

Autism Waiver Information

Taken from the state website:

http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/foradults/autismservices/adultautismwaiver/generalinformationquestions/S_000243

The Adult Autism Waiver is one of two programs in Pennsylvania specifically designed to help adults with an autism spectrum disorder participate in their communities in the way that they want to. Below are responses to some frequently asked questions about the Adult Autism Waiver. If you can't find the information you are looking for here, please call 1-866-539-7689 or email us at: **RA-odpautismwaiver@pa.gov**.

What is the Adult Autism Waiver?

The Adult Autism Waiver is a Medical Assistance program that provides home and community-based services specifically designed to help adults with an autism spectrum disorder participate in their communities in the way they want to.

What are the goals of the Adult Autism Waiver?

- Increase the person's ability to care for themselves
- Decrease family/caregiver stress
- Increase quality of life for both the person and the family
- Provide specialized supports to adults with an autism spectrum disorder based on need
- Help adults with an autism spectrum disorder reach their employment goals
- Support more involvement in community activities
- Decrease crisis episodes and psychiatric hospitalizations

What are some of the differences between the Adult Autism Waiver and other programs for adults in Pennsylvania?

- Designed to meet the needs of adults with an autism spectrum disorder
- Administered at the state level directly by the Bureau of Autism Services
- Does not use IQ as an eligibility factor
- Providers required to complete autism-specific training and meet standards
- Clinical and behavioral support, as well as technical assistance, is available to enrolled providers
- Service planning and measures of success based on individual goals
- Services based on proven approaches to help participants realize these goals

What are some of the important features of the Adult Autism Waiver?

- Priority given to individuals not receiving ongoing state/federally funded services
- Participant retains Health Choices or ACCESS Plus; physical health services are not included as waiver services
- Choice of enrolled provider for each service
- Residential Habilitation Services (24/7) available if assessment determines need
- Higher income eligibility threshold than the eligibility threshold usually applied to persons living in the community

Is the Adult Autism Waiver a temporary or pilot program?

No. The Adult Autism Waiver is not a temporary or pilot program. This waiver has been approved by the Federal Government (the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services-CMS) as a part of Pennsylvania's Medical Assistance program.

How many adults can be served under the Adult Autism Waiver?

The waiver program can currently serve 300 adults with autism. Priority is given to those individuals not already receiving state or federally-funded services. Please see the "Application Process" and "Eligibility" sections for more information.

Where is the Adult Autism Waiver offered?

Waiver services are available statewide.

Is there a waiting list for the Adult Autism Waiver?

This program is enrolling participants. The Bureau of Autism Services maintains a list of individuals who have requested applications but have not received them, in order of the date and time of their initial call to the toll free number. Applications will be sent and eligibility for these individuals will be determined as waiver capacity allows. Priority for the Adult Autism Waiver is given to people not already receiving state or federally-funded services and they will receive applications first. Requests for applications are processed in the order they are received. Please see the "Application Process" and "Eligibility" sections of this document for more information.

Can I apply for more than one Pennsylvania waiver or the ACAP adult program at once, or will applying for one make me ineligible for the other ones?

You may apply for more than one waiver or the Adult Community Autism Program at a time, including the Adult Autism Waiver. However, individuals may not enroll in more than one.

What happens to my waiting list status for the Person/Family Directed Support waiver or the Consolidated waiver if I enroll in the Adult Autism Waiver?

An individual can be on a waiting list for another program while receiving services from the Adult Autism Waiver. However, his or her priority status on that waiting list depends on the individual's situation and whether unmet needs are anticipated. Applicants should discuss their individual situation with program staff from the Bureau of Autism Services and the Bureau of Supports for People with Intellectual Disabilities, Office of Developmental Programs which operates the Person/Family Directed Support and Consolidated waivers.

What role does the individual with an autism spectrum disorder play in the Adult Autism Waiver?

The participant is at the center of all service planning and service delivery. During the service planning process waiver participants share their goals, likes and dislikes to help determine what services they will receive. Once enrolled in the Adult Autism Waiver, the participant is actively involved in the services they receive and their ongoing services plan.

What role do families play in the Adult Autism Waiver?

Families have the opportunity to provide information during the service planning process and to provide feedback about the program. Decreased family stress is one goal of the program and is assessed each year.