



# YOUR PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

Guide to Services



Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Program  
Fall 2006

# YOUR PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

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## PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

### What are Pathway to Employment Services?

- ★ *Pathway to Employment* provides individualized services to help you develop opportunities for contribution and paid employment.
- ★ Your pathway to employment must include movement toward a job in the community.
- ★ You may be supported in a variety of settings and in a broad range of activities that will contribute to your employment goals.
- ★ While on an employment path, some individuals may need more support than others. You may spend time in a variety of activities that will assist you in pursuing community employment.
- ★ Once you have decided to pursue a Pathway to Employment, you must contact your case manager at the Division of Developmental Disabilities. If you are eligible, and funding is available, *your DDD Case Resource Manager is responsible for authorizing the services you choose.*



**For questions about DDD eligibility call 360-714-5000**



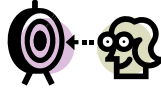
### KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PATHWAY

- ✓ Services are individualized for each participant.
- ✓ Services are based on individual choices, preferences, and support needs.
- ✓ Pathway to employment planning and development is the basis for determining services.
- ✓ All participants are supported to pursue and/or maintain community employment.

# It's up to you!

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- ★ Decide what is important to you and think about your pathway to employment goals.



- ★ Think of others who can help you develop your pathway to employment plan.



- ★ Use this guide to explore your options and to choose a service provider.



- ★ Remember that you are the customer and you can make changes to your Pathway to Employment Plan or change service providers at any time.



- ★ Contact your DDD Case Resource Manager to determine eligibility for funding and referral for services.



## WHAT SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE?

### *SHORT –TERM SUPPORTS*

**I. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation\* (DVR) and Department of Services for the Blind\* (DSB):** Assist people with all types of disabilities to prepare for, obtain and keep community employment. Services are short-term and designed to achieve an employment outcome.

The following are examples of the types of services that are available through DVR/DSB:

**Assessment:** Helps you to identify your job-related strengths and interests. Includes activities to help you select a job goal and services that will lead to successful employment.

**Training services:** Helping you gain knowledge or skills to perform work in an occupational field. (May include college or vocational training.)

**Job related services:** Help in looking for a job and/or developing a job with the help of a vocational agency. (May include learning to use devices or equipment to help you work.)

**Other services** are available depending on your unique needs, including a variety of support services that enable you to participate in vocational rehabilitation, such as help with short-term costs of transportation, child care, independent living or other disability-related expenses. **Social security benefits planning** allowing you to keep your benefits while working are also available.



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Services through DVR/DSB are typically the individual's first step along their pathway to employment. Contact your DDD Case Resource Manager for a referral for the services and supports listed above if you are ready to pursue or obtain paid community employment. 360-714-5000

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\*DVR and DSB are part of the State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).  
DVR Website: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/dvr/>

## WHAT SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE? *LONG –TERM SUPPORTS*



### **II. Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities (DD) Program:**

Whatcom County provides long-term supports needed to maintain or pursue community employment for individuals with developmental disabilities. **You must be eligible and receive a referral through the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to receive services.**

*What kind of help can the Whatcom County DD Program Provide?*

#### **Help in keeping your job**



Individuals may already have a job after working with DVR, their school transition program or with help from their family and friends, but need some on-going support to keep their job.

Support to maintain your job might include the support of a job coach who may help keep you on task, help you maintain good working habits and skills, train your fellow workers to assist you when needed or problem solve ways for you to do your job more efficiently.

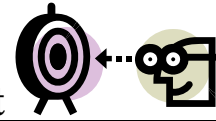
#### **Michelle: Making her own decisions**

*When the local hardware store Michelle works for needed to make changes to her job duties, Michelle’s job coach helped her make the transition, learning new skills and working with her co-workers to ensure her success.*



*Now Michelle uses an employer-approved checklist to check her work, and sees her job coach typically 1-2 times a week. Wanting to “stay busy and meet new people” this hard worker has also started volunteering 2 days a week at a local non-profit.*

## Help Identifying your Pathway to Employment



What if you don't know what you want to do? Don't have a lot of job experiences? Don't know how to match your skills and interests to an employment goal? Developing your pathway to employment through planning can be an important first step.

The person-centered planning approach involves listening closely to you and the people you invite to assist you in developing your dreams. The person centered vocational plan is about you and your work in the community.



The individual team of family, friends and other supports (such as vocational and residential providers) meet to explore your interests, skills and strengths. The group brainstorms ideas and identifies next steps and supports needed to achieve your employment goals.

