



WHAT IS OPWDD?

The NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is a NY State Agency that assists individuals with developmental disabilities and mental retardation. The agency provides eligible individuals with a variety of services, from assisting individuals in supportive employment to funding individual's attendance at day programs.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR OPWDD SERVICES?

- Individuals who have a developmental disability or have mental retardation.
 - A developmental disability is a neurological impairment, which developed before the age of 22. Must be indefinite and have a significant impact on the individual's abilities.
 - Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Autism
- Full Scale Psychological Evaluation stating the Full Scale IQ is below 59.
 - Must be within the past 3 years
 - If FSIQ is above 59, an adaptive behavior scale (Vineland II) must be completed.
- Individuals also must have a complete social history stating the diagnosis occurred before the age of 22, a current physical/medical evaluation within the year, a current IEP, and any neurological and or psychiatric reports if applicable.
- A completed Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health Developmental Disabilities Registration, Consent to Release Confidential Information, and a Developmental Disabilities Profile Form.

HOW CAN OPWDD SERVICES BE ACCESSED?

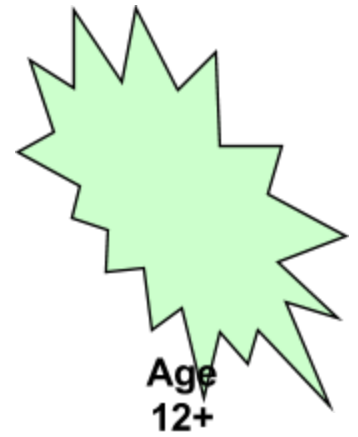
An individual needs to apply to OPWDD to obtain services. Students who have Medicaid can begin to receive services once found eligible. If an individual is under 18 and their family does not have Medicaid, when the individual turns 18, they should apply for Medicaid so they can receive a Medicaid Service Coordinator (MSC).

WHAT TYPES OF SERVICES DOES OPWDD PROVIDE?

OPWDD provides individuals with a wide range of services depending on their needs. The range of services spans from in-home care, respite care, residential services and day habilitation to health care, counseling, family support services and evaluation and referral services. In some cases, OPWDD can also assist individuals with employment related needs on a long-term basis.

WHEN SHOULD AN INDIVIDUAL APPLY TO OPWDD?

OPWDD provides services to individuals of all ages. A student may be able to even receive services while in school.



What Is The OPWDD Front Door?

There is a new policy that is being implemented by the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). The goal of OPWDD's new Front Door Policy is that it is a person-centered approach for people with developmental disabilities that prioritizes individual choices, needs, and desires in making decisions.

The Front Door strives to:

- Improve the way people learn about OPWDD and available service options
- Better connect individual needs to available services
- Give people as many opportunities as possible for self-direction

The way to access the services from OPWDD once eligibility has been established is by way of the Front Door. It is particularly important for those who are transitioning to connect with the Front Door if they want to receive adult services from OPWDD. The transition students (if they have not done so already) can connect with the Front Door now.

The Front Door 2 Components

1). Attending a front door orientation session. Registration to attend a front door session is required. Visit http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/welcome-front-door/information_sessions to register for sessions.

2). An assessment is to take place with a front door facilitator from the local Westchester OPWDD office. The assessment is a phone interview. The phone number for the front door is 914-332-8960. Parents are asked to leave their contact information and if their son/daughter is transitioning to emphasize that in their message. A front door facilitator will call them back for the phone interview. It is always important for parents to answer questions from the assessment given their son/daughter's worst day.

The assessment identifies their needs which drives a certain amount of money that then has to be authorized for the services they need. Whether it's self-direction or more traditional OPWDD services, the parent must have an authorization letter by OPWDD to get into the program or to receive the services needed.

What Is A Supplemental Security Income?

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a US federal program, which can help give financial aid to those with disabilities. One of the useful aspects of SSI is that it also makes one eligible for state medical insurance, which is generically referred to as Medicaid. One can also hold private medical insurance, and this does not affect eligibility for Medicaid. Even if one only receives a few dollars a month from SSI, one still usually has full eligibility for state aid. This can cover things like co-payments or provide full insurance if one is uninsured.

