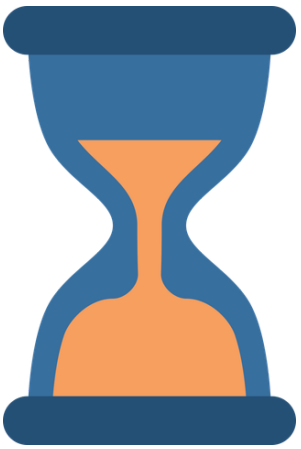
Community Employment Alliance
Since 1974

Moving School to Work to DDA:

Creating a Simpler and More Effective Transition System for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Why This Matters:



- **School to Work (STW) Belongs in an Agency that Specializes in Supporting People with IDD:**
  - STW serves students with IDD who are eligible for DDA services.
  - DDA is the state agency that specializes in supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), while DVR serves individuals with all disability types.
  - Moving School to Work to DDA aligns the program with the agency best equipped to serve the population it was designed for.
  - Housing School to Work within DDA would strengthen coordination with other IDD-specific services they provide including individualized technical assistance, personal care supports, and respite.
- **Students are Stuck Waiting Due to DVR's Federally Mandated Waitlist:**
  - School to Work helps students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) obtain paid employment before leaving school.
  - DVR's federally required waitlist process is currently preventing students from accessing School to Work.
  - A time-limited program should not depend on a system that cannot guarantee timely access. DDA does not have federal waitlist requirements.
- **This Move Will Create Access in Every County:**

  - Students with IDD should have access to STW regardless of their ZIP code.
  - Today, access varies across Washington because the current funding structure requires counties to provide upfront funding and assume financial risk. Many counties lack the local resources needed to participate and therefore do not provide STW services.
  - Moving School to Work to DDA would provide a more sustainable funding structure, support upfront investment in services, and expand access to students across the state.

How the Bill Improves Transition Services:

- **Creates a Seamless Pathway to Employment:**
  - School to Work serves students who are eligible for DDA services.
  - DDA already funds the long-term employment services many students rely on after graduation.
  - Moving School to Work to DDA creates a more coordinated transition from school to adult employment.
- **Reduces System Complexity:**
  - Families often navigate schools, DVR, DDA, counties, and employment providers simultaneously.
  - Aligning School to Work with DDA reduces fragmentation and creates a simpler system for students and families.

> School to Work programs are important because there's a high success rate for students actually becoming employed, and that's a big deal. It allows the new relationships with the employment [provider] to develop while the old [school] relationships are still there.
>
> Debbie Adamson, teacher
> South Kitsap High School

Why Move STW to DDA?

- **No Waitlists:** DDA does not have the federal waitlist requirements that currently block some students from STW.
- **IDD Expertise:** STW belongs in the agency that specializes in supporting people with IDD.
- **Statewide Access:** STW is currently available in only 19 of 39 counties. Moving it to DDA would help expand access statewide.
- **Federal Match:** STW currently operates with only state dollars.
- **Support:** Individuals, families, providers, and counties support this change

About the STW Program:

- STW is a proven employment model started by King County in the 2000's
- The program supports students in their last year of school (age 21-22) to get connected with adult services and get a job before they graduate