

COVID-19 Emergency Funding Request for Providers of IDD Services



What is IDD?

Formerly described by the term “mental retardation,” intellectual disability most often occurs at birth, or early childhood, and is a condition characterized by significant limitations in practical and social skills, as well as intellectual functioning.

Why are HCS, TxHmL, and ICF/IID services crucial?

- More than 35,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) receive residential and other long-term services and supports from providers of Home and Community-based Services (HCS), Texas Home living Services (TxHmL), and Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF/IID).
- HCS, TxHmL, and ICF/IID services offer an alternative to institutional care, making it possible for individuals to remain in community.

How is COVID-19 affecting HCS and ICF/IID group home operations?

The response to COVID-19 has dramatically changed how HCS, TxHmL, and ICF/IID services are provided.

- Stay-at-home orders and social distancing requirements have eliminated access to certain services provided outside of the home setting, such as day habilitation, placing greater stress on families and residential programs.
- This stress is exacerbated by enhanced hygiene and screening protocols to prevent COVID-19 spread, fears of being infected and self-quarantine orders if exposure occurs or symptoms are exhibited, all of which are creating alarming staff shortages.

What is needed?

- Emergency rate increase to provide funding relief to HCS, TxHmL, and ICF/IID providers.
- The letter signed by the bipartisan group of 63 House Representatives requests funding for
 1. Increased costs for direct care staff wages
 - As Executive and local orders are restricting direct care staff from working in multiple settings to limit the spread of COVID-19, IDD providers are unable to increase wages to level necessary to retain workers.
 - To mitigate loss of staff, providers urgently need the resources to increase pay and make it feasible for direct care workers to work at one site.
 - Overtime costs are significantly increasing because HCS, TxHmL, and ICF/IID providers are losing staff who do not have access to another adult to stay home with their children, or the staff are contracting COVID-19 and must be quarantined for at least 14 days.
 2. Personal Protective Equipment
 - IDD providers do not have the designation to receive enhanced access to much needed personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - Lack of PPE not only causes concern for employees, but providers are forced to compete with other members of the public for PPE and pay for the resources at higher costs as a result.

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