

**REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE**

**Employment and day rate study**

ESSB 5092 Sec. 203 (1)(ff)(i-iv)  
Chapter 334, 2021 Laws PV

ESSB 5268 Sec. 10 (1)(b)  
Chapter 219, 2022 Laws

ESSB 5693 Sec. 203 (1)(ff)(i-iv)  
Chapter 297, 2022 Laws PV

October 1, 2022

Developmental Disabilities Administration  
Office of the Assistant Secretary  
PO Box 45310  
Olympia, WA 98504-5310  
(360) 407-1500  
[www.dshs.wa.gov/dda](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda)

## WORKING VALUE

# Jobs Transform Lives

Washington State Supported Employment Providers  
continue to [rank #1](#) in the U.S. with outcomes.

## In 2019 over 7,600 clients worked

Client outcomes are clear. Each dollar invested in employment support equals a 60 cent return into the economy. In 2019, clients earned \$67.6 million, paid taxes and reduced their need for public supports.



### Bertha's Job

Employment in Action

## All means all

Outcomes prove that there is a place for everyone in the workforce. Since 2010, we increased serving clients with the most complex needs by 200%.



[Click to watch on YouTube](#)

# Unpaid provider costs

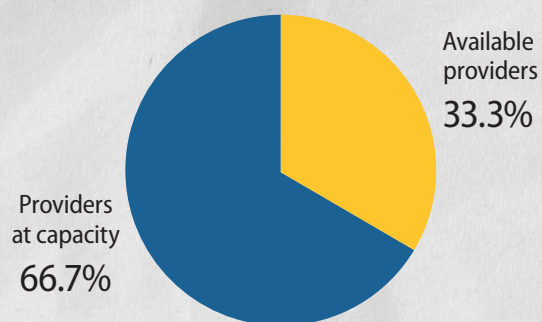
Providers support clients with unbillable work:

- Client supports that exceed approved hours
- Staff training and education
- Staff benefits, taxes, mileage and insurance
- Client data security
- Operational costs

## Providers need support to maintain and expand capacity

House Bill 1980 and Senate Bill 5790 will provide more clients with access to employment and community inclusion. The reality is that clients are not getting requested services because providers cannot hire and retain staff at the current rate.

## Providers are at capacity statewide



National and local experts agree that the workforce crisis may be the most significant challenge we face in maintaining client services and supports or improving outcomes.

## Provider support

### Service in Action

Washington businesses rely on providers to create positions that match job seekers skills and provide support with training, accommodations and coworker education.



[Microsoft Supported Employment Program](#)



## Contents

Summary .....	5
Rates Needed to Maintain Outcomes .....	5
Employment Service Outcomes.....	6
Background.....	6
Where are We Now.....	7
Where We Want to Go.....	8
Employment and Community Inclusion Services Transform Lives.....	8
A. Rate Study Participants.....	9
B. Description of the Organizational Components and Costs Associated with the Delivery of Supported Employment and Community Inclusion Services.....	10
<i>Overview.....</i>	10
<i>Provider Surveys.....</i>	10
<i>Wage Rate Adjustments .....</i>	11
<i>Productivity Adjustments .....</i>	12
<i>Other Direct Program Costs .....</i>	12
<i>Facilities and Administrative Costs.....</i>	12
<i>Detailed Cost Components .....</i>	13
C. Recommendations of the Rates Needed for Providers to Cover Costs and Maintain Infrastructure Required to Achieve Client Outcomes.....	14
<i>TABLE 1. DDA Individual Supported Employment Rate Model.....</i>	15
<i>TABLE 2. DDA Community Inclusion Rate Model.....</i>	16
D. Recommendation for a Methodology for Regularly Analyzing Costs Associated with Service Delivery, Including Frequency of Required Rate Adjustments .....	17
E. Current System Overview.....	17
<i>What is Supported Employment?.....</i>	17
<i>Why do Supported Employment Services and Jobs for People with Developmental Disabilities Matter?.....</i>	18
<i>Who Provides Supported Employment Services?.....</i>	18
<i>What Elements are Needed to get People Jobs in Supported Employment?.....</i>	19
<i>What Employers are Saying About Supported Employment .....</i>	19
F. Program Service Categories.....	20
<i>Activity Descriptions.....</i>	21
<i>Employment Activities - Strategies &amp; Progress and Outcome Measures.....</i>	21
<i>Community Inclusion Activities - Strategies &amp; Progress and Outcome Measures.....</i>	25
G. Consistent Rate Allocation Methodology to Counties.....	26
H. Counties Administer Services at the Local Level.....	29



### Summary

The DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration partnered with the DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division to prepare this report and conduct a rate study of supported employment and community inclusion services. As directed in [Senate Bill 5693 Sec. 203 \(1\)\(ff\) \(i-iv\)](#) this report:

- i. Summarizes the current employment and day system and how it operates, including an overview of the current rate structure.
- ii. Describes the organizational components and costs associated with the delivery of supported employment and community inclusion services that achieve client outcomes.
- iii. Recommends a methodology that includes:
  - a. Periodic funding of a full-scope rate study, with the resources and timeline necessary to support external contracting through a competitive bid process when it is determined that delivery systems have stabilized and established a “new normal.”
  - b. Annual adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue statistical area.
  - c. Completion of the next full-scope rate study by 2026.
  - d. A formal assessment of disparities and differences in provider rates for employment supports funded by the Health Care Authority, the DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration.
- iv. This report recommends the Legislature sufficiently fund individual supported employment, group supported employment and community inclusion services with the rates needed for providers to cover their costs and maintain the infrastructure required to achieve and support client outcomes.

### Rates Needed to Maintain Outcomes

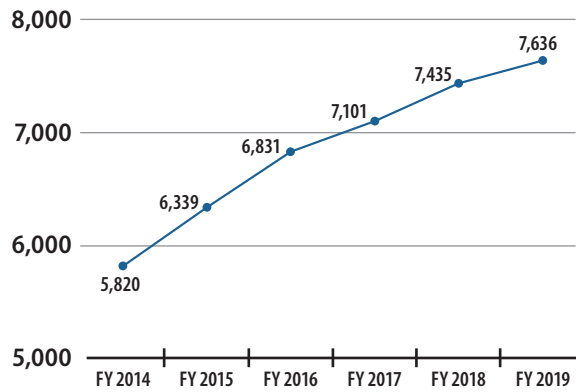
For Individual Supported Employment services, the rate model supports a rate of \$121.41 per billable hour in SFY 2023, increasing to \$125.05 in SFY 2024 and \$128.80 in SFY 2025.

