

SELF-DETERMINATION PROGRAM MANUAL

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Welcome to Self-Determination

Welcome to the **Self-Determination Program Manual!**

The Self-Determination Program (SDP) is built on the principles of choice, control, and person-centered planning.

This manual helps you understand processes, rules, and best practices for participating in the program. Whether you are new to SDP or want clarification on specific aspects, this manual provides clear and practical guidance for individuals, families, providers, and community partners.

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MODULE 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE SELF-DETERMINATION PROGRAM

Self-Determination is about choice for how you want to live:

- What you do each day,
- Who you spend your time with,
- How you spend your money.

Self means *you*, and **determination** means *control and responsibility*.

You set your own goals and take responsibility when you go after them.

But you do not have to do it alone: the Regional Center is here to help you!

1.1. What is Self-Determination?

Self-determination is based on the idea that every person has the right to make decisions about your own life.

Self-determination means having control over your own life. It means making your own choice and deciding what kinds of supports you need to live the life you want. With self-determination you:

- Choose what is important to you
- Set personal goals
- Direct the supports you receive
- Take responsibility for your choices
- Are included in your community

Self-determination is about choice, control, responsibility, and freedom.



1.2. What is the Self-Determination Program?

The Self-Determination Program (SDP) is a program within the Regional Center that gives you more choice and control over your services and supports. It is a voluntary program (meaning you decide whether it is the right program for you). With SDP, you create a **personalized plan** for services based on your **documented needs related to developmental disabilities**. You are part of the decision-making process about:

- **Who** delivers services, and
- **How** you receive those services.

The program is designed to give you **flexibility** in your life: you can choose how you spend your time, who you spend your time with, and where to live in your community. With flexibility comes the **responsibility** to use public funds fairly and follow program rules.

Points to Consider

- **Living Arrangements:** You must live in the community to participate in the program: by yourself, with family or roommates, or in program housing. If you live in a long-term care facility, you need to move into the community within 90 days.
- **Moving:** You can stay in the program even if you move within California. You can receive SDP services from a different Regional Center.
- **Wait Time:** If you leave the Self-Determination Program, you will have to wait 12 months before you can use it again.



1.3. Core Principles of Self-Determination?

The Self-Determination Program has five principles to guide decisions:

1. Freedom

You get to plan your own life and make your own choices. You decide where you want to live, how you spend your time, and who helps you.

2. Authority

You have control over the money for your services and supports. You decide how to spend it based on your needs and budget.

3. Support

You choose the people and services that help you live, work, and enjoy your life. You can get help from the Regional Center, your planning team, or an independent facilitator.

4. Responsibility

You are responsible for decisions about your life. You have the responsibility to use public money carefully.

5. Confirmation

You are the most important person when making plans for your life. Your decisions matter and are respected.

"Nothing about you without you."



1.4. How Does the Self-Determination Program work?

The Self-Determination Program offers support for person-centered services through an approach built on choice, dignity, and self-direction. It balances what's **important to you**—your relationships, routines, and interests—with what's **important for you**—your health, safety, and legal requirements—so your voice guides every decision.

The SDP process includes the following:

1. **Orientation**
2. **Person-Centered Plan (PCP)** (optional)
3. **Pre-Enrollment Transition Supports** (optional)
4. **Individual Program Plan (IPP)**
5. **Budget**
6. **Spending Plan**
7. **Financial Management Service**

Initial Steps in the SDP Process

Your journey into the Self-Determination Program starts with a mandatory **Orientation** to learn about the program.

The program offers **Pre-Enrollment Transition Supports** to help you get ready. These supports include services that guide you through the process and help you create a **Person-Centered Plan (PCP)**. The PCP is an optional, but recommended, individual profile where you share your goals, strengths, and needs in your own words.



Core Steps in the SDP Process

As with other Regional Center Services, you and your team will develop an **Individual Program Plan (IPP)**. This plan documents needs based on your developmental disabilities and the services authorized to support those needs. This plan is *binding*: this means the IPP is a formal document that you and your team must sign and respect as a contract.

With the IPP in place, the Regional Center can help you fund services. You and your team must complete three steps:

- Review and agree to the **Budget** for authorized needs,
- Create a **Spending Plan** listing how the budget will be spent,
- Hire a **Financial Management Service** to manage your funds.



Step-by-Step Self-Determination Process

1.5. Should I use Traditional Services or the Self-Determination Program?

As a person with developmental disabilities you—or your loved one—can receive supports and services in two main ways:

- **Traditional services**
- **Self-Determination Program (SDP).**

In both cases, you develop a written agreement with the Regional Center called an **Individual Program Plan (IPP)**. This plan lists your goals, needs, and the services approved to help you achieve them.

The table below shows you the main differences between these options.

Features	Traditional Services	Self-Determination
Person-Centered Planning	✓	✓
Individual Program Plan (IPP)	✓	✓
Vendored Providers*	✓	✓
Non-vendored Providers	✗	✓
Individual Budget	✗	✓
Independent Facilitator	✗	✓
Financial Management Service (FMS)	✗	✓
Spending Plan	✗	✓

***Vendored** means that the provider has a contract with the Regional Center.

1.6. Your rights—no matter which services

You always have these rights as a person with developmental disabilities:

Dignity and Autonomy



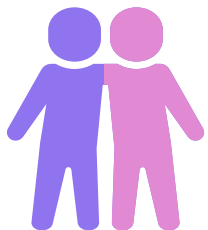
- Be treated well and with respect
- Have privacy and personal space
- Choose how you dress and spend your time

Life Choices and Community Participation



- Choose where you live
- Go to school
- Exercise and have fun

Communication and Social Connection



- See your friends, family, girlfriends or boyfriends every day
- Communicate privately with others: freely use the phone, write or talk in person

Health & Wellbeing



- See a doctor when you need to
- Receive services that help you live, work, and play as best you can

Financial Independence



- Keep and use your own things
- Keep and spend your own money on what you need or want

Freedom from Harm



- Say "NO" to things that will put you in danger
- Say "NO" to drugs or being tied down or forced to be alone—unless necessary to protect you or someone else
- Say "NO" to people trying to change you by hurting or upsetting you



MODULE 2:

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE SELF-DETERMINATION PROGRAM

The Self-Determination Program empowers you to make your own decisions and take ownership of the responsibilities that come with independence. But you do not have to go through the process alone—a **team of people is in your corner!**

In the next pages, we will cover the roles of people who can help you plan, budget, and implement services while ensuring you follow the rules.

2.1. Your Role as a Self-Determination Program Participant

In the Self-Determination Program you take control of your choices and accept the responsibilities that go with that. You agree to:

1. **Work with your Service Coordinator** at the Regional Center.
2. **Attend an Orientation** to the Self-Determination Program.
3. **Develop an Individual Program Plan (IPP)** centered on your needs—you can create a Person-Centered Plan (PCP) to help .
4. **Determine an Individual Budget and create a Spending Plan** to buy approved services that match your goals.
5. **Use a Financial Management Service (FMS)** to help you manage and pay for approved services within the Self-Determination Program.

Your Circle of Support

Who can I ask for help?

You can choose anyone you trust!

People you trust are your **Circle of Support**.

They include:

- Family and friends
- People who know you best
- Teachers, therapists, coaches
- Your service coordinator
- Your employer



2.2. The Role of an Independent Facilitator

An Independent Facilitator is a person you choose to help you. They can be someone in your Circle of Support or your Service Coordinator.

How does an Independent Facilitator (IF) help?

Your Independent Facilitator can help you:

- **Communicate in your preferred language,**
- **Understand what is important to you** and identify your needs,
- **Support and advocate for you** during the person-centered planning process to develop your Individual Program Plan (IPP),
- **Make informed decisions** about your Individual Budget,
- **Coordinate the services and supports** approved in your Individual Program Plan (IPP),
- **Find options to meet your needs,** including services not funded by the regional center.

When does an Independent Facilitator (IF) help?

An Independent Facilitator (IF) can help you before and during the Self-Determination program.

- Before transitioning to SDP, your IF can help you navigate the enrollment process.
- Once you are enrolled in SDP, your IF can help you plan goals and services, and stay on track.

Do I have to use an IF?

No, it is your choice! You can be in the Self-Determination Program without an Independent Facilitator.



What are the Rules for Independent Facilitators?

To become an Independent Facilitator, a person **MUST**:

- **Receive training** in the principles of Self-Determination and the process of person-centered planning.
- **NOT provide any other service to you** (such as respite, therapy, etc.) This is to make sure they remain independent.
- **Be able to support you and advocate for you** during your journey in the program—from planning to budget and services.

Do I have to pay my Independent Facilitator?

Independent Facilitators do not need to be paid. They can volunteer their services. For example, a friend can be an IF for free.

If you choose to pay your Independent Facilitator, how you pay them depends on which stage of the program you are in.

- Before transitioning to SDP, their pay comes from **Pre-Enrollment Supports**.
- Once you are enrolled in SDP, their pay comes from your **Individual Budget**.

Points to Consider

These are important points about who can work with you if you:

- **Are under 18**: a parent can be your IF but cannot be paid for it.
- **Are over 18**: a parent can be an IF and be paid for it, as long as they are not providing another service.
- **Are married**: your spouse can be your IF but cannot be paid for it.
- **Have a conservator**: the conservator may be your IF but cannot be paid for it.

Want help finding an Independent Facilitator?

[See the Hiring Toolkit at the end of the Manual](#)

2.3. The Role of Your Service Coordinator

The **Consumer Services Coordinator (CSC)** is always your main contact at the Regional Center.

Your Service Coordinator will help you:

- Develop your **Individual Program Plan (IPP)** that outlines your goals and needs.
- Find **generic resources** available to you. These are resources paid by sources different from the Regional Center.
- Determine eligible **traditional services**. These services are the foundation of your Individual Program Plan.
- Find out the allowed **cost of services** eligible for funding to work on your budget.
- Review the Individual Budget draft before it becomes final.
- Review your Spending Plan to make sure it includes only **approved services**.

! Points to Consider

- **Ongoing help:** Your Service Coordinator will be available to answer questions and serve as a guide to what's possible.
- **Limitations:** Your Service Coordinator will NOT be able to:
 - Negotiate service rates.
 - Write spending reports (report on services and funds).
 - Recommend someone to be your Independent Facilitator.



2.4. The Role of a Financial Management Service (FMS)

A Financial Management Service (FMS) is a Regional Center Vendor that helps you **manage your money in the Self-Determination Program**.

You will have a **Budget** and create a **Spending Plan**. This plan lists the services that will support your documented needs and the approved costs for those services. Your FMS will help you keep track of amounts, payments, and rules you must follow.

You will learn more about this in the Financial Management Service module.

2.5. Other SDP Roles

In the Self-Determination Program, you will mainly work with your Consumer Services Coordinator (CSC). But your case will be supported by a team that helps make sure you get consistent, well-informed support throughout the Self-Determination Program.

The following pages share information about these roles.

SDP Lead Trainers

Lead Trainers support and train SDP Consumer Services Coordinators. They help make sure Regional Center team members give you consistent, accurate guidance.

Lead Trainers can also manage up to 40 cases directly.



SDP Specialists

SDP Specialists work with your Service Coordinator to help:

- Calculate and certify the amount allowed for your Individual Budget to ensure that your Individual Budget pays only for services approved in your Individual Program Plan.
- Review your Spending Plan with Case Management.
- Process initial and subsequent transitions into system (ebilling)

SDP Coaches

SDP Coaches are a free resource available to you both before and during the Self-Determination Program. SDP Coaching is supported through dedicated regional center grants, working with contracted coaching organizations such as AACcolades, HelpGrow, and Claudia Cares. Their job is to give you free education, mentoring, and practical guidance so you can navigate the program with confidence.

SDP coaches can help you:

- Understand how SDP works and decide if SDP is right for you,
 - Prepare for meetings, build self-advocacy skills, and solve problems.
 - Navigate NLACRC-specific processes and paperwork.
 - Manage your spending plan, including budget adjustments and preparing for your annual IPP review.



The Local Volunteer Advisory Committee (LVAC)

The Local Volunteer Advisory Committee (LVAC) is an independent group created under California law (Welfare & Institutions Code § 4685.8). It provides local oversight, support, and guidance for the Self-Determination Program (SDP) at NLACRC.

The LVAC helps:

- Oversee how SDP works at NLACRC, understanding how participants enroll in and navigate the program and making recommendations to improve the program.
- Decide how SDP funding is used locally—for example, on Independent Facilitator training, SDP coaching, spending plan training, or other outreach.
- Build awareness and provide education by hosting public meetings, joint trainings, and workshops for self-advocates, families, and service providers.



Points to Consider

- You don't need to be enrolled in SDP to attend an LVAC meeting.
- The LVAC's role is oversight and support—not approving or denying anyone's individual SDP services.



2.6. The Role of Your Service Providers

Service providers are the people and agencies you choose to help you achieve the goals listed in your Individual Program Plan (IPP). They will directly deliver the services and supports you need in your daily life.

Service providers can be:

- individuals you hire directly,
- agencies who hire providers, or
- businesses that provide services in your community.

Your chosen providers must understand and support the principles of self-determination, respect your choices, and help you achieve greater independence and community inclusion. When providing personal care services, providers must pass required background checks.

Can I choose my service providers?

In the Self-Determination Program, you have the freedom to select providers who best match your preferences, culture, language, and specific needs—whether they are currently vendored with the regional center or not.

Service providers work under your direction (or your representative's direction) to support your independence, help you participate in community activities, take care of yourself, learn new skills, or receive specialized therapies.



What should I consider when choosing service providers?

It is important to find people who understand your needs, know your community, and with whom you feel comfortable.

Consider your needs. Do you need someone who...

- has a medical background?
- is able to drive you?
- can support you with personal care?

Consider the type of person you want to work with: Would you prefer ...

- someone who will not speak for you?
- someone who will respect your privacy?
- someone who understands your culture or language?

Consider the big picture and the daily details: What will be the...

- Expectations of the job
- Hours and start/end dates
- Rate of pay
- The places where the service will happen

Your service providers are a key component of your success in the Self-Determination Program. They are the ones who will directly support you in achieving your vision for a good life.



Want help hiring Service Providers?

[See the Hiring Toolkit at the end of the Manual](#)

Community Inclusion Rule

Providers of day, home, and residential programs must follow a rule called **Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Final Rule**, also known as **Community Inclusion Rule**. It applies when the federal government pays for services—in whole or in part.

This rule means that services you choose must help you be part of your community.

Requirement	What it means	Red flags
1. Full access to the community	You can go places other people go	 All activities happen only with people with disabilities
2. Choice of setting	You choose where you live or receive services	 You can't come and go freely
3. Privacy, Dignity, and Respect	No one controls you through fear or punishment.	 Group decisions made for everyone
4. Control of Your Own Life	You decide what you do each day and who you spend time with.	 Schedules you can never change
5. Choice of Services and Providers	You choose what services you get and who provides them.	 Retaliation for speaking up

Community Inclusion Rule (continued)

Providers of housing have additional requirements—when providers own or control where you live.

These requirements support Community Inclusion: wherever you live, you should be able to make choices, build relationships, and participate in everyday life.

Requirement	What it means	Red flags
6. Legal Rights to Your Home	Your home is legally yours, not “program space.”	 No lease Eviction threats
7. Privacy in Your Living Space	You can lock your door, decorate your space, and choose a roommate.	 Staff enter without permission No locks on doors
8. Control of Schedule	You decide when you wake up, eat, and go to bed.	 Rigid meal times or locked kitchens Enforced bedtimes
9. Visitors Anytime	You decide who visits you and when.	 Restricted visitors Approval for guests
10. Physical Accessibility	The environment works for your physical needs.	 Bathrooms with no accessibility No accommodations

Why Does the Community Inclusion Rule matter?

The Community Inclusion Rule helps protect your rights, making sure that you:

- ✓ make your own choices
- ✓ choose how you live
- ✓ can build relationships with people with and without disabilities

Where can I find more Information?

To ask a question, make a comment, or get more information about the HCBS Final Rule, email HCBSregs@dds.ca.gov.

For more detailed information on the HCBS Final Rule and California's Statewide Transition Plan, please visit:

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ltc/Pages/HCBSStatewideTransitionPlan.aspx>



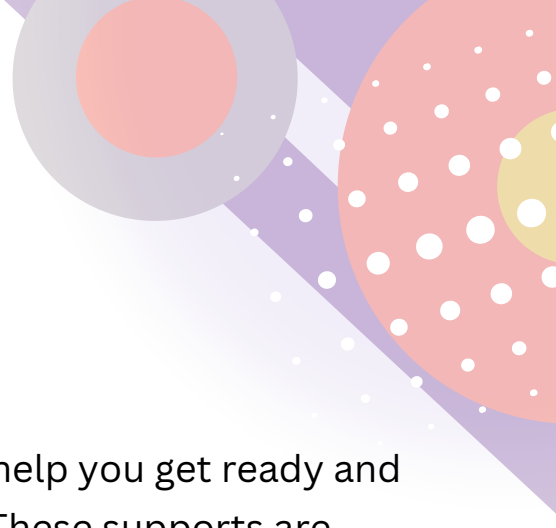
MODULE 3:

SDP TRANSITION PROCESS

Transitioning into SDP can feel overwhelming, with new paperwork, new terms, and a different way of thinking about your services. During this phase, Pre-Enrollment Transition Supports can help you get ready.

These supports are temporary services designed to assist you and your family in preparing to enter the Self-Determination Program (SDP).

You will have access to these services after completing the SDP Orientation.



3.1. What are Pre-Enrollment Transition Supports?

Pre-Enrollment Transition Supports are ways to help you get ready and transition into the Self-Determination Program. These supports are available any time after you finish your SDP orientation and before you enroll in the program.

