

Department of Developmental Services



At a Glance

JORDAN A. SCHEFF, Commissioner

Vacant, Deputy Commissioner

Established – 1975

Statutory authority – Conn. Gen. Statutes Chap. 319b – 319c

Central office – 460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106

Number of full-time employees – 2,047

(total permanent FT filled count as of June 30, 2017)

Number of individuals determined eligible – 16,951

Recurring operating expenses - \$522,346,716

Organizational structure – Services and supports for more than 16,000 individuals and their families are provided through a network of public and private providers across Connecticut.

In Fiscal Year 2017, the Office of the Commissioner oversaw and directed the following divisions: Communications; Equal Opportunity Assurance; Family Support Resources; Fiscal Services (incl. Quality Management & Waiver Services); Human Resources; Investigations; Legal and Government Affairs; Legislative and Executive Affairs; and Project Management and Strategic Planning.

The Office of the Deputy Commissioner oversaw and directed the following divisions: Health Services; Information Technology; Psychological Services; and Regional Services.

The department operates three regional offices, and provides or funds residential, day program and family support services.

The Independent Office of the Ombudsperson for Developmental Services and the Council on Developmental Disabilities are housed within the department.

Mission

The mission of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is to partner with the individuals we support and their families, to support lifelong planning and to join with others to create meaningful opportunities for individuals to fully participate as valued members of their communities.

Statutory Responsibility

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is responsible for the planning, development, and administration of complete, comprehensive, and integrated statewide services for persons with intellectual disability and persons medically diagnosed as having Prader-Willi Syndrome. DDS provides services within available appropriations through a decentralized system that relies on private provider agencies under contract or enrolled with the department, in addition to the state operated services. These services include residential placement and in-home supports, day and employment programs, early intervention, family support, respite, case management, and other periodic services such as transportation, interpreter services, and clinical services.

Public Service

The department continues to engage in a number of activities designed to improve services and the management of its public and private programs. DDS also continues to be involved in initiatives designed to meet the increasing expectations of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) concerning health and welfare, and quality improvement protocols for the operation of Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers.

Five Year Plan:

In February 2017, DDS released a new Five Year Plan. Building on the department's accomplishments from 2012 – 2017, the plan creates a path for DDS to transform itself and continue to have a positive impact on the individuals and families it supports. The new Five Year Plan takes the foundational elements developed with stakeholders in 2012, and applies to them a project-based approach to implementation.

DDS' 2012-2017 Five Year Plan described a paradigm shift that would necessarily guide the work of the agency over that period. The elements of this paradigm still ring true today, as Connecticut and the rest of the nation work toward innovation and transformation across the board. In the 2017-2022 Five Year Plan, DDS is committed to continued work toward this new paradigm, focusing on several overarching shifts:

- DDS is dedicated to moving away from traditional legacy systems, in favor of innovation and ever-increasing community integration in all areas of supports for individuals with intellectual disability.
- In this movement, DDS is seeking sustainability, as the state continues to face the need to do more with less.
- DDS will continue to support self-advocacy efforts, helping the individuals we support to engage, organize, and communicate.
- DDS is committed to maintaining and enhancing transparency, through participation of

stakeholders in the work to come, and continual communication about progress to the community at-large.

The direction of the plan is set by five guiding principles: 1) People & Families First, 2) Strong Foundation, 3) Innovation & Transformation, 4) Excellence in Service Delivery, and 5) Sustainable Change. These guiding principles speak to where the agency must focus its efforts and resources, in order to be successful in transforming models of supports in the years to come. They point the agency toward establishing a strong foundation first, on which to build innovation, transformation, and best practices in service delivery. They remind DDS to promote sustainability in the changes sought. Most importantly, they ground the team in a steadfast commitment to the individuals and families supported by the agency. These principles are woven throughout the 2017-2022 Five Year Plan, giving a lens through which to view and prioritize the projects that will make up the department's work going forward.

