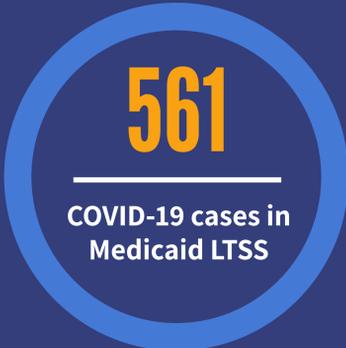




Washington's Self-Direction Program Response to COVID-19

Washington was the first state in the country to experience a COVID-19 outbreak. Little was known about the virus when it first struck, so state officials had to react very quickly and with little precedence.

Of the approximately 46,000 adults over 18 receiving Medicaid long-term services & supports (LTSS) in their homes, there have been self reports



of **561 positive or suspected COVID-19 cases** since Washington began tracking in early March. Of the reported cases, **39 adults have been reported as passing away due to COVID.**¹

This is compared to long-term care (LTC) facilities in Washington, where there are **6,090 known positive or suspected cases**

(which include residents, staff or visitors) and **951 facility associated deaths from COVID** as of August 2020.²



With over eighty percent of the individuals self-directing in Washington already hiring friends and family as workers even before the pandemic, those self-directing were better prepared for shelter-in-place orders and resulting workforce shortages.

>80%
hiring friends & family

With 45,000 individuals self-directing across the state, changes were needed for the program to run smoothly and safely. During a State Program Member Open Forum with Applied Self-Direction, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services shared the changes they made to promote safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, including:

- 1 DEEMING HOMECARE WORKERS ESSENTIAL**
- 2 RETHINKING ASSESSMENT RENEWAL PLANS AND BACKGROUND CHECKS**
- 3 ALLOWING SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED REMOTELY WHERE POSSIBLE**
- 4 ACQUIRING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) FOR SELF-DIRECTED WORKERS, STAFF AND CLOTH FACE COVERINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS AND ALL PROVIDERS**
- 5 NEW RATE ENHANCEMENTS**

While these changes were challenging, Washington has risen to the occasion, purchasing vast quantities of cloth face coverings and PPE to distribute to participants and their employees and working with families to ensure continued services using technology and remote options. As the state begins to phase opening businesses again, families are getting the support they need to make decisions about how services are delivered. Through the use of retainer payments, the state has successfully maintained social distancing and adhered to safety guidelines in day rehabilitation centers that have remained open, but they also anticipate an increased use of at-home services moving forward.

¹ Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, August 2020

² <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/issue-brief/state-data-and-policy-actions-to-address-coronavirus>