

ECF CHOICES

Many individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) are seeking ways to achieve independence. In Tennessee, these individuals can receive services to support this goal through **TennCare's Employment and Community First (ECF) CHOICES program**. This program provides home and community-based services (HCBS) for people who don't want to live at an institution and who choose to live independently of their families. This program also supports families who live with and care for a family member with I/DD.

What does I/DD mean?

<p>TennCare Rules 1200-13-01-.02 (108) define intellectual disability as a disability that manifested before age 18 and significantly sub-average intellectual functioning –an IQ below 70 is a good signifier to TennCare – plus limitations in two or more of the following adaptive skill areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Self-care • Home living • Social skills • Community use • Self-direction • Health and safety • Functional academics • Leisure • Work 	<p>TennCare Rules 1200-13-01-.02 (52) define developmental disability as a disability attributable to a mental and/or physical impairment that manifested before age 22; the disability will likely continue indefinitely; and substantial limitations in three or more of the following life activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-care • Receptive and expressive language • Learning • Mobility • Self-direction • Capacity for independent living • Economic self-sufficiency
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Who can apply for ECF CHOICES?

The ECF CHOICES program has three groups, each with its own eligibility requirements. Here are some general differences:

Group 4 (Essential Family Supports)	Group 5 (Essential Supports for Employment and Independent Living)	Group 6 (Comprehensive Supports for Employment and Community Living)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families with a child under age 21 who has I/DD • Age 21+ with I/DD living with family and chooses to enroll in this group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 21+ who has I/DD and doesn't qualify for nursing home level of care • Age 18-21 with I/DD and can't live with family anymore • Person who qualifies for nursing home care but slots in Group 6 are full and needs can be met in Group 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 21+ who qualify for nursing home care • Age 18-21 with I/DD and can't live with family anymore

Any adult or child who meets these eligibility requirements should apply, even if they think they don't fit within any of the priority groups (referenced below) because they might meet one of the exceptions.

Generally, you also can't earn more than \$2,250 a month or have more than \$2000 in resources for any of the groups. For more details on the different eligibility requirements for each group, see TennCare Rules 1200-13-01-.31 (3), starting on page 244 of the [October 2017 revised rules](#).

What services do you get?

Each of the three groups in ECF CHOICES has its own list of available services under the following support categories: employment, independent community living, family caregiving, self-advocacy, family empowerment, dental & therapy. The Family Caregiver Stipend is only available in Group 4. For more information, see [TennCare's table](#) that lists services for each group.

How do you apply for ECF CHOICES?

[APPLY FOR ECF CHOICES HERE](#)

Even if you are on the waiting list for a DIDD 1915(c) waiver program you should still complete and submit the application.

If you want help completing this form and you already have TennCare:

You can call your Managed Care Organization (MCO) if you already have TennCare. You can find the MCO's number on your TennCare card. Here are the MCO's toll free numbers:

- Amerigroup: (866) 840-4991
- BlueCare: (888) 747-8955
- United Health Care Community Plan: (800) 690-1606

If you want help completing this form and you don't have TennCare:

You can call your region's Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) office. Tell them you need help with a self-referral for ECF CHOICES. Here are the numbers for each regional office:

- West Tennessee DIDD Regional Office: (866) 372-5709
- Middle Tennessee DIDD Regional Office: (800) 654-4839
- East Tennessee DIDD Regional Office: (888) 531-9876

When will you get services?

Because of inadequate funding, there are not enough open slots for everyone who wants or needs services. So people who qualify for ECF CHOICES may not be enrolled or get services right away. TennCare created a list of eight enrollment priority groups. For those who fit within groups near the top of the list, there is a higher chance of getting a slot in the program if one opens up. But, there are some slots reserved for people in emergency situations. Here is a list of the priority groups:

1	You have a job. You need help to keep your job.
2	You are 18+ years old and about to finish school. You have a job offer but you can only get the job if you have help on the job.
3	You just lost your job and you need help getting a new job and keeping your new job.
4	You are 18-22 years old and about to finish school. You want to work. You need help getting a job and keeping your new job.
5	You don't have a job but you want to work. You need help getting a job and keeping your new job.
6	You are 14-22 years old. You are still in school. You live with your family. You want to work when you finish school and you need help getting ready to work.
7	You are 14+ years old but not old enough to retire. You are open to the idea of working and agree to receive a service called "Exploration." This service will help you decide if you want to work and the kinds of jobs you might like.
8	You are 62+ years old and you are not interested in working OR you are 55+ years old and your health problems make it hard for you to work. You need help to live in and be part of the community.

