

ENTITLEMENT VS. ELIGIBILITY

- In Maryland, a young adult with a disability who is receiving special education services is **entitled** to a free and appropriate public education through the school year in which the student turns 21 years of age (IDEA, 2004), or has met the requirements for a Maryland High school Diploma or a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion.
- Once a student exits from high school, he or she **must** apply for adult services to see if they are **eligible** to receive them. In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria, **funding must be available** to receive services and supports from agencies.

occupational therapy
speech therapy behavior management
job training physical therapy
community based instruction
special education services, etc.

**This is what your child is entitled to
from birth to age 21.**



**This is what your child
is entitled to after 21.**

What is a Medicaid Waiver or Waiver Program?

A Medicaid waiver lets some Medicaid rules be set aside to help more people get the services they need at home or in the community, instead of in a facility or institution.

- It allows services (or benefits) that Medicaid does not usually cover.
- A waiver is not an entitlement. That means services provided by a waiver are not an automatic benefit, even if you are eligible. So even if you meet all the requirements, you are not guaranteed to get services right away because there are a limited number of spots in the program. If all spots are full, you may be placed on a waitlist until a spot becomes available.

As of October 6, 2025 there is only one “Waiver” offered in Maryland – the Community Pathways Waiver.

Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative

- Maryland provides Transitioning Youth (TY) funds for students with developmental disabilities (ages 21–22) leaving school, primarily through the Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative (GTYI). This program, a collaboration between the DDA and DORS, funds supported employment, day services, and vocational training to prevent long waiting lists. Applications must be submitted by June 30 of the graduating year to the DDA regional office.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION (DDA)

- State agency that provides funding and resources to access services and supports for people with developmental disabilities who are found eligible through the DDA assessment process. They do not serve those with a sole diagnosis of mental illness.
- Supports people with developmental disabilities and their families, providing case management, individualized supports, and resources to enable these individuals to live fulfilling lives.
- DDA is guided by the principle that individuals with developmental disabilities have the right to direct their lives and services.

What Does DDA Provide?

- DDA participants have access to a full array of paid and unpaid support services, based on their assessed needs. These supports can include:

Community Supports

Personal Supports

Employment and Day Services

Self-Directed Services

Residential Services

Behavioral

Support Services

- With the support of a case manager (CCS), a plan for services is developed based upon the goals and needs of the individual.

Who Should Apply?

A student of any age who has been formally diagnosed with a developmental disability by a qualified professional.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- **A developmental disability is a physical or mental impairment, but not just mental illness, or it can be a combination of mental and physical impairments.**
- **A condition that is more than likely to continue forever and had an onset before the age of 22.**
- **A condition that causes the person to need supports or assistance to live independently.**
- **A condition that causes someone to need the support of a team to help with services and treatment.**

When To Apply?

When completed assessments result in the development of an IEP, the application to apply for DDA should be completed at the initial, or annual, IEP meeting.

How to Apply

- **Complete a DDA application and submit with ALL assessments conducted by professionals both in and outside of the school.**
- **These assessments should include the actual results of updated psychological, educational functional and adaptive testing, not just a summary of previous tests.**

APPLICATION PROCESS

- **Obtain Application from DDA Website**
- **Fill Out Application**
- **Include supporting documentation**
 - Psychological Evaluation (should be within last 3 years)
 - Most recent approved Individualized Educational Plan
 - Medical Documentation from medical professional

Submit application to Regional Office

- DDA – Southern Maryland Regional Office,
 - 312 Marshall Ave #700, Laurel, MD 20707
 - Email- eligibility.smro@marlyand.gov

Comprehensive Assessment (seeing is believing)

