

ONA Ramirez June Initiative

Resource Guide



Services for New Americans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) in New York State

Created by the NYS Office for New Americans (ONA) Ramirez June Initiative in partnership with the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC).



**Developmental
Disabilities
Planning Council**



**Office for
New Americans**

How to use this Resource Guide

This Resource Guide intends to assist immigrant service providers in supporting new Americans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families in accessing services in New York State.

Part 1 of this Resource Guide describes the ONA Ramirez June Initiative and has information about disabilities and new Americans in New York State.

Part 2 has information for providers to assist families with young children including information about early childhood development and developmental delays.

Part 3 has information about New York State agency services for individuals with disabilities including information about which immigration statuses can access each service.

Part 4 shares mental health resources and additional resources.

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Part 1

Ramirez June Initiative

Connecting New Americans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and their Families to Vital Resources, Information, and Services in New York State



Mission

The New York State Office for New Americans Ramirez June Initiative was created to support new Americans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in New York State. The initiative's mission is to help affirm the dignity, value, respect, contribution, and worth of all New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) by assisting new Americans with I/DD and their families to connect with vital resources, information, and services. The Ramirez June Initiative is a collaboration between the NYS Office for New Americans (ONA) and the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC).

Inspiration

New American families who faced complex barriers to accessing services for their family members with intellectual and developmental disabilities in New York State inspired ONA and the DDPC to create the Ramirez June Initiative. The initiative is named after two new American families who live in New York State, the Ramírez family and the family of Siewling (June) Lum.

Goals of the Ramirez June Initiative

- Expand the capacity of the ONA network and community partners to assist new Americans with I/DD and their families in connecting with vital resources, information, and services.
- Conduct outreach and community engagement with new Americans with I/DD and their families as well as with immigrant service providers in NYS.
- Develop and distribute disability-themed resource materials.
- Increase awareness for the identification and prevention of human trafficking of new Americans with I/DD.
- Share strategies, promising practices, and lessons learned with the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council and other key stakeholders.

The New York State Office for New Americans

Founded in 2012, ONA is the nation's first statutorily created immigrant services office. ONA assists all new Americans with accessing and navigating a variety of free services and support through its statewide network of community-based providers. For more information, visit <https://dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans> or follow ONA on Twitter at @NYSNewAmericans or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/NYSNewAmericans>.

The New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC)

The New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council addresses the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through the development of demonstration projects around advocacy, systems change, and capacity building efforts that promote self-determination, integration, and inclusion in all facets of life. For more information about the DDPC, visit <https://ddpc.ny.gov> or follow the DDPC on Twitter @NYSDDPC or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/nysddpc>.

The Ramírez Family

The Ramírez family came to New York State from Oaxaca, Mexico, in 2003 in search of a better life and access to opportunities for their children Herminia, Monica, Humberto, and Victor. Their son Humberto has cerebral palsy and uses assistive technology which helps him communicate. Humberto's sister Monica said, "Humberto is a great brother who I see as a role model. He has inspired me to achieve my goals and taught me that there are no limits. That it is always better to focus on one's ability. Humberto is a person who gives a lot of love and receives a lot of love."

The Family of Siewling (June) Lum

Siewling (June) Lum is originally from Malaysia. June overcame complex barriers and waited years to access disability-related services for her son who has autism. Now June is a member of the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council's (DDPC) Cultural Competency and Language Access Workgroup and she supports families with developmental needs as a self-direction broker.

New Americans in New York State



New Americans are individuals who were born outside the U.S. and who currently reside in the U.S. In New York State, there are about 4.4 million new Americans which is almost one-quarter of the total population of 19.45 million total individuals. Here are some examples of new Americans¹:

Asylee/Asylum Seeker

A person who meets the definition of a refugee but who applies for this status from within the United States, either when they are seeking admission at a port of entry or after they have already entered the country in a different status or without a status.

Green Card Holder

A permit issued by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services that allows individuals to live and work in the United States on a permanent basis. Green card holders may apply for naturalization after living in the U.S. for five years. Currently, green cards are subject to renewal every 10 years.

Immigrant/Nonimmigrant

An immigrant is any non-citizen who is legally permitted to remain in the United States. A nonimmigrant is a temporary non-citizen visitor to the United States such as a tourist, student, or business visitor.

