



Imagine Different...Achieve Different Coalition

FAST FACTS: Home- and Community-Based Service Waivers

Overview

Home- and Community-Based Service (HCBS) “waiver” programs offer extra MA-funded services to a limited number of people to avoid institutional placement. For children, these services may include, but are not limited to:

- Home modifications like widening doorways, expanding bathrooms, building decks for lifts
- Respite care (with or without a nurse) to provide relief and breaks to caregivers
- LifeSharing – a paid family (the child’s own or an alternative chosen by the child’s parents or legal guardian) with agency supports

Children can be served by one of three PA Department of Human Services, Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) HCBS waivers: the Consolidated waiver (unlimited service cost); the Community Living waiver (\$85,000 per year limit of service); or the Person, Family, Directed Service (PFDS) waiver (\$41,000 per year limit on service).

Eligibility

Eligibility criteria for all three waivers are:

- Intellectual Disability (ID) (manifesting before adulthood), Autism, or likelihood of being diagnosed with ID or Autism by age nine; or
- Medical Complexity (i.e., need technology and nurses) even without ID or Autism; and
- An Intermediate Care Facility level of need (i.e., at risk of institutionalization); and
- Meet financial criteria (most children with significant disabilities do)

Unfortunately, the waivers, which serve thousands of people, have waiting lists even for emergency cases. Enrollment priority is based on need – not time of application - and while children are generally a low priority due to access to expanded MA services, education, and parent or child welfare support, children in or at risk of institutional settings are considered “emergencies”.

How to get started:

- Register your child with your county office of MH/ID Services. You will need to document disability and institutional level of need.
- Once your child is deemed eligible, choose a Supports Coordination organization. With the help of your Supports Coordinator, complete an application for the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waiver Program.
- Make sure a PUNS (Priority of Urgency of Needed Services) form is completed for your child.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DHS Consolidated Waiver
<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Disabilities-Aging/Pages/Consolidated-Waiver.aspx#>

Disability Rights Pennsylvania
<https://www.disabilityrightspa.org/>

Pennsylvania Health Law Project
<https://www.phlp.org/en/>