



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Erin Dalton, Director



Office of
Developmental
Supports

4550 McKnight Road, 1st Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Phone: 412-436-2750
Fax: 412-271-1392
alleghenycounty.us/dhs/ODS

24-hour emergency service:
412-350-4457

Intake and Registration:
412-253-1250

Administration

Brenda Bulkoski
DHS DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR
OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORTS

MH/ID Advisory Board

Oversight:
Pennsylvania Department of Human
Services, Office of Developmental
Programs (Pa. DHS ODP)

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid
Services (CMS)

Mission

Allegheny County Department
of Human Services, Office of
Developmental Supports (ODS) will
foster an equitable and inclusive
person-centered environment;
committed to compassionately serving
all who interface with our services –
individuals seeking and/or receiving
supports, their families, our providers,
and the community.

Background

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (AC DHS) Office of Developmental Supports (ODS) is the county's public office responsible for providing eligible Allegheny County residents with a coordinated, community focused system of high-quality and cost effective services, programs and opportunities that support participants in living an Everyday Life in their community. The Office of Developmental Supports (ODS) registers eligible Allegheny County residents with:

- Intellectual Disability (ID)
- Autism
- Developmental Disability (DD) prior to age 9 and
- Medically Complex Condition (MCC) prior to age 22

Everyone must meet all PA Department of Human Services (PA DHS) Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) established criteria.

ODS includes the Allegheny County DHS Multi-System team, previously under the former Office of Integrated Program Services. Its purpose is to provide support and resource options to DHSs children and youth with the most complex needs that are involved across DHS Program offices. DHS offices include Children and Youth and the Office of Behavioral Health along with the Office of Developmental Supports.

ODS has three office locations:

4550 McKnight Road, 1st Floor Pittsburgh, PA 15237 412-436-2750	110 Roessler Road Suite 300 D Pittsburgh, PA 15220 412-253-1399	810 River Avenue 2 nd Floor Pittsburgh, PA 15212
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Office Overview	
Persons served* – 2023	6,216
ODS filled positions (a/o 01/2020)	5
Base-funded† ‡ agencies under contract (FY 2022–2023)	56
Total Budget (FY 2023-2024) <i>Of the total budget</i> Federal: 10.7% County: 1.2% State: 87.9% Other: 0.2%	\$14.9 million
Contracted agencies account for 88.2% of the ODS budget	
*All of these individuals receive Supports Coordination services. Some also received services via Intellectual Disability/Autism (ID/A) Consolidated, Community Living or Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) Waivers.	
† Approximately 115 agencies providing ID/A services to Allegheny County residents are contracted directly with Pa. DHS ODP.	
‡ All clients receiving services were served by at least one contracted provider.	

Legal Mandates

ODS operates under authority and within the constraints of:

- The MH/ID Act of 1966
- The Medicaid Home- and Community-based Services Waiver Program Section 2176
 - Person/Family Directed Support Waiver
 - Community Living Waiver
 - Consolidated Waiver

Philosophy and Principles

Allegheny County Department of Human Services Office of Developmental Supports is committed to partnering with individuals and their families to fulfill their own vision of a quality life through an inclusive and intersectional blend of community, natural, and service-based supports.

We want to help people navigate, network and access what they want and need in their communities, so they can live the good life they envision- an Everyday Life. The foundation of Office of Developmental Programs (ODPs) Everyday Lives: Values In Action is valuing what is important to people with disabilities and their families, who are striving for an everyday life and recognizing their right to an everyday life; a life that is no different than that of all other citizens.

This help can include use of Charting LifeCourse (CtLC) Framework and planning Tools, Community of Practice (CoP) LifeCourse Planning Tools. Charting the LifeCourse tools focus on supporting families and individuals across the lifespan. CtLC tools can assist families and individuals in identifying and navigating community supports and integrate an array of family/natural, community and system supports.

For more details about Everyday Lives: Values in Action and Charting the LifeCourse: Supporting Families across the Lifespan principles visit www.MyODP.org.

