

Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Opportunities: New Opportunities to Support People with I/DD

In July, Congress passed a law that will let states provide home and community-based services (HCBS) to people with a broader range of needs. Services can include at-home supports, employment support, and day services.



This document explains:

*How new HCBS waiver possibilities
can help more people get
community-based supports*

*How you can help advocate for a
waiver that helps more people get
community services*

Congress Has Allowed States to Apply for New, “Lower Needs” Waivers

In July, Congress passed a law that will let states provide home and community-based services (HCBS) to people with a lower level of needs. This means that more people may be able to get home and community-based services that could help them succeed in the community. Services can include at-home supports, employment support, and day supports.

Right now, people can get home and community-based services through different kinds of Medicaid programs. One of those programs is the **1915(c) waiver**. Until now, 1915(c) waivers could only help people who would otherwise need care in an institution, like a nursing home or an institution for people with developmental disabilities. Now, states can set up new 1915(c) waivers for people who would *not* otherwise need to go to an institution.

Under the new law, states can create these new waivers only when they can show it won't make it harder for other people to get home and community-based services. Approximately [7,900 people](#) with disabilities living in Georgia are waiting to get home and community-based services.

Expanding these services can help Georgians with disabilities. A new waiver could offer a set of services designed for people with less intensive needs. People who have fewer needs can use that new program, freeing up spots in the NOW and COMP waivers and reducing the wait time for those programs. With more support, people in the new program can work towards community living and employment goals and, in many cases, become taxpayers.

The new programs can start as early as July 2028 - but the approval process takes time. States that want to expand their HCBS programs should start working on this now.

How Can I Help?

You can **call your state legislators, Governor Kemp, and Commissioner Tanner at DBHDD** and tell them to create a new 1915(c) waiver program for people who do not need an institutional level of care:

- This can help address Georgia's waitlist by creating a new program for people with less intensive needs, taking them off the current waiting list, and freeing up waivers for people with more significant needs.
- It can also help make sure that all Georgians with disabilities get the support they need to live in, and contribute to the community - including holding a job, getting an education, and being part of community life.
- If people get access to basic supports early on, it may prevent them from needing more intensive and expensive supports in the future. It may delay their need for more comprehensive and expensive services, and enable them to hold a job, further their education, and participate more fully in their communities.

Learn More at <https://unlockgeorgia.org>

For more Medicaid advocacy tools, check out our resources here:

<https://unlockgeorgia.org/medicaid-advocacy-tools>

You can read the full HR1 Reconciliation Bill where the rules and information for this resource came from here:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1>

For an accessible interpretation of HR1, here is a great resource from the Arc Alliance <https://thearcalliance.org/understanding-hr1/>