



What the New Fiscal Intermediary Means for Individuals/Families

The Department of Human Services (DHS) recently announced the selection of Public Partnerships, LLC (PPL) as the new Fiscal Intermediary (FI) for the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Division of Disability Services (DDS), and Division of Aging Services (DoAS). This means that the current FI for DDD will shift from Easter Seals to PPL.

Will PPL function the same way as Easter Seals in terms of my Self-Directed Employee?

No. Easter Seals functioned in an **Agency with Choice** (AwC) service delivery model. With the transition to PPL, New Jersey is also shifting to a **Fiscal/Employer Agent** (F/EA) service delivery model.

In an Agency with Choice Model:

- **The Agency is the employer of record** (or *common law employer*).
- The Agency and program participant have a **co-employer relationship** with regard to an SDE providing services to the participant.
- The Agency is responsible for hiring the SDE and managing duties related to tax, labor, and workers' compensation. The participant may refer an SDE to the agency for hire, and maintains some duties in overseeing the day-to-day management of the SDE.

In a Fiscal/Employer Agent Model:

- **The program participant or his/her designated representative is the employer of record.** (A representative can be anyone the participant knows and trusts.)
- The participant (or his/her representative) is responsible for hiring, firing, training and/or tracking completed training, and managing Self-Directed Employees.
- The Fiscal/Employer Agent plays a supporting role in administrative duties, which can include managing payroll duties, completing and filing tax forms, withholding, depositing, and filing taxes, all on the participant's behalf, and ensuring participant expenditures are in accordance with program rules and the participant's individual budget.

AwC and F/EA overviews excerpted from the National Resource Center on Participant-Directed Services

What are the benefits of shifting to a Fiscal/Employer Agent Model?

In addition to enhancing New Jersey's alignment with national best practice principles, shifting to an F/EA service delivery model:

- Increases **choice, control, and freedom** for the participant
- Increases **flexibility** for the participant
- Supports and reflects **person-centered planning and service model**

- **Enables participant to determine SDE pay rate** (previously, SDE pay rate was capped at \$15/hour)
- **Enables participant to hire a family member** (except for parent, legal guardian, or spouse)
- **Allows a family member who resides in the home to become a paid SDE** (except for parent, legal guardian, or spouse)

It is also important to note that this type of service delivery model has been **very successfully used** by the Division of Disability Services for its Personal Preference Program, a program accessed by many Division consumers. Many families whose loved one currently receives services from an SDE have shared that this model is more in line with **true self-direction** and have recommended this model for all self-directed services.

What happens if I don't want to use the Fiscal/Employer Agent Model for my Self-Directed Employee?

Under the contract with PPL, the only way that a participant can receive services from a Self-Directed Employee is under the F/EA model. Individuals/families not comfortable with the F/EA model have the option to access services through a traditional provider agency.

Will my Self-Directed Employee need to complete new employment paperwork?

As with any transition to a new employer, there will be some required paperwork that an employee must complete. PPL is highly experienced in this area and fully prepared to assist individuals/families in ensuring their workers' paperwork is submitted accurately.

Why has the Division instituted mandatory training for Self-Directed Employees?

The Division greatly values the importance of Self-Directed Employees as an option in our service delivery system. The Division also has an obligation to ensure the health and safety of the individuals we serve, regardless of who is providing the service.

Following many months of discussion with families, and in response to the concerns that were raised, the Division modified its initial training requirements. The new training requirements for Self-Directed Employees providing Division-funded services are outlined below.

Mandated Training for ALL Self-Directed Employees and Approved SDE Back-ups:

- **Individual/Family Orientation** – individual/family determines length and topics
- **DDD System Mandatory Training Bundle** – up to six months from hire to complete, with online and non-online options available (bundle includes DDD's Shifting Expectations; Preventing Abuse/Neglect/Exploitation plus on-site competency assessment; Danielle's Law)
- **CPR/First Aid** – up to 6 months from hire to complete (re-certification every 2 years)

Mandated Training for SDEs who will Administer Medication

- **Medication Administration** – to be completed before the worker administers medications
- **On-site Medication Competency Assessment** (up to 6 months to complete)

Mandated Training for SDEs who will Provide Services to an Individual with a Behavior Plan

- Behavior Plan training by the author of the plan – up to six months from hire to complete

Specialized Training

- As applicable – individual/family to determine length, and topics, and if needed

Who will pay for the mandated Self-Directed Employee trainings?

The Division will fund the cost of the trainings themselves and will also cover the cost of the SDE's time to complete the trainings. (A single standardized pay rate for all Division-funded SDE training hours will be established by the Division prior to June 1.)

What if my current Self-Directed Employee isn't able to complete an online training?

This was a concern that was raised by families. In response to these concerns, the Division will make a non-online version of the mandated trainings available to SDEs.

My Self-Directed Employee works full time and receives health benefits from Easter Seals. What will happen to those health benefits?

While many workers currently employed as SDEs work part-time, sometimes for more than one employer, there are some SDEs who are full-time employees who received health benefits from Easter Seals. As with any change from one employer to another, health benefits from a former employer are discontinued.

Under the new F/EA model, the participant or his/her designated representative is able to determine the rate of pay received by the SDE. While the participant as employer of record will not be required to provide health benefits, if the participant wants to ensure that his/her SDE receives benefits (such as paid leave, healthcare etc.), the participant can include the cost for these benefits in the hourly rate provided to the SDE.

Notably, an initial review of SDEs in the Division's system showed that fewer than 10% of them are currently utilizing health benefits provided by Easter Seals. Of those, many are expected to have health benefits available through a spouse's employer or another source, such as Medicaid or Medicare.

What happens if my Self-Directed Employee is injured while on the job?

Worker's Compensation is provided through PPL and is funded from the individual's budget at an annual cost of \$92.00, regardless of the number of SDEs employed by an individual.

What if I need to hire a Self-Directed Employee before the new Fiscal Management Services provider is in place?

Billing and payment for current SDEs will continue to be handled as it has been until the transition to the new Fiscal Management Service provider and the new Fiscal/Employer Agent service delivery model occurs on June 1. If an individual needs/wishes to employ a new worker before May 1, the application

and paperwork will be processed by Easter Seals. Beginning May 1, new SDE applications will be processed by PPL.

Please note that an SDE who is employed through Easter Seals prior to May 1 **will need to complete a new application** with PPL in order to continue to provide services after June 1.

What if I have questions about the transition to PPL or to the new Fiscal/Employer Agent model?

The Division understands that families may have questions and concerns that are not addressed here. PPL will conduct trainings throughout the state in March/April, and PPL representatives are available by phone at **1.855.243.8775**.

In addition, the Division's **Provider and Family Division Update Meetings** are scheduled for **Tuesday, March 21**. The transition to the new Fiscal Management Service provider and Fiscal/Employer Agent model will be a topic of discussion at those meetings, which as always, will include ample time for questions from attendees.