For Group Supported Employment services, the rate model supports a rate of \$104.06 per billable hour in SFY 2023, increasing to \$107.18 in SFY 2024 and \$110.40 in SFY 2025.

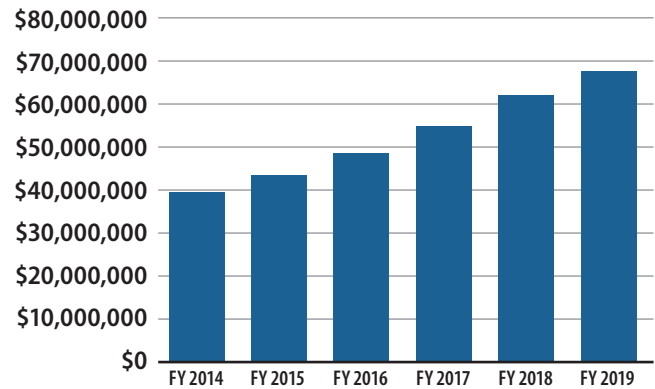
For Community Inclusion services, the rate model supports a rate of \$82.63 per billable hour in SFY 2023, increasing to \$85.11 in SFY 2024 and \$87.66 in SFY 2025.



## Number of Clients Earning Wages



## Employment Security Dept. Reported Client Earnings



SOURCE: DDD Working Age Adult Policy Paper Data-DDA Client Wages; DSHS RDA, August 8, 2020.

## Background

Washington state has been number one in the nation for employment outcomes for clients with developmental disabilities for over a decade<sup>1</sup>. Our Employment and Community Inclusion providers, contracted through counties, have demonstrated their commitment to quality services and outcomes, implementing and sharing best practices across their networks to support employment and inclusion for all. With this and our state's strong Employment First [policy](#), advocacy efforts and investment in provider training and professional development, DDA clients receiving Employment and Community Inclusion services have seen their lives transformed. In 2019, Washingtonians with developmental disabilities earned \$67.6M (DSHS Research Data and Analysis), paid taxes and reduced their reliance on public supports while increasing their quality of life and health outcomes.<sup>2</sup> Sustaining investments in quality Employment and Community Inclusion services are critical to support Washingtonians with developmental disabilities to live full, meaningful lives in their communities.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.statedata.info/statepages/Washington>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health#tab=tab_1)





### Where We are Now

Due to COVID-19, many clients enrolled in Employment and Community Inclusion services were not able to participate in services for more than two years and are excited to get back to work or community inclusion activities. Unfortunately, providers are struggling with workforce shortage and are no longer able to fully staff these critical services. For providers, rising business costs and increases in benchmark wages, combined with no rate increase in over a decade has created barriers in maintaining or expanding availability of services. As of spring 2022, less than one third of contracted providers in Washington state had staff capacity to take on new clients in Employment and Community Inclusion services. Additionally, providers are struggling to deliver services to their current clients.



*"I feel confident interacting with customers."  
– Nicole (working client)*

With the recent passage of [House Bill 1980](#) (allows clients to access concurrent Employment and Community Inclusion services for the first time) and [Senate Bill 5790](#) (expands and improves school to employment services statewide) there will be a

significant increase in demand for services. DDA may face challenges to execute on the intent of this legislation if providers are not adequately funded.



*"Having this job makes a difference... and it's a lot of fun."  
– Tevin (working client)*



### Where We Want to Go

Washington state is a national leader for employment and community participation for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The US Department of Labor lists funding as one of the [10 Critical Areas to Increase Competitive Integrated Employment](#). Unfortunately, the rate study shows that the current rate paid to providers is not sufficient to continue Washington's leadership position and support the outcomes DDA seeks for Employment and Community



Inclusion services. These services should be funded in alignment with the findings of this study to continue quality services in Washington State and to meet the exciting opportunities that [House Bill 1980](#) and [Senate Bill 5790](#) will bring.

All Washingtonians with developmental disabilities deserve to work and participate in their communities. Employment and Community Inclusion services increase skills, opportunities, health outcomes and meaningful relationships. Funding sustainable provider rates for services is imperative to support an inclusive Washington.

*"I am an essential part of the workforce." – John (working client)*

### Employment and Community Inclusion Services Transform Lives

Select a link below to see how Employment and Community Inclusion services transform lives.

- Nate's job: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tm1sbKpop5U>
- Bertha's job: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgfX9y7dJoo>
- Haley's job: <https://gopro.com/v/wEv05OZBeyoR>
- Josh's job: <https://gopro.com/v/lrvyGVOX2aqJE>





### **A. Rate Study Participants**

#### **Association of County Human Services**

- King County – Susy Stremel
- Spokane County – Brian Nichols
- Whatcom County – Jessica Lee

#### **Community Employment Alliance**

- Community Employment Alliance Executive Director – Courtney Williams
- Trillium (employment provider) – Karen Williams
- SKCAC (employment and community inclusion provider) – Debbie Meyers

#### **DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration**

- Branda Matson
- Brett Lorentson
- Brooke Baynard
- Dala Rice
- David Money
- Megan Burr
- Saif Hakim
- Stephanie Jones

#### **DSHS Research Analysis and Data**

- David Mancuso

#### **DSHS Management Services Division**

- Kenneth Callaghan



# B. Description of the Organizational Components and Costs Associated with the Delivery of Supported Employment and Community Inclusion Services

## Overview

DDA partnered with the DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division to conduct a comprehensive study of rates for Supported Employment and Community Inclusion services. Rate models are built on a number of factors, including: wages and benefits for direct service staff; the relationship between direct service staff paid hours and billable hours; and other direct program operation, facility, and administrative costs. Providers' directly reported cost information is the main data source for rate model development, supplemented by Bureau of Labor Statistics wage survey<sup>3</sup> and Consumer Price Index data<sup>4</sup>. Rate model parameters represent typical provider costs, trended forward based on the CPI to the 2023-25 biennium. Rate model assumptions are not intended to be restrictive; for any given provider, actual costs for specific rate components are expected to vary.

