



Self-Directed Services Policy and Manual Updates

Thank you for expressing your concerns regarding the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Self-Directed Services Policy and Manual released on Thursday, October 24, 2024. We appreciate the opportunity to address your concerns and we welcome continued dialogue about how we can improve services.

In developing updates to the Self-Directed Services Policy and Manual, the DDA consolidated and clarified policies to improve quality and accessibility for self-directed services based on constituent and advocate feedback. Changes will not only help reduce processing delays, but ensure that taxpayer-funded services are delivered in accordance with state and federal requirements.

Based on stakeholder feedback, the Department is delaying the implementation date of the Policy, Manual, and associated forms from November 7, 2024 to November 21, 2024. We've also made updates to policies to help ensure more efficient service delivery and program integrity. These updates have been made as a direct result of feedback we have received since the October 24, 2024 release:

- **Legally responsible persons.** Language has been clarified to emphasize that relatives, legal guardians, and legally responsible persons can continue to provide certain services; and
- **ABLE Accounts and Special Needs Trusts.** Based upon coordination with interagency partners, the DDA is issuing revisions to requirements for Individual and Family Directed Goods and Services regarding "personal funds." Specifically, ABLE accounts and Special Needs Trusts will not be considered as funds available to the participant for the purpose of authorizing Individual and Family Directed Goods and Services.

Additional clarifying edits have been added to the Policy and Manual to ensure that standards are clear and accessible, and to reflect the above changes.

The delayed effective date for the updated Policy, Manual, and associated forms will allow stakeholders additional time to provide constructive feedback to the Department. To that end, stakeholders are encouraged to attend the [DDA Community Meeting](#) on November 14, 2024, at 2:30 p.m. to learn more. We look forward to hearing from you during this meeting.

Thank you again for your inquiry. Improving the Self-Directed Services service delivery model will be an ongoing process. Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to email the Self-Directed Services Team at dda.sds@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marlana R. Hutchinson".

Marlana R. Hutchinson, Deputy Secretary
Developmental Disabilities Administration

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