Director of Family Support Strategies and Advocacy:

Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 was the fourth year of implementing activities related to the national Supporting Families Community of Practice Project. Connecticut (CT) was one of five states in the country to receive a five-year Community of Practice (COP) Grant, which supports examination of the process of improving supports to individuals with intellectual disability and their families across the span of their lifetime. The project is administered through a partnership between DDS and the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities. Year four activities focused on embedding Charting the LifeCourse concepts into other CT organizations as a means to sustain use of LifeCourse planning practices after the COP grant activities have ended. The following state agencies and units have begun to incorporate Charting the LifeCourse concepts into their organization's activities: Birth to Three, Department of Aging, Department of Education, Department of Public Health, Department of Rehabilitation Services, and the Division of Autism Services (Department of Social Services). The University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, several local school districts and a number of family groups have also incorporated Charting the LifeCourse Planning activities into their organizations' family support activities. Use of the Charting the LifeCourse concepts at other agencies has helped to create a common language and a universal framework that help families to effectively find, use and coordinate supports they receive across different agencies.

During FY 2017, Family Support and Advocacy efforts were also focused on enhancing support services that are important to families. Changes were made to day service and employment policies, procedures and infrastructure to support effective implementation of the Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act (WIOA) regulations and modifications were made to support broader and more effective use of DDS respite services. Training and technical assistance provided to DDS qualified providers also resulted in enhanced use of technology as an effective support strategy and work with financial planners and benefit planners has resulted in more families learning how to use and grow their own assets to more effectively support the needs of their loved one with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Positive Behavioral Support and Trauma-Informed Care

DDS continues to promote the use of clinical, behavioral, and trauma-informed practices that are evidence-based and empirically-supported in order to best serve individuals who present with challenging and complex needs. DDS is one of seven CT State agencies that have partnered to form the CT Restraint and Seclusion Prevention Initiative. In FY 2017, DDS provided a presentation on reducing the overuse of psychiatric medications at the Restraint and Seclusion Prevention Annual

Conference. Also in FY 2017, DDS continued to partner with colleagues from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to provide positive behavior support (PBS) training to Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services (EMPS) clinicians who may encounter crisis situations involving children with developmental disabilities. The Director of the DDS Psychological Services Division is a member of the PBS Steering Committee for the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) and an active participant in the weekly Beacon Health/Behavioral Health Partnership complex case rounds for children and adolescents.

DDS Continues Our Lean Journey:

DDS remains an active member-agency of the Statewide Process Improvement Steering Committee. This year the Committee undertook a strategic planning initiative to increase the effectiveness of subcommittee work. The Committee is now poised to release Lean 101 online using the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Learning Center for registration tracking. Making this introductory training available for all employees is a major accomplishment upon which to build future enhancement modules. Participant evaluations will be used to identify baseline values for some of the committees' statewide performance measures.

In FY 2017, DDS became the first state agency to execute 100% of Purchase of Service Provider Contracts in a fully electronic environment. The execution of a new multi-year POS contract in the DAS BizNet contracting portal was the result of an internal Lean process that involved collaboration with the Attorney General's office and DAS/Bureau of Enterprise Systems and Technology (BEST).

DDS participated in a statewide Lean process to identify requirements for an e-Licensing system to be used across multiple state agencies. DDS is in the process of implementing the new technology solution and is streamlining workflows for facility licensing, medication administration, and evacuation score processes.

DDS invested both business and IT resources into its Business Intelligence and Analytics program this year. By taking a Lean approach, DDS was able to increase value and eliminate waste in provision of analytical data to business users across the agency. The Medicaid Waiver Management dashboard, which was highlighted at the 2017 Lean CT Showcase, replaced over 20 Microsoft Access queries requiring manual administration, analysis and interpretation. The dashboard provides all information on one screen with visual controls showing defects requiring action. This saves staff time and eliminates manual processing, but more importantly can highlight conditions to be fixed that if left unattended would result in loss of claims revenue.

