

BUILDING CAREERS AND COMMUNITY

What is it?

Building Careers and Community is a three year project to engage local communities to more naturally support and welcome citizens with developmental disabilities to get great jobs and be involved in their communities. This project is funded by a Real Choice federal grant received by Washington State Division of Developmental Disabilities. This project is being carried out in local communities of Clark, Snohomish, and Chelan-Douglas counties.

How will this be accomplished?

Each county selected twelve individuals with developmental disabilities who will each bring together an **informal support team** to help him/her create a plan and take action on dreams and goals that lead to a great job and community involvement. Each participant will choose and engage a support team that can include family members, friends, neighbors, community citizens, and people who are paid to provide employment or other kinds of supports. This personal team may expand overtime as the person becomes more connected to their community, becomes employed, and develops more positive relationships.

Each county will engage a project **Planner/Coordinator** to work with each participant and his/her support team. The Coordinator will help each person and team to develop a plan for the future and identify doable steps to take to help the person get there. The Coordinator will invite the team to come together on a regular basis to renew the plan, make adjustments, provide mutual support, and celebrate accomplishments. Each team will work uniquely depending on the desires of the team members. The coordinator will coach or accompany the person and their team members, as needed, to take positive action to fulfill these stated dreams and goals.

To build a culture of welcoming and inclusion that supports good jobs and citizen engagement **community connections** will be developed and utilized in these local communities. Community members, leaders, resources, organizations, groups, and businesses will be engaged to establish a local network for this project and opportunities for jobs and other community contributions for citizens with developmental disabilities.

What we hope to learn

Experiences of the 36 people, their support networks, and their local communities will be compiled along the way. We hope to learn several successful approaches that assist people to secure paid jobs and become active citizens through the natural supports and creative actions of personal networks and community connections. We hope to learn about effective planning processes and useful strategies; how each person's informal support team has expanded, worked together, and learned to take action; how the community's members and organizations have changed and benefited and as a result affected the extent of community welcoming and inclusion for all people with disabilities.

For more information contact

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