



# State of Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Health  
Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

## MEMORANDUM

OCDD-P-21-038

OCDD-R-21-008

OCDD-SC-21-018

**DATE:** October 13, 2021

**TO:** Stakeholders for the Intellectual/Developmental Disability Community

**FROM:** Julie Foster Hagan, Assistant Secretary  
Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

**SUBJECT:** OCDD HCBS COVID-19 Appendix K Exceptions Focus Groups  
(Webinar Information Below)

During the current Public Health Emergency (PHE) for COVID-19, the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) has requested flexibilities in the four Home and Community Based Waivers to help protect the health and welfare of participants. These requests are known as *Appendix K* requests, which are changes to our normal waiver processes. CMS has approved these Appendix K requests, and they are able to remain in place until 6 months after the end of the declaration of the PHE. Stakeholders have asked that OCDD continue to allow for certain flexibilities beyond the 6 months after the end of the declaration of the PHE, including the following:

- The use of legally responsible relatives and family members living in the same home as the participant to be paid caregivers,
- The suspension of the 16-hour rule (prohibiting caregivers from working more than 16 hours in a 24 hour time period), and
- The use of virtual visits for some services.

OCDD has given consideration to these requests, and we have engaged in substantive research into all regulations pertaining to these flexibilities and how other states regulate these areas. OCDD will be sponsoring three separate focus groups, one for each of these areas, to share our research with stakeholders and engage in a collaborative discussion on how we can best move forward in a manner that is in compliance with regulations.

- These focus groups will include two two-hour sessions, the first session will be a sharing of the research/background information and a *brainstorming* session with all participants.
- The second session will include any follow-up research/activities and development of a final plan of action to move forward.
- Each focus group will be limited to 25 people to allow for this collaborative approach, and we are asking that interested participants register as indicated below.

If you would like to be in a focus group, please click the Zoom registration link below. Please register for only **one focus group**. Please ensure that you are available for participation on the dates / times indicated below for the focus group prior to registration. OCDD will review all

applications and select the panelists to ensure that there is a diverse group of participants, families, advocates, and providers on each group.

| Group Topic                                    | Meeting One                            | Meeting Two                            | Zoom Registration Link                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Legally Responsible Relative as Paid Caregiver | October 25, 2021<br>4:00 PM to 6:00 PM | November 1, 2021<br>4:00 PM to 6:00 PM | <a href="https://ldhocddadmin.zoom.us/j/94461221234">https://ldhocddadmin.zoom.us/j/94461221234</a><br><br>After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. |
| 16-hour Rule                                   | October 26, 2021<br>4:00 PM to 6:00 PM | November 2, 2021<br>4:00 PM to 6:00 PM | <a href="https://ldhocddadmin.zoom.us/j/94461221234">https://ldhocddadmin.zoom.us/j/94461221234</a><br><br>After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. |
| Virtual Services                               | October 27, 2021<br>4:00 PM to 6:00 PM | October 29, 2021<br>4:00 PM to 6:00 PM | <a href="https://ldhocddadmin.zoom.us/j/94461221234">https://ldhocddadmin.zoom.us/j/94461221234</a><br><br>After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. |

Following the focus group working meetings, OCDD will hold a general stakeholder meeting to provide the entire community with the plan for moving forward for all flexibilities that have been granted during the PHE. The general stakeholder meeting will take place on **November 10, 2021** at **10:00 AM**. You must register in advance of the webinar at [https://ldhocddadmin.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Z68bkRiMR\\_6WmTRrSrBBxg](https://ldhocddadmin.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Z68bkRiMR_6WmTRrSrBBxg). Once you have registered you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. Stakeholders will have an opportunity to submit questions and comments on the proposed changes following this meeting.

I do understand the lasting impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our I/DD community, and I look forward to engaging in these much needed discussions with stakeholders.

Please send any additional questions to [OCDDInfo@la.gov](mailto:OCDDInfo@la.gov).