

## **DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration**

### **Announces 2022 Community Summit**

Mark your calendars! DSHS' Developmental Disabilities Administration recently announced that planning is underway for the 2022 Community Summit. The conference will again be offered as a virtual event, featuring a series of 10 webinar sessions in May and June of 2022.

In its 10<sup>th</sup> year, the Community Summit debuted in 2013 as a relaunch of the long-running, DDA-sponsored "Ellensburg Conference" which focused on supported employment. The new Community Summit was intended to broaden the scope of the conference, to bring together self-advocates, families, friends, and allies to talk about building more inclusive communities where people can live the life they want to live. The Community Summit features keynote speakers and presenters that focus on self-advocacy, supported employment, local and national policy changes, person-centered planning, community inclusion, building positive relationships, and technologies that promote independence in the home, workplace, and community. In addition to the informative presentations, the Community Summit also features engaging social events so that people connect with friends -- old and new.

DDA sponsors the Summit in conjunction with a variety of public and private partners including Washington state counties and WISE. The Community Summit has been a well-attended event since its inception. As the COVID-19 pandemic impacted our communities, the 2020 and 2021 events changed from being an in-person venue based event to a virtual platform with the conference being hosted entirely online. The online conference experience is different than what people are used to, but it has enabled an audience and presenters to attend who may not have been able to do so otherwise.

"We are aware that people are really wanting to return to our communities and get together again, but given the on-going situation with COVID-19, there are still too many unknown variables to plan a big in-person event," said Ron Bryan, DDA's Roads to Community Living program and coordinator of the Community Summit steering committee. "Extensive stakeholder outreach was conducted to guide us on making the best decision, and it was the consensus opinion that a virtual event is the safest way forward, at this time."

The steering committee and planning partner Wise continue to work on the online conference platform, improving accessibility to make it easy for all to participate, and to continue the important message of the Community Summit.

Exact dates are to be determined, but the Summit will be featuring weekly presentations and online social events through May and June of 2022. We will be bringing impactful local and national level speakers that the Community Summit has become known for, addressing the important issues facing our communities and citizens.

As planning gets under way, updates on Community Summit themes and speakers will be sent out via Gov.Delivery and this newsletter. You can also check out the Community Summit Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/thecommunitysummit/> for updates on planning. If you have questions about Community Summit 2022 or want to know how you can be involved, please contact Community Summit steering committee coordinator Ron Bryan at [Ronald.Bryan@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Ronald.Bryan@dshs.wa.gov)

We look forward to seeing you at Community Summit 2022!

