



Informing Families

Today and Tomorrow



As the year ends, many of us are looking forward to time with friends and family during the holiday season. We are finding ways to be together and continue our traditions of joy and celebration. Many of us also use this time for reflection about the last year and what lay ahead. Those of us involved with the Informing Families partnership have learned a lot—personally and professionally—and continue to be humbled by so many folks around the state who entrust us with their stories and rely on us to provide news and resources. Thank you for staying connected and sharing with others in your community. We are looking forward to a new year and new opportunities ahead.

As always, we are proud to provide helpful information and resources through the Informing Families partnership.
Jeremy Norden-Paul



In today's issue...

- What is travel training and how does it help increase independence?
- Importance of emergency preparedness
- And more!

Independence through Travel

TRAVEL TRAINING THROUGHOUT WASHINGTON STATE

Using public transportation is a valuable and useful skill to help individuals gain independence and become more involved in their local community. By using public transportation individuals are able to directly interact with their community and gain the independence to run errands by themselves, see friends, or go to events. "Travel training" are programs designed to assist and teach individuals with disabilities the skills necessary to use public transportation. Programs can vary but typically will include a meeting to understand and identify the individuals' strengths and skills.

Programs can vary but typically will include a meeting to understand and identify the individuals' strengths and skills. This will help identify the necessary training and education to support that individual in learning how to use transportation safely and independently.

Travel training programs will vary from county to county but will have similarities throughout including learning local bus routes, how to purchases passes, maneuvering mobility devices on and off buses, and more.



TRAVEL TRAINING IS AVAILABLE IN:

- Clark County
- King County
- Skagit County
- Pierce County
- Thurston
- And more!

To view an updated list of available travel training programs throughout the state visit: <https://informingfamilies.org/travel-training-in-washington-state/>

Emergency Preparedness

THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF BEING PREPARED.

The past couple of months were filled with exciting holidays and celebrations but also brought severe weather. During the next few months, we may experience snowstorms, windstorms, power outages, and cold weather. It is a good time to begin preparing for these potentially dangerous situations. When planning emergency preparedness, it is important to consider the individuals circumstances for members of your household or family members. Disabilities are in every demographic group – it can be visible or invisible. There are people with disabilities in every age, race, and gender. It is important to take into consideration the needs for everyone.

The first step is to stay informed. Be aware of what potential disasters could affect your local area. Make a list of places where to evacuate if necessary and research places that offer shelter within your community. Another way to stay informed is to sign up for mobile alerts for severe weather warnings in your area. To learn more visit, <https://www.weather.gov/wrn/wea>. Next step is to plan for all possible scenarios. It is important to prepare to be able to cope for at least a couple days independently if needed. Plan for all your daily needs and what to do if they become unavailable. This includes creating a support network to contact in case of emergency. This also includes writing down and saving contact of different city authorities that can provide accessible services. Be aware of accessible transportation and who you may need contact in case of evacuation.

To learn more about emergency preparedness for individual with disabilities, visit <https://www.ready.gov/disability>.

COVID-19 Vaccine and Booster Updates

- The COVID-19 Vaccine booster is now available for anyone who is 18 and older and fully vaccinated.
- You can get a different vaccine for your booster dose than the vaccine you got for your primary series.
- Booster doses will help provide continued protection against severe disease.
- To find out where you can receive the booster visit: <https://vaccinelocator.doh.wa.gov/>
- The **Pfizer-BioNTech** COVID-19 Vaccine is now approved for children ages 5-11. To learn more regarding the vaccine and eligibility for children visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/children-teens.html>



Mental Health Resource:

The winter months can hold challenges and take a toll on mental health. It is important to reach out for support. This is a peer support helpline for people living with emotional and mental health challenges. Calls are answered by specially-trained volunteers who have lived experience with mental health challenges. All calls are confidential. **Call 877-500-WARM (877-500-9276).**

Distance-Based Observation and Reporting Available for DDA Waiver Participants

THE BENEFITS OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY



BECOME AN ALTERNATIVE LIVING PROVIDER IN WASHINGTON STATE

Do you or someone you know live in Eastern Washington? Region 1 is currently looking for Alternative Living providers.

An AL provider supports clients living in their own home or in their parent's home. As an AL provider, you will support the client's goals in learning new skills or keeping existing ones such as establishing a residence, home living, health and safety, self-protection, advocacy, and living in a community.

To learn more visit:

<https://informingfamilies.org/become-an-alternative-living-provider-in-washington-state/>

Assistive Technology is the use of items or equipment to increase, maintain, or improve capabilities of an individual. This technology can include such tools as tablets, switches, sensors, and more. In today's world assistive technology is a constantly growing field that can provide the tools and abilities to increase an individual's independence.

DBOR stands for "Distance-Based Observation and Reporting".

DBOR is a part of Assistive Technology (AT), a waiver service of the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). AT is available on all five waiver programs when a waiver participant requires technology in order to receive waiver-funded remote supports to maintain, or improve independence with daily living, to increase safety, or to help with social communication.

AT and DBOR are currently available to clients on the Basic Plus, CIIBS, Core (Residential Support levels 1-3A and 3B), and IFS waivers during the COVID-19 pandemic, as an added flexibility approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

DDA Waiver participants are recommended to contact their Case Resource Manager (CRM) and discuss how AT and/or DBOR can help address unmet needs and assistance. DBOR will include developing a person-centered plan that will evaluate the support and devices that will be most beneficial to the individual.

To learn more about DBOR and view a printable informational flyer visit: <https://informingfamilies.org/distance-based-observation-and-reporting-available/>

Programs throughout Washington State that offer support to parents and guardians of individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities.

SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE TO YOU.

As a parent or guardian to an individual with a developmental and/or intellectual disability, you may have questions, concerns, and anxieties about services and information for your child. Finding support groups of individuals who may have a child with similar needs can provide support and help when you may need it. Throughout Washington state, there are multiple organizations that connect parents to each other and provide support in finding services.

- **Parent to Parent:**
<https://arcwa.org/parent-to-parent/>
- **Washington State Fathers Network:**
<https://fathersnetwork.org/>
- **Family Mentor Project:**
<https://www.familymentorproject.info/>

COVID-19 Testing and Resources

WHY IS TESTING FOR COVID-19 IMPORTANT?

Testing plays an important role in the effort to contain and track COVID-19. Testing can help prevent further person-to-person transmission of COVID-19.

Testing Locations in Washington

Washington State Department of Health has an online COVID-19 testing location map. To find testing sites near you visit

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/TestingforCOVID19/TestingLocations#heading55924>

Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests

Every home in the United States is now eligible to order 4 free at-home COVID-19 tests. To place your order for an at-home test visit: <https://www.covidtests.gov/>

RESOURCES FOR COVID-19:

- What to do if you test positive:
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/TestingforCOVID19/TestedPositive>
- Vaccine Information: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/Vaccine>
- Washington Listens (mental health resource):
<https://waportal.org/partners/home/WaListens>