

This helps plan and set-up services with an independent provider.

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

Formal supports: Supports outlined in your individual support plan (ISP). Typically formal supports are funded by DHHS-DD through Medicaid HCBS DD Waivers.

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): The maximum amount of funding available to you during your ISP year to purchase Medicaid HCBS Developmental Disabilities Waiver services. The year is the 12 consecutive months following the start of your Individual Support Plan (ISP) year.

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.

Informal supports: Supports that do not have the oversight of DHHS-DD. These may be naturally occurring because they are provided by family or friends.

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.

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 firing 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, firing, 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. How do I make a plan for life after high school?

Before you begin receiving DD services, your Service Coordinator will set up an Individual Support Plan (ISP) meeting. You can decide who should be invited. To prepare for your meeting, make a list of the things you want to do, where you want to live and work, what you want to do with your free time, and what is important to you.

When you are interested in an agency provider, find out from your Service Coordinator what providers are in your community so you can meet them and tour their services.

When you are interested in an independent provider, your Service Coordinator can help you decide what kind of services you want, people who you might want to hire, and who you might be able to talk to about their experiences.

3. What can my school do to prepare me for adult services?

Since you know and trust your school and teachers, the best thing you can do is ask them to advocate for you and help you connect to adult services. Before your final IEP, talk with your teacher about inviting agency representatives, such as your Service Coordinator and Nebraska VR. Your school will have consents for you to sign in order to invite people to your meeting.

DHHS-DD will need documentation from your school. Documentation was submitted when you applied for DD services, but you should ask that any documents created after you were determined eligible are sent to your Service Coordinator. This includes IEPs, MDT Reports, and psychological evaluations.

The ability to be a self-advocate is possibly the most important skill to learn while in school. Your teachers have many resources to help you learn self-advocacy. The Summary of Performance is a useful tool to identify your goals after high school. Your school can help you use this tool to summarize your achievements and identify services and supports you may need to meet your goals.

4. Once I have been determined eligible for DD services, how can others help me decide what services will meet my needs?

While still in high school, it is important for you to begin to decide what you want for after high school. During your transition years (16 to 21 years old), educators and other agency professionals, such as Nebraska VR, can talk to you and provide activities to help you identify your strengths, interests, and preferences.

You may be most comfortable getting information from teachers and others you have been working with in school. You should also develop a relationship with your Service Coordinator and invite them to your IEP meetings.

5. How can others help me make a plan for DD services after high school?

You need to work with your Service Coordinator to identify the specific services which will meet your needs. Your coordinator will discuss the options available through agency and independent providers. You can have others help you sort out your options, but it is up to you and your coordinator to develop a plan for services that can be purchased within your annual Individual Budget Amount (IBA).

When you are interested in an agency provider, you may want to meet with and tour agencies to decide which provider can best meet your needs. You may have your family or other trusted people come with you.

When you are interested in an independent provider, your coordinator will describe the requirements and help you identifying people to talk with about becoming your provider.

6. Will Nebraska VR continue vocational rehabilitation services with me after high school?

[Nebraska VR](#) offers services to both students and adults who are actively seeking employment. Nebraska VR staff will determine your eligibility for their adult program while you are still in school. The availability of their adult services after graduation will depend on the availability of funding. It is possible you will need to wait for services with Nebraska VR.

DHHS-DD has a [brochure](#) that outlines the relationship between your school, Nebraska VR, and DD services.

7. How do I know the amount of services I can get?

You and your family will be told the amount of money, called your annual Individual Budget Amount (IBA), which you can spend on services. This amount is determined by an assessment completed by DHHS-DD. Additional funds will not be available if all funds are used before your year ends.

Your Service Coordinator will help you decide how you use your budget and can tell you what services typically cost. You are responsible for using your IBA to purchase the DD waiver services you need. Your Service Coordinator will tell you the maximum amount you can pay for each service and help you decide what you want to pay your provider. You can have family or friends help you manage services, but you are responsible. You must keep track of provider time and cost so you do not go over your annual budget. You must know when to talk to your coordinator about budget changes.

