

Participant Guide for Self-Direction

How to work with independent providers

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INTRODUCTION TO SELF-DIRECTED SERVICES

WHAT ARE SELF-DIRECTED SERVICES?

Self-directed services allow you to have control over what services you receive. There are many choices so you can be successful. Self-directed services are based on the principles of self-advocacy and self-determination. Self-advocacy means speaking or acting on your own behalf. Self-determination means you have the amount of control you want over the areas of your life that are important to you.

WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT SELF-DIRECTION?

It is up to you to determine the services and supports needed to maximize your independence. You have the right and responsibility to participate to the greatest extent possible in the development and implementation of your plan. Self-directed services may be used alone or with other services and supports funded by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Self-direction allows for services to be provided by agency providers or independent providers:

- **Agency providers** are certified by DHHS Public Health. Your agency provider takes care of hiring, training, scheduling, supervising, and dismissing your staff. You may take ownership of these responsibilities, but the provider is responsible.
- **Independent providers** can be any qualified community member you select, as long as they are not legally responsible for you and meet the requirements of the service you want them to provide. People who are legally responsible for you: your parent if you are under age 19, your legal guardian, or your spouse. You can choose a neighbor, a friend, or a family member. You are responsible for hiring, training, scheduling, supervising, and dismissing your provider.

CAN I SELF-DIRECT SERVICES?

You may self-direct services if you:

- Are eligible for services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD);
- Are age 19 or older (your parents can self-direct if you are under age 19);
- Currently meet the level of care criteria for home and community-based waiver services;
- Are eligible for Medicaid; and
- Have an individual support plan (ISP) that says you want to self-direct.

WHAT SERVICES CAN BE SELF-DIRECTED?

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES MAY BE SELF-DIRECTED:

Day Services: Habilitative Community Inclusion*

Prevocational: Individual,* Small Group*

Employment Services: Supported Employment – Follow Along,* Individual*

Habilitative Services: Adult Companion Home*

In-Home Residential Habilitation Services*

Homemaker Services

Assistive Technology

Consultative Assessment Service

Home Modifications

Transitional Services

Transportation

Respite

Services with a star () are habilitative and include teaching. For provider requirements, see "Who can I hire?"*

HOW ARE SERVICES AUTHORIZED?

Your DD Service Coordinator authorizes services based on the following guidelines:

- Your provider must have a current agreement with DHHS;
- Service authorizations must be approved and current;
- Services and supports are documented in your individual support plan (ISP);
- Funding is available in your individual budget amount (IBA); and
- Respite funding is only from one DHHS program source.

MY ROLE AND WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME

Self-directed services allow you to build on your strengths and add to what you have in place. You determine the services and supports needed to maximize your independence. You have the right and responsibility to participate as much as possible in developing and implementing your plan. You are responsible for hiring, training, scheduling, supervising, and dismissing your independent providers.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS WHEN I SELF-DIRECT?

You have the same rights as anyone receiving services. This includes the right to:

- Be safe;
- Be treated with courtesy, consideration, and respect;
- Trust your instincts;
- Agree or disagree with others;
- Make decisions about your services and providers (within the limits of services);
- Ask questions until you understand;
- Change services at any time;
- Appeal a DHHS decision that affects you; and
- Be free from neglect and abuse.

WHAT IF I THINK I AM BEING ABUSED OR NEGLECTED?

Abuse and neglect are actions that may result in physical injury, unreasonable confinement, cruel punishment, sexual abuse, exploitation, or denial of essential services. Abuse or neglect can be intentional or as the result of carelessness. If you are uncomfortable with your provider, talk to someone about why.

If you think you might be the victim of abuse or neglect, tell someone! If you are not sure, talk to your DD Service Coordinator, a trusted friend, or a family member. Your DD Service Coordinator will monitor services and report any abuse or neglect they witness. Your Service Coordinator may ask questions about if you feel uncomfortable or if your needs are being met. However, you do not have to wait on anyone else to make a report. You can call Adult Protective Services or law enforcement.

EXAMPLES OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

Physical Abuse: Hitting, pushing, hair-pulling, kicking, biting, overuse or improper use of medications, use of restraints.

Sexual Abuse: Touching you in ways that make you feel uncomfortable, talking sexually or showing sexual material or body parts you do not want to see, making you touch or talk in a way that makes you uncomfortable, taking nude pictures or asking you to take inappropriate pictures that make you uncomfortable.

Emotional/Verbal: Threats, name-calling, denying the right to express wants and needs, cyberbullying, isolating from friends and family.

