Maine Children's Behavioral Health Services

The Single Assessment: A Guide for Families

A practical guide for families and youth in Maine



Department of Health and Human Services

Welcome

This guide helps families and youth understand the Single Assessment, which determines eligibility for certain medium- and high-intensity behavioral health services. It explains how to navigate the assessment and referral process, what to expect along the way, what the results mean, and what happens next.

This guide explains:

- What the Single Assessment is and when it is needed
- What to expect before, during, and after the assessment
- What the assessment results mean
- How the results affect access to medium- and high-intensity behavioral health services
- What happens next and where to get help



Understanding the Single Assessment

What is the Single Assessment?

The Single Assessment helps determine whether a child or youth under age 21 who is eligible for MaineCare needs medium- or high-intensity behavioral health services and **which services may be appropriate.**

As part of the Single Assessment, a licensed clinician:

- Assesses the youth's current and past behavioral health needs and services.
- Talks with the youth and family and, when possible, gathers information from current or former providers, educators, and other supports
- Uses a standardized level-of-care tool [1]

The results help the Child and Family Team understand the youth's needs and plan for appropriate services and supports.



When might a youth need a Single Assessment?

A Single Assessment may be appropriate when:

- A youth's behaviors suggest they may need medium- or high-intensity behavioral health services.
- The youth struggles to function at home, at school, and in the community.
- Behaviors are severe or getting worse, suggesting the youth may need intensive services—even if lower-intensity services have not yet been tried.
- There is a risk that the youth may need care outside the home.
- The youth may need multiple services or intensive Care Coordination.
- Involvement with the juvenile justice system is part of a broader pattern of behavioral health needs over time.

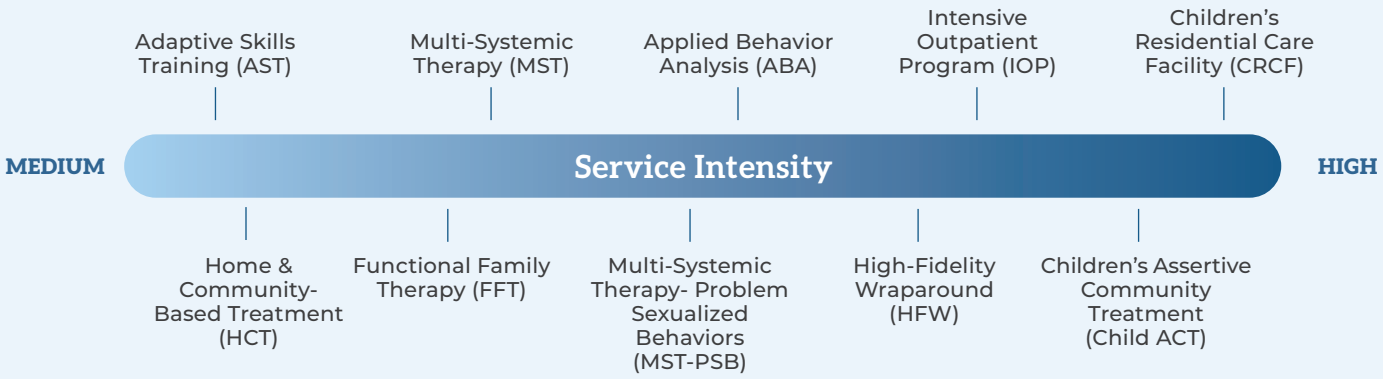
A Single Assessment is not needed when a youth's needs can be met through lower-intensity services, such as outpatient therapy, medication management, or Care Coordination.

