



Medicaid Waiver Programs: Waivers for Adults

Colorado currently administers ten Home and Community-Based Services Medicaid (HCBS) Waivers. This issue brief discusses the six waivers available to adults. An issue brief entitled [Medicaid Waiver Programs: Waivers for Children](#) discusses the four waivers available to children.

Background

The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) administers the Colorado Medicaid program. The program is subject to federal standards that can be waived through a Medicaid waiver. This issue brief discusses the Home and Community Based Services Medicaid waivers for adults. For more background on Medicaid and the waiver process, please see the previously referenced [Medicaid Waiver Programs: Waivers for Children Issue Brief](#).

Home and Community Based Services Medicaid Waivers for Adults

HCBS waivers for adults allow states to provide home- and community-based care to adults who may otherwise be institutionalized in a nursing facility, hospital, or an intermediate care facility for individuals with

intellectual disabilities (ICF/IID). A waiver applicant must meet financial, medical, and program criteria to access services under a waiver. Currently, an individual's income must be less than \$2,829 per month and their countable resources less than \$2,000. Applications for waivers are submitted to either a single entry point agency (SEP)¹ or a community centered board (CCB)².

In addition to receiving all regular Medicaid services, HCBS waiver clients receive a variety of specialized services not currently available to the general Medicaid population, such as home modifications, life skills training, and personalized emergency response systems. The client, the client's family or guardian, and the case manager collaborate to create an individualized service plan that meets the needs of the client. The services are provided by certified Medicaid providers or by a Medicaid-contracted managed care organization. The cost of the services provided cannot be more than the cost of placement in a nursing facility, hospital, or ICF/IID.

The different types of adult waivers are summarized below. Additionally, HCPF maintains a [waiver comparison chart](#) and an [application process flow chart](#).

¹ SEPs provide case management, care planning, and make referrals to other resources for elderly, blind, and disabled persons, persons living with AIDS, mental illness, brain injury, or spinal cord injury, children with a life-limiting illness, and children with a physical disability.

² CCBs are private nonprofit organizations designated as the single entry point into Colorado's long-term service and support system for persons with developmental disabilities.

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Persons With Brain Injury Waiver

This waiver provides home- and community-based alternatives to hospital or specialized nursing facility care for persons with a brain injury who are 16 years of age and older. In FY 2022-23, 701 clients were served under this waiver.

Community Mental Health Supports Waiver

This waiver provides a home- or community-based alternative to nursing facility care for persons 18 years of age and older who are diagnosed with a major mental illness. In FY 2022-23, 5,427 clients were served under this waiver.

Persons Who are Elderly, Blind, and Disabled Waiver

This waiver provides a home- or community-based alternative to nursing facility care for elderly persons 65 years of age and older with a functional impairment or who are blind, or physically disabled persons aged 18 to 64. In FY 2022-23, 37,629 clients were served under this waiver.

Complementary and Integrative Health Waiver

This waiver provides home- and community-based alternatives to nursing care for persons 18 years of age and older with a spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, a brain injury, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, or cerebral palsy with the inability to walk independently. In FY 2022-23, 253 clients were served under this waiver.

Supported Living Services Waiver

This waiver provides supported living services to persons with developmental disabilities who are 18 years of age and older who can either live independently or who receive a high level of support from other sources, such as family, in the person's home or community. As of November 2023, 4,608 clients were receiving services under this waiver.

Persons With Developmental Disabilities Waiver

This waiver provides persons with developmental disabilities who are 18 years of age and older with services and supports to allow them to continue to live in the community. As of November 2023, 7,955 clients were receiving services under this waiver, and 3,357 individuals were on the waiting list.

The waiting list for the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Waiver has been a frequent topic of in budget and policy discussions at the legislature. Listen to the [December 11, 2023, Joint Budget Committee briefing](#) and refer to the [corresponding handout](#) starting on Page 12 for additional information.

Future Changes

HCPF is currently in the process of submitting the state plan amendment (SPA) required by [Senate Bill 23-289](#). If approved by CMS, this will allow many HCBS waiver services to be provided under the general Medicaid program. Among other things, this will allow HCPF to receive more federal funds and serve more people.