Neglect: Denial of food, clothing, shelter, or transportation; not providing supervision; not providing medical treatment.

Exploitation: Taking money or personal belongings, charging more hours than worked, not fulfilling job responsibilities.

REPORT ABUSE AND NEGLECT TO:
Abuse/Neglect Hotline
24-hour - Toll Free
1-800-652-1999
Or contact local law enforcement

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN I SELF-DIRECT?

When you choose to self-direct, you are responsible for:

- Participating in developing your individual support plan (ISP);
- Following through with the activities in your plan;
- Hiring, training, scheduling, supervising, and dismissing your independent provider;
- Determining what to pay your provider;

- Staying within your annual individual budget amount (IBA); and
- Making sure your provider isn't submitting false claims.

Your DD Service Coordinator tells you maximum service rates and helps you decide what you want to pay. Family or friends can 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 Service Coordinator about budget changes.

Your Service Coordinator has you sign form FA-65 "Appointment of DHHS as Agent" if your provider does an in-home service. The form makes DHHS responsible for paying employer taxes, state and federal employment taxes, and other tax withholding on your behalf.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH SELF-DIRECTION?

To be successful, you must recognize risks. You must decide how to meet your needs when things do not go as planned. Your DD Service Coordinator is available to help. Talk to your Service Coordinator when change is needed.

HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS

Consider your needs for health and safety. You may have a need that is best met by someone with medical knowledge or training. You may be able to train on these health and safety needs or your provider may need training from a professional. With self-direction, you are responsible for your health and safety.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT

If you receive services in your home, you may be isolated and vulnerable to abuse or neglect. Do not be reluctant to report a complaint or an allegation. You may not recognize abuse. Do not worry about losing a provider or be afraid that someone will be mad at you. You need to tell someone if you suspect abuse or neglect.

PROVIDER RELIABILITY

You might have a hard time finding a provider. Your provider may quit or not show up. Your provider may not meet your needs in the way you had in mind.

With an independent provider, there is not a "pool" of workers to fall back on if your provider is unavailable. It is your responsibility to resolve any issues about how services are scheduled and provided. If you are unable to resolve an issue, you may stop using a provider at any time, but it is up to you to find a new provider. You may ask your DD Service Coordinator to help. There may be other providers looking for hours who you can contact and interview.

Your back-up plan should include:

- What would happen if my provider did not show up?
- Can I use a phone to notify someone? Do I need a personal emergency response system (PERS) to get help?
- Will someone always be available if I need to call for help?
- Do I have family or friends to help if none of my providers are available?

HOW MUCH CAN I SPEND ON SERVICES?

Your individual budget amount (IBA) is decided by an objective assessment process (OAP). Your DD Service Coordinator provides you with your IBA and helps you plan how many hours your provider can work within your budget. You work with your Service Coordinator to make sure you have money available for your entire year of services.

Each service has a maximum rate that you can pay. Your Service Coordinator will give you these rates. You and your provider decide what you will pay. There is no automatic rate increase. You may not want to start your provider at the maximum rate, so you can give a raise after some time or when things are going well. To change a provider's rate, talk with your Service Coordinator.

If you decide to stop self-directing services at any time, you can choose services from an agency provider using the remaining funds available for your current budget year.

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS TO CHOOSE?

You should identify your needs by thinking about what you want in your life. What will it take to make those things happen? What natural supports do you have? Natural supports include family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and community services that are available for free or for an affordable charge. What do you need that your natural supports do not cover?

Your Individual Support Plan (ISP) team will discuss and document a plan that addresses your health and safety needs. These needs should be identified and discussed. If health and safety needs cannot be met, you may not be able to self-direct.

Once you identify your needs, your DD Service Coordinator will review DD services available. Your Service Coordinator may also recommend other services, available from other resources. You will decide which services can help you meet your goals. You may identify more services than your budget allows. If you cannot meet all your needs, you will need to decide what is most important to you.

Once you identify the services you need, your Service Coordinator can help you decide how and when those services will be provided. You need to estimate how many hours of service you need per day, week, or month.

FINDING A PROVIDER

You have the primary responsibility for locating your provider. Your DD Service Coordinator can assist and guide you through the process. They may know a provider looking for additional work. You can also ask for help from family or others.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME?

