

Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn



Navigating Independence: Empowering Adult Decision-Making and OPWDD Transition Services



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**Office for
People With
Developmental
Disabilities**



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Today's Training



- Introduction
- OPWDD
 - Eligibility
 - Services
 - Training Programs & Employment
- Adult Decision-Making
 - Alternatives to Guardianship
 - Guardianship
 - Supported Decision-Making





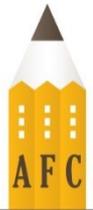
What is Advocates for Children (AFC)?



AFC is an independent agency that protects the rights of all NYC students

Our Services:

- Helpline: **1-866-427-6033** (Mon-Thurs, 10am – 4pm)
- Guides and resources: www.advocatesforchildren.org
- Workshops and trainings
- Free legal services to low-income families



What is OPWDD?

Office for
People With
Developmental
Disabilities



- OPWDD provides services to people of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Many children with IEP classifications of Intellectual Disability (ID), Multiple Disabilities (MD), or Autism qualify for OPWDD services.
- Cerebral palsy, autism, neurological impairments, Prader-Willi Syndrome, Down Syndrome, TBI, and others
- Medicaid-based Program
- Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs) assist most people with the coordination of their services.
- Services through network of non-profit providers

Terms



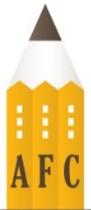
Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is a New York state agency that provides supports and services to people who have developmental disabilities.

The Developmental Disabilities Regional Offices (DDROs) – DDROs provide Front Door information sessions, determine eligibility, conduct the intake process, and help to coordinate and oversee programs, supports, and services.

Transition Planning is planning for adulthood for students with a disability. Students' goals for adult life can include college, vocational education, employment, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs) – CCOs guide you through the OPWDD eligibility process, develop service plans, and help secure services.

Front Door: is the Eligibility Determination process for OPWDD services.



Eligibility



Diagnosis of a developmental and/or intellectual disability



Disability happened before the age of 22



Disability is expected to be permanent



Disability impacts child's ability to live everyday independently

Required Documentation



- A psychological evaluation report that is within 3 years of date of application.
 - It should include a full-scale IQ score and Adaptive Behavior Scales.
 - A social history or psychosocial evaluation report that is within 1 year of date of application.
 - These might be included in the psychological report listed above or done with your child's school evaluations as part of the IEP process
 - A medical report, such as the one from the annual physical conducted for your child's school, that is not older than 1 year.
 - OPWDD Transmittal Form for Determination of Developmental Disability: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/eligibility>
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- OPWDD may also ask you for other documents or evaluations, including an IEP.
 - (ADOS) or Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS) may be requested.

Evaluations



- There are “Article 16” Clinics where you can have evaluations done:
 - AHRC: 212-780-4491.
 - YAI: 212-273-6182,
 - SINERGIA: 212-643-2840, ext. 602
- More info: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/providers/article-16-clinics>

