

# THE ROLE OF YOUR SSA

*How your service & support administrator works  
with other HCDDS teams and within your life*



HAMILTON COUNTY  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
SERVICES



# BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Denise Driehaus

Stephanie Summerow Dumas

Todd Portune

## HAMILTON COUNTY DD SERVICES BOARD

Alan Abes

Rene Brinson

Tasha Faruqui

Stephen Jones

Andy Magenheim

Nestor Melnyk

Deana Taylor

## AGENCY LEADERSHIP

Superintendent Alice Pavey

### Office of Budget and Administrative Operations

*Human Resources*

*Information Technology*

Rick Ratterman

Shawn Garver

Brian Knight

### Office of Medicaid, Contracts and SSA

*Service and Support Administration*

Jennifer Meadows

Melissa Haas

### Office of Planning, Innovation and Quality

*Community Relations*

*Integration and Advocacy*

Dawn Freudenberg

Ryan Braun

Eric Metzger

### Office of Integrated Services

Matt Briner

### Office of Inclusion and Collaboration

Kristee Griffith

### School Programs

Duerk Zinn

### Major Unusual Incident and Prevention

Jennie Flowers

# WELCOME

This handbook has information about the programs, services and supports offered within Hamilton County Developmental Disabilities Services (HCDDS) and the choices you can make about these services and supports.

Your service and support administrator (SSA) works closely with other units in the Office of Medicaid, Contracts and SSA, and also with the Office of Inclusion and Collaboration, the Office of Integrated Services, and the Office of Planning, Innovation and Quality. This handbook will illustrate the role of the SSA within HCDDS and your life.

Hamilton County DD Services encourages community integration for people with developmental disabilities. To achieve this, your SSA will promote and support opportunities so you can live, work, learn and fully participate in your community. If you have questions, call us at (513) 794-3300 or email [contactus@hamiltondds.org](mailto:contactus@hamiltondds.org).

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Welcome</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Office of Inclusion &amp; Collaboration</b> .....	<b>4-5</b>
Introduction and Eligibility	
Waiting Lists	
Types of Waivers	
<b>Office of Medicaid, Contracts &amp; SSA</b> .....	<b>6-9</b>
Service and Support Administration—SSA	
Children’s, Adult and Other Teams	
SSA and The My Plan—A Person-Centered Plan	
Funding and Contracts	
Benefits	
Psychology Services	
<b>Office of Integrated Services</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Behavior Supports	
<b>Office of Planning, Innovation &amp; Quality</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Provider Relations and Compliance	
Integration and Advocacy	
Family Support	
<b>Major Unusual Incident and Prevention (MUIP)</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Other Commitments to Individuals with DD</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Self-Determination	
Confidentiality and Access to Records	
Complaint Procedures and Right to Appeal	

# OFFICE OF INCLUSION & COLLABORATION

## Introduction and Eligibility

A person may qualify for services when s/he has a developmental disability that is:

- Not solely caused by mental illness
- Manifested prior to age 22
- Likely to continue indefinitely

The Introduction and Eligibility team (I&E) will review each individual's file to determine if they have a qualifying diagnosis. In addition, a functional evaluation called the Children's Ohio Eligibility Determination Instrument (COEDI) or Ohio Eligibility Determination Instrument (OEDI) will be administered. This instrument is a statewide evaluation tool used to assess the impact of the individual's disability on his/her functional abilities.

Eligibility must be determined at ages 3, 6 and 16. Eligibility may also be redetermined if an individual has a significant change in functioning.

## Provide Proof of Disability

Individuals or their legal guardian are required to gather and submit records to support proof of a developmental disability. An individual or guardian should submit copies of the most recent school, medical, and or psychological reports to the I&E team. Guardians will be required to provide probate court records showing proof of guardianship before assisting with the eligibility process.

## Visit and Interview

If the submitted records confirm a developmental disability, an eligibility specialist will conduct a face-to-face interview to assess the individual's current level of functioning. The specialist will administer the C/OEDI assessment and look at life skill areas including mobility, communication, self-care, learning, self-direction, and independent living. We will also assess economic self-sufficiency for those ages 16 and older.

## Final Determination

You will receive a letter notifying you whether you qualify for services. If you do not agree with the results of your eligibility review, you have the right to request an appeal.

## Waiting Lists

There is a waiting list for individuals with a current need for home and community-based services. Please contact your SSA or the Introduction & Eligibility team if you believe you would benefit from placement on a waiting list for these services.

## Types of Waivers

Waivers are funding sources so people with disabilities can receive services in the community. The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) administers three waivers, but a person can receive only one. The table below describes each waiver.

