

Residential Treatment Facility Program Information for Caregivers



What are Residential Treatment Facilities?

Residential Treatment Facilities (RTF) are a type of inpatient mental health program for youth with complex mental health needs. They provide all physical, medical and mental health services for youth in their care. They provide treatment on-site, in the home, and in the community. RTFs offer a supervised and structured environment. Youth admitted to an RTF go to a school on or close to the RTF campus.

RTFs are 24 hour/7 days a week programs. There is a ratio of at least one staff to four youth. Youth may have their own bedroom or share with one or two other youth. Each RTF program has its own unique admission criteria.

How do RTFs help?

The RTFs reduce outside stressors a youth experiences so they can focus on getting better. A variety of trained staff work with the youth daily. The program offers youth and families space and support to practice skills so that they can better handle challenges.

RTF staff meet with caregivers to work on a family-centered plan of care. Family therapy helps strengthen their relationships. As the youth makes progress, they will spend more time at home. RTF staff can work with the youth and their family in the home during this time.

What services does an RTF provide?

Clinical Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification of strengths• Identification of unmet needs• 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

Is my youth eligible for RTF?

RTFs are a voluntary program that serve youth under the age of 18 (or in some cases, up to the age of 21.) They are most appropriate for youth with severe mental health symptoms. The youth's provider must agree that they have a Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED). SED means the youth's mental health symptoms are keeping them from functioning in their daily life. The youth must need active treatment by a psychiatrist and 24/7 care.

How is an RTF paid for?

RTF services are only covered by New York State Medicaid. OMH helps to apply for this coverage when a youth is accepted for admission to an RTF.

Please note admission to an RTF may impact a youth's Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security survivor benefits or other assets in their name. The RTF will speak with families about any costs of treatment that are not covered.

How do I access an RTF?

You apply for RTF through your local Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPOA). You can find your local C-SPOA at this [website](#). Choose your county from the map and it will bring you to a page with the name and contact information for your county's C-SPOA. An RTF application requires a packet with several evaluations from professionals.

The C-SPOA will send the completed application to OMH. OMH decides eligibility for RTF services. If the youth is eligible for this level of care, their application will be sent to the program(s). RTFs then decide if their program can meet the youth's mental health needs.

Where can I get more information?

Contact your local department of mental health or C-SPOA. The C-SPOA contact list can be found [here](#).