CEA Townhall questions for SHB1980 Concurrent Services

1. If a provider is currently an IE provider and wants to be able to provide CI – will it be as simple as just “checking a box” with no need for an RFP.

DDA’s Policy 6.13, *Provider Qualifications for Employment and Day Program Services*, outlines criteria for Employment and Community Inclusion service providers. If an agency is currently a qualified provider of IE, they may not need to go through the full RFP/Q process as some requirements may be completed already; however, providers will still need to demonstrate qualifications to deliver CI services as outlined in DDA Policy 6.13. This process may vary slightly County to County. Counties may have procurement processes specific to their counties which may include a streamlined process for existing providers. Counties will continue to have open processes for agencies to become qualified providers. Additionally, Counties monitor all contracted providers bi-annually as part of the ongoing provider qualification process. DDA will work in collaboration with the Counties to ensure processes are clear and consistent related to DDA requirements. Our goal is to have access to quality Community Inclusion services for clients who may choose CI services.

2. What is the commitment to continue to be an Employment First state

DDA remains committed to being an “Employment First” State. Offering additional service options to clients does not deter us from this status. Rather, offering Community Inclusion in addition to employment services positions us to support individuals a full quality of life that includes both support to work and support to engage in their community outside of work. Eligible clients will continue to access employment services for 9 months prior to being able to request Community Inclusion services or will need to submit an Exception to Rule request.

3. How to audit if same provider is serving a person in IE/CI – how do you determine if the hour provided was CI or IE – will different staff be required to provide each service

Individual Employment and Community Inclusion are and will continue to be distinct and separate services. Staff training requirements for each service are outlined in DDA Policy 6.13. Services which are offered in support of Community Inclusion goals, and which align with services outlined in “Community Inclusion Billable Activities” should be provided as part of Community Inclusion services. Similarly, services which are offered in support of a client’s Individual Employment goals, and which align with services outlined in “Individual Employment Billable Activities” should be provided as part of Individual Employment services. Our process for oversight and monitoring will not alter; IE and CI services will continue to be evaluated per our current process. DDA, in collaboration with county and provider partners, will work together to develop strategies and best practices for service delivery when managing both services.

4. Does receiving dual services preclude employment from obtaining add on hours when warranted

These services will be separate, and clients will receive separate sets of hours to access each service. The process for obtaining additional support hours a client may need to obtain or retain employment will remain unaltered.

5. What does dual services look like in an Employment First state – how to craft CI to inform employment if the person is not working. If already working, what is the purpose of CI for a working age adult?

Washington’s Employment First framework is centered on the premise that all individuals, including those individuals with the most significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in Competitive Integrated Employment. The change in the law to allow for concurrent services, brings additional supports for clients to be fully integrated in the community by developing relationships while pursuing their employment goals. Community Inclusion is a distinct and separate service and can support someone to develop meaningful connections and relationships in their community, outside of work, in a way that many other working age adults already do.

6. Is there any plan to enhance the CI service?

DDA welcomes stakeholders input for improving the outcomes of the services we offer. Beginning September 1, 2022, Individualized Technical Assistance will be available as a secondary service for Community Inclusion participants.

7. How is the determination made if someone needs CI – especially if the person is working

Basic+ or Core waivers allow for CI services. Clients on these waivers can chose this option if they have completed nine months of employment supports or meet the exception criteria for employment; any client who meets this criterion and is interested in the supports CI offers can receive it without further demonstration of need.

8. How is it going to be messaged that there are people getting two services when there are people on the waitlist not getting any services

DDA plans to inform clients of this service option. Provider capacity may prevent a client from receiving CI services. We are working with our County partners to address provider capacity, including the anticipated increase in the number of clients who may choose CI services when it is available. We are analyzing data to learn the potential increase in this service option by County. DDA has received funding to support capacity growth, including funding for a DDA staff and start-up funding.

9. How is DDA going to use the provider capacity building funds?

 DDA has met with the Community Employment Alliance to discuss impact and strategies for successful capacity building efforts knowing that the current reimbursement rate is a barrier. DDA is still in the process of reviewing options for how capacity building funds can be applied in the most impactful and equitable manner and anticipates start-up funding being available to new providers and current providers who will expand capacity for CI services.

10. Concurrent services IE/CI after 9 months in IE effective 1/1/23; how will hours be determined and applied? Will we have provider input? CI or IE algorithm, how is this determined. Who decides what the mix of hours is? Will DDA determine IE hours and CI hours, separately? What if two different providers?

DDA will utilize the current algorithm in client Person Centered Service Plans to assess the need and authorization levels for each of the program separately. One service will have not impact on the level of support a client will receive for the other service, and clients will receive separate sets of hours to access each service.

11. Will agencies control numbers that come in based on the budget afforded?

Providers will continue to accept client referrals based upon their staffing expertise and capacity. DDA will continue to work with Counties and provider agencies to mitigate barriers to accessing services for clients, including capacity challenges. Agencies must comply with the requirements within their contract with the Counties.

12. How is DDA’s change going to impact DVR? What are the risks for people with the most significant disabilities? A concern from the community is there will be less access as a result of the eligibility change.

Dual services should not have an impact on a client’s ability to access DVR services, as the services are separate and distinct with different intentions and goals. Community Inclusion does not detract from, or duplicate services being offered by DVR. DDA will be working on potential issues that may impact client services when the new eligibility law goes into effect in 2025. Our goal is to ensure clients have access to services they are eligible for, and to identify potential service gaps and inform leadership about needed resource development to avoid lack of access for eligible clients who have an identified need.