



ABC'S of Waiver/OPWDD Services & Disability Community Terms

Accessing Supports Requirements: Provide evidence that the person has a developmental disability, enroll in Medicaid (if needed), and enroll in the Home and Community Based Waiver (if needed).

ADA or Americans with Disabilities Act: ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

ABA or Applied Behavior Analysis: A method of using behavioral science to improve behavioral issues. Often used with people on the autism spectrum.

ACCES-VR or Adult Career and Continuing Education Services: A New York state and federally funded program that helps people with disabilities to find and maintain employment. ACCES-VR services are not limited to those with the OPWDD Medicaid waiver.

ASD or Autism Spectrum Disorder: A neurological and developmental condition that affects the way people communicate, interact and behave.

Benefits Information: The Revenue Support Field Operations and the Revenue Support Field Office (RSFO) develops and maintains benefits and entitlements for individuals served by OPWDD. There are nine RSFOs throughout New York State. As part of OPWDD's Division of Enterprise Solutions, the RSFO is responsible for various revenue related support functions for individuals in certified programs operated by OPWDD. As a result of the traditional responsibilities for benefit development and billing for individuals in OPWDD-operated programs, RSFO staff are in a unique position to share their expertise with state operated and voluntary operated staff, individuals with disabilities, their families, advocates and other representatives.

Care Manager: The coordination of an individual's care is done through a dedicated Care Manager who oversees and coordinates access to all services.

The Care Manager supports the person as he or she facilitates the Life Plan Meeting (to the extent the person prefers to do so) and also ensures that all relevant and pertinent information is gathered from the care planning team. It is the care manager's responsibility to update the Life Plan as well as other documents, so they are up to date for the service providers. The care manager also gets approval from the state for new services, so a person could be enrolled in programs.



In addition to this, the care manager also coordinates Medicaid, social security and food stamps.

Community Habilitation: Community habilitation is a Medicaid waiver service that assists people who either live at home with a loved one or independently in the community to maintain or develop the highest level of independence possible for them. People who utilize this service work on goals to build independent living skills in the following areas: personal hygiene, self care (eating, grooming, etc.), general household chores, mobility training, personal health care, financial management, appropriate social skills, and life safety. The person receiving the support and the Direct Support Professional establishes weekly schedules.

Day Habilitation: Daytime activities that consist of a combination of diagnostic, therapeutic, training, and career identification services to people with an intellectual or developmental disability. Services may vary in the staffing arrangements, locations, and supports as they are offered based on individual needs, interests, and preferences.

DD or Developmental Disabilities: A group of chronic conditions that start at birth or during childhood, continue throughout life, and affect the person's major life activities. These may include cerebral palsy, autism, brain injury, down syndrome, and intellectual disabilities.

DSP or Direct Support Professional: Staff who work with people with disabilities to achieve personal goals and be as integrated as possible into the community.

EI or Early Intervention: Supportive services to help infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities. Typically, people transition from EI to OPWDD services.

Eligibility: Each person who wants OPWDD supports or services has the right to an individual eligibility review. That review will determine whether he or she has a condition that qualifies – or makes the person “eligible” -- for services or supports from OPWDD.

Eligibility Review Process: The Eligibility Review process is the way OPWDD determines if someone has a developmental disability and is eligible for OPWDD supports and services. The eligibility review process begins at one of OPWDD's five Developmental Disability Regional Offices (DDROs) located throughout New York State. The individual and their family submit materials and records to the DDRO, such as reports of assessments conducted by medical professionals. A service coordinator may help with this process. Qualified DDRO staff review this information to see if the person's disability meets requirements specified in New York State law. If they meet the requirements, the person is deemed to have a developmental disability and becomes eligible for OPWDD services. (Please note: additional steps are needed—such as enrolling in Medicaid—to gain access to most supports and services.) Depending on the complexity of an individual's condition, the process for obtaining an eligibility determination may require reports from multiple specialty assessments. A face to-face interview may also be part of this process.



Environmental Modifications (E-Mods)/Adaptive Equipment: Specialized equipment, or changes to the living or work environment (for example, wheelchair ramps, lifts, handrails, communication boards), that enable people with a physical disability or limited communication to lead more independent lives.

Family, Education, Training Services (FET): This service is available to families/advocates with a loved one, under 18 years of age, enrolled in the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver. The purpose of Family Education Training (FET) is to enhance the decision-making capacity of the family/advocate by providing information regarding the nature and impact of developmental disabilities, as well as to inform them about service alternatives.

