

**Final Report on Employment And**  
**Community Participation**  
**Recommendations**

**Submitted to:**

**Fred DeCrescentis, Director**  
**Division for Developmental Disabilities**  
**Colorado Department of Human Services**

**June 30, 2005**

**By:**

**Ad Hoc Committee on Employment and Community**  
**Participation**

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## Preamble

This final report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Employment and Community Participation is being presented to the Division for Developmental Disabilities at the completion of the committee's efforts to craft recommendations designed to enhance community employment and meaningful community connections for persons with developmental disabilities in Colorado. This committee has worked diligently for eighteen months to analyze existing information, define terms, identify barriers, brainstorm solutions (both short and long range) and develop recommendations designed to increase the opportunity for individuals to participate in paid individualized community employment and to have typical, valued connections in their community. This has been a formidable task given the myriad variables that contribute to the services that are available for and chosen by individuals with developmental disabilities and/or their guardians. At the end of the day, **the clear and overriding consensus of committee members is that all adults in our society need to contribute to their communities and that work is a widely valued mechanism for contributing. It is also the consensus that persons with developmental disabilities need to be part of their community through inclusive and valued interactions with non-paid, non-disabled peers.** The committee found it quite easy to identify the countless barriers that restrict community employment and connection opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities, but viable and readily applicable solutions have taxed the experience and creativity of committee members. Committee members feel that the lack of adequate funding for employment services in Colorado is a formidable barrier that is difficult to overcome. While additional funding would be a great asset, committee members believe there is an existing capacity to increase the number of persons in community employment without additional funding. **The consensus of the committee is that community employment must become a major focus of effort by the State developmental disabilities system in Colorado.** State leadership must clearly and compellingly provide this message to all constituents of the Colorado developmental disabilities system.

It is also strongly believed that supported community connections can best be achieved for persons with developmental disabilities not as a separate “day program”, but as a natural adjunct to non-work time. This concept differs substantially from the current practice which has large numbers of persons spending the majority of their time in community participation/access programs that stress leisure and recreational options and operate primarily during the time when typical citizens are engaged in remunerative employment.

It is recognized, by committee members, that individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and guardians, advocates, State policy makers, community centered board personnel, and service providers need to understand, embrace and implement the concepts enumerated in the vision statements, mission statements, core values and guiding principles contained in DDD publications and the recommendations in this report in order to achieve full community inclusion in both work and non-work activities.

The remainder of this report provides details on:

- the committee’s charge and formation;
- the philosophical tenets for the recommendations, drawing from vision and mission statements, core values and guiding principles;
- a brief history of the current employment and community participation services;
- historical, trend and baseline data used to help objectify the issues of concern;
- recommendations for system change to achieve committee goals; and,
- strategies for on-going monitoring of progress and updating and modification of recommendations as needed.

The success of the Division for Developmental Disabilities strategic plan goals specific to this Ad Hoc Committee will take significant effort, commitment and time by many people in the developmental disabilities system to achieve. This report lays out numerous recommendations, many of which require on-going work by a variety of sub-committees



comprised of diverse members of the system constituency. These sub-committees will provide the detailed operational recommendations needed to implement the changes contained in this report. Many of these sub-committees will continue to operate and provide recommendations to DDD for a period of time after the submission of this final report. The sub-committees objectives and work as of the date of this report will be detailed in the attached appendices.

This preamble would not be complete without acknowledging the generous input of all the Ad Hoc Committee members over the course of the last eighteen months. All individual volunteers on this large and diverse group gave a substantial amount of their time and effort to the outcome of the committee. This truly was, and continues to be a “working committee”. The expectations of committee member input and participation were high and those expectations were met. Committee membership was diverse and represented persons with many strongly held beliefs regarding service options for persons with developmental disabilities. Throughout the course of the committee’s work, the members freely expressed their ideas and debated the issues in a respectful and courteous manner. A very positive outcome of the experience has been greater insight into issues and concerns of the various factions that comprise the developmental disabilities constituency in Colorado. This final report represents the consensus of all committee members.

## **Introduction**

Stakeholders in the Colorado developmental disabilities system have been concerned, particularly since 1997, that the number of persons with developmental disabilities engaged in integrated employment has significantly declined while the number of persons involved in community participation/access has dramatically increased. Concern has also been expressed about the quality, inclusiveness and connectiveness of services and, in particular, community participation/access services and supports. These concerns were expressed to Fred DeCrescentis, Division for Developmental Disabilities Director, by virtually all constituent representatives during Mr. DeCrescentis' statewide tour of Colorado's developmental disabilities service system in 2002.

The statewide tour culminated in the publication of the [Issue Paper: 2003](http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/ohr/dds/IssuePaper.pdf), (<http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/ohr/dds/IssuePaper.pdf>) in March 2003. Following its publication the constituency had the opportunity to prioritize the concerns identified in the Issue Paper to the Division for Developmental Disabilities. This input helped in the development of the Strategic Plan. The DDD Strategic Plan, published in July 2003, is comprised of:

- a. Vision Statement
- b. Mission Statement
- c. Core Values
- d. Action Plan
- e. Strategic Goals

One of the items in the Action Plan section of the [Strategic Plan 2003-2008](http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/ohr/dds/Strategic2003-2008Final-JulyVersion.pdf) (<http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/ohr/dds/Strategic2003-2008Final-JulyVersion.pdf> ) involves issues related to employment and community participation. Specifically, Item II, D of the action plan reads:

Employment and Community Participation:

To explore and submit new viable approaches to (1) promote equality of opportunity for all individuals to participate in paid community employment and other inclusive community activities regardless of the severity of their disabilities and; (2) promote significant paid community employment and community participation outcomes that build natural supports in the workplace and community and result in making all individuals valued community participants.

1. To form an ad hoc committee comprised of representatives from:
  - a. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services;
  - b. The Division for Developmental Disabilities;
  - c. CCBs, CACCB and Service Provider Organizations; and
  - d. Other advocate and self-advocate representatives.
2. The purpose of the ad hoc committee is to explore viable options to create financial and other incentives for CCB/Service Provider Organizations to find/create and realize gainful community employment outcomes for persons with developmental disabilities.
3. Time Frame: A report with recommendations is to be submitted to the Director of DDD. The date of the final report is to be determined by members of the ad hoc committee and the Director of DDD.

## **Formation of the Ad Hoc Committee**

Mr. DeCrescentis appointed Al Orlofsky, Program Manager at the Division for Developmental Disabilities, as chairperson for the Ad Hoc Committee on Employment and Community Participation in October 2003. In addition to the committee purpose stated above, specific parameters were identified. These parameters included:

1. Reasonable assurances of safeguards regarding the health and safety of individuals participating;
2. Adherence to the Core Values of the Division for Developmental Disabilities; and
3. Adherence to the Core Values and Guiding Principles of the Self-Determination Ad Hoc Committee.

The chairperson was given the discretion to solicit and appoint committee members. It was deemed vital, by the chairperson, that the committee have balanced representation in order to achieve the broadest variety of input. To that end representation was sought in the following areas:

- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation;
- Division for Developmental Disabilities;
- Self-advocates;
- Parents/guardians;
- CACCB;

- Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE);
- Colorado Association of Private Resource Agencies (CAPRA);
- Advocacy Organizations (Arc, Developmental Disabilities Council);
- Community Centered Boards (urban/rural – large/small – geographically diverse);
- Provider Agencies (urban/rural – large/small – geographically diverse); and
- Other organizations involved with employment (CTAT, WIN Partners, etc.).

During November and early December 2003 an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of twenty-three members representing the constituents listed above was established. All members were sent information consisting of the purpose and parameters of the committee, Division Core Values, Core Values of the Self-Determination Ad Hoc Committee and Guiding Principles of the Self-Determination Ad Hoc Committee. The first meeting of the ad hoc committee was held on January 14, 2004. Over the course of the committee's work some of the initial members were not able to continue and new members were seated resulting in the input of twenty-five members.

## **Vision, Mission, Values and Guiding Principles**

As indicated in the previous section, committee parameters included Division for Developmental Disabilities core values as well as core values and guiding principles related to the self-determination ad hoc committee. In addition, the stated vision, mission and guiding principles of the Division for Developmental Disabilities were also very instrumental in the course of this committee's work. Documents containing these beliefs are included as Appendix A.

While all the values and principles are important, a few are particularly pertinent to this committee's undertaking and helped to form the philosophical basis for the recommendations that follow. Therefore, it is important to establish the value-based foundation for the recommendations and future direction of employment and community connection services for adults with developmental disabilities in Colorado.

