

# Waiver Reimagine Individual Budget Methodology

## Expert Panel

Throughout the Waiver Reimagine Project, DHS staff has sought input from Minnesota disability services experts. This evolving group has included people with disabilities, family members, advocates, provider organizations, and lead agency staff. These groups worked alongside DHS to develop the support ranges and provide in-time feedback to individual budgeting analysis and decisions.

Expert panel members engaged in many activities throughout the project, though two activities provided material data outcomes: support range surveys and record reviews.

- *Support range survey* used expert panel members to determine whether the initial support range methodology placed people in practical support ranges. Panel members reviewed de-identified individual assessment data to score a person's general support need, behavioral, and health support needs. The findings from this survey were compared to initial quantitative analyses and, as a result of this feedback, DHS adjusted the draft support range criteria.
  - In 2018, experts reviewed 800 MNCHOICES assessments of people using waiver services
  - In 2020, experts reviewed 700 MNCHOICES assessments for children using waiver services
- *Record review* is a more intensive, focused review of the nearly finalized support ranges and service mixes to determine whether an individual budget would support a person's service use. This process asked expert panel members to review all records (including MNCHOICES assessment, CSP, and CSSP) of a de-identified individual to determine if the support needs and services aligned with the developed support ranges. The findings from this review were again compared to the support ranges and used to adjust the support range criteria and service mixes. To comply with privacy laws, only DHS and lead agency staff participated in record review, though findings were reviewed with the larger expert panel.
  - In 2018, DHS staff reviewed 135 complete records of people using waiver services
  - In 2020, DHS staff and lead agency experts reviewed 138 complete records of children using waiver services

In addition to the formal work of the expert panel, DHS has continually engaged with stakeholders on the development and refinement of the individual budget methodology. Details of specific DHS Waiver Reimagine stakeholder engagement are identified below.

## Quantitative Analysis

Development of the individual budgeting methodology relied on data across four years from assessment, rates, and claims information. Overall, over **103 million MNCHOICES data points, every authorized and paid claim** under the four disability waivers, including **each rate input** for calculated rates, was used to create the individual

budget methodology. The number of authorized and paid claims varies by each individual waiver participant, while each calculated rate has between two and sixty-five inputs.

## Qualitative Analysis

Development of the individual budgeting methodology also relied on qualitative data provided by the expert panel explained above. Overall, expert panel members provided qualitative feedback on **15,000 support range survey** data points and over **18,000 record review** data points. These data points are in addition to the numerous conversations and workgroups that reviewed decisions and provided in-time feedback about support ranges and service mixes.

The qualitative data provided by the many Minnesota experts engaged throughout the development the individual budget methodology were used as both a validation and a control on the quantitative analysis outlined above. During both the support range survey and record review, experts provided feedback that ultimately adjusted the methodology to better support Minnesotans with disabilities.

## Stakeholder Engagement

This list of engagements encompasses the formal engagement with stakeholders since February 2019. It does not include the numerous engagements and informal conversations that may have happened as a course of DHS engagement on other topics, nor any of the engagement included in the 2018 work. For example, not included are regional trainings for the Waiver Management Systems that focus mainly on managing waiver budgets for Lead Agencies, but often also include questions about Waiver Reimagine.

- 2/27/19: MN Support Planning Community
- 3/21/19: DWRS Advisory Committee
- 5/30/19: Altair Business Group
- 6/27/19: ARRM conference
- 8/22/19: MOHR annual conference
- 8/1/19: Odyssey Conference
- 9/3/19: MOHR Regional Meeting
- 9/25/19: Support Planning Professionals Learning Community
- 11/8/19: County State Workgroup meeting
- November 2019 Lead agency regional meetings
- February 2020 Lead agency regional meetings
- 3/13/20: ARRM meeting
- 6/3/20: Support Planner Expert Panel kick-off
- 6/18/20: Support Planner Expert Panel meeting
- 7/1/20: Altair Business Group
- 7/2/20: Waiver Reimagine Webinar
- 7/13/20: Waiver Reimagine Webinar
- 8/26/20: MACSSA meeting
- 8/27/20: MOHR annual conference
- 8/31/20: Virtual stakeholder event #1 (2 sessions)

