

HCBS Settings Rule: Integration into Broader Community

What Does Integration into the Community Mean?

Integration into the broader community is a fundamental requirement of the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule. This provision ensures that individuals receiving Medicaid-funded HCBS have the same opportunities to live, work, and participate in their communities as individuals not receiving HCBS. The rule emphasizes meaningful access to employment, education, recreation, and other community-based activities.



Key Requirements for Community Integration:

1. Access to Community Activities:

- Individuals must have opportunities to participate in community-based activities, such as:
 - Shopping, dining, and entertainment.
 - Educational programs and classes.
 - Volunteering and recreational activities.

2. Employment Opportunities:

- Settings must support individuals in exploring and pursuing competitive, integrated employment.
- Service plans must identify employment goals and include steps to achieve those goals, such as job coaching or skills training.

3. Transportation Access:

- Individuals must have access to reliable and affordable transportation to participate in community life.
- Providers are responsible for facilitating or coordinating transportation as needed.

4. Non-Segregated Settings:

- Services and activities must occur in settings that are inclusive of people without disabilities.
- Segregated settings (e.g., institutions or facilities that exclusively serve individuals with disabilities) do not meet the community integration standard.

5. Individual Choice and Control:

- Individuals must have the freedom to choose how they spend their time, who they interact with, and the activities they participate in.
- Individuals must have control over their personal resources and funds.
- Providers must ensure these choices are respected and documented in the individual's person-centered service plan.

Examples of Compliant Practices:

1. Facilitating Employment:

- Partnering with local businesses to provide job opportunities for individuals receiving HCBS.
- Offering job coaching and ongoing support to help individuals succeed in competitive employment settings.

2. Promoting Social Engagement:

- Organizing group outings to community events, such as festivals or concerts.
- Encouraging participation in recreational leagues, clubs, or community classes.

3. Providing Transportation Solutions:

- Coordinating with public transit providers to ensure individuals can access transportation.
- Using agency vehicles or ride-sharing services to support individual needs.

4. Inclusive Service Delivery:

- Ensuring services like therapy or counseling take place in community settings rather than segregated facilities.
- Supporting individuals in joining community-based organizations or advocacy groups.



Provider Responsibilities:

- Develop policies and procedures that promote community integration.
- Train staff on the importance of inclusion and how to support individuals in accessing the broader community.
- Regularly assess whether individuals' service plans include goals and activities that support integration.
- Identify and address barriers to community access, such as transportation or lack of accessible venues.
- Keep accurate records of services provided and report any incidents or concerns.

Benefits of Community Integration:

- Promotes independence and autonomy.
- Enhances quality of life by providing meaningful opportunities for social and recreational engagement.
- Improves self-esteem, confidence and social skills through community participation.
- Alleviates feelings of isolation, promoting better physical and mental health outcomes.
- Aligns services with the individual's personal goals and preferences.

DCH's Role in Supporting Integration:

1. Technical Assistance and Training:

- Provide training for providers on the community integration standards under the HCBS Settings Rule.
- Offer technical assistance to help providers identify and overcome barriers to integration.

2. Monitoring and Oversight:

- Conduct regular site visits and reviews to ensure compliance with community integration requirements.
- DCH may require corrective action plans (CAPs) to be developed and implemented by providers to address any deficiencies.

3. Stakeholder Engagement:

- Host forums and feedback sessions with individuals, families, and providers to share best practices and gather input on integration efforts.

Resources for Providers:

- **CMS Guidance on HCBS Community Integration:** <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/home-community-based-services/home-community-based-services-guidance/index.html>
- **DCH Compliance Support:** www.dch.georgia.gov
- **Provider Training Materials:** [HCBS State Transition Plan Provider Guidance manual](#)
- **Contact Information:**
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