



DODD Waiver Simplification and Improvement

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) is committed to improving the lives of Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families through the simplification and improvement of the Level One (L1) and Self-Empowered Life Funding (SELF) waivers. By focusing on the efficiencies of both waivers while exploring other innovative service methods, DODD intends to improve waiver services and advance self-direction and community integration. The goal is for this one improved waiver to provide increased flexibility, autonomy, and choice for Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families. The services available in the waiver should meet each person and family's individualized needs and preferences while sustaining an efficient, equitable, and effective support system.

The L1 waiver, with 19,200 enrollees, generally supports people who need minimal in-home assistance on a routine basis. The funding for this waiver is set up with specific spending caps for specific groups of services, and the funds are non-transferable across the different groups of services. While this structure provides the opportunity to access a variety of services, it can serve as a barrier if a person's need for a particular service exceeds the spending cap established for that service.

The SELF waiver, with 2,200 enrollees, is DODD's self-directed waiver. This means the person, or their parent/guardian, has decision-making authority and direct responsibility to manage their supports; including who provides the service, how or when they are provided, and the opportunity to recruit, hire, train, and supervise their service providers. The waiver has an established annual cost cap for adults and a different annual cost cap for children. Along with self-directing services and providers, the SELF waiver includes a participant-directed goods and services (PDGS) option. The funding structure and PDGS provide more flexibility and access to services that are not available within the L1 waiver. With services being self-directed, the waiver enrollee oversees how their funds are spent, within their respective limits.

The goal of a simplified and improved waiver will be to include the best of both waivers with creative ideas around new supports and create a waiver that provides more flexibility in the array of waiver services available. This will provide individualized support for people to select the desired services based on their unique needs and goals within an established annual budget.

DODD is convening a subcommittee under the auspices of the Waiver Workgroup, consisting of advocates, stakeholders, and county boards to participate in the design, development, and implementation of this waiver. The subcommittee members will be responsible for sharing the work and progress of the group with the stakeholders they represent to ensure sufficient opportunity for frequent feedback from a wide range of perspectives. Additionally, virtual town hall meetings will be held early in the process to allow for input from all interested people on the overall design of the waiver.

DODD looks forward to working with its stakeholders and is excited for the potential to move Ohio's system another step forward by meeting the needs of Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families in simpler, more flexible ways while maintaining quality, cost-effectiveness, and compliance.