

# DD Waivers: First Steps

*Revised July 2023*



Virginia Department of  
Behavioral Health &  
Developmental Services

My Life,  
My Community



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# Welcome!

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The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) made this guide to help families understand resources, supports, and services that the Commonwealth of Virginia offers to people with developmental disabilities.

It includes the following information:

- how to access Virginia's Medicaid Waivers for Developmental Disabilities,
- links to our one-stop information website, My Life, My Community, and
- a list of resources for people who are on Virginia's Developmental Disability waiver waiting list.

We know that navigating the developmental disability system can be hard for families. We hope you will find this resource useful!

For more detailed information about the resources named in this document, we invite you to visit our website at [mylifemycommunityvirginia.org](https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org) or call My Life, My Community operators at **844-603-9248**.

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# Virginia Developmental Disability "DD" Waivers

This is a brief overview of Virginia's Developmental Disability Waivers (DD Waivers). You can find more detailed information in the [Navigating the DD Waivers Guide](#). You can also click on the links provided in this page, or use your mobile device to scan the QR code on Page 1.

**What is a developmental disability?** A "developmental disability" is usually a lifelong disability that can affect a person's day-to-day physical function, learning, language, or behavior. Developmental disabilities can often — but not always — begin in early childhood.

**What is a DD Waiver?** DD waivers help people with developmental disabilities, including an intellectual disability, live at home and in their communities. Virginia has [3 types of DD waivers](#). Each type provides access to a different level of supports and services for employment, independent living, and other needs.

**Who can receive DD supports in Virginia?** In Virginia, the service system helps people with developmental disabilities and their families from birth through adulthood.

**What DD services are available?** You have to be eligible to receive services.

The service system includes the following:

- service providers,
- advocacy organizations,
- public agencies, and
- nonprofit partners.



To read how Virginia defines "developmental disabilities," [visit this link](#) or use your mobile device to scan this QR code.

A person receives services and supports based on individual needs.

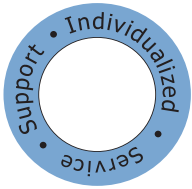
**Where do I start?** Contact your local [Community Services Board or Behavioral Health Authority](#) (CSB/BHA) to start the process. Local CSB/BHAs are entry points to DD waiver services in your region.

**What are Community Services Boards/Behavioral Health Authorities?** Local CSB/BHAs provide community assistance for people who:

- are in crisis,
- have behavioral health needs, and/or
- have developmental disabilities.

To find your local CSB/BHA, visit [My Life, My Community](#). Type in your city, county, or zip code. Then type "CSB or BHA" in the topic box. You can also visit the [Virginia Community Services Board Directory](#).

To learn more about state assistance for people of all ages with DD, please see the [Waiver Information section](#) on My Life, My Community.



# Support Coordination/ Case Management (SC/CM)

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**What is support coordination?** Support coordination is when a support coordinator (SC) helps you find the supports and services you need. Support coordination is also called "case management" (CM). SCs are the point of contact for DD waivers and the waiver waiting list.

**How can I get support coordination?** Contact [your local CSB/BHA](#) to ask about support coordination. If you have not already had a DD waiver screening, an SC will guide you through the process of [determining eligibility](#).

The process starts with an assessment. The assessment verifies that you have a developmental disability. It also identifies the services and supports that you need. During the assessment, your case manager will ask you questions from an assessment tool called the Virginia Intellectual and Developmental Disability Eligibility Survey (VIDES). The information from the assessment lets your SC know if DD waivers are right for you. Based on your responses, your SC can work with you to develop an individualized plan.

**How do I get help for my infant or toddler (under the age of 3)?** Early Intervention Services (EI) helps families with children who are:

- under the age of 3,
- not developing as expected, and
- have a medical condition that can delay normal development.

EI services also help parents and caregivers support their children with everyday activities. Services are available for all eligible children and their families. This is true whether you can pay for the services or not. To learn more about EI services, contact the [Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia](#).

**How do I get help for a child older than 3?** If your child is older than 3, you should contact your local school system.

Your local school system offers services to help your child succeed in school through Special Education services. To connect with the special education program at your local school system, visit the Virginia Department of Education's [Virginia School Directories](#).

