
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADVISORY BOARD

*THREE YEAR PLAN
2020-2023*



Skagit County Public Health



INTRODUCTION

The Skagit County Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board is comprised of voting members who are committed to improving the lives of fellow citizens with developmental disabilities in our communities. The Board serves as an information and referral agency within the community about developmental disabilities, and ensures reasonable progress toward the coordination of all local services to persons with developmental disabilities. The Board provides recommendations and feedback on budget proposals prepared by Skagit County Developmental Disabilities Program and works to achieve annual strategic goals that reflect the needs of the community.

The Board's 2020 strategic planning retreat led to the following vision and mission that forms the basis of this plan.

VISION

The Skagit County Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board envisions a future with a clear, compassionate, and accessible service system that is committed to community acceptance, well-being, independence, and inclusion of all individuals with developmental disabilities.

MISSION

To promote prosperity and community inclusion through advocacy. Our visible presence in the community promotes Pride, Hope, Independence, and Respect for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.



COUNTY PLAN

The County Plan is updated and reviewed by the Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board on a three-year cycle to confirm underlying principles and to redefine the vision and mission, if needed. The 2020-2023 plan was informed by:

- A community event held on November 7, 2019 focused on collecting feedback on issues affecting people with developmental disabilities and their families across the lifespan. This event was facilitated by Tim Corey of Colibri Facilitation.
- The annual strategic planning retreat with Board members on January 29, 2020 to establish long-term and short-term goals.
- Priorities, plans, and strategies of the Skagit County Developmental Disabilities Program as informed by community providers, the Developmental Disabilities Administration, and the Association of County Human Services Developmental Disabilities Section.

The goals in this plan are divided into areas of focus that were identified as high priority for our community from the November 2019 event and include:

