



2017 Accomplishments





Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Looking back on all that was accomplished during the past year, 2017 was a busy and productive time for the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and all of our stakeholders and partners. Together, we moved forward with the launch of a new system, People First Care Coordination, and approved the creation of new certified homes that will serve over 450 more people with developmental disabilities, adding to the 41,000 residential opportunities available for people with developmental disabilities today in New York State.

We also saw impressive gains in helping people take more control over their service planning with Self-Direction. In 2017 alone, there was a 40% increase in the number of people self-directing their services.

This report highlights these accomplishments and others, as we reflect on the past year and how OPWDD has worked together with individuals, parents, service providers, employers and communities across New York State. These partnerships open new possibilities for those we serve, strengthen our neighborhoods and help people reach their personal potential.

Each of these steps has made a difference, and together they represent part of the evolution and transformation of our system. Let us take a moment to reflect on all of the great things we have achieved together so far, as we go forward to make services for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities even more flexible, innovative and responsive to their needs.

Sincerely,

Kerry A. Delaney
OPWDD Acting Commissioner



Self-Direction

Self-Direction is an important option for those seeking greater control over their supports and services. OPWDD offers a Self-Direction model that is flexible and helps people make informed choices about their lives while gaining independence for community living.



40%

increase in the number of people enrolled in Self-Direction in 2017

Self-Direction empowers people with developmental disabilities to design supports based on their own strengths and needs.

Since OPWDD's model of Self-Direction was revised in 2014, more and more individuals and families have chosen Self-Direction for the flexibility and personalization of services it offers. The number of people with self-directed supports and services grew by 40% in 2017.

A top to bottom review of the Self-Direction program led to recommendations for improvements. These recommendations focused on ways to make the process easier for individuals and families. To support the demand for increased enrollments of people choosing to self-direct, OPWDD also collaborated with provider agencies and issued improved processes and guidance.

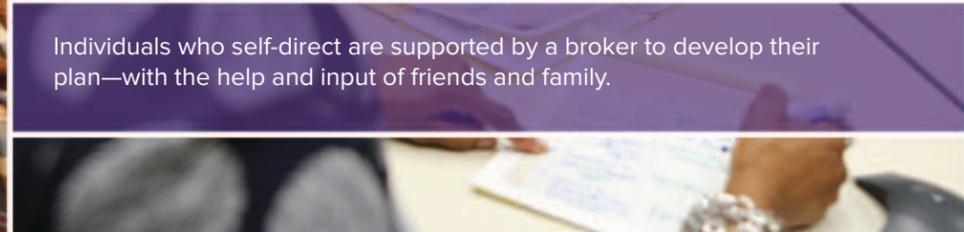
Self-Direction supports people who want to be more independent and have the most control over the services they receive and how they are provided. Each Self-Direction participant has a circle of support, which may include their family, friends, service coordinator and a "support broker." This team comes together to help develop a service plan, with the person who is self-directing at the center of decision-making. Individuals who self-direct are supported to make informed choices.

Regional Office Self-Direction Liaisons are available to assist and help ensure timely submission and approval of Self-Direction plans and budgets. Regional Offices regularly offer information sessions for those interested in self-directing their services.

Over the course of 2017, standards for Self-Direction were updated and the process for planning was streamlined. A review of the program was also conducted to identify improvements for the future.



Individuals who self-direct are supported by a broker to develop their plan—with the help and input of friends and family.



Employment & Meaningful Community Activities



Working and earning money gives people a sense of accomplishment and independence, and volunteering and pursuing meaningful activities help them become truly engaged in their community.

