INFORMATION

PARTICIPANT ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Pre-Communication

WELCOME

Are you considering making a change to the way that you receive care? Have you ever considered being able to hire your own family member, friend, or neighbor to provide services to you instead of a stranger? If so, self-direction might be a great fit for you!

Here are some questions to ask yourself before you determine if self-direction is the right step for you:

1. *Am I ready to take control of my own life?*
2. *Am I ready to help develop and follow a cash management plan?*
3. *Am I ready to be an employer, hiring and managing the people I choose to give me support?*
4. *Am I ready to follow and manage my monthly budget?*

If the answer to all four questions is "Yes," then please join us as we guide you through the first steps in your journey towards greater independence through self-directed services on the Personal Preference Program.

Here at Public Partnerships, we would like to welcome you to your self-directed journey and thank you for choosing us to support and guide you through these crucial first steps.

When choosing the Personal Preference Program, you will have more choice and control over how you receive your services and supports. You can decide how best to fit your specific needs.

Enrolling in PPP allows you to hire the people you want to help you, and who you feel are best qualified to provide the services and supports you need exactly when you need them. You will be able to manage your budget to identify when your employees work, what tasks they complete and what assistance they give you, within the needs identified in your MCO assessment. When you qualify, you may also request approval to purchase goods and services designed to increase your independence.

BECOMING AN EMPLOYER

Becoming an Employer can be scary, especially if you've never been one before. But it doesn't have to be! While there is a lot of information to learn and know, Public Partnerships is here to support and guide you every step of the way. Below are some of the important topics that should be considered in making the leap to self-direction.

Employer Authority Includes

The PPP Employer Authority option supports you to hire employee(s) of your choice. First, you will register with the IRS as a household employer. Your Public Partnerships Consultant will provide any assistance you request to complete the following forms:

FORMS

- IRS Form SS-4 Application for Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- IRS Form 2678 – Employer Application of Agent
- M-5008 – State of New Jersey, Division of Taxation Power of Attorney
- Broker of Record Authorization
- Worker's Compensation Questionnaire
- Personal Preference Program Consent Form
- Participant Statement of Rights and Responsibilities
- Duplication of Service Statement
- Representative Appointment

To hire your employee, your Consultant will also provide any assistance you request to complete the Employee Employment Forms listed below:

- Employment Information & Attestation, a standard application for employment that provides PPL with the following:
  - *Information and Attestation Form*
  - *Payment information (direct deposit, mailed check, etc.)*
  - *Central Registry Consent Form*
- Certification of Tax-Exempt Status based on Relationship
- IRS Form W-4
- USCIS Form I-9
- NJ Form W-4

Budget Authority

Budget authority means you have choice and control over any goods or services you'd like to purchase with your spending plan/ budget. These goods and services are meant to promote your independence and reduce reliance on human assistance. It also means that you can schedule your employee(s) at the times that best work for you, within your monthly budget.

Cash Management Plan (CMP) - Your Public Partnerships Consultant will assist in completing the initial CMP. They will help you make revisions as necessary based on need, review budget amount changes, and ensure worker's compensation costs are met. The CMP is used as a budget planning tool and includes all services you plan to utilize with your monthly budget.

Service Type – PCA Individual Hours - In the Personal Preference Program, you must have an employee in order to remain eligible for self-directed services. Your budget will be used to pay the employee's wage and employer related business taxes, based on Participant/Employee relationship status. You will identify an hourly wage for your employee(s) between $11.00 and $25.00, based on their skills, training, and your needs. Wage adjustments may be necessary when there are changes to the minimum wage in New Jersey. When you set this wage, you are exercising Budget Authority. Your Consultant has received training to provide you support with this important decision. Feel free to ask them for guidance and to answer any questions you might have.

PPP Support Plan - Person Centered Planning is a process supporting you to maximize choice and exercise independence when creating and maintaining community connections. You are at the center of the process and direct the services and supports you receive. Person Centered Planning in the PPP program is designed to get you closer to your goals, dreams, and aspirations by making sure you have control over what happens in your life.

Risk Assessment Plan (RAP) - As part of your initial visit, your Consultant will assist you to complete the RAP, assessing any level of risk which may be present in your home. This plan is designed to help you identify and reduce risks. As part of this process, you will be also responsible for having an emergency back-up plan in place in case your household employee becomes suddenly unavailable to provide care.

RECRUITING EMPLOYEES

Writing a Job Description

As the household employer, you will have the ability to identify exactly how and where your employee provides support. This might include such things as meal preparation, assistance with household chores or getting around in your home and the community. You can choose the type of person you want to provide your care. The Job Description gives you the chance to identify exactly what you want your employee to do and is an opportunity to outline the expectations that you have for your employee. You may also decide to include information on the type of employee you would like to hire. Examples of this include someone who has specific training, reliable transportation, is patient, reliable or a go-getter.

Your Consultant has received training on writing job descriptions and can provide guidance or direct support creating a job description to meet your needs.

Minimum Requirements for Employees

All employees must be 16 years or older, authorized to work in the US, able to complete new employee paperwork, and capable of performing the tasks you need during times that work for you.

Hiring Friends and Family

If you choose to hire a friend or family member to provide your care, you may experience changes in your relationship when you become their employer. Your Consultant is available to support you and your family member or friend with conversations helping you both feel comfortable with the change in roles.

