



Self-Direction Guide

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This guide is intended to help you understand the changes that have occurred in Self-Directed Services as of 10/1/14. The following are the categories identified in all Self-Directed budgets (plans) and explanations of what is required in order to receive services and or reimbursement from Independent Support Services. This guide reflects the current regulations that are subject to change. We will do our best to share information as it is received.

Check our website for informational updates – <http://www.issny.org>

Welcome to Self-Direction

If you have received this guide, you or a loved one have a Self-Direction Plan and you have chosen Independent Support Services to be your Fiscal Intermediary. Self-Direction (formerly Consolidated Supports and Services) are Medicaid funded services that allow individuals with special needs to exercise control over their budget and have a say as to whom they work with. While Self Direction can be a life changing addition to someone’s life, there comes several responsibilities for an individual and his or her circle. These responsibilities include but are not limited to recruiting and hiring staff, training and overseeing staff, and completing monthly paperwork.

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SELF – HIRED SUPPORT STAFF:

Hiring Staff:

While you are responsible for selecting and conditionally hiring your employees, Independent Support Services is the employer of record and must comply with all state and federal mandates. As the employer of record, we conduct background checks to clear your staff before they can begin working and we also pay your staff's paychecks.

Anyone you wish to conditionally hire as Support Staff must complete the application process and background checks before they are able to begin working and are paid. There are four parts to the application process. Part 1 of the application process is available by emailing or calling the Human Resources Department at hr@issny.org or 845-794-5218. We are also requiring the completion of the Conditional Hire/Pay Rate Title Form which is available on our website under Human Resources forms. After sending in the first part of the application, human resources will send the next part. Once the staff is cleared, he or she will be contacted either by email or phone. If the potential staff person is not officially cleared by Independent Support Services and he or she submits timesheets, he or she will not get paid.

The only requirements in regards to staffing is that the potential staff person must be 18 years of age, a legal citizen, complete an application, submit to and pass a background check. If you wish for staff to meet additional requirements, you determine these criteria. The participant and their circle are responsible to find their own staff.

Hiring Family Members:

There are specific restrictions regarding self-hired staff who are related to the Self Direction participant. Relatives **can** be paid service providers as long as the following criteria are met:

1. The person must be at least 18 years of age.
2. They are not parents, legal guardians, spouses, or adult children of the participant.
3. The service is a function not ordinarily performed by a family member.
4. The service is necessary, authorized, and would otherwise be provided by another qualified provider of waiver services.
5. The relative does not reside in the same residence as the participant.

Required State Trainings For Support Staff:

- All support staff must annually complete state mandated training including Incident Abuse Identification, Reporting, and Processing training. Failure to complete the training at hire and as requested annually could result in suspension or termination of employment. Human Resources will be sending requests to complete required trainings. All trainings are self-study and will be online through a software called Mindflash. New staff and existing staff will receive emails with a link to the trainings online through Mindflash. If staff do not have any way to do training online they must let us know and we will send through the mail self-study packets to them. **All other training of staff is done by the participant, family, and circle.**

Additional Training for Job Coaches and Developers (NEW SEMP GUIDELINE as of 7/1/15)

- Supported Employment staff hired after July 1, 2015 must complete at least 24 hours of OPWDD's Innovations in Employment Support Trainings within 12 months and provide training documentation to our Human Resources Department.
- Supported Employment staff who were job coaches and developers prior to July 1, 2015 must obtain 24 hours of OPWDD's Innovations in Employment Support Trainings by June 30, 2017 and provide training documentation to our Human Resources Department.
- Upon completion of either above requirement, SEMP Staff must continue to attend OPWDD's Innovations in Employment Support Trainings and obtain at least 6 hours of continuing education annually and provide training documentation to our Human Resources Department.
- Job Coaches and Job Developers can get paid for their training time by submitting their training hours on their normal timesheets/billing sheets. **These hours are considered non-billable for ISS and should be documented as non-billable when completing the billing sheet.** The hours come out of the budget for whom the job coach works with. If the person works with several participants (job developer), training hours will be split between the different plans.

Timesheets/Medicaid Billing Sheets:

- All timesheets must be postmarked and mailed out by the middle column date on the payroll schedule. Currently, each timesheet that is submitted must have a billing sheet attached. If you complete a billing sheet online, you must still ALSO submit an original billing sheet to the payroll department in order to get paid. Any timesheets & billing sheets received 30 days after the day they are due (as per the payroll schedule) may not be paid. Payroll Schedule is available on our agency website.
- Combined timesheets are now available! In order to get new timesheets, your broker must complete a habilitation plan on the Harmonics Portal and get the appropriate signatures. Your Medicaid Service Coordinator must also get us an updated Individualized Service Plan (ISP) with the correct service listings pertaining to Self-Direction.
- Please make sure that the timesheets/billing sheets are filled out in their entirety including the:
 - Participant's name
 - Staff's name
- Appropriate title (i.e. Community Habilitation, Job Coach, Job Developer or Respite) for each Support Staff to ensure the correct pay rate is given.
- As per Medicaid regulations, staff are unable to provide support to participants once they are admitted and considered an "inpatient" in the hospital. Staff can help transport participants to and from the hospital but they cannot get paid to stay in the hospital to support the individual. They can also support the individual while in the emergency room. This is considered double billing to Medicaid.
- Please always report the dates of hospital admission and discharge to your Self Direction Coordinator (SDC)
- Staff cannot work more than 40 hours in a work week (Monday through Sunday). He or she can work Community Habilitation, Job Coaching, and Respite hours-however; never more than 40 hours with one or several positions combined.

