



TO: Developmental Disabilities Regional Office and State Operations Directors and Deputies
Provider Associations
Voluntary Provider Agency Executive Directors

FROM: Sally Berry, Acting Associate Deputy Commissioner

SUBJECT: FRONT DOOR PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

DATE: February 20, 2014

This document is being issued to provide clarification and a description of practices for some of the elements of the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities' (OPWDD's) Front Door, for the purpose of ensuring consistency of experience across the state for individuals and families seeking OPWDD support. The document addresses some, not all, Front Door practices; additional direction will be provided when the Front Door Procedure Manual, currently being finalized, is distributed or by additional interim communication.

This document supersedes communication of July 24, 2013, from Jill Gentile, and contains information about:

- Who comes to the Front Door
- Front Door Information Sessions for Individuals and Families
- Effective Communication
- Who completes the DDP-2, and when
- Availability of funding for services

1. Who comes to the Front Door?

Presently, the Front Door process is focused on people in the following categories:

- OPWDD eligibility has not been established
- OPWDD eligibility has been established but the person is not receiving services

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- An eligible person is not receiving MSC (Medicaid Service Coordination) or PCSS (Plan of Care Support Services) and is now requesting MSC or PCSS
- An eligible person receiving MSC but not receiving other services
- An eligible person is not receiving any HCBS Waiver services and is now requesting one or more
- There has been a significant break (1 year or more) in waiver services
- Young adults who are transitioning from public or residential schools either into the OPWDD system for the first time or requesting a new HCBS waiver service
- Individuals who are transitioning into the community from Developmental Centers (DCs)

2. Front Door Information Session for Individuals and Families

Information Sessions for Individuals and Families

Individuals and families as defined in #1, above, must participate in a general informational session. This session is intended to help the individual/family understand the Front Door process and to answer any questions the individual or family may have about OPWDD services, the eligibility determination process, or service planning.

When to attend: OPWDD eligibility is not a prerequisite to attend the sessions. It is recommended that eligibility be established and the Information Session, or its equivalent, completed before proceeding to assessment and service planning. In instances when individuals and/or family members are not able to attend an information session, Regional Office Front Door staff may provide information via telephone or in person on OPWDD services, with training materials shared via mail or electronically. These alternative strategies are equivalent to attending the Front Door information session.

Who can attend: Information Sessions are targeted to individuals who are seeking OPWDD services and their families, but are open to agency representatives and other interested individuals if there is capacity and if no individuals/families are turned away from a specific session. An individual or family may request a service provider or advocate to attend the session with them. However, since the main purpose of the Information Sessions is to inform and engage families and individuals, regional offices should also provide separate sessions targeted to provider representatives to address their specific questions and responsibilities.

When and how are the Information Sessions accessed: Front Door staff will conduct Information sessions minimally on a monthly basis and as frequently as necessary. Times will vary in order to be conducive to family participation enabling better progression through the Front Door process. Regions will

ensure sessions are video-conferenced to remote locations whenever possible to meet the needs of people living in outlying communities or with transportation barriers. Translated Front Door Information Sessions are available to individuals who speak a language other than English, including those who are deaf, hard-of-hearing and/or visually impaired. See “Effective Communication”, below.

People interested in attending an informational session may register through the Front Door Intake staff or via the OPWDD Training website.

3. Effective Communication

OPWDD is committed to providing effective communication to individuals, family members and/or designees who speak another language other than English. This also includes individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing and/or visually impaired that require communication assistance. To assist employees with meeting the communication needs of individuals, OPWDD issued a Language Access Policy and Procedures with instructions for accessing interpretation and translation resources. In addition to the Language Access Policy and Procedure, each region has a designated Language Access Liaison who can assist you with language access resources and services. For a listing of the Language Access Liaison in your region, please follow this link: <http://omrnet.omr.state.ny.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=47480>

Please click the following link for the OPWDD Language Access Policy and Procedure: <http://omrnet.omr.state.ny.us/entity.aspx?entityId=47356>

4. When is the DDP2 assessment conducted and by whom?

Assessment – Front Door/Regional Offices

A completed, current Developmental Disabilities Profile 2 (DDP2) is **required** for all individuals accessing the Front Door, including those with provisional eligibility who are seeking waiver services. For individuals seeking only contracted funded Family Support Services or ISS, a DDP2 is not needed. In those instances where the individual has a DDP2 on file, Front Door staff will review and verify that the DDP2 accurately represents the individual, and update or replace with a new DDP2 as needed.

DDP2s previously completed by voluntary providers define the program specific needs for the individual. However, the Front Door will utilize the DDP2 to assess the individual’s needs across all environments as opposed to a singular setting, and any existing DDP2s will be evaluated from this perspective. Instructions for completing the DDP2 based on the individual’s global needs have been provided to the Front Door staff to ensure consistency of completion.

The Coordinated Assessment System (CAS), a more robust assessment tool, is currently being piloted. This will eventually be used to assess a person's strengths, interests and needs, instead of the DDP2.

Assessment – Providers

Provider agencies enrolling an individual in a service are also required to complete a DDP2 and should follow established protocols (see link below for detailed instructions). The Front Door/Regional Office DDP2 *does not* eliminate the provider's responsibility to have their own DDP2 on file for the service they are providing the individual, if a DDP2 is required or recommended for that service.

Please click the following link for the OPWDD DDP2 user guide:

http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_resources/opwdd_forms/developmental_disabilities_profile_user_guide_and_forms/ddp2_user_guide

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5. Funding available for services?

Regional offices should have adequate resources in their allocation to support services for individuals new to service as well as individuals seeking changes in service.

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