

This handout is designed to help plan and set up 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.

Formal supports: Supports outlined in individual's support plan (ISP). Typically supports funded by DHHS-DD.

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 Budget Amount (IBA): The maximum amount of money that you can spend on your services during the year. The year is a 12-month period tied to your Individual Support Plan (ISP) year.

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 DD 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: 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 provide 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. How do I make a plan for life after high school?

Before you begin receiving DD services, your DD coordinator will set up an Individual Support Plan (ISP) meeting. You can decide who should be invited. To prepare for the meeting, it is a good idea to 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 things that are important to you.

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

If you are interested an independent provider, your DD 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 in the final months before I graduate 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 DD 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 DD 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. The tool is found in the [Transition Topics](#) guide.

4. Once I have been determined eligible for DD services, how can others help me decide what services are right for me?

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 DD 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 DD coordinator to identify the specific services you would like to receive. 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 decide a plan for services that can be met within your Individual Budget Amount (IBA).

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

If you are interested in an independent provider, your coordinator will describe the requirements and help you identifying persons you may wish to contact regarding becoming a provider.

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

Yes. Nebraska VR staff will determine your eligibility for their program while you are still in school. [Nebraska VR](#) offers services to both students and adults who are actively seeking employment. 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 the Individual Budget Amount (IBA), which can be spent on your services during the year. Your DD coordinator will help you decide how you use your budget and can tell you what services typically cost. Your IBA is the amount of funding you have on an annual

basis. 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.

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

An assessment is completed by DHHS-DD staff to determine the amount of funding you need; this is your Individual Budget Amount (IBA). The DD 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 who is not legally responsible for you. 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 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 that can be funded within your Individual Budget Amount (IBA). You should work with your DD coordinator to identify your needs. Then you will decide what services will best meet your needs. For example, you may want a trained staff from an agency provider to support you on a job and an independent provider to help you get to appointments.

Your DD coordinator will discuss the options available, including identifying agency providers in your community. You may want to meet with and/or tour the agencies to determine the provider that may best meet your needs. Your coordinator will also assist you to identify persons you may wish to contact about becoming an independent provider.

You and your DD 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 work or other activities?

Yes, your independent provider can drive you. In order to provide transportation, your provider must become a Transportation provider and 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 looking is to talk to people you know. Neighbors, friends, family, teachers, and para-educators might be 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 DD coordinator or local advocacy groups.

You can also check with statewide resources:

- 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 that 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 DD 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 an independent provider get paid?

An independent provider gets paid by the hour. Each service has a maximum rate that you can pay. Your DD coordinator will give you these rates. You and your provider decide what you will pay. There is no automatic rate increase so you may not want to start your provider at the maximum rate. You can give your provider a raise after some time or when things are going well. To change a provider's rate, talk with your coordinator. Remember that you only have so much money in your Individual Budget Amount (IBA) to work with for an entire year. The more you pay your provider per hour, the fewer time of service you will get.

16. How does an independent provider get paid?

Your provider will complete attendance information on a computer program called Therap. This program will create 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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