Pay Raises:

- Previous to 10/1/14, staff raises would be given automatically after 6 months as long as they were written into a person's plan.
- Currently, we now require evaluations on file for each staff before giving the raise. As the supervisor, you will be required to submit a staff evaluation form for each staff. You may use the staff evaluation that is available on our agency website. If you would prefer, you may write your own narrative as to why the staff person deserves the pay raise. Once we receive the evaluation, we will process the raise. Payroll will contact you by email or phone to confirm that you are approving a raise for the staff person.
- The pay rate must be established in the approved budget. If it is not already in the approved budget, a cost neutral change can be completed to request it be added into the approved budget. The cost neutral change would be signed by the participant, broker, DDRO and Independent Support Services.

Staff ID Badge

- Many places will allow staff into places for free or at reduced admission with a staff id badge. If you are interested in getting a staff ID badge, please send a photo electronically to Terry Woodard, Human Resources Specialist (twoodard@issny.org 845-794-5218 ext. 320)

Paid Time Off: Effective January 1, 2016 (New Policy)

Full Time Self Hired Support Staff working 30 or more regularly scheduled hours per week in total:

- Effective January 1, 2016 and for each subsequent year, Self-Hired Support Staff designated as Community Habilitation, Supported Employment (Job Coach) or Respite staff that work 30 or more regularly scheduled hours per week in total (all participants they work for) will receive one accrued paid time off day per month pro-rated on the last day of each month after 30 days of employment. Self-Hired Support Staff will not be eligible to use accrued time until they have worked for 60 days.
- **Example:** Community Habilitation Staff, Jane is hired on January 2, 2016 and works 30 regularly scheduled hours per week. On February 28, 2016 she begins to earn 1 paid time off day per month pro-rated. On December 31, 2016 she has 2 Paid Time Off **days that she did not use. Jane will be able to roll over 2 days into 2017 and will begin accruing Paid Time Off** for 2017 on January 31, 2017.

Part Time Self Hired Support Staff working 29 or less regularly scheduled hours per week in total:

- Effective January 1, 2016 and for each subsequent year, Self- Hired Support Staff designated as Community Habilitation, Supported Employment or Respite staff that work 29 or less, regularly scheduled hours per week in total (all participants they work for) will receive one accrued paid time off hour for every 30 hours they work up to a total of 5 days off pro-rated. The accrued Paid Time Off will be earned on a pro-rated basis on the last day of each month. Self-Hired Support Staff will not be eligible to use accrued time until they have worked for 60 days. Paid Time off is accrued on a calendar year basis and only 1 accrued days will be allowed to roll over into the new calendar year following the year in which the time was accrued.
- **Example:** Community Habilitation Staff, Matthew is hired on January 2, 2016 and works 10 regularly scheduled hours per week. On January 31, 2016 he earns 1 paid time off hour and will continue to accrue 1 hour for every 30 hours worked at the end of each subsequent month. On December 31, 2016 he has 1 Paid Time off day that he did not use. Matthew will be able to roll over the 1day into 2017 and will begin accruing Paid Time Off for 2017 on January 31, 2017.

Please see the specific agency policy in regards to Paid Time off for Self- Hired Support Staff if you have any questions or need further clarification.

Effective January 1, 2016

- All Self- Hired Support Staff (Community Habilitation, Supported Employment and Respite) that work twenty or more regularly scheduled hours per week in total (all participants they work for) are granted 6 paid holidays per year.
- The following is the schedule of Holidays:
 - New Year's Day
 - Memorial Day
 - Independence Day
 - Labor Day
 - Thanksgiving Day
 - Christmas Day
- The above Holidays are granted per calendar year. Staff must work 30 days before they are granted Holiday time.
- If a Self- Hired Support Staff as designated above who works twenty or more regularly scheduled hours per week in total (all participants they work for) is needed to work a holiday they will be paid for the hours worked on the holiday and will accrue those same hours to use at a later date.
- No more than one accrued holiday can be carried over into the next calendar year. The carried over holiday accrual must be used by January 31st of the year following the year the holiday time was accrued.

Examples:

1. If a Self- Hired Support Staff works for three different participants, works a total (all participants they work for) of 20 regularly scheduled hours per week and on the Holiday is needed to work for all three participants the staff member will accrue time equal to the hours they are regularly scheduled to work on the day the Holiday falls.
2. If a Self-Hired Support Staff works for two different participants, works a total (all participants they work for) of 20 regularly scheduled hours in a week and on the Holiday is needed to work for one participant and not the other participant the staff will accrue time equal to the hours they are regularly scheduled on the day the Holiday falls for the participant they work for on the Holiday and will be paid for the holiday equal to the hours they normally work on the day the Holiday falls for the participant they do not work for on the Holiday.

