

Fall 2024

Strategic Plan Mid-Period Update



CONNECTICUT
Developmental Services

CONNECTICUT Developmental Services

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 system that relies heavily on our qualified provider network, in addition to some state-operated services.

In 2022, DDS finalized a strategic five-year plan that would guide the Department's direction over the next five years using the LifeCourse Framework.

DDS outlined priorities in the following areas:



Daily Life & Employment



Community Living



Healthy Living



Safety & Security



Social & Spirituality



Advocacy & Engagement

This document provides insight into the progress DDS has made towards furthering those strategic priorities.



CONNECTICUT Developmental Services

Daily Life & Employment



Priorities from '22-'27 Plan

Key Action Steps Taken

Progress Indicators

DDS will expand innovative programs like supportive employment and micro-enterprises

1. Awarded funds for individuals to support the development and expansion of micro-enterprises
2. Supported more individuals to transition into supportive employment through STEP

\$65K

Awarded for micro-enterprise expansion

DDS will drive CT's service offerings towards the agency's Employment First philosophy

1. Developed two additional employment-focused support options, Employment Exploration Options (EEO) and Employment Enrichment Services (EES).
2. Adopted an Employment-First Policy

2

New Employment-Focused Support Options Launched

DDS will improve communication across multiple sectors

1. Offered Customized Employment trainings to provider staff, free of charge to expand awareness of best practices

100+

Private provider staff trained in Customized Employment at DDS



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Community Living



Priorities from '22-'27 Plan

Key Action Steps Taken

Progress Indicators

DDS will continue to develop more integrated settings

1. Hired a Director of Housing to expand Supportive Housing
2. Deployed Supportive Housing funding opportunities

366%

Increase in open supportive housing units for individuals DDS supports

DDS will increase flexibility in residential options

1. Expanded opportunities for AT evaluations
2. Implemented the AT & Me Program
3. Deployed funding opportunities to expand AT use by individuals and providers
4. Supported providers to enhance staff technology competencies

300+

Individuals who have participated in DDS's AT & Me program

DDS will continue to think creatively about how to support individuals without residential funding

1. Support providers to plan for restructuring of residential settings to support individuals with unmet residential needs and/or more complex medical or behavioral support needs

4

Private providers who have developed relevant plans

DDS will partner with sister agencies to move forward with transformative work

1. Collaborated with DDS to implement Connecticut's ARPA HCBS Section 9817 Spend Plan to support innovative and transformative work

58

Individuals have transitioned to a more independent or community-based settings through STEP



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Healthy Living



Priorities from '22-'27 Plan

Key Action Steps Taken

Progress Indicators

DDS will support focused work in mental/behavioral health services and specialty areas

1. Offered support groups to individuals to support mindfulness, social skills, peer support, grief, and dialectical behavior therapy
2. Trained thousands of stakeholders across the state in topics related to neurodiversity, clinical behavior supports, trauma-informed care, and psychiatric medication

4

Types of specialized mental/behavioral support groups available to individuals

DDS will build connections to upskill professionals supporting individuals with IDD and mental/behavioral health needs

1. Support providers to expand supports to individual with more complex medical/behavioral support needs through STEP

5

Providers who have developed relevant plans

DDS will continue to explore how Public Services can act as a specialty or gap provider

1. Expand operation of the DDS Step Down Unit, which supports individuals in crisis and requiring behavioral stabilization
2. Expand capacity to offer complex medical support

In Progress



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Safety & Security



Priorities from '22-'27 Plan

Key Action Steps Taken

Progress Indicators

DDS will improve internal critical incident reporting data

1. Improved DDS's internal tracking capabilities to identify un-reported critical incidents
2. Improved internal processes by setting deadlines to follow-up on critical incidents

100%

New follow-up rate for critical incidents*

*formerly 60%

DDS will develop an online incident reporting tool

1. Explore tools that would support online reporting

In Progress

DDS will support specialized programs to provide emergency response

1. Expanded individual and Family support teams in each region
2. Increased the capacity of DDS Family Support Workers to support more individuals

500+

People received supports each month from a DDS Family Support worker in FY21



CONNECTICUT Developmental Services

Safety & Security



Priorities from '22-'27 Plan

Key action steps taken

Progress Indicators

DDS will seek out best practices in staff retention

1. Hired a Director of Workforce strategies to support research and best practices for staff recruitment and attention
2. Awarded funds to providers to support staff retention in the wake of the pandemic impacts

136

Private providers who received workforce funding from DDS

DDS will sponsor an employment network for self-directed services

1. Offered no-cost subscriptions to DDS-funded Employers of Record for a subscription to Rewarding Work to connect with job seekers

226

Average number of job seekers active on Rewarding Work each month in 2024

DDS will create a structure to engage stakeholders in a deep dive into equity

1. DDS's DEI director continues to work across agency initiatives to keep equity at the forefront of DDS initiatives

In Progress



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Social & Spirituality



Priorities from '22-'27 Plan

Key action steps taken

Progress Indicators

DDS will support better education and communication on Life Course principles

1. Trained Life Course Ambassadors to support education
2. Incorporated Life Course principles into STEP and other ARPA initiatives

113

Life Course Ambassadors trained

DDS will support a network of recreational and leisure activities

1. Awarded over \$1 million in grant funds to providers to implement enhanced community engagement programs (ECE)

7

Projects awarded funds for ECE

DDS will expand opportunities including respite for children in behavioral supports program

1. Opened two new 4-bed respite centers available to children in the Behavioral Supports Program

8

New beds available for weekend respite



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Advocacy and Engagement



Priorities from '22-'27 Plan

Key action steps taken

Progress Indicators

DDS will support SACs to use online platforms to expand their work

By offering a mix of in-person and virtual options, the SACs were able to reach over 1,000 new individuals in advocacy groups in 2023

145%

Increase in total participants in SAC-led advocacy groups from 2022

DDS will support SACs to educate individuals on the importance of advocacy and engagement early on

SACs reached more individuals in 2023 through advocacy groups than in any prior year

3,336

Participants in advocacy groups in 2023

DDS will work with stakeholders to define and educate about supported decision making

1. Continues to work with various stakeholders to identify best practices around supported decision making

In Progress