

What is Participant Direction?

Participant Direction, sometimes called "self-direction", allows you to have control over your life and receive the services and supports you need to live in your home or community. It allows you to make individual choices about which services you receive, how they are delivered and by whom. In Georgia, Participant Direction is an option for individuals receiving the Now/Comp waiver and who live in their own home or in the home of a family member. Participant Direction is not available to individuals who live in a residential facility, host home or a personal care home.

Do I have to Participant Direct in order to receive the Now/Comp waiver in Georgia?

No, there are two ways that you can receive services:

- a) In the Traditional model, services are provided by a Medicaid-approved company that is responsible for providing the necessary supports and services, including hiring and paying employees. They charge a fee for their services which is taken from your budget and in return they pay for your services and handle billing Medicaid for reimbursement.
- b) In Participant Direction, you are the employer and are responsible for recruiting, hiring and training employees. You determine how much you will pay for services and which vendors you will use for supplies and other goods and services. You are also responsible for managing your own budget and submitting bills or timesheets for those services to a fiscal intermediary. The fiscal intermediary then pays for your services and bills Medicaid for reimbursement.

If I am unable to participant direct my own services, can I get someone else to do it?

Yes, in addition to the participant (individual with the waiver), a legal representative of the participant or, if you are over 21, anyone that you choose can participant direct your services.

What qualifications should someone have to do this?

In order to be successful in participant direction, the person must be able to:

- Understand and perform the tasks required to manage and supervise employees
- Complete all required timesheets and invoices
- Manage the budget

How do I get started?

The first step is to contact your Support Coordinator and let them know that you would like to participant direct. Your Support Coordinator can assist you with the following steps:

- Choosing a fiscal agent to manage your waiver funds
- Completing and returning all required enrollment forms for processing and approval
- Recruiting, hiring and training staff
- Selecting vendors for other services

Tell me more about the role of the Fiscal Agent

Financial Support Services or Fiscal Agents are a required service of Participant Direction. It is their responsibility to manage your waiver funds, by performing payroll responsibilities, making sure necessary paperwork is completed on employees, withholding state and federal taxes, and tracking and monitoring your budget. The cost of these services are set by Medicaid and are a part of your annual budget. The current cost is \$75 per month.

Do I still need to have a Support Coordinator?

Yes, support coordination is a required service for individuals who participant direct their waiver. Your Support Coordinators can be an important source of assistance in the development of the Individual Service Plan (ISP) and the budget for services and supports. In addition, your Support Coordinator will monitor the services to assure that responsibilities are being met.

What are the benefits of Participant Direction?

- It allows more flexible solutions to meet your needs.
- It can result in higher satisfaction for yourself and the employees you choose.
- It allows you more control over the services you receive and the way they are delivered.

Tips for Successful Participation Direction:

- ✓ Be sure that you or your representative understands what is involved in participant direction.
- ✓ Know that you will have to recruit, hire and train your own staff.
- ✓ Don't forget to enroll your employees with the fiscal intermediary.
- ✓ Be prepared to manage your staff by setting up their work schedules and your house rules.
- ✓ Manage timesheets each week to ensure proper staff payments.
- ✓ Find vendors and enroll them with the fiscal intermediary.
- ✓ Manage and routinely monitor your annual budget.
- ✓ Follow the rules of the fiscal intermediary regarding submission of necessary paperwork.
- ✓ Work with Support Coordinator on ISP and budget development.
- ✓ Be aware that Participant Direction will take time and effort on your part.
- ✓ Connect with others who are participant directing for support.

Where to go for more information:

Parent to Parent of Georgia

770-451-5484 or 800-229-2038 or www.p2pga.org