



**Background**

Direct care workers provide critical services and supports to individuals enrolled on Ohio Medicaid’s home and community-based waiver programs. The provision of these essential services is even more critical during the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency. The commitment of direct care workers, and the agencies that employ them, is ensuring the needs of vulnerable Ohioans continue to be met.

There is a recognition the COVID-19 emergency may impact both the pool of direct care workers and the willingness of individuals to allow workers to come into their homes to provide services. Service delivery disruption may result in increased health and safety risks to waiver participants.

**Policy Change**

Effective immediately, agency providers of specific waiver services, listed in the table below, are permitted to hire individuals who may have been previously excluded from furnishing waiver services.

This flexibility is available to agency providers serving individuals enrolled in DODD-operated waivers, ODA-operated waivers and ODM-operated waivers.

Operating Agency	Waiver Program	Waiver Service
Department of Developmental Disabilities	Individual Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homemaker/Personal Care</li> <li>• Waiver Nursing</li> </ul>
Department of Developmental Disabilities	Level One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homemaker/Personal Care</li> </ul>
Ohio Department of Aging	PASSPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homemaker</li> <li>• Personal Care</li> <li>• Waiver Nursing</li> </ul>
Ohio Department of Medicaid	Ohio Home Care Waiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Care Aide</li> <li>• Waiver Nursing</li> </ul>
Ohio Department of Medicaid	My Care Ohio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homemaker</li> <li>• Personal Care</li> <li>• Waiver Nursing</li> </ul>

Agency providers may hire the following individuals to **furnish services to a family member on a waiver for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency. It's important to remember that some waiver programs may already allow some of the below individuals to provide services.**

- Spouse
- Parent of a minor child
- Stepparent of a minor child
- Foster parent
- Power of Attorney
- Authorized Representative
- Legal Guardian\*.

*\* Applies only to individual relatives or friends acting as a guardian; it excludes attorneys and/or agencies in the role of guardian.*

The agency provider must comply with the following practices when hiring an individual listed above:

- ✓ Collect the standard employment information;
- ✓ Conduct the criminal background check and database specific to each waiver program;
- ✓ Put aside select, program-specific direct care worker qualification requirements for specific waivers as prescribed in Ohio Administrative Code rules; and
- ✓ Modify waiver program specific direct care worker orientation requirements prescribed in Ohio Administrative Code rules.

At the end of the COVID-19 emergency, if the worker elects to retain employment with the agency to serve waiver participants other than their family member, all the program specific requirements related to qualifications, orientation, and continuing education must be met.

### **For Specific Waiver Program Information and Questions**

DODD certified providers: <https://dodd.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/dodd/about-us/communication/news/news-guidance-waiver-providers>

ODA certified providers: <https://www.aging.ohio.gov/ProviderCertification>

ODM approved providers: <http://ohiohcbs.pcgus.com/>