

Serving more people in Employment and Community First CHOICES

In July 2021, after seeking input from stakeholders, TennCare submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) an Initial Spending Plan for enhanced federal funding for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) provided under the American Rescue Plan. The Plan was posted on the TennCare website and shared broadly with stakeholders. A key component of the plan is enrolling up to 2,000 individuals from the waiting list into Employment and Community First CHOICES.

Tennessee received conditional approval of the plan from CMS on September 22, 2021. On November 2, 2022, TennCare received state budget authority to accept and spend the additional federal funds in order to begin implementation. A press release and other communication followed immediately after, and TennCare began working with DIDD and MCOs to start enrolling people into the program as quickly as possible.

The 2,000 slots were *initially* targeted to serve individuals who were actively seeking services and had been waiting to receive services the longest. These were individuals who had been on the DIDD waiver waiting list before those waivers closed to new enrollment in 2016 (many for years prior to that), and were unlikely to be enrolled under employment-related prioritization criteria. We also contacted individuals who been on the DIDD waiting list as “deferred”—to offer them the opportunity to enroll if they want to receive services now.

After contacting the above groups, TennCare began contacting individuals in priority groups, again starting with those who had been waiting the longest. We will continue until all slots are filled or there is no one else waiting to receive services.

Will all 2,000 slots be filled?

We expect that ultimately all 2,000 slots will be filled. Individuals can continue to self-refer for the program and may be eligible to enroll if slots remain available. TennCare has requested funding through the budget process to cover these slots once the ARP funds expire in March 2024.

Are there other slots available besides these 2,000?

Yes. TennCare also has reserve slots for people in emergent circumstances. In addition, both reserve and priority group slots are filled as they become available (for example, if someone leaves the program).

I’ve been on the waiting list since last summer. Why has no one called?

Enrollment for the 2,000 slots began with those on the waiting list the longest. You will be contacted as DIDD and MCOs continue to work their way through the list.

I’m not sure TennCare has the right address and/or phone number for me. How do I check?

The best way to ensure that TennCare has the correct address and phone number is to check through the portal (<https://tenncareconnect.tn.gov/>) or call TennCare Connect at 855-259-0701.

What if my MCO or DIDD can't reach me?

If the person reaching to you from the MCO or DIDD can't reach you by phone, you will receive a letter letting you know they have been trying to contact you. This letter will have a phone number you can call. **BE SURE to open your TennCare mail and respond if you want to enroll.**

I'm on the list but I don't want services right now. Can I stay on the list?

No. If a slot is offered to you and you do not want services at this time, you will no longer be on a waiting list. But you can self-refer again once you are ready to receive services.

I still have more questions. Who can I call?

You can call our LTSS Help Desk at 877-224-0219, your MCO or DIDD with any additional questions.