Planning can be done by an independent planner or through your vocational agency. Independent planners work with the planning team over the short term to identify goals and action steps, but are not involved in implementing the plan.

### **Nick: A man, a plan**

Nick and his family decided to participate in a person-centered planning process to address issues around work and community involvement. Together, Nick's team of family, friends and supports helped brainstorm new job ideas, goals and next steps. *"I had a group of people that were willing to support Nick and his goals", says Nick's mom... the group listened to what Nick wants for himself and learned to follow his lead.*" What does Nick think of the planning process? *"Cool...It was fun."*



## Moving forward along your pathway to employment



Once you have identified your interests, skills and goals; support services through a vocational agency can assist you in implementing the next steps in your plan for achieving employment in the community.

Steps might include:

- Getting connected to services through DVR
- Identifying volunteer jobs to gain experience and build your resume
- On-going job development by the vocational agency
- Exploring different work places
- Connecting with community resources

### **Eric: Enjoying Life**

Eric's pathway to employment began in earnest when he was 15 years old, job shadowing and gaining valuable work experience with a variety of local employers while in High School.

Business contacts made by the vocational provider and family networking leads were key to Eric's success in finding paid employment packaging products for a local retail business. Julee, Eric's mom, stresses the importance of communication and team problem solving.



*“Be part of that team as a parent—you know your son/daughter the best. “*

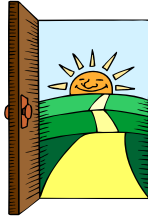


### **Meleah: Exceeding expectations**

Meleah's mom, Marilyn, admits having concerns about her daughter's ability to find paid employment. As with Eric, family networking was key to identifying sites for volunteer and trial work experience. These connections led eventually to paid work shredding documents for several local businesses.

*“Be willing to take one little step at a time even when you can't imagine the end result”, says Marilyn. “I'm so glad I gave Meleah the opportunity to amaze me and to add such enjoyment to life. “*





## **Retirement Services**

Individuals who are of retirement age with a developmental disability (62 or older) who have retired and/or choose not to work may have support to participate in community activities. Services assist individuals to participate in activities, events and organizations in the local community in ways similar to others of retirement age.



Contact your DDD Case Resource Manager for a referral for the services and supports listed above if you are ready to pursue your pathway to employment or are of retirement age interested in connecting with community activities.  
360-714-5000

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## **What if I don't want to work?**

For those individuals of working age (21-62) who do not want to pursue or maintain employment in the community your DDD case manager will provide information about generic community services. (i.e. Services that anyone in the community might use.)

## **By working will I lose my Social Security /Medicaid benefits?**

The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides incentives that allow individuals to work without losing their social security and Medicaid benefits.

If you would like to talk with someone about how your benefits will be affected by work, talk with:

- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) 360-714-4136
- **The “Plan to Work”** program @ 1-866-497-9443
- Your Vocational Provider





## Preparing for Pathway to Employment Services

Use this participant guide to help you explore your options and follow these seven (7) easy steps:

**Step 1**  Enlist the help of friends and family to support you.



### **My support team:**

Family \_\_\_\_\_

Friends \_\_\_\_\_

Neighbors \_\_\_\_\_

Others \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 2**  Contact your DDD Case Manager to check on funding and eligibility. To find out who your DDD Case Manager is, call the Bellingham DDD Office:  
**360-714-5000**



My DDD Case Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 3**  Start developing your Pathway to Employment Plan.  
Use the worksheets on pages 13 & 14.



➔ Independent Planning Services can help! See page 7

## Preparing for Pathway to Employment Services



**Step 4**  Request a referral to DVR/DSB from your DDD Case manager  
Or contact DVR/DSB directly (see page 16).



Follow your DDD or DVR counselor's directions. They may need to determine eligibility or develop a plan for services.

**Step 5**  Request a list of vocational providers from your DDD or DVR case manager, and use the worksheet on pages 15 & 16 to help you interview providers.



My chosen service provider is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 6**  Notify your DDD Case Manager or DVR counselor about your choice of service provider.



**Step 7**  Start Pathway to Employment Services!



## Creating your Pathway to Employment Plan

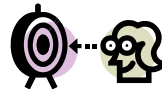


The purpose of the Pathway to Employment Plan is to write down your career path goal and the steps you need to achieve that goal.

You may develop your plan before choosing a service provider through the use of Independent Planning Services (see page 7), or you may develop your plan with the service provider you choose.

