

Oklahoma Department of Human Services  
Community Living, Aging & Protective Services (CAP)  
Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS)  
American Rescue Plan Act of 2021  
Initial HSBC Spending Narrative

---

**OKDHS CAP & DDS: Eyeglasses and Hearing Aids**

CAP – The initiative will **expand** services to include the purchase of eyeglasses and hearing aids. DDS – Historically, eyeglasses were offered as a waiver service but removed several years ago due to budget issues. Currently, eyeglasses can only be purchased for Homeward Bound Waiver Recipients through state funds. The initiative will **expand** services to include the purchase of eyeglasses for all waiver populations served.

---

**OKDHS CAP & DDS: Retroactive Rate Increase – FFY21 Q1**

Waivered services providers are experiencing difficulty hiring qualified staff to serve HCBS clients. Higher wages offered by businesses competing for the same labor pool is a primary contributor to the HCBS labor shortage. The lack of qualified staff has significantly increased overtime for providers and increased their cost. This short term shortage of qualified staff will be addressed with a temporary rate change to Appendix K. This change will **strengthen** HCBS and allow CAP and DDS to offer a temporary increase to providers to meet their immediate needs while OKDHS conducts a rate study and develops a strategy for a permanent solution.

---

**OKDHS CAP & DDS: Retroactive Rate Increase – FFY21 Q2**

Waivered services providers are experiencing difficulty hiring qualified staff to serve HCBS clients. Higher wages offered by businesses competing for the same labor pool is a primary contributor to the HCBS labor shortage. The lack of qualified staff has significantly increased overtime for providers and increased their cost. This short term shortage of qualified staff will be addressed with a temporary rate change to Appendix K. This change will **strengthen** HCBS and allow CAP & DDS to offer a temporary increase to providers to meet their immediate needs while OKDHS conducts a rate study and develops a strategy for a permanent solution.

---

**OKDHS CAP & DDS: Retroactive Rate Increase – FFY21 Q3**

Waivered services providers are experiencing difficulty hiring qualified staff to serve HCBS clients. Higher wages offered by businesses competing for the same labor pool is a primary contributor to the HCBS labor shortage.

---

The lack of qualified staff has significantly increased overtime for providers and increased their cost. This short term shortage of qualified staff will be addressed with a temporary rate change to Appendix K. This change will **strengthen** HCBS and allow CAP & DDS to offer a temporary increase to providers to meet their immediate needs while OKDHS conducts a rate study and develops a strategy for a permanent solution.

---

#### **OKDHS DDS: DDS Provider Technology Grants**

DDS will provide Technology grants to Provider Agencies contracted to provide direct waiver support services. Grants may be used to purchase compatible technology equipment, such as laptops and tablets for each home or work site. New computers and software will be utilized by each provider agency to connect with OKDHS and will **enhance** services for the individual receiving DDS Services. This will include Daily Living Support homes, Specialized Foster Care Homes, Group Homes, Vocational Work Sites, and individuals who receive IHSW and/or Self-Directed Services. Each Provider Agency or Specialized Foster Care home will complete an application requesting funds to purchase compatible technology. They must specify the number of devices needed and how the agency plans to safeguard the equipment. This grant money will improve the continuity of services as DDS and Providers will be utilizing the same software.

---

#### **OKDHS CAP & DDS: Staff Education Program**

CAP & DDS will **enhance** the HCBS program by increasing professionalism and expertise of staff. The initiative will provide scholarships up to 2 years of reimbursement for educational expenses (tuition, fees, books, other learning materials) incurred by existing staff to complete an advanced degree in a field of study which will **strengthen** the worker's knowledge base and encourage innovation. Staff will have the opportunity to learn best practices in social work, counseling, behavioral health, allied health services, nursing, and other related disciplines to integrate into the HCBS service delivery system.

---

#### **OKDHS CAP: Nutrition Services**

CAP will expand nutrition services to maximize the member's nutritional health.

