Abilities First

ABILITIES FIRST | FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Understanding Missouri Waiver Waiting Lists

A guide for people with disabilities, families, and community partners

Keep requesting the services you need. Stay connected with your Support Coordinator, ask about waiting-list placement, and explore other resources while you wait.

Quick talking points

- Missouri has waiting lists for new enrollment in the Partnership for Hope, Community Support, and Comprehensive waivers. People already enrolled remain enrolled under this announcement.
- Eligibility does not mean funding or a waiver opening is available. DMH decides enrollment based on need, waiting-list order, openings, and funding.
- Your Support Coordinator should continue to document your needs, advocate with you, and help pursue appropriate waiting-list placement. Keep asking for services.
- A Support Coordinator is not solely responsible for securing funding and cannot guarantee it. People, families, providers, funders, and community partners all have roles.
- Ask about local options such as churches, foundations, scholarships, community programs, and county disability board funding where available. Each has its own rules and limits.
- Community funders may receive more requests while waiver has a waitlist. Local help may fill some gaps, but it cannot replace all waiver services.
- Report changes in health, safety, housing, or caregiver support right away. Do not wait for your next annual meeting. Call 911 for an immediate emergency.



What changed in Missouri?

Effective October 15, 2026, the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) began waiting lists for new enrollment in three developmental disability Medicaid waivers: Partnership for Hope, Community Support, and Comprehensive. DMH cited budget limits and has not announced an end date. People already participating in a waiver continue under this announcement.

What a waiver can help pay for?

Home and Community-Based Services waivers help eligible people get support to live and participate in their communities. Depending on the waiver and the person's approved plan, this may include help with daily living, employment, or respite so a caregiver can take a break.

How are enrollment decisions made?

DMH considers priority of need first, then the date a person joined the waiting list among people with the same priority. Enrollment also depends on available waiver openings and state funding. Your Support Coordinator does not control those decisions.

How can your Support Coordinator help?

- Document requested services, unmet needs, goals, and changes in your person-centered service plan. This is the plan based on what matters to you and the support you need.
- Help complete the steps for appropriate waiting-list placement when requirements are met, and help confirm your status.
- Continue to advocate with you, communicate changes in need, and follow up on service requests. Waiting does not mean the need has ended.
- Help identify other programs or funding you may qualify for, connect you with partners, and help you understand next steps.

Your Support Coordinator remains your partner in planning and advocacy, helping document your needs, request services, and explore available resources. Access to services and funding depends on state guidelines, eligibility requirements, and available funding. Your Support Coordinator will continue to advocate with you and keep your needs documented while you wait.

Questions to ask at your next contact?

"Are my service requests and unmet needs documented?"
"Am I on the appropriate waiting list?"
"What information is still needed?"
"What other resources can we explore, and who will follow up?"



Some needs may be met through other public programs, community services, or local funding. Ask your Support Coordinator to help explore options with you. You can also contact community organizations directly.

Local resources to explore:

- Churches and faith communities may offer practical help, donated items, or limited financial assistance. Ask whether help is available to the wider community.
- Foundations and charitable organizations may offer grants for specific needs, equipment, or activities.
- Scholarships or fee assistance may help with recreation, camps, classes, or other community activities.
- County developmental disability boards may have local funding or partner programs. Requests depend on local priorities, eligibility, application cycles, and available funds.
- Community organizations and providers may offer existing programs, equipment loans, transportation options, or other help. Ask about other public benefits you may qualify for as well.

Make a clear request

Describe the need, what support would help, the estimated cost, and when it is needed. Ask what the funder covers, what documents are required, and when a decision may be made. Share only the personal information needed for that request through an appropriate, secure process.

Agree on next steps with your Support Coordinator and other partners. Keep a simple record of requests, contacts, decisions, and follow-up dates. Let partners know if another source agrees to pay for the same need.

What community partners should expect

As people wait for waiver services, families and providers may turn more often to churches, foundations, scholarship programs, and local boards. Partners may see more requests for financial help, equipment, and other supports.

Local funders can help by explaining their criteria, available resources, and application process. Coordinating with the person and their Support Coordinator, with permission, can help reduce duplicate work and identify remaining gaps.

Local resources have limits. Assistance is not guaranteed and may be short term or limited to one need. Community help should not stop continued service requests, waiting-list follow-up, or advocacy for needed waiver services.

Stay Connected and Advocate

Keep your needs and contact information current

- Contact your Support Coordinator between meetings if needs change. Explain effects on daily life, health, safety, independence, or community participation.
- Report changes in caregiver availability, living arrangements, or risk as soon as possible. Ask whether the change affects your priority or available options.
- Keep your phone number, address, and preferred way to communicate up to date. Ask for plain-language explanations, an interpreter, or another format when needed.

Ways to advocate

- Share your experience in your own words. Explain what support would make possible. Share only details you are comfortable making public.
- Contact Missouri legislators about the importance of community-based services and the effects of unmet needs. Advocacy is a personal choice.
- Ask for a written explanation of a decision you do not understand or agree with, and information about any review or appeal options and deadlines.
- Use resources from MACDDS and STARLING to learn about advocacy and the budget process. Keep checking for current information.

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Information and resources

DMH waiver enrollment information and waiting list updates
https://dmh.mo.gov/dev-disabilities/waiver-enrollment

MACDDS advocacy resources
https://macdds.org/advocacy/

STARLING information and resources
https://starling.memberclicks.net/

Find Missouri House members
https://house.mo.gov/

Find Missouri Senate members
https://senate.mo.gov/

DMH Information and Referral: 1-800-241-2741

This guide is published by Abilities First. MACDDS and STARLING are independent sources of additional information. State details were checked against DMH's waiver enrollment page on November 8, 2026. Programs and funding may change; confirm current information with your Support Coordinator.