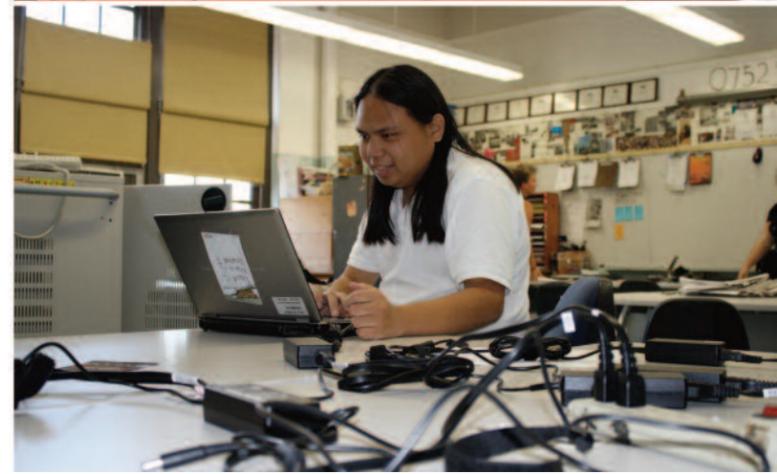
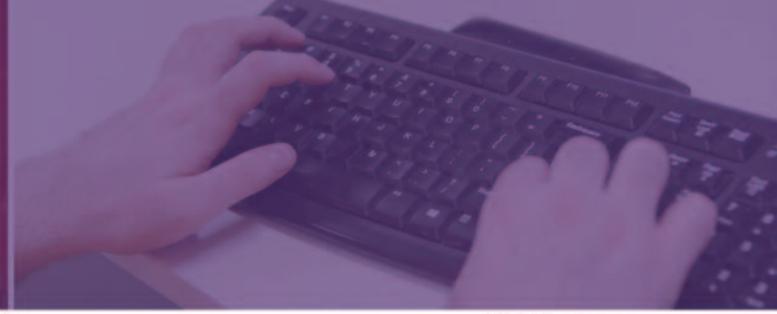
Many individuals with developmental disabilities want to work, and OPWDD offers employment and pre-employment services to support them. Individuals are assisted by job coaches and through a variety of flexible services to learn new job tasks and communicate with supervisors and co-workers.

For individuals who may lack the community experiences or vocational skills to obtain competitive employment, Pathway to Employment and Community Prevocational Services can help people explore and make an informed choice about their work options.

People with developmental disabilities also volunteer and participate in civic life in other ways, building relationships with other members of the community and engaging in meaningful activities that provide a sense of accomplishment.

To help increase employment for people with developmental disabilities, OPWDD collaborates extensively with provider agencies, employers and other state agencies. Together we advocate for a person-centered approach to develop employment opportunities that reflect each person's skills and abilities. OPWDD has been working to transition sheltered workshop services to competitive businesses paying at least minimum wage, and, to date, over 90% have submitted plans which will result in the creation of 20 new businesses.

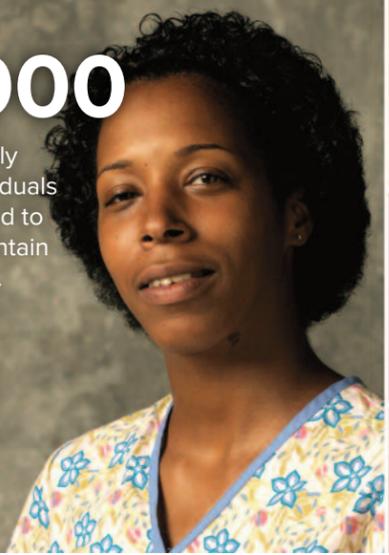
Employability is a multi-agency effort to raise awareness among employers about the positive aspects of employing people with disabilities. In coordination with the Governor's Employment First Commission, and through the Works for Me initiative, OPWDD continually spreads the word that employing people with developmental disabilities makes good business sense!



OPWDD employment and prevocational services support people to achieve greater independence and contribute to their communities.

10,900

Approximately 10,900 individuals are supported to find and maintain employment.



16,000

Over 16,000 individuals receive pre-employment supports to help prepare for employment.



Housing

OPWDD supports people with developmental disabilities to live in communities across New York State through an array of residential supports and services.

41,000

OPWDD supports approximately 41,000 people with residential supports and services—ranging from rent subsidies to staffed group homes.

1,290 new individuals were served with OPWDD certified housing in 2017.

5,300 people are supported through rental subsidies to live in community apartments.



OPWDD residential supports and services are provided in neighborhoods throughout New York State, empowering over 41,000 people with developmental disabilities to be included in community life.

Residential supports help individuals to not only be safe and healthy, but also to learn the skills and abilities needed for increasing their ability to live independently.

In 2017, OPWDD developed a Multi-Year Housing Strategy reflecting the needs and resources of local communities. Stakeholders, including individuals and families, were invited to join in this review. So far under the strategy:

- 83 homes supporting 459 individuals were funded for development in the coming year
- 55 supportive apartments were opened in 2017 to allow increased reimbursement to providers to support people in the community
- A new housing funding policy for individuals with higher needs was put in place
- OPWDD staff and stakeholders participated in innovative “Housing Navigator” training

These actions and others will help to ensure that OPWDD’s robust housing system stays strong for the future while meeting the needs of today.

New Housing Development

A “Request for Services” was issued as part of OPWDD’s Multi-Year Housing Strategy. As a result, fifty-three provider agencies received awards totaling \$58.9 Million to serve a total of 459 additional individuals in 83 new homes.

