

# Understanding Eligibility



Department of  
Developmental  
Disabilities

Many people with developmental disabilities need support for their daily needs, to engage in their communities, and to achieve their vision of a good life. People with developmental disabilities may be eligible for many different services in Ohio, including through their county board of developmental disabilities. This document will help you understand the basics of how eligibility is determined for services through county boards of developmental disabilities.

To begin the eligibility process, contact the county board of developmental disabilities. Contact information for each county board in Ohio is available on [DODD's website](#).

Families with children under the age of three with concerns about their child's development should seek eligibility for Ohio Early Intervention by visiting <https://ohioearlyintervention.org/>.

As outlined in more detail through Ohio Administrative Code, a person must have more than a diagnosis to be eligible for services through a county board of developmental disabilities. To be eligible for services, a person must meet both of the following criteria:

1. A person must have a developmental disability that presents or "manifests" before the age of 22 and is likely to continue throughout the person's life.
2. A person must meet eligibility criteria for Functional limitations are determined through an assessment conducted by the county board. For children ages 6-15, this assessment is called the Children's Ohio Eligibility Determination Instrument or "COEDI." For people aged 16 and older, this assessment is called the Ohio Eligibility Determination Instrument, or "OEDI."

## What does "manifest" mean?

The term "manifested before age 22" means that the developmental disability is apparent, shown plainly, or capable of being easily understood, recognized, or diagnosed. Manifested does not necessarily require a formal diagnosis before the age of 22. A doctor or other qualified health care professional could determine if a person had a disability before the age of 22 by looking at their history and records. The county board might request documentation from the healthcare provider if the diagnosis was not made prior to the age of 22.

## What are functional limitations?

Functional limitations mean a person struggles or cannot perform a task or action in the way it would usually be done by a person of the same age. Questions for functional limitations will look at major life areas such as self-care, mobility, and learning.

Substantial functional limitations are not required to manifest before age 22. These limitations can come at any point in the person's life. A condition may or may not cause functional limitations. People can live independently but still have functional limitations.

The substantial functional limitations should be clearly connected to the developmental disability, even if the functional limitations did not happen until later in life. The limitations should not be clearly connected to a different medical condition.

## Why do I need county board eligibility?

County board eligibility is the first step in getting support through a county board of developmental disabilities. If eligible, you can ask for a service and support administrator from the county board to help find services to meet your needs and goals.

Your needs could be met in different ways, including through locally funded resources, other community resources, through a Medicaid waiver, or an intermediate care facility. The county board can help you understand what is available to you and connect you to the needed supports.

### Tips for the eligibility process:

1. Ask the county board what paperwork and documents you need.
2. Have people who know you best attend and help during the assessment.
3. Ask for the county board decisions in writing.
4. If you are found not eligible for services, the county board can refer you to other resources in your community.
5. There is an appeal process if a person is found not eligible for services. You can learn more about the rights of people living with disabilities [here](#). For details about the process of filing an appeal, follow [this link](#).
6. If you are found not eligible for services, you can come back to the board later for another assessment if your needs change or you have a change in your life.

OACB's Life Map is another good resource for learning about the developmental disabilities system. You can find the map at <http://oacbdd.org/lifemap>.

*Disclaimer: This publication is intended to provide information only and is not intended as legal advice.*