These help you:

- Understand the SDP process
- Develop the knowledge and skills needed for self-direction
- Prepare for person-centered planning
- Build an effective support team

3.2. Do I pay for Pre-Enrollment Transition Supports?

You do not need to pay for these supports. There are **three main funding** types:

- **Reimbursement Process** for help with a Person-Centered Plan
- **Self-Directed Supports** for vendored support services (these are traditional authorizations)
- **Participant Directed Services** for non-vendored support services

Support services are usually given by an Independent Facilitator, who is a person you trust to help you and is trained on SDP principles.



3.3. How Do Pre-Enrollment Supports Work?

Reimbursement Process

This funding pays for your Person-Centered Plan (PCP). It does not cover other private support services. Through this funding:

- You get up to \$1,000 of support.
- The funds are paid to the Independent Facilitator who completes your PCP.
- Processing payment can take 6 to 8 weeks.

Self-Directed Supports

This funding pays for Independent Facilitator time when your Independent Facilitator is **vendored** with a regional center (it does not have to be NLACRC). Through this funding:

- You get up to 40 hours of support.
- Support cannot start until your IPP Agreement is signed.
- Your Regional Center must confirm the hours before funding begins.

Participant Directed Services (PDS)

This funding pays for Independent Facilitator time when your Independent Facilitator is **not vendored** with a regional center. Through this funding:

- You get up to 40 hours of support.
- The provider is paid through a Financial Management Service.
- Support cannot start until your IPP Agreement is signed.



MODULE 4:

SDP Planning

Planning is at the heart of the Self-Determination Program. Before you build your budget or choose your services, you and your team build a plan around you—your life, your goals, and what matters most to you.

The SDP planning approach is person-centered, which means the plan is built around your voice.

Your planning can include a Person-Centered Plan that helps develop your Individual Program Plan (IPP). This is a plan you always need, whether you use traditional services or SDP.

4.1. What is a Person-Centered Plan?

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A Person-Centered Plan is a document that helps you make choices by listing what's important to you. During the person-centered planning process, you will think about:

- **How you want to live your life**
- **What you're good at and enjoy doing**
- **Which supports you need to succeed**

Think of it as a snapshot that captures the most important information about you in a single, easy-to-read page. It's often one of the first steps towards your Individual Program Plan, because it helps everyone understand who you are and what matters to you.

The Regional Center can pay up to \$1,000 to help you develop this plan. You can work with:

- A Regional Center vendored provider of person-centered planning services, or
- A non-vendored provider who has training or certification in person-centered planning.

This planning can happen in person or remotely.



Points to Consider

- The Independent Facilitator must provide a certificate or résumé showing training in Self-Determination Program (SDP) principles.
- Payment is only made after delivery of your written Person-Centered Plan and detailed invoice.



4.2. What is an Individual Program Plan?

Individual Program Plan (IPP) is a written plan you create with your planning team. It is person-centered, which means it is built around you.

Your IPP includes:

- What is happening in your life right now,
- What is important to you,
- Your goals and future plans,
- The services and supports that you and your team agree will help you reach those goals.

How does the planning work?

You lead your IPP. Your Regional Center Service Coordinator meets with you to talk about your goals, choices, and the support you want. You can also invite people in your Circle of Support:

You choose who joins your planning team.

You can call an IPP meeting any time your needs or goals change. Just contact your Service Coordinator to get started. Your Service Coordinator also checks in on your plan on a regular basis, even if nothing has changed.



Points to Consider

Everyone who receives Regional Center services has an IPP. If you choose SDP, the goals in your IPP shape your Spending Plan.



4.3. Can I add a Service to my IPP?

Life changes, and so can your needs. To ask your team to add a new service to your IPP, you create an amendment following these steps:

Step 1: Identify Your Need

Describe the goal you're trying to reach and the barrier that's in the way. Keep it simple and specific—what are you trying to do, and what's stopping you right now?

Step 2: Document Your Need

Collect formal evidence that supports your request: clinical notes, assessments, or daily logs that show the need is real and ongoing.

Step 3: Submit to Your Service Coordinator

Bring your documentation to your Service Coordinator, so your team can review it and discuss it with you before an IPP meeting.

All changes must be documented, reviewed, and approved in your IPP or an IPP amendment.



Points to Consider

- Regional Centers fund services only after other public or community resources (called **generic resources**) have been tried first. These are things like Medi-Cal, an Individual Education Plan in your school district, or insurance.
- Gather proof that you've asked these sources for help and been denied, or that they don't cover what you need.



MODULE 5:

Financial Management Service

A Financial Management Service (FMS) is a Regional Center vendor that helps you manage the money in your Self-Determination Program. Once your budget is approved, you'll create a Spending Plan—a list of the services you need and the approved cost for each one. Your FMS helps you carry out that plan. It keeps track of your spending, handles payments, and makes sure you follow the program's financial rules.

5.1. What is a Financial Management Service (FMS)?

A Financial Management Service is a Regional Center Vendor that helps you **manage your money and follow the rules.**

You will have a budget and create a **Spending Plan**. This plan lists the services that you need and the approved costs for those services. We will cover more details about the Financial Management Service and Spending Plan Modules. Your FMS will help you keep track of amounts, payments, and rules you must follow.

How does the FMS help?

A Financial Management Service will help you with:

- Tracking all spending against your Budget and Spending Plan
- Making payments for approved services you chose
- Providing regular financial reports
- Making sure labor and tax laws are followed
- Providing forms and information for employee background checks

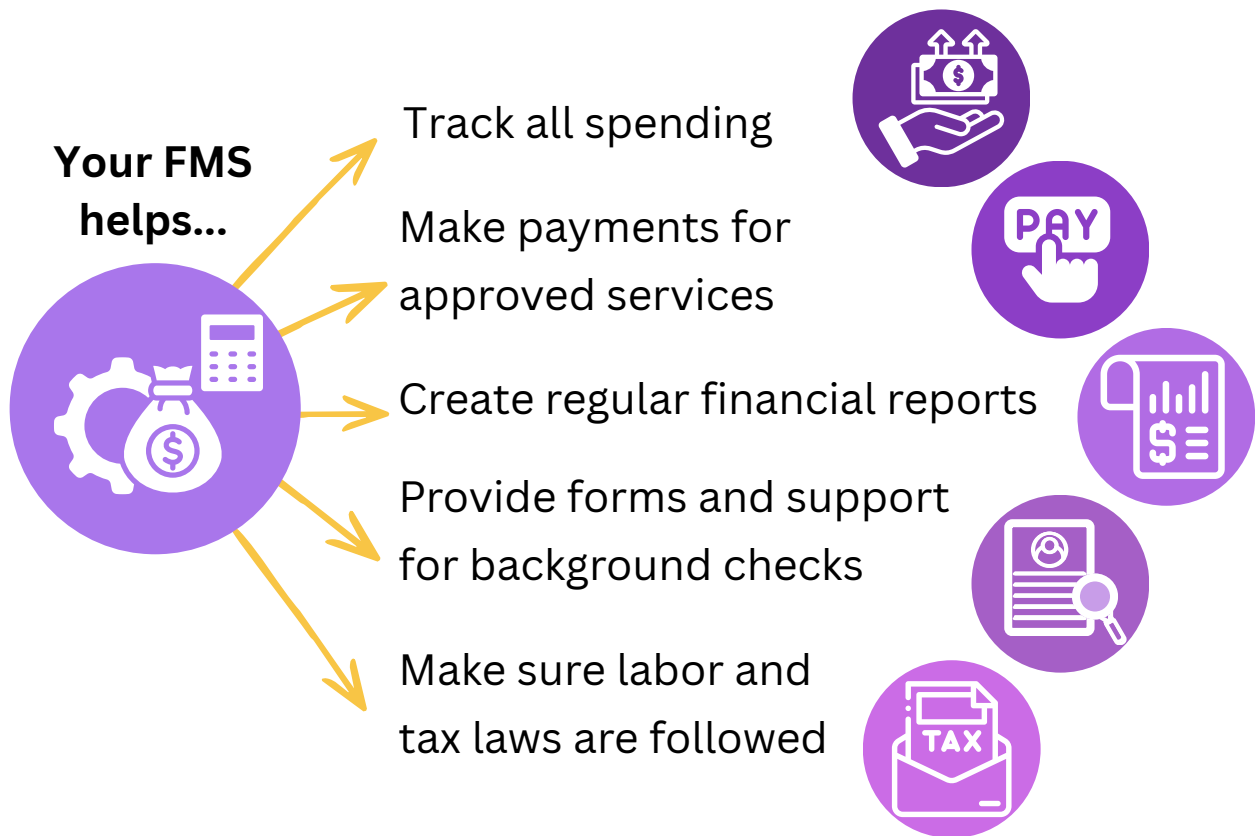
5.2. Do I have to use an FMS?