Supporting children and youth active with multiple DHS offices

The Multi System Planning Team has been collaborating with DHS Program offices for almost 20 years.

This team oversees facilitation of planning meetings for our most complex children and youth. These children and youth are typically involved in multiple DHS offices including Children, Youth and Families (CYF) and the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) along with the Office of Developmental Supports.

The Multi System team works to find resources that meet the specialized needs of these youth. They do this through Integration and Teaming meetings. These meetings bring together systems, providers, schools, and therapists, along with the individual and their families to look at existing resources and options that promote the wellness of the youth in the least restrictive setting possible. If necessary, the Multi System team will look to find and include subject matter experts.

Some situations require longer timeframes for planning of supports. This team would continue their involvement in these complex cases until services are secured and in place.

If resources cannot be located, the situation may be referred to the DHS Multi System Response team. The Manger of the Multi System team calls this meeting which includes administrators from each program office for added technical assistance, breaking down of barriers, or exploration of new/different resources.

This team also oversee admissions and discharges related to Allegheny County RESPOND (Residential Enhancement Services Planning Opportunities for New Directions) program along with other specialized placements such as RTF (Residential Treatment Facility) Step Down programs for youth and Enhanced Group Home options.

The Multi System team and the ODS Promising Practices team work closely together to support teams for individuals with extraordinary need.

Administration

The ODS is supervised through a series of Operational Grant Agreements by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Office of Developmental Programs (PA DHS ODP). The operation of ODS is the responsibility of the AC DHS deputy director for ODS. County advisory is provided by the Mental Health/Intellectual Disability Advisory Board. ODS is under the authority of the Allegheny County DHS director. ODS is also under the authority of the Allegheny County manager and county executive. Learn more about the board here: [https://alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/About/Advisory-Bodies/Mental-Health/Intellectual-Disability-\(MH/ID\)-Advisory-Board.aspx](https://alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/About/Advisory-Bodies/Mental-Health/Intellectual-Disability-(MH/ID)-Advisory-Board.aspx).

Responsibilities

ODS, also known as the Allegheny County Administrative Entity (AE), in conjunction with other AC DHS offices and through more than 169 community-based agencies, provides the following services:

- monitors and helps to ensure the availability of services designed to meet the immediate needs of individuals registered with ODS and, utilizing the strengths of individuals and the community,
- empowers these individuals to become more self-sufficient in choosing the supports and services they need,
- authorizes and oversees state and federally funded, home and community-based services which may include but are not limited to community participation supports, employment services, residential services, Life Sharing, transportation, adaptations to the home and/or vehicle, habilitation, and special therapies. All individuals receive supports coordination,
- provides technical assistance, community resources and training to stakeholders. This includes individuals, families, human services and education professionals, Supports Coordination Organizations (SCO) and provider agencies,
- conducts annual financial audits of provider agencies and SCOs to assure compliance with state fiscal standards,
- conducts monitoring of provider agencies to assure service delivery as authorized for each individual,
- qualifies providers of waiver services,
- plans and implements new program initiatives as developed by ODP,
- responds to requests for assistance, complaints and appeals from stakeholders,
- reports and manages incidents as defined by ODP,
- oversees waiver capacity management activities,
- acts as central intake and registration of individuals who are seeking supports coordination and services,
- develops and maintains a Human Rights Committee (HRC),
- collaborates with the local Health Care Quality Unit (HCQU), Acentra Health Southwestern PA HHCQU (formerly KEPRO) HCQU (<https://hcqu.kepro.com/>),
- develops and maintains an employment protocol that complies with the Employment First Act and monitors various activities related to the quality management of both individual and system indicators.

For more details about ODS functions and activities refer to the current Administrative Entity Operating Agreement available at www.myODP.org

Mandates

ODS operates under authority and within the constraints of:

The MH/ID Act of 1966

The Medicaid Home and Community-based Services Waiver Program Section 2176

- Consolidated Waiver
- Community Living Waiver
- Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) Waiver

Oversight of ODS

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that is responsible for administering Medicaid, Medicare, and State Children's Health Programs. CMS works with ODP in the determination of how Medicaid Waivers (including the Consolidated, Community Living and P/FDS) are to be implemented. ODP must assure CMS that the requirements that are set forth in implementing the waivers are met.

