



The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP) Supports Intensity Scale-Adult (SIS-A)® 2nd Edition Pilot: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

INTRODUCTION

DPHHS DDP is piloting the **SIS-A 2nd Edition** through early 2027.

This guide helps DPHHS DDP Quality Improvement Specialist (QIS) SIS-A Pilot Schedulers and Targeted Case Managers answer questions from 0208 waiver enrollees, families, and service providers about the SIS-A assessment pilot.

SIS-A PILOT IMPLEMENTATION

WHAT IS THE SIS-A ASSESSMENT, AND WHAT IS THE SIS-A PILOT?

The SIS-A (2nd Edition) is a special checklist created by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). It measures how much help an adult with intellectual and developmental disabilities requires each day.

We are using this tool to learn what help you need on the 0208 waiver. This information will help us figure out fair pay rates for care workers based on the amount of support you need. This test project is our first step toward that new pay system.

WHY WAS I SELECTED FOR THE SIS-A PILOT?

We randomly selected 500 people from our 0208 waiver group, including you. We did not pick you because of any problem with your current care. We simply need a good mix of people across Montana to help us design this new system.

You and others aged 16 and older from all parts of the state can take part if you use services that will use these new rates. Joining this project gives you a chance to improve Montana's services and provides your team with extra information to plan your care.

WHICH 0208 WAIVER SERVICES WILL HAVE ACUITY-BASED RATES?

We plan to use these new rates for:

- Adult Foster Care



- Day Supports and Activities
- Residential Habilitation Congregate Living
- Residential Habilitation Supported Living
- Supported Employment

These services were selected because variations in support intensity can significantly affect the cost and complexity of service delivery.

WILL THE PILOT ASSESSMENT RESULTS IMMEDIATELY CHANGE MY SERVICES OR FUNDING?

No. The SIS-A assessment is part of a pilot program to gather information so we can plan future pay rates. We will study the results from all 500 participants to create a new plan. Participation in the pilot will not immediately change your services, funding level, or support plan. However, the assessment may lead to conversations between you, your family, and your targeted case manager about support needs and service planning.

WHEN DOES THIS PROJECT START, AND WHEN WILL THE NEW RATES BEGIN?

We will start scheduling assessments in the fall of 2026. We hope to complete a total of 500 assessments, though our timing may shift depending on everyone's availability.

The pilot is just the first step. After assessments are completed and support needs and other data sources are analyzed, we will develop rate recommendations. The state will then engage stakeholders, seek input, and work through the regulatory and waiver amendment process to implement new rates. Current rates will remain in effect until new acuity-based rates are formally implemented, which is estimated to occur in late 2029.

WILL THE SIS-A REPLACE THE MONTANA NEEDS ASSESSMENT (MONA)?

We are still looking for a new tool to replace the MONA. We will let you, your family, and your case manager know before we make any changes.

WILL THE SIS-A REPLACE THE SMULL ASSESSMENTS?

At this time, the SIS-A will not replace the Smull Assessments. Your targeted case manager and providers will continue to use the Smull Assessments and person-centered thinking to build your case plan.



WHAT IF I AM IN CRISIS OR EXPERIENCE A SIGNIFICANT LIFE CHANGE DURING THE PILOT?

If you have a big life change—like going to the hospital, moving, or having new behavioral struggles—tell our DDP scheduler right away. We can move your meeting to a better time. We want to measure your usual daily life, not a high-stress moment.

ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW AND SCHEDULING DETAILS

WHERE WILL MY ASSESSMENT HAPPEN?

We hold meetings in person or online. Most in-person meetings take place at your local DDP regional office. Online meetings use Microsoft Teams. You, your family, and your helpers will work with your case manager or our scheduler to make sure everyone is ready.

WHAT IF MY FAMILY MEMBER OR I DO NOT WANT TO TAKE PART?

Participation in the pilot is completely your choice. If you or your guardian says no, we will simply pick someone else from our backup list. Saying no will not hurt your services in any way.

WHAT IF THERE IS A DISAGREEMENT ABOUT WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING OR ANSWER QUESTIONS FOR ME?

The scheduler will work with your targeted case manager, family, and service providers to find people who can provide correct information. The goal is to ensure that the assessment includes input from people who know you well and support you in multiple environments. If there is disagreement, the regional QIS or DDP staff will be consulted to help us decide who should be there.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I NEED TO CHANGE MY APPOINTMENT TIME?

We know schedules can change. If you or your family need to reschedule, please contact the DDP scheduler as soon as possible. The scheduler will work to find a time that works for everyone. It is helpful to notify the scheduler with as much advance notice as possible, and families should confirm their appointment when they receive reminder emails. No-shows or frequent cancellations may affect the overall pilot timeline, so prompt communication is appreciated.



DO YOU OFFER ANY SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR MY COMMUNICATION OR SENSORY SUPPORT NEEDS?

Yes. The SIS-A assessment process can accommodate various communication and sensory support needs. During the scheduling process, your family should inform the DDP scheduler of any accommodations you need (e.g., a sign language interpreter, communication device support, or sensory accommodations). If the accommodation is not arranged in advance, the assessor may determine that the assessment needs to be rescheduled. We are committed to ensuring the assessment process is accessible and comfortable for all participants.

HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW?

- **For online meetings:** Pick a quiet room with no distractions. You will need a computer or phone with a camera and microphone, and Microsoft Teams installed (in a browser like Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge). Log in 15 minutes early to test your camera and microphone. You and your family must keep your cameras on during the visit.
- **For in-person meetings:** You and your family will need to arrange transportation to attend the interview. You will all receive a confirmation email that includes the address where the interview will happen, parking instructions, how to access the DDP Regional Office building, and other important coordination details.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE INTERVIEW

WHO NEEDS TO BE AT MY MEETING?

We need at least two people who have known you for at least three months to answer questions. This can include:

- Your guardian (if appropriate),
- a direct support professional or residential staff member (if applicable),
- a day service staff member or day program staff (if applicable), and/or
- your targeted case manager

These should be people who see you at home, at work, or during the day. They are there to support you and help talk about what you need.



WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING MY MEETING?

Our interviewer will ask you and your helpers questions about how much support you need for daily activities. We will talk about your medical needs, behavior, home life, community activities, health, safety, learning, work, social life, and advocacy activities.

Everyone must be on camera during an online meeting.

You can find helper resources on the [AAIDD SIS-A Website](#).

HOW DO WE GET READY?

You and your helpers should think about your daily needs and talk with other team members before the visit. This is not a test you can pass or fail. It is just a tool to help you get the right support.

HOW LONG WILL MY ASSESSMENT TAKE?

The interview can take up to three hours. Your family and providers should plan to stay and participate throughout the meeting.

WILL MY INFORMATION BE KEPT PRIVATE, AND HOW WILL IT BE USED?

Yes. Your answers are private and protected by state and federal privacy laws, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). We store your data safely and use it mainly to set fair service rates. Your team can also use it to plan better care for you.

WILL MY FAMILY AND I GET A COPY OF THE RESULTS?

Yes. After the meeting, we create a Support Needs Summary. You or your family can ask your case manager for a copy four weeks after your meeting date.

OTHER QUESTIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY FAMILY, MY PROVIDER, OR I HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

If you have questions or questions that we have not resolved, please reach out to the scheduler who contacted you or to our central team. We want to make this easy for you and are ready to help.

- Learn more on the [AAIDD Website](#).
- Email us: SISAPilot@mt.gov
- Call us: 406-444-0600