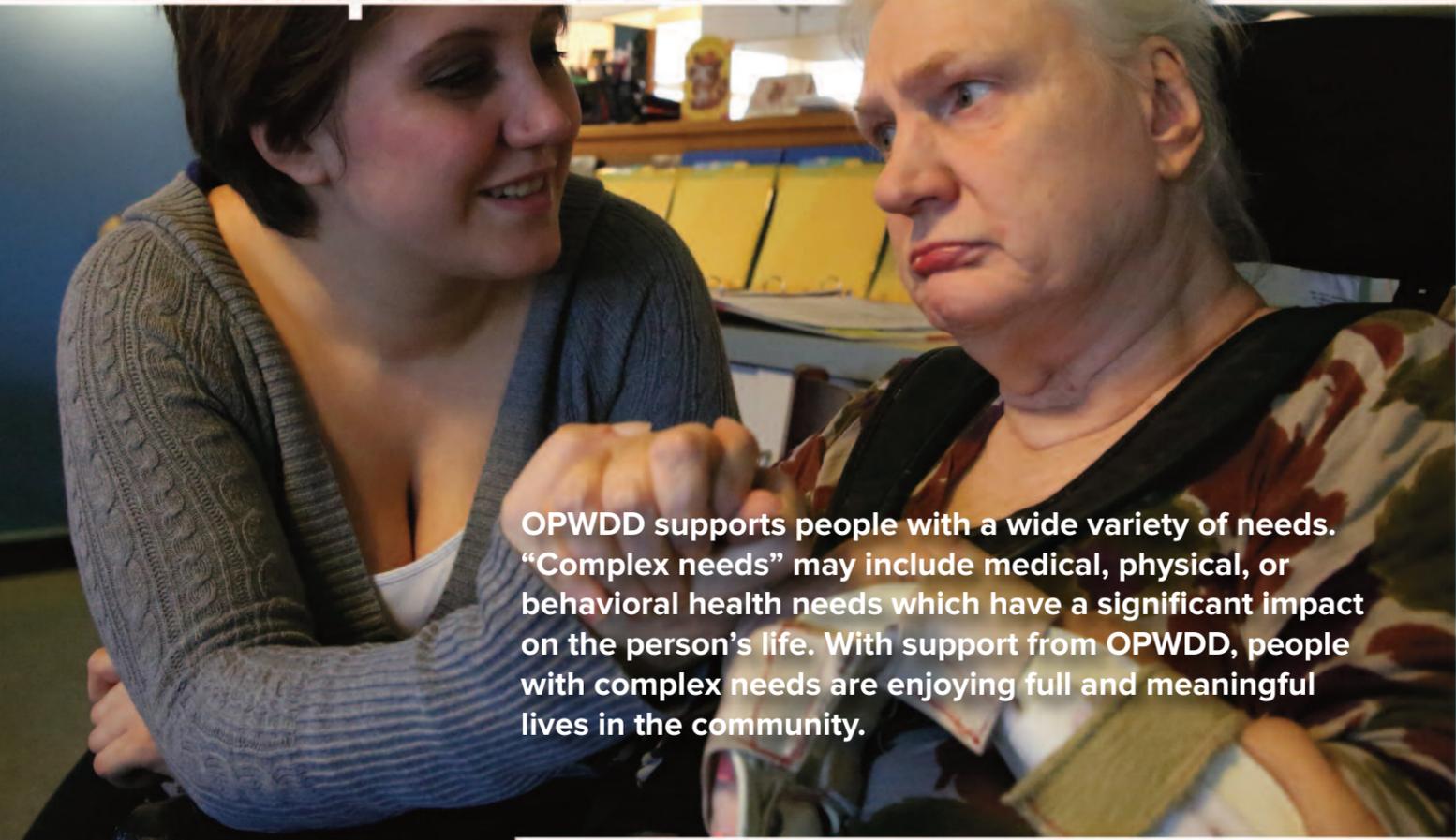
OPWDD also supported projects to create new apartments to serve 103 individuals using the \$15 million in capital funding provided through the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 budget. Pending housing tax credit funding was incorporated in this plan.



Individuals living in OPWDD-funded homes have support staff to assist them, based on their needs.



Complex Needs



OPWDD supports people with a wide variety of needs. “Complex needs” may include medical, physical, or behavioral health needs which have a significant impact on the person’s life. With support from OPWDD, people with complex needs are enjoying full and meaningful lives in the community.

Individuals with developmental disabilities who have complex needs are supported in the community with services focused on maintaining safety and encouraging independence.



OPWDD’s State Operations Offices provide services directly to meet the needs of individuals with complex needs, along with a network of nonprofit providers who excel in serving people who require that level of support.



OPWDD works to ensure that planning teams are responsive to the service needs of each person. The efforts to create the correct supports are always evolving as new therapies become available.

Parents and other family members often have an important role in explaining the person’s preferences and difficulties. These family members become part of a team, along with support staff, to meet the unique needs of their loved one.