## Provider Surveys

Following a review of similar rate studies recently undertaken in other states, RDA developed a survey data collection instrument customized for the Washington state program environment. Instruments were finalized with input from DDA program staff and providers. Data were collected separately for Individual Supported Employment and Community Inclusion programs. Data for Group Supported Employment services were not submitted.

The initial round of provider data collection was completed on May 13, 2022. Collection of supplemental direct staff detail from a subsample of Individual Supported Employment providers was completed on June 30, 2022. A second round of data collection was completed with Community Inclusion providers on June 30, 2022, to expand the information set used for rate development. With limited time available for analysis and rate development, data collection focused on higher-volume providers with the ability to report the requested data on the rapid cycle needed to meet legislative report timelines.

For Individual Supported Employment rate development, information was received from 13 providers who delivered 243,026 hours of services across 15 counties in the July 2021 to February 2022 reporting period.

For Community Inclusion rate development, information was received from eight providers who delivered 27,310 hours of services across eight counties in the July 2021 to February 2022 reporting period.

<sup>3</sup><https://www.bls.gov/oes/home.htm>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.bls.gov/cpi/>



### Wage Rate Adjustments

Mean wage levels from BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics Survey estimates for May 2021 were used to develop market rate benchmarks for direct service staff for Individual Supported Employment rate development. The market rate benchmark was a weighted average of the mean wage observed for rehabilitation counselors (90 percent) and social and community service managers (10 percent) in the vocational rehabilitation industry in Washington state. Weights were determined based on provider direct service staffing data. For Community Inclusion rate development, wage levels were based on provider-reported direct service staff wages, weighted by hours of Community Inclusion services billed in the reporting period.

Historical BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics Survey data show that real mean wage levels for rehabilitation counselors and social and community service managers in the vocational rehabilitation industry have eroded since 2012, declining by approximately 10 percent on an inflation-adjusted basis. This contrasts with a two percent increase in real (inflation-adjusted) mean wages across all occupations in the health and social service sector in Washington state over the same time period. This observation may reflect the impact of stagnant provider reimbursement rates (except for time-limited COVID-related enhancements) in an industry where public programs are the primary funder of services. In this context, it is appropriate to consider linking future rate levels to inflation, to mitigate against further real wage erosion that would create additional pressure on provider capacity to deliver services. Consequently, the rate models developed here include inflation adjustments through the SFY 2025 forecast horizon.

We note that the adjustment to market wage rates derived from BLS survey data in the Individual Supported Employment rate model has only a modest effect in the rate model. Individual Supported Employment providers reported an average direct staff wage level of \$25.77 in the July 2021 to February 2022 period, compared to the weighted average of \$26.92 derived from May 2021 BLS survey data for our selected industry and occupation benchmarks.

Wages were trended forward through April 2022 based on the observed values of the CPI for All Urban Consumers in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue statistical area, with further inflation forecast adjustments made to project provider rates for SFYs 2023 through 2025. We applied a pro-rated eight percent inflation adjustment to January 2023 (as a midyear reference point for SFY 2023), and then applied three percent annual inflation factors to develop projected rates for SFYs 2024 and 2025<sup>5</sup>. These parameter choices assume the Federal Reserve will be largely successful in bringing inflation rapidly in line with its policy targets.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.kiplinger.com/economic-forecasts/inflation>



### Productivity Adjustments

Direct service staff do not provide billable time during all working hours. For example, leave and training time are not billable, and client availability may further reduce the volume of paid staff time available to provide billable hours. Further, in some contexts staff-to-client ratios may exceed 1:1. The costs associated with these activities must be distributed across workers' billable time. Our provider survey collected information about the relationship between paid direct staff time and billable hours, providing the basis for the "productivity adjustment" used in the rate model.

We found that in the provision of Individual Supported Employment services, for each hour of billable direct staff time, there is another hour of paid direct staff time that is not billable. In the provision of Community Inclusion services, for each hour of billable direct staff time, there is another 38.4 minutes of paid direct staff time that is not billable.

Note that the period used for provider survey data collection (July 2021 to February 2022) may not yet fully reflect the "new normal" in post-pandemic patterns of service utilization. For this reason, we recommend that a follow-up rate study be conducted in the relatively near future, when utilization patterns have stabilized following the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Other Direct Program Costs

Costs in this category include items such as mileage and transportation, program-specific materials and supplies, translation costs, assistive devices and other program-specific technology, program-specific training, and other program staff time not attributed to direct service (e.g., first-line supervision).

### Facilities and Administrative Costs

Providers require administrative infrastructure including executive management, finance and accounting, information technology, human resources and administrative support to effectively deliver services. The rate models include funding to support costs associated with these functions, along with costs such as facility-related expenses, other equipment and supplies, insurance, professional services, licensing and accreditation fees. We note that several of these costs elements reflect contract requirements.

The administrative component of the rate (20 percent) includes a margin of approximately five percent to provide resources to:

- Ensure delivery system resilience and ability to sustain operations through potential future disruptions (e.g., public health emergencies);
- Support investment in staff recruitment and retention, technology, training or other domains to improve service quality and client outcomes;
- Mitigate the need to cross-subsidize DDA-funded services with other revenue sources.



### Detailed Cost Components

The data collection instruments captured the following cost components for the development of Individual Supported Employment and Community Inclusion rates:

- Direct service staffing costs, which includes:
  - Salaries and wages
  - Benefits and other payroll-related expenses (e.g., payroll taxes)
  - Adjustments to account for the fact that not all direct service staff paid hours are billable (e.g., due to client availability, unreimbursed program setup or staff meeting time, vacation, sick leave, training time, etc.).
- Direct program costs including costs associated with:
  - Mileage
  - Supplies
  - Translation
  - Assistive devices and other program-specific technology
  - Training
  - Other direct program staff time not attributed to direct service (e.g., first-line supervision).
- Facility costs.
- Administrative indirect costs including administrative support staff, executive management, HR support, information technology, other equipment and supplies, insurance, professional services, licensing and accreditation fees.

