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Department of Developmental Services

Quick Guide to the Self-Direction Fiscal Intermediary

Revised August 2025

Introduction

Welcome! This is the Quick Guide to the Self-Direction Fiscal Intermediary (FI). Use this guide if you or your loved one self-direct services and supports or are thinking about self-directing. It has reminders and tips for working with the FI.

What's in the Quick Guide?

1. Definitions of important terms
2. Descriptions of what different people do
3. How to enroll yourself and your staff
4. Links to online resources and tools
5. Answers to common questions

What is Self-Direction?

- Self-direction is a way you can set up your supports from DDS
- You and your team choose your own supports
- You and your team have control over who you hire
- You and your team make a plan that fits your needs
- You and your team have more responsibility for your supports, such as training your staff

What is a Fiscal Intermediary?

- A Fiscal Intermediary (FI) is an organization that supports people who self-direct
- It manages payment for services and supports
- It makes sure you follow rules for employers
- Currently, GT Independence is the FI working with DDS

Acronyms to Know

- ✓ **DSP**: Direct Support Professional
- ✓ **EOR**: Employer of Record
- ✓ **EVV**: Electronic Visit Verification
- ✓ **FI**: Fiscal Intermediary
- ✓ **OFL**: Open Futures Learning
- ✓ **SDSA**: Self-Directed Support Agreement

Understanding Each Role

Explore the different roles in your self-direction team. Understanding each role is important to help you manage your team and understand who is responsible for what. This knowledge will help you provide guidance and support to your team.

Individual

The person receiving supports funded by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

Case Manager

A DDS employee who helps you set up, manage, and direct your supports, including planning and finding services.

Fiscal Intermediary

An organization that manages your budget, payroll, taxes, and ensures legal requirements are met.

Employer of Record

This is the legal employer. The EOR has a tax ID number with the IRS. You will usually be your own EOR and can get support from your representative and others.

Optional roles the team can add

Representative

Someone you choose to help with employer duties. They can help review and approve work shifts and help you set up your supports. They are often family or friends. You don't pay representatives.

IDGS Supervisor

IDGS stands for Individually Directed Goods and Services. You hire them to train and manage DSPs. If you use a lot of supports and hire many people, they can help. They are paid from the budget.

For more information or if you have questions, please contact your case manager.

Individual Enrollment Process

To self-direct, you need to enroll in, or sign up for, the self-direction program with the fiscal intermediary (FI). The path below shows the steps to get you started on your self-direction journey.

1 Talk with your Case Manager

Talk to your DDS case manager. They can help you decide if self-direction is right for you. If it is, they will help you get started and connect you to the FI.

2 Gather information

The FI will ask for information. This includes your birthdate and Social Security number. If someone supports you as a guardian or with Power of Attorney, the FI needs that information. Collect the information and documents so you are ready.

A **Representative** is someone who helps you be an employer. They work with you to manage your supports and staff. If a Representative will assist you in Self-Directing, it is important to document what you will need help with. Do this during the enrollment process using the Self-Direction Support Agreement.

3 Enroll with the FI

The FI has different ways you can enroll:
1. Self-enroll: Fill out information online at your own pace.
2. Enroll with an FI enrollment specialist: Someone from the FI will walk you through the process. You can do this in person at an FI office or virtually.

4 Fill out enrollment forms

Fill out the enrollment documents. This includes the **Self-Direction Support Agreement (see definition box below)**. Make sure the FI has your correct information. Then sign the forms electronically.

Self-Directed Support Agreement (SDSA) is an agreement between DDS and you and your supporting team. It explains your responsibilities as an employer. It also has a list of rules you agree to follow as part of self-directing supports. Make sure to read this document carefully!

5 You are ready to be an employer!

Congratulations on enrolling! Now you are ready to work with the FI. To start self-directing your services, you also need to hire staff. See the next page for more information.

Staff Enrollment Process

For the fiscal intermediary (FI) to pay your staff, it needs to know who your staff are! You will enroll your staff with the FI. This includes steps like filling out paperwork and having your staff take important training. Then your staff will be ready to help support you! See below for an overview of the staff enrollment process.

1 Decide staffing needs

Look at your Individual Plan (IP) to figure out who you want and need to assist with your services and supports. Think about how many people you need and what skills they should have.

2 Recruit employees

Look for and interview potential staff. Talk to people you know, advertise a job listing, and talk to your case manager about Rewarding Work, a website where you can look for staff. The FI portal also has a "Find a Caregiver" link you can use.

3 Background Check

The FI helps you make sure your staff meet DDS requirements. This process includes performing background checks and checking references. The FI will need information from your potential staff to run these checks.

4 FI Onboarding

Your employee needs to fill out and sign paperwork with the FI. Make sure they complete and send it in on time. This makes sure they are set up to get paid and meet employment rules.

