

# Developmental Disabilities in Nebraska: Services, Outcomes, and Recommendations

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## Overview

Nebraskans with developmental disabilities are an important part of our community. They are workers, volunteers, friends, and family members. The State of Nebraska Division of Developmental Disabilities, in partnership with the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, provides vocational, residential, and medical support services to individuals with disabilities to assist them in their goals to gain employment and independence.



For example, Erin works in the bakery department at Super Saver with support from her job coach. Her work packaging take-home cookies and icing is one of the areas where the bakery sees the highest profits. Erin, and many others, benefit from services providers expertise.

## Types of Services Provided

Services provided to people with developmental disabilities by the Nebraska Association of Service Providers are varied. Each person has an individualized plan to provide needed services in a community-based setting.

- **Vocational:** providing employment and job training services
- **Medical:** providers serve a variety of medical needs, ranging from daily medication assistance to intermediate care facilities serving individuals with significant medical needs in a residential setting
- **Residential:** serving and supporting clients in activities of daily living
- **Extended Family Homes:** providing support to people with disabilities in a family home environment

## Services for People with Disabilities

People with developmental disabilities in Nebraska are served by a robust network of service providers across the state. Service providers are large and small, urban and rural, and provide a wide range of expertise to serve the diverse needs of people with developmental disabilities in the community.

- **4,668** people receive community based developmental disability services in Nebraska<sup>1</sup>.
- **1,627** people are on a waiting list for services.
- The Medicaid Waiver provides a federal match for Medicaid waiver eligible people in the system. The federal match is **52.8%** federal, **47.2%** state and local funds.
- Service providers cover the entire state of Nebraska and employ thousands of workers.

## Performance

In Nebraska, each person who receives services through the Comprehensive Developmental Disabilities Waiver has a team including their friends and family, a state service coordinator, and their service providers. Together, the individual and the team develop an individualized plan. This helps them to identify goals and skills.



Additionally, Nebraska participates in the National Core Indicators (NCI) Project that assesses our overall performance in services for individuals with developmental disabilities through one on one interviews and/or state records<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Memo, Legislative Research, based on Department of Health and Human Services data, August, 2018

<sup>2</sup> National Core Indicators, Adult Consumer Survey, Nebraska Report, 2016-17

## Outcomes

Highlights from the NCI project related to developmental disability service provision include:

- **88%** of individuals in Developmental Disability Services who like their home, near the national average of 90%.
- **90%** of individuals who have a paid job in the community and like their job, just at the national average of 90%.



Areas for improvement include:

- While Nebraska is above the national average of people in services who have a paid community job at 30%, Nebraska should increase the percentage of individuals with paid employment in the community.
- Nebraska's indicators for community integration, or being able to go out and do things you like to do in the community, is below the national average of 86% at 73%. Nebraska should continue to promote community engagement opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities.

## Recommendations

- 1. Fully fund services:** The State of Nebraska, as a requirement of the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, updated the method used to calculate how we pay for developmental disability services. Nebraska should appropriate an additional \$10.3 million dollars to fully fund the methodology and ensure that we can offer high-quality services.
- 2. Address lost federal funds:** Providers lost millions of dollars due to administrative inaccuracies in compliance with the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services. Providers should be appropriated the remaining \$2.7 million dollars of lost federal funds they are owed.
- 3. Provide inflationary increases:** The cost of providing services continues to increase due to the cost of health care, workers compensation, and other inflationary factors. Services should reflect actual costs and funding should include a related increase.
- 4. Ensure services for youth:** Nebraska established a statutory requirement that we will fund developmental disability services for all youth transitioning from high school into the adult system. This helps individuals build on the progress made in the K-12 education system. Nebraska should remove the sunset on this statutory requirement.
- 5. Serve individuals on the waiting list:** Nebraska should make a commitment to fund and serve the 1,688 individuals currently waiting for services.
- 6. Increase resources for employment:** When individuals with developmental disabilities have opportunities for employment, they contribute to the economy and their communities. Nebraska should commit resources to employment opportunities to all individuals with developmental disabilities.



For more information, contact the Nebraska Association of Service Providers at (531) 289-2578  
Protecting and strengthening the supports for people with disabilities. | [www.neserviceproviders.org](http://www.neserviceproviders.org)

