A GUIDE FOR SELF-DIRECTING NOW & COMP WAIVER SERVICES

A Guide to Self-Directing Services for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and their Families and Allies

Commissioned by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

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MAKING THE DECISION TO SELF-DIRECT

What are the advantages of self directing services?

* Personally controlled planning process with support from family and friends
* Individualized budgeting in regards not only to what you buy, but also for how much
* Choice of where and when supports are provided
* Choice and direct of support workers
* Control of how budgeted funds are spent for approved services and goods, meaning you negotiate the pay rate within allowable limits

What are the responsibilities of self directing services?

- Develop your own job description for the positions you want to fill
- Recruit your own staff
- Interview people to see who you want to hire
- Check references and make sure background checks are done
- Train staff
- Set up the schedule for when each staff person will work
- Have a back-up plan for absent support workers
- Give feedback to staff on how well they are doing their job
- Make sure time sheets are completed...sign off for accuracy
- Keep up with your budget….how much you are spending for services
- Participate in individual service plan meeting (ISP)
- Report to support coordinator how things are going with your services
- Making sure reporting and documenting are done
- Fire staff if you are dissatisfied with their work

If you have made the decision to self-direct, this guide and workbook will give you information and tools to do it successfully.

ROLES OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

Intake and Evaluation Team Members

- Inform individual and/or family/representative at time of waiver services application about the self direction option
- Notifies support coordinator of interest of individual or family/representative in the self directing option
- Conducts person-centered assessments that support self direction
- Writes assessment reports that support self direction
- Is knowledgeable of community resources

Individual and/or Family/Representative

- Understand the budget and determine how many hours of service you can afford
- Develop a job description and identify qualities you are looking for in a support worker
- Recruit, screen, and interview possible workers
- Check references and make hiring decisions. Provide them the required information to complete for the Financial Support Services Provider
- Train on specific needs of the person being supported
- Determine work schedule of support workers
- Develop open communication with support workers
- Provide positive / negative feedback on job performance
- Create a positive work environment
- Set boundaries and expectations
- Develop a back-up plan for when support workers are absent
- Sign off on time sheets and submit them for payment
- Keep documentation of services as used, including notes on ISP goals.
- Review budget reports and stay within your budget

Regional Office Staff

- Shares with the family the amount of money to be assigned to the individual's budget
- Authorizes the services for delivery and payment
- Approves the Individual Service Plan

ROLES OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

Support Coordinator

- Works with and on behalf of the Individual
- Offers information and technical assistance in planning and organizing resources
- Completes the Supports Intensity Scale with key people who know the individual well
- Requests an increase in the budget allotment if needed.
- Develops the Budget along with the individual and family/representative
- Develops the Individual Service Plan in collaboration with the team
- Makes sure the Individual Service Plan reflects the self directed services and appropriate goals and objectives
- Links individual to technical assistance of the Financial Support Services
- Assists with the evaluation of services
- Monitors the health and safety of the individual