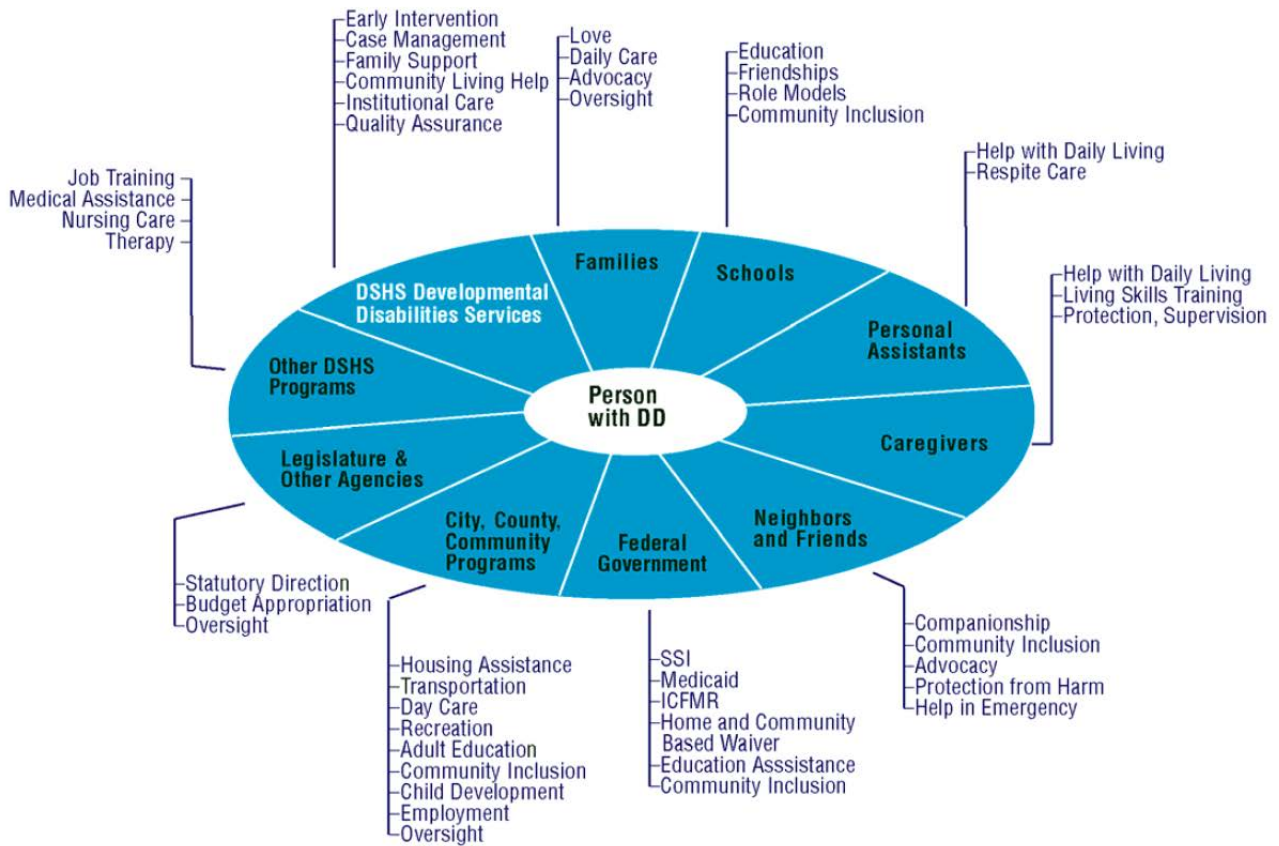
- HOUSING
- RECREATION
- EMPLOYMENT
- HEALTH & SAFETY



SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The formal service delivery system for people with developmental disabilities is a shared role between Washington State and Skagit County. The State Department of Social and Health Services, Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) is mandated to provide or fund day services and supports for eligible children and adults with developmental disabilities through counties.

Services are based on individual preference, capabilities, and needs and are designed to promote integrated, everyday activities, routines, and relationships that all individuals living in the community access and enjoy. These services are provided to the degree that funding is available through State legislative appropriations and local designated dollars.



As families well know, County and State services are a sub-set of a much larger service delivery system that people with disabilities access in order to live healthy, quality lives; to be and belong in their community; and to develop and reach personal goals. The services and supports outlined in the following diagram illustrate the myriad of formal and informal resources available to meet individual needs.

RCW 71.A charges counties with the following responsibilities:

- To coordinate and provide services to people with developmental disabilities and their families and provide the following indirect services to the community;
 - 1) Serve as an information and referral agency within the community for persons with developmental disabilities and their families;
 - 2) Coordinate all local services for persons with developmental disabilities and their families to ensure the maximum utilization of all available services;
 - 3) Prepare comprehensive plans for present and future development of services and for reasonable progress toward the coordination of all local services to persons with developmental disabilities.”

I am different, not less..
Dr. Temple Grandin

The State determines program eligibility and provides the following services based on client need and funding availability:

- Eligibility determination
- State institution services
- Medicaid Personal Care (MPC)
- Management and oversight of residential services
- Case management services
- Family support services
- Home and Community-Based “waiver” services (the “waiver” allows individuals to receive services in their communities who might otherwise live in an institutional setting)

The State contracts with Skagit County to provide the following:

- Early Intervention services for children 0-3 years of age
- Pathway to Employment services for adults 21 years of age or older
- Community Inclusion services for individuals of retirement age or no longer pursuing employment
- Information and education to the community
- Comprehensive planning for the development of future services

In addition, the Skagit County Developmental Disabilities Program receives dedicated local County property tax or “millage” funds. These funds are prioritized by the Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board.