Lawful Permanent Resident

An immigrant who has been lawfully accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the United States. Lawful Permanent Residents are granted admission to the U.S. based on family relation or job skill. Refugees and asylees may adjust to LPR status after one year of continuous residence. Generally, lawful permanent residents are those individuals who have green cards and are permitted to apply for naturalization after five years of residence in the U.S.

Mixed Status Family

Many new American families are mixed status meaning that different family members have different immigration statuses. In a mixed-status family, one family member may be undocumented while another family member is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident (green card holder). Many mixed status families have U.S. citizen children.

89.7% of children with immigrant parents are U.S. citizens.² In New York State, about 359,000 U.S. citizens live in mixed status families that file taxes.³

Refugee

A person who flees his or her country due to persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group. Refugees enter the United States through the U.S. Resettlement Program: <https://www.state.gov/refugee-admissions/>

Undocumented Individuals

People who entered the U.S. without inspection by immigration services or who entered lawfully but overstayed their visa. An estimated 835,000 undocumented individuals live in NYS.⁴

Language Access in New York State



In New York State, about 2.5 million individuals have limited English proficiency (LEP).⁵ Individuals with LEP have difficulty communicating effectively in English and self-report speaking English less than “very well.” About 234,613⁶ children ages 5-17 are English Learners, which is about nine percent of the total New York State population of students.⁷ New York State Executive Law Section 202-a. establishes New York’s Statewide Language Access Policy. The Statewide Language Access Policy requires state agencies to translate vital agency documents into the top 12 most commonly spoken non-English language among limited English proficient New Yorkers. U.S. Census data (including data from the American Community Survey) is used to determine the top 12 languages

most commonly spoken by LEP individuals in New York State. New York's language access law also provides agencies, in consultation with the Office of Language Access, the option to add up to four more languages of translation beyond the top 12. The assessment about whether to include additional languages must be based on factors that are identified in the language access law.⁸ NYS Language Access Policy webpage: <https://ogs.ny.gov/new-york-state-language-access-law>

The Top Ten Non-English Languages Spoken by Individuals with Limited English Proficiency in New York State⁹

1. Spanish: 1,201,322	4. Yiddish: 64,070	7. Haitian Creole: 54,746	10. Polish: 34,840
2. Chinese: 379,745	5. Bengali: 64,020	8. Italian: 46,431	11. French: 30,770
3. Russian: 119,380	6. Korean: 55,506	9. Arabic: 40,781	12. Urdu: 28,827

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities



The ONA Ramirez June Initiative was created to assist new Americans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families in connecting with vital resources, information, and services in New York State. Some new Americans may not have records that a disability occurred during their development (before they were 22 years old). New Americans might not always have medical records from their country of origin, or they might not have had their disability identified by a medical professional.

Information about disabilities in this Resource Guide intends to assist service providers who are supporting new American families with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other disabilities.

- Developmental disabilities begin during the developmental period or before an individual turns 22 years old in New York State.¹⁰
- Developmental disabilities are typically lifelong.
- Some individuals with developmental disabilities may benefit from support services for their health, safety, and overall well-being.¹¹

Examples of developmental disabilities in the scope of the Ramirez June Initiative include, but are not limited to:

- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Cerebral palsy
- Epilepsy
- Intellectual disabilities
- Prader-Willi syndrome
- Neurological Impairment
- Familial Dysautonomia

The Ramirez June Initiative also engages with the wider new American disability community in NYS to better understand barriers and how to improve accessibility and inclusivity for all individuals with disabilities.

Disability Statistics

- About 1 in 6 children aged 3 to 17 years in the U.S. has one or more developmental disabilities according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).¹²
 - (The CDC's definition of developmental disabilities includes more developmental disabilities than the New York State definition.)
- About 1 in 44 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) according to estimates from the CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDN) Network.¹³
 - Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can be diagnosed by age 2. Autism spectrum disorder can sometimes be detected as early as 18 months.¹⁴
- Intellectual disabilities occur in about 1.48% of boys and 0.90% of girls according to the CDC.¹⁵
- Cerebral palsy occurs in about 1 in 323 children, or 0.3%.¹⁶

Part 2

Developmental Awareness



As they grow, children reach many milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act, and move. Parents and caregivers can celebrate their child's growth by looking for developmental milestones. Understanding children's development can help families identify signs of a developmental delay and get help early. Early treatment can make a big difference in a child's ability to learn new skills.¹⁷ If you are a service provider assisting a family with young children, you can support them to monitor developmental milestones and engage with their doctor or nurse to have developmental screenings completed at the recommended ages.

