

# Access to Services Provided by the Developmental Disabilities System in Orange County

Most specialized services are accessed through the NY State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and require OPWDD eligibility. *New Individuals* seeking OPWDD services must go through the “Front Door” Process which includes:

- eligibility deeming and orientation
- assessment of need,
- and service authorization

Obtaining eligibility is key to moving forward if the service needed requires NYS OPWDD eligibility. This is a formal, often multi-level review process that includes letters of notification about status and next steps. It is not an easy process, it can be quite lengthy, additional information may be requested, and most people need assistance.

**There are a limited number of OPWDD services that can be accessed prior to having OPWDD eligibility. In Orange County, additional services can be accessed without OPWDD eligibility if funded in part or entirely by your county government through its Department of Mental Health (OCDMH) or through funds raised by non-profit agencies. Those services are identified at [www.orangecountynyddconnection.com](http://www.orangecountynyddconnection.com)**

## QUALIFYING DIAGNOSES FOR ALL SPECIALIZED SERVICES

Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Autism, Neurological Impairment (injury, malformation, or disease involving the Central Nervous System), Intellectual Disability (formerly known as Mental Retardation with IQ of 69 or lower)-any one diagnosis or combination

## CRITERIA FOR OPWDD ELIGIBILITY

- Presence of a qualifying diagnosis or condition, and
- occurrence before age twenty-two, and
- is expected to continue indefinitely, and
- constitutes a “substantial handicap” requiring the need for lifelong support

## DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR OPWDD ELIGIBILITY

- A current (minimally within three years), comprehensive, measure of intellect (IQ) using the most current version of an OPWDD acceptable assessment tool; and
- If the IQ is above 60, a current measure of adaptive behavior/functioning using an OPWDD acceptable assessment tool; and

- A social history describing any pre-natal or other early risk factors that may have impacted the individual, age of onset, and that reflects the person's current situation. If documented history is not available, efforts to obtain the information must be provided along with any history that can be gathered from family members or other sources; and
- A physical (current within one year) specifying any medical/ physical anomalies; and
- If the IQ is 70 or higher, documentation of a qualifying diagnosis other than intellectual disability must be submitted resulting from an assessment, medical records, genetic testing, etc. This does not need to be current.
- For adults seeking eligibility, documentation of onset prior to age 22

Often, the first three items are contained within one psychological assessment.

To download the coversheet and transmittal forms, please refer to [www.orangecountynyddconnection.com](http://www.orangecountynyddconnection.com).

Send all documentation to: Hudson Valley Developmental Disabilities Service Office  
9 Wilbur Road Thiells, N.Y. 10984

For assistance, please contact a provider of OPWDD family assistance or the County Department of Mental Health.

## **DOES NYS OPWDD ELIGIBILITY HAVE TO BE RE-DETERMINED?**

There are always unusual situations that fall outside of day to day practice but generally, eligibility is determined once with these exceptions:

- Young children meeting criteria will receive *provisional* eligibility. Services provided at an early age may result in significant improvement to the point where a child may no longer qualify therefore, eligibility must be *re-determined* by age eight.
- People may need to re-apply after a break in service. An example might be a person who ends all specialty developmental disabilities services and receives all services from another system such as foster care, residential school, correctional facility, mental health.

For more detail, go to [www.opwdd.com](http://www.opwdd.com) or [www.orangecountynyddconnection.com](http://www.orangecountynyddconnection.com)

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