5 Training

DDS requires online trainings for all new employees. These cover topics like health, safety and protecting privacy. The FI sends information on taking the trainings and getting paid for them. Union training also needs to be completed on time. You also train your employees on how to best support you!

6 Ongoing support

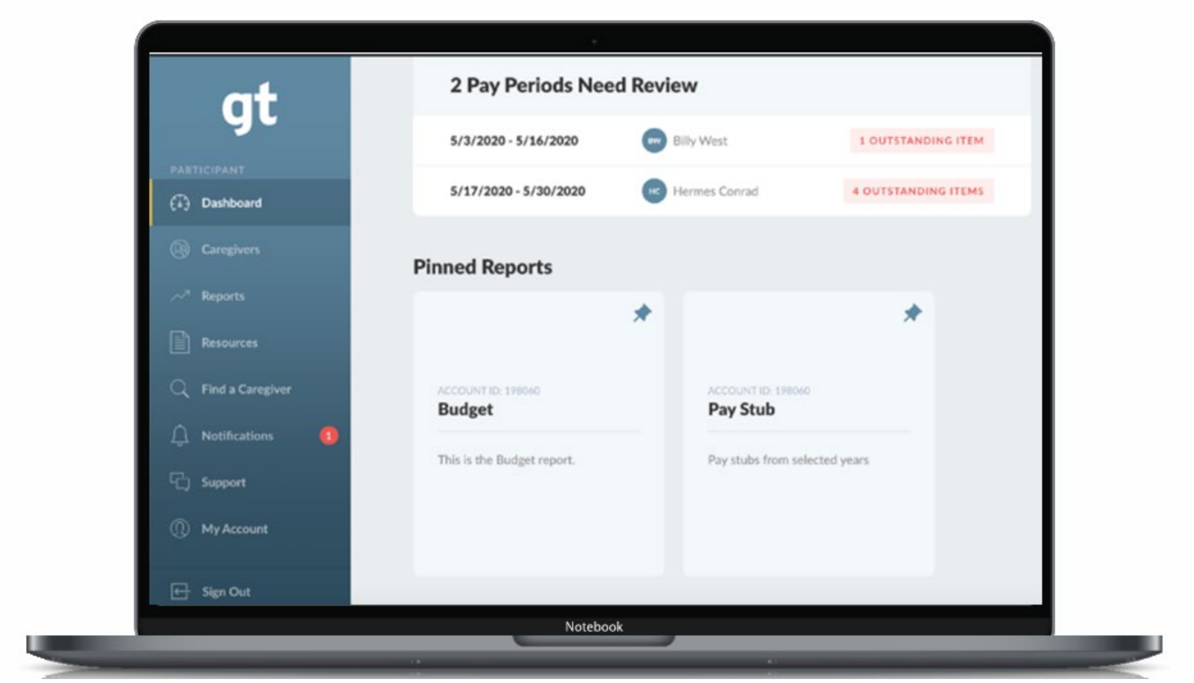
Get to know the FI portal and processes so you can answer your employees' questions. You will work with the FI to make sure your staff get paid on time and correctly. See the next page for more information on the portal and payments.

Online Resources and Tools

Overview of Fiscal Intermediary (FI) Portal

1. The FI has a portal, a safe online tool, with information about self-direction. You can sign in from a computer, smartphone, or tablet.
2. Use the portal to check and approve timesheets and view your budget reports.
3. Notifications let you know if you need to do something like send in paperwork.
4. You can also access forms, documents, and other resources for self-direction.

Go to Resources in the Portal to learn more!



This image shows the FI portal dashboard. It includes important features like managing your staff, checking training status, viewing payroll information, and accessing support. The dashboard helps you manage your team and stay on top of important tasks.

Description of EVV

1. EVV stands for Electronic Visit Verification. This technology is used to record who provides support, how long each shift is, and where the support happens.
2. The Federal government requires EVV, so people use funds properly.
3. EVV helps staff get paid correctly. It helps the FI check that people receiving supports get the support they need in the right place.
4. Your staff will use an EVV app to log hours. You need to approve these hours each week. Then your staff submit timesheets for payment.
5. The EVV can be found in the GT Caregiver application. You can download the application wherever you download other phone and tablet apps.

More Online Resources and Tools

Remember, you can find helpful information in your Fiscal Intermediary (FI) portal at anytime. You can also find more resources like these, on the DDS Self-Direction Webpage:

Where to start?
Guide to Self Direction Support Services

SDSA info
Guide to Self Direction Support Agreement (SDSA)

Getting around
Self-Direction Transportation Options

Frequently Asked Questions

General

What is the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)?
The CBA is a document between a group that represents individuals who self-direct and the Union that sets rules for pay, work hours, benefits, and job conditions. For example, the CBA guarantees that employees can earn Paid Time Off (PTO). It also sets some wage increases.

What does dually-funded mean?
People who use DDS Self-Direction supports and Department of Social Services (DSS) Community First Choice (CFC) coverage at the same time have "dually-funded services". Their supports are funded by both Departments. If your services are dually-funded, talk to your case manager about what this means for your budgets.

