Residential Options & the Waivers that Cover Them



Navigating waiver services and residential care can be a very confusing and overwhelming process. In this article, we hope to provide a brief snapshot of residential services and associated waivers to help breakdown the process to make it more manageable.

Types of Waivers

There are three waivers in Virginia that are focused on providing services for individual in the Developmental Disability (DD) community. These waivers include: Building Independence (BI) Waiver, the Family and Individual Supports (FIS) Waiver, and the Community Living (CL) Waiver. The Building Independence Waiver provides the lowest level of support for individuals who are more independent, and the Community Living Waiver covers the most intensive supports for individuals that need significant assistance.

Residential Options

There are many residential options for adults with disabilities in Virginia depending on their needs, preferences, level of independence, and support required. Below are the primary living arrangements available under the Medicaid waivers listed in order from least to most supportive environments:

Independent Living with Supports: In this setting, the individual lives on their own and receives minimal, schedule support visits to help with things such as bills, transportation, shopping, etc. It is best for adults with higher levels of independence who still benefit from occasional help. This service is covered by the BI Waiver.

Shared Living: In this arrangement, an individual resides in their own home or apartment in the community. They reside with a roommate of the person's choosing. The individual receives a Medicaid reimbursement for the roommate's portion of room and board including rent, food, and utilities in exchange for the roommate providing minimal supports. It is best for individuals who want companionship and moderate assistance in a semi-independent setting. This service is covered by the BI waiver, the FIS waiver, and the CL waiver.

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Supported Living: Individuals in Supported Living reside in an apartment setting with scheduled support and access to 24/7 staff support in the apartment community. They may live alone or with another individual that requires supports. This service is covered by the FIS and CL waiver.

In-Home Supports: This service provides supports to individuals living in a family home such as respite care, personal assistance, or behavior therapy. It is a great fit for individuals who have family that can provide housing and care but need some outside supports in order to maintain care at home. This is covered by the FIS and CL waiver.

Sponsored Residential: In this setting, individuals live in a host-family home. The homeowners are trained to provided care and are compensated as independent contractors under a licensed agency who ensures that all regulatory requirements and standards are met by the caregivers and the home. It may be best for individuals that benefit from a more personal environment with fewer and more consistent caregivers. Individuals who like to be more active and integrated in the community may also benefit from this setting. This level of care is covered by the CL waiver.

Group Home: Residential care in a group home provides 24/7 staffing to a small group of peers who live together in a licensed home and receive supports from staff. There are two categories of group homes recognized by DBHDS. Those with four or fewer residents and those with greater than 4 residents. DBHDS considers those with four or fewer residents to be least restrictive and preferred environments. Group homes may be best suited to those that need moderate to intensive supports with daily activities, medication management, and community involvement. This living arrangement is covered by the CL waiver.





