



# **DC Caregiver Resources Spotlights**

***DC Supporting Families Community of  
Practice***

# What is the Community of Practice for Supporting Families (SF CoP)

- People with I/DD, their families, government and community organizations work together to enhance and drive policy, practice, and system transformation to support people with intellectual/developmental disabilities within the context of their families and communities.
- Part of a national community of practice



# Who is part of the SF CoP?



Ethiopian and Eritrean  
Special Needs  
Community



Family  
Support  
Council



# Ethiopian and Eritrean Special Needs Community



- **Parent Cafe (virtual)**
- **In person parent meetings**
- **Question and answer sessions on behavioral health and special education topics**

## **Contact:**

**[eesncdmv@gmail.com](mailto:eesncdmv@gmail.com)**

**Phone: 301-201-6240**

# How AJE supports DC families and students



**Maria Blaeuer**

**Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.**

*The Parent Training and Information Center for the District of Columbia*

# Who we are & what we do

Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc. (AJE) is a local nonprofit. We were founded in 1996 and governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, most of whom have had personal experience navigating the same systems AJE works in. **We are an independent organization and are not part of DC government or any school system.**

We receive federal funds from the US Department of Education and the US Department of Health and Human Services, and other non-federal sources like private foundations and the DC Bar Foundation to make sure that DC parents and youth are aware of their rights and choices in the education decision making process. **We are the Family-to-Family Health Information Center (F2FHIC) and the Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) for DC. Every state has at least one PTI and one F2FHIC.**

**We have a focus on special education/disability rights and school discipline, but also provide support for families with students experiencing homelessness, having residency issues, grade disputes or challenges with the transition from early intervention to school-age supports and services, or to life after high school.**

# Who We Serve & What We Believe

## Our Mission

Advocates for Justice and Education seeks to empower families, youth, and the community to be effective advocates to ensure that children and youth, particularly those who have disabilities and/or special healthcare needs, receive access to appropriate education and health services.

## Our Values

**Accountability:** We promote school and agency accountability to ensure that all children, youth, and families receive proper services and supports.

**Accessibility:** We ensure accessibility to all families and the community at large.

**Commitment to Children and Families:** We are committed to the success of all children, youth, and families.

## Who We Serve

We serve DC families of

# Parent Training

We offer FREE in-person and online parent training about -

- the Special Education Process
- IEPs, 504s
- School Discipline
- Working with your child's school and medical team
- Effective Advocacy
- Preparing your young person for life after high school
- and more!

# Direct Services for Families

We offer –

**Advice and Counsel** – one:one coaching, information, and resources

**Brief Services** - referrals, introduction, facilitated communication, document review.

**Extended Representation** - in some special education and school discipline cases

Opportunities to grow as leaders and advocates via the **Parent Ambassadors** program, **Parent Leadership Academy** and the **Parents Building Bridges** program.

Our direct services are supported by -

An on-demand YouTube library of trainings

A robust referral network

# Systemic Advocacy

We help parents and families recognize the power they have to impact policy and give them the tools and support they need to do so by offering training on existing laws/regulations and advocacy skills to change them.

Our Parents Building Bridges supports parents who want to engage with their local school to make changes and our Health Equity programming, like HEAL US HEAL DC, empower parents to advocate for the health care needs of students with disabilities and special health care needs in their community.

AJE also targets our resources to support families by-

training & supporting Parent Ambassadors to be effective advocates in the community

filing systemic state complaints

filing targeted FOIA requests (and litigating compliance)

supporting impact litigation via amicus briefing

representing families in cases where we see a problematic trend or emerging issue

growing the capacity of the legal community to serve families

# Advocates for Justice and Education

*The federally designated Parent Training & Information Center for Washington D.C.*

***Educate. Advocate. Empower.***

AJE's mission is to empower families, youth, and the community to be effective advocates to ensure that children and youth, particularly those who have special needs, receive access to appropriate education and health services.