A student may not have more than \$2,000 in his/her name to qualify for SSI.

How Do We Apply For SSI?

To apply for SSI, you must fill out an application.

Applications can be found online: (www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability)

Applications can be found at the Social Security Administration office which is located at: 85 HARRISON ST
NEW ROCHELLE, NY
1-800-772-1213



What Is Medicaid Service Coordination?

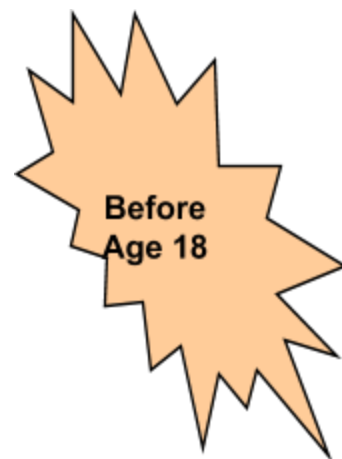
Medicaid Service Coordination (MSC) is the active assistance offered to persons with developmental disabilities as they navigate the community and various service systems in pursuit of the necessary and desired services and supports that will assist them in achieving and/or maintaining their personal goals.

Service Coordinators help people explore what they want and need in life and then assist them in getting it. They work in partnership with the person and/or family to develop, implement and maintain the person's life plan. Service Coordinators assist people to attain the highest quality of life and live as independently and productively as possible.

Service Coordination is provided by qualified service coordinators and uses a person centered process to develop, implement and maintain an Individualized Service Plan (ISP).

How Do We Obtain An MSC?

After the student is eligible for OPWDD and Medicaid, contact Greg Lau who can provide a list of agencies that provide service coordination and which have openings. The family is responsible for contacting the individual agencies that have availability.



What Is Guardianship?

In New York State, at the age of 18 a person is presumed to have the capacity to make his/her own decisions. Guardianship provides another individual or agency, perhaps a parent, with the authority to make some or all decisions for that person if he/she does not have the ability to make his/her own decisions. Guardians are expected to provide assistance, guidance and protection and to advocate for that person's rights, privileges and entitlements. A guardian is not responsible for the financial support of the individual with disabilities.

Who Needs Guardianship?

Guardianship determination should be COMPLETE by the time an individual is 18 years old. Allow at least 6 to 8 months for the guardianship process to be completed.

Guardianship should be part of a long-term plan for a person who is developmentally disabled if that person is unable to make decisions concerning his/her housing, education, medical care, etc. It should also be considered if the person does not have the capacity to access benefits and entitlements for which he/she is eligible. Not all persons who are developmentally disabled need a guardian. If you believe your child or family member will not be capable of managing these or other matters, then guardianship may be appropriate.

What Are The Different Types Of Guardianship?

The Guardian of the Person is appointed by the Court to manage the personal affairs of the individual with intellectual and/or other developmental disabilities, and is responsible to protect and assist the individual who because of their intellectual or other developmental disability is not able to manage their affairs and adequately provide for their own care or custody.

The Guardian of the Property, under supervision of the Court, is responsible for the control of any or all financial resources and property matters of the ward. The specific powers are limited to acting only in property matters and

investments or in the expenditure of income and other assets. The Guardian of the Property is typically required to provide an accounting to the court every year.

The Standby/Alternate Standby Guardian is a person appointed to serve upon the death, incapacity or renunciation of the primary guardian. The standby guardian is permitted to assume duties immediately, subject to court confirmation within 60 days of the death, incapacity or renunciation of the primary guardian. An alternate standby guardian can be appointed by the court to fulfill the duties of the standby guardian should the standby guardian become incapable or unable to serve.

Who Can Be A Guardian?

Parents, siblings or other interested persons can be named as guardian for persons with mental retardation or other developmental disabilities. A properly empowered not-for-profit corporation can also be designated as a guardian of the person only. The law also permits the families to name a standby or alternate standby guardian to succeed the primary guardian when that person can no longer serve. This assures continuation of the guardianship.

