

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for DDS Individuals and Families regarding COVID-19

As of: 3.26.2020

Please continue to contact your DDS Case Manager with any questions regarding COVID-19.

- 1. My loved one works (group supported employment, competitive employment etc) but is no longer receiving a paycheck as the job has shut down. Are they eligible for unemployment?**

Individuals and families should connect with their Job Coach, Provider and the CT Department of Labor to determine if they are eligible for unemployment. There are specific rules that apply to unemployment that will need to be considered. In most cases if the person is laid off unemployment rules/regulations would apply. For more information please visit: <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/>

- 2. Are staff hired directly by individuals and families considered essential employees and can they work?**

Providers, staff and families should be working with the staff to ensure all health and safety needs are being met. DDS also recommends reviewing remote technological options that may be appropriate, with proper team approval.

- 3. If self-directed staff are being told they cannot work with individuals they provide supports to, do they contact the Fiscal Intermediary for the documentation needed to apply for unemployment?**

If a family is asking a direct-hire staff not to come into the home, the Employer of Record should provide staff with direction for unemployment. As the need for direct-hire staffing increases, they are encouraged to register on www.Rewardingwork.org to receive a temporary work assignment.

- 4. Can self-directed supports continue in the community for competitive work? Example, staff is still supporting someone at Shop Rite.**

DDS would ask that providers think through and make decisions regarding competitive employment that are based on health and safety and the relationships with the employer. Some of the things individuals, providers and employers may explore to mitigate opportunities for exposure include:

- Can the work be done off hours to minimize contact with others*
- Is the employer open to shifting hours*
- Can the work be done in a shorter shift*
- Is the work essential to the business or can the work be limited to x per week*
- How can social distancing be implemented in the work*

- 5. Can families use day program funding or get grant funds for self-directed in-home supports? Some families prefer to use people they know to come into their homes instead of day program staff (even if they are willing to work).**

New grant funds will not be approved for this purpose. In some situations where families are temporarily caring for a loved one that was previously supported in a different setting, day program staff may be able to work directly in a family home to support an individual during the day. Self-directed budgets may also be able to be set up to hire staff that are already familiar with the individual. Ask your DDS Case Manager for to see if this is an option for you.

- 6. What happens if someone that lives independently has no access to money and needs medication or food and the agency person is out sick?**

The individual needs to contact the supporting agency to let them know about the situation. Providers will work through contingency plans to help meet the health and safety needs of individuals. Individuals should also reach out to their case manager. Other assistance resources include 2-1-1 infoline.