

Information on receiving Medicaid HCBS DD services from an independent provider.

The [Participant Guide for Self-Direction](#) gives information about your responsibilities when you choose to work with an independent provider. The guide should be used any time you need more information that this FAQ provides.

1. What words and terms do I need to know?

Habilitation Program: A structured method of teaching skills, with goals and data collection.

Habilitative Service: A developmental disabilities service which teaches a participant through habilitation programs and provides other supports such as personal care, supervision, and medication administration.

Individual Budget Amount (IBA): Maximum amount of funding available to a participant during their ISP year to purchase Medicaid HCBS DD Waiver services.

Individual Support Plan (ISP): A plan of services, supports, activities, and resources based on your personal goals and preferences, and assessments of strengths and needs. This is like the Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed in school. Your Service Coordinator helps you develop your ISP.

Legally responsible adult: A person who is legally authorized to make decisions on your behalf. This includes your parent (natural or adoptive) when you are a minor child, a spouse, a guardian, a conservator, or a power of attorney.

Medicaid: A public health insurance program for people who have low-income or people with disabilities. Medicaid funds developmental disabilities services through Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver programs.

Provider: A provider delivers Medicaid HCBS DD waiver services. A provider can be either agency or independent.

- An **Independent Provider** is a person who is an enrolled Medicaid provider and employed by you. This person provides your Medicaid HCBS DD Waiver services and is not associated with an agency. It may be someone you already know. A person who is legally responsible for you cannot be your independent provider. You are responsible for hiring, scheduling, training, and dismissing independent providers. The state has an approval process to ensure the provider meets requirements.
- An **Agency Provider** is a company that is an enrolled Medicaid provider and certified by DHHS to provide your Medicaid HCBS DD Waiver services. The company can be an agency, organization, association, or other entity that completes the certification process. An agency is responsible for hiring, dismissing, scheduling, training, and paying staff that work with you. There are many agency providers across the state.

Service Coordinator: DHHS-DD employee assigned to help you find needed services and supports, facilitate the development of your ISP, and make sure the ISP is implemented as written.

2. Who can help me work with my independent provider?

When you choose an independent provider to work with you, you are self-directing your Medicaid HCBS DD Waiver services and are responsible for them. This does not mean you have to do everything yourself. You can choose an advocate to help you self-direct.

Think about the people who know you best. This may be your parents, another family member, or a close friend. Ask this person to help you talk with, choose, and train your independent provider.

At your ISP meetings you will talk about the things that are important to you and the support you need. Your provider will be at your ISP meetings and will hear what is important to you. Your Service Coordinator will talk to you regularly, observe your Medicaid HCBS DD Waiver services to make sure your needs are being met, and help you when changes are needed.

The [Participant Guide for Self-Direction](#) has information about how others can help you with self-direction.

3. How do I hire an independent provider?

You are responsible to find your independent provider. You may choose someone you already know, talk to others about people they know, or advertise. There is not a public list of independent providers, but you should talk to your Service Coordinator about ways to find a provider in your area.

When a potential provider is someone you know, who you think is qualified, you may not need to do a formal interview. You will need to talk with him/her about the requirements of the job, your expectations, and answer any questions they have. You need to make sure that the provider can meet your medical, behavioral, and safety needs while teaching you things you need to learn to be more independent.

When you do not know the potential provider, or are not sure if they can do the job, it is important to do an interview. You need to describe the job, schedule, and your expectations. It is helpful to prepare a list of questions so you do not forget anything. Interview suggestions and possible questions are included in the [Participant Guide for Self-Direction](#). Ask your Service Coordinator for this guide.

After you have interviewed a potential provider, they will need to complete provider enrollment with Medicaid. DHHS will make sure all requirements are met. Your Service Coordinator will help with this process.

4. What do I need to tell my independent provider about myself?

Think of the things you need your provider to teach you or help with. Make a list of exactly how you want service provided. For example, when you need help getting ready to go to work, tell your provider what you are able to do on your own, what you need to learn, and what you need help with. Be specific about what you want from your provider. Remember the little things, such as house rules and pet peeves. Your provider cannot read your mind!

Your independent provider will attend ISP meetings and learn more about you there. Do not expect the meetings to be the only way your provider learns about you.