---

#### **OKDHS DDS: Wait List Assessment & Navigation Vendor**

As of June 2021, OKDHS has approximately 5,800 people on the waitlist for HCBS services. Persons on the wait list have been waiting for services since February 2008 or longer. OKDHS recently awarded a contract to Liberty of Oklahoma, a third-party company who will contact every person on the waiting list to **strengthen** and **expand** HCBS services by determining their individual needs, as well as provide case management and navigation services. This contract is the first step to developing a comprehensive plan to fund and eliminate the waitlist over the next few years. This project will lead to long term **expansion** of HCBS programs in Oklahoma and include a complementary project to transition data from the current to the new system.

### **OKDHS CAP: Assistive Technology**

CAP will purchase assistive technology to **enhance** waiver member's ability to perform activities of daily living or to perceive, control or communicate within the environment which they live.

---

### **OKDHS CAP & DDS: Direct Support Staff Professionalization**

Direct Support Professionals (DSP) providing HCBS services have a direct impact on the health, safety and quality of care received by waiver participants. Supporting professionalism, education & training and creating a DSP worker registry will **enhance** and **strengthen** the client experience. OKDHS seeks to develop a comprehensive program to focus on DSP professionalization through a variety of efforts and initiatives, such as minimum training requirements, training certificates and a worker registry.

---

### **OKDHS CAP: Family Home Care Training**

CAP will provide family home care training to provide necessary assistance to a waiver member under their care. Services are intended to allow the family to become more proficient in meeting the needs of the member by **strengthening and enhancing** the HCBS services the member receives.

---

### **OKDHS DDS: DDS IT System**

DDS has contracted with a third party vendor to replace the current IT system with a more robust IT system to better integrate data, support case management, provide program data and ultimately **enhance** HCBS waiver services.

---

### **OKDHS CAP: Provide Annual Transportation Grants to Area Agencies on Aging and Disability Transportation**

CAP will initiate a program to develop and support a robust public transportation network for HCBS waiver members. This will **enhance** HBCS services by allowing more independence and support.

---

### **OKDHS DDS: Hope Therapeutic Respite Homes**

This setting is designed to serve individuals 12 years and older who receive waiver services or are on the DDS waiting list. In this setting, individuals will be able to access respite and ancillary medical and behavioral health evaluations on an as needed basis. This allows for **enhancement** and modification of the program as needed and may allow for waiver funding in the future. Housing used for this level of care must be accessible with ramps, roll in showers, assistive technology, etc. DDS will use two beds in a 4 bed home for 2 beds for respite and 2 beds for therapeutic respite. In this model, respite is offered for up to 7 consecutive days and therapeutic respite is offered for 14 consecutive days with the option to approve an additional 14 days, when needed. This may be allowed when there is a need for additional time to complete evaluation and treatment.

Individuals are limited to one respite event per calendar year. During therapeutic respite, caregivers visit the individual in the program at a rate of twice per week to engage in learning and therapy as determined appropriate by program staff. Involvement of caregivers is an essential component in order for individuals who require therapeutic intervention to be successful upon returning to their home. Therapeutic respite is not offered when the caregiver is unable to participate twice per week.

---

#### **OKDHS CAP: Expand the Capacity of the ADvantage Waiver Management Information System**

CAP will implement a real-time data replication service to include a data dashboard for development of performance monitoring and reporting. The system will **enhance** services and include implementation of a portal for waiver members to access/review individual service plans and communicate with their case managers within the system. In addition the new system will integrate a HIPAA compliant digital signature software system for use by members and providers and an internal helpdesk/ticketing system to manage internal and external user issues, claims resolution issues, provider training requests, etc. Comprehensive training and training materials for internal and external users impacted by system enhancements.

---

#### **OKDHS CAP & DDS: Dental Services Cap Increase**

CAP and DDS will **expand** services by increasing the dental services plan of care cap for all adult waiver populations served from \$1,000 to \$3,500 through the Appendix K. There are numerous individuals who were unable to seek dental care during the pandemic. This led to an increased need for treatment and to allow individuals with extensive needs to obtain treatment. This initiative is expected to reduce costs in other areas as dental care is vital to overall health.

---

#### **OKDHS CAP: Develop the ADvantage Waiver Adult Day Health Infrastructure**

CAP will providing one-time funding to **enhance** services by making physical, operational, technology or other changes to safely deliver services during a period of public health emergency. This initiative will provide for start-up costs to developing new centers within existing community facilities, such as assisted living, etc.