8. How do I know how much money is available for services?

An objective assessment is completed by DHHS-DD staff to determine the amount of funding you need. The assessment is done with input from people who know you well and review of documentation.

The funding is your annual Individual Budget Amount (IBA). The Service Coordinator working with you helps you decide how funds will be spent on a yearly basis. Your year begins at the time of your annual Individual Support Plan (ISP) meeting. Additional funds will not be available if all funds are used before your year ends.

9. Can my family member be my independent provider?

For most services you can hire anyone not legally responsible for you. Legally responsible adults include your parent (natural or adoptive) when you are a minor child, a spouse when you are married, a guardian, a conservator, or a power of attorney.

You cannot hire a person you live with to provide respite or homemaker.

Anyone you hire must meet the provider requirements, which can be found in the [Participant Guide for Self-Direction](#).

10. How many independent providers can I hire?

You can hire as many independent providers as you want. It is a good idea to hire more than one independent provider so you have a back-up in case someone cannot work as planned.

11. What if I want to use an agency provider and an independent provider for different services?

You can choose any services available on your waiver which can be paid for within your annual Individual Budget Amount (IBA). You should work with your Service Coordinator to identify your needs. Then you will decide what services will best meet your needs. For example, you may want a staff from an agency provider trained to support you at a job and an independent provider to teach you skills to live in your apartment.

Your Service Coordinator will discuss provider options available, including agency providers in your community. You may want to meet with and tour agency providers to determine who may best meet your needs. Your coordinator will also help you identify people you may talk to about becoming your independent provider.

You and your Service Coordinator will talk to your providers to decide on a schedule and how services will be provided within your IBA. Your individual support plan (ISP) will assign which services meet which needs.

12. Can my independent provider drive me to my job or other activities?

Yes, your independent provider can drive you. In order to provide transportation, your provider must have minimum vehicle insurance required by Nebraska, have a valid driver's license that has not been revoked within the past three years, and use their own personally registered vehicle.

13. Where can I find independent providers?

The best place to start is to talk to people you know. You might have a neighbor, friend, family member, teacher, or para-educator who is interested in the job. Think about the people you know and like. If you have trouble finding an independent provider on your own, talk to your Service Coordinator or local advocacy groups.

You can also check with groups which maintain statewide databases:

- Nebraska Resources and Referral System (NRRS) is a database of agencies and service providers: www.nrrs.ne.gov.
- Nebraska 211 lists information regarding Health and Human Services agencies and services providers: www.ne211.org.

14. What do I do when I find someone who wants to be my independent provider?

Interview the person to be sure they understand what you want them to do and you are comfortable with them providing the service. Give the person's name, address, and phone number to your Service Coordinator and they will begin the DHHS approval process. Your coordinator will let you know when the person is approved to be a provider. You can expect the process to take a few weeks since it includes background checks.

15. How much does my independent provider get paid?

Your independent provider gets paid by the hour. Each service has a maximum rate you can pay. Your Service Coordinator will give you these rates. You decide on what you want to pay and talk to your provider for agreement. You may not want to start your provider at the maximum rate, so you can give your provider a raise after some time or when things are going well. To change a provider's rate, you will need to talk with your coordinator so a new Service Authorization can be made. Remember you are limited to spending the money in your annual Individual Budget Amount (IBA) for the year. The more you pay your provider per hour, the fewer hours of service you can buy.

16. How does my independent provider get paid?

Your provider completes attendance records on a computer program called Therap. This program makes a billing claim for the provider to electronically submit to DHHS-DD. You may ask to see your provider's billing at any time to verify that it matches the schedule you have for them to work. Your provider is paid by DHHS-DD. You do not handle any of the money.

Contact Information

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