Waiver	Yearly Funding Limit(s)	Some Available Services
Individual Options or IO Waiver	<p style="text-align: center;">\$5,326 or more</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Maximum amount is based on an assessment completed by your SSA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homemaker/Personal Care</li> <li>• Shared Living</li> <li>• Home Modifications or Adaptations</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Respite</li> <li>• Home-Delivered Meals</li> <li>• Assistive Technology</li> <li>• Adult Day Array Services</li> <li>• Remote Supports</li> <li>• Specialized Equipment</li> <li>• Money Management</li> </ul>
Self-Empowered Life Funding or SELF Waiver	<p style="text-align: center;">\$25,000 for children \$40,000 for adults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant-directed Homemaker/Personal Care</li> <li>• Remote Supports</li> <li>• Assistive Technology</li> <li>• Participant-Directed Goods and Services</li> <li>• Respite</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Adult Day Array Services</li> </ul>
Level One Waiver	<p style="text-align: center;">Up to \$5,325</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Separate budget for Adult Day Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homemaker/Personal Care</li> <li>• Home Modifications or Adaptations</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Respite</li> <li>• Home-Delivered Meals</li> <li>• Specialized Equipment</li> <li>• Adult Day Array Services</li> <li>• Remote Supports</li> <li>• Assistive Technology</li> <li>• Money Management</li> <li>• Emergency Assistance of \$8,000 cap over 3 years</li> </ul>

# OFFICE OF MEDICAID, CONTRACTS & SSA

## Service & Support Administration—SSA

A service and support administrator (SSA) is the primary point of coordination for individuals who are determined eligible through the HCDDS Introduction and Eligibility (I&E) team. If you would like an SSA, contact the Introduction and Eligibility team to talk about what your needs are and how those needs can be met.

Your SSA also will assist you in locating, connecting to and coordinating additional supports that might be available in your community. If you have preferences as it relates to your SSA, you may specify this and the assigning supervisor will try to accommodate if there is availability on a team. In order to better meet your needs, an SSA is assigned based on several factors outlined below.

### Children's Team (Enrolled in school):

- Community SSA: Available for those not enrolled in waiver-authorized services, however, includes those enrolled on a Level One Waiver
- Medicaid Waiver SSA: Available for those enrolled in waiver-authorized services

### Adult Team (Accepted diploma/no longer enrolled in school):

- Community SSA
- Medicaid Waiver SSA
- Multi-System SSA: Available for those who have multiple complex needs and are also involved with the criminal justice system
- Group Home SSA: Available for those who are enrolled in waiver-authorized services and who live in larger residences

If you receive waiver services from our agency, you are required to work with an SSA. All SSAs use person-centered planning to create individualized service plans that identify the supports each person needs. Our service and support administrators get to know each person and learn what they want or need for a good life, respecting the individual choices of that person and their support team. Your SSA will conduct an annual My Plan meeting to talk about the outcomes you hope to achieve during the next year.

SSAs connect people to provider agencies, community resources and funding sources to achieve their life goals. SSAs assist with self-advocacy and, when needed, advocate on behalf of that person. It is important that families and individuals understand available options and seek the support of their SSA, who can connect them to resources.

If you are enrolled on an agency-managed waiver (IO, Level One, SELF), you will be assigned an SSA to ensure waiver services are authorized in line with your My Plan and outcomes. Additionally, we monitor services to ensure progress is being made and you are happy with the authorized services.

The group home SSA will complete similar functions as the community or Medicaid waiver SSAs, but this team assists individuals who live in larger residences with four or more individuals. This encourages efficiency and effectiveness in service coordination because one SSA will be assigned per residence.

Finally, the multi-system SSA assists individuals who are eligible for HCDDS services and also are involved or at a high risk of involvement with the criminal justice system. The multi-system SSA will work much like the community or Medicaid waiver SSAs, but they have a greater knowledge of the court system and are able to provide a higher level of support to navigate this system.

Once an SSA is assigned, they will contact you by phone, email or letter to share their contact information. They will also set up a time to meet with you. At this meeting, your SSA will talk to you about your interests and preferences, as well as your hopes and dreams for the future.

Using this information and with your help, your SSA will complete a My Plan that outlines what outcomes you hope to achieve during the next year. Your My Plan is a document that should reflect who you are and can be revised over the year as things change in your life. Your SSA will check in throughout the year to make sure you are satisfied with services. At least one of these visits must occur in your residence.

## **SSA and The My Plan—A Person-Centered Plan**

Person-centered planning is a personalized way of talking and working with you to achieve the kind of life you want. It is a way to talk about what is most important to you, which people are most important in your life, and how we can help you get more of the life you desire.

When you and your SSA talk about this, you can invite anyone you wish to be part of it. Think of people who care about you, have high hopes for your future, have creative ideas, and who will stick with you to help you meet your goals. You can also decide who you do not want to be involved. It is your choice.