1. Level-of-care tools are based on age: ECSII (birth–5), CALOCUS-CASII (ages 6–17), and LOCUS (ages 18–21).

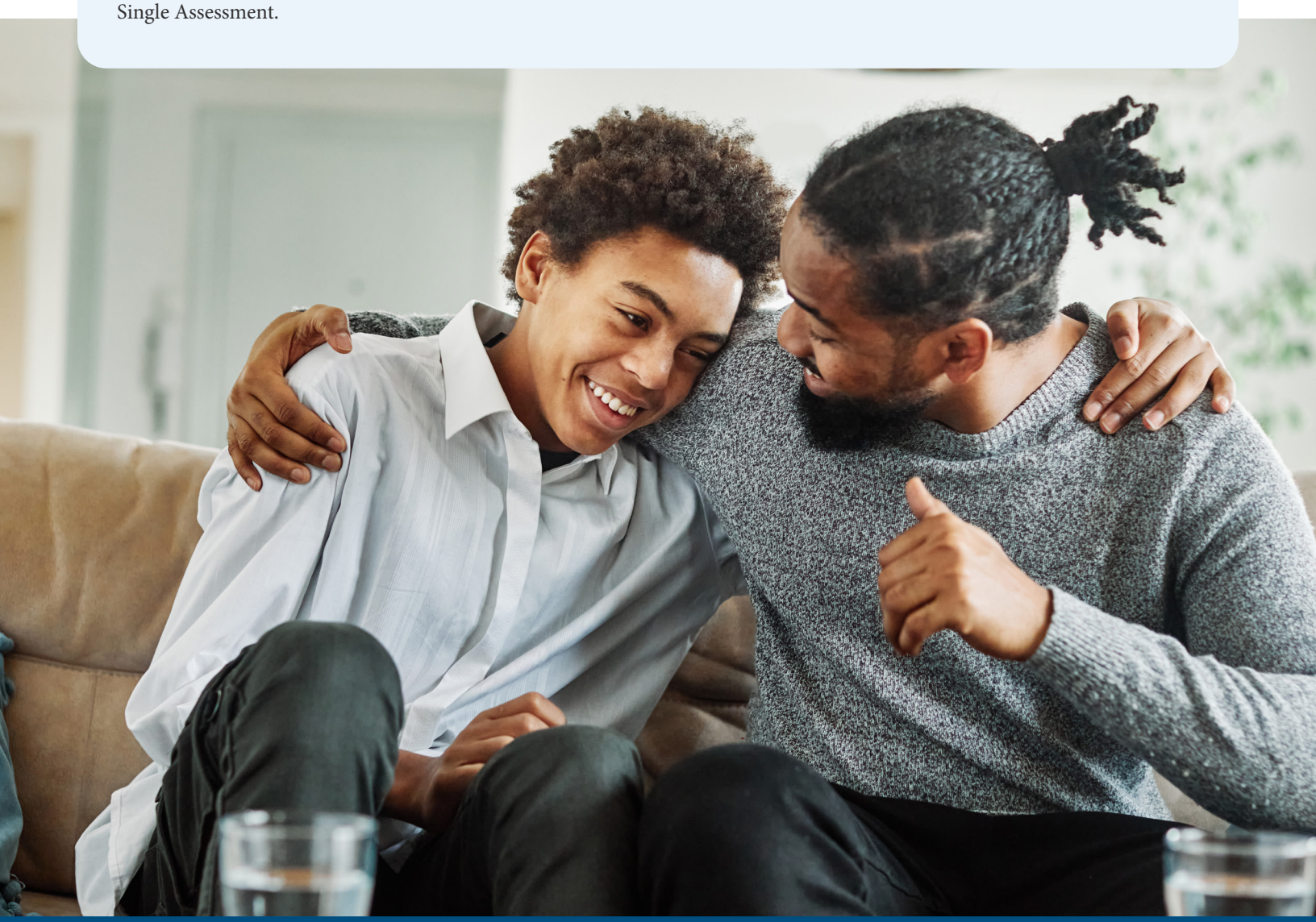
Which services require a Single Assessment?

A Single Assessment is required to determine eligibility for certain medium- and high-intensity children's behavioral health services, as shown below.

Children's Behavioral Health
Medium- to High-Intensity Behavioral Health Services



A Single Assessment is not required for all behavioral health services. Behavioral Health Care Coordination (BHH), Targeted Case Management (TCM), routine outpatient services, and other lower-intensity behavioral health services do not require a Single Assessment.



