

# Individualized Supports Waiver (ISW)

## Frequently Asked Questions

October 20, 2022

### **1. What is the difference between the ISW and the Intellectual and Developmentally Disabled (IDD) waiver?**

*Response: A participant on the ISW has an individual cost limit (a budget) of up to \$17,500 annually (set in 2018), adjusted for inflation, while there is no individual cost limit for participants on the IDD waiver. The ISW includes fewer services, and out of home residential habilitation services (group home and family habilitation services) are not available for ISW participants.*

*ISW applicants are expected to have services and supports available from other sources that in combination with waiver services are sufficient to assure their health and safety within the individual cost limit. The applicant will not qualify for the ISW if applicant's needs or desired supports exceed the scope or cost limit of the waiver.*

### **2. What services are offered on the ISW?**

*Response: Participants may choose from any combination of the following services:*

- *Day Habilitation*
- *Intensive Active Treatment for Adults*
- *Non-Medical Transportation*
- *In-home supports for ages < 18*
- *Supported living for ages > 18*
- *Respite*
- *Supported employment (including pre-employment activities)*

### **3. Are Care Coordination services available under the ISW?**

*Response: Care coordination services are required for ISW participants. Costs associated with Care Coordination are in addition to the individual cost limit. Care coordinators currently certified to serve IDD waiver participants will be considered certified to provide services for ISW participants.*

*Care coordinators who assist with ISW applications may bill for one initial ISW waiver application, an initial support plan, and an annual renewal support plan, all under Long Term Services and Supports Targeted Case Management (LTSS-TCM)*

*Ongoing care coordination contacts are currently allowed to be conducted using distance delivery, per approved Appendix K flexibilities that will expire six months after the federal Public Health ends. Proposed regulatory amendments will require one in-person contact at least once every six months and contact with the recipient by telephone or distance delivery at least once in each month in which the in-person contact is not made. For more information, please review the "Care Coordination Services and Long Term Services and Supports Targeted Case Management Conditions of Participation." The payment rate for ISW care coordination is set lower than the rate for care coordination in the other waivers because the service is less intensive.*

#### **4. How does an individual become eligible for the ISW?**

*Response: The ISW eligibility criteria is the same as that for the IDD waiver. Potential waiver participants must meet the following criteria:*

- *Be determined to have a developmental disability (DD) as defined by Alaska law (AS 47.80.900) “one who experiences a severe, chronic developmental or intellectual disability that is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments that manifested before the person is age 22, is likely to continue indefinitely, and results in substantial functional limitation in three or more major life activities including self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, and economic self-sufficiency”;*
- *Be on the Developmental Disabilities Registration and Review (DDRR). The DDRR is also known as the “Registry” or “Wait List”;*
- *Meet level of care (LOC) criteria for Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID LOC); and*
- *Be enrolled in Medicaid.*

#### **5. Who is offered the opportunity to apply for the ISW?**

*Response: The ISW has the capacity to serve 600 participants.*

*After the ISW reaches full capacity waiver slots will become available only through attrition, (i.e., someone will need to exit the ISW in order to open a space for the next person waiting for ISW services). To fill future slots, individuals will be drawn from the DDRR-ISW waitlist, according to the date the IDD Unit receives the completed application, and will be offered the opportunity to pursue the waiver.*

#### **6. How does an individual apply for the ISW?**

*Response: Potential ISW applicants first need to be on the DDRR. Then the applicant must receive a letter from SDS inviting them to apply for the ISW. An applicant will be given 30 days to inform SDS that he or she would like to submit an application. If it is difficult to respond within 30 days, contact the local SDS IDD Unit for assistance. Providers will not be notified of the individual’s selection.*

*If the individual does not respond to the ISW offer within a timely manner his or her name will be removed from the DDRR and the offer will be rescinded. Individuals may re-submit a DDRR application at any time.*

#### **7. If an individual is offered the opportunity to apply for the ISW, can the individual decline the offer?**

*Response: The individual may choose to decline the offer to apply for the ISW but must inform the IDD Unit within 30 days if he or she would like to remain on the DDRR.*

**8. Where can individuals get assistance with the ISW application?**

*Response: SDS will accept ISW applications directly from the applicant or anyone assisting them with the application. Developmental Disabilities Resource Connection (DDRC) program staff also stand ready to help with ISW applications. Any Care Coordinator can assist an individual to apply for the ISW.*

**9. Can an individual be considered for both the ISW and the IDD waiver?**

*Response: Yes, the DDDR will ask if an individual wants to be considered for the IDD waiver, the ISW or both the ISW and the IDD waiver. These two sublists will be managed separately.*

**10. If a participant chooses to enroll in the ISW, can his or her name still be on the DDDR waiting for the IDD waiver?**

*Response: Yes, even if a participant is receiving services through the ISW, his or her name may remain on the DDDR-IDD sublist waiting for an IDD draw. The IDD Unit will continue to draw 50 individuals per year for the IDD waiver.*

**11. Can a participant receiving IDD waiver services choose to receive ISW services instead?**

*Response: Yes, if the participant's health and safety can be assured with the available ISW services and the costs of those services do not exceed the participant's authorized cost limit, the participant has the option of switching to the ISW. A participant cannot be on two waivers at the same time, though.*

**12. What happens if a participant uses all their ISW authorized funds before the end of the support plan (plan of care) year?**

*Response: No additional ISW funds will be available to ISW participants if participants spend down the amount of funding authorized before the end of the support plan (plan of care) year. Care coordinators will assist participants to plan for spreading service delivery across a full plan year, as documented in the support plan that will be approved by SDS.*

**13. What happens if a participant is enrolled in the ISW but circumstances change?**

*Response: ISW participants may request safeguard funding one time during any three-year period. An additional \$5,000 above the individual cost limit is intended for additional services and supports to address short term needs based on (1) the participant needing enhanced supports due to their own acute health needs and/or (2) temporary changes in the capacity of natural supports.*

**14. What happens if the \$5,000 additional safeguard funding is not enough to ensure the health and safety of an individual on the ISW?**

*Response: If the safeguard funding is not enough to assure an ISW participant's health and safety, the participant may no longer qualify for the ISW. SDS may offer the participant the opportunity to enroll in another waiver.*

**15. Do providers need to take any action to be ISW certified?**

*Response: If a provider is certified for services offered under IDD waiver, they will automatically be certified for the ISW as long as the provider is subject to and remains compliant with the settings rule.*

**16. Will providers need to apply for another enterprise number to bill for ISW, similar to the site-based day habilitation billing requirement?**

*Response: Possibly, it depends upon the location of the actual setting. Consult with the SDS Provider Certification and Compliance (PCC) unit on specific questions.*

**17. Are the ISW reimbursement service rates the same as the IDD waiver service reimbursement rates?**

*Response: Yes, the reimbursement rates are the same, except for care coordination monthly monitoring which is less for the ISW because it is less intensive.*