3. Jane a Self - Hired Support staff works for Participant A and Participant B for a total of 20 regularly scheduled hours per week. On Labor Day which is a Monday, Jane normally works for Participant A for three hours and for Participant B for 2 hours. Participant A needs her for the Holiday and Participant B does not need her for the Holiday. Jane would accrue 3 hours of Holiday time and would be paid for three hours due to her working for Participant A and for Participant B she will not work but will be paid 2 hours of Holiday time.

Bereavement Time:

- Full-time employees (regularly scheduled for 30 hours or more weekly) are eligible immediately upon hire for three paid days to prepare for and attend funeral services for the death of an immediate family member. Members of the immediate family include spouses, domestic partners, parents, brothers, sisters, children, children of domestic partners, grandchildren, grandparents, parents-in-law and parents of domestic partners.
- Full-time employees, are eligible immediately upon hire for one paid day to attend the funeral of aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews.
- Requests for bereavement leave should be made to the participant/Circle of Support.

Inclement Weather Time Off:

- Is granted at the discretion of the Participant/Family/ Circle of Support

Medical, Dental, Vision Insurance:

- Support Staff are eligible for this benefit the first of the month following 60 days of employment, are regularly scheduled to work 30 or more hours in a week and there is a 34% fringe rate in the participant's budget line. Questions on eligibility or other general insurance questions should be directed to Human Resources.

Workers Compensation:

- If an employee is hurt while working with you, he or she should seek medical help if necessary. Upon seeking medical help, they should let the medical facility know they were hurt on the job and give them the address to Independent Support Services. They also need to contact Human Resources to get the necessary forms to complete. These forms are required to be submitted to our insurance carrier within 24 hours of the injury.

Disability:

- If an employee is out sick for more than a week for their own illness they could be eligible for disability benefits.
- Please ask them to contact Human Resources so we may get them the necessary forms to see if they are eligible for disability.

Disciplinary Actions/Resignation/Termination:

- There may be times that you have some performance issues with your employee. Performance issues could be absences, not completing necessary documentation, not competing tasks as required, and many other concerns – please call Human Resources or your broker. We will help you deal with the concerns you have.
- If an employee resigns please notify us immediately so that we may complete the necessary documentation for the resignation.
- If an employee needs to be terminated, notify us as well because there are protocols that need to be taken care of to terminate them from our system.
- If an employee does resign or you would like to terminate them please complete an Employee Exit form which is found in the HR section under forms on our website or contact us.

Corporate Compliance:

- Our Corporate Compliance Officer's contact information and our hotline number can be found on our website at issny.org or on the front cover of this guide. Any questions or concerns can be directed to our hotline or to our Corporate Compliance Officer directly.

Incident Reporting:

- We are mandated by New York State to Report certain classifications of incidents and abuse and neglect. Each staff member is required to report incidents as they occur, find out about them or are observed. Questions in regards to incidents, to report any incidents or to discuss whether something is an incident can be directed to our Director of Quality Assurance. The number to contact the Director of Quality Assurance is on the cover of this guide.

REIMBURSEMENTS

Submitting Reimbursement:

- Due to the changes in billing requirements, we now have a very limited timeframe to process and submit all billing, which includes invoices, expense reports, timesheets and/or billing sheets. If we are not able to bill, we are reimbursed for any expenses or payroll we have paid out. Due to the limited timeframes, all reimbursements including timesheets, staff activity fees, mileage, classes, family reimbursed respite etc. ***must*** be to us within 30 days after the day of service. We may no longer be able to pay for anything past the 30 day timeframe.
 - For example: If a service is rendered in September, your reimbursement requests should be sent up and received by the Monticello office by October 30th.

Reimbursement Checks:

- After submitting an expense report or mileage form, please expect a 10-15 day turnaround for a reimbursement check. If you have any questions about your reimbursement, please contact your Self Direction Coordinator. You can also email accounts payable directly at finance@issny.org.

INDIVIDUAL DIRECTED GOODS AND SERVICES (IDGS)

Individual Directed Goods and Services (IDGS) is an HCBS Waiver Service. IDGS are services, equipment or supplies not otherwise provided through OPWDD's HCBS Waiver or through the Medicaid State Plan that address an identified need in a participant's service plan.

The services, equipment or supplies must:

- Relate to a need or goal identified in the Individualized Service Plan
- Be for the purpose of increasing independence or substituting for human assistance, to the extent the expenditures would otherwise be made for that human assistance
- Promote opportunities for community living and inclusion
- Be able to be accommodated without compromising the participant's health or safety
- Be provided to or directed exclusively toward the participant.

Camp:

- Funding may be requested for the cost of summer camp in New York State.
- Summer camp is considered Memorial Day to Labor Day.
- Camps can be either focused on supporting individuals with disabilities or open to the general public
- It must be directly related to a valued outcome in the ISP

Submitting for Reimbursement for Camp:

- In order to get reimbursed for camp, please lay out the money first and submit for reimbursement using a completed expense report. Attached to the expense report please include:
 - A flyer or brochure explaining the camp (what it is, when, and how much it costs)
 - An invoice from the camp showing when the child will be going or has gone
 - Proof of payment (cancelled check, credit card statement, etc.)
 - An ISP with a valued outcome directly related to camp
- If the family or participant does not have money to lay out and the camp will bill us directly, we can pay the camp directly. The camp must send an invoice to our accounts payable department in our Monticello office (finance@issny.org). If the invoice is being emailed please send it as an attachment.