Front Door: Opening the door to a richer, fuller life—that’s the goal of OPWDD’s new Front Door—a person-centered approach for people with developmental disabilities that prioritizes individual choices, needs, and desires in making decisions. In order to receive services through OPWDD a person must go through the Front Door process. For more information about the Front Door and accessing services, please call the Front Door access number in your region:

Region 4:

Queens (*Queens County*) 718-217-6485
Brooklyn (*Kings County*) 718-642-8576
Manhattan (*New York County*) 646-766-3220
Bronx (*Bronx County*) 718-430-0757
Staten Island (*Richmond County*) 718-982-1913

Group Home: A community-based, residence that provides room, board and individualized services. Residences’ are certified by OPWDD to provide housing and related services, operated by either OPWDD or not-for-profit agencies. These settings include supervised group living (a home with 24-hour staffing and supervision), semi-independent (or “supported”) group living (a home with less-than-24-hour staffing and supervision), and other residential options. A group home can also be referred to as an *IRA or Individual Residential Alternative*.

HIPAA or Health Information Portability and Accountability Act: A 1996 federal law that mandates the protection of private, protected health information.

Home and Community Based Services Waiver (HCBS Waiver): The OPWDD Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver operated by the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is a program of supports and services for adults and children with developmental disabilities.

I/DD or Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Intellectual disabilities arise before age 18 and result in an IQ of 70-75 or lower. Intellectual disabilities are included in the broader group of developmental disabilities (see DD above). “I/DD” is a term used to include all intellectual and developmental disabilities.



IDEA Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: A 1975 federal law, updated in 1990, that guarantees a “free, appropriate public education” that is individualized to the needs of each student with a disability.

IEP or Individual Education Plan: A document that lays out the services and supports that a child needs to succeed in school. It is tailored to the individual student.

Individual, Service & Supports (ISS)/Housing: Assistance to people with an intellectual or developmental disability in locating, leasing, or buying individualized living arrangements that are alternatives to traditional group living. Residential options include home sharing, independent living, HUD rental subsidy programs, low income home ownership programs, and other leasing and ownership initiatives.

Intensive Respite: Intensive Respite services are for people supported with high behavioral and/or high medical needs that meet the qualifications for additional staffing supports.

Just ASK: There is an array of different services available for people with developmental disabilities. Your Care Manager is there to help you find the best services!

Kids: OPWDD offers individualized, person-centered supports to children and young adults aged birth to 21 who are OPWDD-eligible with a qualifying diagnosis. OPWDD services can be provided in addition to supports received through Early Intervention (EI), the education system, and the Office for Children and Family Services (OCFS), which are the primary systems serving children with disabilities in New York State. These systems work together to ensure children have the supports they need to build on their strengths and overcome any challenges they face. In addition, OPWDD offers services to family members to help them provide supports to their loved ones. When a referral is made, OPWDD regional staff can work with the family to learn about the child’s support needs and discuss what OPWDD service options may be of benefit.

Level of Care Eligibility Determination (LCED): The LCED is a form for HCBS Waiver participants. LCED is required for all participants in the HCBS waiver. The LCED form is used for the initial determination and annual redetermination (i.e., reevaluation) of an individual’s eligibility to receive HCBS waiver services. This form can only be completed by one of the following: a designated Qualified Reviewer; a qualified person at a voluntary agency, Care Manager, Care Manager Supervisor, or a DDSO Director or the Director’s designee.

Life Plan: The Life Plan development is driven by the person, with input and participation of all members of the care-planning team. It is crucial that all members of the care-planning team are included, engaged and working together towards the ultimate outcome of a comprehensive person-centered service plan that meets the needs, overarching safeguards and life goals of the person. The Life Plan is a document that outlines a person's:



- Goals and desired outcomes
- Habilitation needs and goals
- Strengths and preferences
- Clinical and support needs (paid and unpaid) identified through their assessment
- Services and provider Medical/health status
- Plan of Nursing Services
- Behavioral Support Plans
- Medication updates/changes
- Staff Action Plans
- Safeguards including individual back-up plans and strategies

This document changes as the needs of the person change.

Nonprofit Organizations: OPWDD certifies and regulates more than 700 nonprofit providers who deliver direct care to individuals with developmental disabilities. These providers offer a wide variety of services and supports, which visitors can review in the provider directory. Many providers have implemented innovative programs that greatly improve an individual's personal outcome. Those providers setting the standard for our system are highlighted in OPWDD's Compass Initiative. This link will assist you in finding a nonprofit organization to best suit you and your families needs: <https://providerdirectory.opwdd.ny.gov>

Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD): The New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is responsible for coordinating services for more than 128,000 New Yorkers with developmental disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders, and other neurological impairments. It provides services directly and through a network of approximately 750 nonprofit services providing agencies, with about 80 percent of services provided by the private nonprofits and 20 percent provided by state-run services.

Pathway to Employment: A person-centered employment planning and support service that provides assistance for people to obtain, maintain or advance in competitive employment or self-employment. This service will be available to people who are receiving support expressing an interest in competitive employment or self-employment including (but not limited to) people who receive Day Habilitation, Pre-Vocational and Supported Employment services, as well as students leaving high school. This service offers an individualized planning process that helps people who receive support identify a career or vocational direction. It provides instruction and training in job readiness skills and develops a plan for achieving competitive, integrated employment at or above the New York State minimum wage. Within 12 months the outcome of this service is documentation of the participant's stated career objective; a detailed career plan



used to guide individual employment supports; and preparation for supported employment services. To be eligible for Pathway to Employment, a person needs to be enrolled in the Home and Community Based Waiver (HCBS). To enroll, discuss Pathway to Employment with your Care Manager contact your OPWDD Regional Office.

