

ICFs and Medicaid Waivers

What is the difference?



What is a Medicaid waiver?

A Medicaid waiver is one way to pay for services that help a person with a disability live their life.

Those services can be things like

- help getting dressed or taking a shower,
- help shopping for food or help cooking food,
- learning and practicing new skills,
- job training and help finding a job that you like,
- and many other services.

A waiver is just one way for person with a disability to get the services they want. They may be able to get the same services without a waiver.

What is an ICF?

ICF is a short way of saying “intermediate care facility”.

An ICF is a place where someone with a disability can choose to live and get the services that help them live their life.

An ICF has people who work there 24 hours a day. The people who work at an ICF are sometimes called staff or aides.

The ICF staff make sure that everyone who lives there gets services that help a person with a disability live their life.

Those services can be things like

- help getting dressed or taking a shower,
- learning and practicing new skills,
- help finding a job that you like,
- and many other services.

If I get a waiver, can I live by myself?

Maybe.

You can live on your own as long as you are able to get the things you need.

With a waiver, you are in charge of paying for

- where you live,
- the food that you buy,
- and for utilities like electricity and heat.

If you do not have enough money to pay for those things on your own, there may be programs that can help you pay part of the cost.

If you think you want to live by yourself

- talk with a service and support administrator at your county board of developmental disabilities,
- ask them for more information about programs that can help you pay for a place to live, for buying food and for utilities like electricity and heat.

Can I live by myself in an ICF?

No.

Every ICF has at least 4 people who live together.

Every ICF looks different, but usually people who live in an ICF share a bedroom.

There are also some ICFs where everyone has their own bedroom.

If I get a waiver can I choose where I live?

Yes, but you may not end up living in the first place that you choose.

With a waiver, you are in charge of paying for where you live. The places where you can choose to live will depend on how much you are able to pay on your own or how much you can pay with the help of a program that pays part of the cost.

You can also choose to live with someone who can share the cost of a place with you.

Sometimes the place that you choose may cost more than you can pay. Then you may have to choose a different place.

If I want to live in an ICF can I choose where I live?

Yes, but you may not end up living in the first place that you choose.

You can choose an ICF

- that is near people you know,
- that has stuff to do every day,
- and that feels like the best fit for you.

Sometimes the ICF that you like the most will not have a space available for you. Then you may have to choose a different ICF.

If I get a waiver what things will I pay for?

You are in charge of paying for some of the things you need.

A waiver pays for services like

- someone to help with getting dressed or help with taking a shower,
- someone to help with shopping for food and cooking food,
- or someone to bring you meals,
- someone to help with laundry and cleaning where you live,
- things like ramps and railings to make it easier to get around your house,
- help taking medicine,
- help doing things that keep you healthy like exercise,
- help finding a job or learning how to do a job,
- help going places,
- and some other services.

You do not pay for any of the services that the waiver pays for.

You are in charge of paying for

- the place you live,
- food that you buy,
- utilities like electricity and heat.

A waiver does not pay for those things.

After you pay for the things you need you are in charge of money left over.

You can spend it or save it however you choose.

If I live in an ICF what things will I pay for?

If you live in an ICF you will not be in charge of making sure your services are paid for. The ICF pulls together the services that the people who live there need.

Most things that people who live in an ICF need are a regular part of what an ICF offers. You will not pay for services like

- someone to help with getting dressed or help with taking a shower,
- someone to help with laundry and cleaning,
- help learning and practicing new skills,
- help finding a job,
- help doing things that keep you healthy like taking medicine,
- rides to work, to the store or other places,
- help moving anywhere around the ICF,
- and some other services.

Your meals and utilities like electricity and heat are also a regular part living in an ICF. You do not pay for those things.

An ICF has staff that can help you 24 hours a day.

If you live in an ICF you are able to get a monthly living allowance.

- A monthly living allowance is money that you get every month. It is the same amount every time.
- You are in charge of how you spend your monthly living allowance.

Your service providers

The people who get paid to help you with things like getting dressed, cooking food, taking medicine or finding a job are sometimes called service providers.

They are called service providers because they provide the services that you want.

If I live in an ICF can I choose my service providers?

Every ICF is different. Usually an ICF has a staff of people that provide services to everyone that lives there.

You can make choices about which things you want someone to help you with and which things you want to do on your own.

You can make choices about how often you want ICF staff to provide some services. You can say things like “I want someone to help me with a shower every day.”

Some services might be part of a regular schedule, like help doing laundry one time every week.

An ICF has staff that can help you 24 hours a day, every day.

If things change and you decide you do not want to live in your ICF anymore, you can decide to move out.

If I get a waiver can I choose my service providers?

With a waiver, you are in charge who will provide the services you want.

You can choose which things you want someone to help you with and which things you want to do on your own.

You can choose how often you want someone to provide a service.

You can say things like

- “I want someone to come every day to help me cook meals.”
- Or like “I want someone to come one time a week and take me to the grocery store.”

You can choose to work with an agency that has a lot of different service providers.

Or you can choose to work with a provider that you choose yourself.

You can choose to work with a different agency or a different provider any time.

The next few pages show what working with providers can look like.

These pages will show you how Mike works with a provider agency.



This is Mike.

Mike needs help with a few things every day like getting in the shower and getting dressed.

Mike chose Sunshine Care Agency to provide those services.



Sunshine Care Agency is a provider agency.

A provider agency is a business that is in charge of a lot of service providers.

Sunshine Care is in charge of a lot of different service providers like Paul, Jana and Nina.

So far Mike has liked all of the providers he has worked with at Sunshine Care.



Mike likes it the most when Paul is the one that comes to help him.

Mike can tell Sunshine Care that he would like Paul to come every day.



Some days Paul is not available, so Jana or Nina come to help Mike.



Sunshine Care is in charge of which service provider will go to Mike's house each day.

Some days a provider that Mike has never met before may be the one to come and help him.



Mike has gotten along with all of the providers that Sunshine Care has sent to his house.

It is ok with Mike if Sunshine Care sends someone he has not met before.

If things change and Mike does not want to work with Sunshine Care any more he can choose a different agency. Or Mike can choose to work with a provider on his own.

These pages show how Sam works with a service provider he chose on his own.



This is Sam.

Sam needs help with a few things every day like getting in the shower and getting dressed.

Sam feels better when someone he knows really well helps him with those things. He really does not like help from someone he has never met before.



Sam chose Leo to provide the services he needs.

Sam and Leo discuss the services Leo will provide.

They discuss which days Leo will come and what Leo will do each time.



If Leo can not come on a day that he is supposed provide services, Sam may have to wait until the next day.



Sam feels better if Leo is the only person who helps him get in the shower or get dressed.

If things change and Sam wants to work with someone new he can choose a different provider.

Or Sam can decide that he wants to work with an agency that has a lot of different service providers.