

New Opportunities Waiver (NOW)

Home and community-based waiver programs are based on federal criteria which allow services and supports to be provided in a home or community-based setting for people who would otherwise require institutional services. Due to the demand for these services, there is a waiting list for the NOW of people who meet the Louisiana definition of developmental disabilities. The waiver is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. There are currently over 8,500 NOW slots available and 9,200 people on the waiting list. Louisiana took a positive step in 2008 by adding 2,025 NOW slots but approximately 1500 people are added to the waiting list each year.

The application process does not begin until a slot is available. At that time, medical and financial determinations are done to validate that the individual has a developmental disability and meets the financial and medical/psychological requirements for institutional care in an ICF/DD (Intermediate Care Facility for People with Developmental Disabilities).

Services and supports provided through the NOW are those that allow an individual to live independently in their home and community or at home with their family. These include such things as assistance with bathing, transferring from wheelchair to bed, household chores, and transportation to work for individuals with physical disabilities and assistance with paying bills, taking medicine, and learning to use public transportation for individuals with cognitive disabilities. Respite is listed as the most needed service by families supporting children or adults in their homes. A complete list of services available through the NOW is below.

There is no individual cost cap for the NOW, however the state uses a Resource Allocation process to allocate service hours based on assessed levels of need. Louisiana began using the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) assessment tool with a supplemental instrument (La. PLUS) to determine individuals' needs and a new individual planning process in 2008, both of which have reduced the per person cost of the NOW. To better understand the SIS and Resource Allocation process, NOW recipients, families and advocates are encouraged to download and read the *Guidelines for Support Planning*. This document explains the process in detail and can be found on the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) web site at <http://www.dhh.state.la.us/offices/publications.asp?ID=77&Detail=2633>.

Funding for the NOW and all home and community-based waivers is a mix of Federal and State funds and is monitored and regulated by the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and administered in Louisiana by the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities and Medicaid.

NOW services

Individualized and Family Support (direct support/assistance, respite)

Center-Based Respite

Community Integration Development (facilitating natural supports & inclusion)

Environmental Accessibility Modification
Specialized Medical Equipment and Supplies
Supported Living
Day Habilitation and Transportation
Supported Employment and Transportation
Facility-Based Employment
Professional Services (psychological, nursing, etc.)
Personal Emergency Response System
Skilled Nursing Service
Substitute Family Care
Transitional Expenses (out of an institution)

Other Waivers for People with Developmental Disabilities

Children's Choice Waiver

- Serving children under the age of 18 living with their families
- Capped at \$17,000
- Limited array of services

Supports Waiver

- Adults
- Capped at \$26,000
- Mainly a vocational supports waiver, with a limited number and amount of other services

Residential Options Waiver (ROW)

- Children and Adults
- Individual cost cap based on ICAP determined level of need, not to exceed cost of services in same level private ICF/DD
- Wide array of services
- Approved by CMS on October 1, 2009 – should be available in Spring 2010

This fact sheet was updated on 1-29-10 by the La. Developmental Disabilities Council. For more information on waivers for people with developmental disabilities, contact the Council at 225-342-6804.