Office of Developmental Programs (ODP)

ODP is the state agency, within the PA Department of Human Services (PA DHS) that is designated to retain ultimate authority and responsibility for the operation of some PA waivers and to exercise oversight over the performance of waiver functions of other agencies. Their mission is to “support Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities to achieve greater independence, choice and opportunity in their lives. The office seeks to continuously improve an effective system of accessible services and supports that are flexible, innovative and person-centered.” Learn more at <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Providers/Pages/Developmental-Programs.aspx>

Office of Developmental Program Communications

ODP generates communications, formal documents that transmit information, make an announcement, transmit a regulation interpretation or issue a policy guideline, to affected individuals and organizations outside PA DHS.

Office of Developmental Program Bulletins

Bulletins are the rules and regulations that provide information on specific topics relating to the management of daily activities that stakeholders engage in. A bulletin is not a means to communicate within the department, but rather with external individuals and organizations. A bulletin is a public document. To search for and access bulletins visit <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Pages/default.aspx>

Administrative Entity Operating Agreement is a business agreement between ODP and Administrative Entities (AE). The AE Operating Agreement gives specific guidelines as to how waiver services must be provided in order to maintain compliance with ODP’s approved waiver applications to CMS. ODP assumes, through this agreement, that AEs will agree to continue their participation in the Consolidated, Community Living and Person/Family Directed Support Waivers (P/FDS). In Allegheny County ODS is the AE.

Quality Assessment and Improvement of ODS is conducted annually by ODP regional offices through the Quality Assessment and Improvement Monitoring Tool. The Quality Assessment and Improvement Monitoring tool is a direct reflection of the assurances in the Quality Assessment and Improvement Operating Agreement.

AC DHS ODS (Allegheny County Administrative Entity) Guidelines

Guidelines are step-by-step instructions and descriptions of a specific topic related to the activity needed to efficiently and effectively manage the requirements set forth by CMS and ODP. For the most part, guidelines are developed as a result of finalized ODP bulletins. However, guidelines can be developed without the introduction of a new bulletin, for instance when any AE (ODS) process changes.

Many times, workgroups are established to update or create processes, and the guideline is the end result. Guidelines have a standardized format, numbering sequence, issue and effective date, scope (target audience), and refer to related AE information or ODP bulletins. Guidelines are distributed to the targeted audience as they are finalized.

Service System

Allegheny County ODS assists eligible individuals and their families with accessing supports and services. ODS also provides oversight of AC DHS-contracted service providers. ODS does not provide direct services or financial support to pay for services.

Communicating with the community

Through ODS community outreach they are committed to sharing information regarding subjects of particular interest to individuals with disabilities, their family members and caregivers and professionals who support them. ODS staff is available to provide presentations or host information tables at various events. More information is available from the <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Services/Human-Services-DHS/Contact-Information-for-DHS/ODS-Outreach>.

The Allegheny County DHS website ODS pages provides the opportunity learn more about ODS, human services and community resources for all. ODS Key Communicators receive emails from ODS that include information about resources, workshops, informational materials, special education, community events and more. Learn more at <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Services/Human-Services-DHS/DHS-Offices/Office-of-Developmental-Supports>

Accessing services and supports

The first step in accessing the supports and services through ODS is to call the ODS intake and registration at 412-253-1250. An Intake Specialist will guide the interested participant through the registration process. After eligibility is verified, a meeting is scheduled with the individual and/or family. At this meeting a supports coordination organization (SCO) is chosen so that supports coordination services can begin. More information on the ODS Fact Sheets can be found by visiting <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Services/Human-Services-DHS/DHS-Offices/Office-of-Developmental-Supports>

Supports Coordination, also known as Targeted Service Management (TSM)

