

## Connecticut Department of Developmental Services

**Procedure: I.C.2.PR.009**

**Subject:** Individual Support Prior Approval Process

**Section:** Individual Supports

**Issue Date:** July 7, 2003

**Effective Date:** Upon release

**Revised:** January 2011, August 2025

**Approved:** Jordan A. Scheff

### Policy Statement

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is committed to providing a framework for individuals to utilize the maximum amount of control over how they receive supports and services through self-direction, choice, responsibility, and control over the delivery of HCBS waiver and state plan services. These service types allow individuals and their families to choose and design their own supports and services including hiring and managing their direct support professionals. Individuals and their families may exercise freedom and authority to customize their support plans through the use of an Individual Budget. Self-direction serves to support the DDS Mission and Vision that endorses the full engagement of persons with developmental disabilities in their chosen communities within Connecticut.

#### A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to establish standardized review and prior approval or denial of individual cost items and document the process within the Individual Plan and Individual Budget throughout the Department. This standardized process and documentation will provide guidance to individuals or their representatives and DDS staff who are involved in reviewing Individual Budget items.

#### B. Applicability

This procedure is applicable to 1. DDS staff who develop, review, and authorize Individual Budgets, 2. fiscal intermediaries who manage the financial aspects of Individual Budgets, and 3. individuals and families or their representative who purchase services through an Individual Budget.

#### C. Definitions

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“Case Manager” means a DDS employee who is assigned primary responsibility for assisting individuals who are eligible for DDS services. The case manager serves as primary contact with the individual or their family or legal representative on the individual’s behalf.

“Cost Guidelines” means guidelines and requirements on the appropriate use of state and federal funds intended for the use of DDS staff, fiscal intermediaries, and the recipients of DDS funds.

“Individual” means a person who has been determined to be eligible for or is currently receiving funding and services from DDS.

“Individual Budget” means an individual’s itemized, comprehensive budget which provides details of all expected funds and resources needed to provide support and services that are included in the Individual Plan. Individuals may have a combination of self-directed and agency-directed supports.

“Individual Budget System” means a database where Individual Budgets are stored that is used by case managers, Resource Managers, and Transition Advisors to develop and manage Individual Budgets.

“Planning and Resource Allocation Team” or “PRAT” means the DDS staff in each region who are responsible for establishing an individual’s category assignment, approving, or denying an individual’s request for funding or services and allocating resources to individuals receiving funding and services from the Department, including, but not limited to HCBS waiver eligibility.

“Prior Approval” means securing the Department’s permission in advance to incur costs for certain items, goods, services, rates, or fees designated in the Cost Guidelines. In certain circumstances, prior approval may be required if the cost is over a specified threshold limit.

“Programmatic Administrative Review” or “PAR” provides a formal process for an individual, who is requesting or receiving DDS annualized funding for programs or services, their legal representative or family members describe why they do not

agree with a specific DDS decision concerning the individual's DDS funding or services. It includes both a regional-level and a commissioner-level review to determine and communicate a final decision on the individual's services.

"Representative" formerly referred to as "Sponsoring Person" means a person selected by the individual to provide support in carrying out some or all of the duties of an Employer. A Representative may be a family member, friend, guardian, or conservator who may co-sign the individual's Self-Directed Support Agreement. The Representative shall not be a paid support staff, without prior approval from DDS. The Representative is identified when an individual or their Employer of Record requires additional assistance to self-direct their supports and services.

#### **D. Implementation**

1. No funding requests for items, goods, services, rates, or fees that require prior approval or review within the established cost standards or for unique circumstances shall be granted unless approved through the prior approval process. The prior approval request shall meet all the criteria outlined in the Cost Guidelines policy.
2. The case manager submits the prior approval request for funding. The prior approval request shall not increase an Individual's Budget current allocation. The individual's budget shall already include the funds necessary to support the request.
3. When the case manager or a designated regional staff receives a request to include expenses that require prior approval, they shall complete the "Individual Supports Prior Approval Request Form" (see attachment A) and send the form along with any relevant documents (i.e. bids, T-19 denials, and clinical recommendations) to the regional designee. When the case manager adds the relevant budget line to the Individual Budget, the Individual Budget system will also flag it for prior approval.
4. The regional designee shall review the individual supports prior approval request form, accompanying documentation and the individual's budget. The regional designee may ask for clarification from the case manager and

consult with the DDS Director of Waiver Services or other central office staff as needed.

5. The regional designee shall send the individual supports prior approval request form with any accompanying documentation, including additional clarifications to other regional reviewer(s), as needed.
6. If the regional designee approves the prior approval funding request, they shall send the approval documentation to the case manager and complete the prior approval entry in the Individual Budget System. The approved prior approval request documentation shall include, but not be limited to:
  - a. The approved "Individual Supports Prior Approval Request Form"
  - b. Any relevant instructions or qualifications
  - c. Documentation stating if the approval is ongoing or one time
  - d. Any other information relevant to the approval of the prior approval request
7. The case manager shall send the approved funding request documentation to the Fiscal Intermediary along with any relevant bids. The case manager or designated regional staff will maintain a copy of the approved form in the individual's case files.
8. Prior approvals can be approved for a period of up to three years.
9. If the regional designee denies the request, they shall send the denial to the case manager with an explanation of the denial. The regional designee shall also complete the prior approval denial entry in the budget system.
10. The individual or their legal representative may appeal denied requests through the DDS regional Programmatic Administrative Review (PAR) process as applicable. See Policy and Procedure I.F.PR.011 [Programmatic Administrative Reviews \(PAR\) Procedure](#).

**E. References**

1. [I.C.2.PR.015 Individual Support Cost Guidelines](#)

**F. Attachments**

1. I.C.2.PR.009 Attachment A: Individual Support Prior Approval Form