Person Centered Planning: Planning from a person-centered perspective seeks to listen, discover and understand the person. It is a process directed by the person that helps us to learn how they want to live and describes what supports are needed to help them move toward a life they consider meaningful and productive. The planning process empowers the person by building on their individual abilities and skills, building a quality lifestyle that supports the person in finding ways to contribute to their community. Other factors, which impact the person's life, such as health and wellness, are also considered during the planning process. Knowing and exploring opportunities to use a person's skills and abilities helps to set a direction while providing positive motivation and increasing the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes that are most important to the person receiving supports.

Quality of Life: OPWDD's vision of productive and fulfilling lives for people with developmental disabilities is achieved by creating opportunities and supporting people in ways that allow for as many people as possible to access the supports and services they want and need.

Respite: Services that provide temporary relief for families or other caregivers of people with an intellectual or developmental disability. Respite is offered in and outside of the home, is available during the day, evening, and overnight, is scheduled and time-limited, and is intended to allow families time for errands, vacations, and other planned activities.

Self-Direction: Self-direction gives you flexibility to choose the mix of supports and services that are right for you so you can *live the life you want*. With self-direction, YOU choose your services, the staff and organizations that provide them, and a schedule that works best for YOU. Each person is unique. Self-direction empowers people to design supports based on their unique strengths and needs. It gives you more control over the funding used to buy your services. Anyone who is eligible for OPWDD services and enrolled in the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver can choose to self-direct their services. For more information please visit: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/node/6941>

SEMP or Supported Employment: A program that matches people receiving services with paid, competitive jobs that match their skills and interests. A job coach often provides ongoing support.

SSDI or Social Security Disability Insurance: A federal benefit that allows workers with disabilities to receive Social Security benefits early; to be eligible, a person must have paid into the Social Security system through previous employment.



SSI or Supplemental Security Income: A benefit provided through the federal Social Security Administration to meet the basic needs of people with disabilities as well as older adults and people who are blind, who would otherwise be unable to pay for food and shelter.

Trainings: The Disability Ally is a hour-long training which addresses diversity and inclusion within the community and informs of better ways of communicating, interacting, working with, and providing functional accessibility to people with disabilities. It focuses on adapting the world around people, instead of aiming to change the people themselves. Through this initiative, our goal is to raise awareness and educate people and establishments within communities on respectful and effective ways of serving a wide spectrum of people. We have come to realize that better relationships are fostered between community members and the people receiving supports from us once the proper trainings have been put in place in areas such as: disabilities culture and cultural competency. To learn more about the Disability Ally, or to sign your business up for training, please contact: Alyssa D'Agosto (Adagosto@pccsny.org)

Utilize Medicaid: Medicaid is a special needs-based health insurance program that pays for: Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver, Care at Home Waiver, Medicaid Service Coordination, Residential Care in Developmental Centers and Intermediate Care Facilities, and Additional health-related items and services. The Medicaid Program has special provisions for people with developmental disabilities: Individuals can work and still qualify for Medicaid, Parental income and resources are not considered for children living at home and seeking enrollment in the HCBS Waiver. Resources can be put into a Medicaid qualifying supplemental needs trust and be exempt for Medicaid purposes.

Voting Rights: All Americans have the right to vote, including people with developmental disabilities, and there are federal and state laws to guard and guarantee that right. OPWDD is committed to ensuring that voting rights are upheld for the people we serve, and that every person is given the opportunity to register to vote.

Waiver Services: A flexible array of services and supports funded by Medicaid that includes residential habilitation, day habilitation, prevocational services, supported employment, respite services, environmental modifications, adaptive equipment, plan of care support services, family education and training, and consolidated supports and services. See also Day Services/Day Habilitation, Employment Services, Environmental Modifications/Adaptive Equipment, In-home Services, Residential Services, and Respite Care.

MaXimize Opportunities: OPWDD's vision of productive and fulfilling lives for people with developmental disabilities is achieved by creating opportunities and supporting people in ways that allow for as many as possible to access the supports and services they want and need.



YES, there is a service for that: There is an overwhelming amount of information given to you and it could be confusing. Whenever you feel that there isn't a service available for the specific needs of the person you are supporting with a developmental disability, think again! We will do our very best to ensure that you are receiving the BEST and most APPROPRIATE services!

Zing Past the Opportunities: Make sure to take advantage of all of the services available to you!

References

<http://www.pccsny.org/our-services/>
https://opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_about/overview_of_agency
<https://opwdd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/documents/030-Front-Door-Access-To-Services.pdf>
https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/longterm/omrdd.htm
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