Data on the number of billed hours in the reporting period was also collected, for use as weights in calculating statewide averages for rate model parameter values.





### **C. Recommendations of the Rates Needed for Providers to Cover Costs and Maintain Infrastructure Required to Achieve Client Outcomes**

Rate models leverage key parameters derived from the provider survey, including direct-staff occupation mix, benefit rates, productivity ratios, other direct-program cost factors, facility cost factors and administrative or indirect cost factors. For Individual Supported Employment rate development, these parameters are combined in the rate model with CPI-adjusted BLS survey market rate wage data for our benchmark occupations. For Community Inclusion rate development, hourly wage rates are based on employer-provided data. Note that we maintain fixed provider-reported cost percentages for other direct program, facility, and administrative costs through the rate-model forecast horizon, assuming common inflationary impacts across these cost centers.

Models reflect the rates needed for providers to cover their costs and maintain the infrastructure required to achieve client outcomes. Individual Supported Employment rates are reported in Table 1. Community Inclusion rates are reported in Table 2.

These rate models provide a standardized statewide approach to rate setting. With a longer runway for data collection and analysis, and additional resources for rate model development, it would be reasonable to assess whether it would be appropriate to develop regional adjustment factors to account for potential cost differences in various parts of the state.



**TABLE 1: DDA Individual Supported Employment Rate Model**

Note: Calculations summarized below are based on unrounded underlying values

TIME PERIOD	7/21-2/22	SFY 2023	SFY 2024	SFY 2025
WAGE DATE SOURCE	Provider reported for historical period	BLS Survey market rate with inflation adjustment	BLS Survey market rate with inflation adjustment	BLS Survey market rate with inflation adjustment
<b>Direct Service Staff Wages and Benefits</b>				
Direct Service Staff Average Hourly Wage	\$25.77	\$31.14	\$32.07	\$33.03
Benefit Rate (as a percent of wages)	28.7%	28.7%	28.7%	28.7%
Hourly Staff Cost Before Productivity Adj. (wages + benefits)	\$33.17	\$40.07	\$41.27	\$42.51
Net Adjustment for Productivity, Staffing Ratio, and Client Attendance and Availability	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Hourly Direct Staff Cost per Billable Hour	\$66.30	\$80.09	\$82.50	\$84.97
<b>Other Direct Program Costs per Billable Hour</b>				
Other Direct Program Costs as % of Total Rate	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
<b>Facility and Administrative Support Costs</b>				
Direct Program Cost per Client per Billable Hour Before Facility and Admin	\$76.32	\$92.20	\$94.97	\$97.82
Facility Cost per Billable Hour	\$4.07	\$4.92	\$5.07	\$5.22
Facility Costs as a Percent of Total Rate	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
Administrative Cost per Billable Hour	\$20.10	\$24.28	\$25.01	\$25.76
Administrative Costs as a Percent of Total Rate	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
<b>TOTAL RATE PER HOUR</b>	<b>\$100.49</b>	<b>\$121.41</b>	<b>\$125.05</b>	<b>\$128.80</b>



**TABLE 2: DDA Community Inclusion Rate Model**

Note: Calculations summarized below are based on unrounded underlying values

TIME PERIOD	7/21-2/22	SFY 2023	SFY 2024	SFY 2025
<b>WAGE DATE SOURCE</b>	<b>Provider reported for historical period</b>	<b>Provider reported with inflation adjustment</b>	<b>Provider reported with inflation adjustment</b>	<b>Provider reported with inflation adjustment</b>
<b>Direct Service Staff Wages and Benefits</b>				
Direct Service Staff Average Hourly Wage	\$21.96	\$24.31	\$25.04	\$25.79
Benefit Rate (as a percent of wages)	30.1%	30.1%	30.1%	30.1%
Hourly Staff Cost Before Productivity Adj. (wages + benefits)	\$28.56	\$31.62	\$32.56	\$33.54
Net Adjustment for Productivity, Staffing Ratio, and Client Attendance and Availability	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64
Hourly Direct Staff Cost per Billable Hour	\$46.77	\$51.78	\$53.33	\$54.93
<b>Other Direct Program Costs per Billable Hour</b>	<b>\$9.72</b>	<b>\$10.75</b>	<b>\$11.08</b>	<b>\$11.41</b>
Other Direct Program Costs as % of Total Rate	13.0%	13.0%	13.0%	13.0%
<b>Facility and Administrative Support Costs</b>				
Direct Program Cost per Client per Billable Hour Before Facility and Admin	\$56.49	\$62.53	\$64.41	\$66.34
Facility Cost per Billable Hour	\$3.23	\$3.57	\$3.68	\$3.79
Facility Costs as a Percent of Total Rate	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
Administrative Cost per Billable Hour	\$14.93	\$16.53	\$17.02	\$17.53
Administrative Costs as a Percent of Total Rate	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
<b>TOTAL RATE PER HOUR</b>	<b>\$74.64</b>	<b>\$82.63</b>	<b>\$85.11</b>	<b>\$87.66</b>

For Individual Supported Employment services, the rate model supports a rate of \$121.41 per billable hour in SFY 2023, increasing to \$125.05 in SFY 2024 and \$128.80 in SFY 2025. For Community Inclusion services, the rate model supports a rate of \$82.63 per billable hour in SFY 2023, increasing to \$85.11 in SFY 2024 and \$87.66 in SFY 2025.

In the absence of provider-reported data for Group Supported Employment services, one approach that might be considered is to apply a comparable proportional adjustment to current rates as indicated for Individual Supported Employment services. This approach would imply Group Supported Employment rates of \$104.06 per billable hour in SFY 2023, increasing to \$107.18 in SFY 2024 and \$110.40 in SFY 2025.



