



Certification Standards for Licensed Developmental Disability Organizations

I. INTRODUCTION

Certification is awarded to programs or services offered by a DDO within a center or in the community. Certification is based on the DDO satisfying a set of quality standards that focus on participant experience and services received. Conformance to the quality standards is a way for the DDO to identify areas for improvement and growth and to focus on improving service outcomes, satisfaction of the persons served, and quality of service delivery.

Purpose of Certification Standards

- Provide a framework for program structure and performance with consistent expectations of purpose and outcomes in order to promote a high level of quality.
- Provide an objective assessment of quality using effective data-driven performance improvement.
- Promote a culture of excellence and continuous quality improvement across the system, strengthening community confidence in the quality of services.

Licensing, Certification, and Quality

Licensing is a statutory mechanism by which the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) grants permission to an agency to operate. Licensing ensure basic health and safety by controlling the entry of providers and facilities and by establishing standards of conduct for maintaining that status.

Certification is a process by which the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) recognizes and evaluates an individual provider or an organization as having met predetermined requirements or standards in order to demonstrate competence in a specialty program or service area.

Quality Improvement is the process by which DDD reviews an individual provider's programs and services to determine how well they meet the certification standards and provides technical assistance to providers to improve performance.

Values

The certification standards incorporate four values which guide the delivery of services:

- ✓ Self-Determination
- ✓ Empowerment
- ✓ Accessibility & Community Inclusion
- ✓ Customized Service Delivery

II. BASE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

The following standards apply to all programs:

Person Centeredness:

- Services and supports are individualized, purposeful, meaningful, and person-centered.
- Services and supports are driven by a person-centered plan that accurately reflects an individual's preferences, choices, needs, desires, personal goals, and objectives.
- Each individual has the opportunity to access information about and explore resources within their communities of choice, which may include the process of community mapping.
- Staff assignments and supports are based on the informed choice and needs of the individual receiving services and supports.
- Individuals are supported to develop, maintain, and enhance relationships with others, and to develop natural supports, as demonstrated by the presence of personal relationships or potential for relationship building.
- Individuals are supported in activities they choose to participate in outside of the provider.

Autonomy:

- Services optimize autonomy and independence in making life choices, including choices regarding services and supports and the individuals who provide them.
- Individuals are supported to identify, develop, and expand upon their skills, strengths, and interests.
- Providers support and encourage individuals to access and utilize available adaptive equipment, assistive technology, and accommodations as needed.
- Individuals express that they feel able to effectively direct their own life to achieve their desired goals, and that services and supports are meeting their expectations.
- Individuals develop, or have input into, their own flexible and individual schedule focused on their needs and desires.
- Individuals have the opportunity to choose with whom to do activities, including with people not receiving any services or not receiving services from the same provider.
- Individuals have privacy for communication.
- Services support an enhanced capacity for and practice of self-determination and self-advocacy.

Addressing Risk:

- Providers assess risk with the individual and others of the individual's choosing to develop, enhance, fade, or remove risk mitigation strategies as needed.

- The assumption of risk is balanced with the individual's ability to assume responsibility for that risk, the promotion of health and safety, and is documented if the individual requires assistance in assuming a risk.

Communication with Participants:

- Individuals are given information in a format accessible to them to assist them to make informed decisions.
- Information is provided in language or alternatives that are understandable to the various stakeholders.
- Information is presented in a clear, accurate, and consistent manner.
- Special communication needs of individuals are identified and addressed.

Documentation of Services:

- Case notes or other record of service are entered in each participant's record whenever a billable service is provided, including the date, time and brief summary of the support provided and signed by the recorder.
- Case notes and other documentation are reflective of each individual's plan and goals, showing an alignment of services and supports provided with the plan.
- Providers are accountable to individuals they serve, as shown by documentation of periodic checks with individuals, formally or informally, on at least a quarterly basis, to gauge if the services and supports being provided are meaningful to them, meet their needs and preferences, and if any changes are needed.
- Providers implement plans of communication for information that impacts the individual's supports across service areas/providers and other stakeholders supporting the individual to promote consistency and collaborative, holistic support.

