

**Certified community residential services providers supporting individuals
through the COVID-19 crisis
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Third Edition
August 13, 2020**

1. **How can a provider support clients through the COVID-19 pandemic?** Through these unprecedented times we have all felt the effects of isolation, inconvenience of wearing a mask and disruption to our routines. It is important that we support each other to cope with the drastic changes and developing new, safe and healthy habits. Providers and clients have likely found ways to cope, and following are ideas that may help:
 - Encourage clients to follow the guidelines provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Washington Department of Health (DOH). Residential Care Services also developed guidelines specific to residential settings and can be found at [FamHelp Facility Status and Information](#) under [Safe Start for Long-Term Care, Full Plan](#) (Certified Community Residential Services and Support). The information was recently presented at a July 31 webinar. RCS is publishing a recording of the webinar for those unable to attend.
 - Provide clients with current information about the pandemic effects in a way they can understand. Informing Families, a resource for individuals and families, developed informational material for individuals and families that describe the current crisis. Additional resources that may be helpful and are available on their [website](#).
 - Watch/listen to DDA's recorded COVID-19 webinar: [Home Survival guide with Dr. Phillip Diaz](#).
 - Encourage clients to select activities that allow 6-foot social distancing from others. Encourage them to spend time their room to stay away from others to reduce the risk of potential transmission.
 - Support clients to make informed decisions. When they make a choice, advise them of the impact their choice has to themselves and others.
 - Refer to the client's support plan to see if target behaviors are addressed. Consider applying behavioral strategies to support the client to make safer decisions and comply with the guidance from Department of Health (DOH). If the behavioral strategies in the client's plan are not successful you may contact the client's case manager. They can access assistance from the regional clinical team if needed.

2. **How do providers support clients to return to jobs and community safely?**

All activities in the community should be assessed individually to assure compliance with the governor's current Safe Start Proclamation. The proclamation includes statewide, county-by-county re-opening plan and provides for implementing safe strategies. This guidance includes employment, community inclusion and any other time spent in public. Continuing work or volunteering is an important part of everyone's lives and must be balanced with health and safety concerns. DSHS expects providers to follow the governor's directive and evaluate each situation specifically by county. When considering an individual's health and safety, balance the individual's right to make their own choices. Providers should take measures to mitigate

spreading the virus. If a client cannot work or volunteer during this time, assist them to explain their absence to their employer and, if applicable, their job support agency. Clients may convey interest in resuming employment when the crisis is over. A tool in development called *COVID – 19 Return to Employment Services Guidelines* will allow collaboration between clients, and residential and employment providers.

3. **What guidelines are in place for clients visiting their community?** RCS provided guidance : [COVID -19: Reopening of Washington State and Client Visits to the Community](#)
4. **Has the governor’s proclamation regarding suspension of training requirements for long-term care workers been extended?** Some training timelines continue to be suspended under the COVID-19 Pandemic State of Emergency [Proclamation](#) 20-05 through August 31, 2020. Forty hour CORE, 30 hours of Populations Specific training and Continuing Education Training remain suspended. Providers should continue to offer trainings virtually whenever possible.
5. **Has the allowance for the 75-hour virtual training been extended?** All of the Train-the-Trainer academies moved online.

All Community Residential provider trainings are now virtualized the 40 hour CORE Chapter 12 is a hybrid virtual/small in-person skill demonstration session with social distancing. Contact [Residential Provider Training Manager](#) for guidance.

- Virtual courses include:
 - Train-the Trainer Academies
 - CE Series Train The Trainer
 - 40 hour CORE Train The Trainer
 - 5-hour DDA Safety and Orientation training: [Community Residential Services Online Training](#)
 - 40-hour CORE
 - 30 hours of Population Specific training
 - Peer Coaching can be conducted virtually or 1:1 with social distancing on-the-job
 - Online CPR/First Aid

6. **What do I do if a new hire cannot get proof of education?** If a prospective employee is unable to locate their high school diploma, consider substituting other credentials, such as a letter from the school/school district, or transcripts. If the prospective employee is still unable to provide proof, talk with your DDA Resource Manager about requesting an exception to rule. As part of the exception request the provider should submit an attestation from the staff stating that they have graduated from High School or have a GED. When the current emergency ends, the provider must obtain verification of the High School Diploma or GED.
7. **What nurse delegation requirements are currently in place?** Rule changes related to COVID-19 for nurse delegation are in place through August 31, 2020. An electronic signature is valid for the consent forms. Current requirements:

- Client visits must be completed every 90-120 days.

