

# HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

## What are Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)?

HCBS are person-centered *services and supports* delivered in a person's home and community to help a person be independent and connected with their community. HCBS are not treatment or hospital services. Some towns have community centers that focus on social opportunities and offer HCBS or referrals to HCBS. These centers also coordinate additional activities to engage people in recreation, cultural activities, or health promotion or disease prevention programs.

## Who uses Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)?

People of all ages who need assistance to live independently in their home and community. HCBS can prevent or delay a person needing institutional care from a skilled nursing home or intermediate care facility. People also use HCBS to move out of institutions or safely discharge from a hospital. A person could be born needing support for their cognitive or physical functioning or that need may develop in childhood or adulthood. Support needs can occur from a sudden change like an accident or stroke, or they can slowly build over time as a chronic condition worsens or a body ages. Older adults are the largest group that uses HCBS.

## How long does a person use Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)?

HCBS are expected to be used long-term. A majority of people using HCBS have a medical condition or disability that will need lifelong support. Some people use HCBS during rehabilitation to restore their physical or cognitive functioning so that they no longer need services. This can take several months or years.

## Why are Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) important?

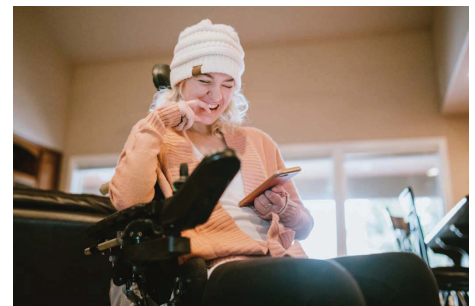
Historically, the standard of care for people with disabilities in the United States was to send them to an institution to live. The 1999 Olmstead decision by the U.S. Supreme Court requires states to make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities to live in the community instead of an institution. This includes people at-risk of institutionalization and people who qualify for institutional care. Further, HCBS promote personal independence and community inclusion and support the pursuit of a meaningful life. Also, while HCBS can be expensive, they cost less than institutional care, for most people significantly less.

## Who pays for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)?

Medicaid is the largest payer of HCBS across the United States. Medicare and Indian Health Services do not pay for HCBS. The Veteran's Administration does pay for some HCBS for qualified veterans. Private health insurance is starting to cover some rehabilitative services but does not cover HCBS. Some people buy long term care insurance, which does not cover all costs, and some pay with their own income or savings or use a grant program. Very few people can afford the ongoing cost of an assisted living home or daily in-home care. If someone does not qualify for Medicaid and cannot pay for services, a combination of grant services and unpaid caregivers may fill some of the gap. Often people are left unserved or underserved if they don't qualify for Medicaid HCBS.

## How does the State of Alaska pay for Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)?

HCBS are optional services the state chooses to provide under Medicaid. Institutional care is a mandatory service. This means that the state must pay for the institutional care of a person. Even though the state is not required to pay for HCBS, it is in the state's best interest to do so because HCBS costs less, it can delay or eliminate the need for future expensive institutional care, and people prefer it. Paying for HCBS through Medicaid also means that Alaska can leverage federal funding, so the state pays less of the cost.



Ashley is 23 years old. She was diagnosed with a developmental disability when she was 3 and was placed on the waitlist. She started receiving services from the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities waiver when she was 18. She lives in a group home and uses care coordination, employment services, transportation, and habilitation services. She would like to open a catering business and move into her own apartment in the future.



Javon is 68 years old. He recently had a below knee amputation from diabetes complications and now uses a wheelchair. He is using the Alaskans Living Independently waiver to access assisted living home services during his rehabilitation while his care coordinator arranges for environmental modifications to make his residence accessible to him so he can move back home with his family.

There are several Medicaid waiver and state plan options that can be used to offer HCBS. The State of Alaska currently uses 1915c Medicaid waivers, 1915k Community First Choice state plan option and state plan services for HCBS. This is a lengthy and detailed process where the state describes who will qualify for HCBS, what medical conditions will qualify a person for a waiver, what services are offered, and how the state will assure that the services are of good quality and administer the program according to the federal guidelines.

### **Does the State of Alaska pay for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) through other funding?**

The State of Alaska also issues a limited amount of grants and General Relief benefits that pay for HCBS. General Relief Assisted Living Home Care benefits are paid for from the general fund. Grants are paid for with a combination of general fund dollars and federal funding issued to the state to serve specific populations like seniors or people with disabilities.

## **COMMON TERMS**

**Activities of daily living/ADLs** are the essential and routine tasks necessary to care for oneself. These activities include moving from one place to another (transferring and ambulating), eating and drinking, dressing, bathing, and grooming (includes dental hygiene, nail and hair care), continence, and toileting.

**Instrumental activities of daily living/IADLs** are tasks that require organization and problem solving to manage routine personal or household needs. These activities include managing medication, communication, finances, shopping, housecleaning, home maintenance, meal preparation, and transportation.

**Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS)** is a term that includes both Home and Community Based Services and institutional care or Long Term Care.

**Person-centered** means that the person using the services is involved in decisions about how services

are selected, designed, and delivered. Person-centered services and supports are customized to meet each person's unique needs and preferences.

**Services and supports** are commonly interchanged in casual discussion.

- **Services** tend to be provided by a person. Examples include case management, care coordination, personal care services, supervision and cueing, transportation, employment services, legal assistance, prepared meals, chore, respite, habilitation, and assisted living home care.
- **Supports** tend to be tangible goods. Assistive technology, wearable devices, equipment, smart home technology, physical changes to a home to make it accessible (examples: ramps, grab bars, faucets with sensors), and technology based interactive devices or apps are examples of *supports*.

## **Links for More Information**

- Administration for Community Living: [acl.gov/about-community-living](https://acl.gov/about-community-living)
  - Centers for Independent Living: [acl.gov/programs/aging-and-disability-networks/centers-independent-living](https://acl.gov/programs/aging-and-disability-networks/centers-independent-living)
  - Older Americans Act: [acl.gov/about-acl/authorizing-statutes/older-americans-act](https://acl.gov/about-acl/authorizing-statutes/older-americans-act)
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services:
  - State Resources Map: [www.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/american-indian-alaska-native/aian/ltss-ta-center/info/state-resources-map](https://www.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/american-indian-alaska-native/aian/ltss-ta-center/info/state-resources-map)
  - Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) Financing: [www.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/american-indian-alaska-native/aian/ltss-ta-center/info/ltss-financing](https://www.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/american-indian-alaska-native/aian/ltss-ta-center/info/ltss-financing)
  - LTSS Expenditures - Medicaid: [www.medicaid.gov/state-overviews/scorecard/ltss-expenditures-on-hcbs/index.html](https://www.medicaid.gov/state-overviews/scorecard/ltss-expenditures-on-hcbs/index.html)
- Olmstead Decision: [www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/special-topics/community-living-and-olmstead/index.html](https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/special-topics/community-living-and-olmstead/index.html)
- State of Alaska, Department of Health, Senior and Disabilities Services: [health.alaska.gov/dsds/Pages/default.aspx](https://health.alaska.gov/dsds/Pages/default.aspx)

To access without hyperlinks, type these links into your browser (then use search to find resources):  
[acl.gov](https://acl.gov), [cms.gov](https://cms.gov), [hhs.gov/civil-rights](https://hhs.gov/civil-rights) (search for community living and Olmstead), [health.alaska.gov/dsds](https://health.alaska.gov/dsds)