

# Participant-Directed Supports and Services in Pennsylvania

## Overview

Aligning with principles of self-determination, participant directed services provide a model whereby people with disabilities have more control over where, when, how, and who provides their supports.

With participant direction, people who live in their own home or the home of a family member or friend are able to hire their own support service professionals (SSP) and conduct many of the employer responsibilities related to this. The person may opt to take the lead with these tasks or select a surrogate to perform these employer responsibilities.

## Supports Brokers

People with disabilities and families do not have to be on their own when it comes to participant-direction. People may choose to hire a Support. Supports Coordinators should have a list of approved support brokerage agencies in your area, or you may opt to hire an SSP who is certified and qualified to provide the supports broker service.

Supports Brokers work collaboratively with the person, family, Supports Coordinator, and other members of the Individual Support Plan (ISP) team and may help with:

- Recruiting and hiring SSPs
- Expanding and coordinating informal, unpaid resources and supports
- Facilitating a Circle of Support
- Developing and maintaining back-up plans
- Enhanced person-centered planning and communicating suggested modifications to the ISP
- Common Law Employer or Managing Employer responsibilities
- Problem-solving to help achieve outcomes
- Compliance with Waiver and PDS standards, regulations, and policies

\*A Supports Broker should never take over the responsibilities of Common or Managing Employer.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
contact your supports coordinator or call  
ODP's Customer Service at 1-888-565-9435.

# Financial Management Services Models

## Participant Directed Services (PDS)

### Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent (VF/EA)

### Agency with Choice (AWC)

Once a person decides to use participant directed services, they will need to choose the Financial Management Service (FMS) model used to employ SSPs. The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) offers two options: Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent (VF/EA) or Agency with Choice (AWC).

There are differences between the two models and it is important that people choose the one that will best meet their needs. The following table describes some of the differences between the two FMS models.

Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent (VF/EA)	Agency with Choice (AWC)
The person or their surrogate is the Common Law Employer (CLE)	The person or their surrogate is the Managing Employer (ME). FMS is legal employer for human resources and payroll.
The CLE is responsible for recruiting, interviewing, hiring and firing the SSP and to ensure the SSP meets provider qualification criteria.	The ME can refer prospective SSP to FMS or select SSP referred to the ME by FMS. The person or their surrogate and FMS are co-employers.
FMS runs criminal clearances.	FMS sees that SSP meets provider qualification criteria.
The CLE approves, signs and submits timesheets to the FMS.	FMS verifies and processes SSP timesheets and invoices the ME submits.
The CLE develops the employee job descriptions and responsibilities in line with the ISP and keeps SSP files.	FMS develops FMS-related SSP duties and the ME develops participant-specific SSP duties in line with the ISP.
The CLE facilitates training for SSPs.	The ME and FMS jointly provide SSP training as agreed by the ME and the AWC.
The CLE develops work schedules and back-up plans for SSPs.	The ME can request FMS to assist with developing work schedules and back-up plans for SSP.
FMS handles SSP paychecks, taxes and employment related insurances insurances.	FMS handles SSP paychecks and taxes, insurances.
The CLE may dismiss SSP if necessary	The ME may notify FMS of desire to dismiss SSP from the home.



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