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***Our passion is empowering families by equipping parents and students with disabilities with the tools they need to be their own advocates.***

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[information@aje-dc.org](mailto:information@aje-dc.org)



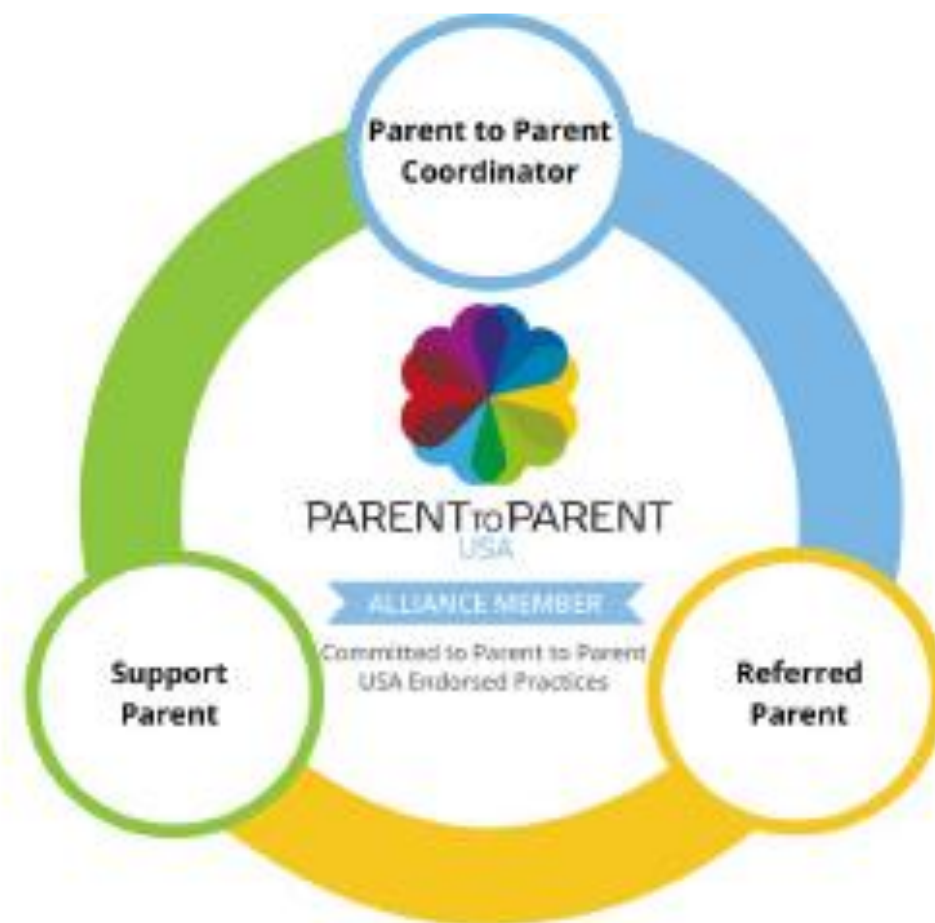


FAMILY TIES OF DC  
The Support Connect

# DC's Central Source of Parent Support



Mission: *To support parents, family members, and caregivers in the District of Columbia who have children with disabilities or special health care needs from pre-birth to end of life through individualized peer-to-peer support, using quality standards.*



***You are not alone!***



**FAMILY TIES OF DC**  
*The Support Connect*

- Do you need a Family Ties of DC (FTDC) parent match for emotional support, information, and resources?
- Are you interested in joining the team of trained FTDC Support Parents?

**Refer to**

**<https://www.dcqualitytrust.org/family-ties/>**  
**for the FTDC parent match request form**  
**and support parent application.**

- Is your agency or organization interested in a purposeful partnership to support families in the District of Columbia?

**Contact Rhonda White, FTDC Program Coordinator,**  
**at [rwhite@dcqualitytrust.org](mailto:rwhite@dcqualitytrust.org) or (202)459-4002.**



# Family Support Council

We are looking for YOU!

Join the DC Family Support Council to provide **recommendations, assistance, and counsel** to the Department on Disability Services and sister agencies in developing person and family-centered systems of support for families throughout the lifespan of their family members with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The DC Family Support Council has **voting member slots for 2-year terms.**

If you are a self-advocate, family member of a self-advocate, subject matter expert, or member of a non-profit/volunteer community organization that supports people with I/DD and their families and has an interest in learning more about membership, please reach out to the Co-Chairs, Craig Leen at [Craig.Leen@klgates.com](mailto:Craig.Leen@klgates.com), or Rhonda White, [rwhite@dcqualitytrust.org](mailto:rwhite@dcqualitytrust.org).

