



Client Handbook

Hours of Operation:

Monday-Friday 8:00-4:30

Address:

Columbia Ability Alliance Administrative Office

900 S. Dayton St.

Kennewick, WA 99336

509.582.4142 (Main Office Number)

Closed Holidays:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day

Services Provided:

Job Placement Services, Community Based Assessments, Trial Work Experiences, Independent Living Skills, Pre-ETS Services (Job Exploration, Job Shadow, Work Based Learning and Workplace Readiness), Retention Services, Intensive Training Services and Benefits Planning

All services are on a referral basis from a funding agency such as:

DVR-Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

DDA-Developmental Disability Administration

FCS-Foundational Community Supports

STW-School Districts which contract Student Services with Columbia Ability Alliance.

All services are at no cost to the client.

Revised

February 2024

900 South Dayton Street

Kennewick, WA 99336

509.582.4142



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Letter from the President

Greetings!

We are glad you are considering us as "Your Partner For Success."

Our goal is to provide job-training services for people with unique needs who need help entering or maintaining employment. We do this with the help of community partners, which include local and State funding sources, individual corporate contributions and our business partners whom utilize our services.

Understand that we want you to succeed and achieve your highest potential. However, it is important to understand that we need to meet our business partners' expectations as well.

We are about the world of work and very much mirror work situations you might find elsewhere in our community. The difference is our caring and supportive staff, some who dedicated their lives to help our clients become successful.

Please review our Mission, Vision and our overarching philosophy and feel free to ask your case manager or supervisor if you have any questions.

Again, welcome, we appreciate the opportunity to be "Your Partner For Success!"

Sincerely,

Michael Novakovich
President / CEO



Welcome, Introduction, and Admission/Intake Policy

WELCOME TO COLUMBIA ABILITY ALLIANCE

Columbia Ability Alliance (CAA) is excited to be working with you, to assist you with locating employment. This will be an opportunity for you to work with a business in your community to determine the type of employment opportunity you may want to do as future employment.

Our goal is to achieve the highest level of services in the areas of Job Placement Services, Community Based Assessments, Trial Work Experiences, Independent Living Skills, Pre-ETS Services (Job Exploration, Job Shadow, Work Based Learning and Workplace Readiness), Retention, Intensive Training Services and Benefits Planning for people with unique abilities who need assistance entering or maintaining employment. We do this with the help of community partners, which include local and state funding sources, individual corporate contributions and our business partners whom utilize our services.

INTRODUCTION

CAA's Client Handbook will acquaint you with our Agency and some policies affecting your training and employment opportunities. Since it is impossible to anticipate every situation that could arise, this handbook will highlight general CAA policies and practices. Other existing policies and practices may not appear in this handbook. If you are not sure about a policy of CAA and you have questions about any portion of this handbook, or need further information, please ask your Employment Specialist, Department Manager, or any CAA Staff.

CAA's client policies will be applied consistently and without discrimination so that all clients receive uniform treatment. A situation may arise which requires deviation from normal operating procedure. While attempts are made to minimize these situations, each case is considered separately and appropriate exceptions made as necessary. The only recognized deviations from CAA's policies, practices, and benefits are those authorized and signed by the President or an authorized officer.

ADMISSION/INTAKE POLICY

The Columbia Ability Alliance: Employment Services Division of CAA obtains referrals from funding agencies such as ESD 123, DVR, DDA, FCS or self-referrals under the Ticket to Work program. Employment Services has the final decision on accepting a client for services or not, based on the criteria below.

The following are the criteria for admission and continued enrollment in CAA's programs:

- For Job Shadow/Internship programs, applicants must be 16 years or older.
- For all other programs the age requirement is 18 years or older.
- There should be both a willingness and ability to assume responsibility for adequate independent functioning in self-care.
- If a person is not ambulatory, he or she must be able to sit unaided in a wheelchair as well as move independently about the facilities.
- Applicant must have a willingness to participate to the best of their ability in the search for employment.
- Ability of CAA to effectively serve a potential client.
- Ability of CAA to serve a particular number of clients at any given time.
- Determination if staff and on-site clients may be at risk for violent crimes or abuse.



