



Self-Directed Services

Module 2: Supports in Self-Direction

Hello, and thank you for joining me today to learn about the Supports available in Self-Direction. This is the second video in a series of seven.

Supports Available in Self-Direction

Self-direction is based on the principle that the participant has freedom, choice and control over the services that support them. The participant is never alone in their self-direction journey. In this training we will review the supports a participant has. These include:

- Family
- Representative
- Support coordinator
- The Financial Management Services Agency, also called the FMSA

Family

The first support we will talk about today is the participant's family. The family is there to support the participant by:

- Being a sounding board for ideas and concerns
- Assisting with problem solving and thinking outside the box if asked
- Providing support when the participant gets discouraged
- Helping with recruiting/spreading the word to find caregivers

Family members can also be a back-up caregiver when wanted or needed. A family member can also serve as the Employer of Record if and when the participant requests it.

The family is there to support the participant. Even if a family member serves as the Employer of Record, the participant's choice is still what is important.

It is important that all supports take the time to communicate and listen to the participant's choices in the participant's preferred way.

Self-direction involves decision making and some risk. When needed, the family is there to support the participant through things that don't work and help them try something different. Being encouraging rather than dismissive will empower the participant to try things in a different way.

Representative

Another support available if a participant chooses is the representative. This person manages employer tasks on behalf of the participant, if the participant chooses. In this role, the representative will:

- Serve as Employer of Record (EOR)
- Manage Employer of Record tasks



- Approve workers' timesheets or Electronic Visit Verification time records
- Make sure spending does not exceed the amount authorized

The representative also

- Receives copies of notices sent to the participant by the Financial Management Services Agency and/or State of Alabama
- Assists the participant with hiring, managing, scheduling workers
- Attends meetings with the participant

Other Considerations for the Representative

Here are some additional things to know about the representative, they:

- Can be a legal representative, family member, or trusted friend
- Cannot be paid with waiver dollars for any reason
- For example, they cannot be paid to serve as Employer of Record or paid to provide any waiver services
- Cannot be hired as a worker
- Must be willing and able to fulfill Employer of Record responsibilities
- Have a background check, as applicable

Support Coordinator

The support coordinator is always there for the participant to provide ongoing information and assistance. Specifically, the support coordinator is there to:

- Inform participant about self-direction
- Conduct all required assessments
- Coordinate participant's services and supports
- Ensure needs are met and a participant-directed service plan is created and updated as needed
- Approve the self-directed service plan

Other responsibilities for the support coordinator include:

- Reviewing Financial Management Services Agency spending reports with the participant/Employer of Record to ensure spending is within program guidelines
- Educating participants about fraud, abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- Keeping in regular contact with the participant to ensure needs are met

Responsibilities: Support Coordinator Versus Participant

To help clarify the responsibilities, let's take a closer look at the role of the support coordinator versus the participant. The support coordinator:

- Informs the participant about self-direction and which services can be self-directed
- The support coordinator will approve services that can be self-directed



- The support coordinator provides information and support regarding being an employer

The participant will:

- Decide if self-direction is appropriate
- Determine which services to self-direct
- Decide to be the Employer of Record or appoint a representative to recruit, interview, hire and manage employees

Financial Management Services Agency (FMSA)

Finally, we will talk about how the Financial Management Services Agency supports the participant. The Financial Management Services Agency handles payroll and administrative duties on behalf of the participant. They are responsible for:

- Helping the Employer of Record fill out paperwork to be the legally recognized employer
- Training the Employer of Record about their responsibilities, including budget management and timesheet submission
- Assisting with paperwork and reporting for new workers
- Processing payroll
- Establishing and maintaining a budgetary savings balance for participants
- Filing employer taxes for the Employer of Record

Other things to know about the Financial Management Services Agency include:

- Even though the Financial Management Services Agency pays the workers, the Financial Management Services Agency is not the employer
- The Financial Management Services Agency is not the worker's boss
- The support coordinator is not the worker's boss
- The Employer of Record is the sole employer of the workers
- This includes all the choice and control of being an employer

Misunderstandings About Self-Direction

Some people misunderstand how self-direction works. Knowing the truth about self-direction can help the participant be an advocate for what they need and how they go about getting it. Here are some incorrect myths about self-direction.

1. The participant has to do everything for themselves. The truth is the supports we went over in this presentation are available to help empower and support the participant. This includes the support coordinator, Financial Management Services Agency, and the participant's friends and family.
2. There is a lot of fraud in self-direction. The truth is there is no more fraud in self-direction when compared to traditional services. When participants are in charge of their own budget and take ownership, they do not want to do anything to jeopardize their place in the program, and ultimately their lives.



3. Some people believe that self-direction is only for high functioning individuals. In fact, self-direction is for anyone. The participant has resources to help them, and they can assign duties to family or friends if needed.

Thank You

Thank you for watching Training 2: Supports in Self-Direction. If you need more information, please refer to the handbook or contact your support coordinator.