

Residential Treatment Facilities (RTFs) Program Information for Referring Providers



What is a Residential Treatment Facility?

Residential treatment facilities (RTFs) are therapeutic programs that provide inpatient psychiatric treatment to youth with complex mental health needs and support to their families. These programs are for youth who present with severe functional impairments and significant risks to their well-being across settings due to their mental health condition. The youth have challenges that need around-the-clock supervision, structure, and clinical treatment. The programs require voluntary participation.

The purpose of RTF care is to reduce symptoms and improve management of emotional and behavioral challenges. RTF care is intended to support a youth's return to their home and community as early as possible, typically within 4-6 months. RTFs provide an array of medical and psychiatric services and coordinate with nearby school programs to meet the youth's needs. RTF programs operate 24 hours, seven days a week. Each RTF campus varies in size from 14 to 50 beds. There is a ratio of at least one staff to four youth at all times. Youth may have their own bedroom or share with other youth. Most RTFs are not locked secure facilities.

RTF programs reduce outside stressors a youth experiences so they can focus on getting better. Throughout a youth's admission they develop new strategies and skills to manage symptoms. Caregivers also learn new skills and strategies for supporting their youth. RTFs incorporate family therapy and time spent at home into treatment. This provides the space and support for youth and caregivers to practice the tools and skills learned during the youth's admission to the RTF. RTF staff are available to support a youth or family during that time at home.

What services does an RTF provide?

RTFs deliver services in the facility as well as in the youth's home and community. RTFs offer daily access to:

Clinical Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensive assessments• Multidisciplinary treatment planning• Medication management• Individual, family, and group therapy• Rehabilitative services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialty services as needed (e.g., substance use treatment)• Physical health services• Recreational therapy
Crisis Resolution and Prevention Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physician on duty/on-call 24/7• 24/7 nursing services• Behavior management risk assessments and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crisis/Behavior Management Specialists• Coordination and collaboration with local emergency and acute inpatient hospitals

Who do RTFs serve?

Youth who may be in need of treatment at an RTF must meet all of the following eligibility criteria as determined by an OMH RTF Authorization Team:

1. Are between the ages of 5-21;
2. Family/Legal Guardian (and/or youth, if over age 16) voluntarily consent to participate in RTF treatment;
3. Intelligence quotient (IQ) equal to or greater than 51;
4. Primary Mental Health Diagnosis;
5. Meet criteria for Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) as determined by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts (LPHA);
6. Outpatient, community-based, and other out-of-home interventions available in the community do not meet the treatment needs of the youth;
7. The youth is experiencing a severity of psychiatric need which requires, proper care and treatment on an inpatient basis in an available RTF under the direction of a physician;
8. Care and treatment in an available RTF can reasonably be expected to improve the youth's condition or prevent further regression so that RTF services will no longer be needed.

How are RTF costs covered?

RTFs are Medicaid funded programs. RTF services are only covered by New York State Medicaid. Regardless of insurance coverage, when a youth is eligible and accepted for admission to an RTF, OMH assists a youth in applying for NYS Medicaid based on the youth's disability and the youth's income and assets. If the youth does not meet financial eligibility requirements, payment toward the cost of care may be requested.

How can a youth be referred for RTF?

A referral application requires a packet with several evaluations from professionals. Applications for RTF are sent to the youth's local Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPOA). You can find the youth's local C-SPOA at this [website](#). Choose the youth's county from the map and it will bring you to a page with the name and contact information for your county's C-SPOA Coordinator. A copy of the application is also available on this website.

C-SPOA will forward the application to OMH to determine the youth's eligibility to apply for admission to an available RTF. There are currently fourteen (14) RTF programs throughout NYS. Each RTF has its own admission criteria, which may be based on the age of the child, their diagnosis and their area of expertise. Not every RTF program will be appropriate for every youth.

If a youth is found eligible by OMH, the referral will be sent to the RTF program(s) that can serve the youth. Consideration is given to any specific RTF program requested by the youth and family. The RTF program(s) meet with the youth and family to decide if they can meet the youth's mental health needs. RTFs are privately operated, therefore the decision to accept a youth who has been found eligible for services is an independent decision made by the facility.

For additional questions or assistance, contact the county C-SPOA in the youth's home community.

What are the names of the RTFs and where are they located?

See the OMH Residential Treatment Facility Map.