Training

What kind of training do my staff need to complete?
DDS requires some trainings. Your staff will need to finish them online through Open Futures Learning (OFL). DSPs under the CBA also need to complete some Union training. You will also train your staff yourself on the job. You can budget for them to take other trainings or classes to learn more to better support you.

Frequently Asked Questions

Training, continued

What happens if my staff do not complete their required trainings on time?

After you sign your staff up with the FI, they will get information on how to take the required trainings. Your staff have 90 days to finish the training online. The FI will send them email reminders. If they do not take the trainings, after 90 days the FI will stop paying them.

Payroll and Benefits

When do my staff get paid?

It takes time to review hours and send the payments. Staff must submit timesheets for the workweek (Sunday through Saturday). It is important that you approve hours by 5:00 PM on the next Monday, so your staff get paid on time. The FI pays staff for those hours on the following Friday. Your employee has two options to submit time for your approval:

1. **"Review with Participant"**. If your employee picks this option, they will give you their phone or tablet to review their time entries. Employees can use this option if you are together to approve their time. You can also approve their time from your portal account.
2. **"Review Later"**. If you are not available when your employee submits their time for approval, they will select Review Later. You will see a "Needs Approval" notification on your portal dashboard. This means you will meet with your employee later, or the next day, to review and approve their time entries.

Use the calendar to see the workweek, the deadline to submit time entries, and payday for your staff!

Workweek: Sunday - Saturday

Staff deadline to submit time entries – Mondays at 5pm

Payday

SUN	MON	TUE	MON	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 **5pm** deadline	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Frequently Asked Questions

Payroll and Benefits, continued

What happens if I face problems with payroll?

If your staff have payroll issues like getting paid the wrong amount or not getting paid on time, please contact FI customer service for assistance. If the problem is not resolved by the FI customer service, then ask your DDS Case Manager for further support. You can submit an FI support request using this online form.

How do I decide how much to pay my staff?

Work with your case manager. DDS sets wage ranges for different supports. Higher wages can make it easier to find and keep staff, but you have to make sure you have enough to pay for all your services and supports within your budget.

What types of paid time off (PTO) are available to my staff?

PTO is a benefit that allows employees to take time off from work while still receiving their regular pay. Full-time staff covered by the CBA earn PTO based on how many hours they work. This CBA PTO does not impact your budget. Additionally, you have the option to offer extra PTO as an added benefit for your staff, but this additional PTO will come out of your budget.

How do my employees use PTO?

To use CBA PTO, all employees must take the following steps:

1. Complete 90 days of employment
2. Provide 7-days notice before taking PTO, except for emergency or illness
3. Request PTO from you only if it has been earned while working for you
4. Enter PTO in the GT App for your approval, just like other time entries

The employer sets the rules for employees to use budgeted PTO.
See the CT: PTO resource in the FI Portal to learn more.

Budget and Expenses

How do I track budget and spending?

You can see your budget and spending reports in the FI portal. Ask your case manager if you have questions or need to make changes to your supports or budget. *See the CT: Budget Reports resource in the FI Portal for more information.*

How do staff get reimbursed (paid back) for expenses?

Whenever staff make a purchase in your budget, such as buying a ticket to go with you to an activity, they should keep the receipt. The expense needs to have a line in the budget for it. You will need to submit the proof of payment or receipt and the Request for Reimbursement Form to the FI, GT Independence. The FI will pay your staff for the cost and track the cost in your budget.

Frequently Asked Questions

Managing Services and Supports

How do I add and remove services and supports?

Self-direction gives you lots of control over your supports, and this includes changing them. Work with your case manager to update your Individual Plan and budget to match what you want and need. If you hire new staff, they will need to enroll with the FI.

Fraud Prevention and Reporting

What is fraud?

Fraud occurs when staff members record hours that they did not work. This is a crime. It can also take funds out of your budget for services you did not receive.

How can I prevent fraud?

To prevent fraud, carefully review timesheets and only approve the hours your staff spent with you and supporting you. You can also contact the Fiscal Intermediary (FI) customer service to set up a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to use as a password for approving time.

Should I report time reporting fraud?

Yes, you should report this type of fraud right away. Contact your case manager to take the right steps to protect your budget. Sometimes people make mistakes reporting time. Your case manager and FI can help fix these mistakes without your staff getting in trouble.

Contacts and Resources

Who do I contact if I have more questions about self-direction?

If you have more questions about self-direction, contact your DDS Case Manager. For questions specifically about the FI, please reach out to customer service. If you need assistance with setting up supports or managing your budget, your Case Manager is the best point of contact.

Fiscal Intermediary (FI) Contact Information

Toll-Free Customer Service Phone Number	1-877-659-4500
Customer Service Email	customerservice@gtindepence.com
FI Website	https://gtindependence.com