

## The Innovations Waiver and Registry of Unmet Needs

*[Please also read the info on Services and Support, Medicaid, and the State Budget]*

Innovations Waivers for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) is a special Medicaid program started in 1983 to serve individuals who would otherwise require care in an intermediate care facility for people with developmental disabilities (ICF/MR). [Prior to 2007 it was called the Community Alternatives Program, CAP MR or CAP IDD.] It allows people with IDD the opportunity to be served in the community instead of residing in an institutional or congregate setting. Innovations is a waiver program; in this case the program “waives” income requirements by looking only at the individual’s income and not the family’s or spouse’s income.

Innovations waiver programs are not currently an entitlement – they are funded with state and federal funds for a specific number of slots based on the funding available. Other folks who are eligible, but for whom there is no slot available, are put on waiting lists; what are called The Registry of Unmet Needs. North Carolina currently has at least 15,000 people on these waiting lists for waivers and other services. People looking for services go through their regional LME MCO to determine eligibility for specific services and to be placed on the waiting list if no slots or funding is available.

North Carolina’s Innovations waiver provides a selection of services, depending on individual need. People who qualify for Innovations and receive a slot are assessed and a person-centered plan is developed based on their needs and personal goals. The kinds of services provided under Innovations are:

- Assistive Technology, Equipment and Supplies (GPS and Personal Emergency Response included)
- Community Navigator, Community Networking, Community Transition
- Crisis Services (includes some Crisis Respite, Behavioral Consultation, etc.)
- Community Living and Supports (bundles together PCS, skill building)
- Day Supports
- Financial Support Service, for those with employer of record
- Home and Vehicle Modifications (\$ limit over 3 years)
- Residential Supports
- Supported Employment
- Supported Living (three types)
- Respite
- Natural Supports Education
- Individual Goods and Services (setup for transition from institution)
- Specialized Consultation Services
- (Transportation is not a separate service but included in provider rate for services)

This is a good array of services, but it may not meet all the needs of all individuals with ASD. Individuals classified as high functioning and/or with Asperger’s may not meet the eligibility criteria for these Innovations services, but still need services and supports. Individuals with high behavioral needs may not get the support to live in community settings. ASNC and others are advocating for more funding to address the waiting list, statewide management of the waitlist, more equitable

distribution of funding, flexible service definitions to cover the gaps in Innovations, as well as other sources of funding and health care coverage for those who do not qualify for waivers.