- 9/15-10/2/20: Support Planner Record Review
- 9/16/20: Advocate/Provider Expert Panel -meeting 1
- 9/21/20: Waiver Reimagine meeting with Arc Minnesota and Disability Law Center
- 9/22/20-9/23/20: Virtual stakeholder event #2
- 10/8/20: Advocate/Provider Expert Panel –meeting 2
- 10/12-13/20: Self-direction Stakeholder Feedback session
- 10/13/20: Waiver Reimagine Webinar
- 11/4/20: Waiver Reimagine Webinar
- 11/12/20: Waiver Reimagine Webinar
- November- December 2020: Lead agency regional meetings
- 11/12/20: Advocate/Provider Expert Panel -meeting 3
- 11/17/20: Individual Budgeting Stakeholder feedback session (2 meetings; one afternoon, one evening)\*
- 11/17/20: Waiver Reimagine Webinar
- 11/19/20: DWRS Advisory Committee
- 11/24/20: MN First Provider Alliance
- 12/7/20: Waiver Reimagine Webinar

## Stakeholder engagement events

In the fall of 2020, DHS hosted a series of online feedback opportunities designed to engage people with disabilities and their families, as well as lead agencies, providers and advocates to:

- Understand the changes to Minnesota’s disability waiver system and their impacts
- Understand opportunities for feedback and how stakeholder feedback has been/will be used
- Elicit feedback on communications about and implementation of Waiver Reimagine.

The events included a brief presentation, small group discussions and question-and-answer sessions. For almost all feedback events, the number of registrants exceeded event capacity (50 via Zoom). In these cases, space was allocated to allow for a variety of perspectives and experiences. This included:

- Prioritizing people and their family members
- Ensuring representation from all regions of Minnesota
- Limiting representatives of providers, lead agencies and advocacy groups to one per organization.

Across the eight events, there were 224 unique participants. Fifty (22%) participants attended more than one event.

- There was a waiting list of providers and lead agencies based on the above rationale to keep the focus on people/families and limit the size of the events so staff could actively engage with participants.
  - There were many other venues/opportunities for providers and lead agencies to engage in the process
- All people receiving services and family members were prioritized for registration—no one was turned away.

- County and provider representation from each region of the state was included in each session and space was held for ARC, ARRM, MOHR, DLC, OMHDD, OOLTC, Altair, PACER, NAMI, Leading age, Care providers

Feedback topics by month (2020)

August	September	October	November
Simplifying the waiver service menu	Reshaping the disability waivers- What influences a person’s choice about where they live?	Improving and expanding access to self-directed services	Individual budgeting: Understanding support ranges

DHS also created opportunities for people to provide written input using feedback surveys prior to each event. An example of some questions asked in the pre-event surveys include:

- How familiar are you with DHS’ work to reimagine waivers?
- What barriers currently exist for you in the existing service model?
- What impact do you think waiver reimagine will have on the services and supports you, your family and/or your community receive?

## Blue Ribbon Commission Strategy

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Health and Human Services (BRC) was created by the Minnesota Legislature and Governor Tim Walz in 2019 to develop an action plan “to advise and assist the legislature and governor in transforming the health and human services system to build greater efficiencies, savings, and better outcomes for Minnesotans.”

To identify ideas to pursue this goal, the Commission members sought public input on ideas to consider and collected through over 200 public submissions to identify priority strategies to develop. Several strategies submitted by the public, including advocacy and provider organizations, promoted the implementation of the Waiver Reimagine project. Many submissions highlighted that individual budgets would provide transparency, equity, and efficiency to people, families, and providers. Others highlighted that the expanded and more flexible use of self-direction would enhance the services available to people. Many submissions requested the expedited implementation of the final phase.

Of the 200 ideas received from the public, the BRC identified 43 strategies to develop. Given the volume of strategies received on this topic and the high prioritization by BRC members, the Waiver Reimagine project was one strategy chosen for development. Given the interruption of COVID-19 pandemic in the middle of the commission’s work, the fully developed strategy was not reviewed by the commission and was placed in the category of further consideration for policy makers in other venues such as the legislature or other commissions.