# Medicaid Innovation Pathway: How 1115 Waivers Work

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Section 1115 waivers allow states and territories to test Medicaid innovations that advance program goals by waiving certain federal requirements, but proposals must be budget neutral and undergo extensive federal review, public comment, and negotiation with CMS. The National Association of Medicaid Directors notes that the process is lengthy and complex, often taking up to five years from initial policy development to implementation, requiring significant planning, stakeholder engagement, evaluation, and ongoing oversight.

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