

Department of Health and Social Services

Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS)



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Joint Finance Committee Hearing Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

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Good morning, Senator Paradee, Representative Williams, members of the Joint Finance Committee and members of the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today as we share some of our recent efforts and present our Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB).

The Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) provides support and services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live their lives fully by accessing services they need to thrive in their community. DDDS works to identify and support the unique needs of eligible service recipients by offering access to an extensive network of providers ranging from employment and pre-vocational services; support coordination to supported living.

Our Division is committed to ensuring our service systems evolves with those we serve, and that in the process we prioritize their success and autonomy, their health and safety, and the sustainability of our service system.

Accomplishments

- ❑ Enhanced Behavioral Residential Services (EBRS)



In response to critical unmet need, the Division introduced a service new to Delaware and unique in the country. Designed and built in partnership with our provider agencies, and piloted with federal funding, the Enhanced Behavioral Residential Service (EBRS) is designed to assist individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and intensive behavioral health needs to live successfully in the community. Through support from an interdisciplinary care team, costly hospital stays have been dramatically reduced, involvement with law enforcement has dropped, and critical incidents for individuals participating in the pilot were reduced by over 90%. The message to us has been clear: when we strengthen the home, we decrease reliance on crisis-based interventions; and make it easier to get home when a true crisis emerges.



Accomplishments

- ❑ Expanding Shared Living
- ❑ Strengthening Investigator Training



DDDS is expanding its Shared Living program to allow authorized providers in the state to deliver this service for the first time. Shared Living offers a more personalized residential service under the Lifespan Waiver allowing individuals and families to become trained providers and open their homes to an individual receiving DDDS services. Doing so now provides expanded access to a service that optimizes the balance between support and autonomy, reduces reliance on workforce, and strengthens financial sustainability.

The Division is also investing in strengthening its ability to conduct investigations and assist providers in ensuring the health and safety of its programs. DDDS worked with Temple University to re-design training, supports, and quality controls for our certified investigators. The new training requirement ensures consistent training across the system while introducing new supports for investigators through the addition of programs focused on self-care, stress-management, and applying trauma informed practices with the aim to reduce burn-out and trauma fatigue to stabilize this critical workforce.

FY 2027 Governor's Recommended Budget

(\$ in Thousands)

	GF	ASF	NSF	Total
FTEs	392.2	1.0	1.2	394.4
Dollars (\$)	\$175,995.0	\$5,115.9	\$12,889.9	\$194,000.8



Budget Definitions:

- GF – General Funds
- ASF – Appropriated Special Funds
- NSF – Non-Appropriated Special Funds
- FTEs – Full Time Equivalent Positions

The slide above shows the budget included in the FY 2027 Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB).

Our Division's FY 2027 GRB is:

- \$176 Million in General Funds (GF);
- \$5 Million in Appropriated Special Fund (ASF) spending authority; and
- \$13 Million in Non-Appropriated Special Funds (NSF).
- For a Total of \$194 Million dollars.

These funding commitments from the State enable the Division to acquire approximately 60% federal match for service participants eligible for Medicaid on all services offered through the State's approved IDD waiver.

FY 2027 Governor's Recommended Budget

- \$ 11,413.2 - Residential Services
- \$ 1,138.0 - Community Based/Day Services
- \$10,582.9 - FY 2025 Rate Study Increases



Our FY 2027 GRB includes funding for DDDS Door Openers including:

- \$11 Million dollars ensuring individuals with the greatest need can access residential services in the community.
- \$1 Million dollars enabling access to community-based services including day habilitation; employment training and support, and other services designed to assist with everyday life.
- \$10 Million dollars to support 33% of the FY 2025 Rate Study which includes rate increases across the service system in keeping with the Administration's commitment to the McNesby Act. These funds will support wage increases for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), our system's frontline care workers, whose dedication and compassion deserves to be better compensated. When our DSPs thrive, so do our friends, neighbors, and family members with IDD.

Looking ahead

- Workforce
- Connecting Youth and Adult Systems



As we look ahead, I'm mindful of our guiding vision: that living life in the community means living life with the community.

That means investing in workforce by seeing DSPs not only as service supports, but as essential members of our state's community health workforce. This budget sends a clear signal of this Administration's commitments to increasing wages while the Division continues its efforts to opening doors to training, education, and career advancement.

And it means building continuity and connection across the lifespan, regardless of disability. The Division is committed to building bridges with our youth services partners while also establishing programs and supports that let folks age in place and with dignity.

Looking ahead

- ❑ Navigating the federal landscape



Finally, I want to briefly address the work the Division is doing to ensure timely responses to the changing landscape of federal policy and funding.

DDDS has not been directly impacted by new federal policies, but we are aware that many of those we support will be since they are often accessing resources beyond those offered by DDDS. We are taking our experience with the Unwinding effort as an opportunity to move more proactively to coordinate with Division of Social Services (DSS) and Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA). Good coordination will lessen the administrative burden on the State, prevent unnecessary use of State funds for services, and provide predictability for caregivers in understanding what to expect.

We know these changes are introducing a vast amount of stress into our service system, much of which is being carried by our families and caregivers. We're committed to supporting those caregivers (family and professional alike) to navigate changes in eligibility requirements in partnership with our sister divisions at Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS).

THANK YOU



Thank you for the chance to share with you some of our Division's achievements and the opportunities that lie ahead.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.