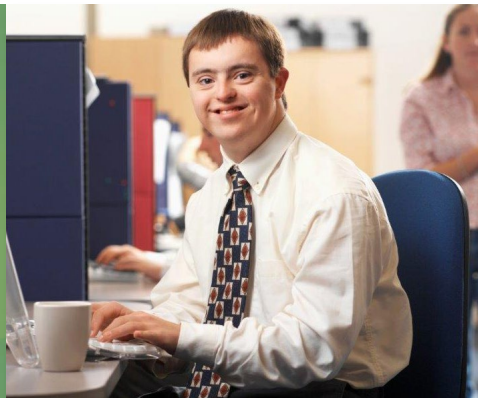


Developmental Disabilities (DD) First Steps: Getting Started and Finding Supports in Virginia

Your guide to finding clear steps, key contacts, and free resources
for people with DD and their families

Revised July 2026



DBHDS 
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health
and Developmental Services


**My Life,
My Community**



*Need an electronic copy of this document?
Use your mobile device to scan this QR code, or visit
mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/dd-first-steps*

Welcome! We're here to help!

Finding the information you need can be overwhelming.

If you or someone you care about has a developmental disability, you are not alone.

This guide explains what the DD Waivers are, what "the Waitlist" means, and where to find free help available right now in Virginia.

We encourage you to keep reading—you might find exactly what you need.



Developed with Lived Experience! This guide was created by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) (dbhds.virginia.gov) with input from people with developmental disabilities and their families. Their lived experience shapes our efforts to make sure this material is clear, accessible, and useful for everyone!

How to Use this Guide

This guide is meant to be easy to skim. You can read it front to back, or jump to the sections you need!

- Look for headings to find information quickly.
- Scan the QR codes to get more details online.
- Look for bolded phone numbers and links you may need right away.
- If you're already on the Waitlist, you can use this guide for information about resources and connections.



Your First Step:

Contact your local Community Services Board or Behavioral Health Authority (CSB or BHA) and ask for a DD Waiver screening.

You do not need to know whether you qualify before calling!

Find your CSB: vacsb.org/csb-bha-directory

A CSB is your local agency to get started with developmental disability and behavioral health services in Virginia. They can help you:

- understand the DD Waiver system,
- get screened for a waiver and learn whether you qualify, and
- get support, even if you're on the Waitlist.

Need Help Getting Started? Call the My Life, My Community helpline for free assistance! Operators can help you:

- find services,
- understand the Waitlist, or
- navigate resources.



The helpline is available at **844-603-9248** from Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Understanding Virginia's Developmental Disability (DD) Waivers

What are DD waivers? People with developmental disabilities (DD) may need different kinds of supports to live well and reach their goals. These waivers help people with DD live at home and in their communities. DD waivers fund supports that help with daily life, safety, independence, and long-term planning.

Virginia has 3 types of DD waivers. Your CSB will help you understand which one fits your needs.

1. The **Building Independence Waiver (BI)** for adults who mostly live independently and don't need supports all the time;
2. The **Family and Individual Supports Waiver (FIS)** for children and adults living with family, friends, or in their own homes who need regular support; and
3. The **Community Living Waiver (CL)** for children and adults who need ongoing supports at all times, including residential supports.

What kinds of supports can DD waivers pay for? DD waivers can fund a wide range of supports, including:

- nursing and medical support;
- help finding and keeping a job;
- behavioral supports and interventions;
- support with daily tasks and community living; and
- home modifications and assistive technology.

This is not a full list! Your CSB can help you explore all available options.

What happens during a DD waiver screening?

A trained staff member meets with you to complete the Virginia Intellectual and Developmental Disability Eligibility Survey (also called the **VIDES tool**). This assessment helps show what kinds of supports you need and whether you qualify for a waiver.

If you do not yet have a formal DD diagnosis, your CSB can guide you on what records or evaluations might be needed. When you call, they will tell you what documents to bring, such as medical records or school evaluations.



Your First Step:

Contact your local Community Services Board or Behavioral Health Authority (CSB) (vacsb.org/csb-bha-directory).

Ask for a DD waiver screening.

The Waitlist

What is the DD Waivers Waitlist? Virginia funds a limited number of DD waivers. If you qualify but a waiver is not available right away, you will be placed on the DD Waivers Waiting List (or "the Waitlist").

The Waitlist is needs-based, **not** first-come, first-served. Your CSB will talk with you about your needs, assign a priority level, and help you find available supports while you wait.



Your Next Steps on the Waitlist:

To stay on the Waitlist, you must complete the **Annual Choice form** each year. Visit mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/dd-waiver-info and click on "Accessing the Waiver Waitlist Forms". (You can also complete the optional **Needed Services form** there.)

- Update your CSB if your needs or contact information change.



This page offers a quick look at how Virginia's DD waivers support people with DD. For the details, explore the **Navigating the DD Waivers Guide** (tiny.cc/dd-waivers-guidebook)!

Getting Help at Your CSB and in Your Community

What is support coordination? Support coordination helps you understand your options, get connected to services, and plan for what you need now or in the future. Support coordinators are your point of contact for:

- DD waiver screenings,
- the Waitlist, and
- ongoing help (even if you are not eligible for a waiver).

Who can get support coordination? Everyone with a waiver is required to have support coordination.

You may also be able to get support coordination if you are on the Waitlist! Check with your local CSB to learn what you qualify for. Read more at tiny.cc/sccm-options.

How do I get help from a support coordinator?

Contact your local CSB (vacsb.org/csb-bha-directory) and ask for a DD waiver screening.

