

What Is Self-Direction?

“Self-direction” is a way to receive services in your home where you have control. In self-direction, you will choose your own workers who support you. You will also decide when and how you will receive the services your workers provide to you.

Getting services through self-direction is not the same as getting them through an agency. In self-direction, you are the employer of your workers. Your workers work for *you*, not for an agency.

Self-direction is based on the idea that people who receive services know best what their needs are and how those needs should be met. This model is very flexible to help give you control over your life.



What are my responsibilities in self-direction?

When you receive services in self-direction, you are in control. This means you will have responsibilities, like:

- Choosing who works for you
- Scheduling your workers
- Training your workers
- Giving your workers feedback on the services they provide

You will always have help available when you self-direct. Your case manager can help answer your questions. You will also have a Financial Management Services provider, who will pay your workers and help you with administrative tasks.

Is self-direction right for me?

Choosing to self-direct is a big decision. Because you are in control, you may have to make more decisions than you would if you received services through an agency.

Below are some questions to help you think through what self-directing might be like for you.

- Do you know anybody that you might hire as a worker?
- If not, do you know any ways to find a worker or someone you can trust to help you find a worker?
- Can you show your worker how to provide the care you need?
- Can you tell your worker what you like or don't like about their work?
- Can you manage your worker's schedule and make sure they do not work more hours than you can pay them for?



If you answered “no” or “not sure” to some of these questions, self-direction could still work well for you. If you want, you can have another person manage these responsibilities for you. This person is known as your **representative**. Your representative can be anyone you know and trust, such as a family member. They will manage these tasks for you.

Why choose self-direction?

Over 1 million Americans currently self-direct their services in all 50 states. People choose to self-direct for many different reasons. Some common reasons people choose to self-direct are:

- They want more choice and control over their lives and how they receive services.
- They want an alternative to their current services, or they feel like their current services are not working well for them.

- They live in an area where it is not always possible to receive care from an agency.
- They would like to hire someone they know as a paid caregiver.

These are not the only reasons. If you would like to have more control over your services for *any* reason, self-direction may be right for you.