Elements of the vision statement that are specifically pertinent to this committee's work include the opportunity:

- to be gainfully employed;
- to have access to a system that exemplifies inclusive practices, and;
- to make informed choices.

Particular adherence was given to DDD's mission statement elements that stress inclusion in Colorado community life, the need for persons with developmental disabilities to make increasingly responsible choices and the value for persons with developmental disabilities to exert greater control over their life circumstances.

These vision and mission documents are followed by a set of core values which include statements such as:

- Programs and services are based on inclusive practices that support person-centered planning, community employment and full participation in society.
- Self-determination empowers individuals to control the direction of their lives and to make informed and responsible choices about services and how to direct their resources.
- Every person, regardless of disability, will be given the opportunity to be gainfully employed.
- An informed and involved community is a vital resource of natural supports.

These statements, taken from the larger body of vision, mission and values, are particularly pertinent to the specific charge for the Ad Hoc Committee on Employment and Community Participation and underlie all committee recommendations.

In addition, a specific guiding principle espoused by the Self-Determination Ad Hoc committee is especially applicable. That principle delineates opportunities for community contribution. It states:

“During life planning activities, the person and their support network should give primary consideration to what opportunities are available for the person to be an active member of their community. Contributions to a person’s community can take many different forms, such as employment or other means for the production of income, volunteer activities, or other activities that promote a positive societal-image and/or self-image for persons with developmental disabilities. When determining what opportunities are available, consideration should be given to the person’s preferences, age (i.e. retirement, minor under age 18), and abilities of the persons (e.g. medical condition).”

The elements contained in the vision, mission, values and guiding principles are reflected as well by the Community Centered Boards, Advocacy organizations, and provider agencies in Colorado. Listed below is a sampling of mission and value statements from a variety of Colorado organizations that provide services to persons with developmental disabilities. These samples are indicative of the system as a whole.

**Blue Peaks Developmental Services – Rural CCB, Alamosa**

*“Our Mission - We believe that all persons have the right to live, learn, and work in the community with the hope, dignity, choices, opportunities and responsibilities accorded all citizens.”*

**Arc of Colorado - Advocacy Organization**

*“The Arc of Colorado advocates with others to create the conditions under which all people with developmental disabilities experience opportunities to develop competency and to make choices, to have good relationships with family members and friends, to have respect and dignity, and to be full participants in all community living.”*

**Employment link – Service Provider, Boulder**

*“To actively support the inclusion of individuals with disabilities within our community.”*

**Denver Options – Urban CCB, Denver**

*“The Mission of Denver Options is to provide the necessary resource coordination, program services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities to achieve their optimum independence and productivity. Denver Options will achieve its mission through effectively managing the developmental disability service delivery system of care and creating opportunities for its customers to live, work, learn and play in the Denver community.”*



As can be seen, these mission and value statements from provider, advocacy and Community Centered Boards all share the common themes that are consistent with the vision, mission, values and principles specified at the beginning of this section. We are clearly a system on the same track as expressed in mission and value statements from a broad array of agencies. While the details of how to achieve the mission may vary significantly, the end goal is consistent across agencies. The overriding message is that persons with developmental disabilities need to be included as fully participating members in their community.

The Ad Hoc Committee members have fully embraced and support these vision, mission and value statements and guiding principles. The recommendations made by the committee, in the following sections of this report, adhere to and seek to advance these statements and principles.

## **Service Data**

Various constituencies in the Colorado developmental disabilities system have suspected for some time that supported employment was losing its preeminence as the major service of choice for adults with developmental disabilities. This seems to have occurred after the implementation of Colorado System Change in the late 1990's. At that time Colorado significantly altered its method of service definition and payment by going from a "slot" based system with service descriptions, hours and rates determined by the State to a resource fund pool at each Community Centered Board (CCB). As part of system change large numbers of state funded "slots" were refinanced to access Medicaid Waiver funding thereby substantially increasing the overall service funding base. This new system was developed with the idea that each person could decide the type and amount of service desired based on their individual needs and prioritization. The new system gave CCBs and providers the freedom to negotiate service rates on a person-by-person basis as opposed to the State determining set fees and parameters of service.

Based on system change, significant modifications in the DDD service system occurred in 1997 and 1998. Some of these major changes included:

- Elimination of pre-defined day programs and creation of a flexible service system.
- Modification of Medicaid Waiver funding rules for Supported Employment to allow funding for all appropriate Waiver eligible persons. The Federal deinstitutionalization requirement was dropped thereby allowing Medicaid Waiver funding for a large number of persons in supported employment.
- Utilization of Medicaid Waiver funds for supervision of persons in non-integrated work settings.
- Development and implementation of State funded Supported Living Services (SLS).
- Refinancing of services for large numbers of persons from State funds to Medicaid Waiver funds.

- Elimination, as directed by the legislative Joint Budget Committee, of the provision of a specific monetary incentive for supported employment.

Tables and charts presented later, in the Work Services and Activity Services sections, provide comparative information for four separate years (1997, 2000, 2003, and 2004) on the number of persons and average hours of service in each of four categories of service. These four categories of service, as defined by DDD for the purpose of collecting billing and encounter data, are:

**Integrated Work** – Integrated Work is work a person performs in a community job setting with support provided by paid staff to develop or maintain the community job. Persons must be involved in work outside of a base site. Included are persons on community jobs, in enclaves and on mobile crews. Group employment (e.g., mobile crews and enclaves) cannot exceed eight persons. This service is also known as supported employment.

**Non-Integrated Work** – Non-Integrated Work is supervision provided in a sheltered/segregated setting. Non-integrated Work (i.e., Sheltered Work Services) typically includes supervision while the individual is engaged in contract and/or subcontract work and prime manufacturing in a setting/business in which the majority of workers have a disability or the primary purpose of the agency/business is to provide work for persons with disabilities (i.e., facility-based sheltered workshop).

**Integrated Activity** – Integrated Activities are typical activities and functions of community life that are desired and chosen by the general population, including community education or training, and retirement activities. Integrated Activities provide a wide variety of opportunities to facilitate, build relationships and natural supports in the community, along with utilizing the community as a learning environment to provide instruction when identified in the Individualized Plan. This service is commonly referred to as Community Participation/Access.

**Non-Integrated Activity** – Non-Integrated Activities are training or day activities (i.e., non-paid work or activities) which are primarily habilitative in nature with an emphasis on skill development and focus on generalizing those skills. Non-Integrated Activities are provided in sheltered/segregated settings in which the majority of people have a disability or the primary purpose of the agency/business is to provide training or day activities for persons with disabilities (i.e., facility-based day program site). Most of the persons involved in this service receive therapies, sensory stimulation, range of motion and other therapeutic type services. Other persons may receive social and leisure services more typical to adult day care (e.g., crafts, arts, current events).

The terms utilized for the different types of day services in the remainder of this report will be:

**Supported Employment** – This encompasses all persons reported under the integrated work label. Reporting in this category, beginning with June 2004 data, will separate data into persons with a community job (individual employment) and persons in enclaves or on mobile crews (group job).

**Sheltered Employment** – This involves persons in non-integrated work receiving supervision while working in a facility based setting comprised of other persons with developmental disabilities.

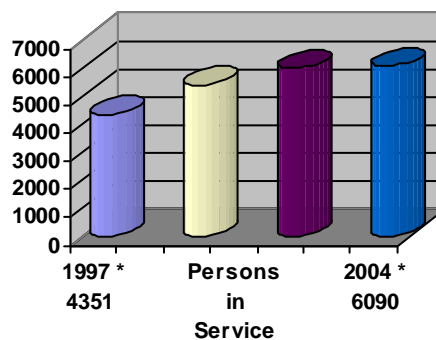
**Community Participation/Access** – Persons in these services are reported under integrated activity. A recommendation of the committee is to separate this reporting as supported community connection (individual activity), volunteer activity, and community participation/access (group activity) beginning June 2006.

**Non-Integrated Activity** – Persons in non-work facility based activity services.

## Work Services

The data in the following tables and charts, unless otherwise indicated, was collected from the CCBs, through the Community Contracts Management System (CCMS), for the months of May and June of each year. The data is averaged across the two months to provide a consistent time frame for comparative and trend analysis across multiple years. Supported Employment work data only includes persons who had recorded job hours during the reporting period.

During the reporting period (1997-2004) there was a significant increase in the number of adults receiving day services through the CCBs. Over the seven years reviewed, the day service system experienced a growth of 1,739 individuals. This increase represents a growth of nearly 40%. The table below depicts this growth. As indicated, 4,351 persons received adult day services in 1997 compared to 6,090 persons in 2004.

