

Personal Preference Program (PPP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the New Jersey Personal Preference Program (PPP)?

The New Jersey Personal Preference Program (PPP) offers an alternative way for NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid members to receive their Personal Care Assistant (PCA) services without the use of a home health care agency. PPP allows NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid eligible members to self-direct and manage their PCA services.

2. What does “Self-Directing” mean?

Self-directing emphasizes independence and empowerment by expanding your degree of choice and control over your long-term services and supports. Self-directing allows you to select who provides your care on the schedule that best fits your needs.

3. If I am unable to manage my services, would I be able to qualify?

If you are unable to manage the responsibilities of directing and supervising your personal care need you may participate, but will be required to have an authorized representative (AR) to act on your behalf. An authorized representative may be your legal guardian, a family member, or any other individual identified who willingly accepts the responsibility for decision-making on your behalf that meets the AR requirements.

Please note your PPP worker cannot also be your AR in accordance with PPP guidelines. The AR must reside within 30 miles or one hour from your residence.

4. How does the Personal Preference Program work?

You, or someone you designate as authorized representative (AR), can choose the workers you want to hire to provide your personal care services. You decide what schedule this person will follow, how much you pay them, and the job responsibilities they perform within your approved budget.

It is important to be mindful of your monthly budget when determining how much to pay your worker(s). The more you pay your worker(s) the less hours are available in your monthly budget for services.

5. Who pays for this program? Will I have to pay any out of pocket expenses for participating?

NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid pays for PPP. You do not have to pay anything related to participating in PPP. However, your monthly PPP budget is reduced each month to pay for associated program costs and fees.

6. What is the role of the Fiscal Intermediary in the Personal Preference Program?

A fiscal intermediary helps you manage the financial responsibilities as well as provides Information and Assistance (I&A) services to support you with being an employer in the PPP. Some of these responsibilities are:

- Paying your workers;

- Filing your paperwork with the IRS;
- Paying employer fees, taxes,
- Sending out payment for goods and services you use, within program rules;
- Arranging for required Workers' Compensation insurance:
- Sharing tips and tricks for finding and hiring workers; and
- Creating a backup plan.

Public Partnerships, LLC (PPL) currently provides fiscal intermediary (FI) services for PPP participants.

7. How is the monthly budget determined?

Your MCO (Aetna Better Health NJ, Fidelis Care NJ, Horizon NJ Health, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, or Wellpoint) is responsible for authorizing the number of NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid PCA hours you are eligible to receive, provide you with options counseling, and enroll you into the PPP.

The MCO uses the hours of service authorized from your initial PCA clinical assessment (or most recent reassessment) as the basis for determining your monthly budget.

The financial consultant will assist you in developing a cash management plan (CMP) to help determine how best to spend your monthly budget to purchase services that you need.

8. How do I receive my monthly budget?

As the fiscal intermediary for the program, PPL issues the budget on a monthly basis. The monthly budget amount is deposited into an account established by PPL for you. You direct PPL to make payments through the use of your cash management plan (CMP) , as you see fit and within program guidelines. PPL handles all payroll responsibilities, tax deductions, and withholding obligations.

9. Who can I hire?

The program gives you the ability to hire anyone you are comfortable with, such as friends, relatives, or neighbors or utilize an accredited agency. You do not have to use an agency, although this is still an option. You can even use a combination of accredited agency workers and individuals you hire directly.

A person must meet all of these requirements to be a worker in self-direction:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Able to perform all services/tasks needed by participant
- Able to provide care at the schedule requested
- Is authorized to work in the United States (I-9 Form required)
- Complete all necessary paperwork to provide care through PPP

10. Can I get background checks performed on my workers?

Yes. You can request a variety of background checks on potential workers. PPL will provide you with information on the various background checks that are available and costs associated with this effort.

You can choose to use your monthly budget to pay for any costs associated with requesting a background check to be completed on a worker.

11. Can a Personal Preference Participant also serve as a worker for another participant?

No. As a PPP participant, you cannot serve as a worker for another PPP participant, PCA program, or other self-directed personal care program.

12. How many PPP workers can I have?

You and your authorized representative are responsible for managing and supervising all workers. You may select as many as needed to be your primary **workers** and designate the others as backup **workers**. There is no limit to the number of **workers** you may have, but their total monthly hours worked must be supported by your budget.

13. How do my workers get paid?

Your worker will submit their worked time and you, as the employer of record, or your authorized representative will approve. PPL provides a phone app called **Time4Care™** and an internet based web portal, **BetterOnline™** that allows your workers to submit time worked in real time. You and your authorized representative, service coordinators, and families can view individual budgets, service authorizations, and spending history in real time. You will be able to submit program related forms, review timesheets, manage your cash management plan (CMP), and track the payroll process. Your worker can choose to have their paycheck mailed to their home or have it directly deposited into their bank account.

14. What happens to my participation in the Personal Preference Program during a Hospital/Rehabilitation Facility/Nursing Home stay?

Your participation in PPP will be suspended for the time you are away from home (i.e. hospitalization, rehabilitation, nursing home, etc.). Your worker is not allowed to work or submit timesheets during your absence from home, since the facility is responsible for meeting your daily personal care needs. You must let your MCO and PPL know whenever you are in the hospital or other facility. You will also need to notify them when you return home so you may resume your PPP services.

The continuation of PPP services while a participant is in the hospital, rehabilitation facility, or nursing home is a Duplication of Services and considered fraud.

15. Can I pay my caregiver/worker overtime if they work more than 40 hours a week?

No, a single caregiver in PPP cannot be authorized to work more than 40 hours in a week. If your budget allows you to purchase more than 40 hours in a week, you must hire a secondary employee.