Finding Employees

You may choose to advertise in your community, including local online message boards and employment offices, or places in your community like a church, post office, grocery store, or laundromat. Your Consultant is prepared to provide assistance and recommendations; like suggesting you call places you want to post job advertisements to first to ask about policies or rules for posting flyers. They may also suggest you submit ads with a brief description of the work, number of hours, range of pay rate, telephone number, and always remind you to exclude your home address.

Screening Potential Employees You May Want to Hire

Screening interested applicants over the phone is an important part of the recruiting process. Your Consultant is available to help you decide how best to communicate with applicants who lack the qualifications or are inappropriate, including the use of a job application to gather important information. You may choose to use a job application including the applicant's work history and their personal and previous employment references.

Interviewing

Interviewing candidates gives you the chance to ask important questions about the employee and supports you would like to receive. State and federal laws don't allow you to ask certain questions, so guidance and assistance from your Consultant putting together interview questions can be very valuable. We recommend you complete employee interviews face-to-face in a public place, whenever possible. Private rooms to interview employees are often available free of charge in community centers and libraries.

Narrowing Down the Applicants

Review the answers your applicants provide during the interview, along with any notes you take. If a friend or family member is present during the interviews, also plan to compare notes with him or her. It may be helpful to ask applicants if they would be willing to work as a back-up Employee, keeping a list of your top choices.

Making an Offer

Once you have decided who you would like to hire, you may decide to extend a job offer. Prior to deciding exactly what pay rate to offer, it's important to know how much has been allocated to your budget. Your Consultant will provide this information during your initial visit. Once your employee accepts the position, they will require your assistance completing all hiring forms. Your Consultant can help with all aspects of this part of the hiring process.

Background and Registry Checks

During the employee's application process, you may decide to complete a background check. If you do decide to complete a background check, the cost will be deducted from your first month's budget. The cost is currently $30.

If your potential employee does not pass the background check, then they may not be hired to provide your care. All employees must complete a registry check before being considered eligible to be hired. There is no cost to you for the registry check. Background checks may be a good option especially if you do not have a personal relationship with the person you plan to hire.

Expectations

You may choose to discuss the following performance expectations with the applicant:

- **Confidentiality -** What you say and do in your home should remain confidential. The support provided by your employee is not to be discussed with their friends, family members or other individuals they provide care to. You may decide to remind your new employee that sharing your personal information can be grounds for termination.
- **Punctuality –** You may choose to discuss with the applicant the importance of reporting to work on time.
- **Time off –** Discussing your expectations for when your employee takes time off can be an important part of the job interview. It's important to think about who will provide your care if your employee needs to take time off.
- T**raining –** You will provide orientation and training for the employee as part of your role. It's important for your employee to know that your training and coaching will be an ongoing part of the employment relationship.

If Things Don't Work Out—Firing an Employee

Sometimes an employee doesn't work out, and you have to end the employment relationship by firing your employee. This can be a hard conversation, but one that must take place when you are the employer. If possible, it's best to have another employee lined up to step in, but that isn't always possible. We recommend you talk with your Consultant immediately after you decide you'd like to fire an employee, and always have another individual present during that difficult conversation. Your Consultant can help guide your approach to the conversation.

Withdrawing from Self-Directed Services in the Personal Preference Program

If self-direction is not the right path for you, you may go back to traditional PCA services at any time. Simply contact your MCO or PPL and share your decision. Once your MCO has been notified, the MCO will change your status within the Personal Preference Program. You will no longer be able to access funds through PPL and your MCO will assist you with accessing agency care.

PROGRAM SAFEGUARDS

Prevention, Identification, and Reporting of Fraud, Abuse, and Neglect

Fraud, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation:

- **Fraud** is an act of wrongful deception intended to end in financial or personal gain.
- **Abuse** is an act of aggression by one person intended to inflict harm on another person. Abuse can be when one person tries to or does hurt or harm another person on purpose.
- **Neglect** is an act of omission by one person that results in harm to another person. Neglect can be when one person does not give a person with a disability the kind of support they have promised and the person with a disability is hurt or gets sick because of this.
- **Exploitation** is when one person uses another person for one's own gain. We say that exploitation happens when one person takes advantage of another person.

What Does "Misuse of Program Funds" Mean?

Misuse of funds means spending funds in a way not allowed by program rules. For example, if you sign a timesheet that is incorrect, it's considered a misuse of funds. An incorrect timesheet would include instances where your employee failed to work all the hours for which you signed off on, or for hours worked on a timesheet while you were in the hospital. Program rules require that you never sign a blank timesheet or share your portal passwords, to help prevent the submission of inaccurate or false timesheets.

What Happens If I or My Employee Misuse Program Funds?

If you sign and submit a timesheet you know is not accurate, you may lose the ability to self-direct your services. You may also place your Medicaid funding at risk. Your employee could also be asked to refund the money they have been paid, and become unable to work for you or other program Participants.

How Do I keep Myself Safe?

It is your right to be free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. There are things you can do to help protect yourself. Protections start during the hiring process:

- Consider checking the person's employment and personal references.
- Consider conducting a criminal background check.
- Let your employees know during the hiring process that you will not allow abuse, neglect, or fraud, and that your Consultant checks regularly to ensure you remain free of harm.
- Share that you plan on being treated with dignity and respect at all times.

If at any point you feel uncomfortable, intimidated, or threatened in any situation, tell your Consultant and any others you choose how you feel. Never hesitate to contact your Consultant at any point to request assistance.

If you feel that you have been abused, neglected, or exploited, contact the abuse and neglect hotline 1-800-832-9173.

Every call is taken seriously. In the event of an emergency, contact local law enforcement or emergency services by dialing 911.