



FOSTER YOUTH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES ELIGIBILITY REPORT



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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Executive Summary

This report is prepared in compliance with HB 1061 enacted in 2021, which requires the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to submit an annual report to the Legislature that provides the number of children and youth who:

- Are enrolled clients of the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) ages 16 through 21.
- Are functionally eligible for Medicaid waiver services.
- Are also defined as dependent children under chapter 13.34 RCW.
- May exit dependency proceedings under chapter 13.34 RCW after reaching the maximum age for dependent children.

The stated intent of HB 1061 is to (1) help reduce the number of former foster youth with developmental disabilities discharged into homelessness or inappropriately placed in hospitals and (2) maximize the use of the most cost-effective and appropriate services for former foster youth with developmental disabilities. This is the third such report. Previous reports can be found on the [DCYF Reports page](#).

Introduction

DCYF’s stated mission and vision are to “protect children and strengthen families so they flourish” and “ensure that Washington State’s children and youth grow up safe and healthy — thriving physically, emotionally, and academically, nurtured by family and community.”

DDA’s stated mission is to “transform lives by providing support and fostering partnerships that empower people to live the lives they want.”

Blending these two missions with a person-centered, family-focused approach helps us meet the needs of dependent children and youth with disabilities. The goal of this cross-agency collaboration is to identify the developmental needs of dependent youth and begin planning as early as possible for their transition to young adulthood.

Shared Planning Meeting Requirement

HB 1061 requires DCYF to convene a shared planning meeting (SPM) for dependent youth between the ages of 16 to 16.5 who are DDA eligible, and a DCYF caseworker has determined that the youth “may be eligible for services administered by the developmental disabilities administration.” The goal of the SPM is to begin planning for services the youth may need or want in preparation for their transition to adulthood. Representatives from the youth’s team, DDA, and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) are invited to this SPM.

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The SPM objectives may include but are not limited to:

- Assessing for functional eligibility for developmental disability waiver services.
- Understanding what services and supports the youth wants or needs when they exit dependency.
- Planning for residential services provided by DDA.
- Planning for housing options from entities other than DDA.
- Developing an action plan for how the youth will receive the services they want or need when they exit dependency.
- Initiating a working connection between the DCYF Social Service Specialist and the DDA Case Manager.

Additionally, DCYF is required to direct youth who have participated in this SPM to apply for DDA services and assist in the application process.

Dependent children and youth are required to have SPMs every six months while they are under DCYF's placement and care authority. These requirements were added to the SPM that occurs when a youth is between the ages of 16 and 16.5. DCYF added the specific requirements of this section to our [Guide to Shared Planning Meetings](#) and [Policy 1710 Shared Planning Meeting](#). Additional work has been done to add DDA and DVR as attendees to the participants list in FamLink's meeting notes template.

Implementation

In 2021, DCYF identified individuals from each of the six child welfare regions as designated points of contact for the Developmental Disabilities Services Planning Meetings. DCYF also started the hiring process for a full-time Developmental Disabilities Program Manager and six full-time Mental Health (MH) /Developmental Disabilities (DD) Program Consultants (one for each DCYF Region) to carry the work ongoing.

The DD Program Manager was hired in May 2022 and subsequently onboarded the six program consultants over the last year. The team was completed in September 2023.

DCYF's FamLink system holds data to indicate whether a child or youth is currently eligible for DDA services. Identifying youth who are not currently eligible but might be eligible is more difficult based on system limitations in FamLink. To help meet this need, DCYF's Office of Innovation, Alignment, and Accountability (OIAA) produces automated worklists that identify youth who have a health or mental health condition, a noted Education Plan (such as a 504 or IEP), or who participated in Early Intervention Planning (EIP), in attempt to better identify the population of children and youth who might be eligible.

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Worklists of both groups of youth – those known to be eligible and those potentially eligible for DDA services are distributed to the designated regional points of contact and MH/DD Program Consultants monthly. They then work with the youth’s DCYF caseworker and Shared Planning Meeting Facilitators to ensure a Developmental Disabilities Services Planning Meeting is scheduled, held, and documented. The regional points of contact and MH/DD Program Consultants also assist in ensuring that partners from DDA and DVR are invited to attend. The new MH/DD Program Consultants are also pursuing training in the team decision-making model of meeting facilitation to further assist in meeting completion and ensure that a formal plan of action is distributed to meeting participants.

Data Summary of the Identified Population

Data reviewed during the time period of October 2022 to September 2023 reflects that there were **510** youth with an open removal between the ages of 16 to 16.5. Of those, 66 were identified as either being eligible for DDA services, having a health condition, or having an IEP. Due to data limitations, this report focuses solely on youth aged 16-16.5. Next year’s report will include data on young people aged 16-21.

Cross Agency Collaboration

Representatives from DCYF, DDA, and DVR have met consistently to discuss implementation and to identify point people from each agency to represent the work. DCYF receives quarterly updates of the appropriate points of contact for DVR, which are consequently distributed to MH/DD Program Consultants. DVR also established a general email address specific to this work so they can further assist in DVR’s meeting participation.

This cross-systems team created a supplemental handout (Developmental Disabilities Services Planning Meeting Guide) with DCYF, DDA, and DVR points of contact, as well as detailed processes for meeting implementation. Further scrutiny indicated that developing a meeting template would also be helpful to ensure that the meeting contents are consistent state-wide, that important topics are covered, and that an action plan is completed and shared with meeting participants.

DDA’s Foster Youth Cross-Systems Program Manager and DCYF’s DD Program Manager meet weekly to discuss mutual cases and systems needs. Additionally, DCYF’s regional points of contact from Child Welfare Field Operations (CWFO) and DD/MH Program Consultants meet quarterly with DDA’s Children’s Regional Transitional Coordinators and other relevant DDA staff to participate in joint training and ongoing collaboration.

In addition to the work required under HB 1061 (2021), DCYF and DDA updated the existing service level agreements (SLAs) to improve communication between agencies for both dependent and non-dependent children and youth. The process of outlining steps for inter-agency communications, escalation of concerns and needs, and multi-system collaboration is already

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supporting creative cross-agency solutions to meet the needs of eligible children and youth served by both systems. Further development of a mutual Data Sharing Agreement is also beginning in anticipation of HB 1188 enacted in 2023.

Some of the ways DCYF and DDA are successfully collaborating and supporting families together include:

- DCYF offers in-home voluntary services to support families waiting for DDA out-of-home services.
- Cross-system meetings that include Medicaid partners to explore all options available to youth and families.
- Development of pathways to provide access to agency leadership when approval is needed for creative solutions.
- Frequent meetings around DDA waiver amendments are occurring related to HB1188.

In addition, DCYF, DDA, and the Health Care Authority (HCA) continue to work collaboratively to support youth experiencing a crisis who do not meet the admission criteria for an acute behavioral health inpatient hospital or free-standing psychiatric hospital.

Conclusion

Expanding DCYF’s data reporting to capture youth approaching age 16 has allowed DCYF increased ability to plan for these youth more proactively and ensure SPMs are being facilitated with both DDA and DVR invited before the youth turns 16.5. The agency intends that these dependent children and youth in out-of-home placement will be able to access all available supports to be successful and thrive in their homes and communities. Dependent youth with disabilities require additional support as they transition to adulthood. Exploring all possible options for services and building multi-system supports around these youth as they move into adulthood will give them the best chance for success as young adults.

Appendices

- [Shared Planning Meetings Policy 1710](#)
- [Guide to Shared Planning Meetings DCYF CWP 0070 p](#)

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