MISSION

We are a mission-based organization committed to supporting an empowering individual with disabilities and other challenges, in order to help them achieve personal success and community engagement.

METHODS

We provide employment services; specialized job and life skills training; career opportunities; a center for social enrichment; and connectivity to community resources.

As a 501(c) (3) organization, public support and donations are essential. As a social enterprise, we generate critical mission support through the operation of successful commercial businesses.

FOCUS

We champion the development of essential vocational and life skills, meaningful social involvement and access to critical resources.

VALUES

We are a change leader dedicated to executional excellence, collaboration, innovation, continual learning, constant improvement, and sustained achievement.

We value teamwork, preparedness, hard work and mutual commitment. Because we respect and honor all people, we operate in a nurturing and transparent manner.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The balance of staff/client labor requires continuous review and scrutiny. When making decisions related to labor needs, the management, supervisors, and staff of Columbia Ability Alliance understand and are committed to first deferring to client labor, whenever and wherever possible. Client labor must be considered in the context of ensuring continuous high-quality products. Transition of clients into the labor force is the standard goal and we will error on the side of believing that all clients can and will transition.

EQUAL ACCESS TO SERVICES/DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of Columbia Ability Alliance that no person shall be subjected to discrimination because of race, creed, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, and marital status, status as a disabled Veteran or Vietnam Era Veteran or based on the presence on any physical, mental or sensory disability.



Columbia Ability Alliance has an excellent team of professionals who specialize in assisting people to get jobs in the community. Our Columbia Ability Alliance: Employment Services Department utilizes their knowledge, education, training and expertise to help people become employed and then retain that employment. These are some of the services which are offered.

DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (DVR)

Programs with DVR:

- **Community Based Assessment (CBA):** The Employment Specialist will work with Clients and locate a business of their desire, where the Client will work at the business for four hours per day for two weeks. This is the opportunity to determine if the Client is ready for employment and if so, what accommodations may be necessary for the Client to be successful at employment. If the Client is employable, it will be recommended that the Client move forward to Job Placement Services at a specified level. (1,2,3)
- **Job Placement Services:** Assistance with resume writing, mock interviews, and interview preparation. Columbia Ability Alliance works with local businesses to employ our clients into competitive employment.
- **Retention Services:** Assisting our clients with maintaining their employment once they get hired and assist with any accommodations which will allow them to better do their job. This will usually last 3 months.
- **Pre-Ets:** Work Based Learning (WBL), Job Exploration, Job Shadow: High School Students that we contract through DVR to give them onsite work experience during high school.
- **Intensive Training Services (ITS):** Clients who are under both a DDA & DVR contract but go through DVR to receive job placement. Once the Client is placed, we do ITS where we assist our client to maintain their employment and assist with accommodations which will allow them to do their job better. ITS will last until the Employer, the Client, the Employment Specialist, and the DVR Counselor all agree the Client is stabilized in their position. The Client will then transfer back to DDA Services.
- **Independent Living Services (IL):** Assisting Clients with specific learning needs, such as utilizing the bus system, learning to read through emails, learning to use a computer and soft skills.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION (DDA)

Programs with DDA:

- **Individual Employment (IE):** Assist DDA Clients with locating employment within the community. This may be one hour per week to full-time employment, depending on the Client's capabilities, desire and needs. Provide on-site job coaching and long-term follow along.
- **Community Inclusion (CI):** Assisting DDA Clients, who do not want employment, with the opportunity to be inclusive within the community in a non-disability atmosphere. Some examples would be joining a bowling league, reading to senior citizens, volunteering at a local foodbank.



Scope of Services (Continued)

FOUNDATIONAL COMMUNITY SUPPORTS (FCS)

Programs with FCS

This program is designed to work with those Clients who have mental health and behavioral health issues, who would like to be employed.