**Where else can I go for help?** Community-based supports may also be available. To learn more about state programs and supports in your local community, visit IFSP's ["Resources for Families" webpage](#) or contact [your local CSB/BHA](#).

To find out about supports for children with special health care needs, visit the [Virginia Department of Health Care Connection for Children](#) and [Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment \(EPSDT\)](#).

## Overview of Services

BI	FI	CL	Employment and Day Options
X	X	X	<b>Individual Supported Employment</b> is provided one-on-one by a job coach who offers training and support in a competitive job where persons without disabilities are employed.
X	X	X	<b>Group Supported Employment</b> is continuous employment-related support provided to a group of individuals working a competitive job where persons without disabilities are employed.
	X	X	<b>Workplace Assistance</b> is provided to someone who requires more than typical job coach services to maintain individual, competitive employment.
X	X	X	<b>Community Engagement</b> provides a wide variety of opportunities to build relationships and natural supports in the community, while utilizing the community as a learning environment. Occurs in the community.
X	X	X	<b>Community Coaching</b> is designed for people who need one-to-one support in order build a specific skill or skills to address barrier(s) that prevents that person from participating in Community Engagement. Occurs in the community.
X	X	X	<b>Group Day</b> includes skill-building and support activities to gain or help keep social skills, self-help skills and other necessary skills to enhance independence and increase community integration. Can occur in a center and the community.
BI	FI	CL	Crisis Support Options
X	X	X	<b>Center-based crisis supports</b> provide long-term crisis prevention and stabilization in a residential setting (Crisis Therapeutic Home) through planned and emergency admissions.
X	X	X	<b>Community-based crisis supports</b> are provided in the person's home and community setting. Crisis staff work directly with and assist the person and his/her current support provider or family. These services provide temporary intensive supports to emergency psychiatric hospitalization, institutional placement or prevent other out-of-home placement.
X	X	X	<b>Crisis support services</b> provide intensive supports to stabilize the person who may experience an episodic behavioral or psychiatric crisis in the community which has the potential to jeopardize his/her current community living situation.



## Overview of Services

BI	FI	CL	Additional Options
X	X	X	<b>Assistive technology</b> is specialized medical equipment, supplies, devices, controls, and appliances, not covered by insurance which enables persons to increase their independence in their environment and community.
X	X	X	<b>Benefits Planning</b> is a service that assists recipients of DD Waiver and social security to understand their personal benefits and explore their options regarding employment.
X	X	X	<b>Community Guide:</b> Direct assistance (1:1) to persons in navigating and utilizing community resources. Provides information and assistance that help the person in problem solving, decision making, and developing supportive community relationships and other resources that promote implementation of the person-centered plan.
X	X	X	<b>Electronic Home-Based Services</b> are goods and services based on current technology to enable a person to safely live and participate in the community while decreasing the need for support staff services. This includes purchases of electronic devices, software, services, and supplies not otherwise provided through this waiver or through the State Plan, that would allow an individual to access greater independence and self-determination.
	X		<b>Individual and Family/Caregiver Training</b> is training and counseling to individual, families and caregivers to improve supports or educate the person to gain a better understand of his/her abilities or increase his/her self-determination/self-advocacy abilities.
X	X	X	<b>Environmental modifications</b> are physical adaptations to the person's primary home or primary vehicle that are necessary to ensure the health and welfare of the person or enable the individual to function with greater independence.
X	X	X	<b>Employment and Community Transportation:</b> The goal of this service is to promote the individual's independence and participation in the life of his or her community. Transportation to waiver and other community services or events, activities and resources, inclusive of transportation to employment or volunteer sites, homes of family or friends, civic organizations or social clubs, public meetings or other civic activities, and spiritual activities or events as specified by the service plan and when no other means of access is available.
X	X	X	<b>Peer Mentor Supports</b> is designed to foster connections and relationships which build individual resilience. This service is delivered by people with developmental disabilities who are or have received services, have shared experiences with the person, and provide support and guidance to him/her.
X	X	X	<b>Transition services</b> are nonrecurring set-up expenses for persons who are transitioning from an institution or provider-operated living arrangement to a living arrangement in a private residence where the person is directly responsible for his or her own living expenses.

