



DDS EXPANDS ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

The Department on Disability Services Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDS/DDA) was established to coordinate supports and services for people with intellectual disabilities. The passage of the Developmental Disability Eligibility Reform Amendment Act (DDERAA) of 2022 expands eligibility for DDS/DDA services to people with developmental disabilities, not just intellectual disabilities. DDERAA ensures that people with developmental disabilities who have long term support needs can access critical community-based services, if eligible. This new law will not impact people currently receiving services or people who have already been found eligible for services.

DDERRA has modified the definition of an intellectual disability to align it with the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM, 5th edition) and establishes the definition of developmental disability that must be met for a person in order to be considered eligible for support services. An explanation of this definition and answers to other questions are below.

WHAT IS A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY?



A developmental disability is a severe and chronic disability due to a mental or physical impairment (other than the sole diagnosis of mental illness) or a combination of mental and physical impairments that manifests before 22 years of age and likely to continue indefinitely. Examples of development disabilities include, but are not limited to:

- Down Syndrome
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Cerebral Palsy
- Epilepsy
- Prader-Willi Syndrome
- Fragile X Syndrome

To be eligible for services through DDS/DDA, a person with a developmental disability must have substantial functional limitations in three (3) or more of the following areas of major life activities:

- Self-care
- Health and Safety
- Functional Academics
- Understanding and Use of Language
- Mobility
- Self-direction
- Capacity for Independent Living
- Social Skills

WHAT DOES “SUBSTANTIAL FUNCTIONAL LIMITATION” MEAN?

“Substantial functional limitation” means that a developmental disability is so serious that it makes it very difficult for a person to live everyday life independently. These limitations must be present across various settings (home, school, work, and community).

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR DETERMINING A PERSON'S ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES?

The agency's Eligibility and Determination Unit conducts interviews, observations, reviews documents, and completes a Level of Need assessment.

WHAT DOCUMENTS OR RECORDS ARE NEEDED TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY FOR DDS/DDA SERVICES?

A completed application includes the following:



- Birth Certificate or Government Issued I.D. such as a driver's license or non-driver's I.D., a Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) card, etc.
- Social Security Card, if available.
- Proof of District Residency: Current lease agreement, utility bill, statement from Social Security Administration listing address. Cell phone bills are not acceptable.
- Proof of Insurance: DC Medicaid or private coverage, if available.
- Documents verifying the diagnosis of a developmental disability. Examples include school records/transcripts, diagnostic assessments, medical records, social history.
- Signed Release of Information.

Applicants will need to submit records that support the presence of a developmental or intellectual disability. Records may include any of the documents below:

- School Records/IEP
- Psychological or Psychiatric Evaluations
- Speech Language Evaluations
- Occupational Therapy Evaluations
- Physical Therapy Evaluations
- Diagnostic Assessments
- Vocational Assessments
- Genetic Assessments
- Annual Medical Evaluation

DDS/DDA staff can answer additional questions and explain the records requirements.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and other reasonable accommodations will be provided in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACT). Language translation services are available to non-native English speakers. To request spoken language interpretation, please contact dds.languageservices@dc.gov.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE

Please call 202-730-1700 and ask to speak to a DDS Community Liaison Specialist.