All those registered through ODS are eligible for supports coordination. A supports coordinator (SC) helps to locate, coordinate and monitor services. Providers of Supports Coordination (Supports Coordination Organizations) are not permitted to provide direct services or to transport individuals or families. There are several SCOs in Allegheny County. Find the list on the AC DHS ODS webpage, <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Services/Human-Services-DHS/DHS-Offices/Office-of-Developmental-Supports>

The Individual Support Plan (ISP)

Based on the important values and desired outcomes expressed by the person, their family, and the people that support them, an Individual Support Plan (ISP) is developed. The supports coordinator (SC), through a person-centered process, assists to prioritize needs and identify the supports that are necessary to meet those needs. The ISP is used to ensure that publicly funded services and supports meet assessed needs and are in keeping with the individual's preferences.

The ISP is a summary of planned services and supports, identified through dialogue with the individual and family along with other members of the ISP team. The team is made up of people who know and support the individual / family. The following dynamic values are most evident in the ISP process:

- promoting self-determination through the driving force of an individual's desired outcomes
- creating one coordinated service plan that integrates all aspects of an individual's life
- providing a consistent response toward the individual based on their desires and needs
- striving for improved financial accountability

Assessed needs may include home and community-based services that require funding through a waiver. The SC is responsible for documentation completion and communications with ODS to assist the perspective waiver participant in acquiring funding. This documentation includes the Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) form. More information on the ODS Fact Sheets can be found by visiting <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Services/Human-Services-DHS/DHS-Offices/Office-of-Developmental-Supports>

Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS)

The PUNS is the tool used to understand the needs of people waiting for waiver funded services in Pennsylvania. Anyone who either has or anticipates having unmet needs within five years should have a PUNS completed and entered in HCSIS by their supports coordinator. A prospective waiver participant may have a PUNS category of Emergency, Critical or Planning, depending on how soon the need for services are anticipated.

The PUNS was originally developed to have a way to systematically monitor people awaiting waiver services across the state. PUNS information is used

- by ODS to plan for county budgeting and service provision
- by ODS to identify service gaps
- by ODP for statewide planning and budgeting and
- to as well as to help develop the governor's annual budget request.

For more about eligibility, supports coordination, the ISP, PUNS and other system and services related information visit:

- <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Services/Human-Services-DHS/DHS-Offices/Office-of-Developmental-Support>
- MyODP, www.MyODP.org
- PA Department of Human Services, www.dhs.pa.gov
- ASERT, www.paautism.org

Base Funding

People who have registered through ODS may be eligible for services through base funding. Base funding is made up of state dollars. The availability of base funding continues to decrease.

Waiver Services

Waiver programs are the Medicaid alternative to providing comprehensive long-term services (home and community-based services) in institutional settings. In 1981, congress authorized the “waiver” of certain federal requirements to allow a state to provide home and community-based services to a person who might otherwise require an institutional setting.

Home and Community-based Services (HCBS)

HCBS are provided in a person’s home and community in order to assist them to acquire, retain, and improve self-help, social and adaptive skills. These services are typically provided through a Home and Community-based Waiver, such as the Consolidated, Community Living or Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) Waiver. Services may be delivered by provider agencies or through a participant directed service model.

A listing of home and community-based services, including definitions of services that may be funded by waiver is found in the Services and Supports Directory (SSD) on the Home and Community Services Information System (HCSIS) homepage at www.hcsis.state.pa.us/hcsisssd/default.aspx.

A listing of available services can also be found at www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/healthcaremedicalassistance/homeandcommunitybasedservices/index.htm

Information on participant directed services can be found at www.MyODP.org and on the ODS page at <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Services/Human-Services-DHS/DHS-Offices/Office-of-Developmental-Supports>

Essentials of Quality Service Delivery

Home and Community Services Information System (HCSIS)

Implemented in 2002, the Home and Community Services Information System (HCSIS) is a web-based application which serves as the operational system for all PA DHS program offices that support the Home and Community-based Services Programs and Medicaid waivers. It includes the application of quality, individual financial and reporting functionalities.

