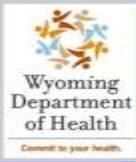


**Developmental  
Disabilities  
Division**



# Self-Direction News

## choice, self-direction and other common questions

### Waiver Mission

*The Developmental Disabilities Division's mission is to provide funding and guidance responsive to the needs of people with developmental disabilities and acquired brain injuries to live, work, enjoy, and learn in Wyoming communities with their families, friends, and chosen support services and support providers.*



### What Is Self-Direction?

Self-direction allows you as a waiver participant, or your legal representative, to decide which services would best meet your needs, encourages you to design your own plan of care, manage your own budget, decide who to hire and provide support for you, and negotiate the wages you want to pay to your employees.

Self-Direction is a process for delivering services that gives you more choices and control over the kinds of services you receive, how services are delivered, and by whom. These services are combined with natural supports and planned around your personal goals and preferences.

Self-directed services differ from traditional provider-driven service delivery, in which providers determine who will be hired, where staff will work, how much they will be paid, and how the services will be delivered. Self-directed services rely more on natural supports and coordinating with all available community and family resources.

**If you choose to self-direct services, you will use either a Fiscal/Employer Agent or an Agency with Choice to hire**

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**employees and pay for services.** More information on these options are included in this newsletter. Information on your options can also be explained to you by your case manager. Additional information is located on the Division's website at [health.wyo.gov/ddd](http://health.wyo.gov/ddd).

### Two service delivery options

Wyoming offers two options for service delivery:

- 1. Traditional service delivery**, in which the provider you choose determines the staff who will be hired or assigned to work with you, where staff will work, how much they will be paid, and how the services will be delivered overall.
- 2. Self-Directed service delivery**, in which you have more choice and control over the kinds of services received, how they are delivered, and by whom. And, if using the Fiscal Employer Agent model, you may purchase goods and services and have flexibility and authority to set wages for services within ranges.

### Can I do both?

Yes. You may choose to self-direct some of your waiver services and keep some services through traditional provider agencies.

## Self-Direction News

### What does a Traditional Provider do?

Instead of hiring workers directly, you can contract with a waiver provider agency to manage your support, which is the traditional way services have been delivered. Many provider agencies offer a variety of supports, ranging from personal care and habilitation services to job coaching or supported living and homemaking services. The main advantage of hiring through a provider agency is that the agency is responsible for sending a worker, and when needed, a back-up worker to you if your regular worker is unavailable.



When you hire an agency to provide workers, the agency as the employer has the responsibility of hiring, training and managing workers, and handling all of the employer duties. This arrangement means that you do not have to deal with the paperwork and details of hiring and employing a worker. It also means that you may not have a choice of who your workers are, and you may not be able to discipline or fire your workers directly; the agency will do this. You should, however, have the option of using different workers if the worker they send does not meet your needs. Hiring a provider agency to get workers will likely be more costly in your waiver budget than hiring your worker directly and the worker may be paid less per hour. Some of the cost goes toward administrative fees including worker's compensation, health and liability insurance, and possibly other benefits for your workers.

### What are the benefits to self-directing?

Self-directing to employ your own workers for can help you have more control and authority over your budget. A worker hired through self-direction may help with daily living tasks, including help to access community services and supports, employment, assisting you with household tasks such as laundry or grocery shopping, or providing personal care or money management. When you directly employ workers, you choose whom to hire and how they will do their job.

You can choose people you like—people who follow your directions and help you in the way you want to be helped. You and your assistants will be a team to ensure that you can do the things that you want and need to do. Being an employer comes with responsibilities. You will handle such things as the hiring, training, and supervising of your workers.



The Support Broker you hire can assist you in asking for help from people whom you have in your life or that you have chosen to participate on your plan of care team. You will want people on your team whose opinion you trust and who will respect your feelings and preferences throughout the process of hiring and managing workers. Think about your team members as your circle of support to help you choose and employ your workers.

Hiring and managing your own worker may be right for you. It may seem challenging, but with the right support, you can handle all of the steps and tasks involved. When you need help or do not understand something, your case manager and support broker are there to assist and support you along the way. You also will have a financial management service to handle many of the employer functions for you, such as tax and legal requirements. With the support of these people who care about you, you can do it!

*You do not have to do it alone!  
Your plan of care team is there to help!*

### What is Public Partnerships, LLC?

A waiver participant, who chooses to become the employer of record, would work directly with the Division's vendor for a Fiscal Employer Agent, Public Partnerships, LLC or "PPL". PPL contracts with the Division to provide this employment service for self-directing participants. You as the participant, with assistance from the Support Broker, hires support workers as "employees" and utilizes waiver funds to pay for these services.

People chosen by you as "the employer" complete a PPL employee enrollment packet, which includes information on the background screening process, training requirements, and other employment information. The Support Broker can assist you in ensuring that the enrollment packet is completed and returned to PPL prior to the employee providing reimbursable waiver services.

PPL will send you, Support Broker and the Case Manager monthly utilization summaries on your budget, process the payroll for your employees, and send reminders to you when your employee(s) need to receive updated trainings for things such as CPR or First Aid. In addition to these responsibilities, PPL will withhold appropriate taxes, file paperwork, process timesheets and payroll. The Employer of Record role allows you to have budget authority, negotiate wages with prospective employees, purchase goods and services, and provide unpaid caregiver training available only through PPL.

***The Self-Direction options through the waivers started on July 1, 2010. Since then, over 150 participants have signed up to self-direct and have more control over their services and their lives!***

Through the Public Partnerships Web Portal, you, your case manager and support broker have 24/7 online access to your account, allowing you to track your spending in real time. Your employees can opt to submit timesheets either electronically or by fax. In addition, many families have opted to self-direct goods and services through PPL—since July, families have purchased over \$17,000 worth of goods, including a recumbent bicycle, homemaking services, an adaptive car seat, and bowling equipment!

For more information, contact PPL Customer Service at 1-866-896-0040 or by e-mail at [pplwy@pcgus.com](mailto:pplwy@pcgus.com).

### What is an Agency with Choice?

Agency with Choice is another way to self-direct services. It is a type of provider agency that supports you to effectively hire and manage support workers yourself. In the Agency with Choice model, you and the agency share the employer duties. The agency handles many of the legal and technical employer duties, but you are the managing employer. You recruit, hire, supervise, and, if necessary fire, your own worker(s).

The agency may still keep the person hired to work with other people, but the person doesn't have to work with you. The agency can provide you with as much support as you request with these tasks; for example, the agency can help you recruit, interview, and provide 1<sup>st</sup> aid/CPR training for potential workers. However, the agency cannot interfere with your authority as the managing employer.

You and the agency enter into an agreement with each support worker that describes the duties and responsibilities of the support worker. While the Agency with Choice has the ultimate decision to retain that employee, the participant serves as the direct manager for that individual as the employee provides service to the participant.

Participants or their legal representatives self-directing services under Agency with Choice do not have budgetary authority, including the option to purchase Individual Goods and Services. If you choose an Agency with Choice to self-direct, the plan budget will also be increased to cover the cost of the Agency with Choice monthly fee.

### Why do I need a Support Broker to self-direct?

A Support Broker is chosen by you to help you self-direct and learn to perform your duties as an employer. Support Broker services are a requirement for the first year of self direction. If you are doing well and demonstrate that you need little assistance, then you may request to opt out of this service. The support broker chosen cannot provide any other services on your plan of care. They cannot have a conflict of interest with the other services you choose to receive. Since the service is a huge help, the Division will increase your plan of care budget to cover the cost of support brokerage for up to 80 hours a plan year.

## Self-Direction News

### What if I want to change to self-direction, or change traditional providers?

Your case manager should educate you in self-direction options twice a year or when you request it. They shall also offer you choice in case manager and providers at least two times a year. The case manager should offer you choice **before** coordinating your annual planning meeting and your six month review meeting. You can change providers at anytime, but there is a transition process that must be followed and the Division encourages participants not to change case managers more frequently than twice a year to keep consistency in service coordination. Let your case manager know if you want to review self-direction, your choice in providers, or search the Division's web-based provider list.

### What do I ask potential team members, agencies, providers?

When you contact any potential employee, provider, or agency make sure you ask about their policies, procedures and costs. You may ask them about the services they provide and their availability to meet your individual needs. For provider agencies you may want to ask, "Can I choose my workers? How do I make a complaint about a worker? What can I do when a person is not working out?" If you hire a provider agency to provide your support and have a problem that the agency will not solve, your case manager should assist you in dealing with the issues. To review your choice in providers, a searchable provider list is located on the Division's website <http://www.health.wyo.gov/ddd/ddd/provlist.html>.

### If you want to self direct...

**Step 1** Tell your case manager that you would like to self-direct services!

**Step 2** Select a Support Broker from the provider list. (Your case manager can provide you with a copy of this list and will help you add this person to your plan of care.)

**Step 3** Decide the way you want to self-direct and the amount of money from your budget that you and your team want to use for self-directed services and your case manager will modify your plan of care to include a self-directed service budget.

**Step 4** Choose to use either the Fiscal Employer Agent (Public Partnerships LLC) to do the employer paperwork so you can be the boss and hire your own staff, or choose an Agency with Choice to help you be a "co-employer" and the agency will help you hire staff.

For more information on self-directing your waiver services, review the self-direction handbook or talk with your case manager about this great opportunity!