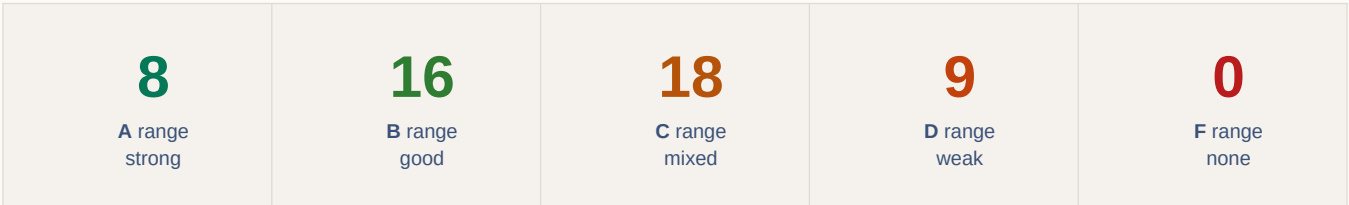


MEDICAID HOME & COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

State Waiver Report Card

Every US state and the District of Columbia graded A–F on how well its Medicaid waiver system actually serves families of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities — spending per capita, waitlist length, program breadth, self-determination, community balance, and how hard it is to apply.



51 jurisdictions graded. Data vintage: CMS FY 2023 · T-MSIS CY 2023 Q4 · KFF 2024 survey · state filings checked monthly.

Strongest systems

A+	California
A	Arizona
A	Oregon
A-	Connecticut
A-	District of Columbia

Weakest systems

D+	Tennessee
D+	Texas
D+	West Virginia
D	Alabama
D	Mississippi

What the grade measures

25%	HCBS spending per capita — Total HCBS expenditure divided by the state population with IDD.
25%	Waitlist length — Average months from application to enrollment across the state's waivers.
15%	Program count and breadth — Distinct waiver programs and the range of populations served.
15%	Self-determination — Whether participant-directed budgeting is offered, in full or in part.
10%	Community vs. institutional balance — Community-based spending as a share of total long-term care spending.
10%	Application accessibility — Online application, language access, intake responsiveness, geographic coverage.

The full ranking

Sorted best to worst. “Waitlist” is the state's own published status, quoted as published — several states report no waitlist because their program is an entitlement, which is not the same as a short wait.

#	STATE	GRADE	WAIVERS	PUBLISHED WAITLIST STATUS	VERIFIED
1	California	A+	2	Lanterman Act entitlement via Regional Center eligibility — no traditional waitlist when eligible.	2026-06-26
2	Arizona	A	3	NO waitlist — ALTCS is an entitlement for those meeting medical/functional criteria.	2026-07-03
3	Oregon	A	3	NO waitlist — K Plan is a state plan entitlement.	2026-07-03
4	Connecticut	A-	3	DDS manages access by priority; verify with your DDS case manager.	2026-07-03
5	District of Columbia	A-	3	Eligibility through DDA intake; DC historically enrolls without long waitlists.	2026-07-03
6	Massachusetts	A-	3	DDS prioritization applies; verify with your area office.	2026-07-03
7	New Jersey	A-	3	Enrollment after DDD eligibility + Medicaid; no traditional waitlist.	2026-07-03
8	New York	A-	1	Access starts through the OPWDD Front Door intake and eligibility process.	2026-06-26
9	Colorado	B+	5	Long waitlist by order-of-selection date — enroll through your Case Management Agency early.	2026-07-03
10	Maryland	B+	5	DDA waiting list by priority category; transitioning youth get priority at 21.	2026-07-03
11	Minnesota	B+	4	County-administered; MnCHOICES assessment sets budget.	2026-07-03
12	Ohio	B+	5	Managed by County Boards of DD; waitlist varies by county.	2026-07-03
13	Rhode Island	B+	2	Eligibility through BHDDH DD Division; consent-decree reforms expanded community services.	2026-07-03
14	Vermont	B+	2	Funding priorities set annually in the System of Care Plan.	2026-07-03
15	Washington	B+	4	DDA enrolls by service need; request the No-Paid Services caseload if waiting.	2026-07-03
16	Delaware	B	2	Delaware combined its DD waivers into Lifespan; verify enrollment timing with DDDS.	2026-07-03
17	Hawaii	B	2	Hawaii generally enrolls eligible applicants; DDD case managers control service levels.	2026-07-03
18	Illinois	B	5	PUNS database selection — enroll in PUNS and update yearly; selections are need+date based.	2026-07-03
19	Maine	B	3	Priority-based waitlist; ask OADS for your priority level in writing.	2026-07-03
20	Michigan	B	4	Slots held by CMHSPs; ask your CMH for HSW screening — many eligible people are never told about it.	2026-07-03