Yes, in the Self-Determination Program, you MUST use a Financial Management Service (FMS). You can choose an FMS that suits your needs. There are different types of services to choose from.

The FMS must be chosen before you can officially enter the SDP Program.

! Points to Consider

- An FMS must be a Regional Center vendor.
- The FMS is a required service: You have to use this service to help you manage your program finances.



FUNCTIONS OF A FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERVICE



5.3. Why Does an FMS help with background checks?

A background check is a search for a person's criminal history. It checks if the person has a criminal record that could prevent them from safely providing services.

If you hire someone to help you with personal care (like dressing, bathing, or grooming), they must complete a background check.

In the Self-Determination Program, background checks usually require fingerprints and are reviewed by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

5.4. Are there Different Types of Financial Management Services (FMS)?

Yes, FMS providers can differ in the services they offer and the way they pay for services. Some FMS providers act more like a bill payer, while others take on more employer responsibilities for you—like payroll taxes and workers' compensation.

Rates and additional services also vary. For example, only some FMS vendors currently offer Participant Directed Services (PDS) for Pre-Enrollment Transition Supports.

It's worth comparing a few before you choose.

You choose the model that best fits your situation. Let's take a look at the three types of Financial Management Services.

Types of Financial Management Services (FMS)

There are **three types** of Financial Management Services—called **models**—that pay for services in different ways. An FMS provider may offer one or more models.

MODEL

FEATURES

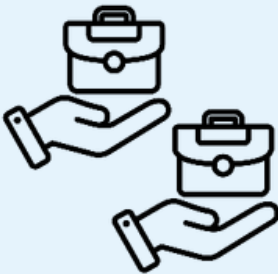
FMS as Bill Payer

(also known as
Fiscal Agent model)



- A business provides goods or services: The business is the employer of service providers and keeps employer requirements such as insurance and workers' compensation.
- **The FMS pays the business for the goods and services.**

Participant and FMS as Co-Employers



- The participant hires and fires service providers.
- **The FMS is the employer of record** and:
 - verifies provider qualifications,
 - processes payroll,
 - keeps employer requirements, such as insurance and workers' compensation.

Participant as Sole Employer

(also known as
Fiscal/Employer Agent)



- **The participant is the direct employer of service providers** and keeps employer requirements such as insurance and workers' compensation.
- **The FMS helps the participant comply** with employment laws and processes payroll.

5.5. How do I Choose the Right Financial Management Service?

To choose a Financial Management Service, you need to consider how you want to buy services and what responsibilities you want to take on:

Do you want...?

1. ...**help paying agencies** for services?

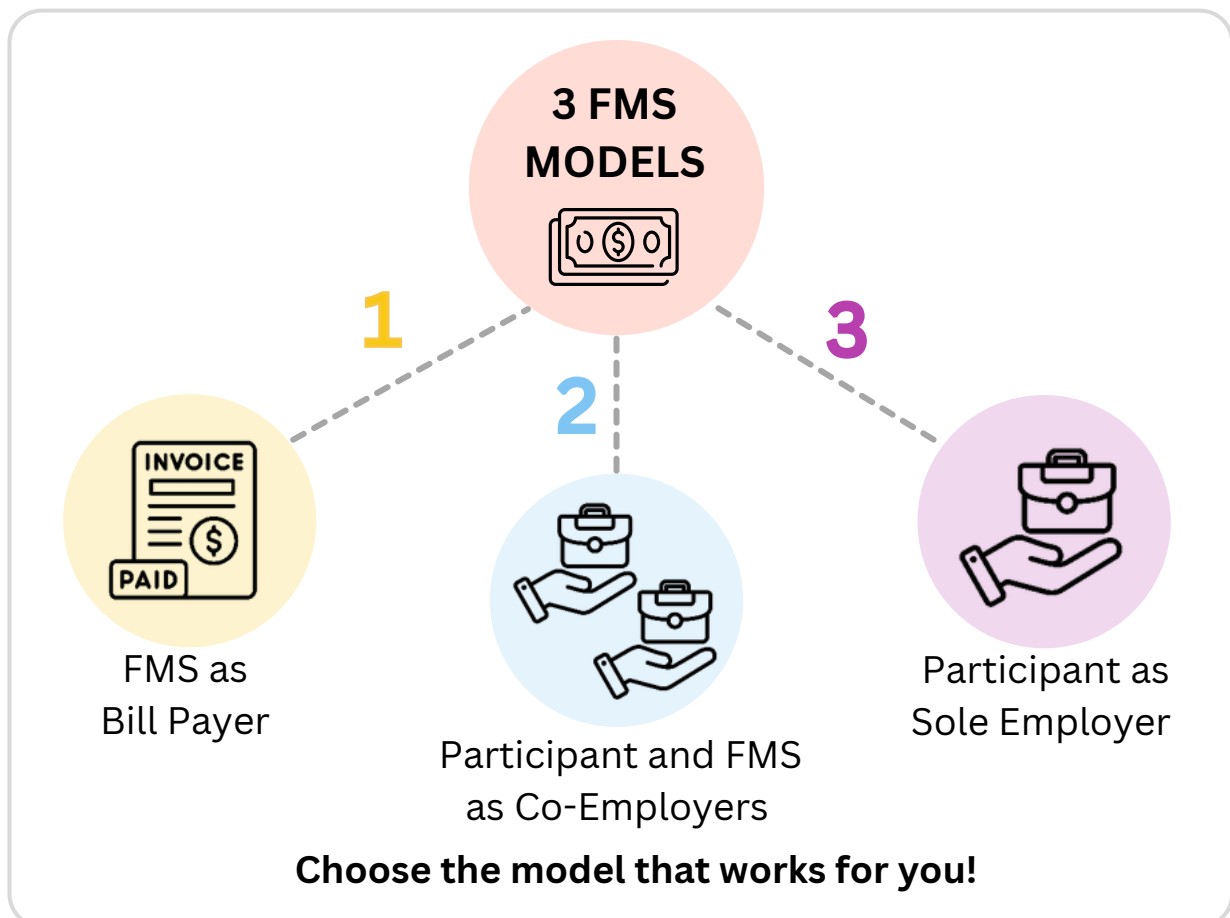
Choose the FMS as Bill Payer model.

2. ...**to hire your own employees but want help with the responsibility** of being an employer?

Choose the Participant and FMS as Co-Employers model.

3. ... to **hire your own employees and be responsible** as an employer?

Choose the Participant as Sole Employer model.



Want help hiring an FMS?

[See the Hiring Toolkit at the end of the Manual](#)

5.6. How Much does an FMS Cost?

The number of services in your annual Spending Plan determines the Financial Management Service monthly cost.

Note that the FMS's monthly fee only pays for the FMS service—it does not cover your employees' pay, taxes, or insurance.

For example, Jason and Sophia will have different monthly costs for their Financial Management Services:



Jason shares the responsibility of being an employer with his FMS and:

1. Hires an Independent Facilitator,
2. Pays an agency for a gardening coach,
3. Hires a home skills coach, a social skills coach, a neighbor for day support, and
4. Pays for a gym membership.



Sophia's family has no employer/employee relationships:

- Her dad is her Independent Facilitator,
- Her preferred language is Spanish, and
- All other services are provided by agencies.

Rates for Participants Whose Preferred Language is English

FMS Model	Total Number of Employees/Providers in Spending Plan*		
	0-4	5-10	11+
Bill Payer	\$230	\$450	\$690
Co-Employer	\$380	\$600	\$840
Sole Employer	\$380	\$600	\$840

Rates for Participants Whose Preferred Language is Not English

FMS Model	Total Number of Employee/Providers in Spending Plan*		
	0-4	5-10	11+
Bill Payer	\$255	\$495	\$760
Co-Employer	\$420	\$660	\$925
Sole Employer	\$420	\$660	\$925



MODULE 6: INDIVIDUAL BUDGET

The Budget in the Self-Determination Program determines how much funding you will receive. The amount is based on your needs but it does not determine exactly how you will spend it.

In the next pages, we will cover the details on how the budget is calculated. In the next module you will make a plan on how to spend your budget on approved services.

