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**SENATE BILL 5681**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Cortes, Frame, Hasegawa, MacEwen, Nobles, and Valdez

AN ACT Relating to the age at which clients of the developmental disabilities administration may receive employment and community inclusion services; amending RCW 71A.12.290; adding a new section to chapter 71A.12 RCW; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 71A.12 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department shall provide employment services to clients beginning at age 19.

(2) Employment service hours for clients of the department must be determined by the assistance needed to reach employment outcomes as described in rule and may not equal the amount of client time spent working or in employment-related activities.

(3) The department shall develop rules and take other necessary actions to implement this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 71A.12.290 and 2022 c 142 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Clients age ((~~21~~)) 19 and older who are receiving employment services must be offered the choice to transition to a community ((~~access~~)) inclusion program after nine months of enrollment in an employment program, and the option to transition from a community ((~~access~~)) inclusion program to an employment program at any time. Enrollment in an employment program begins at the time the client is authorized to receive employment.

(2) Prior approval by the department shall not be required to effectuate the client's choice to transition from an employment program to community ((~~access~~)) inclusion services after verifying nine months of participation in employment-related services.

(3) The department shall inform clients and their legal representatives of all available options for employment and day services, including the opportunity to request an exception from enrollment in an employment program. Information provided to the client and the client's legal representative must include the types of activities each service option provides, and the amount, scope, and duration of service for which the client would be eligible under each service option.

(4) The department shall work with counties and stakeholders to strengthen and expand the existing community ((~~access~~)) inclusion program, including the consideration of options that allow for alternative service settings outside of the client's residence. The program should emphasize support for the clients so that they are able to participate in activities that integrate them into their community and support independent living and skills.

(5) The department shall develop rules to allow for an exception to the requirement that a client participate in an employment program for nine months prior to transitioning to a community ((~~access~~)) inclusion program.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act takes effect October 1, 2025.

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