

Long-term care services and supports: More pay for direct support workers, streamlining of complex waiver system

Minnesota took important steps toward strengthening long-term services and supports in the 2019 session. The state will move forward with the Waiver Reimagine project to re-envision how services are provided under the current complex system of four disability waiver programs. The Waiver Reimagine effort will result in a simpler, streamlined two-tier waiver system based on the setting where services are provided.

An increase in funding for the Disability Waiver Rate System will lead to better compensation for direct support professionals, helping attract and retain workers in this critical field. Personal care assistants will also receive higher wages and benefits, as the result of a contract the union negotiated with the state. Other changes will improve the financial situation of people with disabilities who receive Medical Assistance, and families of children with disabilities covered by Medical Assistance under an option called TEFRA.

2019 legislation

Disability Waiver Rate System modifications. An adjustment in the Disability Waiver Rate System rates for home and community-based disability waivers will help in the effort to attract and retain direct support workers. The rate formulas will be adjusted for inflation more frequently. *FY 2020-21: \$34.2 million.*

Raising compensation for personal care assistants. Increased wages for direct support professionals represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) will help people keep the worker of their choice. Personal care workers will have a higher wage floor, earn more paid time off, and receive higher pay on more holidays. Direct support services help people live and receive services in their homes and communities of their choice, avoiding institutionalization to meet their needs for long-term services and supports. The state and the union negotiated a new contract in January 2019. *FY 2020-21: \$36.5 million.*

Waiver Reimagine for disability home and community-based waiver system. The state will streamline and simplify the four disability waivers: Brain Injury, Community Alternative Care, Community Access for Disability Inclusion and Developmental Disabilities. The changes will result in a standardized and simpler service menu that is easier to understand and lay the groundwork to create a new financing system that puts more focus on individual needs. The Legislature also called for recommendations to consolidate the four waivers into a two-tier structure. *FY 2020-21: \$2.6 million.*

New asset rules for people aging out of Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities. Some people formerly covered under Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities (MAEPD) may be able to keep more of their assets without losing coverage, improving their financial situations. *FY 2020-21: \$40,000.*

Lower fees for parents of children with disabilities. Reductions in parental fees for the Medical Assistance TEFRA option will help families of children with disabilities. This option lets families who otherwise wouldn't qualify for state health care programs receive coverage for children with disabilities. *FY 2020-21: \$3.1 million.*

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- [DHS 2019 session fact sheets](#)

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