To ensure appropriate support for those with complex needs, in 2017 OPWDD continued implementation of the START model. START (Systemic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Resources and Treatment) is a national model that aims to support people with behavioral health needs through referrals to local, person-centered and community-based resources. There are now five operational START teams that are actively providing START clinical services.

- Two Regional Centers for START were launched in 2017 to provide crisis and emergency services.
- 1,400 people have been served through START since the program began, with approximately 720 current users statewide.

OPWDD retains the capacity to serve about 200 individuals with complex needs in developmental centers. However, this capacity is considered short-term, with the goal of each person being able to live in the community in the long-term.

In 1975, there were approximately 20,000 people with developmental disabilities living in institutions. The closure of Bernard Fineson Developmental Center, on December 29, 2017, marked the successful conclusion of New York State’s efforts to close institutions for people with developmental disabilities in favor of community-based services.



People First Care Coordination

"Putting People First" is OPWDD's guiding principle. It represents our ongoing commitment to ensuring that New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities get the high-quality, person-centered supports and services they want and need for a full and healthy life.

People First Care Coordination is a new way of coordinating services for people with developmental disabilities. A single, comprehensive and individualized Life Plan is created for each person served. The Life Plan includes services for developmental disabilities and will add other health, wellness and behavioral health services that the person accesses.

People First Care Coordination is built on a foundation of person-centered planning.

Learn more at the OPWDD website: www.opwdd.ny.gov

- Informational videos
- Archived webinars and presentations
- Links to relevant documents

As people's expectations and needs evolve, so must the coordination and delivery of their services and supports. People First Care Coordination is designed to take service coordination to the next level.

Through People First Care Coordination, families will be able to rely on a care manager for more help (for example, in tracking medical appointments.) A heightened focus on the outcomes of services will help to ensure those services are having a real and positive impact on the person's life.

People First Care Coordination links the OPWDD services a person receives with the services they receive from other systems (such as medical and behavioral health care.)

A care manager will monitor the goals set in each person's individualized Life Plan and whether the services they receive are supporting them to reach their goals, in addition to helping them stay safe and healthy.

In 2017, OPWDD:

- Set statewide policy around People First Care Coordination with the input of stakeholders
- Issued the Application for Care Coordination Organizations
- Provided technical assistance to support newly forming Care Coordination Organizations
- Held thirteen regional forums around the State to educate and hear feedback
- Published a draft transition plan that describes the move to care coordination

In 2018, OPWDD will begin care coordination through newly created Care Coordination Organizations, including the development of Life Plans.



2017 was a year of unprecedented opportunities for stakeholder outreach and engagement...

Our stakeholders include self-advocates (individuals with developmental disabilities,) parents, family members, advocates, providers and professionals. Any interested member of the public is welcome to *Join the Conversation!*

Launched in 2017, *Join the Conversation* is an effort to expand the reach of OPWDD's online community. You can sign-up for updates by email at OPWDD's homepage—just click *Join the Conversation* to receive:

- Information on new and innovative services
- People First Care Coordination
- Care Coordination Organization/Health Home Application
- OPWDD's Transition Plan for the 1115 Waiver, Care Coordination and Managed Care

Approximately 3,000 members of the public attended webinars about system changes and improvements, including the following topics:

Several hundred people attended public forums on the development of People First Care Coordination, hosted by OPWDD's regional offices for dialogue and education. Thirteen of these public forums were held across the state.

Approximately 400 people attended a statewide public hearing hosted by OPWDD to accept comments, feedback and testimony to aid in the refinement of OPWDD's five year, statewide comprehensive plan--and 95 people provided either written or oral testimony.

Regional Stakeholder teams reviewed and scored proposals for expanding certified housing as part of the Multi-Year Housing Strategy. Over 150 proposals were submitted by 104 agencies and reviewed by these panels. Through this process, 53 providers were funded to create 83 homes offering 459 individuals a new residential opportunity.

By the Numbers

40,800 individuals access **Housing** supports for a place to call home

7,400 individuals access **Self-Direction** to maximize their independence

10,900 individuals access **Supported employment** to maintain or find employment

16,000 individuals access **Work-related supports** and are working toward getting a job

52,600 individuals access **Day habilitation** for meaningful activities to fill their days

43,000 individuals access **Respite** services so family caregivers can take a break

28,600 individuals access **Community habilitation** for personalized community supports

Note: Numbers are rounded to the nearest 100.

Join the Conversation

Help OPWDD keep you in the know –
Join the Conversation today and be
empowered with accurate, timely information.

Join the Conversation today at
opwdd.ny.gov/jointheconversation



**Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities**