



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DIVISION
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<http://adsd.nv.gov>

Nevada's Pilot of the Supports Intensity Scale-Adult Version™ (SIS-A)™

Description of the Pilot

State of Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) continues to work toward refining person-centered planning and developing a service delivery system based on support and access to what people identify is most important to them. As part of this effort, ADSD is piloting the use of the Supports Intensity Scale-Adult Version™ (SIS-A)™ as a tool to assess support needs and aid in a meaningful planning process. Several intake specialists who work within ADSD/Developmental Services and received training on the SIS-A will be interviewing approximately 50 adults and their supporters through the regional centers. Additionally, there will be an opportunity through Community Meetings and other contacts to learn more about the SIS-A and how it may benefit service delivery. Information from this pilot will assist ADSD in examining the usefulness of the SIS-A within our developmental disability service delivery system as a tool in support planning.

If you are interested in learning more about Nevada's Pilot of the SIS-A or participating in the pilot, information can be found on the ADSD website (www.adsd.nv.gov) or you can contact any of the following ADSD representatives:

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Frequently asked Questions

- 1. What is the SIS-A?** The SIS-A is a tool designed to measure the relative intensity of support that each person with intellectual and developmental disabilities (e.g., cognitive/intellectual disabilities, autism, and cerebral palsy) needs to fully participate in community life. The SIS-A is intended to be used in conjunction with person-centered planning processes to assist planning teams in developing individualized support plans that are responsive to the needs and choices of persons with disabilities. The SIS-A is a standardized and norm-referenced assessment tool.

SIS-A measures the individual's support needs in personal, work-related, and social activities in order to identify and describe the types and intensity of the supports an individual requires. SIS-A was designed to be part of person-centered planning processes that help all individuals identify their unique preferences, skills, and life goals.

The supports approach also recognizes that individual needs change over time, and that supports must change as well. They must be developed and delivered in age-appropriate settings, with the understanding that, regardless of intellectual abilities or limitations, people should have the opportunity to engage in activities and life experiences just like any other person.

2. **Who wrote the SIS?** The SIS[®], published in 2004, was developed over a five-year period by a team of experts from the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). In 2015, AAIDD refreshed the SIS to the SIS-A (Supports Intensity Scale-*Adult Version*) to distinguish it from the SIS-C (*Children's version*). SIS-A measures the exact domains and items as the classic SIS. Since 1876, the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities has been providing leadership in the field of developmental disabilities.

3. **Why will the SIS-A be used as part of a pilot project in Nevada?**

The State chose the SIS-A to gather consistent information about people's support needs. Information from the SIS-A, along with other factors will be used to determine support levels as part of person centered planning processes. The pilot project will help inform the usefulness of the SIS-A as part of support plan building.

4. **Why was the SIS-A chosen?** The SIS-A was chosen to be used in the pilot because it is designed specifically for individuals with intellectual and development disabilities and has been used for over a decade in many developmental disability service systems.
 - The SIS-A is principally designed to directly feed into and support the development of person centered plans by measuring the frequency, type, and intensity of support that individuals need in various dimensions of everyday functioning and living.
 - The SIS-A includes a focus on employment related supports.
 - The SIS-A provides an evaluation of significant medical and behavioral conditions.
 - The SIS-A focuses on an individual's current needs. Although historical usage is important information, the SIS-A identifies needs for supports that may not have been used in the past.
 - The SIS-A has been tested nationwide and yields reliable and valid information about individual support needs and, thereby, is a foundation for linking funding for such needs.
 - Agencies can use the results to help plan for staffing, staff training, budgeting, strategic planning, and evaluation. Furthermore, the State can use the results for systems planning and program evaluation.

5. **Who is administering the SIS-A and how were they trained?** AAIDD SIS Trainers will train SIS interviewers who work within Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division/Developmental Services as intake specialists.
6. **Who should be at the SIS-A interview?** The individual receiving services should be present and can act as their own respondent or self-reporter. The trained SIS-A interviewer will make sure that two or more appropriate respondents are included in the SIS-A interview. An appropriate respondent is someone who knows the individual well and has had recent and frequent contact with them. According to AAIDD, a respondent must have known the person for at least three months and have had recent opportunities to observe the person in one or more environments for substantial periods of time (at least several hours per setting). Two or three people who know the individual well and who the individual wants to participate should be present. It is not recommended to have a large number of people present during a SIS-A interview. The individual, the interviewer and a few respondents are essential. For the assessment to be valid, it is required that at least two of the primary respondents must be present throughout the full SIS-A interview.
7. **How long does a SIS-A interview take?** The average amount of time for an interview is approximately 2-2 ½ hours. As this is a standardized assessment, there is a very specific way that the questions are to be asked, which includes the expanded item definitions of each question. In addition, in order to maintain the validity of the assessment, interviewers have to ask all the questions on the assessment, even if the answer appears to be obvious. Each item in the assessment must be described before it is rated, and opportunity for discussion is given during the assessment. It is perfectly okay to ask for a break if an individual or their family member needs one.
8. **How will ADSD select the 50 individuals for the pilot assessment project?** The developmental disability intake specialists will be asking for volunteers to participate. Additionally, some individuals will be asked to participate if they are involved in other state pilot projects.
9. **Can I get a copy of my SIS-A Interview Form?** You can have a copy of the SIS-A summary information and the SIS-A interviewer can go over the results with you.
10. **When an individual uses assistive technology, is the SIS-A administered with the assistive technology in place?** Yes. This applies only to assistive technology that the person already has. For example, if a person has an assistive device (communication device, wheelchair, hearing aid and so on) they would be scored with the device in place.
11. **Is there an intent of implementing the SIS-A for all individuals?** The pilot project will help the State decide if the SIS-A will be used in developmental disability services as part of support planning. It might be used for all individuals or only in certain circumstances.
12. **Where can I get more information about the SIS-A and its use in Nevada?** For more information on the SIS-A, please visit www.aaid.org/sis.