Diagnostic Evaluation



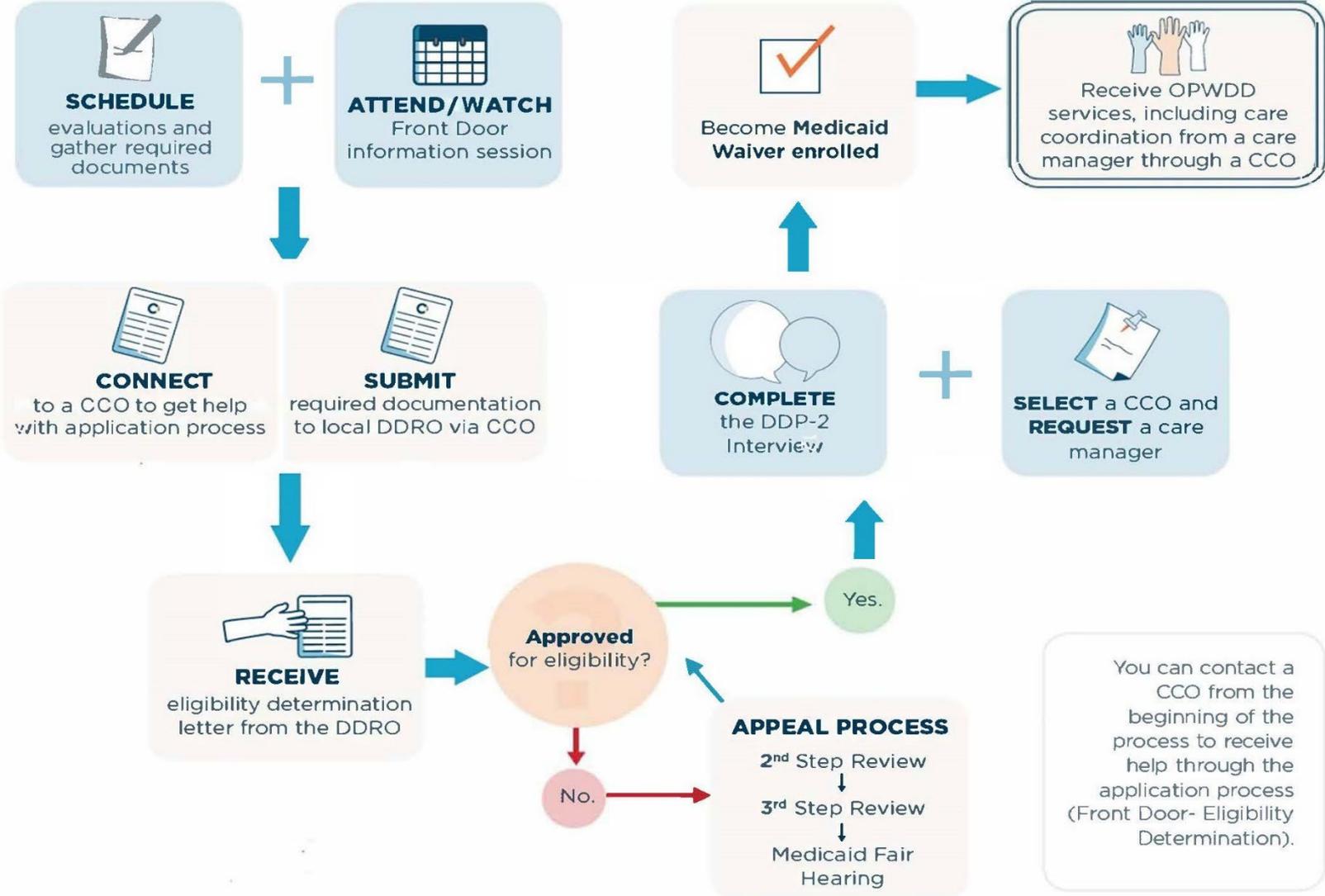
- Critical component to determine nature and significance of developmental disability.
- **Acceptable Measures of Intellectual Functioning**
 - The Wechsler series of intelligence scales
 - The Stanford-Binet Scales
 - Leiter International Performance Scale
 - The Kaufman series of intelligence scales
- **Considerations for Measures of Intellectual Functioning:**
 - Abbreviated measures of intelligence (WASI, K-BIT) are not acceptable alone.
 - Language-free instruments (Leiter, CTONI) in combination with the Performance items of a comprehensive IQ test will be considered for individuals who do not speak English, are deaf, or are non-verbal.
 - Intelligence tests standardized in English cannot be administered in a different language.
- **Acceptable Measures of Adaptive Behavior**
 - Adaptive Behavior Assessment System
 - Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales
 - The Motor Skills Domain only of the Scales of Independent Behavior

Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs)



- OPWDD works in partnership with Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs) to support people in developing and maintaining service plans.
- There are three 3 CCOs providing services in NYC:
 - Advanced Care Alliance (ACA) - <https://acany.org/>
 - Care Design NY - <https://caredesignny.org/>
 - Tri-County Care - <https://tricountycare.org/>
- As you are going through the OPWDD eligibility process:
 - You will need to choose and contact a CCO and a Care Coordinator
 - ✦ guide you through the OPWDD eligibility determination process,
 - ✦ help you through the Level of Care Eligibility Determination process,
 - ✦ assist you in enrolling in Medicaid.