The agency strives to make Lean part of everyday work at DDS, and is committed to ensuring all technology improvement efforts are preceded by Lean process improvement to deliver the most streamlined solution to the most streamlined process.

Self-Advocate Coordinators:

The DDS Self Advocate Coordinators (SACs) continue to promote people to "Speak Up and Speak Out" to ensure those receiving supports and services from DDS have a voice. The ten SACs, located in each DDS region, are employed by DDS. Their voices support, guide, question, and strengthen the department in practices, policies, and culture. Supporting the department in highlighting what is important to individuals, families, and staff while promoting best practices in self-advocacy and self-determination. The SACs play a central role in systems change and make sure individuals supported by the department have an active role in the development and evolution of the department's service system.

The SACs have had an ongoing focus to build self-advocacy and empower individuals to find their voice. Over the past six years, the SACs have worked to increase peer participation in Self Advocacy Groups. Self-advocate involvement has shown an increase in the number of active voices participating in self-advocacy groups from 285 voices in FY 2011 to over 1,300 voices in FY 2017.

SACs continue to participate in many significant projects, including their initiative of supporting and recognizing the use of "People First Language." The "We are People –Call Me by My Name" campaign is asking for everyone to be called by their given name. The SACs are hoping to eliminate the use of words such as "client," "patient," "ward," "them," "handicapped," and the "R" word - "retarded." In March, one of the SACs provided testimony with the Commissioner before the Public Health Committee to support Governor Malloy's proposed bill No. 796, An Act Concerning the Use of Respectful and Person-First Language. As stated in the testimony "I am a person first! I know I have challenges, but everyone does. I need the support that will assist me to be the best I can be. Support does not mean I am any different than you. I may need a little more explanation of something, or more assistance to complete something, but there is no reason that should change how you see me. I just want to be treated with respect. Call me by my name." This bill did pass with a few revisions and now the SACs continue to promote, educate, and advocate for everyone to use language to show respect for each other and promote Disability Awareness - seeing the person and not the disability.

The SACs are leading the way in supporting change for people with disabilities. Through their outreach, ongoing training, and advocacy, the SACs support individuals to understand what it means to live a self-determined life and be part of our CT communities. Together they promote exploring and understanding all types of relationships by team teaching the "Healthy Relationship Series" supported by the department. "Real Work For Real Pay!" can be heard with strong voices as the SACs promote the importance of employment and being empowered to make a difference in accepting everyone in our CT workforce. "No Excuse for Abuse" can be heard as the SACs provide information in understanding personal rights and responsibilities and teach others to speak up against bullying, neglect, abuse and financial exploitation. "My Life My Choice" is heard as the SACs assist individuals to understand how to plan for their future and participate in developing their Individual Plan. The SACs strive to be a positive role model to others showing anything is possible if you understand who you are and what you want to accomplish in life.

The SACs are an important part of the department and assist in promoting initiatives and activities that have made a difference to the people supported by DDS. The SACs meet with the DDS administration to make sure the voices of individuals supported by DDS are being heard. They work collaboratively with sister agencies, community and national organizations, private providers, individuals and families to spread the word of "Living the DDS Mission."

Improvements/Achievements 2016-2017

Individuals Served:

As of June 30, 2017 there were 10,145 individuals enrolled in the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers for persons with intellectual disability. DDS funding priorities continue to address individuals with an emergency need for supports and services and for existing HCBS waiver participants with increased needs or a change in their need. During FY17, DDS provided residential resources to 108 individuals on the basis of emergency. Also, 111 waiver participants received additional funding to fully meet their needs.

As of June 30, 2017 there were 500 individuals on the DDS Residential Waiting List including 20 Emergencies and 480 Priority Ones (P1s). In FY17, 54 individuals had their residential

needs met and came off the waiting list and 167 individuals received additional supports to fully meet their residential needs.

