



Choice. Flexibility. Control.

My Life, My Way

The Department on Disability Services (DDS) is committed to providing high-quality services that enable people with disabilities to lead meaningful and productive lives as vital members of their communities. Our Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) is implementing **My Life, My Way**, a self-directed initiative that gives District residents with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) more control, choice, and flexibility over the services and supports they may receive while living in their natural homes.

How Does My Life, My Way Work?

My Life, My Way gives District residents with IDD more choice and more control over the supports they need to live life their way. As a participant, you are the employer of your staff or Participant-Directed Workers (PDW). You or your designee hire, train, and evaluate the employees who will help you achieve your goals. If you find that a PDW is not meeting your needs, you can select a new PDW to help you stay on track to get the life you want.

To get the most out of the program:

- **Talk with your Service Coordinator.** Together you will develop a person-centered Individual Support Plan (ISP) that includes Participant-Directed Services (PDS).
- **Participate in a program orientation** to learn how to access available services.
- **Develop a budget for your service(s).** The IFS Waiver limit is \$75,000. The cap for Individual-Directed Goods and Services (IDGS) is \$2,500.
- **Hire, train and manage your Participant-Directed Workers** and purchase approved IDGS to meet your needs.
- **Agree to follow all program rules and guidelines.**

Who can Participate?

DC residents with IDD who are at least 18 years of age are eligible to participate in *My Life, My Way*. **Participants must:** live in their natural home, be eligible to receive Medicaid, and be enrolled in the Individual and Family Support (IFS) waiver.

What Services are Included?

IFS waiver participants enrolled in *My Life, My Way* can self-direct five types of services:

- In-Home Supports
- Individualized Day Supports (IDS)
- Companion Services
- Daily Respite Services
- Individual-Directed Goods and Services (IDGS)

Who Can I Hire as My Participant-Directed Worker (PDW)?

You may hire friends, family members, or a person who is new to you to serve as your PDW. All PDWs must:

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Pass a criminal background check.
- Be authorized to work in the U.S. and have a valid social security number.
- Complete Person-Centered Training.
- Participate in ongoing training to ensure the well-being of people supported.
- Be certified or willing to become certified in CPR and First Aid.
- Have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance if providing transportation.
- Sign a Medicaid provider agreement
- Meet any additional waiver requirements related to the service provided.

People who have legal responsibility for you cannot be your PDW. You cannot hire your spouse or a designated legal guardian. Parents cannot serve as a PDW for a minor child.

What if I Need Additional Help?

If you decide to enroll in *My Life, My Way*, you will have ongoing support throughout your enrollment. The program offers **Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent Financial Management Services (VF/EA FMS)** to help you manage financial tasks and staffing needs. Your VF/EA FMS **Support Broker** acts as your independent advocate, assisting you with:

- Managing paperwork—from program forms to government documents necessary for you to serve as an employer of PDWs.
- Processing payroll for your support staff.
- Developing and managing a budget.
- Safeguarding your money.
- Gaining access to the services you want and finding ways for you to receive those services in the community when you want.
- Communicating with others on your behalf, as needed.

You can also select someone you trust to act as **an Authorized Representative**. An Authorized Representative willingly accepts responsibility for employer and PDS budget management tasks that you are unable to perform without the help of a representative. An Authorized Representative can be a family member or friend who you designate in writing to act on your behalf.

How do I Enroll?

If you are currently receiving services from the DDS Developmental Disabilities Administration, please contact your Service Coordinator for assistance with enrolling in *My Life, My Way*.

If you are interested in receiving services through the Developmental Disabilities Administration, please call 202-730-1700 and ask to speak to a DDS Community Liaison Specialist.