Who's Who? Several people and organizations may be involved in the Single Assessment process. Here's a quick guide to who they are and what they do.

A Team That Works Together

Many people and organizations may be involved in the Single Assessment process. They each have a role, but youth and families are at the center.



Care Coordinator

May submit the request for the Single Assessment, participates when possible, and works with you to understand the results, plan next steps, and make referrals.

Acentra Health



Schedules the assessment and read-out meeting, conducts the Single Assessment, and provides the results to the family. If your child does not have a Care Coordinator, Acentra can submit referrals for community services during the read-out meeting.



Providers and Other Supports



When appropriate, the clinician may gather information from your child's providers, educators, and other professionals who know your child.

Youth and Families

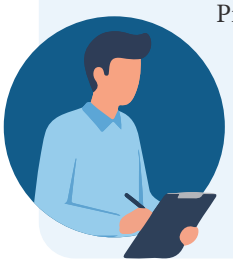
You and your family are at the center of the process. You share information, ask questions, and help decide what services and supports are the best fit for your youth.

Children's Behavioral Health Services (CBHS)

Part of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, CBHS helps families understand and navigate the children's behavioral health system, including the Single Assessment process.

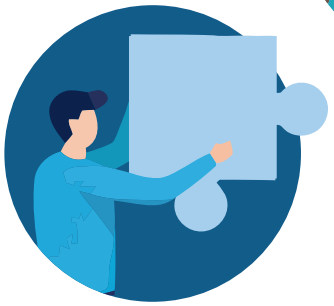


Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)



Provides health and social services to Maine's children, families, and adults. Both the Office of MaineCare Services (OMS) and Children's Behavioral Health Services (CBHS) are part of DHHS.





Office of MaineCare Services (OMS)

Administers MaineCare, Maine's Medicaid program, and is responsible for determining eligibility for MaineCare-covered services. OMS contracts with Acentra Health to conduct Single Assessments and determine eligibility for certain children's behavioral health services.

MaineCare

The Single Assessment Process

A Step-by-Step Guide

Request | Schedule | Prepare | Assessment | Results | Plan Services

Step 1: Request a Single Assessment

If your child has a Care Coordinator: Your Care Coordinator should submit the request for the Single Assessment and will know how to do so.

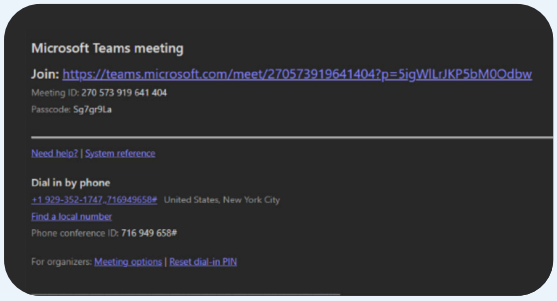
If your child does not have a Care Coordinator: Check if another provider or professional involved with your child has suggested that your child may need a medium- or high-intensity behavioral health service, including an out-of-home placement, such as a Children's Residential Care Facility (CRCF). If so, they can request a Single Assessment for your child.

If you are a parent or legal guardian and believe your child may need a medium- or high-intensity behavioral health service, but you are not sure who should submit the request, complete the Single Assessment Help Request Form and Children's Behavioral Health Services (CBHS) will help.

Step 2: Schedule the Single Assessment

After a request is submitted, Acentra Health will contact you within two business days to schedule two virtual meetings:

- **Single Assessment meeting:** This meeting lasts approximately 90 minutes.
- **Read-out meeting:** This 30-minute meeting is scheduled for two to three business days after the Single Assessment. During the read-out meeting, Acentra will review the assessment results with you and answer any questions you may have.



You do not need to wait for Acentra to contact you. You can also call Acentra at 1-866-521-0027, Option 4, to schedule your Single Assessment.

