

The Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) continues to work to assure that services in the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) are available to meet support needs for people receiving services. Additional rate cuts were proposed for community service providers due to the funding challenges in our state. Instead of making these additional rate cuts to community services, a decision was made with input from advocates, support coordinators, and providers to discontinue the three year phase-in of Resource Allocation for people receiving New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) services. OCDD's original phase-in plan would have allowed waiver recipients three years to reduce the number of support hours to the amount necessary for their assessed level of need. OCDD estimates there are approximately 2,600 people who are currently receiving more services than determined necessary by the assessment on the Supports Intensity Scale and Louisiana PLUS (SIS/LAPLUS). The new plan eliminates the phase-in period. These changes go into effect January 1, 2011 but reductions in hours will only occur following discussions with your support coordinator and support team to decide if you can use options like sharing, work/day program, natural supports or unsupported time to help reduce your hours.

Questions and Answers

How were the IFS hours in the NOW Resource Allocation System determined?

The IFS hours were determined for each level by reviewing the hours used by individuals in each level in a sample group. Most individuals in each level should have their support needs met within the hours allocated. However, some individuals will not be able to have their needs met with the hours built into the system.

Does this mean that my number of IFS hours are being capped/limited?

No. You may work with your support coordinator to ask for additional hours over your level membership's recommended IFS hours. Requests must include a justification. Approvals may come with conditions of developing shared supports, natural supports, or other options to eventually replace the extra IFS hours. OCDD remains committed to providing the services individuals need regardless of the determined allocation recommendation.

Why do NOW recipients have to now be assessed and work within the associated amounts of IFS hours?

Louisiana is using the resource allocation model to be more responsible in using limited resources to serve people's needs. The reason for the shift in the time frame for resource allocation is to avoid additional rate cuts to providers that would further jeopardize the entire support industry. Louisiana, like most other states, has recognized that providing services should be based on need. There is also the need to serve everyone who needs support. Even with the increases in numbers of people on the waiver there are still over 9,000 people waiting eight

years for waiver services. Hopefully, cost savings from resource allocation will lessen the length of wait these individuals must endure.

My support coordinator wants me to try shared supports and/or natural supports. Does this mean I have to live with a roommate or move in with my parents?

No. Sharing supports doesn't always mean having a roommate. Most people will be able to share supports in some manner. You may have the same routine or interests as someone and be able to share staffing. An example of shared supports would be friends watching football together and sharing a single staff during the games.

Natural Supports does not mean you have to move in with your parents. Natural supports should be support that a family member or friend may be able to provide such as transportation to and from work or time with family for dinner or holidays.

Will I be left alone or have to use options that put me at risk if I require constant support?

No one will be left alone unless they are able to care for themselves. In deciding on self care options, you and your support team should identify the period of time you can care for yourself, and for what activities, and then develop plans to ensure that you are not placed in an unreasonably risky situation. Other options will also be explored but will not be implemented if serious health and safety concerns exist and cannot be addressed.

What if I disagree with the SIS level assigned to me?

The assigned level is only one piece of information your team will consider in your meeting. In addition to this, your personal goals, natural supports, life situations and schedules are taken into consideration when determining the number of hours you will receive. You should work with your support coordinator to review any errors in your assessment. Your support coordinator can request a change in the assessment using the additional information you provide. You can receive a copy of your assessment from your support coordinator.

What if I disagree with the number of hours in my new CPOC?

You can request to have the number of IFS hours reviewed by the Guidelines for Planning State Office Review Committee (GPSORC). It is encouraged that individuals act responsibly and only seek a review when there is good reason to do so. If you plan to appeal you must do so within 30 days of receiving notification.

Once GPSORC has made a determination, if you still disagree you can appeal to the Division of Administrative Law – Health and Hospitals Section, P. O .Box 4189, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821.