

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is self-determination?

Self-Determination is all about individuals making choices based on their preferences, beliefs and abilities. It means individuals taking control over and participating in decisions that impact the quality of their life, taking risks and assuming responsibility for their actions. Self-determination may be referred to as self-direction or consumer-direction.

What is self-directed service delivery?

It is a way of providing home and community based services whereby informed individuals make choices about the services they receive. Self-directed service delivery ranges from the individual independently making all decisions and managing services directly, to an individual using a representative to manage needed services.

What are the advantages of self-direction?

Advantages of self-direction include:

- Personally-controlled planning process, with support from family and friends
- Individualized budgeting
- Choice of where and when supports are provided
- Assistance in locating and accessing supports in the community
- Choice and direction of support workers
- Control by the participant of how his/her budgeted funds are spent for approved services and goods
- Greater flexibility

What is Independence Plus?

Independence Plus is an initiative developed by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to provide guidance and assistance to states wishing to implement self-direction programs for persons with disabilities and their families.

What is the Georgia Independence Plus Initiative?

The Georgia Independence Plus Initiative is a collaborative effort between the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Department of Community Health (DCH), Division of Medical Assistance. Grant funding from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is supporting this three-year initiative. The overall goal of the initiative is to develop a comprehensive system of self-directed services and supports for individuals with disabilities

(developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, traumatic brain injury) and older adults. The initiative also includes a project to develop a mental health self-determination pilot design.

What are the goals of the Georgia Independence Plus Initiative?

The goals of Georgia's Independence Plus Initiative are:

- Develop a methodology by which all individual budgets in the state will be calculated;
- Adapt the Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement system of the waiver programs for self-directed service delivery;
- Design access to the self-directed service delivery system, and self-directed supports, including supports brokerage, and fiscal management services;
- Develop a self-determination master plan; and
- Develop a mental health pilot design based on peer support and the Medicaid Rehabilitation Option.

When will Georgia offer self-directed services?

Georgia has already begun offering self-directed services. DHR and DCH amended Home and Community Based Waivers for people with disabilities and older adults to offer self-direction options. The Independent Care Waiver Program (ICWP) for individuals with physical disabilities and adults with traumatic brain injury began to offer a self-direction option in November 2005. The Mental Retardation Waiver Program (MRWP) for persons with mental retardation/developmental disabilities started offering a self-direction option in July 2006. The Community Care Services Program (CCSP) for older adults and those with functional impairments is scheduled to begin offering a self-direction option in January 2007.

How are the initial implementation of self-directed services and the Independence Plus Initiative related?

This initial implementation of self-direction is expected to provide a real-world test for some of the proposed system design changes that are being developed during Georgia's Independence Plus Initiative described above.

What are the responsibilities of participants in self-direction?

Responsibilities of each participant or family/representative in self-direction include:

- Planning and directing services and supports
- Recruiting, hiring, and managing his/her own support workers.
- Reporting and documenting as required

How will individuals who choose the self-direction option be trained and supported in their new roles and responsibilities?

Individuals who choose the self-direction option will receive orientation training on the responsibilities of self-direction, including management of the employment of support workers, understanding and accessing the self-directed supports of Financial Support Services and Support Coordination/Support Brokerage, and requirements of participation in self-direction. Financial Support Services providers and Support Coordinators/Support Brokers will provide ongoing support to participants in self-direction.

How will Financial Support Services providers assist participants in self-direction?

Financial Support Services providers perform customer-friendly, fiscal support functions or accounting consultation services for the participant or family/representative. These services include:

- Performing payroll responsibilities
- Writing checks for approved services and goods
- Tracking and monitoring individual budget expenditures
- Providing financial reports to the participant or family/representative
- Offering training and technical assistance to participants and families/representatives

How will Support Coordinators/Support Brokers assist participants in self-direction?

The Support Coordinator/Support Broker will guide and support the participant or family-representative in self-direction. Types of assistance include:

- Planning and organizing resources
- Evaluating services
- Recruiting, hiring, managing, and dismissing support workers
- Identifying and accessing community resources
- Mediating and resolving problems
- Meeting incident reporting requirements