Satisfaction Survey:

- Providers survey individuals in their program annually to ensure satisfaction with program supports and services.
- Providers use survey results and other data to improve services.

Staff Development:

- Staff are appropriately trained when hired and all staff receive ongoing annual training in areas relevant to their job descriptions and roles and the unique needs of the individuals they serve.
- Staff assignments demonstrate respect for an individual's preferences, including but not limited to the individual's cultural preferences, demographics, and diversity.

- Staff promote and support access and opportunities for individuals to explore and engage their preferences and identities in ways that demonstrate an understanding of each individual's unique needs and goals.

Integration:

- Providers encourage individuals to take advantage of existing integrated community programs, settings, and resources in the same manner as people without disabilities.
- Individuals with disabilities are supported to interact with individuals without disabilities to the greatest extent desired and practical for each individual.
- Staff identify, encourage, and support opportunities for individuals to use natural supports.

III. EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

A DDO seeking certification to provide employment services provides individualized services and supports to participants to help them achieve their identified employment outcomes. The DDO designs services around the needs of individuals seeking employment and provides individuals with information they can use to make informed choices and career decisions. Services are provided at an appropriate level based on each individual's needs.

The array of services and supports offered include:

- Development of realistic employment goals;
- Identification of employment opportunities and resources in the local job market;
- Development of viable work skills that match workforce needs;
- Establishment of service plans to achieve employment outcomes and identifies appropriate supports;
- Identification of resources and supports to achieve and maintain employment;
- Opportunities for participation in programs and services in the community.

Certification of Employment Services is based on the base standards as well as the following Employment Specific Certification Standards:

Person-Centeredness:

- Individuals are involved in making informed employment-related decisions including the expected outcome for services.
- Individuals served are informed about employment opportunities consistent with their desired outcomes.
- Services are provided at times and in locations that meet the needs of the individuals served.
- Individuals have opportunities and are supported to develop valuable work skills that will promote career advancement
- Individuals are supported to optimize autonomy and independence in the workforce, and to have paid supports faded in a manner that effectively meets the needs of the individual.

Communication with Participants:

- The Provider offers a job seeker orientation for interested participants and families/support systems that includes the following information:
 - available services
 - the roles, rights, and responsibilities of both the individual and the provider,
 - including employment reporting as needed, such as to SSI or Medicaid
 - other information regarding employment related supports and requirements as needed by the individual

Staff Qualifications:

All staff who support individuals with employment services are knowledgeable and have the expertise to address barriers to employment that individuals may have

- Staff are trained and/or certified to understand concepts of supported employment.
- Supervisors of employment staff are certified/trained in supported employment.
- New hires or transfers are enrolled in a training program within nine months of hire.
- New hires or transfers complete required field work within one year from the start of training course.
- Prior to completing training and/or certification, DDOs will ensure that new hires or transfers can appropriately demonstrate competencies in specific areas of supported employment before providing those services without direct supervision.

Safety:

- Individuals receive an orientation and needed coaching regarding safety at any place of employment, including but not limited to the evacuation plan and meeting place outside, who to ask for help in an emergency, and any job-related safety needs or requirements.

IV. DAY & COMMUNITY SUPPORTS CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

A DDO seeking certification to provide day services and supports provides individualized services and supports to participants to help them achieve their identified personal goals and outcomes. The DDO designs services around the needs of individuals and provides individuals with information they can use to make informed choices and decisions about activities and community participation.

Standards for day services and supports prioritize an individual's control, choice, and purpose in directing day services that are person-centered. Standards are meant to ensure that these services and supports are rooted in the person's plan, recognize a person's dignity of risk, and are delivered in a way that is flexible, responsive, accountable, accessible, and goal-oriented.

The array of Day Services and Supports are designed in a way that:

- Promotes individual independence, inclusion in the community, strengthened interpersonal relationships, and goal attainment;
- Supports an enhanced capacity for and practice of self-determination;
- Develops social networks in which the individual experiences valued social roles and contributes to their community;
- Encourages the establishment of lasting community connections;
- Recognizes the value of relationships between people with disabilities and their communities of choice;
- Is provided at an appropriate level based on each individual's needs.

