



Informing Families ...Today and Tomorrow

A project of the Washington State DD Council



Getting the Word Out About Services and Supports

In the talks and workshops I have given this past year, I have made it my mission to get the word out that our state now has money for services from the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), urging anyone who needs services to ask for them.

Although some families and individuals have taken advantage of this opportunity, we've been finding that many people simply do not know what to ask for.

To help shed some light on what's available, we asked Lonnie Keese, DDA's Individual & Family Services (IFS) Program Manager, to describe the new IFS waiver, which has close to 2,000 openings for new

enrollments through June of this year.

IFS has a broad menu of services, including some new ones we're excited to see offered. If your family member is living with you, IFS can be an important part of providing support and connecting to community (see page 3 for more on IFS).

Another important part of overall support planning is one that often gets overlooked: emergency preparedness. In this issue, Deborah Witmer of Seattle Human Services offers some great tips on building relationships and creating an emergency communications plan in today's tech-dependent world.

Speaking of which, technology is making great strides in creating equal

access for people with disabilities. Learn what others are doing to put pieces of the technology puzzle together—from funding sources to services (such as Community First Choice for devices and IFS and other waivers for evaluation and training).

Let me end by wishing you well during this winter season. Keep up to date by visiting the Informing Families website at informingfamilies.org.

And remember...we have funding now so if you need a service do not be afraid to ask!

*Ed Holen, Director
Washington State
Developmental
Disabilities Council*



Ready Set Know...



Preparing for Emergencies TOGETHER

by Deborah Witmer

*Vulnerable Populations Coordinator
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There are many ways we advise people to be ready for an emergency: build a kit, store water and food, and have emergency supplies like flashlights, a radio, and a utility shut-off tool. But probably the most important of all: connect with others and make a plan.

In an emergency, relationships matter. Talk with your neighbors, family, friends, and caregivers about what you will need in an emergency and how you will communicate with each other. Write down your plans and contact information and make sure everyone in your support system has a printed copy.

Individuals and families might not be able to have all needed emergency supplies on hand, but when people group together they can pool resources and solve common problems (like buying bulk items more cheaply or solving storage needs.)

Make a communications plan. When something bad happens, we want to be able to communicate with our family and friends, but local communications might be very difficult or even impossible. The following are some things to think about when making your plan. (con't page 3)

Closing the TECH GAP

From smart phones and

smart homes to tablets and touch screens, the technology wave has hit just about every aspect of daily life; except, that is, the daily lives of people with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, where the tech wave has looked more like a tech trickle.

Through its Supplies and Equipment Services (SES) program, Sherwood Community Services in Lake Stevens is striving to close that gap by helping children and adults with I/DD throughout the state tap into resources for purchasing a variety of devices to meet individual needs.

Lance Morehouse, Sherwood's Executive Director, says, "We can't provide the service end of things [like occupational or speech and language therapy] for people outside our area, but we can help get the technology into people's hands if they're eligible for Community First Choice."

Community First Choice (CFC), a new state plan program that includes personal care services (see side bar), comes with an assistive technology (AT) benefit of \$500 per year.

Sherwood is the first to contract with the state to help people on CFC purchase devices for daily living tasks. Medicaid waivers are another source of AT benefits. (See sidebar.)

Morehouse points out that CFC only covers the cost of the device, and not the services needed to adapt the device and/or train the individual and their family/staff how to use it; however, we can help people identify resources to pay for those services, such as private insurance, DDA's Individual & Family Services and Children's Intensive In-Home Behavioral Support waivers, or school.



Photo Credit: Sherwood Community Services

"When people are referred to us to get the device," Morehouse says, "we'll help them figure out where to turn locally for the services and supports to make sure whatever device they have isn't just sitting on a shelf."

Program manager, Andrew Urie, explains his role at Sherwood. "I mostly work with the case resource managers, but oftentimes I get to work with a family member or teacher or speech therapist to procure whatever they are requesting."

He describes a recent call he received from a parent who wanted to thank them. "She said, 'The process was so simple. I just called my [DDA Case Resource Manager], we talked about what our options were, I called you, and within a week or so my daughter had her iPad. We took the iPad to her speech therapist who helped us set it up and now she won't put it down!'"

Urie adds, "There's a learning curve to all of this, but the case managers have been wonderful to work with. The families have a lot of questions that we are happy to answer."

To learn more, email Andrew Urie at: aurie@sherwoodcs.org, or call (425) 404-3111.

TECH FUNDING

DEVICES AND SOFTWARE

Community First Choice

If your family member is on DDA's No Paid Services caseload, there's a good chance s/he may be eligible for an annual assistive technology award through Community First Choice (CFC). CFC is an entitlement program, which means that it's available to everyone who meets functional and financial eligibility criteria.

SERVICES

DDA IFS Waiver Services

DDA's Individual & Family Services (IFS) waiver includes assistive technology services by contracted providers, including evaluation, therapies, and training to help ensure that the technology gets used. The IFS waiver has more than 2,000 openings for new enrollments. Income eligibility is based on the individual, not the family or household income.

