Time to Choose a Support Coordinator?

It's an important decision…

Don't be afraid to take the time to ask some questions!

A Guide for Individuals and Families Using DSPD Services

TIME TO CHOOSE A SUPPORT COORDINATOR?

IT'S AN IMPORTANT DECISION…

DON'T BE AFRAID TO TAKE THE TIME TO ASK QUESTIONS!

A **Support Coordinator** works with individuals with disabilities and their families to develop service and support plans, based on the individual's needs and wishes, and to coordinate and monitor the services and supports that are provided to the individual. Support Coordinators may be private contractors or employees of the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD).

STEP ONE

Find out all of your options!

- Ask around and find out which Support Coordinator other individuals/families are using and how satisfied they are with the service they receive from the individual or company they have selected.
- If you know who you want for your Support Coordinator, contact that Support Coordinator and see if they are willing to set up an interview with you.
- You can get contact information for Support Coordinators on the Division's website (www.dspd.utah.gov) or from your Administrative Program Manager (Supervisor). You can get the name of your Program Manager (Supervisor) by contacting DSPD Intake toll-free at: 877-568-0084.

or …

- Ask your Administrative Program Manager (Supervisor) to send out an Invitation to Submit Offer (ISO) to private Support Coordinators letting them know that you are looking for a new Support Coordinator. Those private Support Coordinators who are interested in becoming your SC will contact your Program Manager. You can get a list of those who respond from your Program Manager and set up interviews with potential candidates.

- You have the right to choose your Support Coordinator and should not feel pressured by anyone to make a particular choice.

- Support Coordination fees are already included in your budget. When you use private Support Coordination, support coordination fees will be added to your budget and show as a line item payable to your private Support Coordinator or Support Coordination Company. Using Private Support coordination will not change your present service package.

- Any time you wish to change Support Coordinators, you have the right to select a new one.

STEP TWO

Phone screen prospective Support Coordinators to see if they are available and willing to serve you or the individual you support .

At this time, you might ask things like:

- How long have you been a Support Coordinator?
- How often do you make visits to the individuals on your caseload?
- Do you work independently, or with a company? If with a company, how many other Coordinators are associated? What are the hours that you usually work?
- What is your current caseload? (The state cap is 40 clients per Support Coordinator. Keep in mind that travel, level of clients' need, and other factors may affect a Coordinator's ability to effectively serve a high caseload.)
- What is your availability in terms of preferred days/times to be contacted? What is the preferred way to communicate with you? How long should I expect to wait for a response?
- What is your policy for contact during emergencies?
- Who covers for you when you are unavailable? How do I contact them?

STEP THREE

If you are the individual receiving services, **have someone you trust with you during the interview** who can help you observe the Support Coordinator and give you some feedback after the meeting. If you are making the decision on behalf of an individual with a disability because the individual is a minor, or is unable to make the decision independently, try to include the individual in at least some part of the meeting, so that you can observe how the Support Coordinator interacts with the individual. Ensure that the Support Coordinator has a realistic picture of the needs of the individual who is receiving supports.

STEP FOUR

Meet face to face, if at all possible, with your top two or three choices.
Ask further questions that will help you get to know the Support Coordinator and decide if they are a good match for you! Here are some questions you might consider:

- What is your education and background related to working with individuals with disabilities and why did you choose this field of work?
- Tell about a time when you successfully helped an individual with disabilities improve his or her quality of life and how you were able to do it.
- What is your business experience? Describe your ability to manage paperwork, finances, taxes, and the aspects of being self-employed (if you are).
- Are you confident in your ability to advocate for our needs with your DSPD Supervisor and other DSPD Personnel? Are you familiar with disability rights and protection under the law? Have you had successful experiences working with DSPD and other agencies and organizations? Give examples.
- Have you had experience working successfully with providers? Give examples.
- Review your budget and services and gauge the Support Coordinator's interest and ability to advocate for changes, if needed.
- Describe what you do when you make a visit to the individual. What things do you monitor during a visit? How much time do you spend with the individual? Where do you prefer to meet with the individual?
- What do you see as your role in the individual's life?
- Ask for references, preferably from other individuals/families and/or providers that have experience with the Support Coordinator.

THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW, BE AWARE OF THE SUPPORT COORDINATOR'S ABILITY TO INTERACT COMFORTABLY WITH YOU AND/OR THE INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITIES.

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SUPPORT COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

After choosing your Support Coordinator, you should expect the Support Coordinator to:

- **Identify Service Options** - communicate with the individual/family member to determine and adapt services that will best meet the individual's needs.
- **Person Centered Support Plan -** work with the individual and their family member to identify interests, preferences and needs in order to develop meaningful supports for increased independence. Identify possible natural supports as well as needed Medicaid services and develop an Action Plan, which identifies goals to assist in developing support strategies. Support strategies are outlined steps, which help employees to know exactly what they are expected to do when working with the individual.
- **Allocate Funding** - develop an annual budget, make changes as necessary throughout the year, and monitor the use of funds.
- **Train on the Use of Self-Administered Services** - define the responsibilities of managing the individual's program, and help the individual/family member become familiar with the Support Book and required forms.
- **Monitor Provider Services** - supply information about the companies that contract with DSPD to provide services for the individual. Work as an advocate and mediator with provider companies on behalf of the individual. (A list of some of the DSPD approved contract providers is also available on the DSPD website, www.dspd.utah.gov and at www.uacs.org.)
- **Monitor Service** - meet with the individual regularly to get to know them and their needs, monitor services for quality and ensure that needs are met. If the program is under Self-Administered Services, they should meet at least once every three months. If the program is with a Provider Company, they should meet at least once every month.
- **Monitor the Budget** - review services and ensure that funds are used as documented on the Action Plan.
- **Monitor Record Keeping** - assist the individual/family member with meeting initial and annual documentation requirements, including the Service Agreement.
- **Refer to Resources** - provide information and referral to other agencies that may meet the individual's additional needs.

For further assistance contact:
The Family to Family Network (at the Utah Parent Center)
by calling: (801) 272-1051 or toll-free at (800) 468-1160 or
by sending an email to information@utahfamilytofamilynetwork.org.

Family to Family Network c/o Utah Parent Center
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