Please apply by clicking [Voice for DC families.](#)

**Join us for the meeting on Thursday, January 9, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.**



The Parenting Support program is the singular home visiting program in the District of Columbia that centers on parents with intellectual or associated disabilities.

Contact: [ParentingSupportProgram@georgetown.edu](mailto:ParentingSupportProgram@georgetown.edu)

**THRIVE  
CENTER**

*for Children,  
Families, and  
Communities*





GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR  
EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

## Transition Supports for Parents with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Partnership

**These videos are for parents with intellectual or developmental disabilities who want to learn about these systems. The goal is to help parents understand how to use these systems better for their children.**

**Scan here**



### Contact

Phone: [202-687-8807](tel:202-687-8807)

Email: [ucedd@georgetown.edu](mailto:ucedd@georgetown.edu)

**THRIVE  
CENTER**

*for Children,  
Families, and  
Communities*



# DDS Community and Provider Forum



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**LIFE. YOUR WAY.**  
Department on  
Disability Services

## HCBS Waiver Services Spotlight

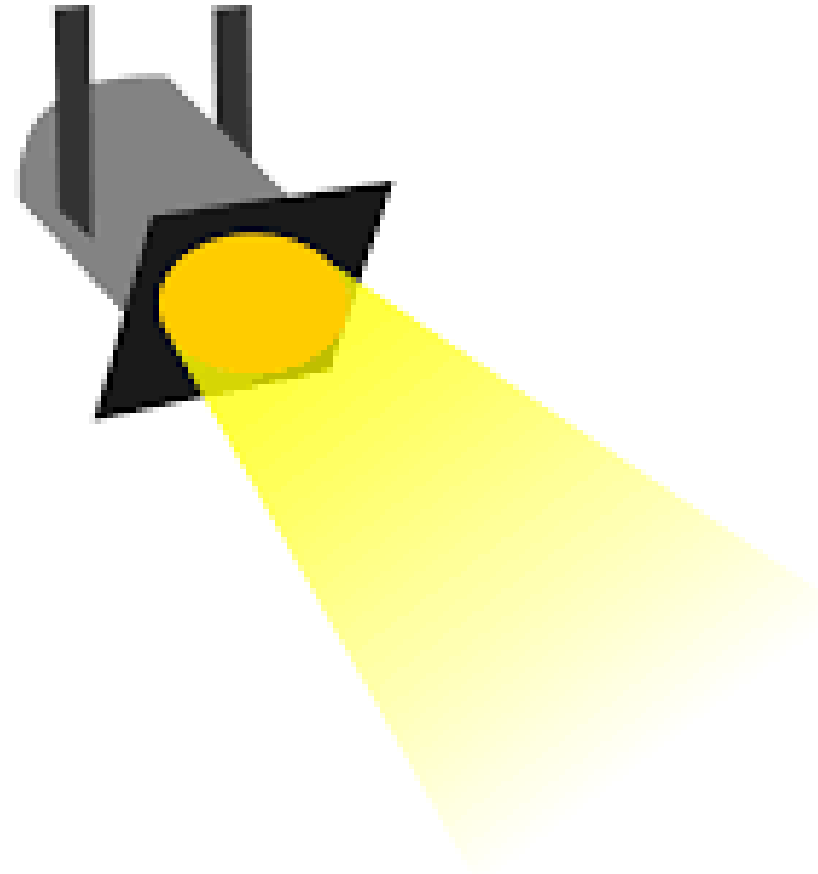
December 13, 2024

# Agenda

- 1) Review Family Training, Parenting Supports, and Respite Waiver Services
- 2) Review the *My Life, My Way* Program: Participant-Directed Services (PDS)



# HCBS Waiver Services Spotlight



**Family Training, Parenting Supports, and Respite Services** are offered to persons enrolled in both DDS Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers, Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Waiver and Individual and Family Support (IFS) Waiver.

**The *My Life, My Way* Program/Participant-Directed Services** is only available to persons enrolled in the IFS Waiver.

# Family Training



Family Training services provides coaching, consultation and other professional supports services offered to families or unpaid primary caregivers of persons enrolled in the Waiver. The training focuses on how to improve the caregivers support of the person or gain a better understanding of the services outlined in the person's Individual Support Plan (ISP) and Plan of Care (POC).