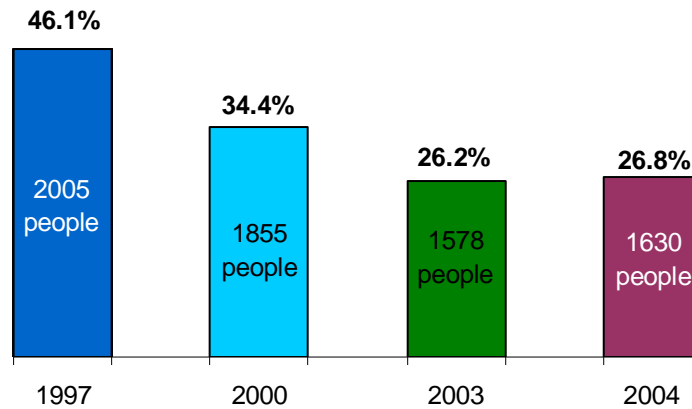


**Table 1 - Persons in Adult Day Service**

An analysis of data specific to persons receiving particular types of day service indicate there has been a steady decrease in the number of persons involved in supported employment services from 1997 to 2004. The data shows that over the reporting time the system experienced a decrease of nearly 19% in the numbers of persons in supported employment who were reported to have job hours while the number of persons receiving service hours in community participation/access increased by nearly 92%.

## Persons in Supported Employment with Job Hours – All Participants

(May/June)



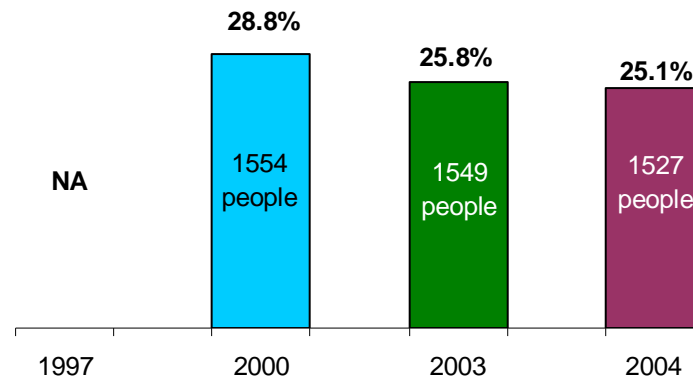
**Table 2**

This table includes all individuals who had reported job hours in supported employment during May and/or June of each year. People are counted if they received any number of hours on a job even though they may also have received support in another type of day service. The numbers include persons on individual jobs as well as persons in group jobs (enclaves & mobile crews). The data presented in this table demonstrates the steady decrease in both number and percentage of persons receiving supported employment services between 1997 and 2003. While nearly half of all adults in 1997 had some paid job hours, the figure dropped to just over one-fourth in 2004. It is encouraging, however, that a slight increase in the number of individuals having supported employment job hours was shown between 2003 and 2004 data.

### Persons Receiving Sheltered Employment – All Participants

(May/June)

(Data not available for 1997)



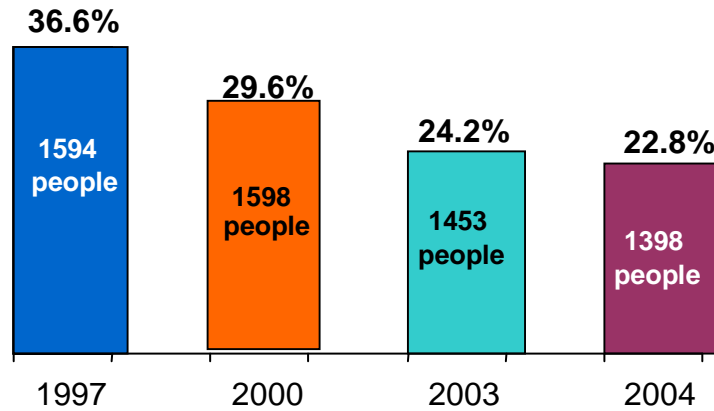
**Table 3**

Table 3 provides the same type of data as Table 2, but is applied to persons in sheltered employment. 1997 data is not available for all participants in sheltered employment since during that year DDD only collected data for persons having sheltered employment as their major program. The data from 2000 through 2004 shows a slow but steady decrease in the number of persons receiving sheltered employment.

The next set of tables looks at data for persons in supported employment and sheltered employment by major program. Major program is defined as the service that the individual is involved in the majority of the time. Therefore, a person is assigned only to the service where he/she spends most of their time. For example, an individual may have received an average of 80 hours a month of supported employment and an average of 40 hours a month of sheltered employment in May and June of the reporting year. In the prior tables (All Participants) the individual would be counted in both supported employment and sheltered employment. Utilizing major program data, this person is only counted in supported employment since that is where he/she spends the majority of their time (80 hrs/mo. vs. 40 hrs/mo.).

## Persons in Supported Employment with Job Hours – Major Program

(May/June)



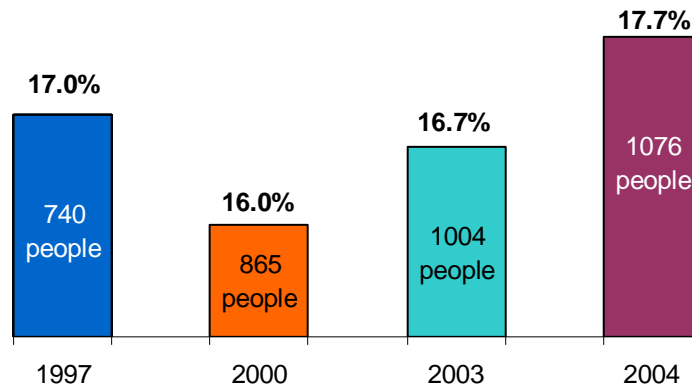
**Table 4**

An analysis of major program data also shows, as in Table 2, the steady decline in utilization for both number of people and percentage of all adults in day service since 1997. In 1997, 1,594 persons (36.6% of all adults in day service) spent the majority of their time in supported employment services. Supported employment was, at that time, the service where most adults spent the largest amount of their time. Table 4 shows a continued decrease between 2003 and 2004 for people having supported employment as their major service. This is in contrast to the slight increase in the number of persons having some hours of supported employment work in 2004 as seen in Table 2.



## Persons in Sheltered Employment – Major Program

(May/June)



**Table 5**

In contrast to the declining overall number of persons accessing sheltered employment as seen in Table 3, the number of persons in sheltered employment as their major program has steadily increased since 1997. However, the overall percentage of persons having sheltered employment as their major program has remained relatively constant. The data shows a 1% fall between 1997 and 2000 and a small but steady increase since then. The percentage of persons with sheltered employment as their major service has, overall, experienced a 0.7% increase since 1997 while the number of persons has increased by 336.

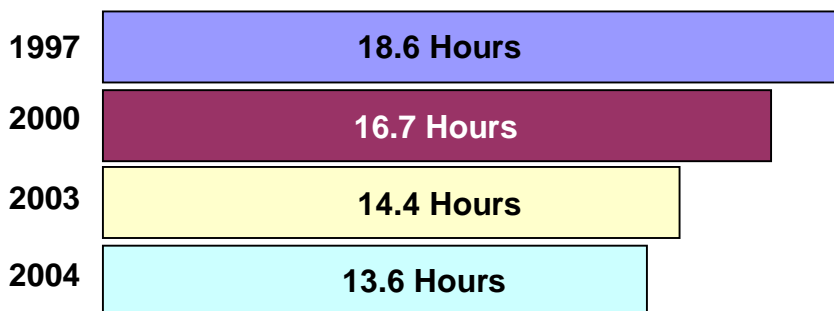
A further interpretation of the data presented above also shows that over the reported years the number of persons accessing both supported employment and sheltered employment as a secondary (non-major) service has also declined. For example, in 1997, 411 persons accessed supported employment even though it was not their major program. These 411 persons represented 20.5% of all supported employment participants in 1997. This number dropped to 232 persons or 14.2% of total participants in 2004. The data shows that not only has there been a decrease in the number and percentage of persons in supported employment as their major service, there has also been a decrease in numbers accessing supported employment as a secondary service.

## Work Service Hours

Between 1997 and 2004 the average job hours of persons in supported employment declined while hours in sheltered employment increased. Details of average job hours are shown in the following two tables.

The average amount of time, per week, that all participants in supported employment were on the job in 1997 was 18.6 hours. This figure includes persons having supported employment as their major service as well as other persons who were working in addition to another major program.

