

People First 1115 Waiver Public Forums – Preliminary Executive Summary

OPWDD's People First Waiver Public Forums were announced following the release of a concept paper outlining plans for development of the People First (1115) Waiver. Sessions were held across the state and via video conference to provide ample opportunity for stakeholder input in the process.

Please note that the figures contained in this summary are preliminary and subject to further verification.

Family members and individuals, agency staff and executives, advocates for people with developmental disabilities and others presented their viewpoints at the forums. A total of 110 participants provided testimony. Participants were invited to respond to four questions:

- How can we further break down barriers and support people to live truly integrated lives in the community?
- What do families need to better support their loved ones at home?
- What reform ideas do you have to help us operate more efficiently [...]?
- What should we be measuring to tell us if we are doing a good job [...]?

(The last two questions are abbreviated.)

Participants often responded to these questions directly, or presented on a topic particularly important to them. Participants noted that they want to be partners in the process of developing the 1115 waiver, and also that the quality services they receive must not be interrupted. General themes from the responses emerged, and those themes are reported on the remainder of this summary.

Perhaps the greatest single theme at the forums was a near-unanimous prioritization of services that **adapt to** the individual, as opposed to asking individuals and their families to fit within a system many find challenging to navigate. Individualized supports and services was the most-mentioned theme during the forums, with about 44% of presenters addressing the topic.

Access to employment services, transition services for those leaving the educational system or family home, and other specialized services (like psychiatric services for those with behavioral challenges or support for medically frail individuals) were among the paramount concerns. The emerging needs of growing populations with intense challenges were also frequently noted.

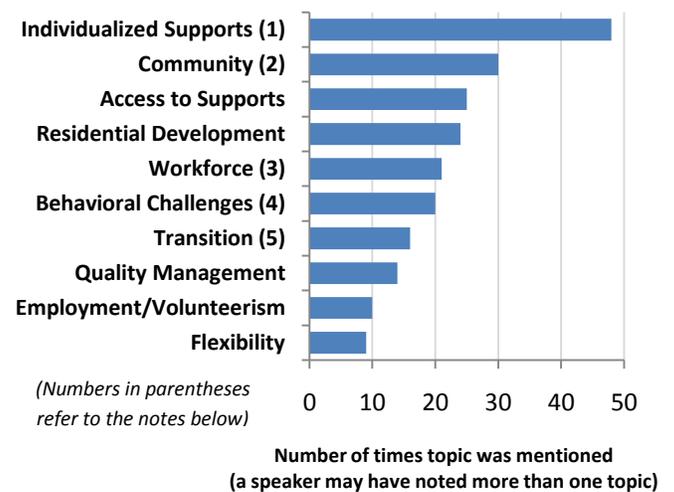
Community integration, acceptance, and inclusion was another major theme. Opportunities for individuals to have choices related to where they live in the community framed requests for residential and other service development.

Forum participants reported that the range of services offered by OPWDD is comprehensive. However, the delivery of the most appropriate services to individuals was viewed as hampered by difficulty accessing certain services. Individualized options were frequently mentioned as highly beneficial, but challenging to access under the current system.

A final major category was quality management, with many expressing concerns about the direct support workforce and the need for improved safety, oversight, and proficiency among direct support professionals. Participants often noted the importance of this workforce in providing for the most basic and complex needs of individuals.

A comprehensive analysis of the forum testimony will be available mid-July.

Top 10 Most Frequently Mentioned People First Forum Testimony Topics



Notes from the chart: (1) "Individualized supports" refer to services and supports which are tailored to the person's needs through a process such as person-centered planning. This count includes comments about individualized budgets and the Consolidated Supports and Services/Self-Determination service. (2) "Community" includes comments related to community living, integration, inclusion, services, and resources. (3) "Workforce" includes general comments about the staff that support individuals with developmental disabilities, including comments pertaining to training. (4) "Behavioral challenges" includes comments about autism and the behavioral impacts of other disabilities. (5) "Transition" refers to individuals who are leaving the educational system or the family home. Those leaving the educational system are typically younger, while those leaving the family home may be any age. This count includes comments about senior citizen parents caring for their adult children at home.