### **D. Recommendation for a Methodology for Regularly Analyzing Costs Associated with Service Delivery, Including Frequency of Required Rate Adjustments**

We recommend a full-scope rate study to occur periodically, with the resources and timeline necessary to support external contracting through a competitive bid process. We recommend that the next full-scope rate study be completed by 2026, or at a point when it is determined that delivery systems have stabilized and a “new normal” has been established following the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recommend that this future rate study include a formal assessment of disparities and differences in provider rates for employment supports funded by the Health Care Authority, the DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration. We also recommend the next full-scope rate study consider whether it would be appropriate to develop regional rates, or enhanced rates to reduce disparities in access across populations.

Before rebasing through a full-scope rate study, we recommend annual adjustments be made based on the CPI for All Urban Consumers in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue statistical area. We note that global statewide mean wage rates across the health and social assistance sector have tracked this CPI benchmark closely over the past decade. That is, averaged across all occupations, real wages in the health and social assistance sector have been relatively stable. In contrast, wage rates in the vocational rehabilitation industry have stagnated, declining by 10 percent in real terms since 2012 in our benchmark occupations. Adjusting Supported Employment and Community Inclusion rates based on the CPI will reduce the likelihood that rate-driven real wage stagnation will put provider capacity at risk.

### **E. Current System Overview**

#### **What is Supported Employment?**

Supported Employment is a service where a direct support professional assists a person with an intellectual or developmental disability to get and keep a job. Supported Employment services support a person to discover vocational goals, market job skills to local businesses and offer ongoing support once the person is in the job. Services are individualized and offer job coaching and instruction to both the person with an intellectual or developmental disability and their coworkers. Supported Employment promotes independence and helps people become self-sufficient members of the communities.



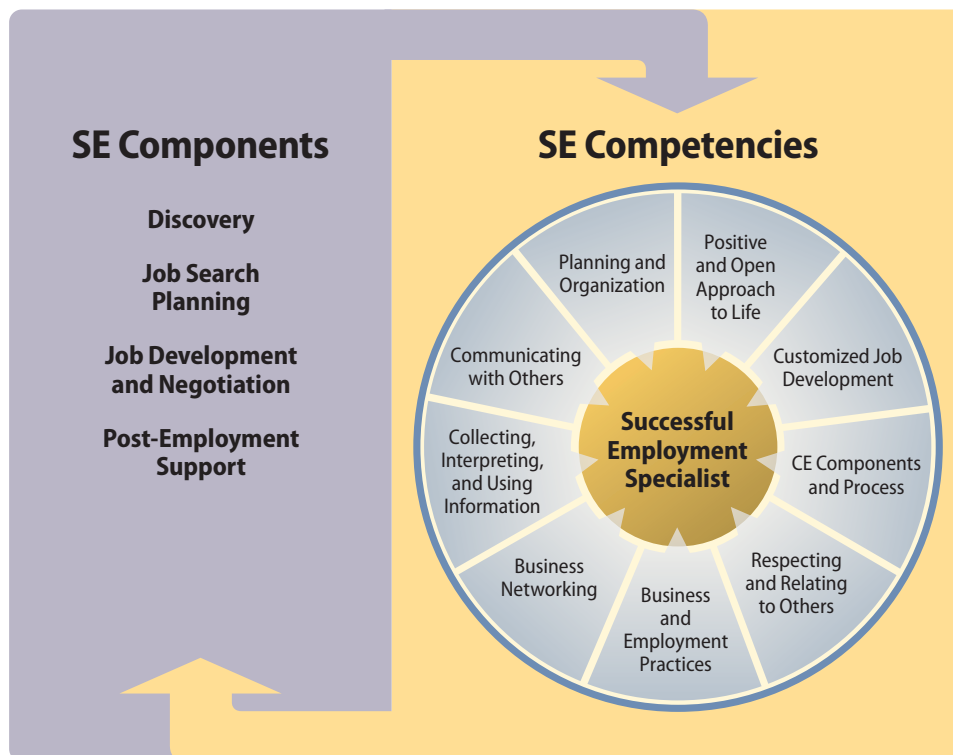
### Why do Supported Employment services and jobs for people with Developmental Disabilities matter?

- Supports people to be contributors to their community.
- Promotes self-sufficiency and reduces reliance on other state-funded services.
- Increases independence and community connections for the person.
- Paychecks expand choice for the person.
- Helps businesses to diversify their workforce.
- Increases community compliance with the American for Disabilities Act.
- Results in cost savings in paid state benefits (medical and financial).

### Who Provides Supported Employment Services?

Washington state counties contract with qualified vocational providers to provide supported employment services. Providers employ support professionals who are trained to work with people with developmental disabilities to find a job. Support professionals connect with local employers to identify needs and match people with developmental disabilities in positions that meet their skills and interests. Support professionals are trained to support people with developmental disabilities at their job and to increase the person's independence on the job.

### Supported Employment Competency Model







### What elements are needed to get people jobs in Supported Employment?

- Quality vocational agencies and experienced support professionals.
- Technical assistance for support professionals to assist people with complex needs.
- Individual and family active participation in employment search.
- Open local employment markets.
- Access to consistent transportation.

### What employers are saying about Supported Employment



*“Think of the person not as someone with developmental disabilities but as someone with diverse abilities. In my experience, those diverse abilities have included: almost fanatical attention to detail, loyalty to the organization, consistency with work output, ability to help instill a team environment, and a very strong attendance record.” – Brian K., Safeway District Manager*

*“Not only have we gained an efficient, detail-oriented worker, but we have gained a valued member of the Connolly Law family whose impact has greatly affected every member of our staff for the better. Our employee provides hard work, dedication, and a sense of humor that is unmatched.” – Connolly Law Offices, PPLC, Tacoma*