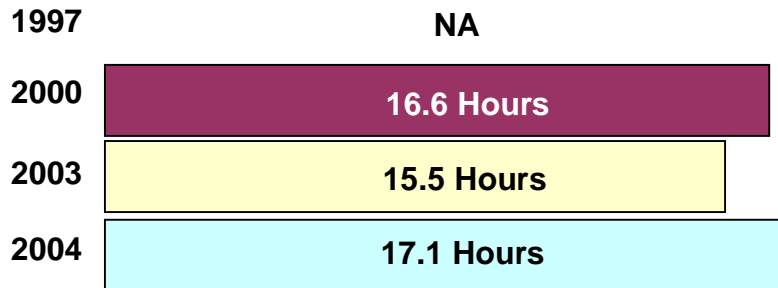
**Supported Employment Weekly Hours  
All Participants**



**Table 6**

As can be seen in the table above, supported employment hours have decreased in each of the reporting years. On average, persons were working five hours less per week in 2004 than they had worked in 1997.

### Sheltered Employment Weekly Hours All Participants



**Table 7**

In contrast to persons in supported employment, individuals in sheltered employment did not, on average, see a reduction of hours. The data shows a slight increase in reported average hours of sheltered employment between 2000 and 2004. Please note that data was not available for sheltered employment hours in 1997.

The data provided in the Work Services section unmistakably confirms the suspicions of the constituents that the number of persons in supported employment services has been decreasing since 1997. It shows, however, that people were not moving from supported employment to sheltered employment since the percentage of persons in sheltered employment dropped slightly as well. What becomes very apparent, as will be seen later in this report, is the tremendous growth in community participation/access that the developmental disabilities system has experienced since 1997.

This data supports the belief that many, many persons with developmental disabilities, who could be involved in supported employment, are choosing or being directed to other non-work services rather than supported employment. It is the role of this ad hoc committee to make recommendations that will expand the opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities to engage in community employment. **The committee feels strongly that the trend away from supported employment needs to be reversed.**

## **Data Collection**

During the course of committee meetings, information was provided that defined the service terms used in day service data collection. The committee members were particularly concerned about the definition of “integrated work” as used by DDD. The current definition, for purposes of data collection, includes persons employed directly by non-DD employers on community jobs as well as persons working under the auspices of supported employment agencies on mobile crews or in enclaves. These different supported employment settings are defined by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy as:

- ***Individual Placement Model***--A person with a disability is placed in a job in a community business which best suits his/her abilities and preferences. Training is provided on the job site in job skills and work related behaviors, including social skills, by a job coach. As the employee gains skills and confidence, the job coach gradually spends less time at the worksite. Support is never completely removed. The private or public vocational rehabilitation agency furnishing the job coach is always available to the employer for retraining for new assignments, assisting in dealing with challenging behaviors, supplying periodic consultations with co-workers and employer, giving orientation and training for co-workers.
- ***Enclave Model***--A small group of people with disabilities (generally 5-8) is trained and supervised among employees who are not disabled at the host company's work site. Persons in the enclave work as a team at a single work site in a community business or industry. Initial training, supervision, and support are provided by a specially trained on-site supervisor, who may work for the host company or the placement agency. Another variation of the enclave approach is called the "dispersed enclave." This model is used in service industries (e.g., universities, restaurants, and hotels). Each person works on a separate job, and the group is dispersed throughout the company.

- **Mobile Work Crew**--A small crew of persons with disabilities (up to 6) works as a distinct unit and operates as a self-contained business that generates employment for their crew members by selling a service. The crew works at several locations within the community, under the supervision of a job coach. The type of work usually includes janitorial or grounds keeping. People with disabilities work with people who do not have disabilities in a variety of settings, such as offices and apartment buildings.

There was concern expressed regarding the use of the term “integrated” to define the employment setting for persons on mobile crews and enclaves. It was felt that the employment definition used by DDD makes a distinction between facility based employment and non-facility based employment rather than just integrated vs. non-integrated. Some committee members raised questions concerning the low level of integration in some mobile crews and enclaves.

Supported employment data, reported since 1997, includes the combination of people working on individual jobs as well as persons on mobile crews or in enclaves. The consensus of the committee was that “integrated work” data needed to be collected differently, by DDD, than it has been in the past. It is important that the system know how many people are engaged in individual community jobs vs. agency controlled mobile crews and enclaves. The committee felt this is essential in order to establish a community employment baseline so progress can be measured as recommendations from this committee are implemented.

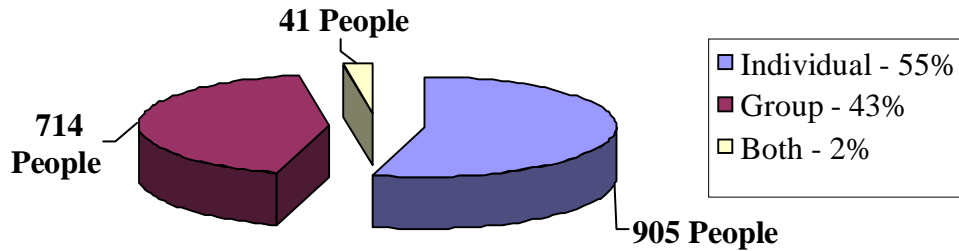
**The committee specifically recommended that DDD collect employment data that differentiates between community employment and integrated group employment (enclaves & mobile crews) beginning with FY 2004 data collection.**

This recommendation was accepted by the Division for Developmental Disabilities and implemented in the fall of 2004. In relation to this recommendation DDD implemented two actions.

1. The Community Contracts Management System (CCMS) was changed to allow the collection of employment encounter data by individual (community) employment vs. group (mobile crew & enclave) employment. This change became effective for the 2005 fiscal year. Therefore, supported employment encounter data that is collected in May and June of 2005, as well as subsequent years will include a breakdown of persons on individual (community) jobs and those on group (mobile crews & enclaves) jobs.
2. DDD, through the use of a special manual survey, collected individual and group job data for June 2004. During September 2004, each CCB received a list of persons, from their service area, who were reported to have supported employment job hours in June 2004. CCB's were instructed to classify the hours worked into either individual (community) jobs or group (mobile crew & enclave) jobs. The outcome was a listing, by CCB, of the number of persons and hours worked in both individual and group jobs. This data establishes the baseline for comparison purposes for subsequent years.

The chart below shows the outcome of this special survey.

### Supported Employment June 2004

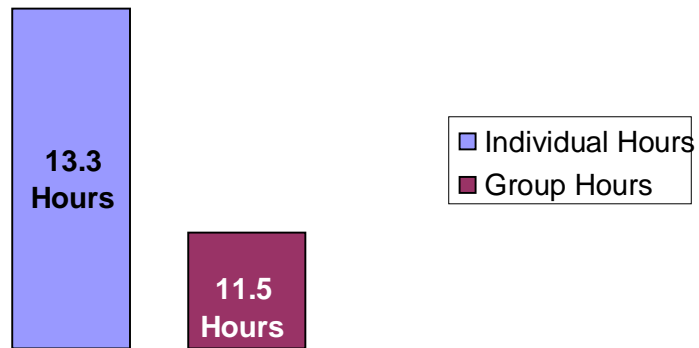


**Table 8 - Individual Jobs vs. Group Jobs – June 2004**

The data collected for June 2004 showed a total of 1,660 people on paid jobs. The largest percentage of persons (55%) was on individual jobs. Less than half (43%) were employed on mobile crews or in enclaves and a small number had both individual and group jobs. The specific data, by CCB, is included in Appendix B.

The 2004 survey also collected specific information on hours worked in either individual or group settings. The table below shows the average hours worked per week for persons on individual jobs and for persons on group jobs (mobile crews or enclaves). It shows that persons on individual jobs worked nearly two hours more per week than those on group jobs. However, the average hours worked is significantly below full time.

### Individual vs. Group Job Hours/Week June 2004



**Table 9** - Individual vs. Group Hours/Week – June 2004.

The fact that a majority of persons in supported employment were on community jobs is positive, but the number accounts for only 15.5% of the total population of adults in day services. Utilizing these figures, the unemployment rate for individual community jobs for adults with developmental disabilities in CCB services is 85.1%. In addition, persons who are working at individual jobs only work 13.3 hours per week which equates to  $\frac{1}{3}$  time.

The committee recommends using these figures, along with additional data collected for June 2005 to form the baseline to measure progress toward inclusion of adults with developmental disabilities into mainstream community employment.



## **Supported Employment Sub-Group**

A small representative group (DDD, CCB, DVR & Private provider/parent) had been developed prior to the Ad Hoc committee formulation to provide input to DDD on the utilization of State funds that had been earmarked for supported employment incentives. All members of this group subsequently became members of the Ad Hoc committee. This group met on numerous occasions and discussed a variety of options to provide incentives to encourage a greater utilization of supported employment services. The initial focus was to leverage the State general fund dollars available through DDD by using those funds as a match to Division of Vocational Rehabilitation federal funds. It was anticipated that the amount of resources could be increased nearly threefold through this match process. Unfortunately, as a result of the State budgetary process, DVR funding could not be matched for State fiscal year 2004.