6.1. What is an Individual Budget?

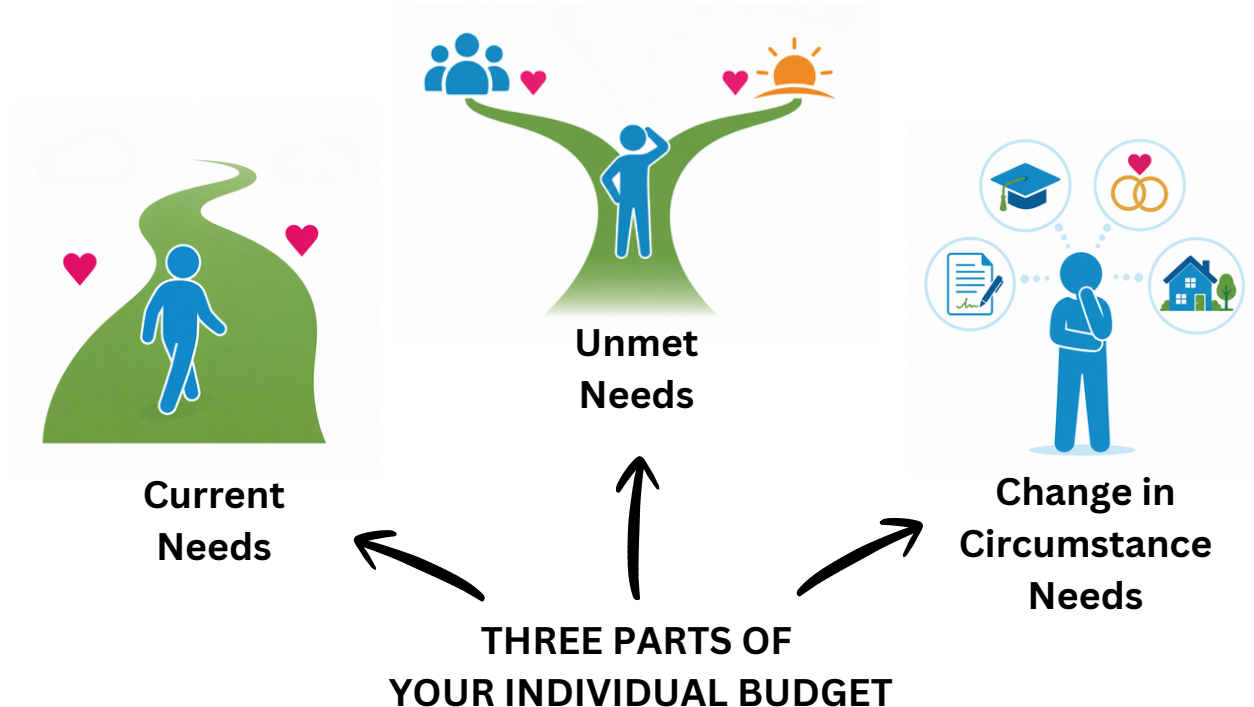
In the Self-Determination Program, a budget is the total amount of money available to you for services and supports in a 12-month period. It is the funding you have to help you with the goals and needs identified in your Individual Program Plan.

What Makes Up Your Individual Budget?

Your Individual Budget is built from three parts:

- 1- Current Needs:** The services you're already using and need to continue.
- 2- Unmet Needs:** These are services listed in your Individual Program Plan (IPP) that you needed but didn't use, or needs your IPP hasn't addressed yet.
- 3- Change in Circumstance Needs:** These are new needs that come up because something in your life has changed.

Together, these three parts make up the full picture of what your budget needs to cover—what you already have, what's missing, and what's new.



6.2. Can my Individual Budget Change?

Life changes, and so can your needs. Your Individual Budget is not locked in place forever—it can change when your needs do. Your budget can change when either of these happens:

Unmet Need: Your Individual Program Plan (IPP) points to something you need, but:

- you have not yet used a listed service.
- the listed service has not been available.
- your budget does not yet reflect the service.

Change in Circumstance: something in your life shifted, and your needs shifted with it. This could look like:

- moving to a new home,
- a change in your health,
- a change in your family or supports, such as losing a caregiver.

Your Individual Budget **CANNOT** be changed to:

- Pay for an Independent Facilitator, if you choose to hire one
- Cover the cost of authorized services you didn't use
- Pay for services that were not agreed upon with your Regional Center

Points to Consider

Key Features of Your Individual Budget are:



It's **Personal**: Your budget is calculated specifically for you based on your unique needs and circumstances.



It's **Annual**: Your budget covers a 12-month period and is “recertified” each year: reviewed, recalculated, and approved.

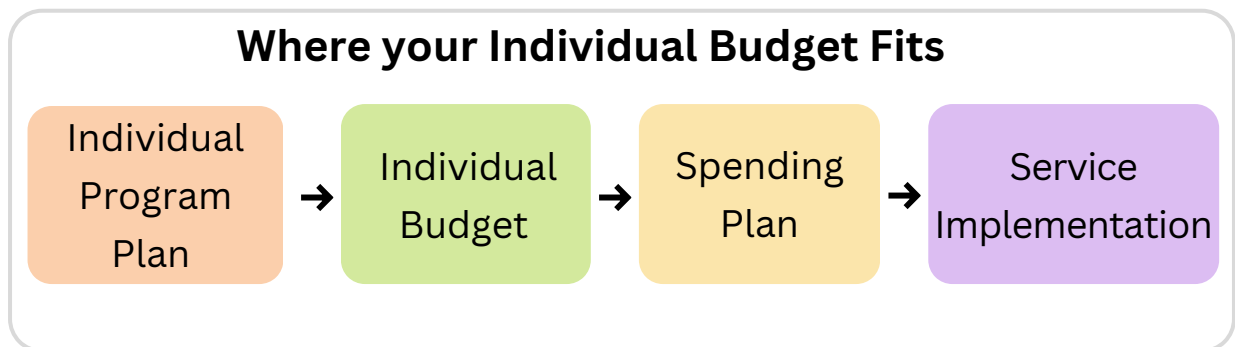


It's **Based on Needs**: Your budget considers all services identified in your Individual Program Plan.

6.3. Where Does the Individual Budget fit in?

In the Self-Determination Program, a budget is the total amount of money available to you for services and supports in a 12-month period. It is the funding you have to help you with the goals and needs identified through your person-centered planning in your Individual Program Plan.

Your individual budget does not determine exactly how you spend the funding. You will plan for specific services in a Spending Plan. Here's the sequence where the budget fits in:



This is what each step means:

1. **Individual Program Plan:** Identifies your goals and needs
2. **Individual Budget:** Determines how much funding you'll receive
3. **Spending Plan:** Details how you'll use your funds to meet your goals
4. **Service Implementation:** Putting your plan into action with chosen Service Providers

Individual Budget and Spending Plan

Two important terms:

Individual Budget

Total amount I can spend



Spending Plan

How I spend the budget



Budget vs. Spending Plan Quick Reference

	Individual Budget	Spending Plan
What is it for?	It sets your funding limit	It details how you'll use your funds
Who is responsible?	Regional Center calculates it	You create it with your team
When is it done?	Before services begin and after all traditional services are approved via IPP Planning	After the budget is certified
Is it flexible?	Set amount for 12 months	Can be modified as needs change

6.4. How Do I Determine My Budget?

Your **Individual Budget** is calculated based on five questions:

1. How much was spent on authorized individual services in the last 12 months? This is the **Baseline Amount**.
2. If authorized services went unused, what would the cost of those unused services be today? This is the **Unfunded Amount**.
3. If group services were used, what was the individual cost? This is the **Group Contract Portion**.
4. If new services are needed (because things changed for you or around you), what will the cost of those new services be?
This is a **Newly Identified Need**.
5. If one-time services were provided in the last year, what was the cost?
This is a **Non-Continuing Expense** (you don't need the service again next year).

Individual Budget =								
1 Services Used in Past 12 Months	+	2 Adjustments for Services Unused	+	3 Group Contracts Portion	+	4 New Service Needs	-	5 One- Time Services
↓		↓		↓		↓		↓
Services received and paid for in the last 12 months		Services authorized but not fully used in the last 12 months		Your responsibility for services under group contracts		New services needed based on your current IPP		Services received before but that will not repeat

In short: start with what you spent last year, add money for new needs, subtract one-time costs.

Budget Process

This budget calculation process ensures your Self-Determination Program budget accurately reflects your needs for the coming year.

Baseline Amount

Your Individual Budget starts with what was actually spent on authorized services in the past year.

Baseline Amount = Paid Amount in the Expenditure Detail Report

Unfunded Amount

If you did not fully use authorized services during the past year, we calculate the unused funds based on current rates and current authorized hours. Unused services could be, for example, respite hours that were approved but not provided due to staff shortages.

The calculation starts with **Annualization**. This is the amount needed for a full year of service.

Annualized Cost = Authorized hours/month × Current rate × 12 months

Then, we calculate the **Unfunded Amount**. This is the difference between annualized cost (full cost at current rates and hours) and baseline amount (payment for services you received).

Unfunded Amount = Annualized Cost – Baseline Amount

Group Contract Portion

If you used services contracted for a group, we calculate the amount that you are responsible for as an individual. For this, we consider the Group Contract Cost and the number of individuals served by the Group Contract.

To calculate the annual Group Contract Portion, we divide the Group Contract Cost per month by the number of individuals served by the Group Contract and, then, multiply the monthly amount by 12.

$$\text{Group Contract Portion} = \text{Group Contract Cost} / \text{Number of Individuals} * 12$$

Newly Identified Needs

If you need new services, we also add funds to cover the cost of those new services. However, these new services must be identified through your Person-Centered Plan.

$$\text{New Needs} = \text{Authorized Hours/Period} \times \text{Current Rate} \times \text{Number of Periods}$$

Note: The periods authorized for these needs may be in weeks or months.