Look for your meeting invitation. You will receive an email with a Microsoft Teams invitation for your Single Assessment. The appointment will be titled **"Single Assessment – [Assessor Name] [Case ID#] [Child's Initials]"** (for example, Single Assessment – Jane Doe 12345678 GP). The invitation will include a link to join the meeting and an option to dial in by phone.

Your invitation to the meeting will look similar to the image above. Click the "Join" link to join online. If you can't use video, dial in by phone.

TIP: You can invite others to join in your child's Single Assessment. Whenever possible, try to include your child's Care Coordinator. You may also invite providers, school staff, family members, or others who know your child well. When scheduling the assessment, provide Acentra with their email addresses so they can receive a meeting invitation.

Step 3: Prepare for the Single Assessment

- **Prepare to attend.** At least one parent or guardian must be there for the assessment to happen.
- **Think about the past six months.** Consider your child's behaviors, needs, strengths, significant events or changes, and how they have been doing at home, at school, and in the community.
- **Be prepared to talk about services and supports.** Think about the behavioral health services and supports your child currently receives or has received in the past, what has worked well, and what additional support may be helpful.
- **Include your child in the assessment when you can.** Help them take part so they can share their views.
- **Make sure you can join the virtual meeting.** If you need help with internet access, technology, or other arrangements, let Acentra know when they contact you to schedule. If you have trouble connecting on the day of the assessment, email SAReferral@acentra.com for assistance or use the **"Dial In"** option in your meeting invitation. If you don't join within 5–10 minutes of the start time, your assessor will call you at the phone number we have on file.



Youth Voice Matters

When developmentally appropriate, youth should have the opportunity to participate in the Single Assessment and share their own strengths, needs, experiences, preferences, and goals. Their perspective is an important part of understanding what they need and which services and supports may be a good fit.