The department provided community residential supports for 87 young adults aging out of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or local education agencies (LEAs). DDS provided supported employment or adult day services to 235 new high school graduates and 112 individuals receiving day age-out funding. This is the tenth year that DDS has operated the DDS Behavioral Services Program (BSP – formerly known as Voluntary Services Program, or, VSP) for children who have intellectual disability and behavioral health needs. As of June 30, 2017, the total number of children served in DDS BSP was 383.

Aging Services:

More than 3,614 individuals age 55 and over receive services from DDS. Aging Services continues to integrate the needs and desires of aging individuals, collects and disseminates relevant data, and shares educational information with individuals, families, DDS employees and support providers. DDS is a partner in CT's Money Follows the Person (MFP) demonstration grant that is intended to assist with the rebalancing of CT's long-term care system, so that individuals can return to living in the community. As of FY17 the DDS MFP unit has assisted 240 individuals who have moved from long-term care settings, Hospitals, Private ICFs, Southbury Training School and DDS Regional Centers into community settings under MFP.

Respite Program:

DDS Respite Centers provide 24-hour care for extended weekends in comfortable home-like environments. The department has 10 respite centers that served a total of 969 individuals statewide in FY17, including 127 children under 18 years of age.

Case Management:

Despite a shrinking workforce, DDS case managers have increased documentation and the associated federal reimbursement for their services for the third year in a row. Development of an updated version of the Individual Plan has been progressing, including incorporation of feedback from multiple groups. Additionally, Person Centered Counseling training has been initiated for all case managers in conjunction with the CT State Department on Aging. This training format includes both online and in-person classes. This is the first of several identified trainings for all case managers this year focusing on person-centered planning practices.

Employment Corner:

DDS continues to enhance services dedicated to fulfilling its commitment to the *Employment First Initiative* through several innovative Individualized Employment Incentives, statewide resource fairs, trainings, internships, job fairs, and collaborative committees. CT remains dedicated to embracing a comprehensive, team-oriented Career Planning process for supported individuals, and enlists professional community based providers to assist in promoting opportunities for training and education in the various stages of the planning process using the "Employment First Initiative" as a guiding principle. DDS continues to implement collaborative guidance and mandatory key implementation features of WIOA and Section 511 through a completed project involving several state agencies including the Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Education.

DDS is involved with several committees including the "CT Job Development Leadership Network," and collaborates with the CT Business Leadership Network and Chambers of Commerce to provide information, referrals, and presentations. Participation in other Employment

First and transition themed committees and activities include: Employment Steering Committee, Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE), Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance, Ongoing Supports MOU, and National Core Indicators surveys. State agency collaborations include: American Job Center promotions (CTHIRES), DOL/Workforce Alliance, Department of Rehabilitation Services, and the UConn Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities' Transition Symposium. Also in FY17, DDS, CT state agency partners, and eight contracted providers participated in the Marc Gold & Associates Customized Employment training. The trainings afforded participants with instruction in Discovery, Customized Employment Implementation, Job Development, and Systematic Instruction.

Throughout FY17, DDS has secured several new providers contracted to provide Individualized Supported Integrated Employment Services statewide, as well as the delivery of the newest day service option entitled "Pre-Employment Transitional Services." Transitional services are intended to be community based and time limited, for the purpose of preparing individuals transitioning from vocational school programs and/or sheltered environments. This service also meets the federal government stipulations outlined through WIOA and Section 511. Through a collaborative effort, DDS and contracted providers continue to plan for supported employment options for individuals participating in sheltered vocational programs. It is anticipated that sheltered vocational programs will be largely eliminated in the state of CT by September 2018.

CT DDS Educational Liaisons and Transition Advisors have advanced their interagency efforts with transitioning youth by providing vocational and competitive employment education to families and educational systems throughout the State. They have embraced a consultative interdisciplinary approach toward future planning for transitioning youth.