Developmental Milestones

Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. All children develop at their own pace, but most children reach developmental milestones at or around a certain age. Here are some examples of developmental milestones to inform providers assisting families with young children.

At two months of age, most babies:¹⁸

- Calm down when spoken to or picked up.
- Look at faces.
- Seem happy to see you.
- Smile when you talk to or smile at them.
- Make sounds other than crying.
- React to loud sounds.
- Watch you as you move.
- Look at a toy for several seconds.
- Hold head up when on tummy.

- Move both arms and both legs.
- Open hands briefly.

At six months of age, most babies:¹⁹

- Recognize familiar faces.
- Laugh.
- Like to look at self in a mirror.
- Take turns making sounds with you.
- Make squealing noises.
- Reach for toys they want.
- Close lips to show they don't want more food.
- Roll over.
- Push up with straight arms when on tummy.
- Lean on hands to support self when sitting.

Developmental Delays

A developmental delay is when a child does not reach their developmental milestones at the expected times. Delays may occur in areas such as growth, learning and thinking, or communicating.²⁰ A child with a developmental delay may not have gained the developmental skills expected of them in at least one area of development, including:

- Physical development (growth, gross, and fine motor abilities).
- Cognitive development (learning and thinking).
- Communication (understanding and using words).
- Social-emotional development (relating to others).
- Adaptive development (self-help skills, such as feeding).

Developmental Monitoring

Developmental monitoring is how parents and caregivers can look for their child's developmental milestones.²¹ Providers can support families with young children to use free multi-lingual checklists and multi-lingual material from the CDC to track developmental milestones: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

Developmental monitoring can help families with young children:

- Learn what to expect.
- Identify any concerns early.
- Talk about a child's progress with doctors and childcare providers.

Developmental Screening

Developmental screenings are questionnaires or checklists that observe whether a child is meeting typical developmental milestones in playing, learning, speaking, behaving, and moving.

- Developmental screenings can be completed by healthcare providers and other trained providers when a baby is 9, 18, 24, or 30 months or whenever there is a concern.
- A developmental screening can help find out if a child needs more help with development or if a formal developmental evaluation is recommended.

- It is not always obvious to doctors, childcare providers, or parents if a child has a developmental concern.²²
- Developmental screenings use a formal, validated screening tool. Learn more: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/child-health-development/watch-me-thrive>

All children need both developmental monitoring and developmental screening.²³

Early help makes a difference. If you have a concern about a child's development, do not wait, act early. Encourage families to tell their child's doctor or nurse if there are any possible signs of a developmental delay and encourage them to ask for a developmental screening.²⁴ For children ages 0-3, families can also call their local Early Intervention Program (EIP) if a child is having trouble with some or all of their developmental milestones. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has guidance for parents and caregivers, visit their page for "[Learn the Signs. Act Early](#)"²⁵ and view their information about [developmental milestones](#) which is available in different languages.

Resources for Developmental Awareness and the Early Identification of Disabilities

CDC "Learn the Signs. Act Early."

- <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>
- Information about developmental milestones, tracking children's development, and connecting to supportive services.
- Multi-lingual resources available.

eiFamilies

- Toll free: 877-205-0502
- <https://www.eifamilies.com/>
- Information, resources, and support for families connecting to the Early Intervention Program (EIP). This website is part of the Family Initiative Coordination Services Project at the Just Kids Early Childhood Learning Center. The Family Initiative Coordination Services Project is sponsored by the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Early Intervention.
- Multi-lingual resources available.

Families Together in NYS

- Hotline: 1-888-326-8644
- <https://www.ftnys.org/>
- Families Together in New York State is a family-run organization that represents families of children with social, emotional, behavioral, and cross-systems challenges. This website provides resources that help ensure that all children and youth have the support they need to succeed.
- Multi-lingual resources available.

Help Me Grow NY

- Call 2-1-1 and follow the prompts to connect with Help Me Grow.
- <https://helpmegrowny.org/>
- Information and connection to resources for parents and caregivers.
- Help Me Grow NYS Coverage: Greater Rochester Area; Long Island: Nassau County, Suffolk County; Onondaga County; Western NY: Allegany County, Cattaraugus County, Chautauqua County, Erie County, Genesee County, Niagara County, Orleans County, Wyoming County.
- Multi-lingual resources available.