How Do I Become a Legal Guardian?

The individual or agency wishing to have a court appoint a guardian must prepare a Petition. The Petition contains information about the person who may need a guardian, such as the person's immediate family and his/her address. It is necessary to include two certificates attesting to the person's disability, completed by two physicians or one physician and one psychologist. Consent forms from those named as standby guardians and other documentation must also accompany the Petition. All materials are submitted to the Surrogate's Court with a small fee. The Court then sets a calendar hearing date.

Prior to the hearing, the judge appoints an attorney, called a Guardian ad-Litem, to represent the interests of the disabled person. Usually the judge does not require a full hearing. At the conclusion of the proceeding, the Court issues a Decree and official Letters of Guardianship. Some families may wish to have an attorney assist them in this process, but it is not necessary or required.

Where Can I Get More Information About Guardianship?

For more information on guardianship or guardianship alternatives, you may contact the following:

Arc of Westchester

<http://www.arcwestchester.org/services/guardianship>

The National Guardianship Association (NGA)

www.guardianship.org



What Is A Supplemental Needs Trust?

A Supplemental Needs Trust (sometimes called a Special Needs Trust) is a specialized legal document designed to benefit an individual who has a disability. A Supplemental Needs Trust is most often a “stand alone” document, but it can form part of a Last Will and Testament. Supplemental Needs Trusts have been in use for many years, and were given an “official” legal status by the United States Congress in 1993.

A Supplemental Needs Trust enables a person under a physical or mental disability, or an individual with a chronic or acquired illness, to have, held in Trust for his or her benefit, an unlimited amount of assets. In a properly-drafted Supplemental Needs Trust, those assets are not considered countable assets for purposes of qualification for certain governmental benefits.

Such benefits may include Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, vocational rehabilitation, subsidized housing, and other benefits based upon need. For purposes of a Supplemental Needs Trust, an individual is considered impoverished if his or her personal assets are less than \$2,000.00.

A Supplemental Needs Trust provides for supplemental and extra care over and above that which the government provides.

Why Do We Need A Supplemental Needs Trust?

Other types of Spendthrift or Family Trusts aren't appropriate for Special Needs persons because they don't address the specific needs of the disabled beneficiary or his future lifestyle. Even in situations where a family may have significant resources to help a disabled family member a Supplemental Needs Trust should be established to address these issues.

Monies placed in the Trust remain noncountable assets and allow the beneficiary to qualify for available benefits and programs. Why sacrifice services that might be available to your relative now and in the future?

Just as importantly, Trust funds are not subject to creditors or seizure. Therefore, if the disabled beneficiary should ever be sued in a personal injury or other type of lawsuit, the beneficiary is not a “deep pocket” because monies placed in the Trust are not subject to a judgment.

Who Can I Contact For Help With Supplemental Needs Trust?

Using a law firm that specializes in Special Needs issues assures you that the attorney is familiar with the benefits systems, the proper creation of the Trust, and ultimately the defense of the Trust in the event that it should be challenged by a court, the Social Security Administration, Medicaid, or the like.



How Can I Obtain a NYS Non-Driver ID Card?

Many residents rely on a New York State Photo Driver License or Non-Driver Photo Identification Card as secure identification for traveling, check cashing or credit purchases. A person of any age who does not have a driver license can apply to the DMV for a non-driver photo ID card. You must provide acceptable proofs of identity and date of birth. The DMV Non-Driver ID Card has the same personal identification information, photo, signature and special safeguards against alterations as a photo driver license. Non-driver ID cards are available to any person, regardless of age, who can provide acceptable proof of name and age. Parental consent is required for applicants under 16 years old.

If the student is receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), they are eligible for a 10-year ID card at a reduced fee. An Application can be found online (<http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/license.htm>) or at the local DMV office.

How Can I Apply for Para-Transit?

ParaTransit service is provided to the following three general groups of persons with disabilities:

- Persons who have specific impairment-related conditions which make it impossible — not just difficult — to travel to or from the bus stop.
- Persons who need a wheelchair lift-equipped bus, but it is not available on the fixed-route when they need to travel.
- Persons who are unable to board, ride or exit from the regular Bee-Line buses even if they are able to get to a bus stop and the bus is equipped with a wheelchair lift.

