

# THE TIME IS NOW

to make an overdue investment in waivers that support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live more independent lives in their communities.

## WHAT IS A WAIVER?

The New Options Waiver (NOW) and the Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) are **vital federal waivers** in Georgia, designed to **support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to live more independent lives** within their communities.

**THERE IS A HIGH BAR TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR NOW/COMP WAIVERS, AND ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF GEORGIANS WITH I/DD QUALIFY.**

If an individual does qualify, they get added to a waitlist.

CURRENTLY,

**7,900+**

**GEORGIANS ARE ON THE WAITLIST TO RECEIVE A WAIVER**

## WHAT HAPPENS WHILE PEOPLE ON THE WAITLIST ARE WAITING FOR THEIR WAIVERS?

Family members leave their jobs to support their loved ones with I/DD

People with I/DD are moved into institutionalized settings (like nursing homes)

Quality of life and health deteriorate, **increasing** the overall cost to the state



**This is Nick.** He is on the COMP waiver waitlist. Nick has been living in a nursing home since he was 39 (he is now 47).

Family members can return to their jobs and people with I/DD can obtain employment, too

People with I/DD can live independently in their own homes

Quality of life and health increase, **reducing** the overall cost to the state

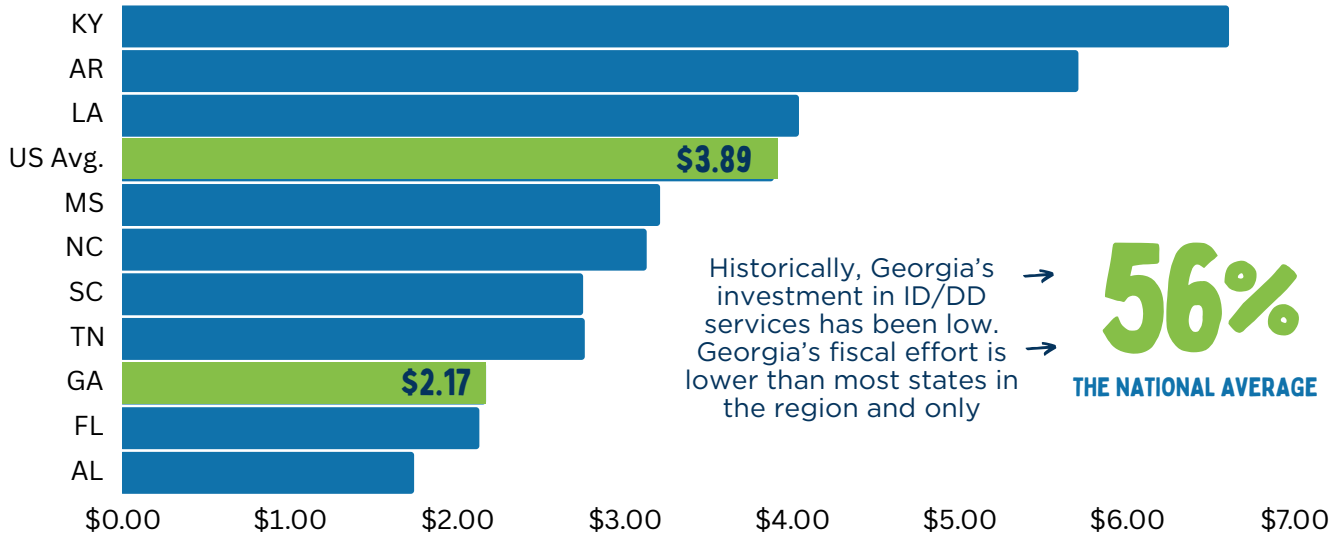


**This is Ben.** He receives the NOW waiver. He works at Georgia State & is an active disability advocate.

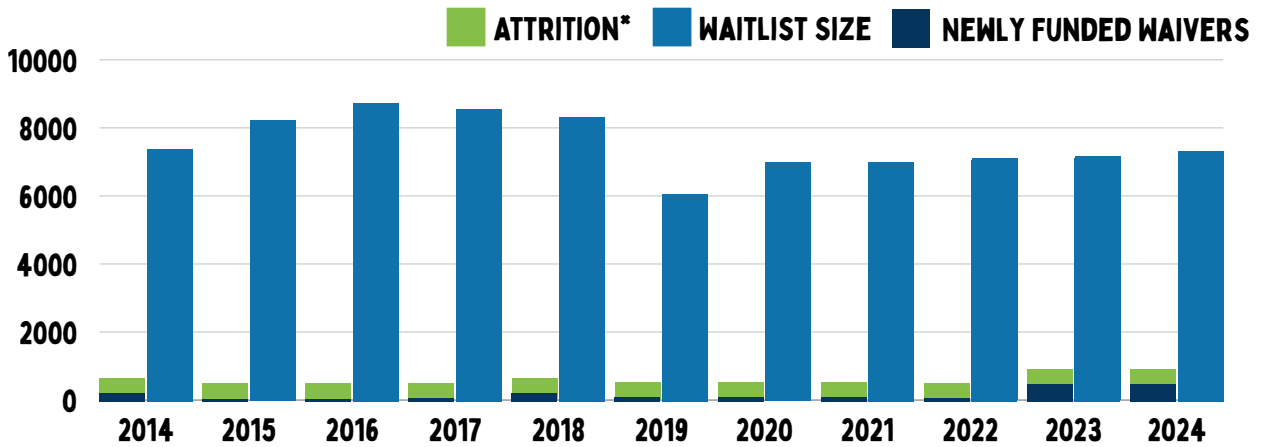
## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE ON THE WAITLIST RECEIVE THEIR WAIVERS?