It is helpful to think about what is important to you before you select a provider:

- What do I need a provider to do to be successful?
- What kind of person would I trust to work with me?
- Does my provider need to have specific skills to meet my needs?
- Will I need different providers to meet different needs?
- How will I know if a provider has the skills needed?
- What does my provider need to know about me in order to support me?
- Are there provider “musts” for me? For example, being fluent in sign language, being a non-smoker, or having a driver’s license.

WHO CAN I HIRE?

Your best resource for finding a provider is the people you know, such as friends, neighbors, or family. If you ask, someone may be willing to be your provider. You do not have to choose a person who has worked in human services. Tell people that you are looking for a provider and what you need. If they cannot be your provider, they may know someone who could be.

An independent provider must:

- Complete all provider enrollment requirements, including background checks;
- Have training in the following areas, and provide evidence upon request:
 - Abuse, neglect, and exploitation and state law reporting requirements and prevention;
 - Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR); and
 - Basic first aid;
- Be age 19 or older and authorized to work in the United States;
- Not be a legally responsible for you (spouse or parent if you are under age 19) or your legal guardian;
- Not be an employee of DHHS;
- Not live with you if providing respite, homemaker, or home modifications;
- Accept a rate selected by you;
- Enter into an agreement with Nebraska DHHS;
- Complete billings thoroughly and accurately;
- Work drug-free; and
- Comply with HIPAA requirements.

In order to provide a habilitative service (training), the provider must:

- Have a bachelor's degree or coursework/training in: education, psychology, social work, sociology, human services, or a related field; OR
- Have four or more years of professional experience in the provision of habilitative services for persons with intellectual or other developmental disabilities (IDD) or in a habilitative program writing and program data collection/analysis, or four or more years of life experience in teaching and supporting an individual with IDD; OR
- Have any combination of education and experience identified above equaling four or more years.

*Evidence of the above must be provided upon request.

In order to provide transportation, the provider must:

- Maintain the minimum vehicle insurance coverage as required by state law;
- Not have had their driver/chauffeur's license revoked within the past three years; and
- Use their own personally registered vehicle to transport.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS AND RISKS TO HIRING FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

Benefits

It may be easier to find someone.

They may understand your likes and dislikes.

They may be more dependable.

A flexible work schedule may be easier.

Risks

It may be harder to fire someone.

It may be hard to give criticism.

A personal relationship may be hurt.

New relationship may be difficult.

WHAT RESOURCES CAN I USE TO FIND A PROVIDER?

If you do not know someone who can be your provider, you may not know where to look. Begin with local advocacy groups. Talk with educators, such as special education programs or local colleges. Your DD Service Coordinator can direct you to resources in your community. They may know an available provider.

You can use statewide internet 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.

You may choose to advertise. For example, "Seeking non-smoker to provide respite care for a person with a disability in the person's family home one weekend per month. Call Sue between 5 and 9 pm at 555-4567." Or, "Wanted: Female to assist person with a disability with general household and personal care. Hours and days are flexible; about 20 hours/month. Call Mark at 555-3456." You are responsible for advertisement costs.

HOW DO I CHOOSE A PROVIDER?

It is important to meet and interview a potential provider before you agree to have them provide services. Only you will know if you are comfortable with someone. DHHS is responsible for establishing an agreement with the provider, but you are responsible for deciding if the provider is right for you.

If you have never hired someone, it can seem like a big task. Remember that you are in charge. You can have someone you trust help with the process.

TELEPHONE SCREENING

Before meeting a potential provider in person, talk on the telephone. Tell them about your needs, the requirements of the job, the pay, and the hours. Ask if there are tasks that they cannot or will not do. Ask if they can meet all requirements. Based on the call, decide if you want to do an in-person interview.

SCHEDULING THE INTERVIEW

Decide where to do your in-person interview. You can have the person come to your home or meet in a public place. It may be a good idea to have a friend, family member or your DD Service Coordinator attend for safety and to help you feel comfortable.

Set a time and place for the interview and decide on a way to connect if one of you cannot make the scheduled time. If you are scheduling interviews with more than one provider, allow enough time for each interview and time between interviews to make notes and think about what you heard and observed. Take your time and be organized.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Think about what you expect of the person and be clear on these expectations. You need to describe the services you want. You need state the days of the week and hours you want. You need to say what you expect from your working relationship. It may be helpful to put this information into a written job description to give the applicant.

A job description should:

- Include DHHS provider requirements (see page 4-5);
- Give a good idea of what the job requires;
- Serve as a guideline for asking questions during the interview;
- Provide a checklist of responsibilities after a provider has been hired and is being trained; and
- Assist you in deciding if the provider is doing the job as you expected.