DDS experienced a 100% competitive job placement rate through partnership and funding for *Project Search*, a nationally recognized internship program specific to pre-employment transition services for transitioning youth and recent graduates. DDS has continued to support the success of Industry Specific Training Programs such as Walgreens, Home Goods, TJ Maxx, Mohegan Sun, and Mystic Aquarium. Additionally, DDS collaborates with a variety of training programs including Workability, Billings Forge, and Hartford Job Corps.

DDS remains an active representative on the "Governor's Committee on Employment of Persons with Disabilities," and contributes to the committee's mission to create interagency and community partnerships to improve access to competitive work opportunities throughout the State. The committee will launch a major statewide campaign in October 2017 to celebrate National Disability Employment Month. Events related to this campaign will include the dissemination of resources as provided by the National Office of Disability Employment Policy, Diverse-Ability Job Fairs in several statewide locations, social media outreach endeavors, employment mentor days, an *Employment Idol* contest, employer engagement and recognition events, and many more activities to encourage the hiring of individuals with disabilities by CT employers.

Federal Reimbursement:

During FY 2017, the department generated \$562,510,301 in federal Medicaid reimbursement (regular reimbursement totaled \$501,426,774 plus \$61,083,527 in adjustments). As of June 30, 2017, there were 10,145 persons enrolled in the DDS Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers. The HCBS waiver program allows for federal reimbursement for residential habilitation, day programs, and support services provided in the community.

Information Reported as Required by State Statute

Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Office:

The DDS Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office is charged with ensuring that the principles of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunities are undertaken with vigor, conviction and 'good faith' to overcome the residual effects of past practices, policies and/or barriers. The EEO Office directly reports to and is under the authority of the DDS Commissioner. The EEO staff conducts investigations into internal discrimination complaints, renders findings and is involved in a variety of resolution activities. The EEO staff develop, implement and monitor affirmative action program goals and objectives. The EEO staff monitor compliance with state and federal affirmative action/equal employment opportunity laws and regulations. The EEO staff provide training to all new employees and supervisors on affirmative action topics. The EEO staff consult with managers and administrators on affirmative action matters.

Council on Developmental Disabilities:

The CT Council on Developmental Disabilities is an independent, federally funded entity, established by Governor Malloy's Executive Order No. 19 and operating under the federal Developmental Disabilities Act (PL 106-402). The Council is composed of 24 Governor-appointed members, and is attached administratively to the Department of Developmental Services. In FY 2017, the Council's budget was \$703,485 to fund an array of initiatives that support the Council's mission of promoting the full inclusion of all people with disabilities in community life. Those initiatives include (1) improving school climate for students with disabilities through the development of an All Abilities Alliance of high school students across the state; (2) supporting the re-development and expansion of CT KASA (Kids As Self Advocates) a youth led leadership development initiative for youth ages 14 to 26; (3) creating an innovative integrated community in which individuals with IDD can realize their right to live, work and play in an accessible community of their choosing and to create a road map for the development of other such communities;(4) providing financial assistance for self-advocates and family members to attend conferences and meetings to their leadership skills and knowledge (5) (6) Continuing work on outreach and informational materials for the 2020 campaign to close Southbury Training School and the five regional centers by the year 2020, including an hour long documentary and 30 second vignettes aired on CPTV; (7) implementing Partners in Policymaking, a nationally recognized seven month leadership training program for self-advocates and parents; (8) continue to support and participate in the Cross-Disability Alliance to increase opportunities for self-advocates to participate in policy and advocacy initiatives; (9) support and provide technical assistance to People First of CT to develop and implement a strategic plan and annual work plan; (10) and provide access to customized employment opportunities through training of service providers and stakeholders.

Regulations:

The department continues the process of amending the licensing regulations for Community Living Arrangements and for Community Companion Homes and reviewing the contracting regulations concerning Individualized Home Supports and Continuous Residential Supports. The agency also is finalizing amended regulations concerning the DDS Abuse and Neglect Registry. The prioritization of reviewing and revising agency regulations continues.