Supports coordinators, providers, ODS, and ODP are the only entities that have access to specific individual information, and these entities only have access to those who are directly linked to their programs. Public portions of HCSIS include the Supports and Services Directory (SSD). For more information visit www.hcsis.state.pa.us/hcsis-ssd/default.aspx

Supports Intensity Scale (SIS)

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) required that Pennsylvania establish a standardized universal screening process for individuals receiving the Consolidated, Community Living or P/FDS Waivers. Kepro is the administrator of the SIS to any individual 14 or older that receives services through these waivers. The SIS was developed by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). It is designed to focus on the supports a person needs in order to be successful and live an Everyday Life. It complements the ISP planning process as it addresses what is important to and for the individual.

For more information on the SIS, visit www.MyODP.org

Quality Customer Response

ODS responds to calls for technical assistance or information during regular business hours (weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.) at 412-436-2750 and on evenings, weekends and holidays at 412-350-4457. Individuals who are currently registered with ODS should call the Supports Coordination Organization (SCO) with which they are registered for assistance or information.

Stakeholders may also make inquiries or share information with ODS through a customer contact form on the ODS webpage at <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Services/Human-Services-DHS/DHS-Offices/Office-of-Developmental-Supports>

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services established the Director's Action Line (DAL) 1-800-862-6783, to empower people in Allegheny County and provide a means to share concerns about services received by Allegheny County DHS or contracted providers.

Charting the LifeCourse Framework and Tools

The Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) Framework and Tools is a person and family centered practice utilized to support individuals and families in living their good life. ODS staff integrate the CtLC framework and tools into their organizational culture to enhance specific policies, practices, and procedures.

CtLC core belief that all people have the right to live, love, work, play, and pursue their life aspirations in their community is supported by the CtLC framework and tools. CtLC can help users organize their ideas, vision, and goals, as well as problem-solve, navigate, and advocate for supports.

Find examples of The Integrated Support Star here: www.lifecoursetools.com/lifecourse-library/integrated-supports-star/. Rather than regarding a single person, these stars reflect transportation supports and services.

To learn more about CtLC visit www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Disabilities/Intellectual-Disability-Autism.aspx and click on Charting the LifeCourse (CTLC) Framework and Tools.

Charting the LifeCourse/Regional Collaborative

Community of Practice: Supporting Families across the Lifespan

ODS is part of the National Community of Practice: Supporting Families throughout the Lifespan, which provides leadership, training and technical assistance to develop a statewide strategic plan to support families of individuals with intellectual disabilities or autism.

The ODS collaborative vision continues to be that of supporting participants, families, Supports Coordinators, schools, and providers. The collaborative includes planning, exploring, problem-solving and supporting a vision for the future for the entire family. ODS has developed a set of strategies targeting the family unit, but that ultimately benefits the individual with intellectual / developmental disability (I/DD). Over the last year, ODS has enhanced the intake and registration process to not just focus on the individual, but the family as well through the use of the Lifecourse tools Allegheny County wants to recognize and support the strengths of families and communities, so those family members with intellectual disabilities or autism can live everyday lives that they envision for themselves. The goal of this collaborative is to think outside of our existing service system and community resources. The Community of Practice (CoP) is at work to discover integrated, flexible, and innovative strategies for supporting the entire family, rather than solely focusing on formal services. We will build community supports for the individual/family unit. Henceforth, the vision will foster Community of Practice by becoming more inclusive with supports instead of isolating supports for people with I/DD. For more information visit www.MyODP.org.

More Information

My ODP, Office of Developmental Programs Resource Center, is the home for ODP's training, communications, and informational resources. This includes Community of Practice LifeCourse planning and Everyday Lives: Values in Action details. www.MyODP.org

General ODP information can also be found on the PA DHS website at www.dhs.pa.gov/

Autism service and ODP information can be accessed at www.paaautism.org

Charting the LifeCourse framework and tools was developed by the Charting the LifeCourse Nexus – www.lifecoursetools.com/. © 2020 Curators of the University of Missouri | UMKC IHD