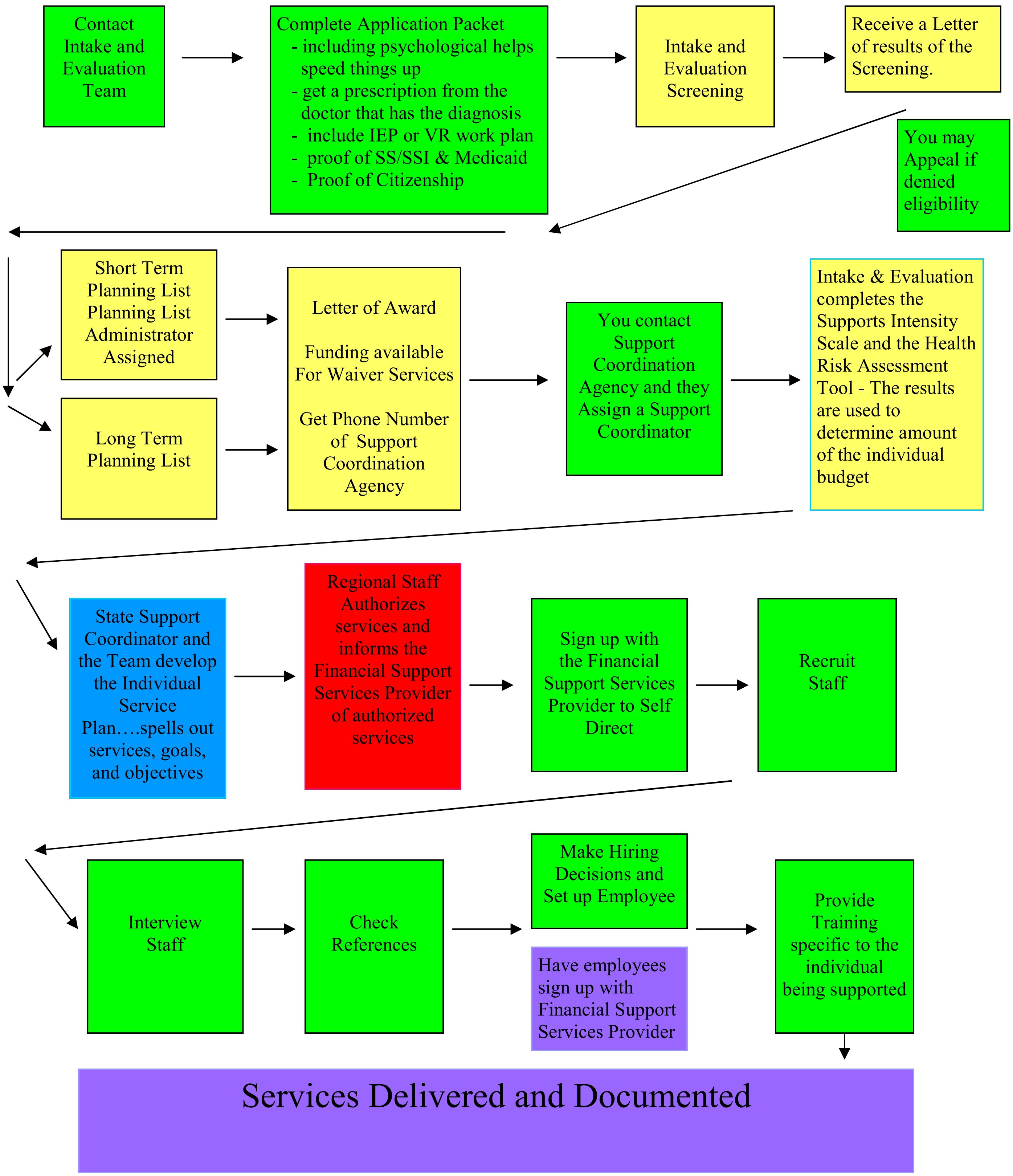
Financial Support Services Provider

- Conducts criminal background checks on prospective support workers
- Performs payroll responsibilities
- Withholds taxes in compliance with state and federal laws
- Writes checks for approved goods and services on behalf of the individual
- Tracks and monitors individual budget expenditures
- Provides financial reports to the individual or family/representative and funding agency
- Offers training and technical assistance on financial support services

Support Worker

- Completes employment application packet for the individual to submit to the Financial Support Services Provider
- Agrees to criminal records check prior to employment
- Possesses current CPR and basic first aid certification
- Completes training required by the individual or family/representative
- Performs duties taking direction from the individual or family/representative
- Demonstrates good work habits and pays attention to the individual’s needs, wants, and preferences
- Completes time sheets accurately
- Provides documentation of services provided.

FLOW CHART OF THE PROCESS



ASSESSING NEED AND ALLOCATING FUNDS

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities bases the amount of funding for services for a person on his or her support needs. The Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) is a tool that measures the areas of support needed by a person with developmental disabilities. The SIS is one tool that is being used to determine the amount of funding (allocation) a person receives. Currently, the SIS cannot be used with children 15 years or younger. Other assessment findings are used at this time for these children to determine their amount of funding.

<u>SUPPORTS INTENSITY SCALE (SIS)</u>

Areas of Need for Support Addressed

1. Home Living
2. Community Living
3. Life-long Learning
4. Employment
5. Health and Safety
6. Social Activities

Additional Areas

1. Need for Protection and Advocacy
2. 15 Medical Needs
3. 13 Behavioral Needs

The Supports Intensity Scale is completed by interviewing a number of people who know the individual well. The support coordinator is trained to ask the questions in a standard way.

<u>You want the Supports Intensity Scale answers to reflect the person's support needs as accurately as possible</u>.

TIP

Sometimes family members are so used to providing support that they do it automatically and may not even think of it. When asked about the different life activities, think about how well the person could do the activity if they were doing it totally by themselves.

ASSESSING NEED AND ALLOCATING FUNDS

HEALTH RISK SCREENING TOOL (HRST)

The Health Risk Screening Tool is used to make sure there is a clear understanding of the individual's medical issues and support needs. The initial assessment gives a baseline of the person's health status. The person receives a health risk score that can range from 1-6 and these scores reflect whether the person needs low, enhanced, or high levels of supports to address their medical / health issues.

The Intake and Evaluation Team is responsible for completing the Health Risk Screening Tool for individuals who are self-directing. This instrument should be updated yearly or whenever there is a change in the person's health status. It is important to make sure that the person who is most familiar with the person's medical care be involved in providing the information. Be as thorough as possible to make sure the Health Risk Screen Tool results reflect the individual's health status.

