

PARTICIPANT DIRECTED SERVICES IN PENNSYLVANIA

Leading a Self-Determined Community Life

Participant Directed Services Overview

Aligning with principles of self-determination, Participant Directed Services (PDS) provide a model whereby people with disabilities have more control over where, when, how, and who provides their supports. Participant directed services help people with disabilities:

- Increase their freedom and autonomy
- Enhance self-advocacy
- Access supports that best matches their needs and preferences
- Have increased authority of services and supports
- Take responsibility for the services receive

With participant direction, people who live in their own home or the home of a family member or friend are able to hire their own Support Service Professionals (SSP) and conduct many of the employer responsibilities related to this. The person may opt to take the lead with these tasks or select a surrogate to act on his/her behalf.

“Self-direction works when individuals have clear and understandable information, opportunities to exercise choice, and assistance with making decisions when needed. Self-direction is only possible when family, friends, and people who provide supports respect the individual’s preferences and their right to make mistakes and facilitate the implementation of the individual’s decisions.”

Supports Brokers

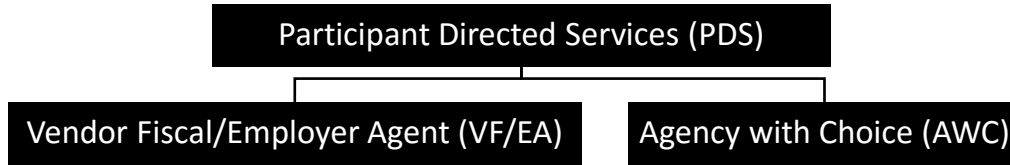
People with disabilities and families do not have to be on their own when it comes to participant-direction. People may choose to hire a Supports Broker to provide assistance with enhancing natural supports, employer-related responsibilities, and following program rules. Supports Coordinators will have a list of approved supports brokerage agencies in your area, or you may opt to hire your own independent broker¹.

Supports Brokers work collaboratively with the person, family, Supports Coordinator, and service team and may help with:

- Recruiting, hiring, scheduling and supervising SSPs
- Expanding and coordinating informal, unpaid resources and supports
- Completing required paperwork
- Keeping track of PDS expenditures
- Facilitating a Circle of Support
- Developing and maintaining back-up plans
- Enhancing person-centered planning and communicating modifications to the service plan
- Fulfilling Common Law Employer or Managing Employer responsibilities
- Problem-solving to help achieve outcomes
- Compliance with Waiver and PDS standards, regulations, and policies

¹ Independent brokers and brokers employed by agencies need to complete the certification and meet qualifications.

Financial Management Services Models



Once a person decides to use participant directed services, he or she will need to choose the Financial Management Service (FMS) model used to employ SSPs. The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) offers two options: Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent (VF/EA) or Agency with Choice (AWC).

There are differences between the two models and it is important that people choose the one that will best meet his/her needs. The following table describes some of the differences between the two FMS models.

Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent (VF/EA)	Agency with Choice (AWC)
The person or their surrogate is the Common Law Employer (CLE)	The person or their surrogate is the Managing Employer (ME) . FMS is legal employer for human resources and payroll.
The CLE is responsible for recruiting, interviewing, hiring and firing the SSP and to ensure the SSP meets provider qualification criteria.	The ME can refer prospective SSP to FMS or select SSP referred to the ME by FMS. The person and FMS are joint-employers
FMS runs criminal clearances.	FMS sees that SSP meets provider qualification criteria.
The CLE approves, signs and submits timesheets to the FMS.	FMS verifies and processes SSP timesheets and invoices the ME submits.
The CLE develops the employee job descriptions and responsibilities in line with the ISP and keeps SSP files.	FMS develops FMS-related SSP duties and the ME develops participant-specific SSP duties in line with the ISP.
The CLE provides training to employees.	The ME and FMS jointly provide SSP training as agreed by the ME and the AWC.
The CLE develops work schedules and back-up plans for SSPs.	The ME can request FMS to assist with developing work schedules and back-up plans for SSP
FMS handles SSP paychecks and taxes, insurances.	FMS handles SSP paychecks and taxes, insurances.
The CLE may dismiss SSP if necessary.	The ME may notify FMS of desire to dismiss SSP from the home.

This publication is supported by a grant from the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council.