### F. Program Service Categories

- a. Individual Supported Employment services are a part of an individual's pathway to employment, promote career development, and are tailored to individual needs, interests, and abilities. These individualized services are necessary to help people with developmental disabilities obtain and continue integrated employment at or above the state's minimum wage in the general workforce. These services may include intake, discovery, assessment, job preparation, job marketing, job supports, record keeping and support to maintain a job.
- b. Group Supported Employment services are a part of an individual's pathway to integrated jobs in typical community employment. These services are intended to be short term and offer ongoing supervised employment for groups of no more than eight workers with disabilities in the same setting. The service outcome is sustained paid employment leading to further career development in integrated employment at or above minimum wage. Examples of employment groups include enclaves, mobile crews, and other business models employing small groups of workers with disabilities in integrated employment in community settings.
- c. Community Inclusion services are individualized activities provided in typical integrated community settings. Services promote individualized skill development, independent living and community integration for people to learn how to actively and independently engage in their local community. Activities provide opportunities to develop relationships and to learn, practice and apply skills that result in greater independence and community inclusion. These services may be authorized for individuals age 62 and older. These services may be authorized instead of employment support (Individual Employment or Group Supported Employment) for working age individuals who have received nine months of employment support.
- d. Child Development Services or birth-to-three services are designed to: meet the developmental needs of eligible children and the needs of their families; and enhance the child's development. Services may include specialized instruction, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, assistive technology and vision services. Services are provided in natural environments to the maximum extent appropriate.
- e. Individualized Technical Assistance services are a part of an individual's pathway to individual employment. This service provides assessment and consultation to the employment provider to identify and address existing barriers to employment. This is in addition to supports received through supported employment services for individuals who have not yet achieved their employment goal.
- f. Information and Education services include a variety of activities and strategies that are developed to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and families have full access to current information about services and supports that will assist them in becoming full participants in their communities.



**Activity Descriptions**

The initial goal for client’s receiving employment and day services is employment. A range of service activities are needed to assist them in moving along a “pathway to employment.”The pathway is made up of phases, elements and activities.

- a. Phase describes the general stage along a client’s pathway to employment at minimum wage.
- b. Element is a component of the employment phase that organizes activities into related tasks and strategies.
- c. Activity is a reportable service within each element that directly benefits the client and supports the employment goals within the individual employment plan. Employment goals may be developed with the client present or on behalf of the client when the client is not present. Billable activities are provided by direct service staff.

**Employment Activities – Strategies & Progress and Outcome Measures**

The outcome for a pathway is always paid employment and self-employment. The process for obtaining employment is individualized; the table below is not intended to require all elements or require the elements in a specific order.

<b>ELEMENTS OF THE PHASES</b>	<b>TOOLS AND STRATEGIES</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
<b>Intake</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview job seeker and family</li> <li>• Provide system overview including services and funding</li> <li>• Provide and explain participant handbook</li> <li>• Collect initial paperwork and documents, records, history and information</li> <li>• Collect Social Security information</li> <li>• Provide documentation on rights and responsibilities</li> <li>• Collect release of information</li> <li>• Resource connections (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Developmental Disability Administration and Social Security Administration, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An informed and knowledgeable job seeker and a supportive family with the knowledge of system, agency and supports and an understanding of rights and responsibilities</li> <li>• A shared understanding of all roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Preliminary Benefits Analysis Completed</li> <li>• Division of Vocational Rehabilitation funding is secured as needed</li> </ul>



<p><b>Discovery</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify job interests</li> <li>• Interview the person, family, friends, neighbors, teachers and others recommended by the individual and family</li> <li>• Develop a Circle of Support if necessary for the job seeker</li> <li>• Observe the individual in different community and home settings including familiar and unfamiliar venues</li> <li>• Conduct activities that change the time, place, people, environment and supports to learn more about the job seeker in different ways such as time-limited job experiences</li> <li>• Research current job market and employers and compare to current job seeker's skills and preferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An employment profile that includes: an employment goal; a direction for job development; and a list of specific tasks the individual can perform competitively (goals, methods, strategies)</li> <li>• A list of employment sites in the community that may match the job seeker's employment goal</li> <li>• An employment goal that meets the job seeker's skills, talents and interests and fits a market need</li> <li>• A plan that includes timelines, preferences, potential contributions of the job seeker, responsibilities for the circle of supports members</li> <li>• Quarterly review to assess goal progress and establish next steps</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop community-based assessment sites</li> <li>• Support the job seeker on the site in orientation and training</li> <li>• Conduct vocational intake</li> <li>• Conduct Person-Centered Planning</li> <li>• Develop an employment plan</li> <li>• Develop an assistive technology plan</li> <li>• Develop and implement trial work experiences that give the job seeker an opportunity to test a job and discover their preferences, skills and support needs</li> </ul>	<p>An assessment report that describes the job seeker's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current level of performance in a specific job environment</li> <li>• Learning and performance characteristics</li> <li>• Preferences</li> <li>• Supports and accommodations needed</li> <li>• Potential needs for accessibility, assistance, technology and personal assistance in the workplace</li> <li>• Behavioral challenges and strategies to reduce the likelihood of the behavior occurring</li> <li>• Habits, routines and distinct characteristics</li> <li>• Degree of supports likely to be needed; &amp;</li> <li>• Type and amount of negotiation likely to be needed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Job Preparation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct travel training</li> <li>• Teach and have job seeker practice interviewing skills</li> <li>• Assist in obtaining required items i.e., food handler's card, first aid card etc.</li> <li>• Develop a portfolio or resume</li> <li>• Complete employment applications</li> <li>• Develop a rough draft for an application</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A resume, video and portfolio are developed</li> <li>• Job seeker is using public transportation or has developed private transportation</li> <li>• The job seeker has practiced interviewing</li> <li>• The job seeker has the information at-hand to create a job application</li> </ul>