BUDGET ALLOCATION

A feature of the new waivers is that each person has an individual budget. The amount that is allocated for the individual's services is determined by using a formula that takes into account the results of both the Supports Intensity Scale and the Health Risk Screening Tool. The formula also reflects how much has been spent on services for the person in previous years.

There are rates and limits that have been approved by Medicaid. These caps must be respected as you work to determine how to best spend the money to meet the individual's needs. By choosing to self-direct services, the person or their family/representative have more control in deciding what services that they want to purchase.

The Support Coordinator is the person who will work with the individual and family / representative to complete the budget. The forms are computerized and the support coordinator will enter the information.

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE PLANS, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Individual Service Plan should include information that will drive how services are designed and delivered. Participants have the flexibility to develop their individualized service and support plans, within their established individual budgets, and direct the service and supports identified in their plans.

One way to think about how to determine appropriate goals and objectives is to look at the different domains of the Supports Intensity Scale and develop goals in the areas where support is needed. (see page 8) You may also want to think about the individual's areas of interests so that you build on their strengths.

The goals and objectives for someone who is self directing should represent the intended supports of the year. Goals describe what the person wants to gain from services and objectives describe the activities that will be engaged in during services. Objectives can specify the activity, place, and frequency. It can cover the amount of time and time of day that the objective will be worked on. By being specific, it helps direct the work of the support staff.

The goals and objectives need to be well defined, measurable, and be able to be tracked. Be clear so that it is easy to be consistent across support staff.

It is important to keep a copy of the Individual Service Plan. Having a copy of the ISP with the progress notes is a good idea. The progress notes will need to reflect how the objective is being worked on and what progress is being made.

The goals and objectives should reflect the amount of time that services are being received. If a person is receiving 6 hours of services, then there should be several goals that are being worked on during that time period. For example if you only had one objective (to brush teeth) during that 6 hour period, it would not justify the need for 6 hours of service.

TIP

Changes to the ISP can be done through an addendum at any time. Just ask your Support Coordinator.

INDIVIDUAL BUDGETS

It is important that you understand what items and services are billable within each service from Medicaid's perspective.

The budget is developed annually and runs from birthday to birthday. The Support Coordinator works with the family to develop the budget and to enter it into the computer. The budget is forwarded to the Regional Office

Families need to keep up with their financial statements so that they are clear with what has been billed per service. This will help determine whether they need to adjust their spending accordingly. Support Coordinators do not have access to financial statements.

As an employer, you need to reconcile your financial statements and keep up with your expenditures, units of service, and balance. You will receive a financial statement after each pay period. You must also remember that federal and state taxes are also taken out of your budget above and beyond the employee's hourly wage. See table on page 12.

TIP:

Many families say that it is helpful to call the Financial Support Service for the actual balance prior to planning the next month's services.

UNDERSTANDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

The Financial Support Services Provider may also be called a fiscal agent or a fiscal intermediary. The role of the financial support services provider is to write vendor and payroll checks and pay withholdings to state and federal agencies. The Financial Support Services Provider has the provider number to draw down the Medicaid Waiver funds for an individual who is self directing their services.

The family signs an Internal Revenue Service form #2678 to become a provider. The Financial Support Services Provider will submit file form SS-4 on your behalf to obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN#). You authorize the Financial Support Services Provider to act as your agent for unemployment and withholding tax purposes.

The Financial Support Services Provider tracks your spending and reports back to you each pay period so that you know the status of your budget.

It is important to remember that more comes out of your budget than just the employee's hourly rate of pay. As an employer by law, you have to additionally pay 1/2 of your employee's Social Security and Medicare payment as well as Federal and State Unemployment taxes. There are also costs for worker's compensation The Financial Support Services Provider will calculate these withholdings for you.

The NOW and COMP Waivers have maximum rates and units that are allowable by Federal Medicaid . The Financial Support Services Provider will not let you exceed the maximum rate nor maximum units. (see chart on page 13)

It costs you more to employ someone than just their wages. As an employer, by law, you have to additionally pay 1/2 of your employee's Social Security and Medicare payment, as well as, Federal and State Unemployment taxes. The amount you pay for each of these is a percentage of payroll.