Non-Continuing Services

Finally, we consider if any services were received and are no longer needed. These are services, like assessments, that won't continue or payments for one-time expenses, like a wheelchair. This means that the service will not be repeatedly needed throughout the year.

$$\text{Non-Continuing Amount} = \text{Cost for services that will not repeat}$$

Final Annual Individual Budget

To reach a final budgeted amount, we add the baseline amount, the unfunded amount, and the new needs amount and subtract the cost for any non-continuing service.

$$\text{BUDGET} = \text{Baseline} + \text{Unfunded} + \text{New Needs} - \text{Non-Continuing Amounts}$$



Points to Consider

- One-time services, like assessments, initial evaluations, or equipment purchase, are not included in your budget because you will not need them again.
- Think of a household budget: If you purchased a refrigerator last year for \$1,000, you wouldn't include that expense in next year's budget because you don't need to buy a new refrigerator every year.

6.5. Certification: Your Budget Responsibility

Once your Regional Center Coordinator calculates your budget, it is your responsibility to review it, ask questions if you have any, and approve the budget. When everyone has signed the budget, the step is called **Certification**.

You will receive a form called “Self-Determination Program Individual Budget Calculation and Certification Tool” filled in by your Service Coordinator. This form calculates your budget. For short, we call these tables **Certification Tool**.

What is the Certification Tool?

The Certification Tool is a form that shows how your Individual Budget for the Self-Determination Program is calculated.

Your budget is the total amount of funding available to you for services in the next 12 months. The budget amount is based on authorized services in your Individual Program Plan. After the Budget is complete, you will create a Spending Plan to select specific providers for services.

When you receive the Budget Calculation and Certification Tool form, please review the budget information and sign the certification page.

If you have questions about your budget, please contact your Service Coordinator as shown in your form.

In the following pages, we will go through two examples of certification forms to help you fill in yours.

Budget and Certification Tool examples

In the following pages, we will share examples and explanations of how the Certification Tool works. To help you understand different situations, we will go over an example when no new services are added, and an example where new services are added for the new year.

6.6. Budget Example with No New Services

Jason is building an Individual Budget in the Self-Determination Program without adding any new services. This means that he will only need services already authorized. We will show here how the calculations are done.

Jason's Process

Jason followed this planning process:

1. One Page Profile
2. Individual Program Plan
3. Report of Amount Spent in the Last 12 Months
4. Budget Certification Tool
5. Service Coordinator Certification

Jason's Budget

This is **Jason's Budget Breakdown**:

Budget Component	Amount
Services Received Last Year	\$5,821.80
+ Adjustments for Unused Services	\$9,667.80
+ Group Contract Portion	\$0
+ New Services	\$0
- Non-Continuing Services	\$0
= Jason's Total Budget	\$15,489.60

Using the Certification Tool for Jason's Budget

Part 1: Baseline Amount

The first part of the Certification Tool is about the amount paid for services over the last year. This amount is listed in the Expenditure Detail Report under the Paid Amount column. Remember that all amounts here are examples for Jason.

Self-Determination Program
Individual Budget Calculation and Certification Tool

Participant: JASON – SDP Year 1
UCI #: 0000000
Date of Birth (M/D/Y): 09/20/2009
Regional Center: NLACRC
Service Coordinator:
Prior 12 Month Period: 03/2025-02/2026

This tool is intended to guide you through building the individual budget for a participant in the Self Determination Program (SDP). It is structured as a series of tables that will allow you to calculate a final budget amount. The individual budget should be calculated and certified in conjunction with, or prior to, development of the Individual Program Plan (IPP) and Spending Plan for SDP.

This is a protected document intended to preserve formulas in the tables. Enter amounts into the grey areas within the tables, as applicable. There are some fields that require manual calculations. Totals will automatically calculate in the tables as you move through the document. Automatically calculated fields appear orange and cannot be edited.

Upon completion of the individual budget calculation, please sign the form to reflect Regional Center (RC) certification and participant review.

Please email sdp@dds.ca.gov for questions regarding the use of this tool and/or the development of the individual budget.

1. **Baseline Amount: Determine the baseline annual expenditures: How much was spent in the most recent 12 months?**

The individual budget amount is based on the most recent 12 months of all regional center expenditures used to purchase services in the IPP. Enter the total amount paid by a Regional Center using the 12-month expenditure report. An updated report can be generated from SANDIS (contact RC SANDIS representative if clarification is needed) or from UFS (instructions are located on the DDS AST website at <https://www.dds.ca.gov/AST/docs/sdp12MonthExpenditureReport.pdf>).

Please attach a copy of the report used to this document.

Total amount on report	\$5,821.80
------------------------	------------

Amount found on the expenditure report in the "Paid Amount" column

1

North Los Angeles County Regional Center

Last Revised: November 2019

See amount in
Expenditure Report

RUN DATE:		DDS UNIFORM FISCAL SYSTEM						REPORT ID:	
RUN TIME:		NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL CENTER						PAGE:	
		POS EXPENDITURE DETAIL REPORT							
CONSUMER NAME: JASON									
UCI: 00000000		DOB: 09/20/2009						SERVICE MONTH: 3/25 TO 2/26	
VENDOR#	AUTH#	AUTH STR DT	AUTH END DT	SVC CD	SUBCD	SERV MONTH	AUTH UNIT	PAID UNIT	AUT AMOUNT
ZY0001	123456789	03/01/25	06/30/25	862		3/25	30.00	30.00	818.40
						4/25	30.00	30.00	818.40
						5/25	30.00	30.00	818.40
						6/25	30.00	30.00	818.40
						7/25	43.00	30.00	818.40
						8/25	43.00	30.00	1,306.34
						9/25	43.00	.00	1,306.34
						10/25	43.00	30.00	1,306.34
						11/25	43.00	.00	1,306.34
						12/25	43.00	.00	1,306.34
						1/26	43.00	.00	1,306.34
						2/26	43.00	.00	1,306.34
XYZ RESPTE AGENCY-ZY0001 VENDOR TOTAL:							464.00	210.00	13,236.38
0000000 CONSUMER TOTAL:							464.00	210.00	13,236.38
*****END OF REPORT*****									

Figure 1: Expenditure Report Example

Paid Amount Column
in Expenditure Report

No calculation is needed in this first part.

Baseline Amount =
Paid Amount Column Total = \$5,821.80

Part 2: Annualization

The second part of the Certification Tool is Annualization Table to calculate the Unfunded Amount. This amount is about funds for services that were authorized but not used.

2. Annualization Table: Determine the costs for services that should be annualized:

These are services identified in the current IPP and in the Baseline Amount reflecting less than 12 months of payment made to the provider; or where no payment has yet been made to the provider. Reasons may include but are not limited to: services that were provided but not yet billed by the provider, mid-year service start, long-term consumer illness, and/or unavailable service providers due to reasons such as distance or language. Leave this table blank if this does not apply.

Service Provided/Funded for less than 12 months	Service Code	Does this service require an "annualized" cost to determine the SDP budget? *(yes/no)	How many months was the service <u>unfunded</u> (not provided)?	Rate/month	Show calculation to determine total cost for <u>unfunded</u> months (rate multiplied by number of unfunded months)	Total cost for <u>unfunded</u> months
Respite	862	Yes	5 months Unfunded	\$1,290.80	\$32.27/hour x 40 hours/month = \$1,290.80/month x 12 months = \$15,489.60 (authorization amount) - \$5,821.80 (amount paid on the expenditure report) =	\$9,667.80

*If no, skip the next 4 columns on the right of this table

\$1,290.80

\$15,489.60

\$9,667.80

Monthly
Rate

Annualized
Cost

Unfunded
Amount

Figure 2: Annualization Table from the Certification Tool

We first calculate a new **monthly rate** based on current service rates and number of authorized hours.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Monthly Rate} = \\ \text{Hours/month} \times \text{Current rate} = 40 \times \$32.27 = \$1,290.80 \end{aligned}$$

We then calculate the annualized cost as the monthly rate multiplied by 12 months.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Annualized Cost} = \\ \text{Monthly Rate} \times 12 \text{ months} = \$1,290.80 \times 12 = \$15,489.60 \end{aligned}$$

Finally, we calculate the unfunded amount as the difference between annualized and the baseline amount from the previous page.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Unfunded Amount} = \\ \text{Annualized} - \text{Baseline Amount} = \$15,489.60 - \\ \$5,821.80 = \$9,667.80 \end{aligned}$$

Part 3: Group Contract Portion

The third part of the Certification Tool is the Group Contracts Table. This table helps you determine how much of a group service you are responsible for. For example, if you share a transportation service that drives 10 individuals (including you), each of you will be responsible for 10% of the cost.

3. **Group Contract Table: Determine costs of services purchased under group**

contract: Regional Center fiscal department should be able to generate a report on the monthly costs of group contracts. An example would be transportation services. Leave this table blank if this does not apply.