You can get started by using the worksheet below.

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Who am I and what do I want to do?



My name \_\_\_\_\_

### **My strengths, interests and skills:**

What am I good at doing? \_\_\_\_\_

What are my personal interests? \_\_\_\_\_

What skills do I have? \_\_\_\_\_

What things do I not like? \_\_\_\_\_

### **My employment choices and career ideas**

What kind of job do I want in the community? \_\_\_\_\_

What hours or shifts do I want to work? \_\_\_\_\_

Do I need to find work close to my home? \_\_\_\_\_

# Creating your Pathway to Employment Plan



## **What is my Pathway to Employment Goal?**

Based on the information above, I am interested in looking for work in the following area or in exploring the following:

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## **What steps do I need to achieve my goal and who will help me?**

Here are some ideas to help you get started:

1. Develop a resume or portfolio
2. Find volunteer work or other activities that help me gain experience
3. Learn how to take the bus or apply for specialized transportation
4. Practice job interviewing
5. Improve self-care or social skills
6. Develop connections in my community related to my goals
7. Contact employers in my community



**Other ideas:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Second Career Path Goal** (You may want to explore more than one type of job or area of interest!)

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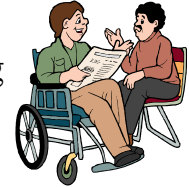
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## Choosing a Service Provider

When you are ready to choose a service provider, it is important to determine which provider will best fit your unique needs.

It will be helpful to visit agencies, talk to others who are receiving services, or discuss your options with your DDD Case Resource Manager.



As you talk to different service providers, be prepared to share your ideas and ask how they can support you to achieve your employment goals.

### **Here are some sample questions to get you started.**

- I am interested in \_\_\_\_\_.  
Do you have any connections in this area? \_\_\_\_\_  
How would you assist me? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- I have limited work experience and I am not sure what I want to do.  
How would you help me explore my options? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- What will be MY role in finding a job? \_\_\_\_\_  
What is YOUR role? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Do you support other folks in my community? \_\_\_\_\_  
What kind of connections do you have with companies in the area in which I live? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- How will I get to my job? \_\_\_\_\_

**Choosing a Service Provider, cont.**



- How have you assisted others with transportation?
- How many people does your agency serve? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many people will my job coach be supporting? \_\_\_\_\_  
How often can I expect to see my job coach? \_\_\_\_\_
- Will the job developer also provide job training or will someone else be hired to do so? (i.e. co-worker trainer.) \_\_\_\_\_
- How will you keep communication open with me, my parents, guardians and significant others? \_\_\_\_\_
- How would you help me if I have special needs such as: Medication, personal care, cultural diversity, behavioral challenges or safety issues?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Contact Information



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)	Bellingham Office	360-714-4136 TTY (360) 714-4009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help in getting and keeping a job</li> <li>• Assistive technology</li> </ul>
Department of Services for the Blind (DSB)	Seattle Office	1-800-552-7103 TDD (206) 721-4056	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Security Benefits Analysis</li> </ul>
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)	Bellingham Office	360-714-5000 TTY (360-714-5002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management and referrals for services</li> </ul>
Vocational Support Agencies		Talk with your DDD or DVR Case Manager for a list of providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job development</li> <li>• Job coaching</li> <li>• Assessments</li> </ul>
Independent Planning		Contact your DDD Case Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person-centered vocational planning</li> </ul>
Plan to Work		1-866-497-9443	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Security Benefits Analysis</li> </ul>

If you would like more copies of this guide or have questions about Pathways to Employment contact Jessica Lee, Program specialist Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities program: 676-6724 ext. 32014 [jlee@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:jlee@co.whatcom.wa.us)



NOTES:





The Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities is part of the Whatcom County Health Department. We provide a variety of support and services to Whatcom County citizens with developmental disabilities, their families and the community at large. County staff members work closely with a citizen advisory board and various community partners to develop sound public policy and responsive community services.

**For more information about the Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Program or for more copies of this booklet contact Jessica Lee, Program Specialist at (360) 676-6724 ext. 32014 or check out our website at:**

**[www.co.whatcom.wa.us/health/human/develop\\_disabilities/index.jsp](http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/health/human/develop_disabilities/index.jsp)**

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**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND  
**HEALTHIER COMMUNITY**

The contents of this booklet were based on materials originally developed through the Snohomish County Developmental Disabilities program under a grant from the CFDA 93.779 from the US Department of Health and Human Services/Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. However this booklet does not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Health and Human Services, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

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