Payment	Percentage
Social Security	6.2%
Medicare	1.45%
Federal Unemployment	.80%
State Unemployment	2.70%
Worker's Compensation	10.0%

SERVICE CODES, RATES, AND LIMITS

Services /Abbreviations for Self Directed Services	Maximum Rate per unit Rates and Units in	Maximum # of Units per year red are what has	Length of billable Unit been proposed as	Annualized Max spent annually amendments
Adult PT /PTE or PTT	Varies by Procedure	Varies by Procedure	NA	$1,800.00
Adult OT/OTE,OTT,OTS	Varies by Procedure	Varies by Procedure	NA	$1,800.00
Adult Speech /SLE,SLT,SGD	Varies by Procedure	Varies by Procedure	NA	$1,800.00
Behavior Support Consultation/ BSC	$23.56	104	15 minutes	$2,450.24
Community Access/CAG (group) **CAI (Individual)**	$3.04 group $7.26 individual	5760 1440	15 minutes 15 minutes	$17,510.40 $10,454.40
Community Guide/CGS	$8.93	224	15 minutes	$2000.32
Community Living /CLH (hourly) **CLD (daily)**	$3.80 unit ($4.93) $138.09 daily	6032 NOW (4650) 11680 COMP (9002)	15 minutes	$22,921.60-44,384 $50,402.85 COMP
Environmental Accessibility / EAA	NA	NA	NA	$10,400.00 Lifetime Maximum
Financial Support Services	$75.00	12	month	$900.00
Individual Directed Goods & Services/ GNS	$1,500.00	20	NA	$1,500.00
Natural Support Training /NST	$20.78	86	15 minutes	$1,787.08
Prevocational	$304	5760	15 minutes	$17,510.40
Respite / RSH (hourly) **RSO (overnight)**	$3.00 ($4.21) $96.00	1248 (889) 13 (39)	15 minutes daily	$3744.00
Medical Supplies / SMS	$1,734.48 NOW $1,868.16 COMP	NA	NA	$1,734.48 $1,868.16
Medical Equipment /SME	$5,200.00	NA	NA	$5,200.00 $13,474.76 lifetime
Support Coordination	$149.88	12	month	$1,798.56*
Supported Employment SEG (group) **SEI (individual)**	$1.80 group $7.26 individual	3840 group 1440 individual	15 minutes 15 minutes	$6,912.00 $10,454.40
Transportation / TET	$13.78	203	Per trip	$2,797.34
Transportation Commercial carrier / TCC	NA	203	Multi pass	$2,797.34
Vehicle Adaptation / VAS	$6240.00	NA	NA	$6240.00 lifetime
Community Residential Alternative (not a service under self direction)	$155.56	324	day	$50,401.44
*** Support Coordination**	It is not taken out of	participant’s budget.		

RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PROCESS

Creating A Job Description

A job description gives the potential employee clear ideas about what is required. After the person is hired, a job description can serve as a checklist of responsibilities for the job. It is important to remember that these are Medicaid funded services and are not babysitting.

You may choose to use different titles for the jobs that you are developing. Some examples might include: Community Assistant, Employment Coach, Community Bridge Builder, Behavioral Tech, Direct Support Professional, Respite Provider, or Behavior Management Tech. Choose a job title that best describes the role that the person will be playing. (See the workbook for a job description outline and sample job description.)

Recruitment

Before you begin your search for an employee, identify your needs and the range of possible payment arrangements. These will be questions that potential employees will ask. Be creative about where and how you advertise in order to find people to work for you that suite you. (See the Workbook for a sample ad and sample flyer)

Some possible places to post your job openings might be in local small newspapers, in local Community Colleges, or the Department of Labor. It can also be very helpful to use word of mouth and to talk with others. If you find someone who is promising, you might try their "friend pool" to see if they know anyone else who might be interested. If you have a college or technical school in your area, it could be profitable to go and meet with some of the departments (nursing, psychology, or education) to try to recruit.

The website www.care.com might be helpful. It costs $20 to register, but they provide you with a list of potential employees whom they have screened. There are employee profiles and you are able to have some initial conversations through email. You can also post a want ad on the site.

Screening

Telephone screening will save time for you and the potential new hire. Give them a brief description of the job duties. Find out what hours the person can work and the rate of pay that they expect. Find out if the person has transportation. If the person wants more than you can pay or can't work the hours you need, then you will not need to interview them. Do not give your home address during the telephone screening and do the first interview in a public place.

Tip:
There are free Sexual Offender Record Checks available on-line.
Go to www.georgia-sex-offenders.com

JOB APPLICATION AND INTERVIEWS

Job Application

Have the person complete a job application. (See Workbook for a sample) You will want to put their application in their employee file if they are hired. It will also give you an example of their writing skills.

