

HCBS Settings Rule: Community Inclusion & Integration

What is Community Inclusion?

Community inclusion means actively working to bring individuals who have historically been excluded to “come in” to the community. Community inclusion is the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to live in and have full access to their community to the same extent as those individuals without disabilities; while being valued and treated with dignity and respect. It is belonging to a community built on true connection to others.

True inclusion increases health, self-worth, lifts depression and gives people a sense of community and protection. Community inclusion is the first step towards integration into the greater community.

What is Community Integration?

Community integration is the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to live in the community and be valued for their uniqueness and abilities to the same extent as others without disabilities. Community integration means actively working to not only bring individuals into the community, but also ensuring that they are able to contribute to the development of the community and feel like they are an integral part of it.

Community integration helps individuals feel connected and engaged in their communities.

Individuals are not forced to go into the community if they do not want to, but they should be given the opportunity to do so.

What types of activities promote Community Integration and Inclusion?

- Recreational activities at the local gym or community rec center.
- Spiritual activities at their preferred church or spiritual organization.
- Cultural activities that support the individual's own cultural interests.
- Social activities or events in their community.
- Informed choice for employment activities.
- Volunteerism at community non-profit organizations.
- Educational and training activities at community colleges, Universities, libraries or community centers.
- Skill development in the community setting where the skill would be naturally used.
- Orientation, mobility, and destination training on getting from their home to their favorite locations independently.
- Access and utilization of available transportation including public and paid transportation options.

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What are the benefits of Community Integration and Inclusion?

- Community participation.
- Being valued and accepted by their community.
- Increased independence.
- Increased social connections.
- Greater quality of life (increase knowledge of community resources, social/professional network building, etc.).
- Volunteer placement and work skill development.
- Movement to competitive integrated employment.
- Increased financial responsibility/freedom.
- Increased safety by being known by community members that watch out for them.
- Access to community resources and opportunities to give back to the community.

Individuals who are integrated and included in their community have a greater quality of life. This can include increased knowledge of community resources, social/professional networking, utilization of natural supports, etc.)

How can settings ensure Community Integration and Inclusion is happening?

Offering choice:

- Offer a variety of experiences, including new experiences to individuals.
- Diversity of choice is evident.
- Process in place for individuals to choose something else (not participate in the activity and have an alternative activity).
- If utilizing a residential home for activities that include other individuals receiving services that do not reside in the home, the setting must have documented permission from all residents and a method for permission to be revoked if residents change their mind later about having certain activities take place in their home.

Providing choice to an individual does not mean an individual gets to do what they want every minute of the day every day.

Meeting Individual Interests:

- Activity options must reflect individual preferences and there is an ongoing process in place to regularly get individuals' input.
- Must have a process to evaluate individual wants and needs; and take active measures to reasonably meet those needs and wants for all individuals.
- Have a process to address when an individual wants to do something that the provider is unable to do or facilitate.

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- Support individualized schedules
 - There is a process in place for individuals to choose what activities they participate in.
 - There are no activities individuals are required to participate in.
 - Individuals are a part of the process that determines activity schedule.
 - Activities and schedules cannot be for the convenience of staff.
 - Staff promote individuals making decisions and exercising choice in all areas.

Providing individualized or person-centered services does not require 1:1 staff, this can be accomplished in a group setting.

Interacting with Community Members:

- Meaningful integration of individuals is a part of community activities; activities should foster relationships with community members unaffiliated with the setting.
- Interaction with non-Waiver peers while in the community rather than all interactions being with paid staff or other individuals from the program.
- Supporting individuals to make the transactions, converse with cashiers, ask for help at the store, etc. during activities.

Accessing the Community:

- Must have a process to identify available community activities, and a strategy to access activities in the community, instead of at the setting, when available (e.g. classes, skill building, etc.)
 - Providers should not be duplicating existing community activities, nor should they be creating separate, disability specific activities within their community.
- Educate individuals on plausible options for transportation (public transport, ridesharing, etc.) and how to use them independently
- Visits by community members (reverse integration) is not the only, or primary form of community integration. Reverse integration involves bringing people and activities from the broader community into the setting, instead of supporting people in the setting to access the broader community. Visits by community members have value, but cannot replace community access for individuals.

What are some examples of what community inclusion and integration look like? [Click Here](#)

Submit any questions to HCBSSettings@utah.gov

Find additional resources here:

<https://medicaid.utah.gov/ltc/hcbstransition/>