Meeting the Social-Emotional Development Needs of Infants and Toddlers: Guidance for Early Intervention Program Providers and Other Early Childhood Professionals

- <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/4226.pdf>
- A resource from the NYS Department of Health Early Intervention Program that provides guidance for program providers and other early childhood professionals.

NYS Department of Health (DOH): “Can Your Baby Hear You? Information for Parents”

- <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/4877/>
- “Can Your Baby Hear You?” information in English.
- <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/4905.pdf>
- “Can Your Baby Hear You?” Spanish translation.

NYS “Growing Up Healthy”

- 24-hour Hotline: 1-800-522-5006
- TTY: 1-800-655-1789
- In New York City you can call 3-1-1
- https://health.ny.gov/community/pregnancy/health_care/prenatal/guh.htm
- Connect to resources near you for health care, nutrition, pregnancy, family planning, children’s special needs, and more.
- Multi-lingual assistance available.

NYS Multiple Systems Navigator

- <https://www.msnavigator.org/>
- Access helpful health, education, human services, and disability information on one user-friendly website. Built for youth, parents, family members and caregivers that rely on supports from multiple child and family serving systems.
- Multi-lingual resources available.

NYS Parent Guide

- <https://www.nysparentguide.org/growth-and-development>
- Learn what to expect and how to prepare as you and your child develop over the first five years of life together.

Parent to Parent of New York State

- <http://parenttoparentnys.org/>
- Parent to Parent of New York State builds a supportive network of families to reduce isolation and empower those who care for people with developmental disabilities or special healthcare needs to navigate and influence service systems and make informed decisions.

WIC Program (Women Infants and Children)

- Call the “Growing Up Healthy” 24-Hour Hotline to locate the WIC Local Agency nearest to you:
1-800-522-5006
- TTY: 1-800-655-1789
- <https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/>
- The special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children offers education, breastfeeding support, referrals, and nutritious foods for caregivers of children up to age 5 with any immigration status.
- Multi-lingual resources available.

Part 3

New York State Agency Services for Individuals with Disabilities

This Resource Guide includes general information about New York State services for community-based providers to assist new Americans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and individuals with other disabilities in connecting with services. For more information about who is eligible for each program, please see the corresponding sections of this Resource Guide or connect directly with the New York State agencies through their website or contact information. New York State service providers described in this Resource Guide include:

NYS Agency	Age	Contact for General Information
Early Intervention Program (EIP) New York State Department of Health (DOH) Bureau of Early Intervention	0-3	518-473-7016 beipub@health.ny.gov https://www.health.ny.gov/community/infants_children/early_intervention/
Special Education New York State Education Department (NYSED)	3-21	518-474-3852 http://www.nysed.gov/
Adult Career and Continuing Education-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) New York State Education Department (NYSED)	14 and older	1-800-222-5627 http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr
Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)	All ages	1-866-946-9733 opwdd.ny.gov
Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (TRAIL) Program The Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs	All ages	1-800-624-4143 https://www.justicecenter.ny.gov/traid-program

Early Intervention Program (EIP)



New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)

Bureau of Early Intervention (BEI)

General Information: (518) 473-7016

Email: beipub@health.ny.gov

Website: https://www.health.ny.gov/community/infants_children/early_intervention/

Early Intervention Program Mission

The mission of the Early Intervention Program (EIP) is to identify and evaluate as early as possible those infants and toddlers whose healthy development is compromised and provide for appropriate intervention to improve child and family development.²⁶

How can Early Intervention Program services help?

Early Intervention (EI) services help families learn the best ways to care for their child, support and promote their child's development, and include their child in family and community activities.

Who can the Early Intervention Program help?

Infants and toddlers under three years of age who may not be making progress like other children because of a developmental delay or disability. For the EIP, a disability means that a child has a diagnosed physical or mental condition that may lead to developmental concerns. These include, but are not limited to, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Down syndrome, motor disorders, or vision and hearing problems. A developmental delay means a child is behind in some area(s) of development, such as growth, learning and thinking, or communicating.²⁷

What ages does the Early Intervention Program serve?