#	STATE	GRADE	WAIVERS	PUBLISHED WAITLIST STATUS	VERIFIED
21	New Hampshire	B	3	Funded through the state 'wait list' budget line; ask your Area Agency about funding year timing.	2026-07-03
22	Pennsylvania	B	4	PUNS-based emergency/urgent prioritization; document crisis factors.	2026-07-03
23	Virginia	B	4	Priority 1-3 waitlist ~13,000 statewide; slot assignment via regional committees.	2026-07-03
24	Wisconsin	B	4	Wisconsin eliminated the CLTS waitlist statewide — every eligible child must be served.	2026-07-03
25	Florida	C+	1	Long Prioritization List except crisis cases; document urgent risks and category changes quickly.	2026-06-26
26	Indiana	C+	4	Multi-year waitlist by application date — apply the day of diagnosis.	2026-07-03
27	Iowa	C+	4	Managed through MCOs with state waitlist; verify timing with Iowa Medicaid.	2026-07-03
28	Nebraska	C+	3	Registry by application date — register at diagnosis, even for young children.	2026-07-03
29	Nevada	C+	3	Served through regional centers (Desert, Sierra, Rural); verify slot timing.	2026-07-03
30	North Carolina	C+	4	Registry of Unmet Needs exceeds 16,000 — register the day you have a diagnosis.	2026-07-03
31	Utah	C+	2	Capped funds can move faster than full waiver services; stay active with DSPD and update needs.	2026-06-26
32	Alaska	C	4	Registry-based selection with annual draws; keep your registry review current.	2026-07-03
33	Idaho	C	3	Idaho enrolls eligible adults; budget set by assessment.	2026-07-03
34	Kansas	C	4	~10-year waitlist historically — sign up through your CDDO immediately.	2026-07-03
35	Kentucky	C	3	Very long waitlist — apply immediately and keep contact info current.	2026-07-03
36	Missouri	C	5	Regional office intake; crisis prioritization.	2026-07-03
37	Montana	C	2	Waitlist with crisis-first selection; document caregiver strain in writing.	2026-07-03
38	New Mexico	C	4	New Mexico cleared its decades-long waitlist in 2022-2023 — allocations now come much faster.	2026-07-03
39	North Dakota	C	3	North Dakota historically enrolls without long waitlists — apply through regional Human Service Centers.	2026-07-03
40	South Carolina	C	5	Waitlist managed by DDSN; keep annual contact updates.	2026-07-03
41	South Dakota	C	3	Served through Community Support Providers; verify capacity.	2026-07-03

#	STATE	GRADE	WAIVERS	PUBLISHED WAITLIST STATUS	VERIFIED
42	Wyoming	C	3	Individual budget model; verify timing with the Behavioral Health Division.	2026-07-03
43	Arkansas	D+	3	Multi-year waitlist; recent funding rounds have pulled thousands off — keep contact info current.	2026-07-03
44	Georgia	D+	5	Long planning list; short-term entry often starts with crisis documentation.	2026-07-03
45	Louisiana	D+	5	Louisiana replaced first-come lists with urgency-of-need screening (SUN) — request a screening update after any change.	2026-07-03
46	Oklahoma	D+	4	Oklahoma cleared its 13-year waitlist in 2022-2023 — new applications process much faster now.	2026-07-03
47	Tennessee	D+	3	Enrollment targets by group; apply through TennCare health plans.	2026-07-03
48	Texas	D+	2	Severe interest lists, often 10-15+ years; register on the Interest List early through your LIDDA.	2026-06-26
49	West Virginia	D+	4	Managed enrollment list moves slowly; annual anchor date matters — apply early.	2026-07-03
50	Alabama	D	4	Waitlist managed through regional 310 boards; document urgent needs.	2026-07-03
51	Mississippi	D	4	Long waitlist; 1915(i) Community Support Program can start sooner.	2026-07-03

How to use this

If you are a family

Your state's grade describes the system, not your chances. A D state still has programs, and a family that applies early and appeals a denial routinely does better than one that waits. Start with your state page for the exact intake office, the phone number that is answered, and the deadline to appeal.

If you are a provider, case manager, or school team

This is the page families ask you for. The grades, the ranking and this PDF are published under CC BY 4.0, so you may print it, post it, or hand it out — including with your own logo alongside the attribution.

If you are a journalist or policy researcher

The full dataset is downloadable as CSV at spectrumpathways.ai/waiver-grades.csv. The weighting, the sources and their vintage are published in full at spectrumpathways.ai/methodology.

Sources

CMS Form 372	Annual HCBS waiver report filed by every state. Waiver slots, expenditures, participant counts.	FY 2023
T-MSIS / MACPro	State-level enrollment, service utilization and claims data.	CY 2023 Q4
Kaiser Family Foundation	Waitlist survey, per-capita HCBS spending, community balance ratios.	2024 survey
State agency filings	Waiver applications, renewals and amendments filed with CMS.	Checked monthly
NASDDDS / state DD agency reports	Self-determination program status and waitlist management approach.	Rolling

Citation

SpectrumPathways.ai, “Waiver Grades”, v1.0, 2026-08-24, <https://www.spectrumpathways.ai/waiver-grades>

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