<p><b>Marketing/Job Development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop marketing tools</li> <li>• Conduct labor market analysis</li> <li>• Research and target employers</li> <li>• Conduct tours of business of interest</li> <li>• Develop and present environmental analysis of targeted businesses</li> <li>• Develop and implement targeted employer presentations</li> <li>• Network</li> <li>• Conduct informational interviews</li> <li>• Introduce and market the individual</li> <li>• Educate employers and benefits to employee, business, outline expectations</li> <li>• Evaluate employment site and present proposal to employer</li> <li>• Negotiate with employer</li> <li>• Identify potential natural supports</li> <li>• Assist with interview or working interview</li> <li>• Customize the job by negotiating hours, tasks, wages and accommodations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific goals for marketing and individualized job development are outlined in the individuals' career path plan</li> <li>• There are marketing tools (employment proposal) that are appropriate to the job seeker and the business</li> <li>• Research has been completed for several companies that match the job seeker's skills and preferences</li> <li>• A relationship has been developed within an appropriate business</li> <li>• A workplace analysis defining employer needs has been completed</li> <li>• An employment offer that meets the needs and preferences of the employer and the job seeker</li> <li>• A satisfying job match that meets employee and employer needs and wants</li> </ul>
<p><b>Job Coaching</b> <b>Intensive on-the-job supports</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setup transportation (bus training on Access) and coordinate schedule with individual and family home site</li> <li>• Perform a job analysis or task analysis to learn about the tasks employee will be performing</li> <li>• Provide assistance with training and staff orientation</li> <li>• Provide safety or emergency information sheets to employer and safety protocol discussed with employee</li> <li>• Provide Job Coaching and training for the individual, co-workers, supervisors</li> <li>• Develop natural supports with co-workers</li> <li>• Benefits Analysis (contacting Social Security)</li> <li>• Develop supports to maintain independence, jigs, checklist, pictorial job map and description</li> <li>• Maintain continuous communication with the family, employee, employer</li> <li>• Maintain continuous evaluation modifying job-site tasks and supports as necessary</li> <li>• Develop natural supports</li> <li>• Develop fading plan</li> <li>• Identify stabilization</li> <li>• Develop follow-up support plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public or private transportation is secured</li> <li>• A job description is created that the new employee can be expected to perform</li> <li>• A new employee who has been oriented to the job and has supports, assistive technology, information and the structure to complete the job either with or without long term supports</li> <li>• An informed and trained staff in the new employee's company including a supervisor, co-workers and a contact person that can answer questions on the job for the new employee and know who to contact for outside supports</li> <li>• Co-worker(s) that will assume a natural support relationship with the new employee</li> <li>• A fading plan is in place with strategies for natural supports and contacts</li> <li>• The new employee has reached "stabilization" and funding is switched from DVR to long term funding source</li> <li>• A follow-up support plan is in place</li> </ul>





<p><b>Retention - Maintaining Employment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check in with manager and employee periodically or as needed</li> <li>• Provide additional job training for either the new employee or for the co-workers and supervisors</li> <li>• Conduct problem recognition/solve communication and/or work or life challenges</li> <li>• Advocate for higher wages, hours and increased responsibilities and advanced career opportunities</li> <li>• Evaluate biannually (minimum) the employment plan</li> <li>• Develop employer evaluation and use for feedback loops to program improvement</li> <li>• Modify job-add tasks-provide additional training support as necessary</li> <li>• Continue to build on the employer relationship</li> <li>• Maintain communication with family/home site</li> <li>• Assess use of Work Incentives such as a plan for achieving self-support or impairment related work expenses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable employment and/or advancement on a career path</li> <li>• An employer feedback system that evaluates both the employee and the support system</li> <li>• Solid communication loops and expectations with employee, employer, family and others are in place as needed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Record Keeping &amp; Other Support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain files/records</li> <li>• Produce ongoing case notes. Write billing reports for public funders</li> <li>• Create skills assessment reports and recommendations.</li> <li>• Document objective observation</li> <li>• Develop measurable outcome based, individualized plans.</li> <li>• Manage data and information required for contractual requirements</li> <li>• Completing reports for Developmental Disabilities Administration</li> <li>• Attend annual Person Centered Service Plan meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a complete record of the employee which includes signed and dated plans, progress reports, Incident reports, employer satisfaction surveys, wage, hours, employer information, contacts, and feedback from the employee</li> <li>• Information and data are documented accurately and comprehensively to be able to see measured progress towards reaching one's individual full work potential</li> <li>• Required documentation for funders is thorough, comprehensive and fulfills all contractual requirements</li> <li>• Information for accreditation agencies and other stakeholders is satisfactory and accessible</li> <li>• Current Person Centered Service Plan in file</li> </ul>



**Community Inclusion Activities – Strategies & Progress and Outcome Measures**

<b>ELEMENTS OF THE PHASES</b>	<b>TOOLS AND STRATEGIES</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
<b>Intake</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with client, family and other support people</li> <li>• Provide service overview and review service requirements/expectations</li> <li>• Complete initial paperwork including intake assessment</li> <li>• Collect individual's history/information/ records from other source</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An informed and knowledgeable client and a supportive family with the knowledge of the system, agency, supports and an understanding of rights and responsibilities</li> <li>• A clear understanding of expected service outcomes and a clear understanding of what the service is not</li> <li>• A shared understanding of all roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>
<b>Discovery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying people and places within the local community where a client's interests, culture, talent and gift can be contributed and shared with others with similar interests</li> <li>• Identify skills and interests for community contribution</li> <li>• Conduct an assessment – skills inventory</li> <li>• Sample various community service sites and activities that match Community Inclusion goals</li> <li>• Identify supports needed for successful participation in Community Inclusion activities (transportation resources, travel training, necessary accommodations identify community organizations and activities compatible with interest's contributions</li> <li>• Develop Community Inclusion plan consistent with the four elements of services and individual's interests</li> <li>• Develop a Circle of Support if necessary for the individual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Community Inclusion plan consistent with the four elements of services outlining:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Goals based on skills, interest, abilities and supports</li> <li>- Methods and strategies</li> <li>- Timelines</li> <li>- Responsibilities for the Circle of Support</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A list of places and activities in the community not organized to serve individuals with disabilities that may match the individual's interests and or contributions that will promote the development of personal relationships</li> <li>• Quarterly review to assess goal progress and establish next steps</li> </ul>
<b>Community Participation, Skill Development &amp; Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a balance of supports to promote inclusion, independence, skills, personal growth and engagement in the following areas:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Socialization</li> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Recreation</li> <li>- Personal Development</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New relationships are developing</li> <li>• Circle of support is expanding</li> <li>• Paid supports are fading</li> <li>• Participating in and contributing to community organization/activities not organized to serve individuals with disabilities</li> <li>• Volunteer work</li> </ul>



<p><b>Record Keeping &amp; Other Support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record Keeping:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact notes and logs</li> <li>- Progress reports</li> <li>- Incident reports</li> <li>- Satisfaction surveys</li> <li>- Maintain files/records</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Attend annual Person Centered Service Plan meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a complete record of the individual which includes signed and dated plans, progress reports, Incident reports, contacts, and identified Circle of Support</li> <li>• Information and data are documented accurately and comprehensively to be able to see measured progress towards reaching one's individual full potential</li> <li>• Required documentation for funders is thorough, comprehensive and fulfills all contractual requirements</li> <li>• Information for contract agencies and other stakeholders is satisfactory and accessible</li> <li>• Current Person Centered Service Plan in file</li> </ul>
--	---	---

## **G. Consistent Rate Allocation Methodology to Counties**

DSHS' Developmental Disabilities Administration contracts with counties and the counties administer services through local qualified providers. The consistent rate methodology begins with funding allocated to counties based on open service authorizations.