# Family Training



Family Training services include the following activities:

- ❖ Instruction about treatment regimens and other services included in the person's ISP and Plan of Care;
- ❖ Instruction on the use of equipment specified in the person's ISP and Plan of Care;
- ❖ Counseling aimed at assisting the unpaid caregiver in meeting the needs of the person; and
- ❖ Follow up training necessary to safely maintain the person at home.

# Family Training



Family Training may be delivered by clinical professionals or by qualified peers. A qualified peer is an individual who meets the qualifications and standards as a family training provider.

Family Training is available as a one-to-one (1:1) service for a person, and in small-group settings not to exceed 1:4. A person served through the waiver may utilize both one-to-one and small group Family Training services.

This service may be delivered through remote supports to the extent the recommended service delivery is through remote supports services, and the person is able to utilize equipment/technology needed for remote supports services as assessed and determined by the support team.

# Parenting Supports



Parenting Supports services assist people who are or will be parents in developing appropriate parenting skills. Parents receive training that is individualized and focused on the health and welfare and developmental needs of their child, as well as building necessary parenting skills. Close coordination will be maintained with informal and other formal supports. This service is available to expectant parents, and parents with physical custody, visitation rights or parents who are pursuing reunification with their child. This service must be provided in the person's home or in a variety of community-based settings, based upon the person's needs and choices.

# Parenting Supports



Parenting Supports service may include training of individuals who provide unpaid support, training, companionship or supervision to persons served through the waiver to reinforce strategies provided to the person served.

Parenting Supports services are available both as a one-to-one (1:1) service and in a small group setting of 1:2, 1:3, not to exceed 1:4. Parenting Supports may be delivered by clinical professionals or by qualified peers. A qualified peer is an individual who meets the qualifications and standards as a Parenting Supports provider.

This service may be delivered through remote supports to the extent the recommended service delivery is through remote supports services, and the person is able to utilize equipment/technology needed for remote supports services as assessed and determined by the support team.

# Parenting Supports



Parenting Supports services peer employees must meet the basic requirements, including but not limited to, the following:

- ❖ A peer employee may be the person's relative, but may not be legally responsible for the person, or the person's legal guardian.
- ❖ A peer employee cannot provide parenting supports services to a person who also provides the following IDD and/or IFS Waiver services: Residential Habilitation; Supported Living with and without Transportation; Host Home without Transportation; or In-Home Supports.

# Respite Services



Respite services are the provision of short-term, temporary relief to those who are caring for family members enrolled in the Waiver to enable them to participate in scheduled or unscheduled time away from the person. Respite services will ensure that persons will continue to receive services and have access to community activities as described in their Individual Support Plan (ISP) and Plan of Care (POC) including transportation to and from the activities.



# Respite Services



Respite services provides persons with hands-on support including, but not limited to:

- ❖ Assistance with activities of daily living;
- ❖ Ensuring access to community activities, including coordination and provision of transportation to participate in community activities consistent with the person's ISP and Plan of Care to allow the person's routine to be uninterrupted; and
- ❖ Monitoring of the person's health and physical condition, as well as assistance with medication administration or other medical needs.

# Respite Services



Respite can be utilized on an hourly or daily basis.

Respite hourly services are provided to persons in their natural home setting or another residential setting that would meet the requirements of certifications issued by DDS.

Respite daily services are provided to persons out of their home in a group home for persons with IDD, Residential Habilitation facility, or Supported Living residence approved by DDS for accepting respite placements for traditional respite services.

Respite daily services can be participant-directed or provider-managed in the Individual and Family Supports (IFS) waiver. Respite daily services are available through Participant-Directed Services (PDS) to IFS waiver participants enrolled in the *My Life, My Way* program and can be provided outside of the participant's home.

*My Life, My Way* Program:  
Participant-Directed Services

# *My Life, My Way* Program: Participant -Directed Services

Participant-directed services (PDS), the *My Life, My Way* Program, are long-term care supports and services that help people of all ages across all types of disabilities maintain their independence and control their care in their homes.