- We also require that the camp sends us an attendance record showing that the participant actually attended the camp after camp services are paid for.

Community Classes & Publically Available Training or Coaching:

- Classes must be available to the general public in any subject area that relates to a person’s valued outcomes (Art, Dance, Exercise, Cooking, Computer Training, Etc.)
- Sessions with a private trainer (physical education/exercise) may be covered as long as the service relates to a valued outcome.
- Classes must be related to a habilitative need in the individual’s person-centered plan and not just for recreational purposes.
- Classes must be non-credit bearing; IDGS funding is for non-matriculated students. The class cannot be working towards a degree.
- **When signing up for classes, please try to sign up for only a month of classes at a time. We are required to bill Medicaid monthly and are not supposed to be laying out for services that have not yet been used. If at all possible, please sign up for a month of classes or sessions at a time.**
- Community classes can be reimbursed under IDGS as long as the classes result in active engagement and participation in **integrated** community settings. In order for Medicaid to reimburse us for classes, they have to meet very specific criteria.
- To find out if a class is reimbursable, please submit a flyer about the class to your Self Direction Coordinator for compliance review. Please do not lay out for a class and expect to be reimbursed before getting the flyer preapproved by your Self Direction Coordinator.

Criteria for Community Classes:

A Community Class is considered **“integrated”** if all these four criteria are met:

1. The setting and class is open to the broader community.
2. The setting is not certified by OPWDD.
3. The setting results in interactions with other participants who do not have an intellectual or developmental disability (other than staff).
4. The class is not being run by OPWDD or a provider agency staff who are acting in their official capacities.

In determining if a class meets the standard of being “open to the general public,” the following five questions should be asked:

1. Is it taught by staff or run by an agency that provides OPWDD services to people with special needs? (NO)
2. Is it located on the grounds where OPWDD services for people with special needs are normally provided? (No)
3. Is it open to the public? (Yes)
4. Does it have published fees? (Yes)
5. Are people who are not OPWDD eligible going to the class (staff and parents do not count) (Yes)

Submitting for Reimbursement for Classes:

- In order to seek reimbursement for community classes, please lay out the money first and submit for reimbursement using a completed expense report. Attached to the expense report please include:
- A flyer or brochure explaining the class (brief description of class, who provides class (with contact information), intended audience, and cost of class)
 - An invoice or bill from the class
 - W9 from the provider (company or person)
 - Proof of payment (cancelled check, debit card/credit card statement, etc.)
- If the family or participant does not have money to lay out and the class will bill us directly on a monthly basis, we can pay for the classes directly. The provider must send an invoice directly to our accounts payable department in our Monticello office.

- **We also require that the class sends us an attendance record showing us that the participant actually attended the class. We cannot pay for services if the person does not attend.**

Coaching or Education for Parents or Spouses

- IDGS funding is for Parent/Spouse/Advocate to attend/participate in educational opportunities (not covered by other public programs) that assist participants and those close to them to achieve goals established in the individual's service plan.
- Self-directing individual is over age 18
- May Include registration and conference fees but does not cover travel or lodging
- Annual cap is \$500.

Submitting for Reimbursement for Coaching or Education Parents or Spouses:

- In order to get reimbursed for coaching or education for parents or spouses, please lay out the money first and submit for reimbursement using a filled out expense report. Attached to the expense report please include:
 - A flyer or brochure explaining the training
 - An invoice or bill from the training
 - Proof of payment (cancelled check, debit card/credit card statement, etc.)

Clinical Non-Direct Service Provision (Staff Trainers)

Clinical Non Direct Consultants/Independent Contractors are clinical specialists who are hired for the following purposes:

- To evaluate an individual's community and/or supported employment habilitation plan
- To train support staff on how to carry out the plan and best work with the individual
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the self-hired staff in carrying out the services in the self-directed plan and make recommendations

Clinical Non Direct Consultants/Independent Contractors are not permitted to provide direct therapy to the participant.

Clinical Non Direct Consultant/Independent Contractor services cannot replicate any service available through a third-party insurer, the Medicaid State Plan or the HCBS Waiver Service.

Prior to any service delivery:

- Consultants must provide a written outline of services to be delivered to the Fiscal Intermediary, prior to approval as well as an annual update of progress.
- Consultants must have a clinical license from the Office of Professions in New York State and provide that information to our Human Resources Department.
- Consultants must complete paperwork with Human Resources to link up to Independent Support Services as an Independent Contractor

Clinical Direct Service Provision (Direct Therapies):

There are only a handful of specialized direct therapies that can be built into a Self-Direction Budget. The approvable therapies are:

1. Hippo Therapy
2. Therapeutic Riding
3. Aquatic Therapy
4. Art Therapy
5. Massage Therapy
6. Music Therapy
7. Play Therapy

Speech, Physical Therapy, and Occupational Therapy ARE NOT therapies that can be built into a Self-Direction Plan. These types of therapies can be accessed through use of your Medicaid State Plan Benefits card or other primary insurance carriers.

Clinician must provide their clinical licensing from the Office of Professions in New York State to Human Resources.

Clinician must complete paperwork prior to any service delivery.

Besides finding a licensed therapist, there are several requirements needed before the service can be approved and used. See below:

There must be a prescription written and signed off on by participant’s **medical** doctor with the goal of treating a specific medical diagnosis and support a specific valued outcome.

