

# Policy Transmittal Developmental Disabilities Services



Lilia Teninty

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**Number: APD-PT-20-039**

**Issue date: 03/25/2020**

**UPDATED**

**Topic:** Developmental Disabilities

**Due date:** 03/25/2020

**Transmitting (check the box that best applies):**

- New policy   
  Policy change   
  Policy clarification   
  Executive letter  
 Administrative Rule   
  Manual update   
  Other:

**Applies to (check all that apply):**

- |                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All DHS employees                              | <input type="checkbox"/> County Mental Health Directors                                                                                                                                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area Agencies on Aging: {Select type}          | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services                                                                                                                                                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aging and People with Disabilities             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS)                                                                                                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self Sufficiency Programs                      | <input type="checkbox"/> ODDS Children’s Intensive In Home Services                                                                                                                                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County DD program managers          | <input type="checkbox"/> Stabilization and Crisis Unit (SACU)                                                                                                                                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support Service Brokerage Directors | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other ( <i>please specify</i> ): Supported Employment Services, DSA, Job Coaching and Employment Path Services at Provider Sites and other congregate settings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ODDS Children’s Residential Services           |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Welfare Programs                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

<b>Policy/rule title:</b>	Temporary Emergency Policy for Employment <i>and</i> DSA Services during the COVID-19 Virus Response – <b><u>This Policy Replaces PT 20-024.</u></b>		
<b>Policy/rule number(s):</b>	Governor Brown’s Executive Order 20-03 and 20-05 and 20-12	<b>Release number:</b>	
<b>Effective date:</b>	3/24/2020	<b>Expiration date:</b>	5/31/20
<b>References:</b>	Governor Brown’s Executive Orders 20-03 and 20-05 and 20-12		
<b>Web address:</b>	<a href="https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Documents/executive_orders/eo_20-05.pdf">https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Documents/executive_orders/eo_20-05.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Documents/executive_orders/eo_20-03.pdf">https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Documents/executive_orders/eo_20-03.pdf</a>		

## **Background Summary**

### **This Policy Transmittal replaces PT 20-024 based on the new Executive Order 20-12, “Stay Home, Save Lives.” It also provides guidance for Supported Employment Services.**

This policy outlines temporary emergency measures as well as some best practices to ensure Oregon and Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) providers are working to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus in ways that align with Oregon’s Employment First initiatives.

Oregon’s Employment First policies support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to work in competitive integrated employment in the general workforce on the same basis as individuals who do not have a disability or use ODDS services.

During the outbreak of infectious disease and related pandemic, including the COVID-19 virus, individuals who have community jobs that are in compliance with Executive Order (EO) 20-12 and want to continue to work, should be supported to do so. However, this may be impacted by direction by federal, state, and local health officials, as well as the direction of general community employers.

Supporting individuals with IDD to continue to work during the outbreak may mean support to obtain additional accommodations on a temporary emergency basis for both the person supported as well as the provider. This policy outlines temporary emergency measures to be able to continue providing employment services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who are working in the community and those who are receiving DSA and Employment Path services.

As always, reviewing people’s Implementation Strategies/Action Plans is the best way to start. During the Covid-19 virus response, plans may need to change in the way services are delivered. This is also a good time for employment provider staff and DSPs to review Action Plans and update as needed, both during the response as well as for service delivery after the response.

Given the new “Stay Home, Save Lives,” Executive Order 20-12, at this time there may be no social/recreational activities that do not allow for physical distancing of 6 feet or more. Additionally, travel to and from work is only supported for essential services or work in essential services, outlined in EO 20-12. For that reason, DSA and Employment Path services, even provided in very small groups, are temporarily suspended unless they fully comply with EO 20-12. As such, online or remote services delivered through telehealth or webinars as outlined below may be one of the best ways to continue these services until this Executive Order is lifted.

Employment providers may also want to consider reallocating staff to provide services needed in residential settings, or smaller groups in the community.

## **New Temporary Emergency Measures**

ODDS is granting increased flexibility and accommodation in the way employment and DSA services are delivered. Below are a few of the measures.

### **1. Remote Job Coaching**

Until further notice, required in-person job coaching contacts and supports may temporarily be made remotely (i.e. phone, telehealth, email). These services (or face to face service if required for immediate health and safety) may be provided to individuals who continue to work in jobs that are permitted as outlined in EO 20-12. This may include teleworking for any business, or essential businesses such as work at a grocery store, gas station, etc. Remote job coaching is subject to the support needs of the individual and may not be appropriate depending on the individual's protocols and health and safety concerns.

Job Coaching to provide for health and safety is considered an essential service and may continue during this time.

### **2. Remote classes and training**

Employment Path and DSA Providers may deliver classes or provide training for individuals using technology remotely on a temporary emergency basis during this time. This may include offering skills training such as resume building, interview skills, Project Search curriculum, self-advocacy skills, assistance to obtain required job certifications such as food handler's cards, assisting with employment goals, technology training, computer skills and other activities intended to promote gaining competitive integrated employment. **Note: if your agency received contingency funding, your agency may not bill any Employment or DSA services for which the contingency funding was issued during the 30-day period after which your agency received contingency funding. Employment and DSA services should continue to be provided under this guidance and EO 20-12 as possible.**

### **3. Identify back up Job Coaches**

ODDS may grant variances to provider training and certification requirements. Please submit a variance request to ODDS if a job coach is not available to support a person with competitive integrated employment who needs a temporary exception for a suitable job coach. Send the request to:

[Employmenttraining.review@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:Employmenttraining.review@dhsosha.state.or.us).