The EIP serves children birth to three with disabilities and their families.

Is there a cost for services?

Services are at no cost to the family and will not affect a family's health insurance. There are no income requirements for the EIP. Funding sources to cover the cost of services include Medicaid and private health insurance, supplemented by county and State funds.²⁸

Accessibility by immigration status

A child does not need to be a U.S. citizen to be eligible for the EIP.²⁹ A child does need to be a resident of New York State to be eligible for the EIP.

Language access

The initial multidisciplinary evaluation (MDE) to determine eligibility for the EIP must be conducted in the child's dominant language, whenever possible.³⁰

What is the process to find out if your child qualifies for services?

The first step is to make a referral to the local EIP in the county that the family lives in. All counties in New York State (NYS) and New York City (NYC) have an EIP. Children who may need services must first be referred to the EIP. Parents can refer their own child to the EIP if they have a concern about their child's development. In NYS, certain professionals (e.g., a child's doctor or daycare provider) are required to refer children to the EIP if a developmental problem is suspected. After referral, a child will be evaluated by qualified professionals. The county EIP or the NYC EIP will help the family receive services if their child is found to be eligible.³¹ County contacts for the EIP can be found at:

https://www.health.ny.gov/community/infants_children/early_intervention/county_eip.htm

Why are Early Intervention services important?

EI helps children improve their abilities and learn new skills. Intervention services are likely to be more helpful when they are provided earlier in life rather than later.³² The connections in a baby's brain are most adaptable in the first three years of life. These connections, also called neural circuits, are the foundation for learning, behavior, and health. Over time, these connections become harder to change.³³

Early Intervention services can include:³⁴

- Assistive technology services and devices
- Audiology
- Family training, counseling, home visits, and parent support groups
- Medical services only for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
- Nursing services
- Nutrition services
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services
- Respite services
- Service coordination services
- Social work services
- Special instruction
- Speech-language pathology
- Vision services
- Health services needed for children to benefit from other early intervention services
- Transportation to and from early intervention services

Where are the services provided?

EI services can be provided anywhere in the community where your child typically spends their day, including,³⁵

- A family's home.
- Childcare center or family day care home that the child attends.
- Community and recreational centers, play groups, playgrounds, libraries.
- Any place parents and young children go for fun and support in their community.
- Early childhood programs and centers, such as Early Head Start.

At what age do Early Intervention services stop?

A child is eligible for the EIP from birth to age three. Children who are referred and evaluated through the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) in their school district and found eligible for preschool special education program services before their third birthday, have the option to stay in the EIP past their third birthday. The child's last eligible date depends on when their birthday occurs. In general, children transition to preschool special education either on September 1st or January 2nd. Some children who receive EIP services will not need or be eligible for preschool special education services, in which case their EI services end the day before their third birthday. If parents opt to have their child stay in the EIP after the child's third birthday, they can choose to leave the EIP and start preschool special education programs and services at any time by contacting the CPSE chairperson in their school district.

Special Education



New York State Department of Education (NYSED)

Office of Special Education (OSE)

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/>

General Information: 518-474-3852

Program goal

To ensure that a free appropriate public education and full educational opportunity in the least restrictive environment are provided to students with disabilities by making school programs more effective and improving outcomes for students, ensuring that federal and state regulations are followed, and ensuring the protections guaranteed to students with disabilities and their parents are enforced.³⁶

What services does the special education program provide?

“Special education” means specially designed individualized or group instruction or special services or programs to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities.³⁷

Who can the special education program help?

Students whose disability affects their ability to learn in school. Committee on Special Education (CSE) develops and implements an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Age

3-21. Students with IEPs may attend school until they graduate or until the end of the school year in which they turn 21.³⁸

Is there a cost for services?

All youth ages 3-21 who live in New York State can attend school for free including students with disabilities.³⁹

Accessibility by immigration status

Children of any immigration status who reside in New York can access public school, including undocumented children and the children of undocumented parents.⁴⁰

Language access

Complete a Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ) or other school assessment and self-identify as having limited English proficiency (LEP) to be eligible for English Language Learner (ELL) Services in a school.⁴¹ English Language Learner services are separate from Special Education. Bilingual Special Education (BSE) services support students in the ELL program, Bilingual Special Education services are not available in every school district.⁴² Interpretation is provided at Special Education meetings if requested by parents or caregivers of the student.⁴³

How to connect to services?