Before you start asking questions, share your expectations. In addition to job duties, share other important information. For example, if they will be working in your home, tell them if you have pets or are a smoker.

Have a list of questions to ask. Questions must be relevant to the job. Ask about the person's background and experience.

Possible interview questions:

- What previous jobs have you had? How did previous jobs prepare you for this job?
- What is your experience working with persons with disabilities?
- What other experiences have you had that prepared you for this job? Examples: volunteering or education.
- Is there any reason you cannot perform the job duties? Do you have questions about the job duties or schedule?
- Is there any reason you cannot meet my "must haves"?
- How would you resolve any problems or disagreements? Give examples of situations you have had in other jobs.
- Have there been times when you've been scheduled to work, but were not able to show up or were late? Why couldn't you be there? How did you let your boss know?
- Do you have dependable transportation to get to work? If your provider is going to drive you, discuss details.

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

Take the lead! Remember the person is applying to work for you. Begin the interview by describing the position, schedule, and duties. If you made a written job description, give it to them. Describe any physical activities that are required (such as lifting). Review your expectations regarding attendance and arriving on time. Explain how much notice you need if they are not able to work due to illness or other commitments. Ask if they are able and willing to do the job. If the answer is no, thank them and end the interview.

Ask questions from the list you prepared. You, or the person assisting you, should take notes on answers. This will be helpful later in deciding how the interview went.

Ask for references and then check them after the interview. This is optional, but recommended. You may be surprised at what you learn.

- *You can ask past employers:* Would you hire this person again? Was this person reliable (on time and dependable in completing tasks)? When necessary, was this person willing to be flexible about schedule or duties? On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your trust level for this person?

- *You can ask personal references:* How long have you known this person? What is your relationship to this person? Do you feel this person has the skills necessary for a position such as this?

Questions to Avoid & Suggested Alternatives

There are questions that should not be asked. These could be considered discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate.

➤ National Origin/Citizenship

- *Avoid:* Are you a citizen? Where were you/your parents born? What is your native language?
- *Suggested Alternatives:* Are you authorized to work in the United States? What languages do you use fluently? (If relevant to job)

➤ Age

- *Avoid:* How old are you? What is your birthday? When did you graduate from high school or college?
- *Suggested Alternative:* Are you age 19 or older? (This is the minimum age required to provide services.)

➤ Marital/Family Status

- *Avoid:* What is your marital status? Who do you live with? Do you plan to have a family? When? How many children do you have? What are your childcare arrangements?
- *Suggested Alternative:* This job may require a flexible schedule. Would you be able and willing to work on a flexible schedule? (This question is okay as long it is asked of ALL applicants for the job.)

➤ Affiliations

- *Avoid:* To what clubs or social organizations do you belong?
- *Suggested Alternative:* Do you belong to any professional or trade groups or organizations that you consider relevant to this job?

➤ Personal

- *Avoid:* How tall are you? What do you weigh?
- *Suggested Alternatives:* Are you able to lift "x" amount of weight? Can you assist with wheelchair transfers?

➤ Disabilities

- *Avoid:* Do you have any disabilities? Please complete a medical history. How is your family's health?
- *Suggested Alternative:* Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodations? (This question is okay if you thoroughly described the requirements of the job.)

➤ Arrest Record

- *Avoid:* Have you been arrested?
- You do not need to ask for this history. A search of Nebraska's Abuse/Neglect registries will be done. DHHS will ask for felony and misdemeanor convictions as part of the agreement process.

MAKING A DECISION

Trust your instincts. Do not choose someone who makes you uncomfortable. If you think someone is not right to work with you, there is probably a good reason for your feelings.

You may want to hire more than one provider. You should be clear with each provider about your expectations and their schedule. You may want to identify back-up providers. Ask if a provider is willing to work on-call or in an emergency. Do not let a good provider slip by. This can save you time searching for a provider later.

When you begin with a provider, be sure to have a back-up plan until you are sure that they are reliable. If the provider does not show up or call, hire someone else! This behavior does not usually change.

Do not get discouraged if you hire a provider and it is not a good match. You must trust your provider and feel comfortable. You may have to try several different providers before you find the right one. Be patient. You will find the right provider.

HOW DO I GET MY PROVIDER APPROVED TO START?

When you are considering hiring a person, let them know that you will be in touch. Ask when they are available to start. Tell the person that, if selected, you will set up an appointment to complete the necessary paperwork, background checks, and provider agreement. Your DD Service Coordinator will help you with the paperwork appointments.