## Overview of Services

BI	FI	CL	Residential Options
X			<b>Independent Living Supports</b> are provided to adults (18 and older) and offer skill building and support to secure a self-sustaining, independent living situation in the community and/or may provide the support necessary to maintain those skills.
X	X	X	<b>Shared Living</b> is support to a person who resides in his/her own home/apartment in the community provided by a room-mate of the person's choosing. The individual receives a Medicaid reimbursement for the roommate's portion of the total cost of rent, food, and utilities in exchange for the roommate providing minimal supports.
	X	X	<b>In-Home Supports</b> take place in the person's and/or family's home or community settings. Services are designed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the person and expand daily living skills.
	X	X	<b>Supported Living</b> takes place in an apartment setting operated by a DBHDS licensed provider and provides 24/7 around the clock availability of staff support performed by paid staff who have the ability respond in a timely manner. May be provided individually or at the same time to more than one individual living in the home, depending on the required support.
		X	<b>Group Home Residential</b> services are provided in a DBHDS licensed home with staff available 24 hours per day to provide a skill building component, along with the provision of general health and safety supports, as needed.
		X	<b>Sponsored Residential Services</b> take place in a DBHDS licensed family home where the homeowners are the paid caregivers ("sponsors") who provide support as necessary so that the person can reside successfully in the home and community.
BI	FI	CL	Self-Directed and Agency-Directed Options (*self-directed only)
	X	X	<b>Consumer-Directed Services Facilitation</b> assists the person and/or the person's family/caregiver in arranging for and managing consumer-directed services.
	X	X	<b>Companion</b> services provide nonmedical care, socialization, or support to adults, ages 18 and older in a person's home and/or in the community.
	X	X	<b>Personal Assistance Services</b> includes monitoring health status, assisting with maintaining a clean and safe home and providing direct support with personal care needs at home, in the community, and at work.
	X	X	<b>Respite</b> services are specifically designed to provide temporary, short term care for a person when his/her unpaid, primary caregiver is unavailable.

## Overview of Services

BI	FI	CL	Medical and Behavioral Support Options
	X	X	<b>Private Duty Nursing</b> is individual and continuous care (in contrast to part-time or intermittent care) for people with a medical condition and/or complex health care need, to enable the person to remain at home.
	X	X	<b>Skilled Nursing</b> is part-time or intermittent care provided by an LPN or RN to address or delegate needs that require the direct support or oversight of a licensed nurse. Nursing services can occur at the same time as other waiver services.
	X	X	<b>Therapeutic consultation</b> is consultation with a professional designed to assist the individual's staff and/or the individual's family/caregiver, as appropriate, through assessments, development of TC supports plans, and teaching for the purpose of assisting the individual enrolled in the waiver with the designated specialty area. The specialty areas are psychology, behavioral consultation, therapeutic recreation, speech and language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and rehabilitation engineering.
X	X	X	<b>Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)</b> is a service that monitors the individual's safety in his/her home, and provides access to emergency assistance for medical or environmental emergencies through the provision of a two-way voice communication system that dials a 24-hour response or monitoring center upon activation and via the person's home telephone system.



**Behavioral Health Authority (BHA)**

The local agency, established by a city or county or some combination of counties and/or cities that plans, provides, and evaluates behavioral health and developmental services in the area it serves. This is another term for a Community Services Board. In this guide, we will use the term “CSB” to mean both CSBs and BHAs.

**Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)**

The unit of the Federal Department of Health and Human Services that administers the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

**Community Services Board (CSB)**

The local agency, established by a city or county or some combination of counties and/or cities that plans, provides, and evaluates behavioral health and developmental services in the area it serves.

**Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)**

The state agency responsible for Medicaid- funded services in Virginia.

**Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)**

The state agency that conducts many of the day-to-day functions of DD Waiver operations and oversight.

**Department of Social Services (DSS)**

The state agency that determines eligibility for Medicaid benefits and “patient pay” amounts (i.e., what an individual owes toward the cost of his/her own DD Waiver services).

**Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)**

The state agency responsible for assisting people with disabilities to assume a place in the workforce.

