



Changing Lives Embracing Hope Raising Awareness

Medical Care and Financial Support

Medicaid Waiver Programs

Texas Medicaid waivers are a gateway to getting services for your child. We encourage parents to consider adding their child to the waiver interest list(s). Regardless of your income, be sure to sign your kids up for long term services and supports in Texas by signing up for waiting lists for Medicaid waivers for people with disabilities. This takes about five minutes to do but can provide lifelong services and supports if your child qualifies. [Learn more](#). There are some helpful videos and information on the [Navigate Life Texas](#) site.

Even if you hope your child will never need those services, it is important that they be added to the interest list for any program(s) that might meet their needs. Some of the interest lists have more than a 15-year wait time. Your child might have to wait a long time to get services through the waiver. You can always decline the services once your child moves to the top of the list.

What are Waivers and How Do they Work?

- Waivers let states use Medicaid funds for long-term home and community-based services for people with disabilities or special health care needs.
- Before the creation of waiver programs, people with disabilities had to live in hospitals, nursing homes or other institutions like residential treatment centers in order for Medicaid to pay for long-term services.
- Some of the services you can get with a waiver are:
 - Personal care for help with things like bathing or dressing
 - Nursing care
 - Home modifications like ramps
 - Car modifications
 - Respite care
 - Certain therapies
- They are named “waivers” because certain Medicaid requirements are waived (meaning they don’t apply). For example, family income. Most programs are based on the child’s income alone - not your whole family’s income.
- Besides getting these additional services, people who receive waiver long-term services and supports also get full Medicaid health care benefits. This is a huge help for children and adults who have complicated medical needs and no other health insurance.
- Texas has seven waivers. Each one has its own interest list. Consider adding your child to all the interest lists based on their identified diagnosis and current needs. You don’t know what future needs your child might have. You might want to place them on as many of the lists as possible.
- Waivers are managed by the [Texas Health and Human Services Commission \(HHSC\)](#).
- When there is room for your child or young adult on one of the waiver programs, they will come off the interest list for the program with the opening. You may choose to continue to leave your child’s

name on interest lists for other waiver programs. This is when HHSC and/or HHSC will review diagnostic and other information to decide if your child meets the waiver requirements. Depending on the waiver, you might be asked for information about their medical, psychological and developmental history, as well as financial and income eligibility. The eligibility varies based on the waiver. The [comparison of Texas Medicaid waiver programs chart](#) gives you more details about what is needed for each of the waivers.

How to Add Your Child to Interest Lists

You do not have to prove your child is eligible before adding them to the waiver interest lists. Your child will go through this process once they move to the top of the list. Only then is the eligibility information reviewed and used to decide if your child can enroll.

- Call 1-877-438-5658 for information about putting your child on an interest list for long-term services. This is for the CLASS, DBMD and MDCP waivers. See the section below for details about each of these waiver programs.
- Call your Local Mental Health Authority about the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) waiver program.
- Go to the DSHS website to find the [Local Mental Health Authority in your area](#).
- Call your Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authority (LIDDA) to get your name on the interest list for the HCS and Texas Home Living Waiver programs. You can [search for the LIDDA phone number for your area](#).

Specific Texas Medicaid Waiver Programs

- [Community Living Assistance and Support Services \(CLASS\)](#): gives home and community-based supports to children and adults with related conditions. There are over 200 related conditions, like cerebral palsy and spina bifida. The related condition must have occurred before the child was age 22.
- [Home and Community-based Services \(HCS\)](#): gives services and supports to children and adults with an intellectual disability (ID) or a related condition who live with their families, in their own homes, or in small group homes with no more than four people.
- [Medically Dependent Children Program \(MDCP\)](#): gives services to children and adults who are 20 and younger who are medically fragile as an alternative to receiving services in a nursing facility.
- [STAR+PLUS Home and Community-based Services \(HCBS\)](#): gives services to adults over the age of 21 to keep them in their community and not in a nursing home facility.
- [Texas Home Living \(TxHML\)](#): gives services to children and adults with an intellectual disability (ID) or a related condition who live in their own home or their family's home.
- [Youth Empowerment Services \(YES\)](#): gives home and community-based services to children under the age of 19 who otherwise would need psychiatric inpatient care or whose parents would turn to state custody for care.

Important Tips About Interest (Waiting) Lists

- Consider adding your child to as many waiver interest lists as possible when your child is first diagnosed with a disability or special health care needs. You should also think about adding your child to the lists even if they aren't diagnosed but have reason to believe that your child will have a long-term disability or special health care needs. If your child no longer needs the service when they

come off the interest list, you can tell them you do not want the waiver. If you refuse a waiver slot offer for your child once they are at the top of the interest list, your child's name will be placed at the bottom of the interest list again.

- Ask for an email/mailed confirmation when you add your child to the Medicaid waiver interest lists. Keep this in a safe place.
- It is very important to keep your address and contact phone numbers updated. If your child moves to the top of the interest list and they can't reach you, your child will be dropped from the list.
- At least once a year, call to update your contact information. Most parents remember by calling around their child's birthday. During these calls, you can also find out where your child is on the list. Write it down in a safe place, like your care notebook, so you can keep track of how far your child moves up the list each year. See tips for [organizing medical records](#) for care notebooks.
- Once your child moves to the top of an interest list, a service coordinator, case manager or nurse will schedule a home visit. This will start the process of determining if your child is able to enroll in one of the waiver programs. You can also research the waiver program beforehand to learn what it takes for your child to get services.
- Your child can remain on other waiver interest lists while receiving waiver services. They just can't receive services from more than one waiver program at the same time. For example, your child is receiving MDCP services. They move to the top of the CLASS interest list and are approved for CLASS services, you will have to pick between the two programs. You might want to [connect with other parents](#) who have done this before.
- If you have other health insurance through an employer and your child is enrolled in a waiver program, you might be reimbursed for health insurance premiums through the [Health Insurance Premium Payment \(HIPP\)](#) program. Once your child starts receiving waiver services, call your local utility company about possible discounts on electricity, water and wastewater bills if your child lives in your home. Depending on income, your family might also be able to receive food stamps (SNAP benefits).
- Most of the waivers offer the [Consumer Directed Services \(CDS\)](#) choice for at least some, if not all, of the program's services. Also known as "self-directed services," this gives you more personal control over how your child's services are delivered, and many parents prefer it. For example, parents who pick the CDS choice serve as the employer for their child's attendants. They are able to interview, hire and train them.
- If your child has an [intellectual disability](#) or a condition related to an ID, and is in a crisis or has high medical needs, call your LIDDA to ask about diversion slots. These slots are for extreme cases only, such as a critical health crisis that puts the family at risk of placing the child in a state-supported living center. If approved, your child moves to the top of the HCS interest list.

Helpful Links

- HHSC has a [comparison of Texas Medicaid waiver programs](#).
- More about the [HCBS waiver](#)
- [Waiver laws and regulations](#)
- If you need insurance but you don't qualify for Medicaid or CHIP, you may still qualify for the Medicaid buy-in program for children with disabilities (up to 300% of poverty qualifies you). [Learn more](#). Or look at the Medicaid [buy-in for adults](#) with disabilities who work.
- [Integral Care of Texas](#) provides grants to help families with children with disabilities.