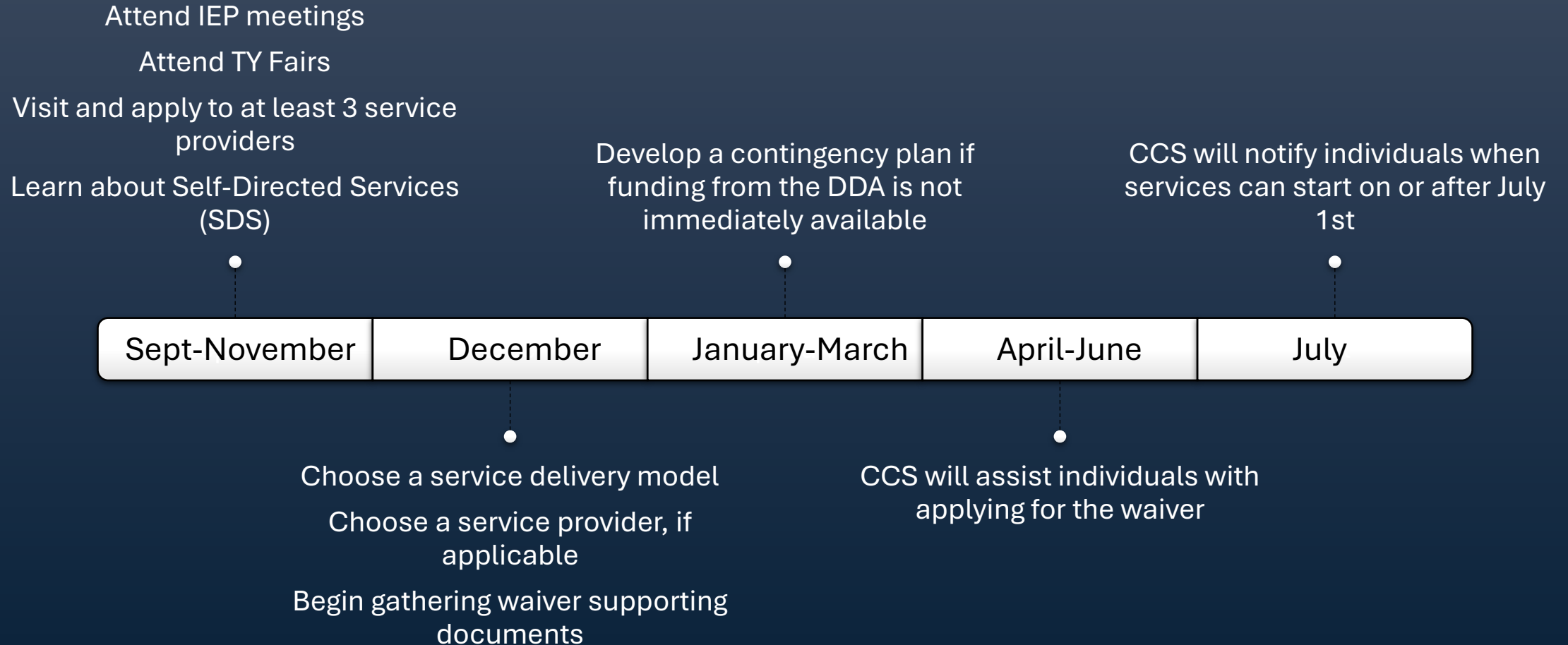
- A Comprehensive Assessment (CA) is part of the eligibility determination process for people applying for services through the Department of Disabilities Administration (DDA). The CA is a review of your medical, social, and other needs and supports to help determine your eligibility for DDA services.
- The Comprehensive Assessment must be conducted in-person.
- Have copies of the most recent psychological evaluation, IEP, and any pertinent medical reports.

Consequences of Not Applying

- **Loss of priority status:** Without this priority status, individuals are placed on a general DDA waiting list.
- **Extended wait time for funding:** The DDA budget is underfunded, and the waiting list is extensive. An individual who misses the transition year deadline may have to wait many years before services become available
- **Services limited to "crisis resolution":** The only reliable way for an individual who missed the transition year to get off the waiting list is to qualify for the "Crisis Resolution" category, which means the person's health or safety is at immediate risk.
- **Waiting to apply** can also result in records being misplaced, with fewer documents available to support the application and confirm eligibility.

TY Timeline Overview

Final School Year



DDA Application Timeline Milestones

- **1-7 Days:** Acknowledgement letter sent acknowledging receipt of the application.
- **Within 45 Days:** A CCS or Regional Office staff member conducts an in-person interview and submits required information to DDA. This is known as the Comprehensive Assessment.
- **Within 60 Days:** DDA sends a final decision letter regarding eligibility and priority category.
- **Appeal Timeline:** If denied, a hearing request must be filed within 90 days of the postmark on the decision letter.

Self-Direction versus Traditional Agency-Directed Care

What is Self-Direction?

- **Definition:** A service delivery model that allows individuals (or their representatives) to take direct responsibility for managing their services.
- **Key Philosophy:** Shifts decision-making power from agencies to the participant.
- **Core Components:**
 - **Employer Authority:** You hire, train, and supervise your own staff.
 - **Budget Authority:** You control how your Medicaid budget is spent on services.
- **Goal:** Increase autonomy, quality of life, and independence.

What is Traditional Agency-Directed Care?

- **Definition:** A model where a provider agency manages all aspects of care.
- **Agency Responsibilities:**
 - Assigns staff to the beneficiary.
 - Establishes schedules and manages worker performance.
 - Determines staff wages.
- **Focus:** Structured care, often with pre-existing, standardized, and highly trained staff.