A prospective applicant may download the Application for Certification of ADA Eligibility at <http://disabled.westchestergov.com/application-process>.

Upon completion of the application you must contact the Office for People with Disabilities at (914) 995-2959 to set up an interview to review your application. A ParaTransit ride will be provided upon request to and from your interview only free of charge. The applicant must bring all supporting documentation requested on the application form. You may also attach any other documentation which you wish to have considered as part of the eligibility process.



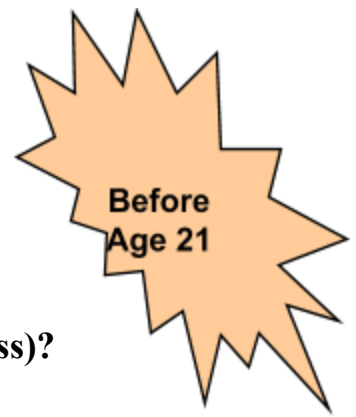
Tour Adult Service Agencies

There are over 15 agencies in Westchester that offer programs for students after the transition out of high school. While in general these programs can have many similarities, there are some unique features, focuses, and differences. It is very important the family and the student visit the agency and see each program in person. Below is a description of different types of services:

- * Day Habilitation - Day Habilitation teaches individuals to effectively utilize community services. Individuals learn to be productive members of society through instruction in the community concerning such daily living skills as shopping, traveling and making choices. Often the activities are fun and highly creative such as cooking contests, photography exhibitions, spelling bees and outdoor festivals.
- * Without Walls - Without Walls gives individuals with developmental disabilities the tools to function in society on a daily basis. Activities are delivered entirely in the community and include bowling, movies, museums, library visits and community service work. Participants gain self-confidence, improve social skills and achieve stronger ties with the community.
- * Blended - combines day habilitation with supported employment services. Unlike typical supported employment, individuals work and volunteer at community sites and are supervised by staff at all times. The experience helps young adults build job and life skills, provides the opportunity to make friends and helps students transition into the adult world. As the program's title suggests, activities are based on the skills and interests of each participant.
- * Supported Employment - Staff help individuals learn what it takes to enter and stay in the workforce through a hands-on training program. Short and long-term contracts enable work crews to perform a variety of tasks at local companies with an on-site supervisor to monitor overall performance, productivity and work quality. And each person earns a paycheck.



ACCES-VR is the New York State office for Adult Career and Continuing Education Services- Vocational Rehabilitation. Counselors at ACCES-VR work with students and adults with varying disabilities on reaching a career goal. ACCES-VR may provide the student with Job Coaching, Career Assessments, Placement Services, Work Try-Out, Vocational Case Management (Advocacy, Referrals), Transportation, Work Site Modifications and a variety of additional services.



What Is CROP (Certified Residential Options Process)?

Referral Criteria

Prior to referring an individual for residential placement, the service coordinator/referral source will be expected to fully explore with the individual and their family the possibility of remaining in their current home with additional supports and services, and/or the feasibility of a community placement in a non-certified residence with services and supports that are either self-directed or overseen and coordinated by a voluntary provider. This person-centered planning process is important to ensure that people have the right to choose where they live from among setting options including settings that are not disability specific.

Referral to a 24-hour supervised OPWDD-certified residence should be made only if all opportunities to support the person in a non-certified or less restrictive community based placement have been exhausted. Individuals deemed to be in crisis will be referred to the RO Crisis Team.

Individuals requesting residential services for the first time, as well as those who require a change in residence due to a change in clinical needs or personal goals that cannot be accommodated by the residential provider, are to be referred to the RO Certified Residential Opportunities Team. The RO Certified Residential Opportunities Team is responsible to send referrals for residential services to residential providers who have a vacancy that might appropriately meet the needs of an individual referred. Residential providers will be asked to assess the appropriateness of the person referred and review their service needs consistent with a particular vacancy.

If you are interested in residential opportunities for the future please contact: