



Contribution to Care and Maintenance

Important information about an adult's financial responsibilities upon entering a residential placement in New Jersey

The New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) can assist individuals who are unable to live at home by arranging a residential placement for them in the community. Some examples include a group home, a supervised apartment or a Community Care Residence with a licensed caregiver.

When this happens, it is important to understand that residential placements funded by DDD entail certain legal responsibilities.

Contribution to Care - the most important financial responsibility

Adults who are 18 or older and reside in a community placement funded by DDD are responsible for contributing financially to the cost of providing their care and maintenance. **This is commonly referred to as an individual's "contribution to care," and it begins to be assessed on the 31st day after an individual enters a residential placement.**

The person who handles the individual's finances is responsible for complying with this obligation. This could be:

- the individual
- a family member or legally appointed guardian
- a representative payee
- an attorney
- the agency that administers the residential facility or
- any other person who has assumed or been given this responsibility on the individual's behalf.

The financial responsibilities are required by law and outlined in N.J.A.C. 10:46D. They also are described in DDD's Division Circular #3A. When an individual - or the person who is responsible for an individual's finances - complies, it offsets a portion of the considerable cost of the individual's care and allows DDD to serve additional people.

How it works

DDD has retained a company called Maximus to contact individuals and help determine their ability to contribute to the cost of their care and maintenance.

- **The individual**, or any other responsible person who is contacted, must provide Maximus with any financial information the representative requests.
- **The individual's** required contribution to care will be based on his or her wages and/or unearned income, such as federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- **In all cases**, DDD will file a lien against the individual. In some cases, the division may also file a lien against the individual's property.

What else is required?

When instructed to do so by DDD, the individual, or someone who is legally responsible for acting on his or her behalf, must apply for all benefits for which the individual might be eligible and make sure they do not lapse once they begin. Three of the most important are:

- **Medicaid Community Care Waiver (CCW).** DDD administers this program, which allows the division to receive federal funding to help pay the cost of an individual's care. A division representative will help the individual - or the person legally responsible for acting on his or her behalf – apply for the CCW.
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability (SSDI).** To receive SSI or SSDI, application must be made to the U.S. Social Security Administration (www.socialsecurity.gov). DDD will assess 75 percent of these federal benefits after first deducting an allowance to cover the individual's personal needs.
- **Health insurance.** Individuals enrolled on the CCW will have Medicaid; others will need to arrange for private health insurance.

How long will these responsibilities last?

Individuals will be assessed a contribution to care for as long as DDD funds their residential placement. The amount assessed, however, will only cover part of the cost of care. Should an individual ever have additional resources, such as an inheritance, DDD may seek to recover the full cost of his or her care.

What happens if the individual, or the person legally responsible for acting on his or her behalf, does not abide by N.J.A.C. 10:46D?

DDD can terminate a residential placement if it does not receive the assessed contribution to care. Before that happens, however, the division may take other appropriate action, to include sending a bill for collection. In addition, any liens filed by DDD against an individual's real or personal property can be enforced if the property is sold.

If you have questions about contribution to care or the assessment process, please contact the fiscal office for your region by calling:

Northern: (Morris, Sussex, Warren, Bergen, Hudson and Passaic counties)	973-927-2600
Upper Central: (Union, Somerset and Essex counties):	908-226-7800
Lower Central: (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean counties)	609-292-4500
Southern: (Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Atlantic Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties)	856-770-5900