



Department of State
Office for New Americans

Disability Resources Toolkit

A guide to disability services in New York State



NEW YORK STATE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS RAMIREZ JUNE INITIATIVE

November 2025



What is the New York State Office for New Americans?

The NYS Office for New Americans (NYS ONA) was created in 2012 to help people who are new Americans to learn English, become a U.S. citizen, access mental health support, find a job, and live their American Dream. A “new American” is a person who was born outside of the U.S. who moves to the U.S. to live here.

How does NYS ONA’s Ramirez June Initiative help new Americans with disabilities?

In 2019, the NYS ONA partnered with the NYS Council on Developmental Disabilities (CDD) to launch the NYS ONA Ramirez June Initiative to help new Americans access developmental disability services in New York State. The NYS ONA Ramirez June Initiative increases access to services for new Americans with disabilities through outreach, training, and partnership. New Americans with disabilities have a right to access services in New York State. It is illegal in New York State to discriminate against someone based on the country they come from or the language they speak.

What is a disability?

Disabilities are conditions of the body and/or mind that make it more difficult for a person to perform certain activities or interact with their environment.¹ Disabilities can be many different conditions, including physical impairments, sensory impairments, cognitive, or developmental disabilities.

What is a developmental disability?

Developmental disabilities (DD) are a lifelong condition that starts before age 22. People with DD may need assistance with self-care, communication, mobility, learning, and/or self-care. In New York State, developmental disabilities include intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders, Prader-Willi syndrome and other neurological impairments.²

How can this Toolkit help people with disabilities?

This Toolkit has information on disability services in New York State. People can use this Toolkit to learn more about available resources and services people with disabilities of all ages can access.



Disability Services

in New York State

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The Early Intervention Program (EIP)

Agency: New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Bureau of Early Intervention (BEI)

General Information: 518-473-7016

For More Information:

health.ny.gov/community/infants_children/early_intervention/

- **Age Requirements:** 0-3 years old.
- **Disability Criteria:** Infants and toddlers with disabilities or developmental delays. The Early Intervention program’s evaluation will determine eligibility.
- **Immigration Consideration:** A person does not need to be a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident to access services.
- **Services:** Early Intervention helps children improve their abilities and learn new skills. Intervention services are likely to be more helpful when they are provided earlier in life rather than later. Services are free and can be provided in children’s homes, daycares and various community settings.



Call the free, anonymous, multilingual New York State New Americans Hotline to be connected to immigration-related referrals, including your local Office for New Americans partner: 1-800-566-7636.

The Hotline is available Monday - Friday from 9 AM to 8 PM and Saturday - Sunday from 9 AM to 5 PM.

dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans dos.ny.gov/ona-ramirez-june-initiative

New York State Office of Special Education (OSE)

Agency: New York State Education Department (NYSED) Office of Special Education (OSE)

General Information: 518-473-2878

For More Information: nysed.gov/special-education

- **Age Requirements:** Ages 3-21, inclusive.
- **Eligibility:** Children ages 3 to 21 who have been identified by their Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) or Committee on Special Education (CSE) as having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that impacts their ability to learn, are eligible for special education services and programs. The Committee on Special Education (CSE) develops an Individualized Education Program (IEP) on behalf of a local educational agency which is responsible for ensuring implementation.
- **Immigration Consideration:** A person does **not** need to be a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident to access services.
- **Services:** “Special education” means specially designed individualized or group instruction (i.e., adapting as appropriate, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction) or special services or programs to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. This includes, but is not limited to, instruction provided in classrooms, homes, hospitals, institutions and other settings, and also includes specially designed instruction in physical education. Special education services and programs are provided at no cost to the parent.



New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

Agency: NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

General Information: 866-946-9733

For More Information: opwdd.ny.gov/



- **Age Requirements:** All ages.
- **Transitioning to Adult Services:** School Transition Planning should start by age 15 or earlier. Keep in mind that if an individual is receiving school-based disability services these services will end when the youth graduates or turns 22 years old.
- **Disability Criteria:** OPWDD serves New Yorkers with developmental disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, familial dysautonomia, Prader-Willi syndrome and other neurological impairments. The OPWDD eligibility process will determine eligibility for services.
- **Immigration Consideration:** A person does **not** need to be a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident to access OPWDD services.
 - Citizenship and/or immigration status are **not** factors in determining OPWDD eligibility. Most OPWDD services are Medicaid funded. Undocumented individuals and immigrants who are not able to access Medicaid due to their immigration status can access state funded OPWDD services which includes OPWDD’s Family Support Services (FSS).
- **Services:** OPWDD services include, but are not limited to, services in the community, day programming and employment services, housing and residential supports, intensive behavioral supports, crisis services, and clinic services.
- **OPWDD’s Front Door Videos:** These multilingual videos provide easy-to-understand information about OPWDD services and how to get started receiving services: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/access-supports/front-door-videos>

Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)

Agency: NYS Education Department

General Information: 1-800-222-5627

For More Information: acces.nysed.gov/vr

- **Age Requirements:** 14 years and older.
- **Disability Criteria:** Individuals who have a disability that prevents them from getting, keeping, or advancing in a job and can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services.
 - Includes students with disabilities, mental health-related disabilities, and people in recovery from substance use.
 - Individuals who are legally blind can apply for vocational rehabilitation services through the NYS Commission for the Blind (NYSCB). The next page of this Toolkit has more information on the NYSCB.
- **Immigration Consideration:** Must be authorized to work in the U.S. to be placed in a job. Job coaching and job readiness supports may be available while work authorization is pending.
- **Services:** ACCES-VR helps individuals with disabilities to achieve and maintain employment and support independent living through training, education, rehabilitation, and career development services.



New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)

Agency: New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)

Toll-Free Telephone: 1-866-871-3000

TDD: 1-866-871-6000

For More Information: ocfs.ny.gov/programs/nyscb/

Short URL: visionloss.ny.gov



- **Age Requirements:** NYSCB assists individuals of all ages who are legally blind, have low vision, or are deaf-blind.
- **Disability Criteria:** Any individual who is legally blind may be eligible for services provided by NYSCB. If you are unsure if you are legally blind, NYSCB can assist you in determining eligibility. If you are severely visually impaired but not legally blind, you may qualify for Job Save services that will help you retain employment and adapt to your vision loss.
- **Immigration Consideration:** NYSCB services are available to individuals who meet eligibility criteria. NYSCB vocational rehabilitation services are available to individuals who meet eligibility criteria and are authorized to work.
- **Services:** NYSCB offers services for children, youth, adults and older adults who are blind, have low vision, or are deaf-blind. Services support independence, employment, and community inclusion at every stage of life. Programs include, but are not limited to: Vocational Rehabilitation, Business Enterprise Program, Children's Program, Transition Program, Summer Recreation Program, Equipment Loan Fund, Independent Living Program, and Adaptive Living Program (Older Blind Program). These services may include mobility training, assistive technology, job placement, counseling, and other supports tailored to individual needs.

New York Association on Independent Living

Agency: New York State Education Department Independent Living Centers (ILCs)

General Information: 518-474-3852

For More Information: aces.nysed.gov/vr/independent-living-centers

- **Age Requirements:** All ages.
- **Disability Criteria:** ILCs service New Yorkers with all physical and mental disabilities.
- **Immigration Consideration:** Undocumented individuals and individuals with other immigration statuses can receive support from ILCs. An individual's immigration status may affect their ability to apply for federal programs that have specific immigration-related criteria.
- **Services:** Provides an array of services that assist New Yorkers with all disabilities to live fully integrated and self-directed lives. ILCs assist with all aspects of living, learning, and earning.



New York State TR Aid Program

Agency: Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (TR Aid) Program – Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs

General Information: 1-800-624-4143

For More Information: justicecenter.ny.gov/traid-program

- **Age Requirements:** All ages.
- **Disability Criteria:** Any individual in New York State who has a long or short-term disability.
- **Immigration Consideration:** A person does not need to be a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident to access services.
- **Services:** Access to assistive technology devices that help people with disabilities. Examples include devices for mobility, vision, daily living, communication, recreation, and more.



New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA)

Agency: New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA)

To Connect with Services: Call NY Connects 1-800-342-9871 or visit their website nyconnects.ny.gov/ and ask to connect with NYSOFA services. NY Connects can also refer you to other services.

For More Information: aging.ny.gov/

- **Age Requirements:** 60 years or older.
- **Disability Criteria:** Services are available to all who are 60+, regardless of disability.
- **Immigration Consideration:** None. Undocumented adults aged 60 and above can receive services.
- **Services:** NYSOFA promotes and administers programs and services for New Yorkers 60 years of age and older and people of all ages with disabilities, along with their families and caregivers.



New York State Division of Human Rights (DHR)

Agency: New York State Division of Human Rights (DHR)

TDD/TTY: 718-741-8300

Reasonable Accommodations: Contact DEIA@dhr.ny.gov

Report Discrimination: The easiest way to report is to call 844-697-3471, and a trained agent will help. You can also report discrimination online at dhr.ny.gov.