## **What is PDS?**

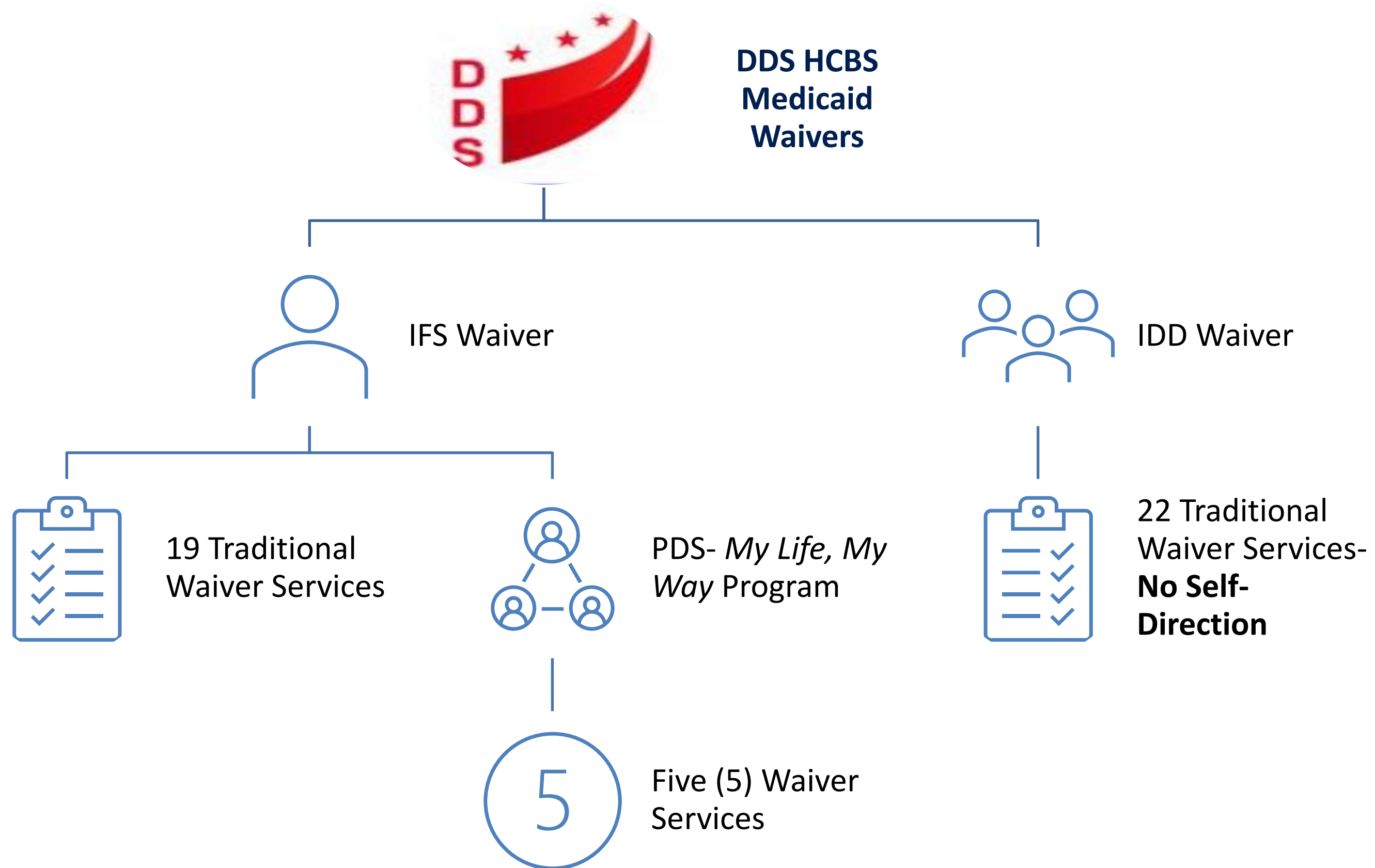
- Long-term care supports and services.
- Enables people of all ages and disabilities to manage their personal care and support needs.
- Known as consumer-directed or self-directed services.

## **How it Works:**

- Alternative to traditional agency-based care delivery.
- Participants choose services and supports that best meet their needs.
- Does not replace agency services but provides a flexible, personalized option.

## **Key Features of the Program:**

Participants can combine PDS with traditional IFS waiver services, as long as services do not duplicate (e.g., cannot receive in-home supports from both models at the same time).



# Services Offered in the *My Life, My Way* Program

The *My Life, My Way* Program allows participants, or their authorized representative if applicable, to have decision-making authority over certain services and take direct responsibility to manage their services with the assistance of a system of available supports.

PDS allows participants to have the responsibility for managing **all** aspects of service delivery in a person-centered planning process.