Step 4: Participate in the Single Assessment

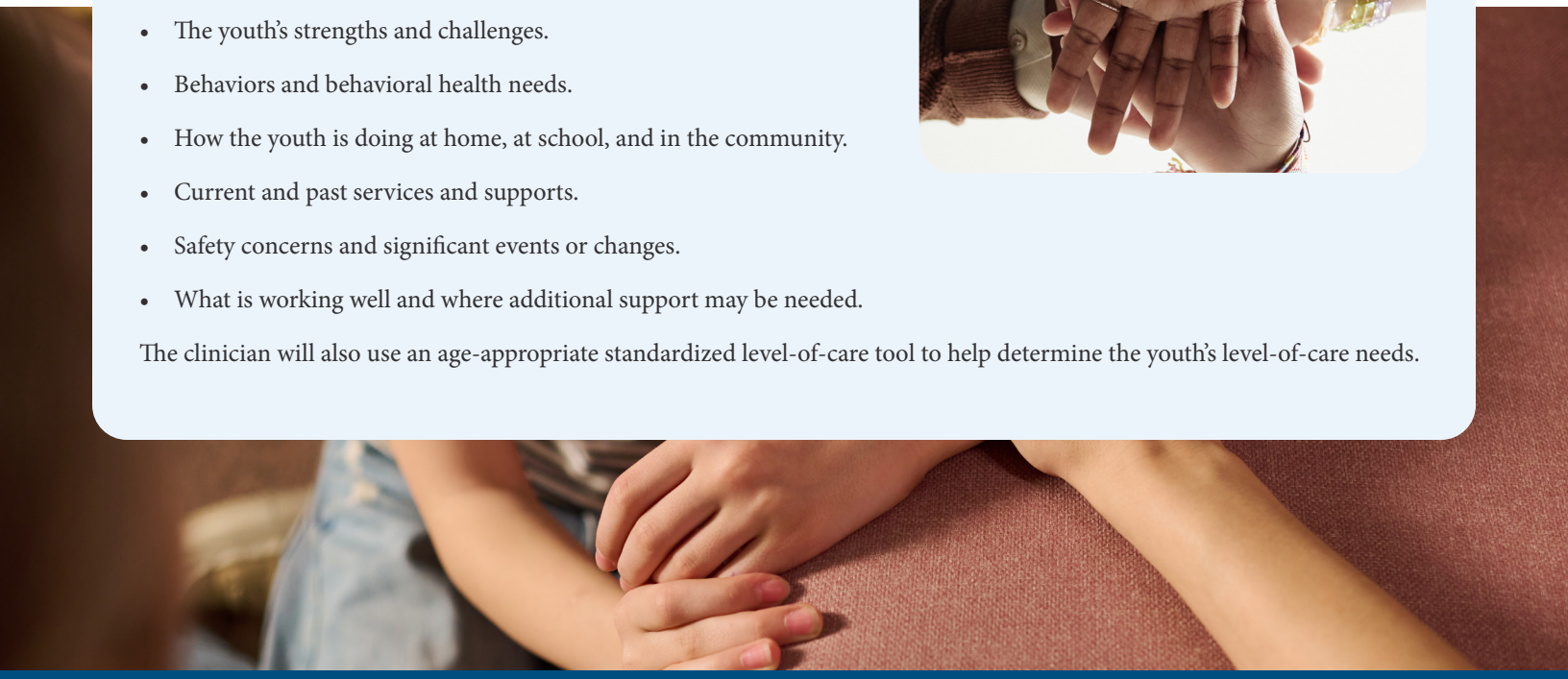


During the approximately 90-minute assessment, a licensed clinician from Acentra Health will guide a conversation about the youth's strengths, behavioral health needs, experiences, and services and supports.

The clinician will ask about:

- The youth's strengths and challenges.
- Behaviors and behavioral health needs.
- How the youth is doing at home, at school, and in the community.
- Current and past services and supports.
- Safety concerns and significant events or changes.
- What is working well and where additional support may be needed.

The clinician will also use an age-appropriate standardized level-of-care tool to help determine the youth's level-of-care needs.



Step 5: Understand the Single Assessment Results

Within one business day after the assessment meeting, Acentra will email you a written summary of your child's Single Assessment results.

The Single Assessment determines your child's level-of-care need based on the information gathered during the assessment. It then considers which services at that level of care are clinically appropriate for your child based on their individual strengths, needs, and circumstances.

Your child's results will show which services are clinically recommended, which other services your child is eligible to receive, and any services for which your child does not meet the eligibility requirements.

Result	What this means
Clinically Recommended	Your child meets the eligibility requirements for the service, and the service was identified as an appropriate clinical fit based on your child's individual strengths, needs, and circumstances.
Eligible	Your child meets the eligibility requirements for the service, but another service was identified as clinically recommended based on the assessment. An eligible service may still be an appropriate option, including when the clinically recommended service is not available.
Not Eligible	Your child does not meet the eligibility requirements for the service.
Clinically Recommended – Current Vineland Needed	AST or ABA has been identified as clinically appropriate for your child, but a current Vineland assessment is needed to determine whether your child meets the additional eligibility requirements.
Level of Care (LOC) Threshold Met	Your child has a Level of Care (LOC) score of 5 and meets the clinical threshold for Children's Residential Care Facility (CRCF) services. Additional information is required before a decision about CRCF eligibility can be made.

Additional Eligibility and Authorization Requirements

Some services have additional eligibility or authorization requirements beyond the level of care determined by the Single Assessment. These include Adaptive Skills Training (AST), Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), and Children's Residential Care Facilities (CRCF).

- **AST and ABA:** These services require a Vineland assessment completed within the past 12 months. If your child needs a current Vineland assessment, Acentra can help schedule one. The assessment typically takes 60–70 minutes.
- **Children's Residential Care Facilities (CRCF):** A Level of Care (LOC) score of 5 on the Single Assessment is the first step toward accessing CRCF services but does not guarantee approval. If you wish to pursue CRCF services for your child, your Care Coordinator must submit a separate CRCF application to determine eligibility and clinical appropriateness. If approved, your Care Coordinator will then submit referrals to CRCF providers.

