

OVERVIEW

The New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) program is a Medicaid waiver designed to provide home and community-based supports and services to recipients with developmental disabilities who require the level of care of an Intermediate Care Facility for people with Developmental Disabilities (ICF/DD). This waiver is operated by the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) under the authorization of the Bureau of Health Services Financing (BHSF). Both OCDD and BHSF are agencies within the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH).

The objectives of the NOW program are to offer an alternative to institutionalization and promote independence and community inclusion for recipients through the provision of services. The NOW program utilizes the principles of self-determination as a foundation for supports and services and to supplement the family and/or community supports that are available to maintain the recipient in the community.

The NOW program includes an array of services such as residential supports, respite, community integration and development, employment-related supports, habilitation, environmental modifications and specialized equipment, professional services, as well as other services. The NOW program also includes a self-direction option which allows recipients or their authorized representative to act as the employer in the delivery of their designated self-directed services. This option provides recipients with maximum flexibility and control over their supports and services. NOW services should not be viewed as a lifetime entitlement or a fixed annual allocation. The average recipient's expenditures for all waiver services shall not exceed the average Medicaid expenditures for ICF/DD services.

Recipients have the choice of available support coordination and service provider agencies and are able to select enrolled qualified agencies through the freedom of choice process. NOW services are accessed through the recipient's support coordinator and are based on the individual needs and preferences of the recipient. A support team, which consists of the recipient, support coordinator, recipient's authorized representative, appropriate professionals/service providers, and others whom the recipient chooses, is established to develop the recipient's Plan of Care through a person-centered planning process. The Plan of Care contains all services and activities involving the recipient, including non-waiver services as well as waiver support services. The completed Plan of Care is submitted to the OCDD regional waiver office for review and approval.

The Medicaid data contractor is responsible for performing prior and post authorization of waiver services based on the information included in the recipient's approved Plan of Care and services entered into the service provider data collection system. The DHH fiscal intermediary maintains a computerized claims processing system, with an extensive system of edits and audits for payment of claims to providers.

CHAPTER 32: NEW OPPORTUNITIES WAIVER

SECTION 32.0: OVERVIEW

This chapter is intended to give a NOW provider the information needed to fulfill its vendor agreement with the State of Louisiana, and is the basis for federal and state reviews of the program. Full implementation of these regulations is necessary for a provider to remain in compliance with federal and state laws and DHH rules.