

Resuming Client In-Person Visits Residential Provider Information and FAQs

September 11, 2020

Dear Residential Providers,

The COVID-19 pandemic requires an unprecedented response from DSHS to maintain our mission and to keep clients and employees in residential programs safe. We could not accomplish the mission of empowering people to live the lives they want without you. We recognize your hard work and extraordinary efforts.

We have sent stakeholders a [general message](#) about how we intend to resume brief, safe in-person/in-home visits. Below you will find frequently asked questions for residential providers.

Why is the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) resuming in-person visits?

Before the COVID-19 pandemic upended daily living, DDA Case Managers would complete the client assessment in-person and typically, in the client's home. The in-person visit is in accordance with state laws¹.

[Proclamation 20-62](#) suspended the legal requirement that DDA Case Managers conduct client in-person visits during the annual assessment. The proclamation expired on August 7, 2020.

How long is the visit expected to last?

The in-person visit is expected to last 15 minutes or less. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, [brief interactions](#) are less likely to transmit COVID-19. Assessments, reviews, and person-centered service planning will continue to be done remotely.

Are Case Managers trained to have a safe home visit?

Case Managers have received Safe Start training which included infection control measures, using protective personal equipment (PPE), and how to conduct a brief visit.

The Case Manager will schedule the visit by calling the provider and the client/client legal representative. Prior to the visit, the Case Manager will call back to ask screening questions using the Safe Start Training screening protocol to ensure the client, household members, and staff are not symptomatic.

¹ RCW 71A.12.310 and RCW 71A.12.320

Additionally, Case Managers will not conduct the in-home visit in a COVID-19 positive home or with individuals or household members who are experiencing symptoms.

How can the client and the provider prepare for the visit?

Consider where you are most comfortable holding this brief visit and let the Case Manager know. Clients and providers are encouraged to limit the attendees during the visit to reduce the risk of [transmission of COVID-19](#). This guidance is also in accordance with the [Washington State Safe Start Plan](#).

What to expect during the visit

You can expect the Case Manager to wear a face covering and to maintain at least 6 feet of social distance. We ask that clients and providers do the same. Case Managers will have disposable masks if you don't have one.

What if the client doesn't feel comfortable having a Case Manager visit in person?

You may choose where your meeting occurs. The in-person visit may occur in an outside setting such as a patio or balcony or another safe location nearby where the client lives. It is important to note that Case Managers are expected to view the client's "living quarters" (typically bedroom) as part of the visit. Please speak to the Case Manager if you need to decline the visit.

Find more information, FAQs, and resources on the [DDA Coronavirus Information page](#).

If you have specific questions regarding Safe Restart visits, please contact:

Region 1 (Eastern Washington) dd1fso@dshs.wa.gov

Region 2 (King, Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, Island, San Juan counties)
dd4fso@dshs.wa.gov

Region 3 (Pierce County, Southwest & Peninsula) dd6fso@dshs.wa.gov

Thank you for your continued services and supports. We look forward to seeing clients again. We are committed to continue to keep everyone safe by using the best public health safety practices from the [Centers of Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [Washington State Department of Health](#). We will also keep you informed every step of the way.