Interviews

Background checks need to be done. You can request the person to bring it with them to their interview. They can obtain it from the local sheriff's department. The Financial Support Services Provider will pay for five background checks, but it might lengthen the time frame. They also need to bring a copy of their driver's license, verification of their car insurance and a copy of their social security card. You can ask them to bring copies of their school transcript (high school or college). Ask them to bring contact information for three references. (See Workbook for sample reference form and sample interview questions)

Interviews Do's	Interview Don'ts
Do actively listen for key points and how they feel about things	Don't simply review what their resume says. Have a list of questions and ask each of them
Do allow the applicant to do the majority of the talking	Don't show disagreement or disapproval if you don't agree with something the applicant says
Do maintain eye contact	Don't stop the interview if the person says something you don't like. Finish all the questions so the hiring process is fair
Do ask open ended questions	Don't ask questions about their religion, sexual orientation, or their age. You can't discriminate on any of these grounds.
Do allow the applicant to finish answering a question before you decide how you feel about their response	Don't ask about marital status, housing situation, military status, national origin or ethnic background.
Do let them know what the job expectations are	
Do ask them if they have any questions about the job description	

After the interview, make notes about your impressions, likes and dislikes about each person you interview. It is better not to hire someone "on the spot". You need to go over their application and check their references before making a decision.

It is important that you have some criteria for selection. Know what characteristics you are looking for in an employee. Making the right match of the person to the job is key. (See Workbook for a list of characteristics/qualities that you might want to choose from)

TIP:

During the interview, inform the applicant that you are an **EMPLOYER AT WILL**. This means that they do not have a contract that guarantees them a job. They can quit for a good reason, a bad reason, or no reason at all. Likewise, you can lay them off or let them go for no reason at all. An employment relationship exists between you and the employee only as long as you both want it to.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN EMPLOYER

* Acquire a payroll service and complete employer paperwork. For the Waiver, this would be a Financial Support Services Provider.

* Interview, Hire, and Supervise

* Non Discrimination—It is against the law to discriminate. You are prohibited from discrimination practices in hiring, pay, training, or discharge. The protected classes are race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, and disability

* Track Employees Hours—sign off on timesheets and validate their accuracy.

* Create Records

  Employee Files (See Workbook for sample checklist)
  ….completed job application
  ….resume
  ….performance evaluations
  ….any disciplinary actions
  ….reference checks

  Payroll and Billing Statements
  ….maintain billing reports from the Financial Support Service

* Training
  ….make sure the First Aid and CPR are current each year
  ….determine other training needs specific to the individual

* Set house rules and boundaries for staff (see Workbook for example)

* Set schedules….verify timesheets

* Submit expenditures and monitor budget

* Evaluate job performance, give feedback, and notify of dismissal or raises

* Create a service delivery record for documentation

GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT AND CORRECTION

Giving feedback and praise to an employee can create a better work environment. Here are some tips for giving encouragement or correction to your employees.

TIPS
For Giving Encouragement

* Always be sincere. Don't say something you don't mean.
* Give compliments often for positive work performance.
* Describe the situation or event which you liked.
* Tell what your feeling was when it happened or say that you appreciated it or say thank you.

TIPS
For Giving Correction

* Give the feedback soon after the situation you dislike occurs.
* Discuss only one incident at a time.
* Do not bring up things from the past. Talk about the present.
* Focus on the person's actions, not the person.
* Keep the discussion brief and to the point.
* Don't exaggerate or become emotional.
* Be aware of your tone of voice.
  The way you say things affects the way the person will react.
* State what would make it better next time.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Though all employees do have to meet the qualification requirements for the service they intend to provide, the only training requirements from the state are that the employee has First Aid and CPR. These are usually available through the Red Cross or the American Heart Association. It is up to you as the employer to determine what other training is needed that might be specific to the individual being supported.

You should check with your local social service agencies to see if they are offering any training opportunities that might be beneficial. Your local technical colleges may also offer trainings or certificate programs that will increase the skills of your employees. You might also check with other families to see if there could be some joint training efforts. Training does not always have to be formal. It could include having the person read some materials and sign off that they understand it. There are DVDs and videos on a variety of topics. There are training booklets and internet materials that are easy to access.

The Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities through a contract with Collective Alternatives has developed a 6 month training curriculum for Direct Support Professionals. This certificate program has both classroom and practicum experience. The program is offered in several of the technical colleges around the state and is approved at the state level so that any of the local technical colleges can request it.

It is important that employees understand the importance of confidentiality. They will be spending time in your home. They need to understand that you have a right to privacy and that they should not share information with others. The records maintained in your home are considered confidential records and should be maintained as such.

It is your responsibility to maintain a training record for each staff member. (see Workbook for the sample staff training log) This should be updated and maintained in their employee file. You can give incentives for employees who take the initiative to get additional training. Training time is not billable so the employee does this on their time. It could lead to their getting an increase in salary as they become a more skilled employee. It can also be reflected in their performance reviews. Their job gets easier as they become more skilled. It can help reduce burnout and help with retention of staff over time.

TIP:
The better trained your staff, the better able they are to provide supports and the longer they stay.

If you invest in them, they will invest in you.