**Developmental Disability *Virginia Code § 37.2-100* (DD)**

Developmental Disability means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that (i) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment, or a combination of mental and physical impairments, other than a sole diagnosis of mental illness; (ii) is manifested before the individual reaches 22 years of age; (iii) is likely to continue indefinitely; (iv) results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, or economic self-sufficiency; and (v) reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special interdisciplinary or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated. An individual from birth to age nine, inclusive, who has a substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired condition may be considered to have a developmental disability without meeting three or more of the criteria described in clauses (i) through (v) if the individual, without services and supports, has a high probability of meeting those criteria later in life.

**Division of Developmental Services (DDS)**

The division of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services that is responsible for the day-to-day responsibilities for the DD Waiver services, including authorization of services, data management, technical assistance and training of providers.

**Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT)**

Medicaid's comprehensive and preventive child health program for individuals under the age of 21. The goal of EPSDT is to identify and treat health problems as early as possible. EPSDT provides examination and treatment services at no cost to the enrollee.

**Enrollment**

The process by which an eligible individual is formally assigned an available DD Waiver slot. This is accomplished by the Support Coordinator submitting certain information to the *Division of Developmental Services (DDS)*. Once the information is reviewed and approved by a DDS representative, the individual is considered to be enrolled.

**Family member/relative**

For purposes of this guide, this usually refers to the person in your family with a developmental disability.

**Family Resource Consultant (FRC)**

Division of Developmental Services staff responsible for helping families learn about the opportunities that community service providers can offer to their family members and linking individuals and families with Family and Peer Mentors.

**Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF-IID)**

A segregated, Medicaid-funded setting in which nearly all of an individual's habilitation, medical, nutritional, and therapeutic needs are met in one place. This is one of the institutional placements that is "waived" when an individual chooses the DD Waiver.

**Individual**

For the purposes of this guide, this usually refers to the person with a developmental disability.

**Patient Pay**

A cash amount, determined by the local Department of Social Services, that some individuals owe each month toward the cost of their own DD Waiver services. Patient Pay is usually the amount in excess of the standard monthly personal allowance, which is based upon the maximum amount of the Supplement Security Income (SSI) payment. People who work are afforded a higher allowance. It is not the same as a co-pay for medications in that it is based on the individual's monthly income and the full amount is paid only once per month.

**Person-Centered Plan**

The document that addresses needs and desires in all life areas of individuals who receive DD Waiver services. It includes providers' Plans for Supports, as indicated by the individual's health care and support needs, and is based on person-centered thinking and practices.

**Person-Centered Planning**

A planning process that focuses on the needs and preferences of the individual (not the system or service availability) and empowers and supports individuals in defining the direction for their own lives. Person-centered planning promotes self-determination, community inclusion and typical lives. It builds on the individual's strengths, personality, and interests. It helps him or her to become an integral part of the neighborhood and community by promoting participation in the life of the community and building relationships with people with whom he or she wants to spend time. It assists the individual in making personal choices and achieving dreams and a desirable lifestyle. It most often begins with a team of people who care about the individual and are willing to invest time and effort to ensure that he or she experiences a richer, more satisfying life.

**Provider**

An agency or individual that has the necessary credentials to deliver services to individuals under the DD Waiver, including an agreement with the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), and for some services, a DBHDS license.

**Slot**

An opening or vacancy of DD Waiver services for an individual.

**Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)**

A cash benefit awarded through Social Security that may come to a person with a disability whose Social Security tax-paying parent has died.

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**

A cash benefit awarded through Social Security that may come to a person due to age or disability due to his/her financial situation. Eligibility is determined by the Social Security Administration.

**Support Coordinator (SC)**

An employee or contractor of a Community Services Board or Behavioral Health Authority who will give you information about services, help you obtain them and make any needed changes over time. This person is sometimes called a case manager.

**Supports Intensity Scale® (SIS®)**

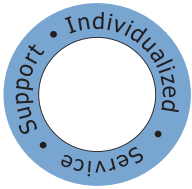
An assessment instrument that assesses the level of supports that an individual needs, as well as what is important to and for him/her. The SIS® reflects a positive way of thinking about an assessment, focusing on the support needs for the individual to be successful, not on his or her deficits. The SIS® is completed by the team, including the person, his or her family and significant others, the Support Coordinator, and other providers, at least every four years for adults (every 2 years for children under 16).

**Virginia Individual Developmental Disability Eligibility Survey (VIDES)**

The tool used in the DD Waiver to determine if an individual meets the level of care required in an ICF-IID, thereby meeting one of the criteria for eligibility for the DD Waiver. It is completed by the Support Coordinator every year a person is receiving services through the DD Waiver. There are three versions: Adult, Child, and Infant.