Certification of Day & Community Services and Supports is based on the base standards as well as the following Day & Community specific Certification Standards:

Day Services:

- Daily schedules are individualized and flexible.
- Individuals are able to choose their own daily schedule without the constraints of a traditional 9am-3pm weekday schedule.
- Providers collaborate with individuals to reasonably meet requests for alterations to the schedule of services and other aspects of service delivery.
- Providers deliver supports through an individualized, meaningful choice of group and non-group activities.
- Day services and supports complement employment for those who desire supports when they are not working.

Community Supports:

- The DDO provides individually tailored supports that assist with the acquisition, retention or improvement of skills related to participants' continued residence in the community, including activities of daily living, fire safety and other basic safety skills.

Person-Centeredness:

- Individuals receiving supports have the same opportunities as non-disabled individuals to engage in non-work activities at times and frequencies of the person's choosing.
- Individuals are aware of and they have access to information to become aware of activities occurring outside of the provider setting, in a form other than a provider- chosen schedule of activities or list of opportunities.

V. SHARED LIVING ARRANGEMENTS (SLA) CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

DDO Responsibilities in Managing Shared Living Arrangements:

The DDO's Shared Living Arrangement (SLA) program management plan includes the following:

- Methods for recruiting qualified SLA contractors. Areas to consider in recruitment include:
 - Character references;
 - Personal interviews;
 - Home inspection report;
 - Lifestyle;
 - Personal preferences;
 - Cultural and religious values;
 - Family and friend involvement;
 - Compatibility with animals and children;
 - Smoking preference.
- Processes for evaluating potential SLA contractors, initial and subsequent annual inspections of the property/home environment, conducting a shared living arrangement study, and for conducting a new home inspection prior to any move to a new address.
 - The DDO assures that any needed repairs or modifications are made to the home.
- Criteria for selection of qualified SLA contractors and shared living respite providers that meet or exceed the minimum requirements found in regulation.
- A process for matching qualified SLA contractors and individuals
- Procedures for reporting and investigating suspected abuse, neglect, and mistreatment of individuals in accordance with the Rhode Island General Laws, as amended
- An orientation program that ensures that SLA contractors have completed pre-service skill development prior to being matched with an individual receiving services and have received any needed specialized instruction or guidance prior to an individual moving into the SLA.
 - Pre-service skill development is documented and includes but is not limited to the following:
 - Roles and responsibilities of the SLA contractor
 - Human Rights of adults with developmental disabilities
 - Self-determination
 - Confidentiality
 - Community integration and support of natural supports
 - Annual individual Person-Centered Planning
 - Mandatory reporting of abuse, neglect, and mistreatment of adults with developmental disabilities to the Department and appropriate law enforcement agencies
 - Documentation required of the SLA contractor
 - Access to medical and psychiatric supports

- Specialized skill development for an individual’s unique medical, behavioral, or social needs is documented.
- Documentation in accordance with CMS rules
- An approved contract that is signed between the DDO and the SLA contractor before an individual moves into the SLA. The contract should self-renew and remain in place unless changes within the contract occur. Contract provisions should include:
 - Rights, responsibilities, and limitations on the role of the SLA contractor.
 - A requirement that the SLA will support individual needs and assist with the acquisition of individual goals as indicated in the ISP.
 - A requirement for immediate notification to the DDO of any changes in NCIC or BCI status and/or DMV license status.
 - Immediate notification to the DDO of any new member of the household.
 - Contractually required routine communication with the DDO of the progress of the individual supported in the Shared Living Arrangement.
 - Adherence to requirements for storing firearms as described in these standards.
 - Access to respite supports and stipend.
 - Notification and process for termination of the contract.
 - The requirement for notice to the DDO at least thirty (30) days in advance of plans to move to a new address.
- Oversight and monitoring to ensure that SLA contractors comply with their contract provisions