SCHEDULES AND TIMESHEETS

The first step is to look at your budget and determine how much you have to work with for the month. You need to have a big picture of the year and decide if there are times of the year when you need more services than others. This will allow you to benefit the most from your services and make sure that you have allocated your resources wisely. You have to stay within your budget, so be careful not to over commit.

The pay periods run from the 1st-15th and the 16th-30/31. The schedule must run from Sunday to Saturday and no one employee is allowed to work over 40 hours / per week. Do not exceed 40 hours when you are scheduling.

An easy way to schedule is to take a monthly calendar and to color code it by the different employees. You should note the name, hours to be worked, and the service that is being provided. The calendar can be developed at a monthly staff meeting. You should set your ground rules about people not switching hours. It may seem like a good way to assure coverage, but it may ultimately end up with unhappy employees and a loss of control over the schedule. Most people want to know who will be working with them and know that they can depend upon their staff. So set your expectations early and you will have more reliable employees.

It is helpful to think about activities that the individual would be interested in participating in and schedule them into the month. You may want to consider which staff would be best suited to support the person for those activities. You may look for employees that have different skills sets and work to their strengths. You want to match the person well to their work.

For consistency, it is wise to total your number of hours of each service category each pay period. This allows you to reconcile your totals with the financial support service's statement.

It is paramount that you complete the timesheet in a legible and accurate manner and that you follow the rules and timeframes for their submission. Your employees pay is dependent upon it being done appropriately. When you submit the timesheets by fax, be sure to note the time, date, and verification of transmission.

TIP:
Employees will not be paid for undocumented hours.
Make sure they are clear about their responsibilities

C O M M U N I C A T I O N

Communication is a key to helping things run smoothly. Creating a communication log can provide an informal way for staff members to share concerns, ideas, and observations with you and each other. This communication notebook should be professional. It can contain notes between staff about their work. It should not be a place to gossip and the contents should be kept confidential. It can be reviewed at staff meetings or used in between so that important information is not lost. It should be kept in a consistent place. Having this means of communication will allow for more continuity across caregivers.

Staff Meetings

Having regular staff meetings is a way to facilitate good communication and is good for team building. It is an opportunity to train, strengthen relationships, and provide clear expectations.

TIPS TO CLEAR COMMUNICATION:

* **Explain any technical words or terms that you use.**
* **Be clear about your expectations. For example, if a worker leaves dishes in the sink and you want them in the dishwasher, you need to tell the person to put them in the dishwasher.**
* **Be pleasant, patient, and fair.**
* **Avoid talking about other support workers when they are not present.**
* **Do not criticize a support person's work with other workers. Instead, address issues with the person directly.**
* **Support workers should not correct each other. If a support worker has a concern, he or she should talk to you directly.**
* **Treat your support workers the same way you would like to be treated.**

EMERGENCY PREPARATION

Emergency planning is a good idea for everyone. Being prepared can help you stay safe and minimize your risks. There are all types of emergencies that need to be taken into consideration: medical emergencies, hospitalizations, fires, power outages, severe weather, or other natural disasters. You must also have back-up plans for absent support workers. There should be a form for documenting incident reports, behavioral and non-behavioral. (See Workbook for an example). Consumers, family members of consumers, support coordinators, or any other persons may initiate reports of critical incidents as needed. In consumer-directed services, the consumer's support coordinator has responsibility for receiving information from the consumer's support system about critical incidents as they occur. The support coordinator then reports all Category I critical incidents to the support coordination agency chief executive officer. Category I Incidents include (1) Death, (2) Allegation of Physical Abuse, (3)Allegation of Neglect, (4) Allegation of Staff to consumer sexual assault or sexual exploitation, (5) Allegation of Consumer to consumer sexual assault or sexual exploitation, (6) Medication errors with adverse consequences, (7) Seclusion or restraint resulting in injury requiring treatment beyond first aid, (8) Suicide attempt that results in medical hospitalization. Category II Incidents include (1) Allegation of verbal abuse, (2) Allegation of financial exploitation, (3) Seclusion or restraint resulting in injury requiring minor first aide, (4) Vehicular accident with injury while consumer is being transported by community staff, (5) Consumer to consumer assault resulting in injury requiring treatment beyond first aid, (6) Medical hospitalization of a consumer, (7) Consumer injury requiring treatment beyond first aid.

TIPS FOR EMERGENCY PLANNING

* Make a list of emergency phone numbers.
* Make a disaster supply kit before there are emergencies.
* Make a list of people to contact for each type of emergency.
* Make a plan for how to contact family and support workers if there is a power outage or natural disaster.
* Make a list of medications and/or equipment that you need to take with you if you have to leave your home.
* Organize medical information, emergency contact information
* Place all of the information together in an easy-to-access location.
* Store extra food and water in case of a severe weather emergency or other natural disaster.
* Talk with and include your support workers in your emergency planning.
* Write down procedures to follow for each type of emergency. Practice in advance of an emergency.