- **Individual Employment:** Work with local businesses to employ our clients into competitive employment.
- **Housing:** This program is operated by another department within Columbia Ability Alliance, however, Amerigroup does provide funding.

SCHOOL TO WORK (STW)

High School Students in Life Skills Program, ages 16 to 21. Each trimester students will work at a different type of employment which allows them to have skills to put on their resume and the opportunity to decide a specific area of employment, by the time they graduate.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SUMMARY

- Job Placement Services
- Community Based Assessment
- Trial Work Experiences
- Independent Living Skills
- Pre-ETS Services (Job Exploration, Job Shadow, Work Based Learning and Workplace Readiness) Retention Services
- Intensive Training Services
- Benefits Planning
- Resume Writing
- Mock Interviews
- Interview Preparation



In accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the DSHS Policy 5.06 on Client Rights the following is a summary of the civil rights of all people served by Columbia Ability Alliance. All Facilities, programs, employees and contractors of Columbia Ability Alliance must not violate the civil, constitutional, and/or other rights of clients.

These rights include but are not limited to:

- Provision of adequate food, shelter, clothing and medical care
- The right to be free from discrimination.
- Freedom from unnecessary medications, restraints, and restrictions
- Legal protections from mental, physical and sexual abuse
- The right to associate with and communicate privately with persons of their choice
- Freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation
- Information concerning all rules and regulations governing conduct and responsibilities of themselves and others with whom they work, or who provide services for them
- Information regarding services available and any related charges for these services
- The right to participate in the development of the plan for services
- The right to exercise their rights as citizens; including participating in elections
- The right to register complaints and recommendations without interference or reprisal
- The right to legal assistance or advocate representation
- The right to manage personal financial affairs or designate other persons to manage them
- Confidential treatment of all information contained in individual records
- The right to participate in activities or social, religious and community groups
- The right to retain and use personal clothing and possessions
- The right to be compensated for work at prevailing wages and commensurate with one's abilities
- The right to participate in research only upon prior informed and written consent of the client and/or parent or guardian
- The right to be free from any kind of abuse or punishment, including verbal, mental, physical, and/or sexual abuse.
- The right to participate in programs involving the use of restrictive or aversive procedures only with the informed consent of the individual and/or parent or guardian
- The right to freedom from humiliation and neglect
- The right to access of information pertinent to the client's sufficient time to facilitate the client's decision-making.

If any person served by Columbia Ability Alliance feels that their rights are being infringed upon or if they wish to report any violation of this policy, they may do so by following the guidelines set forth in the Client Handbook under the Grievance Policy section.



Employees will ensure confidentiality and privacy in regard to history, records and discussions about the people we serve. The very fact that an individual is served by Columbia Ability Alliance must be kept private or confidential; disclosure can be made only under specified conditions, which are described below, for reasons relating to law enforcement and fulfillment of our mission. This means that employees shall not disclose any information about a person, including the fact that the person is or is not served by our Agency, to anyone outside of this Agency unless authorized by the President or other authorized personnel. The principle of confidentiality must be maintained in all programs, departments, functions and activities.

- All Client information is recorded on a daily or every other day basis to ensure clear and precise documentation of current communications.
- No information regarding persons served, requested by someone outside the Agency, will be given over the telephone. Employees are instructed to respond with the statement "Columbia Ability Alliance' policy does not permit me to give out this information." That includes whether or not a person is or has been served by this Agency.
- Release-of-information forms will be explained and completed in the presence of the person about whom any information may be released, before it is released.
- No information about individuals or records will be released to state, federal or other agencies that enable the identification of any person by name, address, Social Security Number or other coding procedures, with the exception of a formal audit, or subpoena.
- Employees will not discuss any individual's record with unauthorized individuals, whether on or off duty. Employees are required to sign a confidentiality acknowledgement stating their responsibility and commitment in regard to client information.



