

Supported Employment

Overview

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) states that about 70 percent of adults with serious mental illnesses want to work (Mueser et al., 2001; Roger et al., 2001). Under Washington State's 1115 Medicaid Transformation Project (MTP) waiver, Foundational Community Supports (FCS) provides targeted supported employment (SE) services to help individuals with significant barriers find and maintain stable employment based on their preferences.

Studies have shown that people who are chronically unemployed tend to exhibit increased mental and physical illness such as high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease and may die earlier than people who are typically employed. Communities with high unemployment rates are more likely to have limited employment opportunities, low-quality housing, fewer available recreational activities, limited access to public transportation and public services and underfunded schools.

Employment is associated with improved quality of life and overall well-being, self-esteem, management of mental health symptoms, and financial well-being. IPS studies show a small but statistically significant reduction in arrest rates between clients one year prior to and after enrollment in Individual Placement and Support, compared to a matched control group.

Individual placement and support

SE services follow the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) evidence-based practice that has been proven effective in 28 randomized controlled trials. IPS is three times more effective than other vocational approaches in helping people with many different diagnoses, educational levels, and prior work histories find employment and stay employed. Individuals targeted by IPS services include but are not limited to: people on long-term Social Security benefits, young adults, older adults,

veterans, people with intellectual disabilities, and people with co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders. With services guided by individual choice, participants maintain employment, reduce the need for higher-cost services, reduce incarceration and recidivism and change the trajectory of vulnerable youth, and young adults away from cycles of poverty.

Evidence based practices provide a framework for exceptional service delivery. The evidence based practice for supported employment is IPS. It is a continuous quality improvement process. The HCA DBHR trainers enhance agencies' ability to provide high quality services by offering a Job Developer's Community of Practice call monthly, during which Rutgers University staff provide training and facilitate conversation to address challenges. The HCA also offers a monthly topical employment webinar, during which selected presenters provide information about resources that will aid in addressing the challenges of people receiving services.

Supported Employment service recipients

To qualify for these services, individuals must be eligible for Medicaid, have a medical/functional need, exhibit a demonstrated need through an assessment, and meet one of the following risk factors:

- Individuals eligible for the Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) or aged, Blind, Disabled (ABD) program.
- Those experiencing significant mental illness, substance use disorder, or co-occurring conditions.
- Long-term care recipients with complex needs.
- Vulnerable youth and young adults with behavioral health challenges.

Enrollment

Since 2018, 38,681 people have been enrolled in Foundational Community Supports, with approximately 20,069 of the individuals in FCS supported employment services through July 2023. The average length of time enrolled in the program 14.1 months, as services are designed to provide supports to individuals for as long as they are

needed. More data can be found in the FCS administrative reports on the HCA website, through the link below (under Initiative 3: Foundational Community Supports):

[Reports | Washington State Health Care Authority](#)

Promising results of Washington's FCS program

The Research and Data Analysis (RDA) Division of Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) released a preliminary evaluation report on the FCS program in July 2021.

The report covers the first 18 months of FCS implementation, from January 2018 to September 2019. Key findings of the report include:

- Positive impacts on employment rates for all target populations
- Increases in earnings and average hours worked among enrollees without a long-term care need
- Significant positive impacts on transitions out of homelessness for HCA-affiliated enrollees
- Statistically significant in the receipt of in-home care services

The independent external evaluator of the 1115 waiver, Oregon Health and Sciences University (OHSU) also identified statistically significant decreases in arrests among enrollees affiliated with the HCA.

[View the latest OHSU report](#)

Authority, extension, and renewal

Washington State and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) entered an agreement for an additional five-year extension which includes the FCS Supported Employment and Supportive Housing program under an 1115 waiver. The program aims to strengthen state efforts to improve healthcare for Washington families and reduce health care costs by addressing the social determinants of health.

Administration

The state contracted with Amerigroup as a Third-Party Administrator (TPA) to select, qualify, and contract with employment and housing providers.

The TPA also determines individual eligibility, authorizes FCS services, and reimburses providers.

Phone: 844-451-2828

email: FCSTPA@amerigroup.com

[Amerigroup TPA website](#)

[FCS provider map](#)

Additional resources

Below are links to additional resources and materials about the FCS program.

- [FCS reimbursement rates](#)
- [RDA preliminary report – July 2021 update](#)
- [WorkSource and FCS fact sheet](#)
- [Subscribe to the FCS Newsletter](#)

For more waiver information

Visit the [Medicaid Transformation page](#) or email questions and comments to medicaidtransformation@hca.wa.gov.

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