



Assessment of  
**RESIDENTIAL SERVICES**  
**DAY AND**  
**EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**



**T**he Virginia Board for People with Disabilities advises the Governor, Secretary of Health and Human Resources, legislators and other groups on issues important to people with disabilities in the Commonwealth. In 2020, the Board assessed residential services and day and employment services available in the Developmental Disabilities (DD) waivers.

The Board's Assessment of Residential Services and Day and Employment Services seeks to determine the extent to which new residential and day services, and opportunities for competitive integrated employment, have furthered the goals of Virginia's 2016 redesign of Medicaid home- and community- based services DD waivers. The Board makes recommendations to increase the availability and utilization of these services, as well as increase individual empowerment in the DD services system.

- Data, research, and feedback from people with disabilities and other stakeholders consistently show that the new residential and day services of waiver redesign, as well as opportunities for competitive integrated employment, are fraught with provider capacity issues, individual access and choice issues, and general confusion about the new services and how they operate.
- As of September 2020, new residential service authorizations (Independent Living Supports, Supported Living, and Shared Living) still only accounted for about 3% of all residential service authorizations under all DD waivers (Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services, November 2020). Providers have been slow to offer these services and few individuals have benefited from them.
- The Commonwealth still lags behind integrated day and employment goals set through the Department of Justice (DOJ) Settlement Agreement. Review of the data and agency reports shows that there are significant gaps in addressing barriers to employment and Community Engagement, particularly for people with more support needs.

A summary of key findings and recommendations is below, organized into three main topic areas.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASED ACCESS TO INDEPENDENT LIVING

- **Recommendation 1:** The General Assembly should support the goals of the Settlement Agreement and waiver redesign to incentivize integrated and independent living options by establishing rates for the provision of supported living services that are comparable to the rates for the provision of group home residential services.
- **Recommendation 2:** The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) should resolve inconsistent practices among licensing specialists when licensing Supported Living to ensure it is the provider that requires licensure, rather than the apartment/home being a DBHDS licensed setting.
- **Recommendation 3:** DBHDS and Community Services Boards should ensure that support coordinators have a comprehensive understanding of supported living services, including the differences between supported living and in-home supports. Support coordinators must be knowledgeable and accurate when explaining to individuals and families the various service options and opportunities available in the DD waivers, including supported living services.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND INTEGRATED DAY SERVICES

### Competitive Integrated Employment

- **Recommendation 1:** The General Assembly should direct the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), DMAS, and DBHDS to study options for designing and implementing a value-based purchasing model for supported employment services in Virginia.
- **Recommendation 2:** DBHDS should invest in training and resource development to cultivate a pool of supported employment subject matter experts who can provide technical assistance to support coordinators and others navigating the complex processes for accessing supported employment services.
- **Recommendation 3:** DBHDS should require support coordinators to educate individuals with disabilities and their families about the basic impact of employment on benefits and the Benefits Planning service prior to the official Individual Support Plan meeting, consistent with the DOJ Settlement Agreement Compliance Indicator #14.

### Integrated Day Services

- **Recommendation 8:** DBHDS and DMAS should develop provider capacity benchmark goals based on service need estimates regionally for Workplace Assistance, Community Guide and Community Coaching and develop incentive options and other strategies to increase provider capacity to meet the benchmark goals.
- **Recommendation 2:** DMAS and DBHDS should explore options to streamline and eliminate redundancy in the Plan for Supports across day services when one provider is providing multiple services including Community Engagement, Group Day, and Community Coaching services.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO FURTHER INDIVIDUAL EMPOWERMENT IN THE DD SERVICES SYSTEM

- **Recommendation A:** DBHDS should incentivize Community Services Boards, possibly through a pilot project, to incorporate self-advocates in paid positions to bring perspective and experience to the training of support coordinators, including adding a self-advocate-led module in the required support coordinator training modules.
- **Recommendation B:** DMAS should consider establishing and seeking General Assembly approval of person-centered facilitation as a distinct, non-duplicative waiver service that would provide more support and expertise to tailor service options to an individual's needs and goals like in Kentucky, where "person-centered coaching" services provide "for modeling, monitoring, assessing and implementing the person-centered plan."