- One client visit must be completed for insulin delegation—the additional three visits are allowed if needed, but the requirement to complete them is suspended for now.
 - Delegated staff must have a current Nursing Assistant Registered (NAR) credential.
 - Delegated staff must complete Nurse Delegation for Nursing Assistant and Special Focus on Diabetes if giving insulin. Virtual training is acceptable.
8. **Can all nurse delegation requirements be temporarily suspended?** Requirements for Nurse Delegation can be met in alternate formats and the training cannot be suspended.
9. **Are all Supported Living clients and staff being tested for COVID-19?** The Department of Health is working to test clients served by Supported Living agencies as well as staff working at client homes. More information about this will be communicated in the future.
10. **Why should providers take the online COVID-19 Facility Survey?** The online COVID-19 survey allows RCS to inform public health partners in resource deployment. If providers are underrepresented, it may prevent them from receiving the resources they need.
 Survey: [COVID-19 Facility Survey](#).
 Letter: [DEPARTMENT REQUEST FOR ONGOING COVID-19 STATUS UPDATES](#).
11. **How can providers request Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when clients tests positive?**
- Providers should first reach out to their local health jurisdiction (LHJ).
 - When conversing with the LHJ, The provider needs to specify that they are providing direct care support for a vulnerable adult when requesting support (testing or PPEs)
 - Inform your region, through their DDA Case or Resource manager (RM), they need support.
 - The RMs/CRMs need to ensure the agency communicated their need to the LHJ.
 - The RAs or RMAs will forward the requests to headquarters.
12. **What are the requirements for direct support staff wearing a mask when supporting someone who is not COVID-19 positive?** According to DOH guidelines, all staff, regardless of their position must wear a cloth face covering or face mask while in a client’s home. This stands if no COVID-19 positive cases exist. If positive cases exist, additional requirements are needed. If you have questions, your local health jurisdictions may be able to assist you.
13. **How can I help the client I support wear a mask?** Providing clients with information on the current world situation may help. Also, masks come in many forms (traditional mask, bandana, balaclava, etc.) Offer face covering choices that may be more comfortable. Include the client when choosing a mask. Assisting a client to choose a mask with a favorite sports team or color may help.



14. **Will temporary rate increase funds continue past June 30, 2020 for Supported Living, Group Training Homes, Group Homes, Companion Homes and Alternative Living providers?** Providers received a second rate increase effective August 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020. This increase was calculated to ensure that July 2020 costs were included. The funds are to be used to address unique costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Details can be found online:

- Supported living, group training homes and group homes can be found [here](#).
- Details for companion homes can be found [here](#).
- Details for Children’s Licensed Staff Residential can be found [here](#).

15. **If staff are staying in the client’s home during the pandemic, does the provider pay a portion of utilities?** If increases occur in client living expenses due to staff living in the client’s home, the agency should consult with the DDA Resource Manger to address the costs.

16. **Has the monthly premium waiver for Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities (HWD) been extended?** Yes. The HWD premium waiver is extended through October 2020 until the declaration of the public health emergency is due to expire.

17. **How do I sign up for a volunteer staff registry that may provide support to my agency?** Agencies who want to request approved volunteers, or activate specific staff under this program, can visit the [DOH website](#).

18. **Are DDA clients who test positive able to go to COVID-only facilities?** Yes. DSHS has five Skilled Nursing Facilities that extended their COVID-19 through September 30, 2020. The facilities are

located in Tacoma, North Seattle, Bellingham, Pasco, and Seattle. Please contact your DDA Case Manager or Resource Manager if you have a client who may qualify.

19. **What are the requirements for community protection treatment team meetings?** The requirement for community protection treatment team meetings to be held every 90 days has been waived via Governor's [proclamation](#). For more details see [Governor's Proclamation](#).
20. **Where can I find information about how many DDA clients and their staff have been effected by the virus?** DDA is collecting data on the prevalence of COVID-19 in community residential services: [DDA Community Residential Service Providers with Confirmed COVID-19 Cases](#).