Hamilton County DD Services uses a person-centered way of working with you and the people you choose to develop your My Plan. Your SSA will talk with you and the people you choose (your team) about things that are most important to you.

They will use Discovery Tools, which are different ways to think about what is important to you. After that, you and your team will talk about outcomes you want to accomplish this year. Outcomes are what you hope to get done this year and will be about the things that matter most to you.

Your plan will include action steps so everyone on your team, including you, knows what he/she needs to do to help you achieve what you desire. You are the most important person in this process, so do not be afraid to speak up and say what you want. You can also listen to what others have to say, and decide if you agree or not. It is all up to YOU!

After you meet with your SSA and team to work on your outcomes and action steps, your SSA will send you a copy of your plan.

Your SSA will also complete a My Plan Assessment, which describes what kind of supports you need to live well in your daily life. This says who will help you with things you do every day, if you need help.

Your plan will be reviewed each year, but you can make changes to your outcomes or action steps at any time. Call your SSA, and he/she will work with you and your team to change your plan. Throughout the year, your SSA will check in to be sure everyone is doing his/her part to help you achieve your outcomes, or change the outcomes or the action steps if things are not going the way you want.

## **Funding and Contracts**

Your SSA will complete a lot of work behind the scenes so you can receive services. Your SSA will authorize services with the Funding and Contracts team based on your available funding and the services you and your team request to meet the outcomes in your My Plan.

## **Benefits**

Maintaining Medicaid can be complicated. Your SSA can assist in getting an authorized representative from HCDDS assigned if you are on a Medicaid waiver and you are not residing with family members who are also on Medicaid.

Agency staff will still need your help in getting required documents, but the authorized representative will attend your appointment on your behalf. Similarly, with a referral from your SSA, Hamilton County DD Services has a benefits coordinator that can meet with you to provide knowledge surrounding the basic operations and interrelationships of Social Security and other federal, state and local work incentive programs for benefits such as: Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicare, Medicaid and other public assistance programs.

Additionally, the benefits coordinator is available to complete a benefits analysis so you know how your income will be impacted by community employment. The HCDDS benefits coordinator can assist you with understanding how an increase in earned income will impact your benefits.

The benefits coordinator also works closely with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities to develop a benefits summary and analysis. The analysis can provide the customized information you need to make an informed decision about work. After the benefits analysis is complete, ongoing work incentive counseling is provided at critical transition points and follow-up is offered at regular intervals.

## Psychology Services

Hamilton County DD Services has two psychologists who are available to help people with a variety of needs and who do not have another option for psychology services. Agency psychologists can conduct assessments when requested by the SSA, which may help with behavior support needs and high-risk situations. Our psychologists do not provide ongoing therapy support, but your SSA can refer you to our community partners for counseling.

HCDDS psychologists also provide training for agency staff, as well as for staff at provider agencies. The psychologists also consult with the Introduction and Eligibility team, where they may help determine whether a person meets the eligibility requirements for HCDDS services.

# OFFICE OF INTEGRATED SERVICES

## Behavior Supports

For individuals who may have ongoing and significant risks in their lives, your SSA may refer you to consult with the Behavior Support team to help understand and minimize these risks that might put you or the community in harm's way. The agency's Behavior Support team advocates for using positive support strategies across all environments and circumstances.

This team believes in the least restrictive forms of supports and interventions, which can mitigate the risk of harm to a person or those around them. This practice also highlights and builds off of a person's unique gifts, talents, strengths, hopes, dreams and preferences.

The HCDDS Behavior Support team recognizes and considers all the factors that influence a person's behavior when determining how to best support people served. Staff value the unique qualities that make each person who they truly are, and early identification of need helps increase the effectiveness of behavior support interventions.

Staff are encouraged to make referrals at the first signs of an identified risk and after receiving approval from the person and their team. Risks can be identified through conversation, during the My Plan process, or as an emergent need arises. Once an SSA makes a referral, the behavior support specialist will consult with the team as long as needed in order to promote growth, choice and independence in the future.

# OFFICE OF PLANNING, INNOVATION & QUALITY

The Office of Planning, Innovation and Quality is responsible for ensuring excellent quality services and conducts satisfaction surveys throughout the year. A team member may call or meet you in person to hear how you feel about your services and supports. Through these surveys and meetings, recommendations are made so we can continue to improve.

This team also supports many innovative projects that build on best practices like community integration, supporting aging caregivers, and program development; such as our Provider Search tool, which assists individuals and their teams in finding providers that they trust can meet their needs and support them to achieve outcomes.

## Provider Relations and Compliance

Hamilton County DD Services works with certified providers to deliver quality services and supports for people with developmental disabilities. The Quality team ensures compliance with requirements set by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and Medicaid. They also monitor trends and listen to concerns from people who receive services, HCDDS staff, and providers to ensure the DD system in Hamilton County evolves to meet the needs of people we support.