The licensed and approved therapist needs to:

- Conduct an initial assessment
- Write a summarization of the findings from the assessment
- Write up a treatment plan (Must be signed off on by the participant’s medical doctor that signed off on the prescription).
 - The treatment plan shall acknowledge the participant’s personal goals and therapeutic activities (along with frequency and duration).
 - The treatment plan must also support a specific valued outcome.
 - Ongoing services must be supported by the treatment plan
 - Write up progress reports reviewed by the medical doctor for approval of continued service.

All invoices must be submitted within thirty days of the end of the month for which the service was provided. If it is later than 30 days we may not be able to pay it.

- A consultant (independent contractor) gets paid once a month. The clinician will complete an invoice at the end of the month and have the families review and sign off on it. All invoices must be submitted within thirty days of the end of the month for which the service was provided. If it is later than 30 days we may not be able to pay it. A family CANNOT layout for these therapies and expect to be reimbursed.

Maximum Pay Rates for Clinicians

- o Payment for the service cannot exceed the rates published under the bureau of labor statistics.

Table 3: Clinician & Therapy Payment Capitation Levels	
Area: New York	
Period: May 2013 –Based on 90th Percentile Wages from BLS July 31, 2014	
Occupation (SOC code)	Hourly 90th percentile wage
Social Workers, All Other(211029)	\$38.21
Dietitians and Nutritionists(291031)	\$40.14
Occupational Therapists(291122)	\$51.60
Physical Therapists(291123)**includes Equine, Aquatic Therapy	\$53.42
Recreational Therapists(291125)	\$34.60
Speech-Language Pathologists(291127)	\$61.16
Therapists All Other(291129)	\$43.00
Registered Nurses(291141)	\$50.98
Nurse Practitioners(291171)	\$65.22
Hearing Aid Specialists(292092)	\$30.33
Occupational Therapy Assistants(312011)	\$34.09
Occupational Therapy Aides(312012)	\$25.08
Physical Therapist Assistants(312021)	\$33.96
Physical Therapist Aides(312022)	\$18.25
Psychologists, All Other(193039)	\$57.66

Footnotes: (1) Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by 2080 hours; where an hourly mean wage is not published the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data. SOC code: Standard Occupational Classification code -- see <http://www.bls.gov/soc/home.htm> Data extracted on July 31 2014

Health Clubs/Organizational Membership's Community Participation:

- Funding for a gym, health club or other community organization membership may be included in the self-directed plan for reasons of health, fitness or community integration in accordance with the participant's valued outcomes.
- The membership is for the individual only and must be in his or her name; **no family memberships!**
- The club/organization must offer open enrollment to the public and cannot be a private club with a closed membership where membership is available by invitation only.
 - Before signing up for a membership, we suggest you obtain, in writing, the establishment's policy on bringing a guest or the ability for the participant to bring their direct support staff, if they need or want.

Submitting for Reimbursement for Organizational Membership:

- We cannot pay membership dues up front and ask that the participant/family lay out for the membership and submit for reimbursement on a monthly basis.
- We must bill monthly. When signing up, please remember that we can only reimburse you on a monthly basis.
- Attach proof of the initial gym contract and how you paid for the month's membership to a completed expense report. (Budget category for gym membership is organizational membership).
- After the first month, you will submit an expense report monthly with proof of how you paid for the membership. If you sign up for an annual membership and pay upfront, we can only reimburse you monthly.
- There is an annual cap of \$1500 in this line.

Household Related Items and Services:

- This is an area under IDGS where certain services or appliances can be reimbursed for those participants living on their own.
- The service or appliance must help the individual live more independently and/or help ensure their safety. (i.e. a microwave oven for someone who cannot safely use a stove or oven)
- The service or appliance must benefit the individual and be related to a valued outcome (related to health and safety).
- Household supports include cleaning, minor maintenance, snow removal, lawn mowing.
- Contact your Self Direction Coordinator to see if something is reimbursable under this category and find out how you would go about getting reimbursed.

Paid Neighbor:

- A paid neighbor is a person hired by the participant that is living on their own. This person can be available to him or her in an emergency situation and provide the appropriate "on call" supports.
- He or she must also become an employee of Independent Support Services by filling out an application and passing a background check. He or she must be cleared by our Human Resources Department before getting paid. This person is paid automatically with a monthly stipend (maximum \$800).
- This person must live within 30 minutes of the participant.
- Prior to starting, there must also be a paid neighbor agreement in place signed off on by the paid neighbor and Independent Support Services as the Fiscal Intermediary. This agreement details the responsibilities of the paid neighbor.
- If a person is called upon to provide direct services with the participant for an extended period of time, he or she would be considered Community Habilitation Staff and should fill out the appropriate timesheet and billing sheet and get paid for an hourly wage.
- A paid neighbor cannot be related to the Self Direction participant by blood or marriage.

Self- Directed Staffing Support (Lead Staff):

- Assists with hiring and scheduling self-hired support staff and assists participant with related paperwork (i.e. timesheets, staff evaluations, monthly summary notes, expense reports, etc.).
- This person must go through a criminal background check and other required screenings to link up as an Independent Contractor with Independent Support Services.