A parent, school district designated professional, licensed physician, judicial officer, or the child, can write a referral to the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) for children 3-5 or the Committee on Special Education for children 5 and older. The CPSE or CSE is a team with teachers, psychologists, and therapists. The CPSE or CSE will arrange for an evaluation of the student's abilities and needs. Based on the results of the evaluation, the committee decides if the student is eligible to receive special education services and programs.⁴⁴

Educational Disability Classifications for Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in NYS⁴⁵

1. Autism
2. Deafness
3. Deaf blindness
4. Emotional disturbance
5. Hearing Impairment
6. Learning disability
7. Intellectual disability
8. Multiple disabilities
9. Orthopedic impairment
10. Other health-impairment
11. Speech or language impairment
12. Traumatic brain injury
13. Visual impairment (including blindness)

What if a student is not eligible for special education?

Students with disabilities who are not eligible for special education may be eligible for disability accommodations under a 504 plan.⁴⁶ A 504 plan is designed to ensure that students with certain disabilities are provided appropriate educational services designed to meet their needs to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities.

At what age do services stop?

School services will stop after age 21 in New York State. To access services through the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), it is recommended to begin the OPWDD eligibility process by age 15.

Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)



New York State Education Department (NYSED)

General Information: 1-800-222-5627

<http://www.accres.nysed.gov/vr>

ACCES-VR Vision

All individuals with disabilities who want to work will have the opportunity to achieve employment and independence.⁴⁷

What services does ACCES-VR provide?

ACCES-VR helps individuals with disabilities to achieve and maintain employment and support independent living through training, education, rehabilitation, and career development services.

Who can ACCES-VR help?

Individuals who have a disability that prevents them from getting, keeping, or advancing in a job and can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services.

Age

14 and older.

Accessibility by immigration status

Students with a disability ages 14 to 21 years old with any immigration status, including undocumented students, may be eligible for ACCES-VR services. Non-citizens 21 years of age and older who are authorized to work in the U.S. may be eligible for ACCES-VR services.

Language access

Translation is provided for vital forms.

How to connect to services

Contact an ACCES-VR District Office to attend an “Orientation Session” or submit an application.⁴⁸

Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)



New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

General Information: 1-866-946-9733

[Opwdd.ny.gov](https://opwdd.ny.gov)

OPWDD Mission

“We help people with developmental disabilities live richer lives.”⁴⁹

What services does OPWDD provide?

OPWDD services can help individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities learn how to get along with other people, manage different situations, be a self-advocate, find ways to get places in their community, go places with less help, take part in activities they are interested in, and enjoy their free time doing activities they choose. OPWDD services include, but are not limited to, services in the community, day programming and employment services, housing and residential supports,

intensive behavioral supports, crisis services, and clinic services. Services are provided by hundreds of nonprofit agencies across NYS that OPWDD certifies and regulates, and by OPWDD. Many services offered by OPWDD require enrollment in Medicaid. Medicaid eligibility would also be needed to access OPWDD services funded by Medicaid.

Who can OPWDD help?

OPWDD serves individuals with a developmental disability, defined as “a condition that occurs anytime from birth until the age of 22, including, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, neurological impairment, autism spectrum disorder, Familial Dysautonomia, and Prader-Willi Syndrome.” The condition is expected to continue indefinitely, and the condition affects the person’s ability to function independently.

Please refer to the NYS definition of developmental disabilities or the OPWDD Front Door for more information. The Front Door is the way OPWDD connects people to the services they need and want: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/get-started/front-door>

Age

All ages. Sometimes provisional (temporary) eligibility is given to individuals under 8 years old.

Accessibility by immigration status

Contact the local OPWDD Developmental Disabilities Regional Office (DDRO) to confirm if an individual is eligible for OPWDD services. Some undocumented adults may have difficulty accessing specific OPWDD services if those services are funded by Medicaid.

Language Access

Over the phone interpretation is available as well as translation of vital documents.

How to connect to services

Contact your local OPWDD Regional Front Door Office and attend a “Front Door” presentation. The OPWDD Regional Office can provide information about how to begin the eligibility process.

Is there a cost for services?

