

Developmental Disabilities Services Division

Division Philosophy

The Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) helps people to make choices and to direct their own lives; pursuing their own choices, goals, aspirations and preferences. To be effective and efficient, services must be individualized to the capacities, needs, and values of each person. Everyone can make decisions for themselves, can live in typical homes, and can contribute as citizens to the communities where they live. Our communities are stronger when everyone is included.

Division Overview

DDSD plans, coordinates, administers, monitors and evaluates state and federally funded services for people with developmental disabilities and their families within Vermont. We provide funding for services, systems planning, technical assistance, training, quality assurance, program monitoring and standards compliance. We also exercise guardianship on behalf of the commissioner for people who are under court-ordered public guardianship.

Staff and Partners

Our work is carried out by a Quality Management Unit of six personnel, a Specialist Services unit of six staff and twenty-seven guardians within our Office of Public Guardianship.

Our division contracts directly with fifteen private, non-profit developmental disabilities services providers who provide services to people with developmental disabilities and their families. Services and supports offered emphasize the development of community capacities to meet the needs of all individuals regardless of severity of disability. DDSD works with all people concerned with the delivery of services: people with disabilities, families, guardians, advocates, service providers, the State Program Standing Committee for Developmental Services and state and federal governments to ensure that programs continue to meet the changing needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Developmental Disabilities Services Division

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

Our Division's Supported Employment Program has been recognized by the Zero Project, based in Vienna, Austria, for the ZERO PROJECT INNOVATIVE POLICY 2017 award. Vermont has been awarded this recognition after the Project reviewed 48 nominations from almost 30 different countries across the world. The recognition focuses on aspects of our DD Act and how we transition from a workshop model into full community integrated employment options.

Future Directions

The division sponsored "Vermont Task Force on Supported Decision Making" is implementing a series of demonstration projects in preparation for their final report. With representation from multiple departments with the Agency of Human Services as well as the legal system and community providers, this group will be exploring and establishing practices that allow people to exercise their right to make important decisions about their lives. The approach of "supported decision making" includes an appreciation for the natural arc of experience in how we typically learn to make decisions and the way most people receive help in making those decisions from trusted friends and associates.

Our community agency partners will be exploring how supported employment staff can mentor businesses to assume the role of training and ongoing assistance of people with developmental disabilities beyond the natural supports already in place. The goal of this pilot program is to broaden our approaches to authentic inclusion and increased investment in the employee by their work team.

Programs and Services

Community-based services are provided through our designated agency and specialized service agency partners. These include Service Coordination, Community Supports, Work Supports, Home Supports including 24-hour Shared Living, Staffed Living and Group Living, Supervised Living including hourly home supports in person's own home, Supervised Living involving hourly supports in the home of a family member. They can be managed by the agency, self-managed or managed by family members. Family Managed Respite is provided through designated agencies to offer families with a break from caring for their child with a disability. The Bridge Program is a service that provides support to families in need of care coordination to help them access and coordinate medical,

Developmental Disabilities Services Division

educational, social or other services for their children with developmental disabilities. Targeted Case Management is a service that provides assessment, care planning, referral and monitoring. Flexible Family Funding provides funding for respite and goods for children and adults who live with their biological or adopted family or legal guardian. These funds are used at the discretion of the family for services and supports that benefit the individual and family.

Results

The DDS Quality Services Reviews (QSRs) are intended to meet our commitment to the State of Vermont to monitor and review the quality of services provided using Federal and State home and community-based services (HCBS) funding. The purpose of the QSR is to ascertain the quality of the services provided by the Designated Agencies (DAs) and Specialized Services Agencies (SSAs) and to ensure that minimum standards are met with respect to DAIL DDS guidelines and policies for developmental disabilities services. The QSR is one component of a broader effort to maintain and improve the quality of services. Other components supported by the review team and DDS include monitoring and follow-up regarding Agency Designation, Medicaid and HCBS eligibility, Housing safety and accessibility inspections, Monitoring of critical incident reports, Grievance and appeal processing and investigations and Independent survey of consumer satisfaction.

Our division participates in the National Core Indicators project that applies a national standardized Adult Consumer Survey.

- 4 out of every 10 people have a paid job in the community
- 9 out of every 10 people who have a paid job said they like where they work
- 7 out of every 10 people said they have a best friend
- 8 out of every 10 people said they feel safe in their home, work and day activity
- 5 out of every 10 people said they have gone to a self-advocacy meeting

The 2016 Case for Inclusion report ranks the Vermont DDS as second in the nation based on a holistically ranking of the states; showing the sub-rankings of each state in 5 key outcome areas: Promoting Independence, Tracking Health,

Developmental Disabilities Services Division

Safety & Quality of Life, Keeping Families Together, Promoting Productivity and Reaching Those in Need.

Our employment services have been recognized as a national model with a 77% increase in the number of people on the job over the past five-year period. Vermonters who experience disabilities are earning total wages of over \$4.3 million, yielded a potential tax contribution of \$666,739 from employees and their employers.

More Vermonters with disabilities are going on to post-secondary education than ever before and our THINK COLLEGE VERMONT, COLLEGE STEPS and SUCCEED programs are helping them get there. PROJECT SEARCH is a school-to-work youth transition program that matches students who are in their final year of high school with internships located within host businesses where they learn multifaceted skills that lead to employment at graduation. These four youth transition programs have enabled young adults to live independently and attain occupations in media, public relations, human resources, data entry, baking, and human services. Participating colleges include Castleton University, Johnson State College, Lyndon State College, Southern Vermont College and University of Vermont. For the 2016 academic year, the employment rate was 83% for these programs.