DDO Responsibilities to Individuals Served by the SLA Program:

- The DDO ensures that each individual is able to make a meaningful, informed choice of SLA contractor.
- The DDO facilitates interviews between individuals to be served and qualified SLA contractors.
- The individual makes the final decision in determining the SLA contractor.
- Family members, friends, and/or advocates, are included, as appropriate, in determining the SLA contractor.
- The DDO provides any necessary ongoing support for the SLA provider to meet the individual’s identified needs.
- The DDO adheres to and ensures implementation of the annual ISP, and participates in the annual ISP to the extent desired by the individual.
- The DDO ensures that the SLA contractor acknowledges that the SLA is also the individual’s home, including but not limited to the following:
 - The individual has full access to and use of the home, with no restrictions unless identified in the individual’s ISP and behavior or medical plan.
 - The participant has privacy within the home as desired.
 - The participant is not isolated within the SLA home from other members of the household.

- The DDO has policies, practices, training, and oversight to ensure that the SLA contractor supports the participant in a way that respects the participant’s goals, preferences, wants, and needs, including that:
 - The individual is able to make decisions without interference or undue influence by the SLA contractor.
 - The SLA contractor does not act on behalf of the participant without the individual’s consent.
 - The SLA contractor does not make decisions that negatively impacts the individual, including but not limited to the individual’s life choices, community involvement, employment, religious expression, and social activities.

Written Policies and Procedures Governing the SLA:

- The DDO has written policies and procedures to assess the support needs of the individual to receive services in an SLA, including but not limited to medications, medical treatment, and other safety and healthcare needs.
- The DDO has written policies and procedures for identifying and selecting appropriate SLA contractors, including a comprehensive evaluation of a SLA contractor for suitability and compatibility based on personal experience, characteristics, conduct, demeanor, integrity, capacity, and philosophy.
- The DDO has written policies for the SLA contractor to follow regarding communication about significant changes in medication and/or medical status of the individual receiving services with legal guardians or with other family members with whom the individual chooses to share this information.
- The DDO coordinates any and all day supports including supported employment and other meaningful day activities.
- The DDO has written policies and procedures for when and how SLAs may be terminated, for the transition plan for the individual leaving a SLA, and for alternate living arrangements for an individual, if needed, until a new permanent placement can be found.

Documentation:

- Documentation of a current and valid certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid
- Documentation of successful completion of pre-service and ongoing skill development and any necessary specialized instruction or guidance needed to support the individual.

Health & Safety:

- The DDO’s program includes that health care services are provided and documented for the individual and that SLA contractors support the person’s health and safety and assist the individual, as needed, in securing required preventive, routine, and emergency health care services.

VI. RESIDENTIAL CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

DDO Responsibilities to Individuals Served by the Residential Program:

- The DDO, in cooperation with the Division of Developmental Disabilities, ensures that each individual is able to make a meaningful, informed choice of residential placement.
- Family members, friends, and/or advocates, are included, as appropriate, in determining the residential placement.
- The DDO provides any necessary ongoing support to meet the individual's identified needs.
- The DDO ensures that there is a legally binding residency agreement for the individuals living in a residential placement signed prior to or at the time of occupancy that indicates each party's rights and responsibilities.
- The DDO adheres to and ensures implementation of the annual ISP, and participates in the annual ISP to the extent desired by the individual.
- The DDO acknowledges that the residence is also the individual's home, including but not limited to the following:
 - The individual has full access to and use of the home, with no restrictions unless identified in the individual's ISP and behavior or medical plan.
 - The participant has privacy within the home as desired.
 - The participant is not isolated within the home from other members of the household.
- The DDO supports the participant in a way that respects the participant's goals, preferences, wants, and needs.
 - The individual is able to make decisions without interference or undue influence by the DDO staff.
 - The DDO staff does not act on behalf of the participant without the individual's consent.
 - The DDO staff does not make decisions that negatively impacts the individual, including but not limited to the individual's life choices, community involvement, employment, religious expression, social activities, and other services received.