



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
Bureau of Autism Services**

Adult Autism Waiver

Consumer Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Autism Waiver?

This waiver was developed in response to key findings of the Autism Task Force formed by Secretary of Public Welfare B. Estelle Richman in 2003. The task force observed that there were almost no community-based services in Pennsylvania for adults living with Autism Spectrum Disorders. In response, the Autism Task Force recommended the development of targeted supports and services designed specifically for adults living with autism.

What are the eligibility requirements for the Autism Waiver?

In order to be eligible for the Autism Waiver, a person must be a resident of Pennsylvania or planning to be a resident at the time of enrollment and meet functional and financial eligibility criteria. Priority is given to people not already receiving ongoing state funded or state and federal funded long-term care services.

Functional eligibility - The applicant must:

- Have a diagnosis of ASD, which includes a diagnosis of Autistic Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD-NOS), Asperger Syndrome, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder or Retts Disorder
- Be 21 or older
- Be at risk of institutionalization in an Intermediate Care Facility
- Reside in Pennsylvania

Financial Eligibility:

- Based on Medical Assistance resource and income limits for waiver programs
- Income limit is currently 300% of the Federal Benefit Rate

How do I know if I meet Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) level of care?

In order to meet ICF level of care, the disability must:

- Result in substantial functional limitations in three (3) or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, understanding and use of language, learning, mobility, self-direction, and/or capacity for independent living.
- Be manifested before the person reaches age 22.
- Be likely to continue indefinitely.

What makes the Autism Waiver different from other developmental disabilities waivers in Pennsylvania?

- The waiver is specifically designed to meet the needs of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- It will be administrated directly by the Bureau of Autism Services, not through the counties.
- Intelligence (IQ) is not an eligibility factor.
- Providers will be required to complete autism specific training and demonstrate competence.
- Clinical and technical assistance will be available to waiver providers
- Participants' progress will be measured against goals.

What services are offered under the waiver?

In addition to Supports Coordination, services include:

- Assistive Technology
- Behavioral Specialist Services
- Community Inclusion
- Community Transition Services
- Day Habilitation
- Environmental Modifications
- Family Counseling
- Family Training
- Job Assessment and Finding
- Nutritional Consultation
- Residential Habilitation
- Respite
- Supported Employment
- Temporary Crisis Services
- Therapies
- Transitional Work Services

How many people will be served under the Autism Waiver?

There are plans to serve 200 consumers in the first year. Waiver capacity may increase as the budget allows.

What if I am already receiving services?

Receiving other services does not make you ineligible for the Adult Autism Waiver. The Autism Waiver gives priority to individuals not already receiving state funded or state and federally funded home and community based services. Examples of these are the OBRA Waiver and the Consolidated Waiver.

Priority 1: Those not already receiving state funded or state and federally funded home and community based services.

Priority 2: Those currently enrolled in state funded or state and federally funded home and community based services.

How do I request an application?

All application requests must be made through the Bureau's toll free number at **1-866-539-7689*** (press one for English then press one to leave a request)

- Call the toll free number and leave a message with the following information:
 - Name of person who wishes to apply
 - Telephone number
 - Address
 - County of residence
 - If you are calling on the behalf of the person who wishes to apply also leave your name and daytime phone number
- The Bureau of Autism Services will return the call to verify basic eligibility.
- The potential applicant is categorized as Priority 1 or Priority 2 as defined above.
- Within two weeks of the return phone call a status letter conforming the consumer's priority will be sent to the consumer and the consumer's representative or contact person.

**Please note: A call to the toll free number is only a request for an application and does not constitute an actual application. Applications will be mailed out separately.*

When will I receive an application?

BAS plans to enroll 200 waiver participants by the summer of 2009. Application packets will first be mailed to Priority 1 individuals in order of the date and time of their initial call to the toll free number until waiver capacity is reached. If additional waiver capacity remains, packets will then be sent to Priority 2 individuals in order of the date and time of their call. Because waiver capacity is limited, BAS cannot guarantee that everyone will receive an application for the waiver.

Will there be a waiting list?

A waiting list in the traditional sense will not be maintained for the Adult Autism Waiver. Typically, waiting lists are comprised of individuals who have already been found eligible for the program in which they are applying. BAS will maintain only a list of individuals who have requested applications in order of the date and time of their initial call to the toll free number. Applications will not be sent and eligibility for these individuals will not be determined until waiver capacity is open to serve them.

Can I keep my HealthChoices managed care plan?

Yes. You will continue to receive your physical and behavioral health care through your current health care plan. The Autism Waiver does not cover those services.

If I am found eligible for the Autism Waiver how long can I remain in the program?

There is no time limit on remaining in the waiver program provided an individual continues to meet all eligibility requirements. The waiver does not have a maximum age limit.

Is there a maximum amount (cap) of waiver funded services a participant can receive?

No. There is no overall limit (cap) on funded services. However, some waiver services have lifetime maximums. Other services have limits on the number of service hours within a specific time frame. Participants will receive services based on individual need.

For more information on the Autism Waiver email us at

DPW-AutismOffice@state.pa.us

Or find us on the web at www.autisminpa.org

TO APPLY FOR THE AUTISM WAIVER, CALL TOLL FREE

1-866-539-7689