The sub-group, in November 2003, recommended that DDD create a supported employment project based program. The purpose was to provide funding for projects designed to enhance and increase the access to supported employment services for persons funded through CCBs. The primary goals of the project were to:

- Expand the availability of competitive integrated employment, and/or;
- Enhance access to supported employment services, and/or;
- Encourage persons with developmental disabilities to seek competitive employment, and/or;
- Increase the number of persons with developmental disabilities engaged in supported employment services in integrated community settings.

The recommendation was accepted by DDD and an application process was developed and made available to the system in December 2003. In January 2004, eleven projects were approved for funding. The projects were designed to operate between February 1, 2004 and

June 30, 2004. Individual grants ranged from \$4,250 to the maximum of \$20,000. Appendix C lists the agencies approved and a brief description of the final outcome of the projects.

Unfortunately, the request for continuation of developmental disabilities State general fund resources for the purpose of enhancing supported employment opportunities was eliminated by the Joint Budget Committee from the State fiscal year 2005 budget. Although the funding has been eliminated, an expanded sub-group will continue to explore ways to work with other agencies, primarily DVR, to enhance supported employment opportunities. **The committee recommended that this sub-group continue to work with DVR to pursue the ability to use DVR matched funds for additional supported employment projects for State fiscal year 2005.**

This group has been expanded to include additional members and to address other issues related to the developmental disabilities system relationship with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Specifically, the issues to be addressed include:

1. The development of a proposal addressing DVR supported employment rates for persons with developmental disabilities.
2. Looking at potential means to find match funds to support innovation and demonstration projects through DVR.
3. Analyzing and making recommendations in regard to the current JBC analyst's plan to utilize CCB local funding for expanded DVR services to persons with developmental disabilities.
4. Identifying impediments to DVR services and proposing changes to their procedures, i.e.: timeliness of eligibility.
5. Brainstorming creative joint project potential between the DD system and DVR.

## **Definition of Community Employment**

The committee feels that the language we use must be unambiguous, easily understood by both laypersons and professionals, and should reflect the value that society places on employment. Work is a fundamental concept in society, and it is a common (although not universal) expectation that adults engage in some form of productive work for which they are compensated. Full time work is a commonly held goal, through either one job or several. Documents available to the committee refer to employment as, among other things, integrated work, employment, paid community employment, gainful community employment, and supported employment. The committee finds that each term or phrase has as many meanings as there are committee members. The committee debated this issue and arrived at a specific definition of community employment.

For the purpose of this committee, community employment means,

- One person, one job arrangements;
- Within typical businesses;
- Wages paid by the employer at a prevailing wage;
- Regular meaningful interaction with non-disabled persons;
- The option of a full-time work schedule;
- Employer paid benefits (if offered to other employees); and,
- Self-employment, if chosen by the person.

The process of obtaining community employment must incorporate:

- Job choice directed by the person;
- Community experience and information to facilitate informed choice-making;
- Evidence of some form of person-centered planning; and,
- Consideration to the continuation of eligibility for federal benefits (e.g., SSI, Medicaid, etc.).

## **Impediments to Community Employment in Colorado**

The committee spent a significant portion of one meeting brainstorming impediments to community employment. This list of impediments was then categorized and formed the basis for later small group discussion related to ideas to overcome these impediments. Those ideas formed the basis for recommendations to achieve the committee goal to promote equality of opportunity for all individuals to participate in paid community employment.

The list of impediments fell into the following five categories:

- Ø Training Issues
- Ø System Issues
- Ø Funding Issues
- Ø Individual Issues
- Ø Employment Environment

The training issues were then sub-categorized to address specific groups and constituencies.

These sub-categories included training for:

- Ø Supported employment provider staff
- Ø Individuals
- Ø Families
- Ø Resource Coordinators/Case Managers
- Ø Employers
- Ø Community

Community employment focused training was recommended and endorsed by the committee while Ad Hoc committee meetings were still being held. The committee endorsed and supported the Customized Supported Employment training presented by Michael Callahan with funding support from DDD, DVR and CTAT in May 2004. In addition, the committee endorsed the fall 2004 Supported Employment training conference.

## **Prior Recommendations**

As noted in earlier sections of this report, the committee has already made recommendations during the on-going meetings. Some specific recommendations made prior to this report and included in the publication of the Interim Report on Employment Recommendations in August 2004, have been implemented. The committee made these recommendations early due to the timeliness of events or the work of an on-going sub-group. It was not deemed reasonable to wait for the conclusion of the committees work prior to making or implementing these recommendations. Consequently, the Ad Hoc committee has:

1. Recommended that DDD collect employment data that differentiates between community employment and group employment (enclaves & mobile crews) beginning with FY 2004 data collection. This recommendation has been put into practice. Specific information on the implementation is contained in the Data Collection section of this report beginning on page 28.
2. Recommended that a sub-group work with DVR to pursue the ability to use DVR matched funds for additional community employment projects for State fiscal year 2005.

This recommendation has been accepted and acted upon. One of the reasons for this recommendation was that the on-going data collection from DVR indicated DVR expenditures for persons with developmental disabilities would be substantially below expectations. DDD has provided State funds for a federal match to DVR that established a pool of \$441,748 in a specific case service fund (Fund 8) to be used exclusively for persons in the CCB system. Data collection had shown that fund to be consistently under spent. For example, tracking data for the 2004 fiscal year showed a total expenditure of \$160,404 from DVRs Fund 8 pool. This figure is \$281,344 below the available allocation.

Questions regarding the accuracy of the DVR Fund 8 data were raised by CCBs, providers and DVR staff. It was known that some DVR counselors, for a variety of reasons, did not classify expenditures for persons associated with CCBs in the Fund 8 pool. Therefore, there was concern that the Fund 8 reports were underestimating actual expenditures. DDD worked with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to ascertain the actual expenditure of DVR funds for persons in the CCB system through a person-by-person match between the two system data bases. The result of this data search was made available in October 2004. It was anticipated that the community employment sub-group would assist in the analysis of that data and make recommendations for the use of any underutilized resources. However, the data revealed unanticipated results on the expenditure of DVR resources for persons in the DD system. The following table shows the results.

**Vocational Rehabilitation Expenditures for Persons in the DD System**  
**July 1, 2003 - June 30, 2004**

Active		Wait List		Total	
Amt. Expended	Number Served	Amt. Expended	Number Served	Amt. Expended	Number Served
\$493,888	472	\$149,176	182	\$613,064	654

**Table 10** – Vocational Rehabilitation Expenditures for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

This information shows that the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation expended a total of \$613,064 for 654 individuals in the CCB system. Persons in the CCB system were separated as either active participants or on a wait list for services. The data reveals that a total of \$493,888 was expended on behalf of 472 persons in active CCB services. This figure is over \$281,000 more than the amount reported in Fund 8 tracking documents. Specific information regarding the reasons for this discrepancy is not available at the current time.

## **Employment Recommendations**

During the course of Ad Hoc meetings small groups of committee members were assigned to discuss specific impediments to community employment and to develop ideas, recommendations and implementation strategies to overcome the impediments. These groups were charged with returning to the full committee with specific recommendations. These employment recommendations, generated by the small groups, were presented, debated and discussed within the committee as a whole.

Based on those discussions the committee has, as was its charge, developed numerous employment recommendations, both short and long range, that are intended to promote the opportunity of individuals to participate in paid community employment, build natural supports in the workplace and create incentives for gainful community employment outcomes. Most of these recommendations were presented to the Division for Developmental Disabilities, in August 2004, in a report entitled, Interim Report on Employment Recommendations. The recommendations were accepted by DDD and the committee was instructed to begin implementation, as appropriate, and to continue its work on Community Participation/Access recommendations. The final employment recommendations from the Ad Hoc Committee on Employment and Community Participation include the following.

### **A. Policy and resource allocation**

The committee is recommending policy and funding changes which are believed to underlie some of the major reasons more individuals are not involved in community employment. These recommendations are:

1. The Division for Developmental Disabilities must make it clear, through an unambiguous and concise written policy directive to the full DD constituency, that



community employment is the primary goal and expectation for all working age adults in the State DD system.

*This recommendation has been added since the publication of the “Interim Report” in August 2004.*

2. DDD will convene a small workgroup to develop a written plan to be added to each adult’s individualized plan to include a statement that addresses section 16.626 A. 2. of the Division for Developmental Disabilities rules and regulations, which states, “Integrated employment should be considered as the primary option for all persons receiving Day Habilitation Services and Supports”.