---

#### **OKDHS CAP & DDS: Critical Incident Management System**

This initiative will develop an **enhanced** method to identify suspected abuse or neglect. A key element in oversight is performing Medicaid Data Correlation Audits including the review of Medicaid claims data for injuries requiring emergency treatments or hospital admissions. The process matches critical incident reports to ensure all incidents are reported, collected, reviewed and analyzed.

---

#### **OKDHS DDS Services: Strengthen Vocational Providers Capacity to Provide Services**

DDS vocational providers are finding it increasingly difficult to place some waiver recipients into competitive integrated employment. Additionally, many providers need to develop innovative ways to increase their capacity to serve waiver recipients with limited resources.

---

DDS will **enhance** HCBS services by offering “Innovation Grants” to vocational providers who propose innovative ideas to increase capacity and job placements which includes the adaptation of technologies for virtual support.

---

#### **OKDHS DDS: Assessment Tool for Persons on Waiting List**

DDS contracted with Liberty Health, a third party vendor to assess the needs of individuals on the wait list to better understand their needs, develop a projected cost and maintain current contact & needs information. This contract is the first step to developing a comprehensive plan to fund and eliminate the waitlist over the next few years. The work performed by the vendor will center on individual assessments utilizing a nationally recognized assessment tool to formulate a plan and **expand** HCBS services to persons currently on the waitlist and lead to long term expansion of HCBS programs.

---

#### **OKDHS DDS: Remove Plan of Care Cap for Public Transportation**

DDS will remove the \$5,000 per 12 month limit for public transportation. This initiative will provide waiver recipients the opportunity to independently seek and maintain employment as businesses affected by the pandemic reopen. An increase to the cap on public transportation will **expand** services and **enhance** the member’s ability to participate in community activities when other modes of transportation are unavailable, or require staffing to implement.

---

#### **OKDHS CAP & DDS: Model Smart Home Development**

CAP & DDS will enhance and expand our home and community based services by working with Oklahoma Able TECH to develop a model smart home. Oklahoma initiated the use of remote supports as a service through the Appendix K process. We support enabling technologies to remotely support an individual with intellectual and developmental disabilities in place of in-person staff support and to maximize the individual’s ability to live and work independently with the least amount of staff intrusion as possible. Through person centered planning, including a risk assessment, Oklahomans receiving waived supports have begun using these services. By developing a model smart home, individuals with disabilities, families, providers and DDS staff will have the opportunity to tour either virtually or in person to learn more about various enabling technologies. Enabling technology is ever-changing and smarter than ever before. It is affordable and “appears” easy to use; however, with so many options available that connect and interact with other devices, the technology becomes complex. These factors can make it difficult to navigate the innovative technologies and to choose the best solution. People need education, training, and hands-on experience to guide them in making informed decisions about their needs, and this project will fill this void. Ohio and Tennessee currently have established model smart homes. The homes have contributed to an increase in demand for remote supports and enabling technologies in those states. Tennessee reported 399 visitors to their smart homes between January and August 2019 while Ohio reported a high number of visits as well. Additionally, both states offer virtual online tours. Since remote supports and enabling technologies are new services to Oklahoma, education and promotion are key to enhancing and expanding the success of the program to increase the independence and choice of people receiving supports.

### **OKDHS CAP: Provide Ongoing Training for Waiver Providers**

CAP will coordinate with the University of Oklahoma’s Center for Public Management to develop training curricula and provide ongoing training for waiver providers to enhance services and expand knowledge & skills related to person-centered thinking and planning.

---

### **OKDHS DDS: Increasing Self-Direction through Education**

DDS will increase the use of self-direction for person served by waivers to enhance **services**. Families and waiver recipients will receive training and education on how self-direction can allow waiver recipients to **expand** their service options to meet their own individual needs.

---

### **OKDHS DDS: Service Modernization**

DDS will issue an RFP for a vendor with national experience to evaluate Oklahoma’s Home and Community Based waiver services. This vendor will hold stakeholder meetings and compare services provided nationally to make formal recommendations to **enhance, expand** and modernize Oklahoma’s services. Oklahoma seeks to add to or enhance current services not remove or decrease services. The vendor will communicate with stakeholders including advocates, families receiving waiver services, HCBW providers, Case Managers and community resource providers to discuss recommendations and gather feedback on best practices for the evolution of services to meet Oklahoma’s unique needs.