Three primary variables determine the monthly amount per client for the supported employment programs: client acuity, client wage history and county classification.

- a. "Acuity" designates a person's support needs as high, medium, or low. Acuity reflects conditions typically related to the person's disability that are not likely to change and are generally not impacted by outside factors.

A person with high support needs: requires support in the community at all times to maintain health and safety; experiences significant barriers to employment or community participation; and requires frequent supervision, training or full physical assistance with community activities most or all of the time.

An individual with medium support needs: is independent in the community some of the time and requires moderate support to obtain or maintain employment; is able to maintain health and safety in the community for short periods of time; may need some supervision, training or partial physical assistance with community activities; and may need regular monitoring or prompting to perform tasks.



An individual with low support needs: is generally independent in the community and requires minimal support to obtain or maintain employment; is able to communicate with others effectively and can maintain personal health and safety most of the time without supervision; and may be able to perform tasks with minimal or occasional monitoring or prompting.

The acuity level is determined through the DDA case resource manager assessment of the individual. A group of professionals and providers identified scales and components within the assessment that contributed to employment support needs. Over 1,500 adults were included in a study to validate the selected assessment items and statistical regression was used to find the best set of questions to predict professional judgement. DSHS codified this acuity methodology in rule effective July 1, 2011.

- b. Wage history is a second factor affecting the allocation methodology and falls into three main groupings:
  - (i) Continuous employment – received wages 9 consecutive months of a 12-month period
  - (ii) Recent or intermittent employment – received wages in at least one month of a 12-month period
  - (iii) Unemployed last 12-month period – no wages reported as earned during a 12-month period

The three wage history groupings are applied to all individuals who are in supported employment. For individuals earning less than minimum wage, their work history would be categorized as unemployed last 12-month period.

- c. County classifications are included to recognize the differential in typical staff salary given the size of the state. The model designates counties as either:
  - (i) King County
  - (ii) Metropolitan statistical area and Non-metropolitan statistical area
- d. This widely used model recognizes the differential in typical staff salary with King County, considered the base rate at 100%, and Metropolitan statistical area and Non-Metropolitan statistical area at 95% of the King County base rate.

The county resource allocation is determined by the number of current clients the county has authorized to receive service, the client's acuity, wage history, the county classification, and then multiplied by twelve to annualize the amount to be entered in the county's contract.



SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT MONTHLY ALLOCATION AMOUNTS TO COUNTIES				
Acuity	Wage History	Program	King \$67 an hour multiplied by x # of hours	MSA and Non-MSA \$64 an hour multiplied by x # of hours
Low	Continuous	SE	\$335	\$320
Low	None-Previous	SE	\$603	\$576
Low	Intermittent or Recent	SE	\$670	\$655
Medium	Continuous	SE	\$603	\$576
Medium	None-Previous	SE	\$737	\$704
Medium	Intermittent or Recent	SE	\$938	\$896
High	Continuous	SE	\$1,206	\$1,152
High	None-Previous	SE	\$938	\$ 896
High	Intermittent or Recent	SE	\$1,608	\$1,536
Clients in IE apply wage history				
Clients in GSE apply wage history to those earning minimum wage or better. Clients in GSE earning under minimum wage use Wage History "None-Previous"				

Two primary variables determine the monthly amount per client for the community inclusion: client assessment algorithm and the county classification. The county resource allocation is determined by the number of current clients the county has authorized to receive the service, and the county classification, and then multiplied by twelve to annualize the amount to be entered in the county's contract.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION MONTHLY ALLOCATION AMOUNTS TO COUNTIES			
Acuity	Program	King \$35 an hour multiplied by x # of hours	MSA and Non-MSA \$35 an hour multiplied by x # of hours
A	CI	\$105	\$105
B	CI	\$210	\$210
C	CI	\$315	\$315
D	CI	\$420	\$420
E	CI	\$525	\$525
F	CI	\$630	\$630
G	CI	\$700	\$700

Child Development funds are added based on maintenance of effort. Community information and education funds and county administration funds are also included in the county's contract.





### H. Counties Administer Services at the Local Level

In accordance with chapter 71A.14 RCW, counties provide a coordinated and comprehensive state and local program of services for people with developmental disabilities. Through a request for qualifications process, counties assure that all providers meet requirements as outlined in [DDA Policy 6.13](#), Provider Qualifications for Employment and Day Program Services. Furthermore, staff need the following competencies to achieve and support client outcomes to the fullest:



Once a provider is qualified and a subcontract is in place, the provider information is entered in the DDA CARE system. DDA case resource managers work with clients to determine direct service need, select a qualified provider and then authorize the service. Providers must deliver services not to exceed the authorization amount and bill counties monthly after service delivery. Provider rates are identified in billing instructions. The initial rates were set July 1, 2011, with a hierarchy as follows:

- a. Individual Employment – \$75 an hour
- b. Group Supported Employment – \$65 an hour
- c. Community Inclusion – \$35 an hour

Counties then bill the state for program services and administration costs. The complexity and scope of work for county-administered programs have significantly increased over the past 30 years and this rate study committee recommends the administrative fee be increased from 7% to 10%. For in-depth process details, refer to the service authorization and billing infographic on the next page.

This rate study committee recommends DDA conduct an analysis of the current employment and day system to ensure efficiencies are in place that strengthen service delivery and reduce barriers. Such an analysis could create a more efficient service delivery system with reduced barriers, and increased client outcomes like gainful employment, community contribution and participation.



# New Client Service

Defines the process used to provide service to a client