ODDS is also working on guidance around essential trainings and requirements for staff to provide direct support. Forthcoming guidance would also be applicable to Job

Coaches or other Employment Specialists.

#### **4. Training reimbursement program expanded**

If Job Coaches (including PSW Job Coaches) or Employment Specialists are not able to provide support full time, this is an excellent opportunity for remote continuing education. For this reason, the ACRE Training reimbursement program is being *expanded to all Medicaid Providers with an Employment endorsement and PSW Job coaches* instead of being limited to rural Medicaid Providers only. All invoices for reimbursement must be submitted by November 15, 2020. Please refer to [AR 20-10](#).

#### **5. ODDS is offering contingency funding for Supported Employment**

ODDS has offered contingency funding for DSA and Employment Path Services as ODDS had to require the reduction and closure of those programs due to potential risk in congregate settings. ODDS has received significant feedback that due to a lack of job development opportunities, reduced hours or individuals not able to work at all, Supported Employment Providers are at risk of not being able to retain staff or maintain a Supported Employment program. As a result, providers are not able to maintain the staff resources they have invested to support Oregon's Employment First Initiative.

To try to maintain this important system capacity, ODDS is going to offer emergency funding for Supported Employment Services in addition to the contingency funding for Employment Path and DSA services.

In order to do this, ODDS will calculate the monthly average for ODDS Supported Employment Services (Supported Small Group, Job Coaching, and Discovery), for Employment Providers for October-December 2019. Based on that, ODDS will provide this average to providers upon request for one month (30 days).

Providers who received funding for DSA and Employment Path are still eligible for this funding, as it is based on an entirely different service line and billing information.

In order to receive this funding, your organization must follow the requirements outlined in [AR 20-040](#) These include retaining a workforce as possible, allowing staff who are not providing DSA or Employment Services to support individuals in Residential or In-Home services, complete a regular reporting on staff, and intend to re-open at the resolution of this state of emergency.

It is also imperative that Supported Employment Services continue as possible. If your agency receives this grant for Supported Employment Services, your agency may not bill those services from 30 days of issue. That being said, part of this funding is designed to ensure some type of service continues. Some service ideas are outlined above regarding remote service options. Additional ideas include (but are not limited

to):

- Assisting people with filing for unemployment benefits;
- Helping individuals re-connect to benefits or file for increased benefits based on unemployment;
- Provide remote benefits counseling (if certified) or connect to WIN/DRO for benefits counseling;
- Remain connected to individuals who may have lost their jobs;
- Connecting with employers to retain relationships;
- Virtual meetings to help with soft skills; and
- Providing opportunities for individuals to connect with others during this time.

## **6. ODDS Seeks Stakeholder Input**

ODDS will continue to share additional guidance and best practices as they become available. We encourage stakeholders to submit ideas and potential solutions to best support the people we serve and the organizations we work for in this challenging situation. Ideas may be submitted to [employment.first@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:employment.first@dhsosha.state.or.us)

## **Supports and Accommodations on the Job Related to Preventing Transmission of the COVID-19 Virus**

Providers should also be working with individuals in order to identify opportunities for making accommodations. For example:

- Can individuals work during shifts where the spread of transmission is less likely?
- How is the employer ensuring employees can take as many precautions as possible? Do they have access to equipment to take the necessary precautions such as frequent hand washing, gloves and practicing physical distancing in compliance with Executive Order 20-12?
- Is the individual trained on his or her employer's sick leave policy and knows how to report sick, and will plan to remain home if he or she is sick?
- If the person must take time off related to the COVID-19 virus, has he or she communicated with the employer about returning to work?

Oregon has implemented robust Employment First initiatives to support individuals with IDD to obtain and advance in competitive integrated employment in the general workforce. This may be our first recession since implementing a number of these policies. Our providers, our service delivery system providers, and the people we support are resilient. Our Employment First initiatives will continue to ensure individuals with I/DD have the same access to community employment and

participating in the general workforce on the same basis as the rest of our community.

**Training/communication plan:**

- For more information, please register for the April Provider Expectations and Responsibilities Around COVID-19 - Webinar at 2 pm on April 16, 2020 at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7518400443284415756> Please send questions in advance to [ODDS.Questions@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:ODDS.Questions@dhsoha.state.or.us)
- **Submit questions and requests for technical assistance to:** [Employment.First@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:Employment.First@dhsoha.state.or.us)
- **Technical assistance is available from regionally-based employment specialists:** <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/EMPLOYMENT/EMPLOYMENT-FIRST/Documents/Map-ODDS-Regional-Employment-Specialists.pdf>

**Field/stakeholder review:**  Yes  No

**If yes, reviewed by:**

*If you have any questions about this policy, contact:*

Contact(s): Rebecca Sexton or Julie Huber	
Phone:	Fax:
Email: <a href="mailto:rebecca.m.sexton@dhsoha.state.or.us">rebecca.m.sexton@dhsoha.state.or.us</a> ; <a href="mailto:julie.l.huber@dhsoha.state.or.us">julie.l.huber@dhsoha.state.or.us</a>	