5. How do I prepare my independent provider for emergencies?

It is important to plan for an emergencies. You need to make sure your provider knows what you want him/her to do to help you in an emergency. Tell your provider what type of emergencies you are more likely to have; this may include talking about your medical conditions and providing a list of medications and allergies. You should always provide a list of emergency phone numbers. Your provider must be trained in basic first aid and CPR.

6. Does my independent provider need training? Who trains my independent provider?

You are responsible to make sure your independent provider is trained. Training is important to be sure your provider understands the requirements of the job and your specific needs and preferences. You can use the job description you created as a basis for training.

DHHS-DD requires training in basic first aid and CPR. When you have medical concerns, such as seizures or diabetes, you may want to locate appropriate training through a local hospital or college.

Information on available trainings can be found online on the [DHHS-DD training page](#). Trainings are available to any interested person and many are free. You and your provider can even attend training together. Some services, such as habilitation, have required training. When your provider has questions about training, your Service Coordinator can give him/her information on how to contact DHHS-DD Provider Relations.

7. Are there things my independent provider cannot help with?

The things your provider can help you with depend on the authorized services. You decide what services to use and these are written in your ISP. The ISP should outline everything your provider is teaching you and helping with. If you want a provider to do something not in your ISP, talk to your Service Coordinator.

8. Can my friend and I use the same independent provider at the same time?

Yes, an independent provider can work with more than one participant at the same time. This arrangement must be agreed on by both. When you and your friend use the same independent provider and want to go to the movies or eat out, you and your friend can share the one provider. There are special rules about how the provider gets paid. The provider is paid from each participants' budget at a different negotiated rate since services are not provided one-to-one. Talk to your Service Coordinator before arranging to share services.

9. What should I do when I do not like my independent provider or I think they are not doing a good job?

When you have a problem with your provider, talk to him/her and explain the problem. Also talk with your Service Coordinator about the situation. You can have an advocate help you with either of these conversations. If you cannot work things out, ask your Service Coordinator to help you decide what to do next. You are in charge of dismissing your provider when you decide that's the right thing for you.

10. What should I do when I think my independent provider is stealing from me or abusing me in some way?

When you think your provider is stealing from you or abusing you in any way, you need to tell your guardian and your Service Coordinator right away! You can also call Adult Protective Services at 1-800-652-1999 or your local police or sheriff.

11. How should I keep track of the hours my independent provider works?

Your provider must keep track of the hours they works with you. This is done on a computer system and is used for billing. Talk to your Service Coordinator about how to use the computer system to see what your provider is reporting. It is a good idea for you to also keep a calendar of when your provider works. This will help you know when to expect your provider to arrive. It will also allow you to compare records if you question if they are billing correctly. You could fill in your calendars together.

When you have questions about your provider's work schedule, or when you don't think billing matches when your provider works with you, ask your provider not to bill. You must report any billing concerns to your Service Coordinator.

12. What can I do when I think my independent provider is doing a really good job?

It is important to tell your provider that you like what they are doing. At some point, you may want to give your provider a raise. Talk with your Service Coordinator to see if this is an option. You can decide the hourly

rate your provider is paid, up to an hourly maximum set by DHHS-DD. You cannot use personal money to pay your provider extra.

13. What should I do when there is something I do not want my independent provider to help me with anymore?

First, talk to your provider. Let them know what you want to change about the services they provides. When the task is written in your ISP, you need to talk to your Service Coordinator so they can update your ISP. When the task is not part of your ISP, this can be changed without team discussion or documentation.

14. What should I do when I want to have my independent provider help me with something new?

Ask your provider if they have time to help you with something new within your current service schedule. When the new task will require more time with your provider, talk to your Service Coordinator to see if you have enough money in your budget for the additional time. The new task should be written into your ISP.

15. What should I do when I decide having an independent provider is not right for me?

Your decision to use an independent provider is not permanent. When you decide you want a change, talk to your Service Coordinator about your concerns. Adjustments to your ISP may make things better.

When you want to receive services from an agency provider, you need to know services may not be immediately available. You will have your remaining individual budget amount (IBA) to purchase services, but an agency provider may need time to set up the right resources to support you. You can explore any agency providers in your area and your Service Coordinator can help with this. You can also choose to discontinue all services.

Contact Information

Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities
P.O. Box 98947, Lincoln, NE 68509-8947
(402) 471-8501 or toll-free (877) 667-6266
dhhs.developmentaldisabilities@nebraska.gov