**Beaufort County Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (BCDSN)**

**Media Kit: Frequently Asked Questions**

**General Questions**

1. **How does someone become eligible to receive services?**

To be eligible for services, an individual must live in South Carolina and meet the criteria set forth by the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs. There are seven categories of eligibility: Intellectual Disability (ID), Related to Intellectual Disability (RD), High Risk Infant, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Head Injury (i.e. Traumatic Brain Injury or TBI), Spinal Cord Injury (SCI), and Similar Disability (SD).

1. **How can an individual apply for services?**

Individuals can call the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs at 1-800-289-7012, Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Those applying for Early Intervention Services for children at risk can call BabyNet at 1-866-512-8881.

**Residential Services**

1. **What is residential living like, and how will it affect an individual’s ability to maintain a relationship with his or her family?**

An individual receiving residential services lives in a four to five-bedroom home with three other individuals. Each home is beautifully furnished and features a large kitchen, bathroom, private bedrooms, and a gathering area. These spaces include ADA accommodations, and individuals receive assistance and reassurance with daily living activities as needed in order to encourage independence and help them remove barriers preventing self-actualization.

1. **Are family members able to visit individuals receiving residential services?**

Yes, families are encouraged to visit as much as an individual would like.

1. **Can individuals in residential services leave the facility to visit family members?**Yes, individuals are allowed to visit their family members with direction and communication from residential staff.
2. **Is there any impact on a caregiver’s financial benefits if that caregiver’s family member earns an income while receiving BCDSN services?** A disabled individual’s employment typically has no bearing on a caregiver’s Social Security benefits, though it might impact the employed individual depending on which benefits are being received. All individuals receive one of two types of benefits: SSA and SSI. Individuals with SSA benefits are allowed to work as much as they want, but they should not have more than $2000 in their account for a period of more than one month. Individuals eligible for SSI benefits receive what is considered supplemental income, contingent on how much money that individual makes monthly. The Department of Social Security utilizes an equation to ascertain how much in funds an individual may receive on a monthly basis. The BCDSN works with the Department of Social Security to assist individuals with maintaining these benefits, which help cover the cost of an individual’s care and housing, and their Medicaid waiver.
3. **Can individuals have friends spend the night at residential facilities?**

Individuals in the residential facilities may have visitors unless they are legally prohibited from doing so or there are reasons that are contradicted. Individuals can have friends spend the night if all other residents in the home agree to this. Each resident and guest must adhere to guidelines that assist in maintaining everyone’s dignity and respect.

**Early Intervention / Case Management Services**

1. **What is the role of an early interventionist?**

An early interventionist is a developmental specialist who works with a child’s caregiver in an effort to teach the child skills that are necessary for development.

1. **What are case management services?**

Case management services ensure that eligible individuals have access to the full array of BCDSN programs and resources that will enable them to live in a community setting, such as their home or a group home, rather than in an institutional setting, such as a nursing facility or Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID). Case management services are provided by case managers.

1. **What is the role of a case manager?**

A case manager is a trained professional who has knowledge of the medical, social, and educational services that are available. Through assessment, case managers work closely with individuals to determine their specific needs. They then plan and facilitate the delivery of appropriate and effective services to meet those needs, making referrals and linking people to specific service providers, as needed.

1. **What should an individual look for in an early intervention program?**

The early intervention program is provided for families with a young child in need of services to learn skills that are necessary for development. The service provider plays a key role in the early intervention program. Caregivers and family members of small children should feel comfortable with the service provider, as the primary role of the service provider is to work with and support family members and caregivers.

1. **Is a case manager assigned to all individuals seeking service?**

Each individual is assigned a case manager, but the level of service provided differs depending on whether the individual has a waiver.

1. **What is a waiver?**

A waiver is a program that allows people who would otherwise need institutionalization to receive services out in the community instead of in an institution.  It contains a package of services that goes above and beyond what is offered through regular Medicaid. Each waiver is different with its own service package and requirements.

1. **What are the requirements for obtaining a waiver?**

Each waiver has different requirements. In general, individuals must meet the following qualifications to receive a waiver:

* An individual must have an intellectual or related disability or qualify for BCDSN services under the category of autism spectrum disorder; traumatic brain injury; spinal cord injury; high risk infant; or similar disability.
* An individual must be eligible to receive Medicaid or already have Medicaid;
* An individual must require a degree of care that would be provided in an institutional care facility or nursing facility;
* An individual must choose to receive the services offered by signing a Freedom of Choice form;
* An individual must have needs that can be met by the waiver;
* Once enrolled, an individual must receive a service every 30 days in order to keep the waiver.
1. **How can an individual obtain a waiver?**

Of the three waiver programs operated by the Beaufort County Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, two have waiting lists. As of 12/1/2018, the Head and Spinal Cord Injury (HASCI) Waiver is the only waiver that currently does not have a waiting list.  The Intellectual Disability/Related Disabilities Waiver (ID/RD) and Community Supports Waiver (CSW) both have waiting lists. Interested individuals should contact their case manager to request placement on the list and/or to verify current list status. Individuals who do not have a case manager and those who are not connected in the BCDSN system can start the process on the [How Can I Get BCDSN Services](https://ddsn.sc.gov/about-us/divisions/waiver-administration-division/how-can-i-get-ddsn-services) page.