D O C U M E N T A T I O N

Records must be maintained to document the services that have been delivered. You need to have a note that reflects the progress or efforts that are being made toward achieving Individual Service Plan goals and objectives. It is the justification that is required so that these services can be paid for.

The Policies and Procedures Manuals for the NOW and COMP Waivers list the Participant Directed Services Documentation and other Requirements in Part II, Chapter 1200, Section 1216. It states:

Key documentation required for Participant-Directed Services consist of:

1. Employee timesheets
2. Vendor payments
3. Written summaries of the participant's progress on ISP goals

The employees and professional vendors are required to provide a written summary of the participant's progress on the ISP goals for the applicable service ninety (90) days prior to the Individual Service Plan meeting.

You can design other forms to help you track the goals. (See the Workbook for examples) This level of detail is important so that you can see whether the methods that you are using are effective. These tracking forms allow you to note the levels of prompts that are required and see the actual outcomes.

It is helpful to purchase a large three-ring binder where you can organize all the documents and progress notes. Develop tabs for your notebook and keep the materials organized in a systematic way.

Tips

Some suggested categories for the documentation notebook might include:

1. Individual Identification & Emergency Info
2. Medical Information
3. Service Plans
4. Progress Notes / Tracking Sheets
5. History and Background Information
6. Behavioral Information
7. Staff / Planning
8. Activities of Interest / Personal Preferences

RESOURCES

Parent to Parent of Georgia
Phone: 770-451-5484
Address: 3805 Presidential Parkway, Suite 207
City, State, Zip: Atlanta, GA
Maintains a data base of resources which can be accessed by county or category.
Have bilingual staff to assist families who are Hispanic/Latino
Serves as the Parent Training Information Center for Georgia.
www.parenttoparentofga.org

The Center for Self-Determination
The Center for Self-Determination is the primary clearinghouse, training and technical assistance source on Self-Determination in the United States and other countries. The Center is devoted to moving power and authority over resources directly to individuals with disabilities, families and allies.
http://www.centerforself-determination.com/

Self Determination Resources, Inc. (SDRI)
Has a domestic employer employment handbook and a domestic employee policy handbook
http://www.sdri-pdx.org/customers/Content_DomesticEmployerInfo.html

Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL)
phone: (404) 232-3620
web site **http://www.dol.state.ga.us/**

Care .com
Helps you find local child care, pet care, senior care, tutoring, private lessons, and housekeeping. $20 charge to register, but a good source of potential employees.
http://www.care.com/

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
A Federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; you will find Medicaid resources and information requirements for 1915(c) and 1115 waivers on this website. **http://www.cms.gov**

NOW and COMP Waiver Policies and Procedures Manuals
Provides the details of rules and policies about the NOW and COMP Waivers.
https://www.ghp.georgia.gov

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **How can I protect the privacy of my health information in my home?**
It is important to stress confidentiality with your new employees and build it into their job description. Provide training to your employees on confidentiality. Have them sign a confidentiality agreement and keep it in their employee file. (See Workbook for a sample confidentiality agreement)

2. **It can be intrusive to have someone in our home. How do I protect my personal space and set boundaries?**
Tell your support worker when you want to spend some time to yourself or the family wants to spend some time alone privately. The worker can be in another part of the house doing something else. Be clear about when you need help. If you are having friends over and need help setting the table, ask for their help, but let them know that you do not want them sitting with you and your guests being part of the conversation. If there are parts of the house that are off limits to staff, be clear about those expectations. (See Workbook for examples of house rules)

3. **What do you do in an emergency? Who should be contacted?**
Each individual should have emergency plans and an emergency contact list. Support staff should all be knowledgeable about emergency protocols. It is a good idea to have a first aid kit readily available. There should also be a permission to treat form and the Medicaid or insurance card easily accessible for staff. (See the Workbook for emergency contact forms)

4. **How do you schedule in lunch/break times for staff? Am I responsible for providing meals or paying for the worker to do activities?**
It would be beneficial to you to develop a set of house rules that spell out your expectations of staff and allow you to make these clear to the employee. Have them sign off on the house rules prior to beginning their employment. You may want to check with the Department of Labor to make sure labor laws are being followed.

5. **What do you do if a support worker is not paid on time?**
Contact the Financial Support Services Provider and ask for their assistance. If the Financial Support Services Provider does not resolve the issue in a timely manner, contact your support coordinator. The Employee can also contact the Financial Support Services Provider directly.

