

STATE OF WASHINGTON – ROADS TO INDEPENDENCE PROJECT ABSTRACT

Washington State is among the nation's leaders in responding to consumer demands to live independently in their own communities. The state has accomplished this by rebalancing its continuum of services to make community living a priority. Attention to consumer choice and self-direction, careful assessment and referral mechanisms and varied and accessible supportive services are the hallmarks of the Washington State system. In 1991 approximately 80% of the state's caseload was served in institutional settings. In a striking turnaround, 76% of individuals currently receiving Medicaid long-term care services and 97% of persons with a developmental disability are accessing care in their own homes or in community-based settings.

Over the past 20 years, the state's rebalancing efforts have resulted in a steady decline in institutional beds. In 2006, the state is seeing this trend level off for the first time. That, coupled with the increased incidence of disabilities and other demographic trends, creates an urgent need to develop additional rebalancing strategies. The Money Follows the Person Rebalancing Demonstration offers a timely and important opportunity to address the growing complexity of the rebalancing efforts of the Washington State long-term care system.

Washington State's demonstration, entitled "Roads to Independence," builds upon our experience designing successful community-based service systems. Washington State requests \$27 million in state and federal funds over a 5-year period to transition 660 high-acuity individuals whose needs exceed services and supports offered under current programs. Our vision for this demonstration project is to support individuals who choose to move from institutional settings to achieve their goal of independence. Participants and family members, providers, and institutional representatives are central in the planning implementation and monitoring of the demonstration. Target groups for this project include older adults, individuals with developmental disabilities, individuals with physical disabilities, and individuals with mental illness. The project strategies include:

- Fortify the culture of respect for self-direction by providing education at all system levels.
- Identify long term residents of institutions who want to move to the community.
- Expand person centered planning to all participants.
- Create intensive transition supports starting before discharge and continuing into the community. Identify and planning for housing, medical, transportation and social supports.
- Develop and train peer specialists, educators and mentors to provide outreach and resource development for individuals in institutional settings.
- Partner with Vocational Rehabilitation to develop employment strategies for participants.
- Purchase one-time supports to facilitate successful transitions, such as assistive technology and service animals.
- Employ quality management measures and outcomes to ensure accountability, cost-effectiveness, and participant success
- Adjust existing waivers and Medicaid State Plan services to assure continued support beyond the first year for demonstration participants
- Partner with the Housing Trust Fund, local Housing Authorities, Vocational Rehabilitation, Mental Health, the Developmental Disabilities Council, Tribal Nations, Area Agencies on Aging, the aging network, and other consumer advocacy groups in project design and implementation.