

INTEREST LISTS FOR LONG-TERM CARE PROGRAMS

AN ISSUE BRIEF FROM LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD STAFF

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OBJECTIVE

The Legislature considers data from interest lists for long-term care programs to make appropriation decisions about whether to expand the number of persons served in community waiver programs, based on perceived need.

KEY FACTS

- ◆ Interest lists operate on a first-come, first-served basis; no prioritization of need occurs.
- ◆ No eligibility determination is made when a person signs on to an interest list.
- ◆ Persons may join multiple interest lists. As of August 31, 2015, all community-based waiver program lists contained 198,538 names (101,948 unduplicated persons).
- ◆ Persons who decline services when they are offered may opt to return to the interest list.

BUDGETARY IMPACT

The Eighty-fourth Legislature, General Appropriations Act (GAA), 2016–17 Biennium, provides \$1.3 billion in General Revenue Funds (\$3.2 billion in All Funds) for community waiver programs. This funding provides for 41,839 positions in fiscal year 2016 and 45,162 positions in fiscal year 2017.

STATUTORY REFERENCES

The Texas Human Resources Code, Chapters 32 and 161

The Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Part 1, Chapters 9, 42, 45, 48, and 51

The Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) manages interest lists for several home and community-based services waiver programs. The programs serve persons who are aging and have physical disabilities and persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These lists identify persons who have expressed interest in receiving services that are unavailable due to limitations on the number of program participants.

Interest lists and waiting lists differ in that waiting lists include individuals whose eligibility for services has been established and will receive services when resources are available. Waiting lists are maintained by many state agencies for a variety of services, including medical services, rehabilitative services, child care services, and educational services. Individuals on waiting lists have been approved to receive services when resources become available.

PROGRAMS WITH INTEREST LISTS

DADS maintains interest lists for the following programs: (1) 1915(c) Medicaid waivers, including Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP), Home and Community-based Services (HCS), Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS), Texas Home Living (TxHmL), and Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD); and (2) non-Medicaid-funded services, including Adult Foster Care, Consumer Managed Personal Attendant Services, Day Activity and Health Services, Emergency Response Services, Family Care, Home Delivered Meals, Residential Care, and Special Services to Persons with Disabilities.

USING INTEREST LISTS TO IDENTIFY UNMET NEED

Duplication exists across interest lists because list management policy allows persons to sign on to multiple interest lists. Summing the number of persons on each interest list does not provide an accurate count of total persons interested in services. **Figure 1** shows the number

FIGURE 1
SUMMARY DATA ON TEXAS LONG-TERM CARE PROGRAM INTEREST LISTS
AUGUST 31, 2015

PROGRAM	INTEREST LIST COUNT	PERSONS DENIED OR WHO DECLINED SERVICES
Community Living Assistance and Support Services	54,084	390
Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities	221	39
Home and Community-based Services	73,011	192
Medically Dependent Children Program	20,540	775
Texas Home Living Waiver	50,683	278
Total	198,538	1,674

NOTE: Interest list counts may contain duplicates. The number of unduplicated persons on interest lists as of August 31, 2015, was 101,948.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board; Department of Aging and Disability Services.

of persons on each community-based waiver program interest list as of August 31, 2015. According to DADS, the total number of persons on all lists was 198,538, and the unduplicated count was 101,948. The unduplicated count represents the total number of individuals that have joined the interest lists, but individuals may and do join multiple interest lists.

The lists also contain many persons who are found ineligible or who decline services when they become available. This inclusion occurs because functional and financial assessments do not take place before list placement. Additionally, people sign on to lists in anticipation of future needs, but they may not have a need for services when they are available. As of August 31, 2015, of the 92,415 persons released or removed from the interest lists for fiscal years 2013 to 2015, 69,293 were denied or declined a slot when it was offered to them (75.0 percent). These individuals may opt to return to the interest list, but they receive a new interest list request date (at least one day after the denial or finding of ineligibility). For example, the 2016–17 GAA fully funds the interest list for DBMD; however, the agency anticipates that some individuals will be found ineligible or decline services and choose to return to the interest list.

The size of the interest list might not reflect the true scope of unmet need. Some people on the lists receive services in other programs while they wait, and, as noted, placement on the list sometimes indicates anticipated need. The number of persons who received services from other DADS programs or from the State of Texas Access Reform Plus Managed Care program (STAR+PLUS) while they waited for community-based waiver services as of August 31, 2015, was 55,009. While it is possible the services that these persons receive are not as robust as the services for which they are waiting, the fact that a number of persons declined services because they were receiving other services suggests that at least some of their needs were met. During the 2014–15 biennium, DADS recorded 1,148 instances of persons who declined services due to receiving services through other DADS programs or STAR+PLUS. However, the extent to which this nonacceptance occurs varies by waiver and consumer.

Since 2011, DADS is required to report explanatory performance measures for each of its interest lists, including the average monthly number of individuals on the interest list, the number of individuals who declined or were found ineligible for services when offered, the average monthly number of clients who were receiving other DADS services while on the interest list, and the percentage of individuals who are offered services in a given year who decline or are found ineligible for services.

USEFUL REFERENCES

Government Effectiveness and Efficiency Report, “Increase Information Available on Interest Lists for Long-Term Care Programs,” published by the Legislative Budget Board, January 2011.

Department of Aging and Disability Services data, including historical data, on interest lists:
www.dads.state.tx.us/services/interestlist/index.html

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