OPWDD Application Process

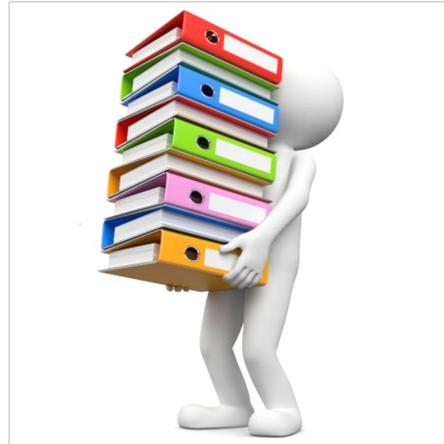


Application Process



1. Gather Documents

- ✦ OPWDD Eligibility Form
- ✦ Psychological Assessment
- ✦ Social History
- ✦ Medical Report



To Get Started:
Call the OPWDD
Information Line
at 1-866-946-9733
for more
information.

2. Attend/Watch a Front Door information session –

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/access-supports/front-door-videos>

3. Connect with a CCO to complete application

4. Turn in Documents

- ✦ To local DDRO via CCO



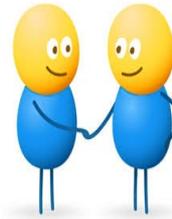
Application Process



4. Receive Determination Letter



5. Get a Care
Coordination Agency



6. DDP-2 Phone Interview



7. Finish Process with Care Coordinator



OPWDD Family Support Services & Medicaid Waiver Services



Family Support Services (FSS)

- Supports for families who care for their loved ones with developmental disabilities
- Must live at home full-time
- Only OPWDD ELIGIBILITY is needed to qualify for these types of services
- Funding from NYS

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid Waiver

- Most OPWDD services are funded through the Medicaid Home and HCBS program
- Must be Medicaid waiver enrolled
- Renew Medicaid eligibility annually
- Funding from NYS and the federal government

OPWDD Family Support Services & Medicaid Waiver Services



Family Support Services (FSS)

- Respite
- Family member training
- Training in how to manage challenging behaviors
- Reimbursement (certain items)
- Information and referral
- Sibling services
- Home Modifications
- After school programs
- Recreation/social activities

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid Waiver

- Community Habilitation
- Day Habilitation Programs
- Residential Programs
- Employment Supports
 - Prevocational Services
 - Supported Employment
- Housing
- Crisis Services
- Intensive Behavioral Support
- Respite
- Adaptive Equipment & Assistive Technology
- Environmental modification
- Home Care Services



Services available through OPWDD



Services Vary Depending on Eligibility & Type

- Family Support Services
- Physical Therapy (PT)
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
- After school programs and summer camp
- Day and Community habilitation programs
- Reimbursement
- Residential Programs
- Applied Behavior Analysis Therapy (ABA)
- Nurses
- Medical, Dental, and Mental Health services
- On-the-job coaching
- Behavior Support
- Equipment
- Transportation to and from services
- Care Coordination
- And much more

Link: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services>

Housing



Depending upon needs:

- Live with their family with supports
 - Respite and community habilitation
- Live independently with assistance
- Paid neighbor: “On-call”
- Family Care: living with another family
- Group home with other people with developmental disabilities
- More info: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/housing>

Day Habilitation



- For adults, after finishing high school
- Takes place outside the home
 - Usually in a certified site
 - Within the community (“Day Hab Without Walls”)
- **Activities to:**
 - Develop skills and self-advocacy
 - Promote greater independence
 - Encourage relationship building
- **Volunteerism**

Community Habilitation



- **Learn skills to live safely/more independently**
 - At home or in the community
- **Includes:**
 - Daily living skill development
 - Assistance with daily living activities
 - Community inclusion
 - Relationship building
 - Travel training
- **Individual gets an amount of hours as per Life Plan**
- **• For people who DO NOT live in an OPWDD certified or operated home**