For More Information: dhr.ny.gov

- **Age Requirements:** 18 years or older.
- **Disability Criteria:** Persons with disabilities are protected against discrimination in all areas of the Law except volunteer firefighting. There are no qualifiers as to the severity of the disability. People with a history of a disability or who are perceived to be disabled are also protected against discrimination.
- **Immigration Consideration:** The New York State Human Rights Law makes it illegal to discriminate against someone based on their national origin, citizenship, or immigration status.
- **Services:** The Division of Human Rights investigates complaints of discrimination. If the Division finds that unlawful discrimination has occurred, it can require violators of the law to pay fines and damages, change discriminatory policies, and more. The Division's Hate and Bias Prevention Unit, discussed in more detail on the next page, also provides support to communities across the state impacted by discrimination, hate, and bias.



New York State Hate and Bias Prevention Unit

Report Incidents of Hate or Bias: 844-NO-2-HATE or 844-662-4283

For More Information: dhr.ny.gov/nohate

- **Age Requirements:** All ages.
- **Disability Criteria:** All victims and witnesses of hate and bias incidents can make a report.
- **Immigration Consideration:** None. You are not required to share your immigration status when reporting a hate act or bias incident. Services are free to anyone in NYS, regardless of national origin, immigration status, or citizenship status. The Hate and Bias Prevention Unit is not affiliated with the police and reports can be anonymous.
- **Services:** Access or referrals to essential resources and support, including legal assistance, mental health services, and/or conflict resolution services following a report of a hate or bias incident.



Disability Rights New York (DRNY)

Agency: Disability Rights New York (DRNY)

Request Assistance by Phone: 518-432-7861

Toll Free Number: 800-993-8982

Request Assistance Online: drny.org/intake.php

For More Information: drny.org

- **Age Requirements:** All ages.
- **Disability Criteria:** All individuals with disabilities.
- **Immigration Consideration:** Services are available to all regardless of immigration status.
- **Services:** DRNY provides free and confidential legal and advocacy services to individuals with disabilities.
- DRNY provides assistance for disability-related issues including, education, employment, housing, discrimination, abuse and neglect, alternatives to guardianship, access to community services, assistive technology, voting, and more.



Additional Resources

- **NYS Office for New Americans:** Learn more about NYS ONA's free resources, programs, and partners, subscribe to our newsletter to learn about upcoming events and webinars: dos.ny.gov/Office-New-Americans
- **NYS ONA Ramirez June Initiative:** Increasing access to disability services for new Americans through outreach, training, and partnership. dos.ny.gov/ona-ramirez-june-initiative
- **The NYS Council on Developmental Disabilities (CDD):** The CDD's mission is to enhance the lives of New Yorkers with Developmental Disabilities and their families through programs that promote self-advocacy, participation, and inclusion in all facets of community life. cdd.ny.gov/
- **NYS Office of Language Access (OLA):** OLA oversees New York State's language access services. ogs.ny.gov/office-language-access
- **Find a Health Care Center:** Certain health centers offer checkups and sick visits regardless of the person's ability to pay, insurance status or immigration status. To find a Health Care Center near you, call 311 (for New York City) and 211 (for all other counties in New York State) and ask about your closest health center or visit this website: findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/?hmpgtile=hmpg-hlth-srvcs
- **Get Health Insurance:** Some immigrants are eligible for health insurance depending on their immigration status. For assistance visit New York State of Health: nystateofhealth.ny.gov/, NYS Medicaid: health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/ or visit the NYS Health Care Navigator Director: info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/NavigatorDirectory.
- **Get Health Related Support:** The New York State Department of Health operates the Growing Up Healthy Hotline, which provides information and referrals about health care, nutrition and other health services 24 hours a day, seven days a week in English and Spanish and other languages. All calls are confidential. Contact the Hotline at 1-800-522-5006.



Additional Resources

- **Head Start:** Head Start: Head Start programs support children, including children with disabilities, from birth to age 5 at no cost to eligible families. [Headstart.gov](https://www.headstart.gov)
- **NYS Council on Children and Families (CCF):** NYS Council on Children and Families (CCF):
 - CCF maintains a web resource to help children and families with multiple needs find health, education, human services, and disability information for children from birth through age 22 years old. <https://helphubforfamilies.ny.gov/>
 - CCF has a Family Guide to NYS Early Childhood Services for children 0-5 that are available in multiple languages. Free copies of this guide can be ordered using this QR code or by visiting: <https://ccf.ny.gov/product/family-resource-folder/>
- **NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH):** OMH’s mission is to promote the mental health of all New Yorkers, with a particular focus on providing hope and recovery. For questions about mental health services, to find a mental health service provider or to make a complaint, call toll-free at 1-800-597-8481. Learn more: omh.ny.gov/

¹ Disability and Health Overview. (2025, April 2). U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [cdc.gov/disability-and-health/about/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/disability-and-health/about/index.html)
² Definitions. New York State Mental Hygiene Law, Section 1.03(22). (2025). nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/MHY/1.03



Use this QR code to order free copies of the
Family Guide to NYS Early Childhood Services.

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