Most OPWDD services are provided through the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid waiver, paid for by New York State and the federal government. To get HCBS waiver services, the individual needs Medicaid and needs to enroll in the HCBS waiver.⁵⁰ Individuals under the age of 18 may be eligible for Medicaid without considering parental income (called “Parental Deeming”). Individuals do not need to enroll in Medicaid or the HCBS waiver to get certain state-funded services, such as Family Support Services. Individuals may have other insurance coverage and still apply for Medicaid.

Additional OPWDD Information

The OPWDD Eligibility Process

The eligibility process begins at one of OPWDD's five Developmental Disability Regional Offices (DDROs) located throughout New York State. The individual applying for services and their family or caregivers should initially attend an informational "Front Door" session. Determination of eligibility will require submission of certain documentation and records, such as reports of assessments conducted by medical professionals. A care manager may be able to help with this process.

The Eligibility Coordinator at the local Developmental Disability Regional Office (DDRO) will need the following information:

- A psychological report that includes assessment of intelligence and adaptive skill functioning.
- A social/developmental history or psychosocial report.
- A medical or specialty report for diagnoses other than intellectual disability.
- Supporting documentation showing that the individual became disabled before age 22.

Other documentation as needed or required. Care Coordination Organizations can help gather and submit materials and records to the DDRO.

Organizations Involved in the OPWDD Eligibility Process

Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

- New York State agency that is responsible for the eligibility determination and authorization of services for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities.
- **OPWDD Front Door Office**
 - Front Door staff will guide applicants through the steps involved in finding out if they are eligible for services with OPWDD, identify needs, goals and preferences and help to work on a plan for getting those services.
 - Contact your Regional Front Door Office:
<https://opwdd.ny.gov/contact-us#access-services-through-front-door>

Health Clinics and Disability Service Providers

- Certain health clinics and disability service provider organizations conduct the assessments needed to decide if an individual is eligible for OPWDD services.
- Ask the OPWDD Regional Office or a Care Coordination (CCO) intake staff for more information about local eligibility assessment providers.

Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs)

- Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs) assist most people with the coordination of their OPWDD services.
 - Care managers work for CCOs and provide care management services to coordinate services for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- CCOs are private organizations that were created in 2018 from existing disability service providers that provided Medicaid Service Coordination (MSC).⁵¹
- There are seven Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs) in New York State.
 - There are typically at least two Care Coordination Organizations in any New York State region.

The Seven Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs) in New York State are:

- Advance Care Alliance (ACA)
- Care Design
- Tri-County Care
- Prime Care Coordination
- Life Plan CCO NY
- Person Centered Services
- Southern Tier Connect

Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (TRAID)



**New York State Justice Center for the
Protection of People with Special Needs**

General information: 1-800-624-4143

<https://www.justicecenter.ny.gov/traid-program>

TRAID Program Mission

“The TRAID Program’s mission is to coordinate statewide activities to increase access to and acquisition of assistive technology in the areas of education, employment, community living and information technology/telecommunications. The program serves individuals of all ages and disabilities.”

What services does the TRAID program provide?

Access to assistive technology for any New Yorker with a disability. Regional TRAID Centers provide, device loans for people to try at home, school, work, and in their communities. Regional TRAID Centers provide demonstrations to compare different devices, trainings for professionals and others,

information, and referrals. Device donations, reutilization, and repair, and public awareness at tabling events and conferences.

Who can the TRAIID program help?

Any individual living in New York who has a disability.

Age

All ages.

Is there a cost for services?

No cost.

Accessibility by immigration status

Individuals with any immigration status can access this program, including undocumented individuals.

Language access

Over the phone interpretation is available.

How to connect to services

Contact a representative at a Regional TRAIID Center.

Part 4

Additional Resources

Mental Health Resources



Just like physical health, an individual's mental health is important for their overall health. Many people have mental health conditions, and anyone can have a mental health concern. According to the CDC, 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. will experience a mental health condition each year.⁵² Up to 40% of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) also have mental health conditions.⁵³ Support from mental health professionals can help individuals with I/DD and caregivers to manage stress, distress, and symptoms of mental health conditions or concerns. Anyone can seek support and counseling even if they do not have a mental health condition.

The New York State Office of Mental Health

- <https://omh.ny.gov/>
- Connect with mental health resources and find mental health providers in New York State.
- Undocumented and uninsured individuals of any status can access mental health services at Office of Mental Health clinics through "sliding scale" payment programs.

NY Project Hope Emotional Support Helpline

- Helpline: 1-844-863-9314
- 8 a.m. -10 p.m., 7 days nyprojecthope.org
- Project Hope is New York's COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline. NY Project Hope helps New Yorkers understand their reaction and emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through an emotional support helpline, educational materials, and trusted referrals, NY Project Hope helps people manage and cope with changes brought on by COVID-19.
- <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- Lifeline: 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish
- Over the phone interpretation is available for the crisis centers, which supports over 150 languages.
- The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

NYS Mental Health Hotline

- Hotline: 1-800-273-8255
- Support for individuals who are distressed. Anyone can call.

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

- National Helpline: 1-800-662-4357
- Support for individuals of any immigration status who are distressed from concerns related to mental health and/or substance abuse.

Other Resources

Disability Resource Clearinghouse

- NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Information Line: 1-800-624-4143
- <https://www.justicecenter.ny.gov/disability-resources>
- “Information about disability-related programs, services, laws and regulations. The Justice Center provides links to resources from local, state, federal and national agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations. We seek to provide a wide-range of information that may be helpful to people with disabilities, their families, caregivers, and advocates.”

Independent Living Centers

- <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/independent-living-centers>
- Independent Living Centers (ILCs) provide an array of services that assist New Yorkers with all disabilities to live fully integrated and self-directed lives. ILCs assist with all aspects of living, learning, and earning.

NYAble

- NYAble: 1-855-5NY-ABLE (1-855-569-2253)
 - English & Español/multi-language accessibility.
 - Call Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., except holidays.
- <https://www.nyable.org>
- NY ABLE is a savings and investment tool that helps people with disabilities and their families save tax-free for short or long-term daily living expenses without risk of losing public benefits.
- Participants must be NYS residents with a disability that was present by age 26.
- Accounts can be open with a \$25 contribution (or a \$15 with payroll deduction).

New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence Hotline

- NYS Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-942-6906
 - English & Español/multi-language accessibility.
- NYC Hotline: 1-800-621-HOPE (4673) or dial 3-1-1
- TDD: 1-800-810-7444
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing: 7-1-1
- <https://opdv.ny.gov/>
- For the hotline number of local domestic violence programs, call the New York State Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline at 1-800-942-6906, English & Español/ Multi- language Accessibility, or go to New York State Domestic Violence Directory: <https://www.nyscadv.org/find-help/program-directory.html>
- Local hotlines can provide information on domestic violence resources in your community.

New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs

- Hotline: 1-855-373-2122
- <https://www.justicecenter.ny.gov/>
- Report suspected abuse or neglect.

New York State Office for New Americans

- New Americans Hotline: 1-800-566-7636
- <https://dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans> The multi-lingual New York State New Americans Hotline provides free and confidential immigration information and referrals to trusted help. Information for immigrant New Yorkers include referrals to free English language classes, immigration legal services and more.
- Open Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., except holidays.
- ONA's website includes additional information on resources for immigrants including COVID-19 related services.
- Multi-lingual resources available.

New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA)

- General: 1-844-697-6321
- <https://aging.ny.gov/>
- NYSOFA promotes and administers programs and services for New Yorkers 60 years of age and older and people of all ages with disabilities, along with their families and caregivers.

Text for Caregivers

- <https://platform.trumpia.com/onlineSignup/ddpctext/text4caregivers>
- Supportive texts for caregivers of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) offered in English and Spanish.

Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver Program

- www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/traumatic_brain_injury/resources.htm
- This program is designed to make it possible for individuals who have suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) to stay in their homes and communities. Home and Community Based Services TBI waiver services are designed to address the unique needs of eligible individuals and promote a service delivery system to assure maximum participant choice. When waiver services are appropriately combined with other services, it enables individuals with TBI to successfully live in their communities.

Report Human Trafficking

- 1-888-373-7888
- Text HELP or INFO to BeFree (233733).
- <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>
- If you are a victim of human trafficking or if you suspect that someone you know is, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline for free and confidential help in 170 languages.

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ONA Ramirez June Initiative

Resource Guide



Services for New Americans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) in New York State

Created by the NYS Office for New Americans (ONA) Ramirez June Initiative in partnership with the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC).



**Developmental
Disabilities
Planning Council**



**Office for
New Americans**