Crisis Services for People with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (CSIDD)



- High intensity Crisis Services for people ages 6+ who have significant behavioral and/or mental health needs.
 - Services: Crisis response, in home therapeutic supports and crisis mitigation techniques.
- For people who reside in a certified residence or in the community.
- Designed to help stabilize individuals so they may remain in their existing residence and retain their existing care networks.
- More info: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/nystartcsidd>

Self-Direction



Allows you control over your OPWDD funds to choose your own services

You are responsible for coordinating your services and supports

Can work with care manager to learn more

Things you can Self-Direct:

- Where you live
- Activities
- Relationships with family and friends
- Who you hire to assist you

Self-Direction



- **Self-Direction Program:**
- What am I hoping to get out of Self-Direction Program –
- Community classes, Self-hire staff, Housing subsidy, the ability/flexibility to create my schedule
- **Traditional Services**
- Attend participate in day habilitation, Pre-vocational, Supported Employment programming

Self-Direction



Self-direction provides more flexibility to choose individualized supports, hire the staff you want and create a customized schedule.

- **Circle of Support:**

- Care Manager: Develops the Life Plan & assist with the Medicaid waiver eligibility process
- A Support Broker: Assists with developing a self-direction budget & staff action plans
- Fiscal Intermediary (FI): Responsible for billing, making payments, fiscal accounting and reporting
 - ✦ Supports as you hire and supervise your staff

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- * Services are paid for with funds from your Personal Resource Account (PRA). Your individualized budget is determined by OPWDD's needs assessment tool.

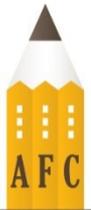
Self-Direction



- **What can money be spent on?**
- Camp: Has to be within NY state
- Health Club: Health club membership in individual's name only (plus other memberships)
- Service-related Transportation: Reimbursement to & from classes, gym, and more
- Household-related Items: Reimbursement for household items that increase independence
- Community Classes

OPWDD & Supported Employment





OPWDD Employment Supports



- Employment and Pre-vocational services, including Supported Employment, through providers:
 - AHRC
 - ✦ <https://www.ahrcnyc.org/services/work/preparing/dycd-programs/advance-earn/>
 - ✦ <https://www.ahrcnyc.org/services/work/preparing/pathway-employment/>
 - Nicholas Center - <https://tncnewyork.org/vocational-support>
 - Goodwill - <https://goodwillnynj.org/people-with-disabilities/>
 - Birch Family Services - <https://birchfamilyservices.org/birch-family-services/employment-programs/new-frontier/>
 - ADAPT Community - <https://adaptcommunitynetwork.org/service-options/employment-services/>



Supported Employment Programs



- Competitive employment in an integrated setting with ongoing support services for individuals with significant disabilities.
- Approach designed to assist individuals with significant disabilities in finding and maintaining employment.
- Typically begins with working with the person to identify their interests and abilities, through different assessments.
- Ongoing support and accommodations to help them succeed in the workplace.
- May include **JOB COACHING**, assistance with skill development, on-the-job training, and ongoing support from job specialists or employment counselors.
- Provided through OPWDD (long term) and ACCES-VR (initial phase)

[ADAPT Community Network](#)

- Pre-employment & Supported Employment Services
- Must enroll in OPWDD

[Nicholas Center](#)

- For young people with ASD
- Include training programs, job coaching, employment assessments and career exploration



Supported Employment Programs

ADAPT Community Network

For young people with
a developmental
disability

Pre-employment &
Supported
Employment

Must enroll in ACCES-
VR and, if possible,
OPWDD

Nicholas Center

For young people with
ASD

Include training
programs, job
coaching, employment
assessments and
career exploration

Must enroll in ACCES-
VR and, if possible,
OPWDD



OPWDD Employment Supports



- **Employment Training and Supports:** Offers training to enhance strengths and mitigate employment barriers, including internships leading to permanent positions.
- **Supported Employment (SEMP):** Aims to facilitate successful employment in community settings through tailored support.
 - Services transition from ACCES-VR funded employment support to limited job coaching for job maintenance.
 - Supported Employment or SEMP is one of the HCBS waivers available to individuals with a disability.
 - SEMP can provide the supports you need to maintain a paid competitive job.
- **Employment Training Program (ETP):** Provides internships with the promise of permanent employment, covering wages during the learning period. ETP includes job readiness classes on various professional skills and offers extensive job development.
- **Prevocational Services:** Designed for individuals requiring additional skill development to succeed in employment. Focuses on enhancing vocational interests, strengths, and addressing employment barriers outside of specific job task training.



ACCES-VR vs OPWDD



ACCES-VR Services

- Pre-ETS
- Tuition assistance
- College supports
- Competitive employment
- Vocational counseling
- Work-related expenses
- Transportation

OPWDD Services

- Supported **employment**
- Job coaching
- Internships
- Assistive technology
- E-modifications
- Job placement
- **Evaluations & assessments**

- Medicaid HCBS
- Services
- Medical services
- Therapeutic services
- Care coordination
- Community habilitation
- Day habilitation
- Residential programs
- Respite
- Home care
- Housing



Customized Employment Programs



- Customized Employment is a process to achieve competitive integrated employment through matching the strengths/interests of an individual to the needs of an employer.
- Approach designed to assist individuals with disabilities in finding and maintaining employment.
- A form of supported employment.
- May include job coaching, assistance with skill development, on-the-job training, and LIMITED ongoing support from job specialists or employment counselors.

JobPath

- For NYC residents 18+ with a developmental disability
- Must enroll in ACCES-VR and, if possible, OPWDD
- Consortium of Customized Employment Providers
<https://www.jobpathnyc.org/cce/>



JobPath – Customized Employment



Job Path supports people with developmental disabilities, including autism, to find meaningful employment that matches their skills.

Offers services to NYC residents 18+ with a developmental disability.

Eligibility specifics for each service vary, with some requiring enrollment in ACCES-VR or OPWDD and having Medicaid.

Works with employers to match individuals -
<https://www.jobpathnyc.org/employment-partners/>

Job areas including Animal Care, Clerical Assistance, Computer/Data Entry, Childcare/Teacher Assistant, Food Service, Healthcare, Media, Maintenance Worker

Consortium for Customized Employment <https://www.jobpathnyc.org/cce/>

More info <https://www.jobpathnyc.org/>



OPWDD Community-Based Employment Programs (via Self-Direction or SEMP)



[Yes She Can](#)

- Retail training and employment program for young people with ASD
- Must identify as female or non-binary

[Invictus Bakery](#)

- Culinary arts and employment program for young people with ASD
- Classes and work readiness training, plus employment

[Tech Kids Unlimited](#)

- Computer science and technology skill-building programs for young people with ASD and related disabilities
- Workshops, classes, internships, summer programs, work experiences, employment

[Harvest Cafe](#)

- Food industry training program for people with developmental disabilities
- A program of AVSP OPWDD agency – via supported employment

[Spectrum Designs](#)

- Employment for individuals with autism and developmental disabilities.
- Offers vocational training and employment in apparel and merchandise.
- Services include screen printing, embroidery, digital and pad printing, and promotional products.

Invictus Bakery



- Offers Work Readiness and Job Training classes focused on creating tangible products for the culinary sector
- Technology partnership with Microsoft
- Bakers work towards certification as a master baker
- HIRE ME Employment Initiative
- Work duties
 - Baking and Cooking Jobs – HIRE ME shifts
 - Deliveries and Order Fulfillment
 - Commissioned Artwork
 - Social Media Content Curation
 - Inventory Management

