

What is the Innovations Waiver?

The Innovations Waiver is a home and community-based Medicaid program. It provides services and supports to individuals as an alternative to institutionalization. It is called a Waiver because rules that apply with regular Medicaid are “waived” for recipients of the waiver program. For example, eligibility for the Innovations Waiver is not dependent on income. Services provided by the waiver improve options for housing and employment throughout an individual’s lifetime. Unfortunately, there are not enough waiver slots to provide services to everyone in North Carolina who qualifies. The waitlist (or Registry of Needs) can be 10 years or longer and is awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis.

What are Innovations Waiver benefits?

There are many services offered through the North Carolina Innovations Waiver. Below is a description of some of the services available under the waiver.

- *Community Living and Support*: Empowers individuals to live in their natural home, maximize their self-sufficiency, increase self-determination, and enhance opportunities to be in their community.
- *Supported Employment*: Assists with choosing, acquiring, and maintaining competitive employment for individuals age 16 and older.
- *Assistive Technology, Equipment, and Supplies*: Provides equipment to help with daily life tasks, changes to a home or vehicle to make it safer, or smart-home technology.
- *Home Modifications*: Enhances the individual’s level of independence by providing physical modifications to a home to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the individual.
- *Respite*: Provides periodic support and relief to the primary caregiver(s) from the responsibility and stress of caring for the member.

Where is your help needed?

Increase access to the NC Innovation Waiver (Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waiver) by an additional 1,000 slots per year to reduce the waitlist for these critical services for individuals with IDD. Currently, there are over 12,500 people in North Carolina waiting an average of seven to ten years on the waitlist. Over 60% of them live with aging parents or on their own with help from family, precipitating crises without services. *\$19.5 million recurring (funds the state match to federal funds on an avg slot allocation of 65,000 a year).*

- **Reinstate single stream funding for critical behavioral health and IDD services.** Funding has been slashed over the last decade resulting in limited developmental, brain injury, mental health or addictive disease services to people without other options. *\$50 million recurring over 5 years*
- **Increase provider rates by 35% to attract and retain peer and direct support professionals** for community-based services for those who qualify. *\$87 million recurring.*
- **Support ongoing funding for children with complex needs** whose developmental and behavioral needs must be addressed with intensive specialized services.
 - This includes continuation of dollars for necessary resources such as NC START.
 - Initiatives to continue to provide comprehensive evaluations and promote navigation through the IDD Medical Health Home.
 - Funding to ensure crisis coordination and Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) services are available to those in crisis. Services are needed to ensure safety, reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, and ensure we are intervening early to lower lifetime costs and strengthen quality of life. Funding recommendation – *\$ 4 million recurring*