

OASIS · AT A GLANCE

Michigan's Habilitation Supports Waiver, step by step

The HSW is the funding source behind most adult autism services in Michigan, and almost nobody explains it in order. Here is the process the way it actually unfolds, not the way the brochure describes it.

BY JIM PALASTY · 12 MIN READ · THE WAIVER THAT FUNDS ALMOST EVERYTHING ELSE

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CORE HSW SERVICE TYPES

Community Living Supports, respite, and environmental modifications form the backbone, though the paperwork rarely says so plainly.

How it works

THREE STEPS

STEP 1

Level of care determination

Your kid must meet ICF/IID level of care criteria before anything else moves forward.



STEP 2

Person-centered planning meeting

The single meeting where the actual services and hours in your plan get decided.



STEP 3

Services authorized in your plan

What gets written down here is what you can actually access, and little else.

What to bring to the planning meeting

Diagnosis	Recent evaluations and diagnostic paperwork
Functional data	Daily living skills assessment and behavioral data
Safety documentation	Any incidents, elopement history, or supervision needs
Current supports	What's already in place and where the gaps are
Goals	Specific, named goals for the coming plan year

THE MEETING SHE ALMOST WALKED INTO BLIND



Rosalind almost attended her son's first HSW planning meeting with nothing but his diagnosis letter. A supports coordinator mentioned, almost in passing, that the level of care criteria was a written document she could request in advance. She asked for it, built her documentation around each specific line, and left the meeting with double the CLS hours she'd expected.

THE STANDARD WAS WRITTEN DOWN THE WHOLE TIME. NOBODY HAD EVER HANDED IT TO HER.

What matters, at a glance

MICHIGAN SPECIFIC

ICF/IID level of care

A specific clinical standard, not a general impression of need. Documentation should speak to it directly, point by point.

Person-centered planning

The meeting is supposed to build a plan around your family member's actual goals, not just check boxes on a form.

Regional process variance

The same HSW exists statewide, but how thoroughly a planning meeting is run varies by PIHP region and by case manager.

Community Living Supports

The largest and most flexible service category, covering daily living, social integration, and skill-building support.

Respite

Available under the waiver but rarely explained clearly enough for families to know how much they can actually request.

Environmental modifications

Home safety and accessibility changes, funded but almost never mentioned unless a family specifically asks.

BRING THESE · CHECK AS YOU GO

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|--|---|
| ☐ The written level of care criteria document | ☐ Recent diagnostic and functional assessments |
| ☐ Safety and behavioral documentation | ☐ A written list of specific goals |
| ☐ A list of questions you intend to ask | |

YOUR MOVE

When you're preparing for an HSW planning meeting, here is the order that works

- 1 Request the written ICF/IID level of care criteria.
- 2 Gather documentation that speaks to each specific line.
- 3 Write out specific goals and questions beforehand.
- 4 Attend the planning meeting with your documents organized.
- 5 Review the draft plan carefully before signing anything.
- 6 Calendar your annual review date the same day.

The plan that gets written in that one meeting is the plan you live with for a year. Prepare like it matters, because it does.

RESOURCES NAMED IN THIS POST

cmham.org · <https://cmham.org>
arcmi.org · <https://www.arcmi.org>

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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