

Frequently Asked Questions: Self-Determination Program

Q: If I live on my own, does my Service Coordinator need to visit me every three months?

A: Yes, the rules from the federal government about SDP in California state “For consumers who do not live with their families, quarterly face-to-face monitoring is required to monitor the consumer’s health, safety and well-being, assess the effectiveness of services, and monitor progress in meeting the identified goals. Basically this means your Service Coordinator is required to visit you every three months to make sure you are doing well and that your services and supports are working out for you as you planned.

Q: Can family members be paid to be the Independent Facilitator?

A: The parent of a minor child cannot be paid to be the Independent Facilitator for that child but can act as the unpaid Independent Facilitator for that child. The parent of an adult can be paid to be the Independent Facilitator for that adult participant. The spouse of an adult participant cannot be paid to be the Independent Facilitator for that participant. All other family members can be paid to be the Independent Facilitator.

Q: I wasn’t picked for the SDP when the first 2500 participants were selected in October of 2018, will I have another chance to participate?

A: Yes. If you attended an Informational Meeting and the organization hosting that meeting submitted your name to DDS for potential enrollment in SDP, your name is now on a list with DDS for future participation in the SDP. Your name will stay on the DDS list in the event space opens in the program. DDS will announce timing for future selections at a later date. After the first three years, the Self-Determination Program will be open to anyone who is interested.

Q: How much responsibility will participants or their family have if they choose to participate in SDP?

A: Self-Determination provides individuals more choice and flexibility in selecting services and supports, who provides them, and how money in the individual budget is spent. The Regional Center continues to be a source of support in SDP. Participants may also choose to get help with these tasks from an Independent Facilitator. The participant will also need to choose a Financial Management Services entity that will work with him or her to monitor an individual budget, verify provider qualifications, and pay providers.

Q: How does the individual budget amount get determined? Can my budget be adjusted?

A: The individual budget is determined by the individual program planning team, and is based upon the amount of purchase of service funds used by the individual in the most

recent 12 months. This amount can be adjusted, up or down, if the individual program planning team determines that the individual's needs, circumstances, or resources have changed. Additionally, the individual program planning team may adjust the budget to support any prior needs or resources that were not addressed in the individual program plan.

Q: Who is required to get a background check? Will parents and family members need one also?

A: A criminal background check is required for anyone receiving payment, including family members, to provide direct personal care (assistance with dressing, grooming, bathing or personal hygiene services) to a participant in the SDP.

Q: Can a participant request that a provider obtain a background check?

A: Yes. Participants or the participant's financial management service provider may request a background check for any providers of services and supports.

Q: What are the different types of Financial Management Services (FMS) services and how much does each cost?

A: There are three different models of FMS: Bill Payer, Sole Employer, and Co-Employer. The FMS may charge different rates based upon the number of services funded from your individual budget as a part of your IPP.

Q: I am really happy with my current service provider in traditional services. Do I have to change service providers if I decide to participate in SDP?

A: No, you do not need to change service providers should you decide to enroll in SDP. You can continue to work with traditional, vendored service providers. However, you now have the option to work with them in new and creative ways and/or to negotiate hours and rates with them, if you like. You may also purchase services from individuals, agencies, and entities that are not vendored with the regional center.

Q: If I choose to participate in the Self-Determination Program, will I still have the same rights?

A: Yes, participants enrolled in the Self-Determination Program will have the same rights established under the traditional service model (e.g. appeals, eligibility determinations, and all other rights associated with the individual program plan process).

Q: Can I live in a group home and be a participant in SDP?

A: Individuals who live in Community Care Facilities (CCF) or Adult Residential Facilities (ARF) are eligible for participation in SDP. The CCF or ARF will require an assessment to ensure the site is in compliance with the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Final Rule regarding choice and inclusion in the community. Individuals who live in a licensed long-term health care facility (i.e., a Skilled Nursing Facility or Intermediate Care Facility) who express interest in SDP through the person-centered planning process, can request that the regional center begin making

arrangements for their transition to SDP provided that he or she is reasonably expected to transition to the community within 90 days

Q: I am excited to be selected for the initial implementation of SDP, how do I know what to do first?

A: Getting started with the new Self-Determination Program (SDP) is not exactly a “linear” or step by step process. Some activities, such as planning and individual budget certification can be happening at the same time or one can happen before the other. Everyone, from participants to the people who support them, is learning together at this time. It helps to have something to guide the process and remind all parties of the steps involved in getting started with SDP. DDS has developed a flow chart to support this process.

Q: What should the participant expect from an individual or organization providing person-centered planning services?

A: The individual or organization providing person-centered planning services are expected to demonstrate they have received training or certification in the person-centered facilitation process. The participant and their support team should determine how much time the planning process will take based on the needs of the participant, their own scheduling needs, as well as the recommendations of the individual or organization providing person-centered planning. Person centered planning can range from one short and focused intensive meeting to several meetings, depending on the needs of the participant. At the end of the planning process, the individual or organization providing person-centered planning services should ensure that there is a written document with clearly stated outcomes provided to the participant that captures the strengths, hopes and dreams of the participant, along with their vision for their future and the supports needed to have a meaningful life in the community.

Q: How can a participant draft a spending plan for the first time without having hired the Financial Management Services agency yet?

A: Per the directive from DDS to regional centers regarding payments for initial person-centered planning services dated September 3, 2019, there is clarification that initial person centered planning services “can include assistance in developing the participant’s spending plan.”

Q: Is there a cap on the budget? An amount that cannot be exceeded?

A: Every individual budget is certified based on the expenditure history and needs of each individual. The individual budget amount cannot exceed the amount that services would have cost if the individual was not in the SDP.

Q: When will the Self-Determination Program be open statewide?

A: After June 7, 2021, the program will be available to all eligible consumers.

Q: Where can I get a list of Independent Facilitators?

A: There is no central list of Independent Facilitators. Each regional center and their Local Advisory Committee should be exploring how best to develop and share

Independent Facilitator resource information that meets the needs of their communities. Keep in mind that a participant may choose a person they know to serve as an Independent Facilitator, as long as they meet the criteria. Community based organizations and the local State Council offices are conducting Independent Facilitator training sessions across the state. Checking with those organizations regarding connecting with individuals who attended their training sessions may be one way to obtain a list of individuals who are trained to be facilitators.

Q: DDS releases “directives” about SDP, what is a directive?

A: A directive is a written explanation to the Regional Centers that provides guidance on a specific aspect, process, or role in SDP. Directives are intended to help all Regional Center communities understand and implement the SDP program as intended in statute.

Q: Where can I find out more about Financial Management Services (FMS)?

A: The SDP page of the DDS website has information on the FMS.

Q: Can I still participate in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) or Paid Internship Programs (PIP) while in SDP?

A: Yes. However, due to federal rules, the cost of CIE Incentives and PIP payments cannot be included in the calculation of the individual budget. Though not included in the participant’s spending plan, CIE and PIP are still available for SDP participants. If you or your team need more information on how to do this, contact SDP@dds.ca.gov.

Q: May I use my own money to purchase something that is in my IPP and that my team agreed I need, and then request my FMS to reimburse me from my SDP Spending Plan?

A: No. The item or service must be purchased directly by the FMS on your behalf. Federal rules do not allow making payments for services directly to a participant, either to reimburse the participant for expenses incurred or enable the participant to directly pay a service provider.

Q: What type of certification should individuals request from independent facilitators?

A: Independent facilitators are not required to have a certification or licensure. However, an independent facilitator is required to receive training in the principles of self-determination, the person-centered planning process, and the other responsibilities consistent with coordination of services for consumers' individual program plans.