

Self-Directing Services

That means people who have control of their own budgets for their services and hire their own staff.



Connecticut DDS STEP Self-Direction Video Series — Real people with intellectual disabilities show how self-direction helps them live and work more independently



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yK7A0Aotso>

Here is a list of Videos About Self-Direction

1. [Self-Direction Front Door Video](#) (New York)

This is a good place to start. It explains services in an easy way. It's also available in other languages and in American Sign Language.

2. [Self-Directed Supports with Jerry Cywinski](#) (Wisconsin)

Jerry talks about how self-directed supports made his life better.

3. [Self-Direction Teaser](#) (Rhode Island)

This is a short, simple intro video. It's part of a bigger playlist about self-directed support.

4. [Maine's Self-Directed Services video](#)

Maine explains self-direction in simple terms. You get to choose what support you get, who gives it, when, where, and how.

5. [Connecticut STEP video series](#)

A video series from Connecticut about self-direction.

6. [New York OPWDD Self-Direction page](#)

This page explains self-direction in plain language. It covers choosing services, choosing staff, and setting your own schedule.

7. [Putting Self-Determination Back in Self-Direction](#)

The video is long. A self-advocate talks about choosing and hiring his own staff.

What Is Self-Direction?

Self-direction is a way to get support services where **you** are in charge. You get to choose the people who help you and decide when and how they provide support.

Self-direction is different. You do not get services from an agency. In self-direction, **you** are the boss. The people work for you. They follow your instructions, not an agency's rules.

The idea is that **you** know what you need best. Self-direction gives you more freedom to make choices about your life.



What Are My Responsibilities in Self-Direction?

When you self-direct, you are responsible for:

- Choosing who works for you
- Setting up your worker's schedule
- Teaching your worker how to help you
- Giving feedback to your worker

You are never alone in self-direction. A case manager can answer your questions.

You also get help dealing with the money to pay your workers. These companies are called **Financial Management Services (FMS) provider**. They help you by handling payments and paperwork.



More About the companies that help you pay for your services

The company is called a **Financial Management Services provider** or a **Fiscal Intermediary**.

Different states use different names, but they all do the same thing.

- **These companies** handles the money and paperwork.
- **Medicaid pays the company**, and the company pays your workers and approved expenses.

They also

- Keeps track of your Medicaid budget.
- Pays invoices for approved goods and services.
- Makes sure Medicaid rules are followed.
- Provides reports about your spending.



Is Self-Direction Right for Me?

Self-direction is a big decision because you are in charge. You have to make more choices than if you got services from an agency.

Think about these questions:

- Do you know someone you would want to hire?
- If not, do you have a way to find someone or get help finding a worker?
- Can you teach your worker how to help you?
- Can you tell your worker what you like or don't like about their work?
- Can you manage their schedule and make sure they don't work more hours than you can pay them for?

If you're not sure about some of these, that's okay! You can pick a person to help. This can be a family member or someone you trust. They can handle some of the responsibilities for you.



Why Choose Self-Direction?

Over 1 million people in the U.S. use self-direction. People choose it because:

- They want more choice and control over their services.
- They want an option other than agency services.
- They live in places where agency care is hard to get.
- They want to hire someone they know to help them.

There are many reasons to self-direct. If you want more control over your services, this might be a good choice for you!



Self-direction lets you choose your own workers.

Many people hire family or friends they trust.

Self-direction lets these helpers get paid for their work.

Some people hire new staff instead. This way, you decide what skills they need. Maybe they need to know how to use computers. Maybe they need a driver's license.

If you're not sure who to hire, ask yourself:

1. Who do I know?
2. Do I trust them?
3. Can they help me with the things I need to do?



Hiring Workers



If hiring someone new, you can write a job description and post it on **social media, job websites, newspapers, or community boards**. Before choosing someone, consider what type of person you work well with and what skills they need.

When interviewing workers, you can do it **by phone, video call, or in a public place**. Bring a friend or family member for support if needed. Ask questions about their experience, interest in the job, and any concerns they have.

As an employer, you must **follow hiring laws** and cannot discriminate based on race, religion, gender, disability, or other personal factors. Focus on finding someone who can meet your needs and make you feel comfortable and supported.

Managing Workers

When you self-direct, you must only schedule workers for the hours you can afford and check their **timesheets** or **Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)** to make sure they are correct before approving payment.

As the employer, you need to **communicate clearly** about how tasks should be done. Give feedback when necessary but balance criticism with **positive feedback**. If there is a serious issue, talk to your **case manager** and keep a record of the problem.



Managing Workers

If a worker makes you feel unsafe or engages in **abuse, theft, fraud, verbal abuse, or reckless behavior**, you have the right to **fire them**.

Some workers may not be dangerous but still not be the right fit due to **lateness, poor communication, or bad attitudes**.

If you need help managing workers, your **case manager** can guide you. Over time, most people find self-directing gets easier.



ASAN has 12 Questions to Ask to See Who Is in Control

Question 1: Do your staff mind their own business?

Do they respect your privacy?

Question 2: Do staff look at your medical or bank information?

Question 3: Do your staff treat you like an adult?

Question 4: Do staff let you speak up for yourself?

Question 5: Do they boss you around, or make fun of you?

Question 6: Do you feel safe telling your staff that you didn't like something they did?

1



12 Questions to ask to see who is in control

Question 1

Do your staff mind their own business?

Do they respect your privacy?

ASAN has 12 Questions to Ask to See Who Is in Control

Question 7: Can you make your own daily schedule, or do staff do it for you?

Question 8: Do staff think you can't do things by yourself, even if you can?

Question 9: Do you get to do things by yourself if you want to? Or, does your staff do everything for you?

Question 10: Do staff have "rules" about where you can go and when?

Question 11: Will your staff help you understand information you need to know?

Question 12: Do staff know what you want help with when they come? Or do they decide what you're going to do?

5

Question 5



Do staff say bad things about you?



Do they boss you around, or make fun of you?

<https://autisticadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/9.-12-Questions-to-ask-to-see-who-is-in-control.pdf>