for vendors to prepare, educate and develop jobs for people with significant disabilities;
- Encourage the development of relationships with job vendors and employment agencies to promote and support individuals with significant disabilities;
- Expand resources to do job placement and employment support;
- Expand the capacity of agencies to do employment-related work;
- Promote work with employers to maximize potential for employment and integration into the work force; and
- Provide clear information to individuals, families and other system stakeholders about the Working Age Adult Policy and how implementation of individual employment goals can best be achieved, (e.g., defining case manager roles and responsibilities, providing trainings to ensure a consistent messages across all systems).

6. Gather and present data related to implementation of the Working Age Adult Policy on a regular basis

- Collect and report measurable, understandable data that provides aggregate information clearly illustrating movement towards or away from employment goals for persons with developmental disabilities.
- Provide data that communicates the human interest side of employment success stories and highlights personal triumphs of people with developmental disabilities.

- Disseminate data that can help to promote personal and professional interest in pursuing employment goals for persons with developmental disabilities.
- Ensure that data is meaningful to individuals, families, employers and funders.
- Provide training for vendors on how to use data, making it understandable to the individual and a useful tool in promoting change at the individual, program, agency and county levels.

7. Acknowledge and address concerns and fears among various stakeholders related to implementation of the Working Age Adult Policy

- Continue to work with parents of persons with developmental disabilities to address concerns that the policy may push persons with developmental disabilities who have significant support needs too far and too fast in the direction of employment and undercut other efforts to support their community tenure and well-being.
- Address the concerns of the residential providers related to the impact of the Working Age Adult Policy on existing workshops and supported employment activities.
- Identify and resolve issues related to discrepancies between waiver and non-waiver individuals.
- Explore and identify issues implicit in the Working Age Adult Policy as they relate to people who either do not want to work, are not yet ready to work or cannot work.
- Explore issues related to retirement options for persons with developmental disabilities, including early retirement for those whose illnesses may impair their ability to continue to work until standard retirement ages.