



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Peter Mason
Deputy Commissioner

TO: DDS Qualified Providers

FROM: Peter Mason, Deputy Commissioner

CC: Jordan Scheff, Commissioner, Katie Rock-Burns, Chief of Staff, Scott McWilliams, Chief of Fiscal/Administrative Services, Regional Directors, Private Assistant Regional Directors, Resource Administrators, Self Determination Directors, IFS Assistant Regional Directors

SUBJECT: **Notice of Opportunity – Remote Supports Pilot Program**

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is currently accepting proposals for DDS qualified providers to establish a Remote Support service option with on-call supports for individuals currently supported with individualized home supports (IHS) to enhance their independence while residing in an apartment-style setting in the community. Participating individuals must currently be funded by the DDS for IHS supports. Funding will be provided to assist with the procurement and utilization of the remote technology (as well as any complementary assistive technology), hardware, software, equipment, general integration and connectivity required for service utilization.

Definitions:

- **Remote Supports:** The delivery of supports by staff at a remote location through virtual means by paid staff or natural supports who are engaged with the individual through technology/devices with the capability for live two-way communication. Equipment used to meet this requirement must include one or more of the following systems: Motion sensing systems, radio frequency identification, live video feed, live audio feed, GPS tracking, web-based oversight system, or a device that otherwise meets the requirement for two-way communication. Individual interaction with the staff person may be scheduled, on-demand, or in response to an alert from a device in the remote support equipment system.
- **Remote Support Technology System:** Technology that facilitates and provides the Remote Support service. These systems may use wireless technology, and/or phone lines, to link an individual's home to a Virtual Support Partner (defined below) off-site. The system may use remote sensor technology to send "real-time" data to the Virtual Support Partner who is immediately available to assess the situation and provide assistance according with the In-Person Response Plan.
- **Remote Support Technology Agency:** The agency with the responsibility to set up the customized Remote Support system necessary for remote supports based upon each individual's needs. This agency may additionally provide the real-time Virtual Partner Supports
- **Virtual Support Partner:** A paid support person such as an agency, qualified provider, etc. OR unpaid support person such as a family member, friend, or other natural support that provides virtual support (e.g. prompting, queuing etc.) from a remote location utilizing the Remote Support Technology System that has been designed for the individual.

- **On-Call Supports:** On demand, in-person supports sent to an individual's location as requested by the individual or in response to an electronic device's indication that support is needed. (On-call staff available during hours of individually contracted remote supports to provide supports on an emergency basis. Staff must respond no more than thirty minutes from when the Virtual Support Partner calls.)
- **In-Person Response Plan:** A plan created by an individual's team and providers that identifies who or what entity will serve as the On-Call Support. This plan must also provide detail on at least one back-up respondent and expectations around the response times (maximum thirty minutes).
- **Assistive Technology (AT) Hardware/Software:** Assistive Technology can be any item, piece of equipment, product, service, or system (whether acquired commercially or customized), that will impact or enhance autonomy and the capabilities of a person with a disability.
- **Internet Connectivity:** May include broadband/internet or cellular services provided at fair market value for the purpose of access to activities related to achieving documented person-centered goals and objectives for a period of up to one year.

Scope

DDS is looking for one provider in each region to pilot a Remote Supports waiver service option for a minimum of two individuals up to a maximum of ten for the first six months. The provider will be responsible for identifying the interested individuals who choose to participate and who are likely to benefit from a Remote Supports option. Individuals must have current IHS funding.

Proposals must include methods to deliver such supports:

Examples may include one or more of the following:

- 1) **Provide or contract for** Remote Support Technology Agency function;
- 2) **Provide** or contract for On-Call Supports;
- 3) **Provide or Contract** with a Virtual Support Partner.

Individuals who choose to use Remote Supports will maintain their current level of funding during the pilot. Additional funding may be given for the cost of the Remote Supports Technology Systems, staff training, or if it is determined additional supports are needed.

