



LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

TIERED WAIVER FACT SHEET

The Louisiana Department of Health's (LDH) Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) is introducing an innovative system, called the Tiered Waiver System, to ensure that more Louisiana residents seeking home and community-based services receive the appropriate level of service to meet their needs.

- After years of research and collaboration with individuals with developmental disabilities, families, providers and community organizations, the Department will offer waivers in a manner that will offer coverage to a greater number of individuals; will provide for more predictable budget requests; and in a manner that will be sustainable for the long-term.
- Prior to this system change, to address the existing number of individuals on the waiting list, it would cost the State of Louisiana roughly \$832 million in new state and federal dollars. This shift to a tiered waiver system will allow Louisiana to address the 25-year-old waiting list while meeting people's needs.
- LDH OCDD has screened more than 9,400 individuals who are on the Request for Services Registry (RFSR) / "waiting list," which was called the RFSR Screening Initiative to determine if they have unmet needs and the type and urgency of the supports needed, if applicable.
- For individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Louisiana who are on the Request for Services registry, which is commonly referred to as the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) waiting list, you can expect three major changes involved in the move to a tiered waiver system.
 1. Waiver offers will no longer be made on a first-come, first-served basis as they have over the course of the last 20 years; waiver offers will now be made based on a person's urgency of need and their registry date. This shift to a prioritization process will provide assistance needed in a timelier manner to those at highest risk of institutionalization and promote the ability to continue living in the community. The system will also allow for a rescreening if a person's needs change over time.
 2. Additionally, the tiered waiver system will now have only one waiting list/registry, and when a person receives a waiver offer, they will participate in a needs-based

assessment to determine the most appropriate waiver to meet their needs. This means that people will not automatically receive a New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) offer; they will receive a Developmental Disabilities Waiver offer, and the most appropriate waiver will be identified through assessment and person-centered planning.

3. The age limit for the Children's Choice Waiver has increased to 21 years of age. This aligns with the age for Medicaid state plan Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) services, and there is a justification system in place if additional supports are needed in the Children's Choice Waiver.

While, we know this is a departure from how services have been delivered in the past, we must act now to solve the problem. OCDD believes this move to a priority-based system is the solution. A move to a tiered waiver system will have the following benefits:

1. Individuals will receive the most appropriate waiver that best meets their need rather than immediately receiving the more costly NOW waiver.
2. This system will allow OCDD to have a more responsive system to meet unmet and urgent needs of those individuals who are waiting for services.
3. This system will allow for more predictable estimates of budget requests needed for developmental disabilities waivers to meet the needs of those with unmet urgent needs.

LDH OCDD has a robust communication plan in place to ensure all stakeholders are advised of the changes made to the developmental disabilities service delivery system and have an opportunity to ask questions about these changes.

1. Letters were sent to all individuals currently on the Request for Services Registry and to all individuals/families currently receiving the Children's Choice waiver to advise how these changes directly affect them.
2. All service providers and human services districts/authorities will receive in-depth training regarding these changes, including change in roles and expectations.
3. Executive management staff at OCDD will be holding regional stakeholder meetings in all ten LDH regions to discuss these changes and provide opportunities for questions.

For more detailed information please visit www.dhh.louisiana.gov/systemtransformation, or call **1-866-517-7687** or email ocdd-hcbs@la.gov.