Do not promise a person that they will be hired. A final decision cannot be made until required background checks are completed, an agreement is signed, and a service authorization is approved. DHHS will work with you and your provider to understand hiring timeframes. You need a back-up plan of support until your provider starts.

TRAINING MY PROVIDER

DOES DHHS TRAIN MY PROVIDER?

There are trainings offered by the Division. You should encourage your provider to attend. Trainings are available to any interested parties. You and your provider could go to training together! Many trainings are free. When there is a cost, training cannot be paid from your IBA. Check out www.dhhs.ne.gov/developmental_disabilities/Pages/aDDP-Training.aspx for more information about available training.

WHY DO I NEED TO TRAIN MY PROVIDER?

Just because someone has experience or knows you, does not mean they will know how you want things done. It is easier if you start by clearly giving your expectations. Training will ensure that your provider knows how you want things done.

WHAT SHOULD TRAINING INCLUDE?

Many problems between an employer and employee are due to lack of training and lack of communication. Allow your provider opportunities to ask you questions. You may want to occasionally ask if there is something you can help them do or learn. It is helpful to develop a training checklist to keep track of when you train or talk to your provider about various topics. If you have more than one provider, keep a checklist for each one.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

Provide a written job description of what you expect. Describe exactly what you want to happen on a daily or weekly basis. If services are provided in your home, give a tour and review house "rules."

Discuss the importance of arriving for work on time. Let them know how and when you want to be notified if they cannot make it or are running late.

If your provider wants you to spend time with their family or friends, they will need to have background checks before they can join you. Your providers should not bring underage children when they are working; they cannot meet your needs while meeting the needs of others. Your DD Service Coordinator can help you navigate the differences between a paid provider and friend.

PERSONAL PREFERENCES

Tell your provider what you think makes a good provider.

Tell your provider what "bugs you." For example, not being included in decisions, people talking about you instead of to you, or cell phone use. You can ask your provider not to talk, text, or play on their cell phone while being paid to work.

If you and your provider will go places, it is a good idea to discuss payment for meals and admission costs for events. If you want to go somewhere, such as a movie, and your provider would not normally go and cannot afford to pay their own way, you can pay for your provider's ticket. You cannot reimburse your provider for something they purchase. Your provider should not ask you to buy them things. If you think your provider is exploiting you, refer to the section on abuse and neglect.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Hopefully an emergency situation will never happen, but it is important to be prepared so that everyone can act quickly and in a calm manner. It is your responsibility to make sure your provider is trained to handle an emergency. You should discuss a plan during the first week of work and review as needed. If you have a fire extinguisher or smoke detector, make sure they are working properly and that your provider knows their location and use. Instruct your provider in evacuation routes in case of fire. If you live in an apartment building, show your provider where to find the fire alarms.

MEDICAL NEEDS, HEALTH, & SAFETY

Review your medical needs, including medications and allergies. Describe what a medical emergency might be for you and how you expect a provider to react. Be sure to train your provider on any medical conditions that may lead to medical events, such as diabetes or epilepsy/seizures.

Have a list of emergency phone numbers. Review them with your provider and make sure they know where to find them. If you and your provider will be in the community, it is a good idea to bring medical and emergency information in case an emergency arises.

WORKING WITH MY PROVIDER

A provider who is happy will work better. Being happy is not just about fair pay and working conditions. Encourage your provider to take pride in their work. This is easier if your provider believes you value them as a person. Praise your provider when they are doing something well. Respect for each other is important when you are working closely together. Positive feedback is one way of showing respect.

Sometimes you will need to give feedback that is not positive. This is not negative feedback, but constructive feedback. Give feedback as soon as you see an action that you do not like. If you wait, your provider may develop habits. Be direct and specific, explaining exactly what needs to be done differently. Be respectful. Do not target the character of your provider. Ask your provider to help find a solution. Focus on how to fix the problem instead of what went wrong.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISMISSING MY PROVIDER

There is always the possibility that a provider may not work out. If this happens, you need to end their employment.

If a provider puts your health or safety at risk, the provider should be immediately terminated and you should tell the proper people. If you are not sure, talk to your DD Service Coordinator. If you suspect you have been abused or neglected, call the hotline.

If you have a less-serious problem but do not want to continue working with a provider, you should plan how and when to dismiss them. If you dismiss a provider due to poor performance, it should not be a surprise. You should have talked to them about the problem. You may give a warning that if things do not improve you will dismiss them. For example, "You have not been able to work the hours we agreed on. If this does not improve next month, I will find someone else."