SKAGIT COUNTY DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES PROGRAM SERVICES OVERVIEW

All programming and funding is based on the values outlined in the 1992 document known as the County Guidelines. It promotes the idea that the role of government and the service delivery system is to support the inclusion of people into their communities. The following benefits of quality living, common to everyone, form the core values of how counties deliver services:

- Power and Choice: Making our own choices and directing our own lives
- Relationships: Having people in our lives whom we love and care about and who love and care about us
- Status and Contribution: Feeling good about ourselves and having others recognize us for what we contribute to others and our community
- Integration: Being part of our community through active involvement. This means doing things we enjoy as well as new and interesting things in groups and activities common to those without developmental disabilities
- Competence: Learning to do things on our own or being supported to do things for ourselves
- Health and Safety: Feeling safe and secure and being healthy

Service for Individuals

Community
Access
Services

Employment
Services

School to
Work
Transition

Self-
advocacy &
Leadership

Support to Families

Birth to 3
Early
Intervention

Parent to
Parent

Building Community

Information,
Education &
Training

"I CHOOSE NOT TO PLACE 'DIS', IN MY ABILITY."
— **ROBERT M. HENSEL**

FUNDING OVERVIEW

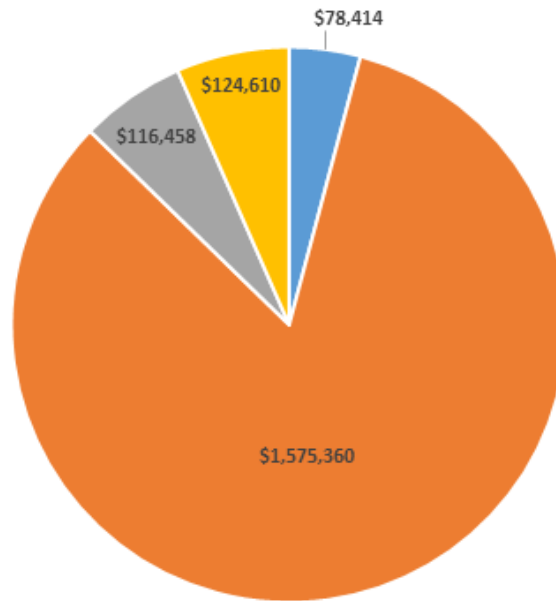
Services are provided to the degree that funding is available through State legislative appropriations and local designated dollars.



Skagit County is a thriving, collaborative, and cohesive community where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full health potential

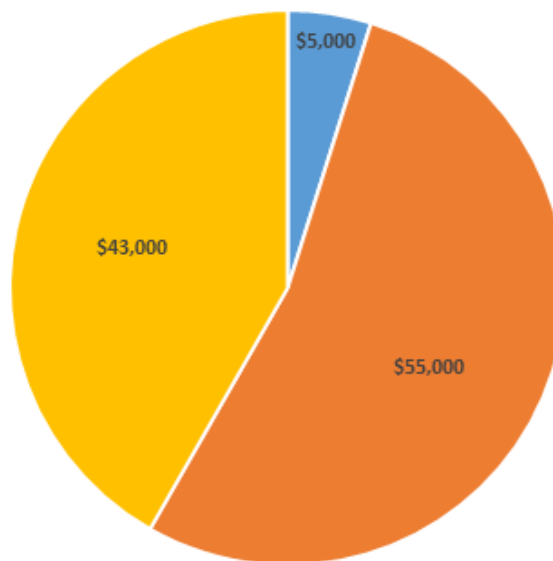


2019-2020 DDA State Budget



■ Early Intervention Services (Birth-3) ■ Employment Services ■ Information and Education ■ Administration

