



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): **Changes to the Self Determination Program**

1. What is the “Self Determination” program?

The Self Determination program was the Division of Developmental Disabilities’ (Division) first program (beginning in the late 1990s) designed to offer self-directed services to individuals with developmental disabilities in New Jersey. The program has been closed to new participants since early 2003.

2. Is the Self Determination program changing?

Yes. The Self Determination program is changing as a result of a series of system reforms related to both the recent realignment in State government and the approval of New Jersey’s Comprehensive Medicaid Waiver. All individuals served through the Division, including those currently participating in the Self Determination program, must be Medicaid eligible and enrolled on either the Community Care Waiver (CCW) or the Supports Program (SP).¹ All services that individuals receive must be covered by the waiver program that the individual is on, related to the individual’s assessed need, and in compliance with all waiver program policies. As a result, Self Determination participants may be subject to some change to their service package if they are currently receiving services that cannot be covered by one of these waiver programs.

3. Why are these changes needed?

These changes are needed in order to establish consistent policies and practices across the system and to maintain each Self Determination participant’s ability to stay on a waiver program. Noncompliance with these policies could jeopardize an individual’s services as well as the State’s ability to collect federal revenues for these critical services.

4. I have heard that there are “cuts” in services. Is that true?

Absolutely not. In fact, the Administration has increased funding to the DD system in recent years. In the FY2013 State Budget, the Governor dedicated over \$50 million in increased funding to serve both existing consumers as well as new ones. While there may be some specific services which cannot continue to be covered, individuals will be able to use their other resources (income, benefits, etc.) to pay for these uncovered items and services.

¹ The Supports Program is a program currently under development by the Division that was included in New Jersey’s Comprehensive Medicaid Waiver. Enrollment onto the Supports program is anticipated to begin during FY2014.

5. How will Self Determination participants' budgets be established as these changes are implemented?

Every participant in the Self Determination program has been evaluated using the Developmental Disabilities Resource Tool (DDRT) assessment. The DDRT assessment relates to a budget matrix. Each participant will be able to utilize their assigned budget to fund waiver services as needed. For many Self Determination participants, these changes will mean access to an expanded package of services.

6. How will these changes be implemented and when will they occur?

The process to implement these changes will begin in February 2013 and will start with three (3) regional meetings held with Self Determination participants (and their families) in order to discuss the upcoming changes and the process. Individual meetings will then be set up with each participant in order to develop a service plan that identifies services based on assessed needs and comports with all applicable policies. Every effort will be made to maintain existing services through the CCW or SP or through the identification of natural supports and generic resources. Meeting with each individual one-by-one will take some time. Individuals with Medicaid eligibility issues will be prioritized in this process. Nothing will change for any Self Determination participant until their individualized meeting is held and the team works through the changes and an appropriate transition plan.

7. What will happen to my Support Broker?

As these reforms are implemented, each participant will be provided a Support Coordinator (SC) who will facilitate the person-centered planning process, write the service plan, and assist in identifying service providers. In cases where the Support Broker meets the qualifications to become a SC and is willing to accept the established monthly rate for Support Coordination services, he/she will be able to continue working with the participant as his/her SC. The established monthly cost of Support Coordination will not be deducted from individual budgets determined by the DDRT, allowing individuals to use these funds for needed waiver services. DDD will pay the standard SC rate as an administrative expense for all waiver participants.

In addition to Support Coordination, individuals who require additional assistance in arranging, directing, and managing services will be able to access Supports Brokerage with their budget. Supports Brokers will need to meet the qualifications to provide this specialized service. The Division will also be facilitating a meeting with Support Brokers in the coming weeks to explain this process in more detail.