Type/Description of Service	Agency Name	Monthly Group Cost	Number of individuals served	Show calculation to determine adjusted annual cost (monthly group cost divided by number of individuals served, multiplied by 12 months)	Adjusted Cost for 12 months of service
				/ x	
				/ x	
				/ x	
				/ x	
TOTAL					\$0.00

Figure 3: Group Contract Table from the Certification Tool

We need to know:

- 1) The **Group Contract Cost**,
- 2) The **number of individuals served** by the Group Contract

The Regional Center fiscal department can generate a report about these numbers.

With the Group Contract Cost and number of individuals served, we first calculate the monthly Group Contracts Portion: we divide the Group Contract Cost per month by the number of individuals using the service.

Then, we can calculate the annual portion, by multiplying the monthly Group Contracts Portion by 12 months.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Group Contract Portion} &= \\ \text{Monthly Group Contract Cost} / \text{Number of Individuals} * 12 \\ &= \$1,548.50 / 10 * 12 = \$1,858.20 \end{aligned}$$

Part 4: Newly Identified Needs

4. **Newly Identified Needs Table: Determine the cost for newly identified needs and services:** These are services that were recently identified and not recorded in previous tables. Reasons may include a change in life circumstances. The rate for these services is based on what would have been spent in the traditional service delivery system. If these services include residential facility (ARM, ARFPSHN, or Negotiated Non-ARFPSHN), use the rate less the SSI amount. Leave this table blank if this does not apply.

Describe Change in Circumstance / New Need	Service Code that <u>would</u> have addressed the need (ex: 862)	Amount & Billing Unit hours, sessions, month, etc (ex: 20 hrs/month)	Average Rate (ex: \$16.50/hr, \$65/day, etc)	Determine the <u>frequency</u> of service for 1 month of use (ex: hourly- hours per day, days per month; daily- days per month)	Show calculation to determine cost for 12 months of service (rate multiplied by frequency of service for 1 month, multiplied by 12 months)	Cost for 12 months of service
TOTAL						\$0.00

Figure 4: Newly Identified Needs Table from the Certification Tool

The fourth part of the Certification Tool is the Newly Identified Needs Table. Jason does not need new services. So, the table is empty.

$$\text{Newly Identified Needs} = \$0$$

Part 5: Budget Subtotal

The fifth part in the Certification Tool is Budget Subtotal Table. Now, we can add up all the pieces that will contribute to your budget.

For Jason, this means adding the following components:

8. **Calculate the annual individual budget:** This table pulls the subtotaled amount from #5 and subtracts the subtotal of the amounts in #6 and #7.

Subtotal in #5	\$15,489.60
Non-Continuing Services Total	\$0.00
Continuing Services Not a Part of the Individual Budget Total	\$0.00
SUBTOTAL	\$15,489.60
Self-Determination Annual Individual Budget	\$15,489.60

Figure 5: Budget Subtotal Table from the Certification Tool

Budget Subtotal =

Baseline Amount + Unfunded Amount + Group Portion
Responsibility + Newly Identified Needs =
\$5,821.80 + \$9,667.80 + \$1,858.20 + \$0 = \$17,347.80

Part 6: Non-Continuing Services

6. **Non-Continuing Services: Determine the cost of services that are not expected to continue, regardless of participation in the SDP:** These services can include but are not limited to: initial person-centered planning services for transition into SDP, home modification, auto modification, durable medical equipment, or services that were included in the Baseline Amount but are no longer needed, regardless of participation in the SDP. Leave this table blank if this does not apply.

Service Description	Amount
TOTAL	\$0.00

7. **Continuing Services Handled Outside of the Individual Budget: Determine the cost**

Figure 6: Non-Continuing Service Table from the Certification Tool

The sixth part in the Certification Tool is for Non-Continuing Services. Here's where we list services that will not be part of next year's budget. These can be expenses for a product that you will continue to use, like a ramp installed at home, or payment for a one-time service, like an assessment. Think of them as past expenses.

Jason does not have any one-time expenses or payments for non-repeating services like an assessment. So the Non-Continuing Table for Jason is empty.

Non-Continuing Amount =
Cost for services that will not repeat = \$0

Part 7: Continuing Services Outside of the Individual Budget

The seventh part of the Certification Tool is a table for Continuing Services Outside of the Individual Budget. Some specific continuing services are handled outside the individual budget and should not be included in the budget. These services are:

- Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Incentives
- Paid Internship Program (PIP) payments
- SSI/SSP restoration payments
- Insurance co-payments, deductibles, or co-insurance

7. Continuing Services Handled Outside of the Individual Budget: Determine the cost of services that are on-going but will be handled outside of the individual budget or the spending plan: These services are limited to: Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Incentives, Paid Internship Program (PIP) payments, SSI/SSP restoration payments, and costs for insurance co-payments, deductibles or co-insurance. If these items were included in the Baseline Amount, enter them here. Leave this table blank if this does not apply.

Service Description	Amount
TOTAL	

Figure 7: Continuing Service Outside the Budget Table

Jason does not have any services handled outside the budget. So the table for this category is empty.

**Continuing Services Outside of the Individual Budget Amount
= Cost for services handled outside the budget = \$0**

Part 8: Final Annual Individual Budget

The eighth part of the Certification Tool is the Final Annual Individual Budget Table.

8. **Calculate the annual individual budget:** This table pulls the subtotaled amount from #5 and subtracts the subtotal of the amounts in #6 and #7.

Subtotal in #5	\$15,489.60
Non-Continuing Services Total	\$0.00
Continuing Services Not a Part of the Individual Budget Total	\$0.00
SUBTOTAL	\$15,489.60
Self-Determination Annual Individual Budget	\$15,489.60

Figure 8: Annual Budget Calculation Table

To reach a final budget amount, we:

1. Copy the **Budget Subtotal** from Part 5.
2. Copy the amount for **Non-Continuing Services** from Part 6
3. Copy the amount for Continuing Services Outside the Individual Budget Total from Part 7
4. Subtract the last two amounts from the Budget Subtotal.

For Jason, his Total Budget is equal to the subtotal from Part 5.

$$\begin{aligned} &\textbf{Self-Determination Annual Individual Budget} = \\ &\quad \text{Budget Subtotal} - \text{Non-Continuing Services} \\ &\quad - \text{Continuing Services Outside of Individual Budget Amount} = \\ &\quad \$17,347.80 - \$0 - \$0 = \$17,347.80 \end{aligned}$$

Part 9: Signatures

The ninth part of the Certification Tool is a space for all the signatures needed. Each party should sign and date the document.

Self-Determination Program Individual Budget Calculation and Certification Tool	
9. Signatures	
The Self Determination Annual Individual Budget for John Doe – SDP Year 1 is \$15,489.60.	
Regional Center	
I certify that the regional center expenditures for this individual budget, including any adjustment, would have occurred regardless of the individual's participation in the Self-Determination Program per Welfare and Institutions Code 4685.8 (n)(1).	
Regional Center Representative Printed Name	
Regional Center Representative Signature	Date
Self Determination Supervisor Printed Name	
Self Determination Supervisor Signature	Date
Consumer Services Director Printed Name	
Consumer Services Director Signature	Date
Accounting Representative Printed Name	
Accounting Representative Printed Signature	Date

Figure 9: Signatures Section for Regional Center Representatives in the Certification Tool

Self-Determination Program

Individual Budget Calculation and Certification Tool

Participant or Legal Representative

The individual budget document calculation and certification has been reviewed with me.

Participant or Legal Representative Printed Name

Participant or Legal Representative Signature

Date

Figure 10: Signatures Section for Participant or Legal Representative in the Certification Tool

Part 10: Rights

The tenth part of the Certification Tool is a reminder that participants in the Self-Determination Program have the same rights as consumers who receive traditional services.

10. Rights

Participants enrolled in the Self-Determination Program have the same rights established under the traditional service model (e.g. appeals, eligibility determinations, and all other rights associated with the individual program plan process).

6.7. Budget Example with New Services Added

Sophia is building an Individual Budget in the Self-Determination Program with newly authorized services. This means that new services will be added to the ones already authorized. We will show here how the calculations are done.

Sophia's Process

Sophia followed this planning process:

1. Individual Program Plan
2. Report of Amount Spent in the Last 12 Months
3. Budget Certification Tool
4. Service Coordinator Certification

Sophia's Budget

This is **Sophia's Budget Breakdown**:

Budget Component	Amount
Services Received Last Year	\$6,915.96
+ Adjustments for Unused Services	\$9,667.80
+ Group Contract Portion	\$0
+ New Services	\$18,680.00
- Non-Continuing Services	\$1,094.16
= Sophia's Total Budget	\$35,263.76

Part 1: Baseline Amount

Self-Determination Program

Individual Budget Calculation and Certification Tool

Participant: SOPHIA – SDP Year 1
 UCI #: 0000001
 Date of Birth (M/D/Y): 12/16/2007
 Regional Center: NLACRC
 Service Coordinator:
 Prior 12 Month Period: 03/2025-02/2026

This tool is intended to guide you through building the individual budget for a participant in the Self Determination Program (SDP). It is structured as a series of tables that will allow you to calculate a final budget amount. The individual budget should be calculated and certified in conjunction with, or prior to, development of the Individual Program Plan (IPP) and Spending Plan for SDP.

