

OPWDD Self-Direction



Cayle White

Benefits Co-ordinator

Center for Special Needs

Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan

What is Self Direction?

- ❑ **A service delivery model for individuals with developmental disabilities that gives them personal choice and flexibility over the goods, services and goods that they require.**
- ❑ **Self-Direction is administered through the State Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities and the Medicaid Waiver Program.**
- ❑ **Prior to the introduction of Self-Direction service delivery was limited to agencies with limited resources and availability.**

Individualized Planning and Personal Authority:

- ❑ **Self-Direction allows an individual to choose from a broad range of options to meet the goals outlined in the Lifeplan, resulting in a highly customized plan closely aligned with the individual's personal priorities and interests.**

The individual can also use their Self-Direction budget to purchase services from an agency if they choose to.

- ❑ **The individual uses the funds allocated in their Personal Resource Account through their yearly self- direction budget.**
- ❑ **The amount of the yearly budget is determined by an Approved Needs Assessment Tool such as a CAS Interview or DDP2 survey conducted by the OPWDD on the individual resulting in a numeric score.**

Why Should I Apply for OPWDD Services?

- ❑ **The yearly OPWDD budget can amount to double digits adding up to millions over the lifetime of the individual. This allows them to access activities and services they might not otherwise be able to afford.**
- ❑ **OPWDD is different from the DOE, and you can have both at the same time.**
- ❑ **The DOE covers the individual up to age 21 and relates to academic issues such as school placements and in-school services.**

Applying cont'd

- ❑ **The OPWDD is focused on broader and more long term goals like housing, independent living, employment, socialization and inclusion in society.**
- ❑ **OPWDD enrollment comes with Medicaid, which can be used as a secondary insurance.**

Who Qualifies?

- **Autism spectrum disorder***
- **Intellectual disability - IQ Under 70**
- **Cerebral Palsy (CP)**
- **Neurological Impairment**
- **Epilepsy**
- **Familial Dysautonomia**
- **Prader-Willi Syndrome**

(Mobility issues as a secondary condition)

(Hearing and vision impairments qualify for a specific Waiver)

Eligibility cont'd

- **The Disability has to have occurred before age 22, but this does not mean that someone over 22 cannot apply.**
- **Mental health issues are not considered for eligibility**
- **ASD with IQ over 70 with low adaptive scores.**
- **Or, ASD with an IQ lower than 70, and than considered as ASD accompanied by Intellectual disability**

How do I apply?

- ❑ **The first step is to attend the online Front Door Webinar - register through the link on the OPWDD website and then the attendance confirmation certificate will be emailed to you.**
- ❑ **Gather the required documentation together and contact the CCO intake person for your borough who will send you an application and then submit your completed packet directly to the OPWDD.**
- ❑ **Within 2-3 months if the individual is deemed eligible they will receive a Notice of Determination from the OPWDD.**
- ❑ **They will then be assigned a Care Manager through the CCO. It is not uncommon to work with several Care Managers over the course of several years.**

What Happens Next?

- ❑ Once you are assigned a Care Manager you have to specifically let them know that you are choosing Self-Direction.
 - You will then be required to attend another webinar called a “Self-Direction Orientation” and provided with a list of Self-Direction Brokers.
 - It is not advisable to pick a random broker from the list but try to ask from referrals from other parents or disability advocacy groups.
- ❑ The Care Manager will conduct a series of assessments (DDP2 and CAS) to determine the size of the yearly budget.
- ❑ Unused funds cannot be rolled over from the previous year’s budget, but funds can be moved from different categories during the same year.

DDP2's etc...

- ❑ The DDP-2 Interview is done over the phone with a social worker from the OPWDD. The responses are all parent informed.
- ❑ You may not receive any advance warning so be prepared.
- ❑ DDP-2's must be updated every two years at a minimum. In the future it may be replaced by the Coordinated Assessment system (CAS).
- ❑ The scores from the DDP-2 assessment can be used to calculate the ISPM (Individual Services Planning Model.) The Score will then be used to determine the size of the Self-Direction budget that will be awarded to the individual with the disability.

Always review the report from the DDP2 and any other report carefully for accuracy and completeness.

