

This handout is designed to help understand services with an independent provider.

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

DD Service Coordinator: Service Coordination staff that works directly with you to assist you in getting and managing the services and supports for which you qualify..

Habilitation: Assisting a person to improve and achieve developmental skills when impairments have delayed or blocked the initial learning of the skill. Most developmental disabilities services are habilitative, and therefore include teaching. Habilitation should be measurable.

Individual Support Plan: Also known as ISP, this is like the Individual Education Plan (IEP) you developed in high school. The ISP document identifies the supports, activities, and resources required for you to achieve and maintain personal goals, health, and safety. Your Service Coordinator helps you develop your ISP.

Legally responsible: A person who has a legal obligation under the provision of state law to care for you. This includes a parent (natural or adoptive) if you are a minor child, a spouse, or a legal guardian.

Provider: Providers are approved to deliver DD services. Providers can be either agency or independent.

- An Independent Provider is a person who provides 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 firing independent providers. The state has an approval process to ensure the provider meets requirements.
- An Agency Provider is an agency, organization, association, or other entity that completes a certification process with the Department of Health & Human Services Division of Public Health. An agency is responsible for hiring, firing, scheduling, training, and paying staff that work with you. There are many agency providers across the state.

Service Coordination: Medicaid targeted case management services provided by DHHS-DD. This is available to everyone eligible for DD services and is a monthly service. See “DD Service Coordinator.”

2. Who can help me get my independent provider ready to work for me?

Think about who knows you best. This may be your parents. Ask them to help you talk to and train your provider. When you have your ISP you will talk about the things that are important to you and what you need. Your provider will be at your ISP and this is a great time for them to see and hear what is important to you. Your DD coordinator will talk to you regularly and observe services to make sure your needs are being met.

The [Participant Guide for Self-Direction](#) will give you more information about your responsibilities and how you may have others help you.

3. How do I hire an independent provider?

If a potential provider is someone you know who you feel is qualified for the job, you may not need to conduct a formal interview. You will need to talk with them about the requirements of the job, your expectations, and answer questions they have about working with you.

If you do not know the potential provider or are not sure if they can do the job, it is important to interview them. You need to describe the job, schedule, and expectations to them. It is helpful if you prepare a list of questions prior to the interview to be sure you don't forget anything. Interview suggestions and possible

interview questions are included in the [Participant Guide for Self-Direction](#). Your DD coordinator can give you this handbook.

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

Think of the things you need and want your provider to help you with. Make a list of exactly how you want them to provide your service. For example, if you need help getting ready to go to work, tell your provider what tasks need to be done and how much help you need. Be very specific about how you want things done. Remember your provider can't read your mind!

5. What do I need to do to prepare my independent provider for emergencies?

Emergency preparations are important. You need to make sure your provider knows how to handle an emergency. Tell your provider about your medical conditions, provide a list of medications and allergies, and provide a list of emergency phone numbers. Your provider must be trained in basic first aid and CPR.

6. Who trains my independent provider? Is training necessary?

You are responsible for training your independent provider. Your provider may be someone who has done similar work before or someone who have never done this type of work. 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 as a basis for training. Don't forget the little things such as house rules and pet peeves.

In addition to training you provide specific to your needs, you may want to have your provider take advantage of training opportunities. Trainings are available to any interested person and many are free. You and your provider can even attend training together! Information on offered trainings can be found on the [DHHS-DD training webpage](#). Some services, such as habilitation, have training required as outlined in the [DD Service Directory](#).

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

The types of things your provider can help you with are dependent on the services they are authorized to provide. Your services are written in your ISP and it should outline everything your provider helps with. If you want a provider to help with something that is not in your ISP, check with your DD coordinator.

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

Yes, it is possible for an independent provider to work with two participants at the same time. This arrangement must be agreed upon by both of you. If you want to go to the movies or out to eat with someone who has the same independent provider, you and your friend can use one provider. There are special rules about how the provider gets paid when you share time. The provider would be paid from each participants' budget at a different negotiated rate since the services are not provided one-to-one. Talk to your DD coordinator before arranging any shared services.

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

If you have a problem with your provider, start by talking to them and explaining the problem. It is also important to talk to your DD coordinator. You can have a trusted person help you with either of these conversations. If you cannot work things out, ask your DD coordinator to help you decide what to do next.

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

If you feel like your provider is stealing from you or abusing you in any way, you need to let your parents or guardian and your DD coordinator know 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 my independent provider's working hours?

Your provider must keep an attendance record of their hours. It is a good idea for you to also keep a calendar to track of when your provider works. This will help you know when to expect them. It will also allow you to compare records if you question if they are billing correctly. At the end of each time you work together you could choose to fill in your calendars together.

12. What if 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 DD coordinator to see if this is an option. You cannot independently pay your provider extra.

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

Talk to your DD coordinator if you think you no longer need help with something so they can update your ISP.

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

Ask your provider if they have the time to help you with something new. If the new task will require more time with your provider, talk to your DD coordinator to see if you have enough money in your budget. The new task should be written into your ISP.

15. What if I decide that having an independent provider is not right for me?

Your decision to use an independent provider is not permanent. If it does not work for you, call your DD coordinator to discuss your concerns. Adjustments to your plan may be possible to make things better. If you have done this and it is still not working, tell your coordinator that you would like to change your plan.

If you previously received services from an agency provider and would like to return, you need to know that those services may not be immediately available. You will have your budget amount to purchase services, but an agency may need time to ensure they have the right resources to support you. You can explore any agency providers in your area and your DD coordinator can help with this. You can also choose to discontinue all services.

Contact Information

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