*Information from this workgroup is included in Appendix D.*

3. A small work group will be convened, in September 2004, to develop specific guidelines defining informed choice. Upon completion, the definition will be presented to DDD.

*Information from this workgroup is included in Appendix E.*

4. A small work group will be appointed to explore the option of alternative means to reimburse community employment activities. In particular, the Ohio Employment Outcome Support model will be investigated.

*Information from this workgroup is included in Appendix F.*

5. DDD must develop the capability for a safety net for persons who choose community employment. Appropriate amounts and levels of support and supervision must be made available to individuals during job development, at times between jobs and for additional day hours when the individual is only

working part-time. Individuals, parents, guardians and other care givers will continue to select the services and supports that provide them, out of necessity, the ability to pursue their own work interests during typical work hours. A small sub group must be established to research and recommend funding options. This group will consider funding methodology for community employment, including the option of reinstating the pre-system change method of funding supported employment.

*Information from this workgroup is included in Appendix G.*

6. DDD will implement a goal of increasing the percentage of persons involved in community employment by 5% per year beginning with FY-06.

*Specifics on this recommendation are included in Appendix H.*

7. DDD must increase the availability of staff time in the area of services and supports in general and supported employment in particular. Ideally, a full time position should be devoted to employment services but, at the least, a full time position must be available for day services and supports. It is clear that the recommendations contained in this document cannot be fully implemented without adequate staff support from DDD.

*This recommendation has not been addressed. The Division for Developmental Disabilities continues to be short-staffed.*

## **B. Development of new services**

The committee highlighted areas that are in need of specific program development. The recommendations include:

1. A specific program focusing on school to work transition will be developed and operational in all twenty CCB service areas. DDD must pursue resources dedicated to youth transitioning from the public schools to supported community employment. DDD must have an active liaison with the Department of Education and representation on current multi-agency groups that are addressing transition issues.

*This recommendation has not been addressed at this time.*

2. DDD will develop services specific to supported self-employment. This area will be fully researched and information made available to individuals and agencies. The sub-group working with DVR will explore, with DVR, joint options for self-employment for persons with developmental disabilities.

*Information from this workgroup is included in Appendix I.*

## **C. Information dissemination and training**

The committee believes significant efforts and attention must be devoted to information dissemination and specific training, in the area of employment, for all DD system stakeholders. The recommendations in this area include:

1. DDD will develop and publish a regularly scheduled newsletter (print and electronic) to disseminate information, highlight best practices and provide recognition to exemplary providers.

*This recommendation has not been addressed at this time.*

2. DDD will develop and maintain a professional web site dedicated to community employment. This site will have areas containing specific information for individuals and families, resource coordinators/case managers, supported employment provider agencies, and potential employers.

*This recommendation has not been addressed at this time.*

3. DDD will provide the leadership to assure the availability of training in the area of community employment. Additionally, DDD will work with local Community Centered Boards, provider agencies and others to make community employment information available locally by means of the Internet, brochures, video/DVD, cable access and other means. Products developed with DDD grant funding will be made available statewide, as appropriate.

*This recommendation has not been addressed at this time.*

4. DDD will develop specific minimum standards for both agency personnel and independent contractors working as employment consultants. Minimum standards will be implemented January 1, 2006.

*This recommendation has been added since the publication of the "Interim Report" in August 2004.*

## **D. Partnering with other agencies and organizations**

The committee members believe the developmental disabilities system in Colorado does not actively engage, to the extent needed, with other entities that may assist in providing community employment opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities.

Therefore, the committee recommends:

1. The Division for Developmental Disabilities, in cooperation with Alliance, CCB Partners and supported employment provider agencies, will develop and present a proposal to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to alter current rates for supported employment for persons with developmental disabilities and alter other perceived restrictions that hinder full partnership between the DD system and DVR. Further, a small representative sub-committee be established to meet with DVR on a regular basis to assess progress toward mutual goals for persons with developmental disabilities.

The committee feels this group is needed since rate and other changes in DVR services since 1997 appears, in combination with DDD system change, to have a negative impact on the employment of persons with developmental disabilities in community jobs.

*Information on this workgroup is included in the Supported Employment Subgroup Section beginning on page 33 of this report.*

2. DDD will establish a small representative sub-committee specifically to work with the State Social Security Administration to discuss and develop means to eliminate SSA disincentives to employment for persons with developmental disabilities. Among other issues, this group will explore the option of various SSA waivers in regard to earned income and other work related restrictions.

This sub-group will also work to assure the availability and access to benefit planning specialists during person-centered individual planning. In addition, this sub-group will collect, analyze, help develop, and set training goals to assure full dissemination of appropriate information to individuals, their families and guardians.

*This workgroup is on going. It is recommended that the Employment and Community Participation standing committee monitor its progress.*

3. DDD and providers will establish partnering relationships with:
  - i. Workforce Development Centers;
  - ii. Department of Education;
  - iii. Community colleges & technical schools;
  - iv. Business organization; and,
  - v. Labor unions

These partnerships will endeavor to establish the means to promote equality of opportunity for community employment for persons with developmental disabilities by exploring and entering into joint projects with a variety of agencies and organizations.

*This recommendation has not been addressed at this time.*

## **Community Participation/Access**

The second phase of the Ad Hoc Committee on Employment and Community Participation began on September 9, 2004. The original purpose of the Ad Hoc Committee were re-visited at the beginning of this phase. The role of the committee, in relation to community participation is to:

1. Promote the equality of opportunity for all individuals to participate in inclusive community activities regardless of the severity of their disabilities; and,
2. Promote community participation outcomes that build natural supports in the community.

It is the consensus of the committee that the current application of services referred to as “Community Participation” does not achieve the goals stated above. Over the next several meetings the committee reviewed the history of community participation/access services in Colorado, looked at past and current utilization data, and discussed the concept and need for a supported community connection definition in addition to assisting individuals with developmental disabilities to access leisure, social and recreational activities. The committee believes that the current Community Participation/access service has evolved into a leisure/recreation “outings” service and does not primarily focus on connecting people with developmental disabilities to their community.

## **Development of Community Participation Services in Colorado**

Non-vocational integrated community services emerged shortly after the implementation of P.L. 200-103, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (OBRA-87). A section of this legislation required all States to implement a preadmission screening process for persons with developmental disabilities referred for placement into nursing facilities and a review process for individuals with developmental disabilities that were already residing in those settings. This process is known by the acronym, PASARR, meaning preadmission screening and annual resident review.

A part of the process required persons, with developmental disabilities, choosing to remain at nursing facilities as well as new admissions to those facilities to have access to specialized services, outside of the nursing facility, provided by the developmental disability system. A review in 1989 of persons with developmental disabilities residing in nursing facilities revealed large numbers who were not involved in any of the developmental disability service options available at that time. This was due, in large part, to the limited types of services available. At that time, the predominate day service was sheltered employment. It was determined that sheltered employment was not an appropriate option for the majority of individuals identified in the nursing facilities due to their age and/or medical considerations. Therefore, many individuals with developmental disabilities residing in nursing facilities did not receive any direct services from the CCB system.

In order to alleviate this problem the Division for Developmental Disabilities developed two new services that were specifically intended to provide a meaningful, out of the nursing home, opportunity for persons with developmental disabilities living in nursing homes. These new services were also planned to meet the specialized services requirement of the legislation (OBRA-87).



The two new were known as: (1) Community Support Services and (2) Services for Retirees. The intent of these services was to provide opportunities for persons to experience valued adult roles in their communities. These services were designed to enable individuals to leave the nursing home to access and participate in typical community services, supports, and activities that any person might need or enjoy. The options allowed a wide variety of opportunities to build personal relationships and public acquaintances. The Community Support Services were intended to promote activities that accessed generic community resources while the Services for Retirees included a component that focused on the use of generic aging services and age appropriate inclusion. The guiding principles of these services were:

- Ø Opportunities to establish supports needed to build and maintain relationships in the community;
- Ø A wide variety of relationships with community members;
- Ø Regular opportunities to experience valued adult roles in the community and the ability to contribute to the community;
- Ø Supports to participate in valued adult activities;
- Ø The supports needed to determine personal preferences and to make decisions/choices; and,
- Ø The right to enhance the quality of life.

The objectives of the service are:

- Ø To increase the individual opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to experience presence and inclusion in their communities;
- Ø To establish and maintain relationships with other community members and develop a sense of belonging in their community;
- Ø To learn to make increasingly responsible choices through preferred community activities;
- Ø To develop and exercise individual competencies through valued adult roles; and,
- Ø To develop natural support networks in community settings.

