

WHY STATES SHOULD EXPAND SELF-DIRECTION IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In response to the current coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is currently encouraging states to expand or adopt self-direction in its [Appendix K: Emergency Preparedness and Response Instructions](#) for 1915(c) waivers. These are some key reasons why self-direction is an especially useful option during this crisis.

1 Limit exposure to COVID-19 while maintaining services at home

Individuals receiving long-term services and supports are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and, as recommended by the CDC*, should remain home as much as possible during this outbreak. **Self-direction allows individuals to hire family or other household members to provide services, limiting exposure to those within the same residence.** In contrast, agency-based workers are more likely to serve multiple households and therefore present a higher risk of exposure to themselves and others.

2 Support continuity of services despite workforce shortages

As COVID-19 spreads, the direct care workforce will be limited as more individuals are infected or choose to stay home to avoid exposure. **In self-direction, individuals are able to hire from a broader pool of potential workers in their personal network, particularly relatives or other household members who may be recently unemployed and readily available.** This flexibility is more relevant during this crisis while agencies experience workforce shortages and community programs, school services, and day programs are not operational.

3 Allow purchase of goods and services to meet unmet emergency needs

The COVID-19 crisis has burdened individuals receiving long-term services and supports with unanticipated expenses for supplies such as medical equipment or meal delivery services. **Self-direction programs can offer an individual budget for goods and services which can help to meet each person's unique needs during a crisis.**

To learn more about how to implement or expand self-direction in response to COVID-19, visit: www.appliedselfdirection.com or email: info@appliedselfdirection.com

* Source: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html