---

### **OKDHS DDS: IntellectAbility Web-Based Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST)**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) require states to design and implement an effective system for assuring waiver participant health and welfare. Oklahoma will procure a Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST). This HRST is a web-based rating instrument developed to detect health destabilization in vulnerable populations and ensure proper care. As a result, DDS will **enhance** and strengthen person centered practices by detecting health destabilization and ensure proper training, support, and care is provided. The instrument is used to determine the types of further assessment and evaluation required by the service recipient to be safe and healthy in the least restrictive setting.

---

### **OKDHS CAP: Create a Digital Communication Network**

CAP will develop a Digital Communication Network between the *ADvantage* Waiver and the Oklahoma Hospital System whereby hospital case managers/discharge planners can communicate with waiver staff for referrals for waiver services; care coordination; and submission of questions or requests for guidance of specific member situations. The network will **enhance** services offered by the HCBS waiver.

### **OKDHS DDS: Expansion of Assistive Technology (AT) / Architectural Modifications (AM) Services to In-Home Support Waiver Service Recipients**

DDS has identified a need for consumers starting services in assistive technology and architectural modifications. The limit on the plan of care and limit on the exception they are able to request (over \$2,500 and under \$10,000) forces a choice between services. This program will **expand** services so consumers are not required to use their exception request and the amount could exceed \$10,000.

---

### **OKDHS DDS: Software Program for Preadmission Screening and Resident Review (PASRR) Program**

PASRR program is a federally mandated program operated by DD. rates. The program is housed in a database residing on a personal computer. DDS will automate the program to **enhance** services for members and store data a central location available and adaptable to nurses, PASRR program representatives and the programs manager.

---

### **OKDHS CAP & DDS: Rate Study**

OKHS will initiate a rate study for all rates paid through the HCBS waiver. The workforce supply supporting HCBS is rapidly becoming insufficient due to low wages. Wages offered to direct care staff are directly connected to rates paid. OKDHS will contract with a third party vendor to complete a rate study to evaluate the basis for rates and identify changes are needed to strengthen the rates and increase the supply of labor to the HCBS workforce. This in turn will **enhance**, expand and strengthen HCBS services provided by OKDHS.

---

### **OKDHS DDS: Public Relations Contract**

This position will **enhance** individuals receiving HCBS waiver services on the wait list, support self-direction by recruitment of direct service providers & foster homes. Additionally, DDS seeks to **expand** access to services by recruiting new therapists, residential and vocational providers.

---

### **OKDHS CAP & DDS: Develop a Statewide Service Directory**

CAP & DDS will develop an informational website to **enhance** and **expand** services to link customers to HCBS services supporting Oklahomans. The website will include planning and assessment tools to help Oklahomans plan for their future as they age and their needs change.

---

### **OKDHS CAP: 1-800 Number**

CAP will implement toll free number to enhance services and link individuals with special needs of any age and family caregivers across the lifespan with providers able to address their needs.

---

### **OKDHS DDS Services: IntellectAbility E-Learn Courses – Fatal Five Fundamentals**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requires states to identify corrective actions which eliminate or lessen the likelihood of circumstances and events contributing to or are associated with the causes related to preventable deaths. The self-paced e-Learn online courses discusses the Fatal Five conditions linked to preventable deaths in people with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities living in community-based residential settings. Training will enhance direct support professionals to observe, make informed decisions and take preventative actions to reduce the risk of death and other adverse outcomes for service recipients.

---

### **OKDHS DDS Services: Annual Development Events for New Case Managers and Mentors**

DDS will **strengthen** case management’s knowledge, increase networking and leadership skills and **enhance** case management’s support network through the provision of annual case management development events. These events will be an **enhancement** to the DDS Mentoring and Training program for new case managers and mentors. The events will focus on team building and leadership skills. Case managers will network with staff from across the state to increase their available support network. Furthermore, the event will increase staff retention by ensuring new case managers are supported and have the skills necessary to be successful in their daily work.