

Hope and Opportunity in Many Environments (HOME)

As part of the [Hope and Opportunity in Many Environments \(HOME\) project](#), The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS) is redesigning its Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) waiver system. The goal is to make services easier to understand, help people stay in their homes and communities, and connect them with the supports that meet their needs.

Iowa HHS is proposing small updates to the current Medicaid HCBS waivers, which would start in January 2026. These changes would affect the current HCBS waivers and would help Iowa prepare for the planned new HOME waivers in the future. Iowa is proposing making these changes through the public comment period process, described more below. There will be a separate public comment period for the new HOME waivers in the future. This document will (1) explain key proposed changes to the current waivers, and (2) describe the public comment period and how you can share your thoughts on these changes.

Here are the proposed changes for January 2026:

- Updating how Individual Consumer Directed Attendant Care (ICDAC) works.
 - Click to learn more about [how ICDAC currently works](#).
- Moving to one statewide assessor to do all waiver assessments. Click to learn more about proposed changes to [waiver assessments](#).
 - Starting a single, uniform assessment process for everyone
 - Using a new tool called interRAI-Early Years for children ages 0–3
- Updating the Waiver Prioritization Needs Assessment (WPNA).
- Making service definitions more consistent across waivers
- Making small technical changes, like:
 - Making it optional to work with Independent Support Brokers (ISB)
 - Updating some wording (for example, how “exception to policy” is written)

You can find more information about these changes [here](#).

How will these changes make things better?

- These updates will:
 - Make the system easier to use and understand
 - Help you get services based on your needs
 - Set up a smoother transition to the new HOME waivers later in 2026
 - Improve the assessment process across the state
 - Describe services more clearly and consistently

What is a public comment period?

The federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requires states to have a public comment period for changes to waivers. This process makes sure the people who might use the services, and their families and communities, get a chance to share their thoughts and concerns. Anyone can provide a public comment.

How does the public comment period work?

The public comment period is from August 20, 2025, to September 19, 2025.

1. Documents are currently available online. You will have 30 days to review the waiver amendments and comment. The waiver amendments are very long, so Iowa HHS also made several shorter documents to give details on key changes.
2. During the public comment period, anyone, including people who need or use HCBS, families, providers, and advocates, can share thoughts on the waiver amendments and proposed changes. You can submit feedback by mail or email.

Written comments may be addressed to Quality/Innovation and Medical Policy Bureau, Department of Health and Human Services, Iowa Medicaid, 321 East 12th St., Des Moines, IA 50319-0114. Comments may also be sent via electronic mail to: HCBS_Public_Comment@hhs.iowa.gov

3. Once the public comment period ends, Iowa HHS will review all the input. They may revise small parts of the waiver amendments based on feedback.

Iowa HHS will create a summary of the public feedback and explain how they responded to it. They'll send this summary to CMS along with the waiver changes. CMS will either approve the changes or ask for updates. If needed, Iowa HHS will make further changes and send the waiver amendments back to CMS for final approval.

What can my public comment include?

Your public comment can suggest changes, point out problems, or highlight things that are good in the proposed changes. Your comments will be most helpful if you keep them clear and specific. Try to give an example and explain why the change matters to you. Focus on what is most important for you, your family, or your community.

The details you share help Iowa HHS understand your point of view.

What will happen after Iowa HHS sends the waiver amendments to CMS?

While CMS is reviewing the waiver, Iowa HHS will keep working on plans to get systems and processes lined up so that making these small changes goes smoothly.

When is the public comment period?

The public comment period is open from August 20, 2025, to September 19, 2025, at 4:30pm CT.

How can I share comments?

You can email comments about the proposed changes to: HCBS_Public_Comment@hhs.iowa.gov