

What are Home and Community Based Services?

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) are for people with disabilities and older Iowans who need services to allow them to stay in their home and community instead of going to an institution.

Iowa currently has seven HCBS waiver programs. These waivers provide service funding and individualized supports to allow eligible members to remain in their own homes or communities. The current HCBS waiver programs are:

- Health and Disability (HD) waiver
- Brain Injury (BI) waiver
- Intellectual Disability (ID) waiver
- Children's Mental Health (CMH) waiver
- Physical Disability (PD) waiver
- AIDS/HIV (AH) waiver
- Elderly (E) waiver

In addition to HCBS waiver services, members enrolled in a waiver have access to Medicaid covered services and benefits. For this reason, HCBS waiver programs are sometimes referred to as Medicaid waiver programs. In addition the services provided by the waiver, Medicaid covers a broad array of health services and limits out-of-pocket costs.

NOTE: Changes are being made to Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver programs in the state of Iowa. These changes are referred to as the HCBS waiver redesign or the Hope and Opportunity in Many Environments (HOME) project. Please check the HOME page on the Iowa HHS website for updates.

What services could be available through HCBS waivers?

- Respite (individualized, group or specialized)
- Supported Community Living (SCL)
- Prevocational Services

- Supported Employment
- Transportation

Services covered vary depending on the type of waiver. These services could be provided either through an agency or any individual that you choose. You can find more information about services available in the different waiver packets through the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Who can apply for a HCBS waiver?

In Iowa, if you have a physical, mental or emotional health condition, you may apply for a HCBS waiver. Eligibility requirements vary by each waiver program. Each waiver offers different services that the individual can access. To determine which waiver program might be most appropriate for your child, you can review the LTSS Program Comparison Chart on the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services website.

When can I apply for a HCBS waiver?

You can apply for a HCBS waiver at any time. There are wait lists (typically several years long) for each of the waivers in Iowa so it is best to apply as soon as you begin considering that your child could possibly benefit from a waiver program.

How do I apply for a HCBS waiver?

You will want to consider which waivers your child might be eligible for. You can apply for waivers online at Iowa HHS or you can access the application here: [Application for Health Coverage and Help Paying Costs | Iowa Department of Health and Human Services](#).

It is necessary to complete the full *Application for Health Coverage and Help Paying Costs* form unless you or your child are already on Medicaid. Applications completed online are sent directly to HHS. Paper applications can be sent via email, dropped off at any HHS office or mailed to your HHS Imaging Center (address located on the application).

Can I apply for more than one HCBS waiver?

Families can apply for more than one waiver. However, a

child can only be on one waiver at a time. Since there are typically years long wait lists for each of the waivers, it is recommended that you apply for each waiver that your child might be eligible for. You can then accept the waiver slot that first becomes available. Your child will remain on the wait list for the other waivers applied for and when a slot comes open for a different waiver, you can determine if it is advantageous to switch.

What are some helpful tips when applying for a waiver?

Below are some helpful tips to remember when applying for a waiver program:

- If your child is currently receiving Medicaid and you want to apply for a waiver, you may complete the one page application found here: [Application for HCBS Waivers for Current Medicaid Recipients | Iowa Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- You only need to complete one application for Health Coverage and Help Paying Costs, even if you are applying for multiple waivers.
- An application is considered valid if it includes a name, address and signature.
- In Step 2: Each person in the household must be included on the application. For the question: *Do you need health coverage?*, you only need to mark YES for the individual that is applying for the waiver.
- In Step 4: Fill out as directed only for those who are applying for Medicaid (waiver applicant).
- The head of household or caretaker must sign at the bottom of page 16 on the application or it is not considered valid.
- There is not an obvious place on the application to indicate that you are applying for a HCBS waiver. It is recommended that you write the names of each waiver you are applying for on page 1 of the application, in the white space near the top.
- Appendix A: If you are completing an application for an individual under 18 years of age, you only need to mark the checkbox that reads: *Services to remain in your home*, and any HCBS waiver program you are applying for in the list below.
- A disability determination is needed in order to be placed on the waiting list for the HD waiver. Once your application for waiver services is received, HHS will mail out a form titled Disability Report for Children. This paperwork must be completed by the date noted in the letter. For all other waivers,

you do not have to prove eligibility until a waiver slot is available.

- Refer to the LTSS Program Comparison Chart on the HHS website for any age restrictions to the waiver programs.
- A Waiver Priority Needs Assessment (WPNA) form can be completed if the caregiver or individual's safety is at risk because the individual is not able to access waiver services. This may allow the individual to access waiver services more quickly. A WPNA can be submitted only after the initial waiver application is processed and the individual has been notified of denial (see below). The WPNA can be submitted to WaiverSlot@hhs.iowa.gov.
- Children who are discharged from a Psychiatric Medical Institution for Children (PMIC) should be eligible for CMH waiver services upon discharge utilizing a reserved capacity slot. You may need to ask a social worker or case manager about this.
- Record confirmation that the application was received (fax confirmation, email confirmation, phone confirmation with Income Maintenance, etc.).
- Record the date that you complete the application. When checking the waiting list, HHS will indicate which application dates are currently being reviewed. Visit the HCBS Waiver Waiting List Information chart on the HHS website to check waiting list information.
- If your family moves any time after initially completing the waiver application, you must update your new address with HHS.

How will I know if my child is accepted or denied for waiver services?

Due to the waiting list for each of the waiver programs, you will likely receive a "Notice of Decision" or a letter of denial by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. Keep this letter. This does not mean that your child is not eligible. It simply means that there is not an available slot open for that waiver currently. Your child will be moved to the waiting list for the specific waiver(s) you applied for. Once a slot opens up, HHS will notify the family. At that time the family will be required to prove eligibility. Families only have 30 days after receiving notification that they are off the waiting list to respond, or the entire application process must start over.