Where else can I go for help? Community-based supports may also be available!

Learn more about programs and supports in your local community. Use the search function on the My Life, My Community website (mylifemycommunityvirginia.org) or contact your local CSB.

You can also find resources in this guide!

Resources for People with DD in Virginia (1 of 3)



If you or a loved one has a developmental disability, is on the Waitlist, or has a DD Waiver, then you may be eligible for the supports listed here. *They are available to you at no cost!* Find more resources at mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/dd-first-steps.



Finding Information

Learn what supports and services are out there—and how to use them!

Explore the **My Life, My Community website** for general information, providers, services, and resources!

- Call **844-603-9248**
- Visit mylifemycommunityvirginia.org

Connect with your **CSB** to get help in your community for people who are in crisis, have behavioral health needs, and/or have developmental disabilities.

- Visit vacsb.org/csb-bha-directory

211 Virginia provides information about food, housing, transportation, and other basic needs.

- Dial **2-1-1**
- Visit 211virginia.org

The CCC Plus waiver is an alternative waiver in Virginia. It supports people of any age who have complex care needs. Apply through your local Department of Social Services and ask for a CCC Plus screening.

- Call **1-800-643-2273** to enroll
- Visit tiny.cc/cc-plus

Resources for People with DD in Virginia (2 of 3)

DBHDS Community Nursing can help with navigating complex health services, health advocacy, and training resources and opportunities.

- Visit tiny.cc/dbhds-community-nursing

Early Intervention (EI) services help families with children under 3 who are not developing as expected and/or have a medical condition that can delay normal development. **The Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia** can help!

- Call 1-800-234-1448
- Visit itcva.online

Special Education Services at your local public school system supports your student's learning and development.

- Call 804-298-3148
- Visit doe.virginia.gov/about-vdoe/virginia-school-directories

Get regional care coordination services for children and youth with special healthcare needs through the **Virginia Department of Health Care Connection for Children**.

- Call 804-864-7716
- Visit vdh.virginia.gov/care-connection-for-children

The **Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT)** benefit provides comprehensive and preventive health care services for children under 21 who are enrolled in Medicaid.

- Visit tiny.cc/epsdt

Explore career interests and learn how to prepare for, find, and keep a job through **Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)**. Pre-ETS is for students ages 14-22 who have a documented disability and are enrolled in an approved education program.

- Visit tiny.cc/dars-transition

Learn about **Supported Decision-Making** and understand how to make your own choices with support!

- Call 804-869-0591
- Visit tiny.cc/dbhds-sdma

Read the Virginia Caregiver Coalition's ***Taking Care: A Resource Guide for Caregivers***.

- Visit dars.virginia.gov/aging/caregiver-support



Connecting with People

Talk to others who have been there! Get support and share ideas.

Find **Peer and Tech Mentoring** support from other self-advocates and people with disabilities to gain independence and/or grow technology skills!

- Call 804-649-8481, Ext. 103
- Visit thearcofva.org/peer-mentoring

Get emotional and systems navigational support from a family like yours through the **Family to Family (F2F) Network of Virginia**.

- Call 877-567-1122
- Visit cfi.partnership.vcu.edu

Attend **Leadership for Empowerment and Abuse Prevention (LEAP)** trainings about healthy relationships led by people with disabilities.

- Email ppdleap@vcu.edu
- Visit leap.partnership.vcu.edu

The **IFSP Regional Councils** empower you to share your voice, connect with others, and work together to improve supports in your community.

- Call 844-603-9248
- Visit ifsp.tny.cc/councils

Resources for People with DD in Virginia (3 of 3)



Getting Goods and Services

Financial support and other programs that can help!

The **IFSP-Funding Program** provides financial assistance for people on the Waitlist to pay for supports you need.

- Call **844-603-9248**
- Visit mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/ifsp-funding

Find ideas for free or low-cost items and services in the ***Beyond IFSP-Funding*** guide.

- Call **844-603-9248**
- Visit mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/ifsp-funding

The **DBHDS Dental Program** can help with finding support for getting dental care.

- Visit tiny.cc/dbhds-dental

The **DBHDS Mobile Rehab Engineering Team** can help with medical equipment, assistive technology, and physical therapy consultations.

- Visit tiny.cc/dbhds-mre

DBHDS Housing can help you find information about rent or housing assistance.

- Visit tiny.cc/dbhds-housing

Crisis Services

If you or someone you care about has a developmental disability and is experiencing a behavioral or mental health crisis, help is available. There is one regional crisis services program in each of the Commonwealth's 5 DBHDS service regions, so you can find help near you or your loved one.

Please contact the **REACH crisis services program** in your region (tiny.cc/reach-crisis):

- **Region 1 Crisis Line Youth and Adults:** 888-908-0486 (Charlottesville)
- **Region 2 Crisis Line Youth and Adults:** 855-897-8278 (Woodbridge)
- **Region 3 Crisis Line Youth and Adults:** 855-887-8278 (Radford)
- **Region 4 Crisis Line Youth and Adults:** 833-968-1800 (Chester)
- **Region 5 Crisis Line Youth and Adults:** 888-255-2989 (Suffolk)



The **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** offers 24/7 call, text, and chat access to trained crisis workers who can help people experiencing suicidal, substance use, and/or any kind of mental health crisis or emotional distress.

Dial **9-8-8**, or visit 988va.org for more information.

*If you need this message provided in Spanish or another language, please contact us at **804-663-7277**.*

*Si necesita este mensaje proporcionado en Español, por favor contactenos en **804-663-7277**.*

*Special thanks to the Center for Family Involvement at
Virginia Commonwealth University*