- Payment cannot be more than \$20 per hour.
- A Self Directed Staffing Support is paid monthly by filling out an invoice. The invoice must be submitted within 30 days following the last day of service.
- This staff person cannot work for non-profit agency and cannot be someone actively assisting the person in making decisions (not a family member).
- A Self-Directed Staffing Support cannot also work as an employee (Self Hired Community Habilitation, Job Coach, Job Developer or Respite) with the same participant.

Transitions programs for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities:

- Tuition for non-credit bearing transition programs for individuals with IDD who have already completed their educational program (i.e. ‘aged out’).
- The coursework must address a person’s valued outcomes and address skill building and employment outcomes.
- Programs may be provided in non-site based settings on college campuses, but not in locations certified by OPWDD.
- Coursework may include training on personal care skills, and socialization skills, but this training is provided to support vocational outcomes for the person.
- To be funded via a person’s Self Direction Budget, the program cannot be funded by ACCESS-VR, IDEA or other funding sources.
- Services are time-limited and cannot exceed a two year timeframe.
- No room and board costs are fundable.
- Class limit is \$350 per class and monthly it cannot exceed \$800.
- Tuition invoice must be submitted prior to beginning of class or within 30 days of start of class.

Transportation:

Service-related IDGS transportation reimbursement takes several forms:

1. Staff person who drove his/her personal vehicle to a service-related activity or accompanied participant to service-related activity using public transportation
2. Participant who drove or was driven in his/her personal vehicle to service-related activity
3. Friend or family member who drove his/her personal vehicle to an activity directly relating to IDGS budget line (i.e. class, camp, membership).

Staff person who drove his/her personal vehicle to a service-related activity or accompanied participant to service-related activity using public transportation

Reimbursable:

- When a participant is in the car with staff OR utilizing public transportation with staff to an activity/support/service directly related to a valued outcome/safeguard

Not Reimbursable:

- Using transportation like a “taxi service” (i.e. using staff to pick up participant and/or drop off participant without providing a service). For example: Staff drove participant to his/her paid employment position but did not provide on-site job coaching supports to participant.
- Transportation to and from OPWDD funded services which include the cost of transportation within billing (i.e. day habilitation programs).
- Transportation to and from medical appointments is NOT reimbursable because this duplicates a State Plan of service.

Participant who drove or was driven in his/her personal vehicle to service-related activity

Reimbursable:

- When participant is using mileage OR public transportation for a service related activity/support/service directly related to approved IDGS budget line (i.e. community classes, health club membership) and directly related to a valued outcome/safeguard

Not Reimbursable:

- Transportation to and from medical appointments
- Transportation to and from OPWDD Programs where transportation costs are included in billing standard.
- Transportation to paid employment if self-directed employment services (i.e. job coaching, job development) are not received on that date.

*Please Note: OTPS: Personal Use Transportation may be utilized for mileage that does not meet the IDGS: Transportation guidelines.

Friend or family member who drove his/her personal vehicle to an activity directly relating to IDGS budget line (i.e. class, camp, membership).

Reimbursable:

- When a family member/friend drove participant to a service related activity/support/service directly related to approved IDGS budget line (i.e. community classes, health club membership) and directly related to a valued outcome/safeguard

NOT Reimbursable:

- transportation to family vacations or family gatherings
- transportation to and from medical appointments
- transportation to OPWDD Programs where transportation costs are included in billing standard
- any public transportation for family member/friend accompanying participant

Filling out a mileage form:

- When filling out a mileage form, please complete it in its entirety (month, participant name, and staff name) and submit it following the month transportation was used (i.e. send in September's mileage in October).
- Please separate mileage forms by month (i.e. do not send in several months on the same form)
- When completing "Leaving From" and "Going To"-please enter the town you are leaving from and the town you are going to.
- Under purpose of travel write specific places you went and activities performed i.e. "supported at volunteer site-The Bristle Nursing Home"

Items that CANNOT be funded through IDGS

- *Academic Tutoring* - Academic tutoring is **not** funded through the IDGS. This service should be pursued through the school district or college setting. Academic tutoring/homework assistance is not an appropriate task for self-hired staff.
- *Automatic pill dispenser/ medication system* - Available through Assistive Technology, outside the person's Self Direction Budget
- *Cell Phones/Telephones* - Funding for cell phones is not an allowable IDGS expense. The SafeLink Wireless program is available to eligible individuals in New York State who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The SafeLink service in New York State allows for a cell phone and limited free minutes for a person who has a diagnosed developmental disability and receives social security benefits under SSI.
- *Computer Hardware* - Not allowable in IDGS
- *Computer Programs/Software* - Computer Software may be available through Assistive Technology, outside the person's Self Direction Budget.
- *Leased Vehicles* - Leased Vehicles **are not an allowable expense under IDGS.**
- *Health-Related Services, Equipment and Supplies* - Health related supplies such as food and beverage thickeners, trachea collars, disposable bed pads, wipes, incontinence products, and supplemental medications are funded through the State Plan only; not through IDGS funding.
- *Parents' Activity Fees, Expenses, and Meals* - Activity fees, expenses, and meals incurred by parents of individuals **are not** reimbursed with IDGS funds and must be paid by the parents when they accompany an individual to an activity supported by the his/her Self Direction Budget.

