

## Frequently Asked Questions: ICFs and Medicaid Waivers

### **My daughter needs 24-hour care and nursing. Can she live in the community and have sufficient staff available?**

Yes. People who have an assessed need for 24-hour care are able to receive that amount of care through the Individual Options Waiver. The type of service authorized by the county board of developmental disabilities will depend on the specific care needs of the person and may include a combination of direct support professionals and nurses.

### **If my daughter lives at home with me, how can I get consistent help at home? What if providers call off or do not show?**

A service and support administrator (SSA) through the local county board will meet with each person enrolled in the waiver, his/her family, and other members of the team to discuss current needs and all the available resources to meet those needs. Based on this assessment, the SSA will develop an Individual Service Plan (ISP) that reflects the amount and type of service the person will receive. Each ISP must include a "back-up plan" that addresses what steps will be taken to ensure a care provider is available in the event of a call-off.

When an agency provider is selected, that agency is responsible for having a protocol in place to address call-offs to ensure sufficient coverage is available to meet each person's needs. This is something that should be discussed during the interview process. When selecting independent or non-agency providers, the ISP will provide more detail about the steps that must be taken when one provider is unable or fails to report to duty.

**In the ICF, there are many sets of eyes on my son and the staff keep me very informed of changes that occur. How will I know he's being taken care of if he lives in the community?**

The level of staffing in the home is based on the assessed needs of the people who live there. Through the person-centered planning process, the team identifies the number and types of staff a person requires throughout the day. When selecting a new provider, people with disabilities and their families encouraged to ask agencies about their policies for notifying families of any changes that occur. In addition, families may request specifically to be notified about certain conditions or events of particular concern.

In addition to having staff working in the home making sure people receive the care they need, everyone enrolled in a waiver is assigned a service and support administrator (SSA). This SSA, by law, is responsible for coordinating and monitoring all services for each person with a developmental disability. The SSA routinely checks in with the person, family, and other team members to make sure the services are being provided, as specified in the Individual Service Plan (ISP). If any problems are noted, the SSA works with the person and team members to resolve the issue.

In addition, each provider of waiver services is certified by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). At least once every three years, DODD conducts compliance reviews of every certified provider, including both independent providers and agencies. If a person with a disability, family member, county board, or other team member reports a concern, DODD may also conduct a "special" or unscheduled review of a provider to identify any potential compliance issues.

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Similar to ICFs, agency providers of waiver services also have established procedures to ensure oversight. This may involve local/regional supervisors in addition to agency administrators. When selecting a new provider, people with developmental disabilities are encouraged to ask agencies about their process for supervision/oversight.

**In the ICF, staff notify me when my son needs to go to the emergency room, is hospitalized, or when other significant changes occur. How will I be notified if he moves?**

Providers of waiver services and intermediate care facilities (ICFs) are required to follow the same rule (Ohio Administrative Code 5123:2-17-02) related to reporting of Major Unusual Incidents, or incidents that may have a negative impact on an individual's health and safety. Whenever one of these incidents occurs, the guardian or person designated by the person with disabilities is contacted and an investigation is initiated.

When other non-routine incidents occur that do not pose a risk to health and welfare, waiver providers, like ICFs, are required to complete unusual incident reports. Providers must keep track of all incidents that occur and monitor for any trends or patterns. These reports are shared with county boards of developmental disabilities to make sure providers are taking necessary steps to reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

**My daughter is non-verbal and cannot express her needs. How would her needs be met in the community?**

When a person with developmental disabilities who is unable to communicate verbally moves to an intermediate care facility (ICF), the staff within the facility become familiar with likes/dislikes through observing behavior, watching how he/she respond to different things, and learning communication cues from family members or others that know the person best. The same is true in community-based settings. The SSA will talk with the person and people who know him/her best to identify important communication cues. Descriptions of how each person communicates is included in his/her ISP and shared with direct support professionals.

Family members or other people who know the person best can share new information learned from observations with the SSA to be incorporated in the ISP.

## **What waiver homes are available in my county/community?**

A “waiver home” is any place a person with a developmental disability would like to live. Waiver services may be provided in family homes, in apartments/homes owned or leased by the individual receiving services, or in homes that are licensed by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Examples of different places a person may live and receive waiver services are listed below.

Family homes – A person with developmental disabilities may choose to live with family members. Independent providers or agencies selected by the person may come to the home to help with personal care, independent living skills, community access, etc.

Independent living – A person with developmental disabilities may choose to live in a home he/she owns or rents. To share living expenses, many people choose to live with other housemates who may or may not also receive waiver services.

Shared Living – A person with developmental disabilities may choose to live in a home with his/her paid provider. This is called Shared Living. This service may be offered by a caregiver who is an independent provider or one who works through an agency. Additional information regarding this service is located at <http://ohiosharedliving.com/Pages/default.aspx>.

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**What waiver homes are available in my county/community?** Licensed

homes – Some homes located throughout the state are licensed by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. These are homes that are owned by the agency that delivers the services. People with developmental disabilities who choose to live in a licensed setting are typically required to receive residential supports only from the provider that owns the home. However, people may still choose different waiver providers for employment, transportation, or other supports.

SSAs talk with individuals about where they would like to live and available resources to cover living expenses. These resources may include rental assistance or housing vouchers through the local housing authority, assistance with food/utilities available through the county department of job and family services, and resources available through other social services agencies.

**My son will wander away if he is not watched. How will he be kept safe in the community?**

Through discussions with the person enrolled in the waiver and people that support him/her, the service and support administrator (SSA) will identify any known or likely risks and will include strategies in the Individual Support Plan (ISP) to minimize those risks. For example, the ISP will include information regarding the level of supervision a person requires. Other services, such as equipment to alert caregivers, are also available through the waiver for people who are at risk of wandering away.

**I have lived at the ICF for many years, and I am concerned about making such a big change. How would I be supported through the process of moving from the ICF?**

The waiver affords people with developmental disabilities with the ability to use the funding anywhere in Ohio and to select providers of their choice to deliver residential, transportation, adult day support, employment, and/or other services. Despite these benefits, change can sometimes be overwhelming. To help people have success in community-based settings, the team, including family/friends, the service and support administrator (SSA), and representatives from the intermediate care facility (ICF) will develop a transition plan. This plan will address steps various members of the team will take to help the person prepare for the change, such as meeting potential housemates, spending time in his/her new home prior to discharge, or spending time with the new waiver provider(s).

**My family member is older. Is there an age limit for people to enroll on a waiver?**

No. People of any age may choose to enroll in a waiver. Even people who are elderly or those who have lived in an intermediate care facility (ICF) for a very long time.

**Are they getting rid of the ICF Program?**

No. The purpose of options counseling is to share information about community-based alternatives to enable them to make an informed decision about whether to receive services in an intermediate care facility (ICF) or in a community-based setting.