There are also several waiver programs operated by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). While it is only possible for an individual to be in one waiver at a time, one of the DHHS waivers may help an individual meet his or her needs while on the waiting list for one of the BCDSN waivers.

1. **Is a waiver from another state accepted in South Carolina?**

No, the waiver does not transfer.

1. **How will a waiver help?**

Individuals seeking a waiver should review the [Medicaid Waiver fact sheets](https://ddsn.sc.gov/about-us/divisions/waiver-administration-division/medicaid-waiver-services) for information on what services are available through the waiver. Interested individuals should keep in mind that each service has specific criteria and that each is based on need. Case managers work closely with individuals to assess needs and to determine which services will best meet those needs.

**Day Program**

1. **Who can qualify to enroll in the day program?**

The BCDSN offers an Adult Services Program to qualified adults, beginning at age 19 to 21, with intellectual or related disabilities. This could include a diagnosis such as autism, spinal cord injuries, and traumatic brain injuries, among others. As individuals transition out of high school with one of these diagnoses they can qualify.

1. **What type of training is involved in the Great Expectations Day Program?**
BCDSN’s Great Expectations Day Program helps to train and place individuals with disabilities in jobs created for them according to their abilities and desires. The four main areas of training are Day, Community, Career Prep, and Employment. Those individuals who are “not employed” spend the day in structured training classrooms with set curriculums and goals and objectives.
2. **If an individual is enrolled in the day program, is it a requirement to work?**For those individuals that express a desire and are able to work, every effort is made to locate employment that is tailored to their individual needs, as well as desires. Many opportunities are made available to all individuals enrolled in the day program, as well as those on work enclaves. Some benefits of employment to individuals with disabilities include the opportunity to work independently, learn skills while working in competitive employment situations, and perform jobs with multiple responsibilities and typical job pressures. Other benefits for individuals in the program include increased self-esteem and a chance to interface with others without disabilities.
3. **If an individual has a desire to work and is trained properly, where will that person be placed for employment?**
The BCDSN has available employment opportunities at MCAS and Goodwill in both Beaufort and Bluffton. There are also opportunities with the City of Beaufort as well as services at other county departments including Parks and Recreation and the St. Helena Library. Additionally, the BCDSN supports people to find individual employment with a number of private entities.
4. **Are individuals in the day program paid minimum wage?**Currently, individuals working in conjunction with this program receive more than minimum wage.
5. **How many individuals are assigned to outside work duties?**

Presently, 45 individuals, or 64% of individuals served, have employment opportunities.

1. **What is an average day in the day program like?**

Individuals in the program typically arrive at 8:00 a.m. After morning exercise and a snack break, they attend classrooms where they have the opportunity to identify individual goals and objectives and discuss new topics and the news. The BCDSN recently established five classroom stations, including Earth Science, Banking, Shopping, Creative Arts, and Technology. These classes are currently offered three times per week, allowing individuals to rotate and spend time with different trainers and people during the day instead of always being in the same class with the same people. Lunch follows and is divided into two periods. After lunch, individuals return to their designated classrooms for an afternoon training period. Extracurricular activities and outside or inside games continue until 1:00 p.m. At this time, preparations for departure begin. Most individuals are out by 1:30 to 2:00 p.m. daily.

1. **Can an individual without a waiver pay for services?**

A fee for service arrangement is available if a waiver is not immediately attainable. The total amount per day varies, but it is typically based on a fee of one dollar per day less than Medicaid provides.

**Finance**

1. **How is the BCDSN funded?**

The Beaufort County Department of Disabilities and Special Needs is the only disabilities agency in South Carolina that is a county department. As such, the BCDSN has much more flexibility and support than most other agencies, as well as additional oversight. The Beaufort County Council funds about 25% of the department’s budget, which supports employee salaries and capital items, while South Carolina Medicaid supplies the bulk of funding, which is comprised of approximately 75% of federal funds and 25% of state funds. The BCDSN is reimbursed a fixed rate per service. Individuals residing in the BCDSN community training homes pay room and board monthly from their Social Security and earned money. Those funds purchase the food, utilities and supplies needed for residential support.

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