

# The Path Forward

## The Supports Intensity Scale® Adult Version, 2nd Edition (SIS-A®, 2nd Ed.) Project Frequently Asked Questions

| QUESTIONS  | ANSWERS  |
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| <b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b>   |  |
| What is the SIS-A®, 2nd Ed.?   | <p>The Supports Intensity Scale -Adult Version®, 2nd Edition (SIS-A®, 2nd Ed.) is a valid and reliable tool used to identify support needs. This assessment is developed and maintained by the Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD).</p> <p>The assessment determines frequency, amount, and type of support needed in the following areas: Home Living Activities, Health and Safety Activities, Community Living Activities, Social Activities, Lifelong Learning Activities, Work Activities, Advocacy Activities. The assessment also measures Exceptional Medical and Behavioral support needs.</p> |
| How does the SIS-A®, 2nd Ed. measure support needs?                      | The SIS-A®, 2nd Ed. assessor uses an interview format to ask a variety of questions which focus on what support a person needs to successfully participate in community life. A trained interviewer does the interview with the person with IDD or autism and others who know the individual well. The SIS-A®, 2nd Ed. typically takes 2-3 hours to gather the information needed and complete in full.  |
| How will SIS-A®, 2nd Ed. scores reflect a person's more complex needs?   | The SIS-A®, 2nd Ed. also asks about a person's exceptional medical and/or behavioral support needs. Additionally, Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) and DDS have worked together to developed questions about medical and/or behavioral support needs specific to Massachusetts.  |
| Where can I learn more about the SIS assessment?                         | The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) has resources available on their website that can be found <a href="#">here</a> .  |
| What if I need an accommodation such as an interpreter?                  | You will be able to ask for accommodations by responding to a <a href="#">survey</a> which will be sent out in an email or by talking to a DDS staff person that will be calling you to schedule your assessment.  |
| Does AAIDD allow the viewing of SIS-A®, 2nd Ed. questions ahead of time? | We are unable to share the SIS-A®, 2nd Ed. questions ahead of time, however, DDS will send you information to help you get ready for the assessment.   |

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| How and why did DDS choose the SIS-A®, 2nd edition?                       | <p>DDS decided to transition from our current assessment tool, the ICAP, to a more contemporary, person-centered assessment system which is validated and reliable. DDS posted a Request For Response (RFR) to purchase a nationally recognized and validated assessment tool that, among other requirements,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identifies the support needs of individuals from a person-centered strength-based approach,</li><li>• is consistent with contemporary best practices and in a person-centered format,</li><li>• is available in, or for translation in, other languages,</li><li>• uses a web-based platform to compile and export data, and</li><li>• has the ability to customize supplemental factors to meet Massachusetts' specific needs.</li></ul> |
| <b>NEW</b><br><br>What if I want to volunteer for an assessment?          | You can complete a preference <a href="#">survey</a> . If you are part of the random sample identified by HSRI, we will be reaching out to you to schedule based on your survey responses.  |
| <b>NEW</b><br><br>How long does the assessment take?                      | This is a comprehensive assessment, and you should plan for a 3-hour period. Depending on the number of respondents and a person's support needs, there can be a lot of discussion. In the interest of time, the assessor may need to redirect a topic and move things along.   |
| <b>NEW</b><br><br>Can the assessment be broken up into multiple sessions? | No. We are unable to break the assessment up at this time and the full assessment will need to be completed in 1 session.   |
| Who should come to the assessment?  | A SIS assessment is a meeting with an assessor and at least two people (respondents) who know a great deal about the individual's daily support needs. The individual being assessed is encouraged to attend and participate.   |
| <b>NEW</b><br><br>Does the individual need to attend the full assessment? | No. The individual must be present, in the beginning, and participate for as long as possible. If they will not be able to stay for the whole meeting, please be sure that there is someone available to help assist them when leaving if needed.   |

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| <p><b>NEW</b></p> <p>What do I get once the assessment is over?</p>  | <p>You will receive a SIS-A Summary Report that provides you with information from the assessment and can be useful to refer to during team meetings or supports planning.</p>   |
| <p><b>PROJECT PHASE 1- Self-Directed Data Gathering</b></p>  |  |
| <p>What is the purpose of this phase of the project?</p>   | <p>DDS is working with AAIDD and HSRI to implement 500 assessments. These assessments will provide data and information to develop a support needs framework that will help determine support needs and inform us about self-directed individual budget allocations to improve consistency, transparency, and equity.</p>  |
| <p>What is HSRI's role in this project?</p>  | <p>HSRI is a consultant that is contracted by DDS to develop a Support Level framework by assessing the extent of an individual's support needs, while accounting for their type of residence and age group and agreeing on the type and amount of services people will typically be allocated.</p> <p>In future phases of this project, the Support Level framework will be used to develop a budget process that is transparent, consistent, and equitable across the state.</p> |
| <p>How did DDS identify the initial 500 individuals for the SIS-A®, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. assessment?</p>   | <p>DDS worked in collaboration with HSRI to identify a random sample self-direction participants. We chose to base the sample on which program the individual is enrolled in and what region they live in to come up with a truly random sample of participants. The data we collect based on this randomization will lead to more consistency, transparency and equity in self-directed services across the board.</p>  |
| <p>If I'm chosen in the sample, do I have to participate?</p>  | <p>Participation is voluntary. However, your participation is key to ensuring that DDS has full representation of the diversity of people we support in self-direction.</p>  |
| <p>Would an assessment done in this phase of the project (2023/2024) for me/my family member be used to determine my individual budget allocation?</p> | <p>Information gathered in this phase of the project will provide data in order for DDS to develop a Support Level framework. Participation in this sample is voluntary. The assessment is not related to budget allocations.</p>  |
| <p>Will the SIS-A®, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. only be used for people self-directing services?</p>  | <p>During this phase of the project, DDS is only gathering data from those who self-direct their services. Once DDS reviews the data collected in Phase 1, DDS will determine the next steps of the project. Over the next several years DDS anticipates using the SIS-A®, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. for all individuals we serve.</p>  |

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| CONTACT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES   |  |
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| How do I contact someone if I have more questions?  | You can email us at: <a href="mailto:SISatDDS@mass.gov">SISatDDS@mass.gov</a>  |
| Where can I find more information about The Path Forward SIS-A Project in the State of Massachusetts? | You can find resources and information at The Path Forward <a href="#">website</a> . We will continue to update information on this webpage as this project moves forward. |