CAS - Coordinated Assessment System

- ❑ **The Coordinated Assessment System (CAS) is a comprehensive assessment tool that OPWDD uses to identify a person's strengths, needs and interests to help with the person-centered planning for his/her care.**
- ❑ **The CAS starts with a conversation to gather information. The CAS looks at all areas of the person's life such as living skills, health, behavior and supports to help develop a care plan that is unique to you. This approach also includes talks with others who know the person well, such as their circle of support, family members, friends and staff providing your supports.**

The CAS is now being used for people who are 18 years of age or older, newly eligible or who are transitioning to adult services.

CAS Continued

- ❑ The CAS interview is conducted by an independent evaluator, usually outsourced to a third party (maximus.)
- ❑ It consists of a one -two hour meeting (Zoom) where the individual receiving services will be interviewed .
- ❑ This is not like a job interview.
- ❑ A report will be written and added to the individual's TABS file and can be used for their LifePlan
- ❑ You can review it and make corrections and edits.

Start Up and Support Broker

The Broker is a professional that is responsible for providing support to a person who chooses to take on Budget Authority and educating the person and their family on Self-Directed service options.

They also assist with developing and maintaining a Self-Direction budget.

- ❑ Writing the Staff Action Plans
- ❑ Facilitating Circle of Support Meetings
- ❑ And other support tasks

Brokers can be independent contractors, or may work for an agency. OPWDD pays the Broker for working with you on your initial self-directed plan (Start Up.)

FI's - Fiscal Intermediaries

- The FI (Fiscal Intermediary) is a non-profit agency that serves as “employer of record” for Self-Direction plans with Budget Authority.
 - Their responsibilities include:
- Initial budget review and amendments.
- Implementing payment or reimbursement for approved goods and services.
- Background checks and processing staff payroll.
- Collecting service-related documents.
- Brokers typically work with several FI's of their choosing.

A Note About Care Managers

- ❑ Once you have eligibility you must choose to work with a CCO, and they will provide you with a care manager.
- ❑ Care Managers receive very little training and there is very little oversight, so be attentive and pro-active.
- ❑ They have huge caseloads and are inexperienced.
- ❑ Care Managers are generally not knowledgeable about Self-Direction and may not offer you the choice, so make sure to specifically request it and mention it at every meeting since it must be included on all documentation including the Lifeplan.
- ❑ Try to cc the supervisor on every email. If the Care Manager is not responsive contact the supervisor.

What is the Lifeplan?

- ❑ Similar to the IEP, the Lifeplan is a document that outlines the individual's specific goals. It highlights their areas of strength, support needs, preferences, recommended services and health and safety safeguards.
- ❑ It is created collaboratively with input from the Circle of Support which can include the individual, their care manager, self-direction broker, family members and friends, support staff, clinicians and professionals and any one else the individual trusts and wishes to add their input.
- ❑ If the family or individual is choosing Self Direction it is essential that this is mentioned in the Lifeplan.

Service Categories Provided Within the Budget

Support Broker

IDGS

OTPS

FSS

FRR

Respite

Housing Subsidy

Live in Caregiver

Community Habilitation

SEMP (Supportive Employment)

Group Day Habilitation

Prevocational Services

Pathways to Employment

Living in a Residential Setting

Services Provided Outside of the Budget

Start Up Brokerage

Fiscal Intermediary

Community Transition Services

ISS Transition Stipend

Article 16 Clinic Services

Environmental Modifications

Adaptive Technologies

Continued

Intensive Behavioral Services

Long Term Sheltered Employment Contracts

**Certified Residential Habilitation, Supervised,
Supported or Family Care**

Care Coordination

IDGS

IDGS are services, equipment or supplies not otherwise provided through OPWDD's HCBS waiver or through the Medicaid State Plan.