- **Participants' Activity Fees, Expenses, and Meals** - Activity fees, expenses, and meals incurred by individuals **are not** reimbursed with IDGS funds and must be paid by the individual or his/her family.
- **Personal Monitoring Systems** - Available through State Plan
- **Staff Activity Fees, Expenses, and Meals** - Activity fees, expenses, and meals incurred by self-hired staff supporting individuals are not reimbursed with IDGS funds, but may be funded through OTPS.
- **Direct Clinician service delivery and Therapies: Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Psychology (Medicaid state funded)** - On-going therapies that are provided directly to the person are funded through the individual's State Plan Medicaid Card or, if the individual is school-aged, through the local school district, and are **not** funded under IDGS.
- **Experimental Therapies** - Experimental therapies are not reimbursable in any clinical category within IDGS and are not a permitted expense in the OTPS payment category.

LIVE IN CAREGIVER (LIC):

- Live-In Caregiver (LIC) is an HCBS Waiver Service that allows a participant to utilize a person that is not related to the individual to reside in the same household as the waiver participant and provide as needed support to address the participant's physical, social or emotional needs so the participant can live safely and successfully in his or her own apartment.
- In exchange for supporting the individual, the LIC's portion of the rent, food, and utilities will be reimbursed. The participant must submit for reimbursement at the end of every month. To submit for reimbursement, please attach itemized receipts and bills to an expense report and submit these expenses monthly.
 - We must reimburse the participant for money they laid out for the LIC's food and utilities. The LIC's rent is typically paid directly to the landlord.
 - We are not permitted to reimburse the LIC directly.
- If the Live-In Caregiver provides a habilitative service (not outlined in the LIC Agreement), the Live In Caregiver must fill out a Community Habilitation Support Staff timesheet/billing sheet to be paid for his or her hourly work.
- The Live in Caregiver cannot be related to the participant by blood or marriage to any degree.
- Independent Support Services must have an agreement stating specific services and responsibilities of caregiver. It must be signed by the participant, Live in Caregiver and the Fiscal Intermediary prior to taking effect.
- Live-In Caregiver must become an employee by filling out an application and passing a background check.

OTHER THAN PERSONAL SERVICES (OTPS):

- Other than Personal Services (OTPS) are service utilizing 100% state funds to help pay for items that are not funded through Medicaid.
- The maximum in this category is \$3,000.
- Goods and services purchased with OTPS funds must relate to a valued outcome in the person's ISP and increase independence or the ability to live safely in his or her home.

The OTPS section of the budget is limited to the following categories of supports:

- Phone service – cell and/or land line
- Internet (in instances where a participant has a cable package, OTPS can be used for phone and internet only, but not the cable portion)
- Software related to the person's disability
- Staff activity fees to cover meals, admissions, fees, transportation or other costs incurred by staff when providing support to the self-directing person in activities that support a valued outcome
- Staff advertising/recruitment costs
- Staff Training
- Personal Use Transportation
- Clothing (capped at \$250)
- Board Stipend (must first request and be denied for food stamps)
 - No expendable, cleaning products, personal toiletries or supplies, etc.
- Utilities

- Other goods and services that increase independence
- Other goods and services related to health and safety

Staff Activity Fees (only for Self Hired Staff and NOT permitted for participants)

- The main purpose of staff activity fees are for participants to be able to have their staff reimbursed for admission fees to recreational places in the community the participant wishes to attend that relates to a valued outcome (admission to a sporting event, concert, movies, bowling, museum, park admission, plays, etc.).
- State funds should not be used for meal reimbursement for staff **unless** the participant has a valued outcome in their habilitation plan and ISP pertaining to skills needed when eating out.
- As for meal reimbursement, we recommend that the reimbursements not exceed the allowed meal reimbursement of the IRS which is \$7 for breakfast, \$15 for lunch and \$22 for dinner. Food drastically depletes the staff activity fee line and we urge families and participants to have staff bring their own meals while working.

Submitting for reimbursement for Staff Activity Fees:

- **Please complete an expense report and attach itemized receipts**
- All reimbursements must be submitted within 30 days of the end of the month for which it was spent.
- **We are unable to pay for tax and tip.**
- Under activity on the expense report, a goal related activity should be referenced-i.e. “Worked on making healthy food choices at Tropical Smoothie.” Or “supported at Met’s baseball game.”

FAMILY REIMBURSED RESPITE (FRR)

- Family Reimbursed Respite is a way for families to pay a person whom they trust (does not have to be an ISS staff person) to supervise their son or daughter, pay them directly, and get reimbursed through the Self Direction Budget.
- Family Reimbursed Respite is paid for with 100% State funds and is capped at \$3,000 annually.
- The family designates the rate per hour. There is no set amount.
- A parent cannot be paid to provide Family Reimbursed Respite through a Self-Direction Plan.
- Anyone living in the same residence as the participant cannot be paid to provide Family Reimbursed Respite in a Self-Direction Plan.
- The person providing the respite must fill out a W9 in order for Independent Support Services to be able to reimburse the person who laid out the money.
- The provider can no longer be paid directly. The family must lay out the money and submit for reimbursement using a family reimbursed respite expense report.
- Staff (employees) that work with the participant can also be paid through Family Reimbursed Respite.
 - Example: if a staff person works 40 hours in a week and a family is going away over the weekend- the family can choose to pay the staff person additional money through FRR to provide respite to the participant while the family is away for the weekend. Staff cannot work more than 40 hours in a week, so paying the staff through Family Reimbursed Respite would allow the staff to work the extra hours without going over the limit.