Implementation Expectations for the Successful Proposer Agency:

- Agency will develop a structure and systems to incorporate Remote Supports into their array of service options
- Agency will develop policies and procedures during pilot to assure transparency and quality of care
- Agency will evaluate and provide agency personnel with education and training specific to operating Remote Support option. Staff affiliated with the pilot program will be required to complete training on Enabling Assistive Technology and Remote Support.
- Agency will develop tools they find necessary to guide the individual and team through the process of initial assessment to implementation of Remote Supports
- Agency will develop a network of resources to guide and support the work of providing Remote Supports
- Agency will develop educational materials to introduce and explain Remote Supports to individuals, families, and guardians

- Agency will develop a quality assurance plan and tools to ensure health and safety, quality of service and to measure successful outcomes for individuals and the agency related to Remote Supports
- Agency will develop an individual satisfaction survey before and after Remote Supports has been implemented
- Agency will develop a continuous improvement plan to guide the development implementation, and improvement of this service
- Agency will meet with DDS Regional Remote Support Ambassadors on an established timeframe to collaborate, report and problem solve on findings during implementation
- Agency will report on costs to operate Remote Supports (technology, ratios, savings etc.)
- Agency may be asked to share individual success stories with others to demonstrate the successful implementation, sustainability, and overall positive outcomes of the service

DDS Hopes to Learn:

- What it takes to set up and operate Remote Supports for the purposes of expanding the capacity to offer Remote Supports for those who choose it
- What qualifications are required for the Remote Support provider to operate the service
- To review and adjust the Remote Support rate structure
- To build a network of resources
- To collaborate with national partners to share information related to Remote Supports and other Technology First policies.
- To create a Quality Service Review mechanism to evaluate Remote Supports
- To incorporate Remote Supports into the audit and billing system

A provider is expected to bill for the supports at the newly established rates for Remote Supports. DDS will work with the provider to monitor the financial viability of the service for their agency and may, if necessary, adjust rates to ensure success of the service. It is the expectation that at least one individual identified by the successful proposers will begin using Remote Supports no later than February 10, 2022. It is expected that other individuals will begin in the subsequent week(s) to follow. Proposals with an alternative starting date will be accepted but the priority will be those proposals that start on February 10, 2022.

Informational Session:

DDS will be hosting an informational session via Teams to discuss this Notice of Opportunity. The date is **Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 11:30 a.m.**

To register for the informational session please follow this link: <https://forms.office.com/g/Ke8XeyhfzD> . Complete the form by close of business on Tuesday, October 12, 2021. Each person attending should complete the form and submit to receive an invitation to the TEAMS Informational Session on October 14, 2021.

Proposal Submission Requirements:

Proposers interested in this opportunity should include the following information in their responses to the department:

1. Executive Summary

2. Details on the program to be established
3. Description of the individuals proposed to begin in the Remotes Supports pilot, rationale, and the benefits that Remote Supports may provide.
4. Description of the staff's credentials to operate this program
5. Description of the experience the proposer has had with utilizing assistive technology
6. Experience providing supports remotely
6. Experience providing IHS supports to individuals living in their own apartment
7. Budget:
 - a. Hiring costs for program staff
 - b. Hiring and training costs for direct Remote Support staff
 - c. Start-up benefits costs
 - d. Start-up administrative and general costs
 - e. Assistive technology hardware and software costs
8. Transition plan for introduction of assistive technology and Remote Supports
9. Funding plan on how these supports will be maintained once pilot ends
10. Fade plan for staff supports (if applicable).

Awardees will be expected to participate in follow up analysis of the use and impact of Remote Supports for people funded by DDS. In addition, select proposers may be expected to act as ambassadors for the use of these supports.

Questions & Answers:

Questions regarding this opportunity may be directed to Julie Bouchard at Julie.Bouchard@ct.gov. All questions must be received in writing by Friday, October 22, 2021. Answers will be posted to the DDS website in a Frequently Asked Questions document by Tuesday, October 26, 2021.

Proposal Submissions:

Responses to this opportunity must be submitted electronically to Julie Bouchard at Julie.Bouchard@ct.gov by Friday, November 18, 2021.

Funding will be awarded by December 1, 2021. Agencies will be expected to enroll selected staff in training on enabling technologies through SHIFT, an organization nationally accredited by the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) designed to provide technology-based resources, develop skills, connect professionals, inspire transformation and advance Technology First movement within the IDD community.