- **These must be associated with needs goals identified in the Lifeplan.**
- **Must be for the benefit of the individual subject of the Lifeplan and related to a valued outcome.**
- **Are for the purpose of increasing independence or substituting for human assistance and/or promote opportunities for community living and inclusion.**

IDGS

Examples of IDGS include:

- **Transportation (reimbursement related to mileage or to pay for public transportation to/from a service related activity)**
- **Community Classes and Gym Memberships**
- **Summer Camp**
- **Hydro, Music and Equine Therapy**
- **Family Coaching and Education**

OTPS

- ❑ **Other Than Personal Services are for people who are self-directing their services with Budget Authority.**
- ❑ **They may choose to use up to \$3,000 from their budget for additional goods and services that are not Medicaid-fundable.**
- ❑ **OTPS are 100% State funded and must meet the following criteria:**
 - ❑ **• Relate to a valued outcome in the person's plan**
 - ❑ **• Increase independence and/or the ability to live safely at home**
 - ❑ **• Other resources must first be explored and exhausted.**

Community Habilitation and SEMP

- ❑ **Community Habilitation**
- ❑ **A “Com-Hab “ worker is a specialist who provides individualized skills training in the home and the community. Similar to a Life Coach**
- ❑ **This corresponds to the goals outlined in the Lifeplan.**
- ❑ **Focus is on increasing a person’s independence in the areas of self care, executive function, social skills development, money management, safety, household tasks, community integration and job success.**

SEMP (Supportive Employment)

- ❑ SEMP provides job-skills training, resume development, interview preparation, application assistance, intensive job-coaching and on-site support to people who wish to obtain and maintain competitive employment.**

FSS - Family Support Services

Helping families provide at-home care for loved ones with developmental disabilities

Family Support Services can provide them with:

- ❑ Someone to call for support**
- ❑ Information about OPWDD programs and services**
- ❑ Respite Services, which provide temporary relief from care giving**
- ❑ Family reimbursement for purchases of goods and services**

Respite and Family Reimbursed Respite

Respite - providing temporary relief for the primary caregiver of the individual through structured and supervised oversight.

- ❑ **FRR is respite that is in addition to or instead of Respite that is Direct Provider Purchased, Agency Supported and Self-Hired.**
- ❑ **It is intended to be used as needed by a parent/caregiver of someone who is self-directing.**
- ❑ **• FRR is capped at \$3,000 annually**

Housing Subsidy

Persons over 18 who choose to live independently may be able to include a Housing Subsidy in their budget.

- ❑ The rental, lease or mortgage must be in the name of the individual who is self directing.
- ❑ If they are in a shared living environment, the person self-directing must have clear tenancy rights.
- ❑ The subsidy amount is calculated based on local rents from HUD FMR (Fair Market Rents) payment standards.
- ❑ If receiving the housing subsidy, they are unable to receive Family Support Services or Family Reimbursed Respite.

Paid Neighbor and Live-In Caregiver

- ❑ A "paid neighbor" can help an individual when they need assistance with a particular task. They are "on-call" to help you once in a while because of a problem or task you can't manage on your own.**
- ❑ The paid neighbor must be located within 30 minutes of the individual.**
- ❑ They are paid a stipend through IDGS.**

Live-In Caregiver

- ❑ The LIC is a care provider who resides in the same household as the individual and provides as needed supports to address the individual's physical, social, or emotional needs in order for the individual to live safely and happily in their own home.
- ❑ The LIC may not be related to the individual by blood or marriage, and cannot be someone who has control or authority over decisions regarding the individual's resources.
- ❑ A portion of additional costs incurred by the individual that can be reasonably attributed to the LIC for room and board will be reimbursed. Room and board includes rent, utilities and food.

Upsides and Downsides of Self-Direction

- ❑ Many of the supports and services require families to cover the initial costs and then they have to wait for reimbursement (exceptions are self-hire staff such as com-hab workers who are paid directly by the FI's.)**
- ❑ Some facilities may be authorized to accept Direct Pay (or may have an arrangement with a broker) but if they are not the broker can request their W9 and reimburse them directly.**
- ❑ While most payments can take 30 days for reimbursement delays are not infrequent and can vary according to the location, the individual FI and the nature of the service.**
- ❑ Even Direct Payments can take 4-6 weeks.**
- ❑ Since allowable expense standards are not uniform many FI's will deny certain expenses resulting in further delays for reimbursement.**

Cont'd

- ❑ Current labor shortage issues and difficulties in finding paid staff but brokers are becoming creative and creating staff hiring agencies.**
- ❑ Wait time for budget approval has increased - can take 6 months to 1 year.**
- ❑ If the budget requires amendments that can add an additional 6 months or more to the wait time.**
- ❑ In the interim while families are waiting for approval they can access traditional services.**
- ❑ Any other services paid for before budget approval are not eligible for reimbursement including any loans.**