EASY ONLINE REQUEST

Use DDA's online Service Request and Information form to find out how DDA can help your family member get the assistive technology services they need through CFC and/or IFS: dshs.wa.gov/dda/service-and-information-request.

Need Services? ENROLL in IFS NOW

by Lonnie Keesee, Individual & Family Services Program Manager
Washington State Developmental Disabilities Administration

The Individual and Family Services

(IFS) waiver provides a menu of services to help children and adults with developmental disabilities live successfully at home and in the community. The best news is that there are close to 2,000 openings for new enrollments. DDA anticipates the openings will be filled by June 2017.

To qualify, individuals must be:

- three years or older;
- a client of DDA; and,
- living with their family.

Family means one or more of the following relatives: Spouse or registered domestic partner; natural, adoptive or step parent; grandparent; child; stepchild; sibling; stepsibling; uncle; aunt; first cousin; niece; or nephew.

“This waiver can benefit individuals in many different ways,” explains DDA Assistant Secretary Evelyn Perez, “making possible a range of experiences which can help individuals who receive DDA benefits participate in physical and social



activities within the communities that they live.”

The IFS waiver provides a menu of 25 different services based on a yearly funding allocation determined by the DDA assessment (\$1,200; \$1,800; \$2,400; \$3,600).

Popular IFS services include:

Respite (A break for the caregiver)
Relief to individuals who live with and care for you. Respite is available in your home or in the community.

Community Engagement

A community engagement provider provides supports for you while you participate in community activities.

Peer Mentoring

Peer mentors use their personal

experiences to provide support and guidance to you and/or your family.

Supported Parenting

Available to you if you are a parent or an expectant parent. Services include teaching, parent coaching and other supportive strategies in areas critical to parenting.

Person Centered Plan Facilitation

A life planning process centered on you. The plan identifies important people in your life and identifies your goals and vision for your life. The service helps you develop an action plan to help you reach your goals.

Requesting IFS is Easy

Request IFS by completing and submitting the Service Referral and Information On-Line Form at: dshs.wa.gov/dda/service-and-information-request. If you are not sure if your family member is a client of DDA, a DDA eligibility packet can also be requested.

Learn More

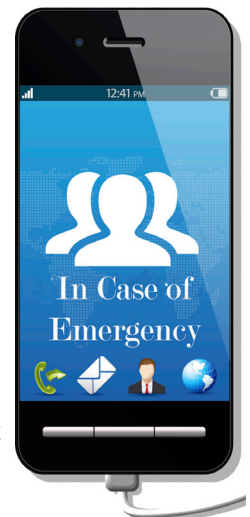
For more information on IFS and other services, visit: dshs.wa.gov/dda.

(con't from front page)

MAKE an EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

- ✱ **Keep a Printed Copy of Phone Numbers.** Many of us store important phone numbers in our phones and computers. Make sure you also keep a printed copy, in case you can't access your electronic devices.
- ✱ **Use Texting.** Texting may be more reliable for local communications than a phone call; texts automatically retry to deliver a message when service is busy.
- ✱ **Identify Out of Area Contact.** Phone service in the immediate areas might be overwhelmed, but reaching someone out of the area has a higher chance of being successful. Arrange with a friend or relative in another state to be your Out of Area Contact. Give their name and phone number to those with whom you will want to communicate. Your Out of Area Contact can coordinate information-sharing until local communications are possible.
- ✱ **Post Messages Online.** If you have internet connection, you can use the Red Cross Safe and Well registry program to post messages about yourself and search for lost loved ones. Facebook's Safety Check feature has also become a great way to post messages and connect. For more information, visit: facebook.com/about/safetycheck/.

Emergencies happen every day, but we don't have to be afraid—we can be prepared, and we don't have to do it alone. We are all in this together and together we can make plans and solve problems that make us all more resilient for whatever life throws our way.



Living a Meaningful Life

for Adults with Developmental Disabilities over age 35



Growing, learning and achieving doesn't end at age 21; it continues throughout life and at your own pace. Just like developmental milestones in childhood and youth, achievements in adulthood may take a little longer to reach. However, with support and planning, a fulfilling and meaningful adult life is not only possible, it's a right.



Our four page Lifecourse pamphlet includes:

- ⚙ **A sample Star Form** to help identify supports to reach goals throughout the adult years.
- ⚙ **People and resources for parents** to consider as sources of support and connection as their son/daughter grows older.
- ⚙ **Planning tools.**
- ⚙ **Questions to consider** when thinking about living outside the family home, and the kinds of supports needed to create a safe, healthy, and full life in the community.
- ⚙ **How to make the most of assistive technology** at home and in the community.
- ⚙ **Support and planning** for the whole family.

Visit informingfamilies.org/meaningful-life to get your free copy.