Your Read-Out Meeting

During the 30-minute Read-Out meeting, an Acentra clinician will review your child's Single Assessment results, explain the recommendations, and answer any questions you or your child may have.

If you disagree with the Single Assessment results, you have the right to appeal. See Appeal Rights for more information.



Step 6: Choose Services and Plan Next Steps

After you receive the Single Assessment results, the next step is to decide which services and supports make the most sense for your child and family's current needs. When appropriate, include your child in these conversations so their preferences and goals are part of decisions about their services and supports.

If your child has a Care Coordinator: Your Care Coordinator will review the Single Assessment results with you and discuss which services you would like to pursue. They will then submit referrals to the appropriate service providers.

If your child does not have a Care Coordinator: During the Read-Out meeting, the Acentra clinician will review the results with you, answer your questions, and discuss the services available to your child. If you decide to pursue a service, Acentra can submit a referral to a community-based service provider on your child's behalf.

If you decide later that you would like to pursue a service, you can call Acentra Member Services at 1-866-521-0027, Option 1 for help with a referral.

Tell Us About Your Experience

At the bottom of your Single Assessment results, you will find a link to a short survey. We encourage you to take a few minutes to tell us about your experience. Your feedback helps us understand what is working well and how we can continue to improve the Single Assessment process for youth and families.

What to Expect After a Referral

A referral is the first step in connecting with a service provider and does not guarantee that services will begin right away. After getting the referral, the provider might reach out. They'll want to know more about your child and talk about the service. In some cases, a provider may have a waitlist, may not have availability in your area, or may determine after talking with you that the service is not the right fit for your child.



Appeal Rights

If you disagree with your child's Single Assessment results, you have options.

Option 1: Submit New Information

If there is new or additional information that may affect your child's Single Assessment results, ask your child's provider to send the information to SAReferral@acentra.com and request that Acentra review the results again. The provider should include your child's MaineCare ID so Acentra can identify the correct assessment.

If you do not have a provider who can submit the information, contact Acentra at 1-866-521-0027, Option 1 for assistance.

Option 2: Request an Appeal Hearing

You have the right to request an appeal hearing if you disagree with the Single Assessment decision.

You must request an appeal **within 60 calendar days of the date of your Single Assessment summary.**

Your Single Assessment summary includes instructions for requesting an appeal, including current phone and mailing information.

The appeal process may take up to **90 calendar days**. A hearing officer from the DHHS Division of Administrative Hearings will conduct the hearing.

Legal Help

If you would like legal help with your appeal, you may contact:



Pine Tree Legal Assistance

- **Website:** www.ptla.org
- **Phone:** (207) 942-8322, then press "2" for additional languages
  - **Pulse 1 para español. (1 for Spanish)** · Contacte a Pine Tree Legal Assistance
  - **(2 for Arabic)** للغة العربية اضغط الرقم اثنان Pine Tree الاتصال بمكتب
  - **Haddii aad rabto Af Somali riix 3. (3 for Somali)** Kala xiriir Pine Tree Legal Assistance
  - **Pressione 4 para Português. (4 for Portuguese)** Fale com a Pine Tree Legal Assistance
  - **Fina 5 pona lingala. (5 for Lingala)** Solola na lisungi ya mibéko ya Pine Tree
  - **Appuyez sur 6 pour le français. (6 for French)** Contactez Pine Tree Legal Assistance
  - **Peze 7 pou Kreyòl Ayisyen. (7 for Haitian Kreyòl)** Kontakte Pine Tree Legal Assistance (Asistans Jiridik Pine Tree)

Disability Rights Maine

- **Website:** drme.org
- **Phone:** (207) 626-2774 or (800) 452-1948
- **Email:** advocate@drme.org
- **Online Help Request Form:** drme.org/get-in-touch
- **Online Intake Form:** drme.org/get-in-touch/request-help

Learn More About the Single Assessment

For additional information and answers to frequently asked questions about the Single Assessment, visit MaineCBHS.org.

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