The PDS delivery option is available for the following waiver services:

- In-Home Supports
- Individualized Day Supports (IDS) 1:1
- Companion Services 1:1
- Respite Daily (Out of home)
- Individual-Directed Goods and Services (IDGS)

# *My Life, May Way* Program: Participant -Directed Services

## Why Choose Self-Direction?

Take control of your care and design a plan that works best for you!

## Self-direction could be a good fit if:

- **YOU WANT FLEXIBILITY:** Customize your services to fit your lifestyle, either on your own or with the help of a trusted representative.
- **YOU'RE READY DECIDE:** Be empowered to make choices about your care that reflect your unique needs and preferences.
- **YOU VALUE INDEPENDENCE:** Take charge of managing your services while still having access to support when you need it.

**Choice. Flexibility. Control.**  
**My Life, My Way**

**DDS**  
LIFE. YOUR WAY.  
Department on  
Disability Services

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 (IGS) is \$2,500.
- **Hire, train and manage your Participant-Directed Workers** and purchase approved IGS 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 (IGS)

208 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20024 | www.dds.dc.gov | Facebook @DDS\_DC | Twitter @DDS\_DC

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**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 transportation will be provided
- 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.

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## LIFE. YOUR WAY. Department on Disability Services

# My Life, My Way Fact Sheet

- The *My Life, My Way* (PDS) Fact Sheet is uploaded to DDS website at: <https://dds.dc.gov/page/medicaid-waiver-information>

# DDS HCBS IDD and IFS Waiver Resources

- **DDS Waivers Information:**
  - <https://dds.dc.gov/page/medicaid-waiver-information>
  - (Includes the 2022 approved IDD & IFS Waiver Applications, IFS Waiver Fact Sheet, *My Life, My Way* Program Fact Sheet, etc.)
- **IDD and IFS Waiver Service Descriptions:**
  - <https://dds.dc.gov/node/1353626>
  - (Includes Remote Supports Services (RSS) Descriptions)
- **Medicaid Waiver Services Documentation Requirements:**
  - <https://dds.dc.gov/page/medicaid-waiver-services-documentation-requirements>
  - (Includes documentation requirements from the DCMR for the IDD and IFS waivers, and DDS policies and procedures.)
- **DDA Waiver Services by Provider:**
  - <https://dds.dc.gov/page/dda-hca-and-pre-qualified-provider-listing>
  - (Includes all services in the IDD/IFS Waivers and HCBS Waiver providers who are approved to provide each waiver service. The document is updated monthly).

# DDS HCBS IDD and IFS Waiver Resources

- DC Municipal Regulations (DCMR)
  - IDD Waiver (Chapter 29-19):
    - <https://www.dcregs.dc.gov/Common/DCMR/RuleList.aspx?ChapterNum=29-19>
  - IFS Waiver (Chapter 29-90):
    - <https://www.dcregs.dc.gov/Common/DCMR/RuleList.aspx?ChapterNum=29-90&ChapterId=5381>
      - *My Life, My Way* Program (Chapter 29-111):
        - <https://www.dcregs.dc.gov/Common/DCMR/RuleList.aspx?ChapterNum=29-111>

# Questions



If you are interested in exploring waiver services, please contact your assigned Service Coordinator to discuss available service options and/or SPCD Program Managers: Musu Fofana at [musu.fofana@dc.gov](mailto:musu.fofana@dc.gov); Robin Exton at [robin.exton@dc.gov](mailto:robin.exton@dc.gov); Sherin Moses at [sherin.moses@dc.gov](mailto:sherin.moses@dc.gov); Tisharra Albright at [tisharra.albright@dc.gov](mailto:tisharra.albright@dc.gov).

If you have questions regarding the IDD/IFS Waivers, please contact Pamela Harmon, Supervisory Medicaid Waiver Specialist at [pamela.harmon@dc.gov](mailto:pamela.harmon@dc.gov) or Bernetrice Parker, Medicaid Waiver Program Specialist at [bernetrice.parker@dc.gov](mailto:bernetrice.parker@dc.gov).

If you have questions regarding the *My Life, My Way* Program/Participant-Directed Services (PDS), please contact Shana Holmes, PDS Program Coordinator at [shana.holmes@dc.gov](mailto:shana.holmes@dc.gov).