The program description indicates that services should not segregate groups of individuals on the basis of their needs or disabilities. Services offered and materials and language used should be age appropriate and promote a positive image of the individual. Evaluations and assessments of individual's competencies, needs, wants, preferences, and interests should be completed on a regular basis.

At the time of development, it was apparent to DDD that these new services would be more costly than the typical non-integrated congregate services available at the time. The Division for Developmental Disabilities negotiated with providers on the number of hours that could be provided for a fixed rate. Based on those negotiations, significantly fewer hours of service, than was available through the typical "slot based" day service, were permitted in order to provide more individualized services for this population. It was felt that fewer hours of service would have minimal residential impact since these services were restricted to persons residing in nursing facilities.

Clearly, the original intent of these services was to promote equality of opportunity for individuals to participate in inclusive community activities regardless of the severity of their disabilities and to promote outcomes that build on natural supports in the community.

## **Current Community Participation/Access Services**

This section traces the actual implementation of Community Support Services and Services for Retirees from the development and initial implementation to the current community participation/access service model. It appears that over the intervening years, since the inception of this service model, a majority of the services have been transformed from a focus on the original guiding principles and objectives to providing an emphasis on leisure, recreation and social activities. An analysis of the data and system change initiatives over the past fourteen years reveals the following:

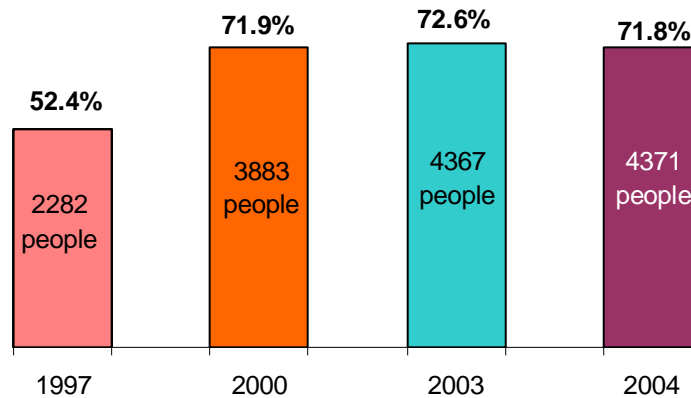
1. This service was initially intended for a very limited population of persons with developmental disabilities. The original appropriation, in Fiscal Year 1991, allocated \$1,250,000 to provide new service to 200 nursing facility residents.
2. Limited hours of individualized services were possible since residential services were available through the nursing facility.
3. Enrollment into Community Participation was increased significantly with the introduction of the Community Supported Living Alternative (CSLA) pilot program in 1992. An option for community access services was included in this pilot.
4. In 1993, Community Participation was included in the HCB-DD Waiver based on the desire of providers to expand the services to individuals who did not reside in nursing facilities. DDD permitted minimal service expansion based on individual exemption.
5. The two service models (Community Support Services and Services to Retirees) were collapsed in 1993 to one service known as Community Participation.

6. Community Participation/Access services continued as an option in the Supported Living Services Waiver that was introduced in October 1995.
  
7. DDD system change was implemented in 1998. One aspect of system change altered the funding mechanism for supported employment which, as an unintended consequence, lessened the financial incentives for supported employment services. This may have has a substantial impact on the growth of community participation/access services.
  
8. Data shows a steady decline in the number of persons involved in supported employment services since 1997 and a very substantial growth in the number of persons receiving community participation/access.

## Activity Services Data

A specific concern of the constituency was the belief that a large number of adults were choosing or being directed to community participation/access services. The data presented below confirms that belief.

**Persons in Community Participation/Access– All Participants**  
(May/June)



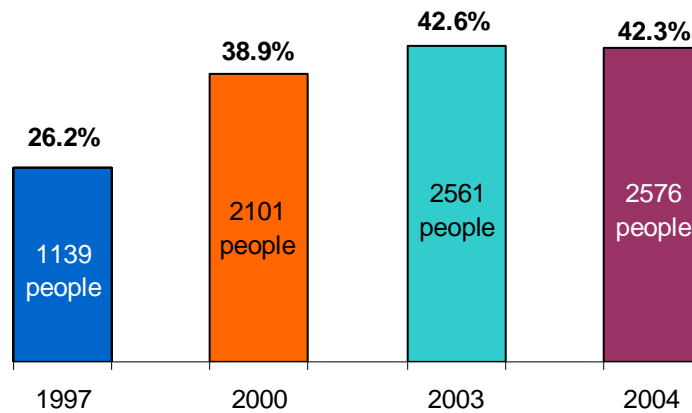
**Table 11**

This table includes all individuals who had reported hours in community participation/access during May and/or June of each year. People are counted if they received any number of hours in community participation/access even though they may also have received services in another type of day service. The data demonstrates the steady increase in the number of persons receiving community participation/access services specifically from 1997 to 2003. The percentage figures, shown in Table 11, represent the percentage of the total number of adults receiving day services that participated in community participation/access. The initial surge was in the three years from 1997 to 2000 which shows an increase of almost 20% of the total adult population. The percentage of adults receiving community participation/access has leveled off since 2000, but the number of persons receiving this service has continued to grow through 2003. This indicates that most of the newly enrolled adults between 2000 and 2003

have had some hours of service in community participation/access. The growth in community participation/access services seems to have peaked in 2003. 2004 data shows a slight decrease in the percentage of persons receiving this service. The data reveals that only 4 additional people were receiving community participation/access in 2004 even though seventy-five additional adults were receiving system services.

**Persons in Community Participation/Access- Major Program**

(May/June)



**Table 12**

An analysis of major program data also shows the steady increase in utilization (particularly in the number of people) between 1997 and 2003. For example, in 1997 1,139 persons (26.2% of all adults in day service) spent the majority of their time in community participation/access services. In 1997, community participation/access was the second most utilized service, trailing supported employment by over 10%. The table above shows the substantial increase between 1997 and 2003 for people having community participation/access as their major service. In 2000, community participation/access, for the first time, surpassed supported employment as the predominant major service. It has remained the leading major service since that time. Additional growth continued until 2003 at which time it appears to have leveled. An analysis of 2005 data, when available, will reveal if the leveling trend in community participation/access services is continuing.

An examination of community participation/access hours of service shows this service to have the fewest average weekly hours of any day service. The table below shows the average amount of service per week from 1997 to 2004.

**Community Participation/Access Weekly Hours  
All Participants**

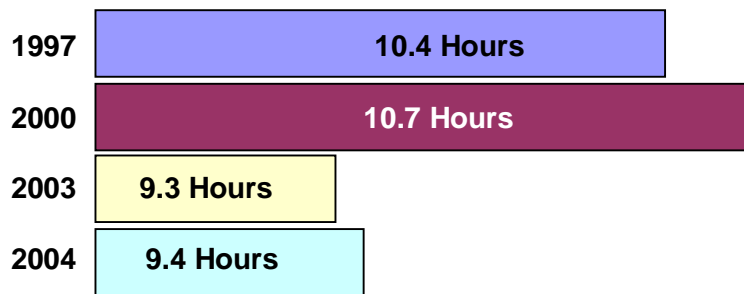


Table 13

In 2004, persons in community participation/access services received an average of 9.4 hours of service per week. This is, on average, one hour less than in 1997.

**2004 Weekly Average Service and Supports  
Hours - All Participants**

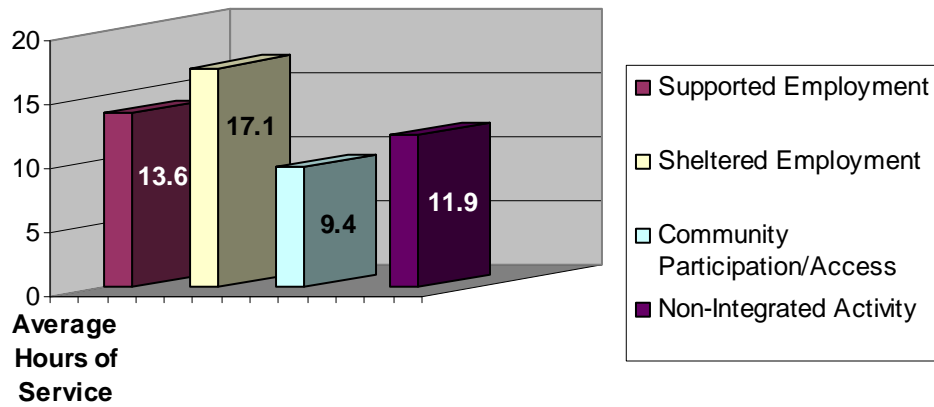


Table 14

Table 13 shows the comparison, in 2004, of average hours of service for each of the day services. Community participation/access provides the fewest average hours of service per week. Community participation/access services are nearly 8 hours less per week than sheltered employment, the service with the highest number of weekly hours.