Submitting for reimbursement for Family Reimbursed Respite:

- Complete a family reimbursed respite expense report in its entirety (month, participant name, check payable to, W9 attached or on file, date, time in/out, number of hours, hourly rate, total paid)
- Attach a W9 filled out by the provider (required annually) and check box of “W9 attached”
- If the W9 was already sent in for the respite provider and we should have it, please check box off “W9 on file”

HOUSING SUBSIDY

Self-Direction participants who choose to live independently or who share a living environment and have tenancy rights may be able to include a housing subsidy in their budgets, funded with 100% state funds. The amount a participant receives in their Housing Subsidy is calculated based on a participant’s income and depends on the Housing and Community Renewal payment standards.

A person who has a self-direction plan and chooses to build in a housing subsidy:

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must have their name on the lease and send to ISS
- Must contribute 30% of their own income towards their rent
- Must rent a **legal** apartment (2 forms of egress out of the home (separate entrance) , operating kitchen, operating bathroom, must be above ground, must meet all town codes)- We need proof (Certificate of Occupancy/Rental Permit from town)
- Must get us a W9 from their landlord they are renting from

If a participant wishes to live in an apartment that costs more than their housing subsidy stipend, he or she is responsible to pay the difference.

If the participant is receiving Section 8/HUD funding, the maximum their housing subsidy can be is \$50 per month. A housing subsidy paid through Self Direction cannot be used toward living expenses of a person living in a certified adult home.

Important Reminders about utilizing a Housing Subsidy:

- Please give us at least 10 days' notice, as much notice as possible, if you require us to make any payments.
- A person with a housing subsidy CANNOT receive Family Reimbursed Respite
- When locating an apartment for an individual, Independent Support Services can only lay out one month's rent and one month's security (based on what is written in his or hers housing subsidy).
- In order for Independent Support Services to lay out money for an apartment, we need to have a lease on file for the individual. If you are waiting on the lease, we could use a processed application from a housing complex to get things going.
- Independent Support Services cannot pay for application fees or additional security deposits.
- When locating an apartment for someone, it is important that the individual, family and broker are in contact with the participant's self-direction coordinator to make he or she aware of the move (The more notice the better).
- Please let us know how the rent should be paid whether it is to the participant/family or to the landlord directly. It can be mailed manually or electronically deposited.
- If the rent is being sent directly to the family to then pay the landlord, we will need proof of the cancelled check that was written and cashed to pay the rent.
- Please provide your Self-Direction Coordinator with information as to how the rent shall be paid (Names, Addresses, Banking Information, Etc.)

Paying rent to a family member

A family member may own the property the individual chooses to rent. However, they must make OPWDD aware of this while a Self-Direction Plan is in the process of being written or amended to add a housing subsidy. The family member that owns the property will not receive the full amount of the housing subsidy in the participant's self-direction budget because the maximum amount to be paid to the landlord would have to be the lower of:

1. The payment standard
2. Asking rent
3. The family member's actualized costs (taxes + utility bills/number of bedrooms)
 - Mortgage payments do not count towards actualized costs. OPWDD will need proof of actualized costs when the plan is initially sent to OPWDD for approval. If the home is in trust for the individual or in third party trust, the subsidy can default to the standards. Again proof of the trust will need to be provided

Transition Stipend

The participant may request a one-time transition stipend of up to \$3,000 in their Self Direction Budget when moving out of a family's home or a certified residential setting to an independent housing situation.

Transition stipend funds are used to pay for:

- Furniture
- Moving expenses
- Household articles

Transition Stipend funds cannot be used for personal or expendable items (i.e. toilet paper, hair brushes, toothbrushes, paper towels, etc.)

Reimbursement for Transition Stipend Items:

- In order to get reimbursed for items purchased through the transition stipend, please collect your itemized receipts and complete an expense report.
- The budget category on the expense report is “transition stipend”
- Please list items purchased in the activity columns
- Attach proof of how you paid for the items
- Tax is not reimbursable
- You have one year from the initial lease date to spend the transition stipend funds.

There are certain stores that we work with regularly that allow us to pay up front for your furniture or house hold items order. For example: Bob’s, Target (Online), and Walmart (Online). You should obtain an itemized invoice of the products to be ordered and send the invoice to your Self Direction Coordinator. Please give us as much time as possible to process these orders.

We hope that you find this guide helpful and informative! Please reach out to your Self Direction Coordinator (SDC) if you have any additional questions. The SDC will work in close collaboration with the individual, his/her circle of support, Support Broker, Support Staff, and voluntary providers. He or she will provide oversight and guidance for Self Direction budget spending. The SDC will track paperwork that has been submitted by the participant/family/Medicaid Service Coordinator to ensure that it is completed correctly and compliant with Medicaid regulations. He or she will also participate in ISP meetings over the phone with the participant’s planning team to track satisfaction with the service. Lastly, the SDC will act as a point person to assist with questions concerning fiscal intermediary services (i.e. Human Resources, Payroll, Accounts Payable, etc.).

Please remember to check our website for informational updates – <http://www.issny.org>

Thank you!