Sexual and Other Harassment

Harassment includes unsolicited remarks, gestures, or physical contact; display or circulation of written materials or pictures derogatory to either gender or to racial, ethnic, or religious groups. CAA has a "zero tolerance" for any such behavior, and anyone found to have violated this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including program termination. All employees and clients have a right to a safe, nonthreatening and non-hostile work environment.

Any client who experiences conduct of this sort, or feels that his or her work environment has become a hostile, intimidating or offensive place to work, should immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Business Division Manager and Human Resources CAO/CHRO. The employee/client concerns will be investigated promptly and they will not suffer retaliation for reporting a complaint. It is important to CAA that all claims of discrimination or sexual harassment are thoroughly reviewed and investigated, so that those appropriate steps are taken as necessary. If the client is unable to report the violation to his/her Business Division Manager or is dissatisfied with the handling of his/her complaint, he/she has the right to pursue said complaint with the Chief Administrative Officer/Human Resources Officer CAO/CHRO, or through the grievance procedure.



Columbia Ability Alliance is committed to offering quality training and providing fair and equitable treatment to everyone. If a person is dissatisfied, he/she has a right to file a formal complaint. Please ask your Employment Specialist, Divisional Manager of Programs or Columbia Ability Alliance CAO/CHRO for a complaint form.

A formal complaint is a complaint made by a client, a representative of the client, or relative of the client who has provided their written signature for the complaint.

At any time during the grievance process, assistance is available by other staff not directly involved with the specific grievance. The correct procedure to file a grievance is as follows:

- Discuss the situation with your Employment Specialist.
- If a suitable solution to the complaint is not reached by a discussion with your Employment Specialist or if the issue involves your direct Employment Specialist, you may address the situation with the next person in the chain of command, the Business Division Manager.
- If neither of these avenues produces a resolution to the situation you may file a written grievance and submit it to the Chief Administrative Officer CAO/CHRO.
- The Business Division Manager shall respond to the grievance in writing within five (5) days of filing the grievance.
- If you are unsatisfied with the response from the Chief Administrative Officer CAO/CHRO, you may submit your original written grievance to the President/CEO.
- The President/CEO will make a full review of the complaint within ten (10) working days of receiving the complaint. He/she will meet with the individual's involved, upon request, and make a decision in writing on the original grievance; photocopies will be made for all parties at that time.
- If a suitable solution is not reached at this point, you will be given information for contacting an outside entity such as the DVR, DDD, or DSHS.

You have the right to file for a complaint or grievance without any risk of retaliation.

USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Under no circumstances is physical punishment ever to be administered to persons served. On rare occasions, however, it may be necessary to physically restrain or remove a client from an Agency program or activity in order to prevent injury or the threat of injury to the client, to other clients, to staff or to the public at large. This should be done in the least restraining manner possible, given the specific circumstances of the situation and the disruptive individual.

Whenever possible, a staff member should talk the client out of his or her inappropriate actions. If after repeated attempts fail, assistance should be solicited. The third party should also attempt to talk the client out of the inappropriate behavior. If the third party fails and it is the decision of the two staff members that the client will need to be physically retrained or removed, the following guidelines should be used:

1. Another staff member should be enlisted to serve as a witness.
2. The two staff members should get on either side of the client and restrain or remove the individual, using the least amount of physical restraint or force. If time allows, the aid of a police officer or fire fighter should be sought.
3. Staff members should be careful not to force any joints or apply a pressure point to an artery and to protect the client's head. The exception to this is the case of a violent client who could endanger the lives or safety of other clients or staff.
4. All staff members involved independently should submit an incident report within 24 hours to the President, using the Incident Report Form. Other copies go to the Client and CAA Case Manager.
5. When applicable, the DDA County/State Representative will be verbally notified with 24 hours of the incident. Copies of incident report will go to DHS DDA and DDA Case Manager within 5 days.

WEAPONS

Weapons are not permitted on the premises of any training site or program area. If you are found with a weapon in your possession, you will be subject to immediate denial of program services as well as possible criminal charges.

BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

In the event of danger from a bomb threat, the staff will be advised to evacuate the buildings without the use of the alarm system. On evacuation from the buildings, you will proceed under supervision of staff to a designated area.

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills and/or evacuation drills will be held periodically. You will be responsible for participating if on campus during a drill. Emergency evacuation procedures are posted throughout the premises explaining what you should do in case of an emergency. Make yourself familiar with these rules; they are for your protection. If you have any questions, be sure to ask your Employment Specialist.

MEDICATIONS

You are responsible for your own medication; staff are not permitted to dispense medication of any kind.



Columbia Ability Alliance would like to create a pleasant and professional environment for our clients, staff and visitors; therefore, all employees and clients should conduct themselves in a decent manner. Interactions between staff and clients at Columbia Ability Alliance should be with courtesy, respect friendliness and cooperation.

The success of all Columbia Ability Alliance operations is based upon the delivery of quality services and products to the client. Columbia Ability Alliance has a reputation for quality services and workmanship and satisfied clients.

You will be expected to conduct yourself in a responsible and mature manner and to follow all policies and procedures. Defacing or causing damage to Columbia Ability Alliance's property will result in denial or revoking services and referral back to funding source as well as possible criminal charges.

All clients are encouraged to provide input and suggestions concerning the overall operation and programs of Columbia Ability Alliance. Should the client require assistance to read or write, they may bring their suggestions to a staff member and have the staff member write out their suggestion (s) for submission to the appropriate Division Manager or department.

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

CAA does not assume responsibility for any theft or damage to personal belongings.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY

Drug Free Work Place Policy – Zero Tolerance for Drugs or Alcohol

Public Law 100-690 requires certain employers to comply with regulations aimed at reducing the impact of drugs at the work place. Columbia Ability Alliance is one such employer that must comply.

SMOKING

Columbia Ability Alliance does not allow smoking in any of its buildings. Smoking is permitted only in the designated areas.

DRESS ATTIRE

You are expected to arrive at CAA with a clean body and in clean clothing. This is important as you are engaging with other people, as well as representing Columbia Ability Alliance to those in the community. Shorts, flip-flops, tank tops, half t-shirts, gang related clothing, or see through work out jerseys, are examples of clothing not considered appropriate attire. Jewelry should be tasteful and minimal. Tattoos must be covered while at CAA. When interviewing/meeting with employers, you are expected to wear clothing that is suitable to the type of work you will be performing. Piercings are at CAA and other employers' discretion. You may be asked to remove them.



TRANSPORTATION

It is the responsibility of the client to arrange transportation to and from CAA, an assessment site, or work. Transportation can be arranged through the Benton-Franklin Transit System, Dial-A-Ride, or personal vehicle. When riding with your Employment Specialists, you are expected to wear your seatbelt, not open car doors from the inside, and not throw trash inside the vehicle or out the window.

RECORDS

Correct and accurate personnel records are important. The following data must be kept up to date at all times. It is your responsibility to notify your Employment Specialist immediately concerning any of the following changes:

- Change of address
- Major health changes
- Change of telephone number
- Legal change of name
- Change of emergency contact person



Completion of Services

EXITING SERVICES

When services with Columbia Ability Alliance are completed, your Employment Specialist will request from your Case Manager (if Case Manager is assisting you) an email to close your file. At this point we will complete:

- Action Notice
- Discharge Summary
- Exit Letter

A copy of the exit letter will be mailed to you along with a self-addressed stamped envelope and a survey. It would be greatly appreciated if you would mail back the survey, no name requested.

You have the right to review your file upon request, during regular work hours 8:00am-4:30pm, Monday-Friday (excluding closed holidays).

WORKING WITH COLUMBIA ABILITY ALLIANCE

All clients in services with Columbia Ability Alliance are welcome to apply for job openings at Columbia Ability Alliance. These notices will be posted on our website, Facebook, announced in the local paper and many other online sites. All clients must follow the normal procedure for applying to a position. If you need assistance in following this procedure, please feel free to ask your Employment Specialist for assistance.