## **Committee Discussion on Community Participation/Access**

The Ad Hoc Committee felt that the current description and definition of community participation/access has evolved, over time, from the description presented in the Development of Community Participation in Colorado section beginning on page 49 to a definition that does not provide a clear direction, to the system, of the service principles, goals or objectives. For example, the current definition of community participation/access reads:

“Community Accessibility services support the abilities and skills necessary to enable the individual to access the community and/or provide the basis for building skills which will assist the individual to access the community. These types of services include socialization, adaptive skills, personnel to accompany and support the individual in all types of community settings, supplies, travel including arranging and providing transportation, and providing necessary resources for participation in activities and functions in the community.”

Generally, it is believed that the current service system is not operationally implementing the original definition; therefore, the committee feels the need to recommend a re-definition of supported community connections to serve as a baseline for system wide training and implementation. The term Community Participation/Access was not used, since committee members believe it does not denote the inclusive connections that the service seeks. The committee agreed that an updated definition, referred to as Supported Community Connections be developed.

After much debate, consensus was reached on a definition, which is:

For the purpose of this committee, Supported Community Connections (SCC) develops and maintains interactions with non-paid, non-disabled persons through:

- One person, one connection arrangements;
- Utilization of typical community organizations, clubs, teams, groups, etc.; and,
- Direct membership in community organizations including, but not limited to, volunteering.

The process must incorporate:

- Exploration and expression of one's own talents and/or interests;
- Activities/inclusion in situations of personal choice;
- Facilitation of choice-making (person-centered planning); and,
- Fading of paid support as natural supports are established.

This updated definition seeks to re-establish the initial concept and intent of the Community Support and Service to Retirees programs developed in 1990. The Supported Community Connection service will reflect DDD core values as well as the core values and guiding principles of the self-determination ad hoc committee. This will entail, in many respects, going "back to the future", to reestablish the service to its original intent.

The committee recognizes that an individualized supported community connection service will not provide a person with a large amount of supervised service during typical employment hours (M-F – 8AM – 5 PM). Supported Community Connections is not intended to be a "day supervision program" by providing a supervised setting or provider agency managed activities while the person's primary care giver is engaged in remunerative employment. The consensus of the committee is that persons with developmental disabilities

can greatly benefit from services that connect and integrate them into their communities in age appropriate, adult valued roles. This is a service that may not typically occur, for working aged adults, between the hours of 8 AM and 5 PM weekdays. Most adults, in our society, are involved in a variety of social, volunteer, and hobby directed activities during evenings and weekends or other non-work times depending on their particular work schedules. The committee's view of Supported Community Connection is to typically engage persons with developmental disabilities in the same types of community, social, volunteer and hobby directed activities as their non-disabled peers.

Community participation/access, as it is currently implemented, appears to primarily be a leisure/recreational service that provides supervised, staff supported activities primarily during the hours that other adults are engaged in employment. The committee understands that persons with developmental disabilities, who are not employed or are underemployed and who require direct supervision, may have needs for services during typical work hours when their primary care-givers are employed or are in need of respite. The major issue is to determine what the most appropriate, meaningful and economically feasible service that the State developmental disability system can or should provide for persons who are not employed during the time when their primary caregiver is not accessible.

Supported community connections and community participation/access can co-exist, for the near future, within Integrated Activity Services in the same manner as community employment co-exists with enclaves and mobile crews within the Integrated Work category. Data needs to be collected to specifically identify the particular type of service individuals are receiving (individual community connections, volunteer activities and/or community participation/access). Goals to increase the number of persons receiving supported community connections and/or volunteer activities can then be established.

## **Community Participation/Access Recommendations**

1. The major transcending recommendation from this committee is that adults with developmental disabilities should be employed on community jobs full time or as close to full time as possible. It is believed that community participation/access services have become an issue because adults are unemployed or underemployed and not because social, leisure and recreational activities are inappropriate for persons with developmental disabilities. Therefore, the committee strongly urges DDD to prioritize and implement all the suggestions contained in the employment recommendations section of the final report.
2. Provide the DD system with the definition of Supported Community Connections as suggested by the Ad Hoc Committee. The committee recommends the DD system (CCBs and provider agencies) receive focused training and technical assistance related to the goals and objectives of supported community connections. These goals and objectives are to be derived from the original description of the Community Support Service and Service to Retirees programs as well as applicable core values from DDD and the Ad Hoc Committee on Self-Determination.
3. Define and collect day service data by non-facility based and facility based services rather than integrated and non-integrated services. The committee believes that the term “integrated” should only apply to individual services such as community employment and supported community connection as defined in this report. Group activities (enclaves, mobile crews and group community participation) are thought to be mislabeled as integrated services. The committee recommends the collection of billing and encounter data for non-facility based and facility based services.

4. Provide the ability within non-facility based activity services to separately track supported community connections (individual integrated activity service), volunteer activities and community participation/access (group service). Collect data, for baseline purposes, to determine the number of persons receiving individual community connection services, volunteer activities and group community participation/access. Establish statewide goals to increase individual supported community connections and volunteer activities.
  
5. Establish an on-going role for a small standing Employment and Community Connections Committee. This group, comprised of representative members of the Ad Hoc Committee would meet quarterly to monitor the status of the recommendations issued in this report which are accepted for implementation by the Division for Developmental Disabilities.

## Summary

The committee fully realizes that the task of significantly altering the recent trends in community employment and community participation/access for persons with developmental disabilities in Colorado is daunting, but absolutely necessary. The decrease in the number of adults involved in supported employment and the meteoric rise in community participation/access did not occur overnight. Changing this trend will likewise not occur over a short span of time. It will require the full support of all stakeholders in the Colorado developmental disabilities system over an extended period of time.

The vast majority of committee members feel the priority service for adults with developmental disabilities must be community employment. This concept has been expressed in the Division for Developmental Disabilities core values and committee members endorse those values. It is essential, however, that the Division for Developmental Disabilities leadership clearly and forcefully articulate this position to the full DD constituency. It is the consensus of the committee members that the primary focus of effort should be directed toward community employment.

The committee recommendations have emanated from a belief in the DDD core values and in the societal value of work. This value transcends ability or disability. People who are employed are more respected and more valued by society than those who do not work. People who are employed are perceived to be contributors to, rather than a drain on society. People with jobs are more purposeful, have greater self-esteem, see themselves as fitting better in their communities, and may lead happier lives. If we build and maintain a system that intentionally or inadvertently allows persons with developmental disabilities to forgo meaningful community employment, then we are marginalizing our citizens with developmental disabilities.

Committee members believe that significant increases in the number of persons who are employed in the community will positively affect many of the current community participation/access issues and concerns. However, community participation/access, while not seen as the primary focus, also requires significant modifications. DDD must provide the training and technical assistance to reaffirm the initial values, goals and objectives of the community participation/access services. We believe this can be accomplished by instituting the supported community connection and volunteer concepts and setting goals with CCBs and providers to increase the numbers of persons accessing these service and monitoring outcomes.

Information dissemination and training are essential and must be on-going. Individuals, families, resource coordinators/case managers and service provider staff must all have access to up to date information presented in a manner that is clear, concise and readily accessible. While access to training for service provider staff is available through CTAT and other recognized sources, training for other groups appears to be minimal. Training efforts must focus on resource coordinators/case managers as well as individuals and families. It is essential that the DD system provide this training in a more effective and efficient manner than is currently available. Full utilization of the Internet, DVD, videoconferencing and other media sources must be explored and developed in addition to traditional training methods.

Accepting and implementing the recommendations contained in this report will require a substantial commitment of the part of the Division for Developmental Disabilities. DDD must provide adequate staff and other resources to be able to achieve the recommendations in this report and the outcomes articulated in the Strategic Plan. If integrated community employment and community connections are truly a high priority, DDD staff time and effort must be commensurate with that priority level.

In closing, we believe it is essential that representative members of the ad hoc committee have the opportunity to continue to meet quarterly in order to track the implementation of the recommendations and progress toward the outcome of equal opportunity and increased employment and community inclusion for persons with developmental disabilities. This ongoing oversight will assure the continuation of effort to achieve goals addressed by this committee.

The committee members wish to thank Mr. DeCrescentis for this opportunity to debate issues, express opinions and offer recommendations that we believe, when implemented, will lead to a greater equality of opportunity for persons with developmental disabilities to participate in community life through employment and inclusive connections.