For independent and agency service providers, the Quality team offers comprehensive training and support to equip providers with tools for success. This includes trainings on state and countywide changes, direct consultation and more.

## Integration and Advocacy

The Integration and Advocacy team is dedicated to creating opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. They guide each person we support as they consider how to live a good life, which can be different for everyone. This team can help you overcome obstacles and meet basic needs, so you can focus on finding new friendships, volunteering, working, getting an education, going places in your community and enjoying life, whatever that means to you.

Families and providers can help you discover your strengths, take you places and support you along the way. Our Integration and Advocacy team works with people in your life to explore your interests and talents, and connect you to community resources. Your SSA can help you get involved.

## Family Support

A supportive community is critical to a good life for all age groups, from babies to seniors. We promote a partnership in which families take control of building a good life for their loved one, and the DD system provides support and services to complement that family's goals.

We provide tools to visualize a meaningful life and put steps in place to help realize that vision, emphasizing activities and opportunities that already exist in the community. Your SSA can connect you with the HCDDS family engagement coordinator to learn more.

# MAJOR UNUSUAL INCIDENT AND PREVENTION (MUIP)

No one deserves to be treated poorly. If you or another person with a disability whom you know is the victim of abuse, neglect, theft or other crimes, MUIP is here to help. The MUIP Unit will listen to your concerns, take steps to ensure your health and welfare, and determine what other actions should take place.

All HCDDS employees are required to report any activity that has, or has the potential to, put a person with developmental disabilities at risk to our MUIP Unit. HCDDS employees may also notify law enforcement or 241-KIDS, depending on the incident.

Other incidents or concerns (not crimes but still serious) should be reported to prevent harmful situations. Based on legal criteria, your concern would fall into one of these categories:

1. Major Unusual Incident (MUI), which would require a formal investigation and may include law enforcement, administrative action and a prevention plan.
2. Unusual Incident (UI) also requires formal administrative action and a prevention plan. Any necessary investigation would be conducted by the appropriate administration and team members.
3. Complaint and/or concern, which should be addressed by the service team and those involved. The concern should be documented to prevent further occurrence.

Both MUIs and UIs are determined by strict criteria in the law, and both require administrative action and a prevention plan. The main goal of MUIP is to promote the prevention of major unusual incidents from occurring and recurring.

You can find a full description of the MUI rule and an MUI manual for families and individuals on the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities website, [dodd.ohio.gov](http://dodd.ohio.gov).

To report abuse, neglect, or other crimes or concerns specific to persons with disabilities:

1. Try to remove yourself and/or the person for whom you are concerned from harm's way, which may include calling 911.
2. Call Hamilton County DD Services' Emergency Hotline, (513) 794-3308, which is operated 24 hours a day, seven days per week. An on-call service will initiate support after office hours and an HCDDS employee will call you back as soon as possible.
3. You can also call the MUI hotline, (513) 559-6629 to report incidents.

# OTHER COMMITMENTS TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

## Self-Determination

Self-determination is the ability for you to make choices about how you would like to live your life and share this information with your team. The principle of self-determination is central to the services and supports HCDDS provides. It is especially important to the person-centered planning process your SSA will use to create your annual My Plan.

The person-centered approach to providing services is based on your choices, preferences, strengths and dreams. Planning includes you, your family and others who you want to be a part of your team. Your team may assist you in developing personal relationships, connecting to the community, increasing the control over aspects of your own life, and overcoming obstacles to achieving your goals.

## Confidentiality and Access to Records

You have the right to see and copy your own records. The information in your file is kept private, except where required by law. We require your signed permission to share information from your file with others, including those sent to another agency.

To see your file, ask your service & support administrator (SSA) or make a written request. Your SSA or a family member can help you read your file, if needed.

## Complaint Procedures and Right to Appeal

Hamilton County DD Services and its employees make every effort to ensure your rights are respected. If you do not agree with something that happens to you or with a decision that has been made, call your SSA or ask to speak to a supervisor at (513) 794-3300.

If your concern cannot be resolved through your SSA or their supervisor, please contact Jennifer Meadows, director of Office of Medicaid, Contracts and SSA, at (513) 559-6626. If you continue to feel your concern has not been adequately addressed, you may request a meeting with the superintendent. You can ask your SSA to guide you through the process if you need help.



**The 24-hour on-call phone number for emergencies is (513) 794-3308.** You can call this number at any time to report abuse or health and safety issues.

If you have questions about information in this handbook, contact Melissa Haas, director of Service and Support Administration, at (513) 559-6886, or [Melissa.Haas@hamiltongdds.org](mailto:Melissa.Haas@hamiltongdds.org).





— HAMILTON COUNTY —  
**DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**  
— S E R V I C E S —

