

Expanding Access and Choice: Kansas' New Community Support Waiver



Case Study

The Client

Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services

The Project

Community Support Waiver design, stakeholder engagement, federal application, and implementation support

The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) partnered with Public Consulting Group (PCG) to develop a new Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver for people ages 5 and older with intellectual and developmental disabilities who do not require continuous, paid 24-hour support. The Community Support Waiver (CSW) creates a route to targeted services that promote independence, employment, and community participation.

The Need

Kansas sought to expand access to HCBS for individuals with I/DD whose needs could be met through targeted supports rather than a comprehensive, 24-hour service model. Developing a new waiver required the state to make interconnected policy and operational decisions while aligning KDADS, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), providers, advocates, individuals, and families.

The work also required translating community priorities into a federally approvable waiver design and preparing stakeholders and state operations for implementation.

The Solution

PCG supported Kansas from initial planning through federal approval, including program design, public comment, submission, and responding to federal questions. The team helped structure waiver design decisions, define services, establish provider qualifications, review business processes, develop communication and educational materials, facilitate broad stakeholder engagement, and prepare the federal waiver application.

Engagement included a Technical Advisory Group, public town halls, accessible written resources, a project website, a stakeholder listserv, and regular coordination between KDADS and KDHE. This approach gave stakeholders repeated opportunities to shape the waiver and understand how decisions evolved.

PCG also conducted a rate study to develop reimbursement rates for waiver services and helped Kansas establish its first conflict-free case management policy to meet CMS requirements. PCG led stakeholder engagement to develop a practical approach that balanced federal compliance with the realities of implementation.

A Flexible Service Model

The waiver includes supports intended to help participants live more independently and participate in their communities. Services include employment supports, personal care, respite, therapies, assistive technology, and transportation.

The waiver also includes **remote supports** as a flexible alternative to continuous, in-person staffing. Through tools such as two-way communication devices, participants can access real-time assistance from trained staff in another location. Remote supports are incorporated into each participant's person-centered service plan and include safeguards related to informed consent, privacy, emergency response, and access to in-person assistance. Remote supports can also help extend the reach of the direct support workforce, particularly in areas with limited provider capacity, while giving participants additional options for receiving support in ways that promote independence.

Self-direction provides another important dimension of flexibility on the CSW. Participants may choose to direct selected services, including personal care and individual-directed goods and services. This gives individuals and families greater control over who provides support, how services are scheduled and delivered, and how available resources are used within established program requirements.

Together, these options give individuals and families another pathway to targeted services when continuous, paid 24-hour support is not needed.

The Outcome

Federal approval was secured in approximately three months, compared with the six-month review timeline state officials had been advised to expect. There were also minimal requests for additional information, which expedited the approval. KDADS credited this expedited review to PCG's subject matter expertise and project management.

What Made the Approach Effective

- **Structured decision-making:** PCG helped sequence population, service, provider, operational, rate, quality, and implementation decisions so that downstream choices were grounded in the waiver's goals.
- **Continuous stakeholder engagement:** Technical advisory meetings, town halls, a dedicated website, written materials, and ongoing feedback channels kept individuals, families, providers, and advocates informed and involved.
- **Cross-agency alignment:** Regular coordination between KDADS and KDHE supported shared decision-making, issue resolution, and alignment between the operating agency and the state Medicaid agency.
- **Federal expertise:** PCG combined knowledge of CMS waiver requirements and regulations with implementation and operational insight to produce an application that moved through review efficiently.

A Blueprint for Other States

Kansas demonstrates how states can pair a clear program vision with meaningful stakeholder engagement, thoughtful program design, and experienced implementation support. The result is a person-centered waiver positioned to expand access to targeted HCBS while giving people with I/DD more options to pursue independence, employment, and community participation.



PCG was an invaluable partner in helping Kansas design and secure approval for our new Community Support Waiver. Their team combined deep CMS waiver expertise with practical operational insight.

*Michele Heydon, LTSS Commissioner,
Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services*



By the time the waiver was approved, the community knew what was in it, understood the why behind it, and felt like they were part of the process.

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To learn more about PCG's Community Support Waiver solutions, contact us today.



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