

Self-Direction 101

Updated on October 8, 2024

Effective for Ohio Home Care Waiver on October 1, 2024

Effective for MyCare Waiver on November 15, 2024

1. What is self-direction?

Self-direction is a service model for Ohioans served by Medicaid waivers that empowers their individual choice and control over the long-term services and support needed to live at home. People involved in self-direction make decisions about the type of care they receive, the way certain services are delivered, and the caregivers who provide those services.

Individuals enrolled on a HCBS waiver can self-direct using budget authority, determining how funding is spent on self-directed services and supports, and/or employer authority, controlling who they hire and how they manage those providing services.

Through **employer authority**, individuals:

- Have direct oversight of their caregivers and can monitor/evaluate performance directly
- Choose caregivers who best match their needs, preferences, and personalities
- Ensure caregivers receive training specific to their needs
- Set their own schedules and care routines, providing greater flexibility and control
- Adjust their care arrangements quickly

Through **budget authority**, individuals:

- Have direct oversight of how funds are spent and allocated
- Determine wages for their caregivers
- Can prioritize spending on services and supports that are most beneficial to them

2. What are the benefits of self-direction?

- **Choice and control:** Individuals get to make informed decisions about their care. They can choose their caregivers and customize how they receive care to meet their needs.
- **Empowerment:** Individuals determine the wage rate for their self-directed caregivers.
- **Flexibility:** Individuals receive a yearly budget that they decide how to use. This gives them the freedom to select services and supports that meet their needs.
- **Need-based budget:** The budget is based on the individual's assessed needs.
- **Personalized care:** Everyone's person-centered service plan can be highly personalized and individually designed. Self-direction gives individuals the ability to train people specifically to their care needs.
- **Family involvement:** Individuals can have family members work as paid caregivers.

3. What services can be self-directed?

Only waiver services can be self-directed. Services vary by waiver. The table below highlights the main services available to be self-directed under each ODM-administered waiver.

Self-Directed Services Available By Waiver	
Waiver	Services
Ohio Home Care	• Home care attendant* • Home modifications* • Personal care aide* • Self-directed goods and services* • Waiver nursing*
MyCare	• Alternative meals • Choices home care attendant • Home care attendant* • Home maintenance and chores* • Home medical equipment and supplies • Home modifications • Personal care aide* • Self-directed goods and services* • Waiver nursing*

*New self-directed service options available on the Ohio Home Care Waiver on October 1, 2024 and the MyCare Waiver on November 15, 2024.

For more detailed descriptions of these waiver programs and self-directed service options available, please see [Self-Direction Service Descriptions](#).

4. What are my responsibilities if I become involved in self-direction?

Individuals who choose to self-direct their services must be willing to work closely with the Ohio Department of Medicaid's (ODM) designated financial management services (FMS) vendor and its waiver care manager. To effectively manage their care, individuals involved in self-direction will need to:

- Understand the services provided by their caregivers
- Know how to instruct and guide their caregivers
- Handle employer-related responsibilities, which include:
 - Identifying, hiring, and if necessary, dismissing caregivers
 - Creating written contracts with caregivers that outline specific activities and training requirements
 - Training caregivers to meet specific needs and ensuring this training is completed
 - Organizing caregivers' schedules
 - Overseeing caregivers' work
 - Approving timesheets and other necessary documents as requested by ODM's FMS vendor
- Manage their self-directed budget by:
 - Setting caregivers' wages

- Allocating funds for other self-directed services as outlined in their person-centered service plan and specific program rules
- Keeping service expenses within the set budget limits

Please note, an individual may choose a representative to help support them in self-directing services.

5. Am I eligible for self-direction?

Yes, if you are enrolled on the MyCare Waiver or Ohio Home Care Waiver, you are eligible to use self-directed services. To learn more about available waivers and enroll, please visit [Ohio Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Nursing Facility Waivers](#).

Services available under self-direction may differ under each waiver. The additional services described in this document will be available on the MyCare Waiver beginning November 15, 2024. Self-direction will be available on the Ohio Home Care Waiver beginning October 1, 2024.

Self-directed services must address needs identified in your person-centered service plan.

6. What is the process for becoming involved with self-direction?

1. The first step is to speak with your care manager about your interest in self-direction. Share your needs, what is or is not working, how you prefer to receive your care, or any other key information related to your care. It's important to openly share your thoughts and feedback to develop the person-centered service plan that best serves you.
2. Speak with your care manager about different services and supports that are available to you through Ohio Medicaid State Plan benefits, waivers, and/or other programs. During this conversation, your care manager will provide information about self-direction and traditional provider-managed services.
3. After reviewing all potential service and support options, work together with your care manager to make your person-centered service plan. During this conversation, identify and discuss the service(s) you prefer and would like to include in your plan, including those you wish to direct yourself. Once the person-centered service plan is created, go back through it to confirm it fits your needs.
4. Once you've identified that self-direction is right for you, your care manager will walk you through the process. They will provide information on how to find a caregiver, your roles and responsibilities as an employer, conducting reviews, and other related logistics.

7. Who do I contact if I have more questions about self-direction in Ohio?

- Individuals with questions about self-direction in Ohio should reach out to selfdirection@medicaid.ohio.gov.
- Care managers with questions about self-direction in Ohio should reach out to selfdirectionprogramassistance@medicaid.ohio.gov.
- If you're enrolled on the Ohio Home Care Waiver, MyCare Waiver, or PASSPORT Waiver, contact your care manager or waiver service coordinator.