

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Self-Direction

What is self-directed services?

Self-directed services are a service delivery option for people who wish to exercise more choice, control, and authority over their supports. Self-direction gives waiver participants and families greater control over the services they receive, how they receive them, and who provides them. Participants may direct his or her own services or appoint an authorized representative to direct on their behalf. DDA's waivers describe each waiver service that can be self-directed and the standards applied to those services as specified in Appendix C.

How do I apply for self-direct services?

Inform your Coordinator of Community Service (CCS), who will assist you with submitting a request to the DDA regional office. The Self Direction Regional Lead will speak with you about supports available under this service model including choosing a Support Broker, and Fiscal Management Service (FMS) provider.

Can I pay my employees benefits?

Yes. As a participant in self-direction, you are the Employer of Record and therefore have the authority to use your authorized budget to pay your employees the salary of your choosing and offer benefits, as long as it is within Department of Labor (DOL) requirements and the DDA's policies including reasonable and customary rates located on the [DDA's website](#).

Can I give my employees bonuses?

Effective July FY 2018 bonuses are not allowed. This decision was made to align business practices with regulatory guidelines related to Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for employee's salaries.

Why is the Support Broker role changing?

Support Broker services are being further defined to clearly describe the mentoring and coaching supports related to the participant's responsibilities as a common law employer per federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies. Support Brokers do not make any decision for the participant, sign off on services delivery or timesheets, or hire or fire workers as these are considered potential indicators of joint employment.

Support Broker services will be offered as an administrative service under the Community Pathways Waiver renewal in 2018 instead of a waiver service which is currently charged to the participant's self-directed budget. Participants will have the option to assume all responsibilities themselves or to seek assistance from a Support Broker or other supports. Therefore, Support Broker services will be offered as an optional service and not required.

When is the next Support Broker training and how do I register?

The DDA's Training Unit provides training in all four regions of the state. These trainings are primarily free and open to all stakeholders, people with disabilities, their families, support staff, advocates, provider agency staff, and DDA Staff. You can view the schedule and register through the [DDA's training calendar](#).

Can a family member be a staff person?

Yes. For purposes of the DDA waiver programs, a relative is defined as parents, step parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, grandparents, cousins, nieces and nephews or child(ren) of the participant. A relative may be paid for providing waiver services as specified whenever the relative/legal guardian is qualified to provide services, as specified in [Appendix C-1/C-3 whenever the relative/legal guardian is qualified to provide services](#).

What is an authorized representative?

An authorized representative is an individual or organization acting responsibly on behalf of the individual in assisting with an application, service delivery decisions, renewal of eligibility, appeals, and other ongoing communications with the DDA.

How do I change my services once I am enrolled in Self-Direction services?

Individuals receiving funding from the DDA can request a [modified service funding plan request change](#) (i.e. increase, decrease, addition or deletion) in services at any time as noted in DDA's Eligibility for and Access to Community Services for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities in the Code of Maryland Regulations ([COMAR 10.22.12.11 D](#)).