2019-2020 Millage Budget

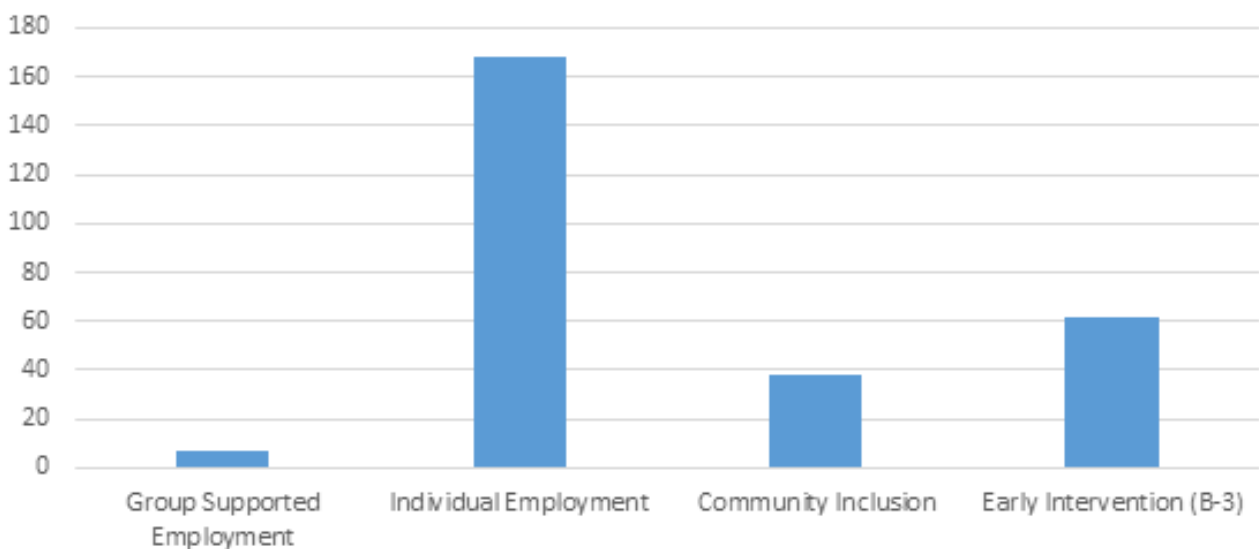


■ Community Outreach/Events ■ Transition Programming ■ Community Support and Trainings

SKAGIT COUNTY COMMUNITY PROFILE

- Skagit County, Washington State's 11th largest county, had an estimated population of 128,206 in 2018 (US Census Bureau)
- It is estimated that 1,539 Skagit County residents have a developmental disability*
- There were 632 individuals eligible for DDA services as of December 2019
- There are 163 individuals on the No Paid Services queue, meaning that they are not receiving any services from the State. This is about 26% of the total number of individuals enrolled with DDA
- There are 275 individuals receiving County services through DDA (December 2019):
 - o 213 adults
 - o 62 children (Birth to 3 years old)

DDA Clients Receiving County Services



GOALS

Three out of the four goals that the community emphasized as important for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families across the lifespan are related to the broader goal of achieving and promoting inclusivity in Skagit County. Inclusivity is the concept that ensures policies and practices are in place to allow people with disabilities to fully participate in their community at the same level as their peers who do not have a disability. The final goal, power and choice, focuses on an individual's capacity to act as an independent self-advocate by communicating and acting on their own behalf. A community's recognition and acceptance of self-advocacy and independence is a crucial step towards achieving inclusivity.



*1.2% is used by DDA to determine portion of the population that may have a developmental disability

HOUSING

The Board recognizes housing as a significant barrier that people with developmental disabilities in Skagit County experience as they attempt to secure independence and achieve community integration. Skagit County as a whole is facing a growing affordable housing crisis, with those living in poverty most directly affected.

Rents have continued to rise while people with lower income, in particular, have experienced slow or stagnant wage growth. Given the fact that adults with developmental disabilities typically work less than full-time and are often classified as low-income, this population is especially at risk when rents rise. Skagit County also does not have many multi-unit housing facilities designed to accommodate people with disabilities, both physical and developmental, thereby limiting options for housing options further.

The November 2019 Community Lifespan Event gave the Board feedback on other issues related to housing in Skagit County for people with developmental disabilities. There was input from those living in supported living settings in our community that their quality of life could be improved given different housing options (e.g. not having a roommate, having outdoor space, etc.). The sentiment of “those who are connected get more while those who are isolated get less” was also echoed in the housing conversation to emphasize the important role that transportation and accessibility play in securing positive housing outcomes for people with developmental disabilities.