Comparison

Feature	Self-Direction	Traditional Agency
Who Chooses Staff?	Participant/Family	Agency
Who Sets Schedule?	Participant	Agency
Who Supervises?	Participant	Agency
Flexibility	High (tailored to needs)	Low (standardized)
Responsibility	High (Employer tasks)	Low (Agency handles tasks)
Staff Type	Can be friends/family	Agency staff

Benefits of Self-Direction

- **Increased Autonomy:** Unmatched control over how, when, and by whom services are delivered.
- **Better Staffing Consistency:** Allows for hiring trusted family or friends, reducing turnover.
- **Customization:** Services are tailored to individual routines and specific needs.
- **Improved Outcomes:** Linked to better health, better medication management, and higher quality of life.

Responsibilities of Self-Direction

- *With great power comes great responsibility.*
- **Recruitment & Hiring:** Finding and interviewing potential staff.
- **Training & Supervision:** Ensuring staff understand specific needs.
- **Time Tracking:** Approving staff timesheets.
- **Budget Management:** Monitoring funds with the help of a Financial Management Services (FMS) entity.

Why Choose Traditional?

- **Less Administrative Work:** The agency handles hiring, payroll, taxes, and training.
- **Reliability:** No need to find backup staff if a worker is sick; the agency typically manages this.
- **Highly Trained Staff:** Access to specialized, agency-trained professionals.
- **Suitable for High Needs:** Sometimes preferred for complex medical tasks that require intense oversight.

Summary – What is Right for You?

- **Choose Self-Direction if:** You want maximum control, desire to hire people you know (like family), need flexible scheduling, and are willing to take on employer responsibilities.
- **Choose Traditional if:** You prefer not to manage staff, want the agency to handle scheduling, and prefer a more structured, standardized approach.
- **Note:** You can often switch, or combine, these models depending on the state and waiver.

Please Don't Forget!!!

- Remember to always present your “worst day”
- While you are in the application process answer your phone and read your mail – email and postal.
- If you move, change your email address or phone numbers – make sure you notify DDA and your CCS
- Make sure your child never has more than \$2,000 in assets.
- Make sure you apply for DDA services before the last year your child is in school
- Keep a paper record of all medical and educational records of your child. Know where they are and make sure someone else has a copy of them.

Quick Acronym Guide

➤ **Transitioning Youth (TY):**

Individuals aging out of the public school system with either a diploma or certificate of completion. This group is a special category of eligibility and has a priority for services through the Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative for people 21 through 22 years of age.

➤ **Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA):**

Under the Maryland Department of Health, DDA works together with children and adults who have intellectual and developmental disabilities to get support and resources so they can live their most meaningful lives.

➤ **Division of Rehabilitative Services (DORS):**

Provides services that prepare students with disabilities to transition from school to post-school life.

➤ **Supplemental Security Income (SSI):** Pays benefits based on financial need and eligibility.

And there are more!

➤ **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI):**

Pays benefits to the person and certain family members if they are “insured” meaning they have worked long enough and paid social security taxes.

➤ **Medical Assistance (MA):**

Maryland’s term for Medicaid, a joint federal and state program that provides health insurance for low-income individuals and families, covering services like doctor’s visits, hospital care, prescriptions, and long-term care.

➤ **Coordinator of Community Services (CCS):**

Ensures that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families get the support they need for independence, health, safety, and active community involvement. The CCS’s role is to promote services and supports that are planned and delivered in a manner that encourages self-sufficiency, promotes being

And Finally!

Comprehensive Assessment (CA):

A detailed review of a person's medical, social, educational, functional, and personal circumstances to determine their eligibility for DDA services. Supporting applicant and provided during the CA. The CA is the first meeting that happens after someone completes an initial DDA application.

Supports and Services Planning Tool (SSPT):

Used as a waiting list evaluation. It helps to determine current community services and resources, assess current needs and supports someone might have, align current support available, and to reassess as needs of the person change. It is used as a reference if the person is selected to apply for services.

Person Centered Plan (PCP):

A written plan for people applying for or currently receiving services from the DDA Medicaid waiver programs. It includes the person's goals for the next year and lifetime, what is important to and for the person, the person's health and safety needs, risks and ways to manage them, resources and programs to help meet goals, the person's chosen service model (self-directed or traditional), service providers, costs, and formal agreements.

Medicaid Waiver Application (MA App):

One of the required forms for the DDA waiver application packet completed by the CCS and the person applying for services (and/or the applicant's guardian or authorized representative). This form in the application packet is used to determine financial eligibility for DDA Medicaid waiver programs.