When possible, you should give your provider notice. This will give them time to look for another job. It will also give you time to replace them. With a back-up plan, you may have someone to fill in, but you will need to find a permanent provider.

It can be hard to tell your provider that you no longer want their services. It is a good idea to have someone with you when you tell them. Stay calm even if they are upset. Stick to the facts about what did not work and give specific reasons and examples. Be firm, but kind. If the provider has keys to your home or other property of yours, ask them to return it.

If you dismiss a provider, they are no longer authorized to work with you. They may still be a provider and work with others, if selected and authorized to do so. Just because they were not the right provider for you does not mean they might not be right for someone else. Again, if a provider put your health or safety at risk, report to the proper authorities.

WHEN DO I HAVE TO DISMISS MY PROVIDER?

If a report of abuse or neglect is substantiated concerning the provider (or a member of the provider's household, if services are delivered in their home), DHHS policy requires that the provider's agreement be terminated immediately. The same is true regarding convictions for certain crimes. If, at any time, you become aware of these issues regarding your provider, it is your obligation to report this information to your DD Service Coordinator so that the appropriate action may be taken.

MONITORING MY PLAN

WHO MONITORS MY SERVICES AND PROVIDERS?

You are responsible for knowing what can be paid as part of a service. You can review your provider's schedule and billing to verify that time reported is correct. You should keep your own calendar so that you can compare. You are expected to know that your provider bills correctly. Your provider should not bill if you have questions about the schedule or if it does not agree with your record. Discrepancies and questions must be resolved. It is important to make sure fraud is not committed.

Any time you have concerns, talk to your DD Service Coordinator. They can help make sure your needs are met. You should notify your Service Coordinator if you make adjustments to a provider's schedule, as this may affect your budget.

Your Service Coordinator monitors that services are provided as described in your individual support plan (ISP). Your Service Coordinator will talk with you and your provider about how things are going. Your Service Coordinator may watch your provider working.

MONITORING MY BUDGET

HOW DO I MONITOR MY BUDGET?

You are responsible for budgeting. It is important that you have a good system in place to monitor how much is being spent on your DD services. You may find that some weeks or months you need more or less hours than what is projected in your budget. This is okay, but you will need to adjust in future weeks and months to stay within your annual budget.

Do not hesitate to ask others to help you. Budgeting can seem complicated and overwhelming. It is entirely understandable if you do not want to do this on your own. A legal guardian, trusted family member, or your DD Service Coordinator can help.

Your Service Coordinator monitors your budget on a monthly basis. They should know your provider's schedule to work with you. You and your Service Coordinator should set a plan to talk that works for both of you. Your Service Coordinator's monthly monitoring will look at if you are getting the services you need. They will also monitor if you are staying within your budget. If needed, your Service Coordinator will help you change your plan to make sure you receive needed services while staying within your budget.

WHAT IS SHARE OF COST (SOC)?

You may have a share of cost (SOC) to be eligible for Medicaid. If so, SOC is assigned to a provider, and that amount is deducted from the payment Medicaid makes. You pay SOC to your provider. If you have more than one provider, you can tell your DD Service Coordinator which provider will get your SOC.

WHAT IF MONEY RUNS OUT BEFORE MY YEAR IS OVER?

Your services and funding are authorized on an annual basis. You are responsible for making sure your annual budget lasts for your budget year. There may be months where your spending is higher. In that case, you need to reduce spending another month to stay within your budget. Additional funds will not be available to you before your budget year ends.

Providers must accept Medicaid reimbursement as payment in full for services (payment from DHHS plus your obligation, if applicable). As a participant on a Medicaid waiver you cannot suggest, endorse, or agree to private pay arrangements. For example, you cannot pay additional mileage.

WHAT IF I DO NOT SPEND ALL THE MONEY I HAVE BUDGETED?

Your budget is good for one year. If you do not spend funds within the year, you cannot carry it over to the next year.

MY PROVIDER'S BILLING

In order for your provider to submit a billing claim for services, your provider must:

- Have a current service authorization for the services provided;
- Bill after services have been provided;
- Be present with you during the time they are billing for;
- Be the only provider working with you (two providers cannot bill for the same block of time); and
- Bill within 180 days of providing services.

Billing can be done on a computer program called Therap. If you ask for a copy of your provider's attendance information, they must provide it to you. You may access information about electronic billing at www.therapservices.net under the section for Nebraska independent providers.

If you have any questions about the billing process, talk to your DD Service Coordinator.