



## What is a Waiver?

- A state can apply for a waiver from federal Medicaid rules that allows it to use Medicaid funding to cover services in the home and community that would otherwise be provided in an Intermediate Care Facility for People with Developmental Disabilities (ICF/DD), which is a residential facility.
- Louisiana has **four waivers** to serve individuals with developmental disabilities:
  - New Opportunities Waiver (NOW)
  - Residential Options Waiver (ROW)
  - Children's Choice Waiver
  - Supports Waiver
- Services provided differ from waiver to waiver but may include: direct support services (for assistance with daily activities like bathing, dressing, eating, etc.), respite, skilled nursing, various therapies, supported employment, home/vehicle modifications, etc.
- Home and community-based waiver services are **more cost-effective** than residential placements and offer individuals with developmental disabilities a **higher quality of life**.
- Parental income is not factored into the eligibility of children receiving these services, however there are financial eligibility requirements for adults.
- As of April 2016, there are **13,826 people on the waiting list** for the NOW. Those at the top of the list have been waiting over 11 years. When caregivers reach their limit financially, physically and/or emotionally, they have no other choice but to seek institutional placement for their loved one.
- Since the home and community-based waiver program is not a federal entitlement program, states can limit the number of people served in each waiver to control costs. To better meet the demand for waiver services, other states have shifted their resources from congregate settings to waiver services. Louisiana has done a good job in reducing its number of large public institutions, but those savings were not invested in community services. Louisiana still ranks at the top of the list in the number of people per capita served in ICFs/DD due to the large number of people served in private facilities.

Average Annual Cost Per Person	
Public Residential Facility (ICF/DD)	\$259,463
Private Residential Facility (ICF/DD)	\$66,188
New Opportunities Waiver	\$51,195
Residential Options Waiver	\$25,182
Children's Choice Waiver	\$10,106
Supports Waiver	\$7,428

More information on waivers can be found at <http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/142>