

The Division of Developmental Disabilities' mission is guided by the following principles:

- All people with severe developmental disabilities must be eligible to receive needed services regardless of age, sex, creed or nature of the disability. Eligibility criteria is functionally based, so not everybody with a developmental disability qualifies. In other words, the developmental disability must manifest before age 22; have lifelong limitations in areas of life activities, learning, mobility, etc.
- Services for people with developmental disabilities must be designed to meet the specific needs of the individual.
- Consumer choice must be maximized among services and to promote individualization.
- People with developmental disabilities who require services or support are to be provided with personal options in their lives. Further, such choices are to be embedded within a context that promotes the most independent lifestyle possible for the person or family.
- Service options that are available in the community at large and that can be adapted for use by people with developmental disabilities should be considered first.
- Adequate professional treatment and services, ensuring continuity in the least restrictive and segregated venue possible (which ideally is in a person's own community), must be assured. However, since many people require specialized services, specialized service networks must be maintained that have trained, knowledgeable, and experienced professionals who either directly provide needed services, or serve as consultants to community-based providers.
- Opportunities and sites designed to provide training and experience in developmental disabilities to professionals must be enhanced.
- Any support services required by individuals and their families (such as respite, counseling, referral, assessment and planning) that assist the person with developmental disabilities to live at home must be arranged for or provided.
- Planning is to be a participatory process that includes all relevant constituents.
- Those who work with people who have a developmental disability will be valued. People with a developmental disability will be supported through consumer response, value-based training and other supports.