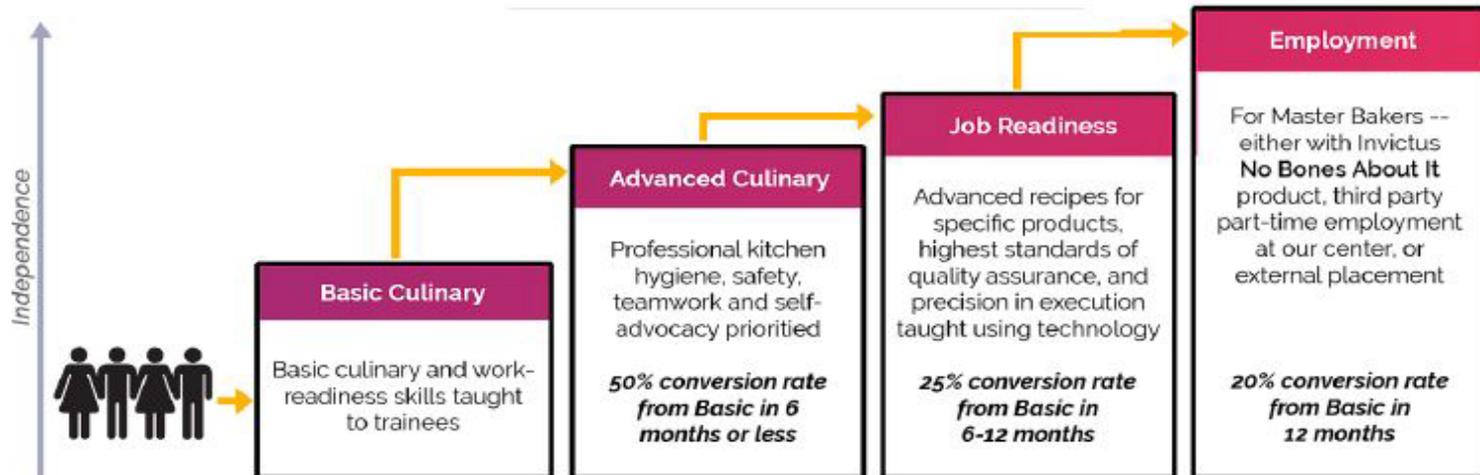
Invictus Bakery



Invictus Works

This is a work exposure course where we share the joys of the culinary arts with our Bakers. We envision a **world of inclusion** where every person is a **productive member of society** and has the capability to reach their full potential.

Progressive Model of Classes



Our courses target necessary skills and builds competencies in areas needed for employment.

Resources



- Front Door Information Session: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/get-started/information-sessions>
- Eligibility: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/eligibility>
- Bronx: <https://www.bronxddcouncil.org/>
 - [Bronx Family Support Services Guide](#)
- Brooklyn: <https://bkddcouncil.org/>
 - [Brooklyn Guide](#)
- Manhattan: <https://www.manhattanddcouncil.org/>
 - [Manhattan Family Resource Guide](#)
- Queens: - <https://www.qcddny.org/>
 - [Queens Family Support Guide](#)
- Staten Island: <https://siddc.org/>
 - [Staten Island Family Support Guide](#)

Adult Decision Making



17a Guardianship



- Most restrictive type of guardianship
- For adults with IDD who will not be able to make decisions on their own once 18
- Requires recent medical documentation of disability
- Court appointment
 - Must file in Surrogate's Court
 - Pro se or with attorney

Supported Decision Making



- Recently legalized in New York (legal in 8 states & D.C.)
- Less restrictive alternative to guardianship
- Can be informal or formal arrangement
- Decision-maker determines:
 - Domains for support (e.g. medical)
 - Types of support to receive (e.g. healthcare proxy)
 - How to receive that support
- Pilot program currently funded by OPWDD

Other Alternatives to Guardianship



- Power of Attorney
- Health Care Proxy
- Social Security Representative Payee
- Special Needs Trusts

Guardianship Resources



- New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)
 - <https://nylag.org/gethelp/>
- New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI)
 - <https://www.nylpi.org/our-work/disability-justice/>
- AHRC
 - <https://www.ahrcnyc.org/services/families/guardianship-services/>
- NY Courts
 - <https://www.nycourts.gov/courthelp/guardianship/resources.shtml>



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