**Waiver Slot Assignment Committee (WSAC)**

An impartial body of trained volunteers established for each locality/region with responsibility for recommending individuals eligible for a waiver slot according to their urgency of need. All WSACs are composed of community members who are not employees of a CSB or a private provider of either support coordination/ case management or waiver services. WSAC members are knowledgeable and have experience in the DD service system.



# Available Resources

If you or a loved one is on the DD Waiver or DD Waiver waitlist, you are eligible for any of the following supports:

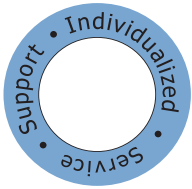
- Advice from a family like yours through the VCU Center for Family Involvement's [Family to Family \(F2F\) Program](#).

Peer support for self-advocates and people with disabilities through The Arc of Virginia's [Peer Mentoring Program](#).

To get the links, visit <https://tinyurl.com/IFSP-FirstSteps>, or use your mobile device to scan this QR code.



- Connections to other families in your community through the [IFSP Regional Councils](#).
- Rent or housing assistance through one of DBHDS's [Integrated, Independent Housing Resources](#).
- Local Community Services Boards/Behavioral Health Authorities (CSB/BHA) have [support coordinators/case managers \(SCs/CMs\)](#) who can answer your general questions about waivers and services. Support coordinators/case managers should be your point of contact if something changes, or if you need help sooner.
- Maintenance and repair of your Durable Medical Equipment (DME), assistive technology and physical therapy consultations through the Office of Integrated Health's [Mobile Rehab Engineering Team](#).
- Assistance overcoming barriers and accessing dental care through the [Office of Integrated Health's dental program](#).
- Assistance with accessing support for health- and/or safety-related issues. Contact [your local CSB/BHA](#) and ask about eligibility for assistance from the DBHDS Office of Integrated Health.
- If you have a child who is under the age of 3 years old, you may be eligible for Early Intervention Services through the [Infant and Toddler Connection](#).
- If your child on the Waiver Waiting List is 14-22 years old and enrolled in an approved education program, they may receive Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) through the [Division of Rehabilitative Services at DARS](#). These services include job exploration counseling, work-based learning, workplace readiness training, and counseling on postsecondary education. To learn about vocational rehabilitation or other employment services in general, contact [your local DARS field office](#).
- IFSP partners with disAbilityNavigator to provide My Life, My Community, an online tool that helps individuals and families gain knowledge and connect to resources in their community. Explore the site to find general information on [waivers](#), [providers](#), and [services](#).



# Crisis Services and General Information

If you need immediate help for an individual with developmental disabilities experiencing a behavioral or mental health crisis, please contact [the REACH crisis services program in your region](#) for assistance.

The REACH program is the statewide crisis system of care that is designed to meet the crisis support needs of individuals who have a developmental disability and are experiencing crisis events as a result of a behavioral or mental health support need that puts them at risk for homelessness, incarceration, hospitalization, and/or danger to themselves or others. REACH services are available statewide, with one regional program being located in each of the Commonwealth's 5 DBHDS regions (Southwestern, Western, Northern, Central, and Eastern).

The **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** offers 24/7 call, text, and chat access to trained crisis workers who can help people experiencing suicidal, substance use, and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. Dial 988, or visit [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org) for more information.

- **Region I Adult Crisis Line:** (855) 917-8278 (Charlottesville)
- **Region I Children Crisis Line:** (888) 908-0486 (Lynchburg)
- **Region II Crisis Line Children and Adults:** (855) 897-8278 (Woodbridge)
- **Region III Crisis Line Children and Adults:** (855) 887-8278 (Radford)
- **Region IV Crisis Line Children and Adults:** (855) 282-1006 (Chester)
- **Region V Crisis Line Children and Adults:** (888) 255-2989 (Suffolk)



To find your region or to get more information, visit [mylifemycommunityvirginia.org](https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org) and select "Resources for Families".

If you need this message provided in Spanish or another language, please contact us at **(804) 663-7277**.

*Si necesita este mensaje proporcionado en Español, por favor contáctenos en **(804) 663-7277**.*

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