# IT IS UP TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR NOW/COMP WAIVERS.

## FY21 I/DD FISCAL EFFORT FOR THE SOUTHEAST REGION



## GEORGIA'S INVESTMENT IN HOME & COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES WAIVERS



\*DBHDD estimates that roughly 400 individuals 'roll off' of NOW/COMP waivers annually. This attrition is largely attributed either to mortality or moving out of the state, and the funds are reallocated as waivers to individuals on the waitlist.

## \$65 MILLION IS AN OVERDUE INVESTMENT

and will relieve the burden on Georgians with I/DD and their families by funding approximately 2,400 NOW/COMP waivers\*

\*As recommended by the Senate Study on I/DD committee in 2022.

**\*LEGISLATORS, PLEASE WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO THE APPROPRIATIONS CHAIRMAN FOR ADDITIONAL NOW/COMP WAIVERS IN THE BUDGET**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT:**

**CHARLOTTE DENSMORE**  
GCDD Public Policy Director, charlotte.densmore@gcdd.ga.gov, 404-859-5316

**CHARLIE MILLER**  
GCDD Legislative Advocacy Director, charles.miller@gcdd.ga.gov, 404-617-9957

# THE ROI OF NOW/COMP WAIVERS

Investing in Georgians with disabilities has a far-reaching positive, economic impact. NOW/COMP waivers offer funds to qualified Georgians with intellectual and developmental disabilities to pay for supports they need to remain living, working, and thriving in our communities. Mia's story highlights the state's return on investment of a single waiver.



**THIS IS MIA.**  
**SHE IS A RECIPIENT OF A COMP WAIVER.**

## HER WAIVER LETS HER FAMILY GET BACK TO WORK...



Because her waiver keeps Mia well-supported in the community, her mother has been able to work at a good paying job. Last year, she paid more than \$30,000 in state and federal taxes.

## HER WAIVER LETS HER SHOP...

Mia's SSDI supplements her income from work to cover her living expenses - utilities and rent approximates \$18,000 a year, and she spends about \$5000 a year on clothes, food, restaurants, movies, bowling, and swimming, on most of which she pays sales tax.

## SO LET'S DO THE MATH.

**MIA RETURNS ABOUT \$40,000 TO THE ECONOMY, ROUGHLY 60% OF THE FUNDING THAT SHE RECEIVES FOR HER SUPPORT.**

**HER FAMILY CONTRIBUTES MORE THAN \$30,000 IN TAXES, NOT INCLUDING THEIR ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS AS WORKING GEORGIANS.**

**THE BENEFIT OF HER PRESENCE AND CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY - HER FRIENDSHIPS, HER SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS, HER BOWLING TEAM, HER NURSES AT WORK, IS A BONUS.**

## HER WAIVER PAYS STAFF...

Mia's waiver paid two direct support people when she was part of participant direction; one paid \$225 in taxes on the income he made from Mia every two weeks, and the other paid about \$100 in taxes every two weeks; about \$8,125 annually. Currently, Mia is served by an agency, and those direct staff pay taxes on what they earn.



## HER WAIVER HELPS HER WORK...



Mia's waiver includes supported employment; she has a job for 25 hours a week at St. Mary's Hospital. She has worked there for 12 years. In 2024 she paid \$2831 in state, federal, SS Tax and Medicare on her income. Her waiver pays Briggs and Associates, the company that provides her job coach, \$10,670 per year. Mia's job coach pays taxes on her income. A support coordination agency also gets paid \$900 per year from her waiver.

## HER WAIVER KEEPS HER HEALTHY...

Mia's social connections and busy schedule keep her pretty active. Aside from COVID in 2020 and a serious infection in 2022, her routine health care costs are minimal.



# LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR NOW/COMP WAIVERS

CURRENTLY,  
**7,900+**  
GEORGIANS ARE  
ON THE WAITLIST  
TO RECEIVE A  
WAIVER



Many of these Georgians are waiting years for essential services that allow them to live independently. Without additional funding, families are left without the support they need.



The bi-partisan 2022 Senate Study Committee on I/DD has recommended funding 2,400 new waivers in this year's budget to begin addressing the backlog. This investment is critical to ensuring individuals with I/DD can thrive in their communities.


## WE URGE LEGISLATORS TO SEND A LETTER TO THE APPROPRIATIONS CHAIRMAN REQUESTING FULL FUNDING FOR THESE 2,400 NEW WAIVERS IN THE FY 2026 BUDGET.

### KEY POINTS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR LETTER:

- \* **Acknowledge the need** - 7,000+ individuals are waiting.
- \* **Reference the recommendation** - Fund 2,400 new waivers this year.
- \* **Request full funding in the budget.**
- \* **Emphasize the impact** - These waivers provide critical services and strengthen the direct support workforce; they are also good for the economy (see back).

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT:**

 **CHARLOTTE DENSMORE**  
GCDD Public Policy Director, [charlotte.densmore@gcdd.ga.gov](mailto:charlotte.densmore@gcdd.ga.gov), 404-859-5316

 **CHARLIE MILLER**  
GCDD Legislative Advocacy Director, [charles.miller@gcdd.ga.gov](mailto:charles.miller@gcdd.ga.gov), 404-617-9957