Over the next three years, the Board would like to focus on better understanding the creative options that other communities have utilized to secure independent housing options for people with developmental disabilities. The Board feels that by doing more research and investigation into different models they will be able to better advocate for bringing new housing options in Skagit County.



The Board is also interested in pursuing advocacy related to expanding the number of ADUs (accessory dwelling units) in Skagit County. The first steps would be information gathering and research to see how other communities have used this type of solution to the affordable housing crisis for people with developmental disabilities specifically. The ultimate goal is to engage in discussions with City leadership on the ADU process in their municipality and the potential for ADU expansion.

RECREATION

There are few opportunities for recreation that are accessible and inclusive for people with developmental disabilities in Skagit County. In order to help individuals and families achieve positive outcomes related to community integration, personal relationships, and status and contribution, the Board has decided to make recreation a focus of their work for this three-year plan.



The Community Lifespan Event brought up conversations around the difference between accessibility and inclusion and how those concepts relate to recreation. For example, a playground might be accessible for a person in a wheelchair to access the play structure, but it is not designed to promote full inclusivity by allowing that person in a wheelchair to engage in all features of the play structure. Those present at the event also stated the importance of recreation opportunities for adult individuals, not just children, and would like to see more types of recreation available to adults who are otherwise homebound or not engaged in recreation activities.



The Board would like to dedicate time to understand what recreation options currently exist in Skagit County that could be expanded to promote inclusivity. There are a few community organizations that the Board is interested in engaging with to gain those organizations' perspectives on inclusion and the steps necessary to achieve full inclusion in their recreation programming. The Board can serve as a valuable resource for organizations looking to expand their recreation options and could potentially advise local groups on future programming to include people with developmental disabilities. There is also the potential for the County DD Program to support a small recreation program for people with developmental disabilities using local millage funding, which is something the Board will explore.

EMPLOYMENT

While Skagit County has over 100 employers who have hired people with developmental disabilities, there is still a lack of participation by the larger, more corporate employers in the County. The Developmental Disabilities Program and the Board would like to explore opportunities to promote inclusive hiring in job development conversations with these large employers in our community. The Board would like learn more about job development strategies and the current systems in place for supported employment in our community to support the work of the Developmental Disabilities Program.



Having additional knowledge on these subjects will also help the Board advocate for supported employment opportunities with local government or State legislature, if necessary. A particular area the Board is interested in learning more about is job carving. Job carving is a supported employment strategy that involves analyzing work duties performed in a given job and identifying specific tasks that might be assigned to an employee with disabilities. The Board would like to learn more about how those job carving strategies can successfully engage employers.

The County Developmental Disabilities Program will provide support for additional training's for supported employment provider staff on job development. The Developmental Disabilities Program will also develop more collaborative, professional job development opportunities for supported employment provider leadership teams to participate in.

7 Benefits of hiring people with disabilities:

- Most employers report high work quality
- Increased consumer markets and revenue
- Improved job morale and corporate culture
- Increased productivity
- Reduced employee turnover
- It's easy!



POWER & CHOICE

Ensuring health and safety for people with developmental disabilities is a large concern for self-advocates and their family members. While individuals' physical health and safety was recognized as a priority topic for the November 2019 Lifespan event, the conversations became more focused on how preserving health and safety has to exist in balance with an individual's power and choice to engage in their own decision-making and independence.

The topic of an individual's power and choice is associated with empowering individuals' by teaching self-advocacy skills. Because of the way this conversation shifted during the November 2019 event, the Board is interested in better exploring the topic of power and choice and what the needs are in our community. The Board intends to engage the community in additional conversations around power and choice to gain more feedback and identify more specific goals related to this topic.



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