6. **What happens if you disagree with a support worker?**
The first step is to talk to the person and try to work things out. Try to hear each other's viewpoint. If it becomes problematic, ask your support coordinator to serve as your advocate. Most problems can be resolved by talking openly about them. If the problems persist, you may choose to no longer receive supports from that person. It takes time to find and train new staff so you want to think carefully when hiring a support worker and try to maintain open communication and a positive working relationship. Be open to compromise.

7. **What services and goods can and cannot be purchased under the NOW and COMP Waivers?**
Georgia State Medicaid has issued policy for the NOW and COMP Waivers on things that are not covered. See the list on page 25. Depending on the needs of the individual, the following may be covered under participant-directed: in-state summer camps, peer discussion and support groups, cultural programs and events, physical fitness and weight reduction programs.

LIMITATIONS ON SERVICES IN THE NOW AND COMP WAIVERS

These items are **not** covered:

Supplies

1) Environmental control items (air conditioners, dehumidifier, air filters or purifiers)
2) Comfort or convenience items
3) Physical fitness items (exercise cycle, exercise treadmill)
4) Supplies considered experimental
5) Experimental medicines, practices, or treatments
6) Infant and child car seats
7) Blood pressure monitors and weight scales
8) Computer supplies (printers, cartridges, speakers and other supplies)
9) Cell phones and minutes
10) Ancillary supplies for the proper functioning of non-approved devices or equipment
11) Supplies for education and related services for children (private schools, Applied Behavior Analysis provided in the school, home-schooling, tutors)
12) Vitamins, herbal supplements, nutritional oils and other non-nutritional supplements

Equipment

1) Environmental control equipment (air conditioners, dehumidifiers, air filters or purifiers)
2) Comfort or convenience equipment (vibrating beds, over the bed trays, chair lifts)
3) Institutional-type equipment (cardiac or breathing monitors)
4) Equipment designed specifically for use by a physician and trained medical personnel (EKG monitor, oscillating bed and laboratory testing equipment)
5) Physical fitness equipment (exercise cycle, exercise treadmill)
6) Furnishing-type equipment (infant cribs)
7) Home security items (alarm systems, burglar bars, security cameras, personal emergency response systems, deadbolt locks)
8) Elevators, chair lifts, and indoor ceiling lift systems
9) Equipment considered experimental or under investigation by Public Health
10) Equipment associated with experimental medical practices or treatments
11) Infant and child car seats
12) Blood pressure monitors and weight scales
13) Computers, such as desktop and personal computers
14) Cell phones and minutes
15) Hot tubs, spas and whirlpool tubs
16) Items that add value to a property such as a fence
17) Equipment commonly used for recreational purposes, including but not limited to bicycles, trampolines, swimming pools, swing sets, slides, stereos, radios, televisions, and MP3 players
18) Equipment for education and related services by children for whom the Department of Education has primary responsibility (private schools, ABA in school, home schooling, tutors)
19) Equipment replacement or repair that is necessitated by participant neglect, wrongful disposition, intentional misuse or abuse. Equipment will not be replaced due to the participant's negligence and/or abuse (a wheelchair left outside). Equipment will not be replaced before its normal life expectancy has been attained unless supporting medical documentation of change in the physical or developmental condition of the participant.

Other Services

1) Educational services for children, including private school tuition, Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) provided in the School, school supplies, and tutors.
2) Admission fees, Memberships, Subscriptions, Donations, or related items (including YMCA memberships, tickets to movies, sports events, or other recreational/leisure events)
3) Out of state camps
4) Registration fees, including in-state summer camps, unless participant-directed services. (see note on page 24)

CONCLUSION

This Guide to Self Directing was commissioned by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. The Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities pulled together the materials from a variety of sources and people. It is our hope that this guide will give you a clearer understanding of what is required for self directing services.

A workbook has also been developed to give people who are self directing some practical help. It includes sample forms, examples, and checklists so that you don't have to start from scratch.

The process of self directing takes time to learn. You will need to put a system in place. If you have never run a business before, it may seem overwhelming. We encourage you to keep at it. Learn the skills you need to be a good employer. By self directing you will have more control over your services, your budget, and ultimately your life and the way it is supported.

If a family decides that they no longer want to self direct, they can opt out and go back to traditional services. The support coordinator is responsible for a timely revision of the ISP, ensuring continuity in services by linking the participant to alternate waiver providers, and assuring the participant's health and welfare during the transition period.

Involuntary termination of participant direction can occur due to the failure of the participant or representative to meet the responsibilities of participant direction or because of identified health and safety issues for the participant. A period of twelve (12) months must elapse prior to consideration for re-enrollment in the participant-directed option.

It is exciting to know that the numbers of people who have decided to self direct are growing. There are now over 700 people who have chosen to self direct their waiver-funded services. We hope that you will be better informed after reading this guide and looking through the workbook.

For additional copies, look on the GCDD website or contact :

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