This is a protected document intended to preserve formulas in the tables. Enter amounts into the grey areas within the tables, as applicable. There are some fields that require manual calculations. Totals will automatically calculate in the tables as you move through the document. Automatically calculated fields appear orange and cannot be edited.

Upon completion of the individual budget calculation, please sign the form to reflect Regional Center (RC) certification and participant review.

Please email sdp@dds.ca.gov for questions regarding the use of this tool and/or the development of the individual budget.

1. **Baseline Amount: Determine the baseline annual expenditures: How much was spent in the most recent 12 months?**

The individual budget amount is based on the most recent 12 months of all regional center expenditures used to purchase services in the IPP. Enter the total amount paid by a Regional Center using the 12-month expenditure report. An updated report can be generated from SANDIS (contact RC SANDIS representative if clarification is needed) or from UFS (instructions are located on the DDS AST website at <https://www.dds.ca.gov/AST/docs/sdp12MonthExpenditureReport.pdf>).

Please attach a copy of the report used to this document.

Total amount on report	\$6,915.96	← Amount found on the expenditure report in the "Paid Amount" column
------------------------	------------	--

See amount in
Expenditure Report

RUN DATE:		DDS UNIFORM FISCAL SYSTEM						REPORT ID:	
RUN TIME:		NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL CENTER						PAGE: 1	
		POS EXPENDITURE DETAIL REPORT							
CONSUMER NAME: SOPHIA									
UCI: 00000001		DOB: 12/16/2007							
		SERVICE MONTH: 3/25 TO 2/26							
VENDOR#	AUTH#	AUTH STR DT	AUTH END DT	SVC CD	SUBCD	SERV MONTH	AUTH UNIT	PAID UNIT	AUT AMOU
AB1234	123456789	03/01/25	06/30/25	862		3/25	30.00	30.00	818.40
						4/25	30.00	30.00	818.40
						5/25	30.00	30.00	818.40
						6/25	30.00	30.00	818.40
						7/25	43.00	30.00	818.40
						8/25	43.00	30.00	818.40
						9/25	43.00	.00	1,306.34
						10/25	43.00	30.00	1,306.34
						11/25	43.00	.00	1,306.34
						12/25	43.00	.00	1,306.34
						1/26	43.00	.00	1,306.34
						2/26	43.00	.00	1,306.34
ABC RESPITE CARE - AB1234							VENDOR TOTAL:	464.00	210.00
987654321 02/01/25 01/31/26 605 ASSMT 12/25								6.00	547.08
							1/26	6.00	547.08
123 AST CARE-CD4321							VENDOR TOTAL:	12.00	12.00
0000001 CONSUMER TOTAL:								476.00	222.00
***** END OF REPORT *****									

Figure 1: Expenditure Report Example

Paid Amount Column
in Expenditure Report

No calculation is needed in this first part.

Baseline Amount =
Paid Amount Column Total = \$6,915.96

Part 2: Annualization

The second part of the Certification Tool is Annualization Table to calculate the Unfunded Amount. This amount is about funds for services that were authorized but not used.

2. Annualization Table: Determine the costs for services that should be annualized:

These are services identified in the current IPP and in the Baseline Amount reflecting less than 12 months of payment made to the provider; or where no payment has yet been made to the provider. Reasons may include but are not limited to: services that were provided but not yet billed by the provider, mid-year service start, long-term consumer illness, and/or unavailable service providers due to reasons such as distance or language. Leave this table blank if this does not apply.

Service Provided/Funded for less than 12 months	Service Code	Does this service require an "annualized" cost to determine the SDP budget? *(yes/no)	How many months was the service <u>unfunded</u> (not provided)?	Rate/month	Show calculation to determine total cost for <u>unfunded</u> months (rate multiplied by number of unfunded months)	Total cost for <u>unfunded</u> months
Respite	862	Yes	5 months Unfunded	\$1,290.80	\$32.27/hour x 40 hours/month = \$1,290.80/month x 12 months = \$15,489.60 (authorization amount) - \$5,821.80 (amount paid on the expenditure report) =	\$9,667.80

*If no, skip the next 4 columns on the row and this table

\$1,290.80

\$15,489.60

\$8,573.64

Monthly
Rate

Annualized
Cost

Unfunded
Amount

Figure 2: Annualization Table from the Certification Tool

We first calculate a new **monthly rate** based on current service rates and number of authorized hours.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Monthly Rate} = \\ \text{Hours/month} \times \text{Current rate} = 40 \times \$32.27 = \$1,290.80 \end{aligned}$$

We then calculate the annualized cost as the monthly rate multiplied by 12 months.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Annualized Cost} = \\ \text{Monthly Rate} \times 12 \text{ months} = \$1,290.80 \times 12 = \$15,489.60 \end{aligned}$$

Finally, we calculate the unfunded amount as the difference between annualized and the baseline amount from the previous page.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Unfunded Amount} = \\ \text{Annualized} - \text{Baseline Amount} = \$15,489.60 - \\ \$6,915.96 = \$8,573.64 \end{aligned}$$

Part 3: Group Contract Portion

The third part of the Certification Tool is the Group Contracts Table. This table helps you determine how much of a group service you are responsible for. For example, if you share a transportation service that drives 10 individuals (including you), each of you will be responsible for 10% of the cost.

3. **Group Contract Table: Determine costs of services purchased under group contract:**
Regional Center fiscal department should be able to generate a report on the monthly costs of group contracts. An example would be transportation services. Leave this table blank if this does not apply.

Type/Description of Service	Agency Name	Monthly Group Cost	Number of individuals served	Show calculation to determine adjusted annual cost (monthly group cost divided by number of individuals served, multiplied by 12 months)	Adjusted Cost for 12 months of service
				/ X	
				/ X	
				/ X	
				/ X	
TOTAL					\$0.00

Figure 3: Group Contract Table from the Certification Tool

Sophia does not use any services provided by a Group Contract. So, the table is empty.

Group Contract Portion = \$0

Part 4: Newly Identified Needs

The fourth part of the Certification Tool is the Newly Identified Needs Table. With this table, you calculate amounts for services that address new needs. Changes in your life may lead to additional services being authorized. The rate for these services is based on what you would have spent on the traditional service path.

4. **Newly Identified Needs Table: Determine the cost for newly identified needs and services:** These are services that were recently identified and not recorded in previous tables. Reasons may include a change in life circumstances. The rate for these services is based on what would have been spent in the traditional service delivery system. If these services include residential facility (ARM, ARFPSHN, or Negotiated Non-ARFPSHN), use the rate less the SSI amount. Leave this table blank if this does not apply.

Describe Change in Circumstance / New Need	Service Code that <u>would</u> have addressed the need (ex: 862)	Amount & Billing Unit hours, sessions, month, etc (ex: 20 hrs/month)	Average Rate (ex: \$16.50/hr, \$65/day, etc)	Determine the <u>frequency</u> of service for 1 month of use (ex: hourly- hours per day, days per month; daily- days per month)	Show calculation to determine cost for 12 months of service (rate multiplied by frequency of service for 1 month, multiplied by 12 months)	Cost for 12 months of service
Adaptive Skills Training	605	10 hours per month	\$80.00/hour	10 hours per month	\$80.00/hour x 10 hours/month = \$800.00/month x 12 months =	\$9,600.00
Personal Assistance	062	5 hours per week	\$28.00/hour	5 hours per week	\$28.00/hour x 5 hours/week = \$140.00/week x 52 weeks =	\$7,280.00
Social Recreation: Karate	525	1 class per week	\$150.00/month	1 class per week	\$150.00/month x 12 months =	\$1,800.00
TOTAL						\$18,680.00

1

Needs & Service Codes

2

Frequency & Rate

3

Monthly Cost

4

Cost of New Needs

Figure 4: Newly Identified Needs Table from the Certification Tool

1. We first identify the needs and assign the service codes that would have been used in the traditional service path. For Sophia, these are:

1

- Adaptive Skills Training: 605
- Personal Assistance: 062
- Social Recreation - Karate: 525

2. We then list the authorized rate and frequency for the service.

2

- \$80/hr for 10 hours per month
- \$28/hr for 5 hours per week
- \$150/month for 1 class per week

3. After, we calculate the cost for a year of service. For this, we multiply rate by frequency of service in one month by 12 months:

Cost for 12 Months (unit rate) = Rate per Unit × Frequency per Month × 12

Sometimes, the rate will already be for the whole month. In this case, we simply multiply the monthly rate by 12:

Cost for 12 Months (monthly rate) = Rate per Month × 12

If more than one new service is added, we repeat the calculation for each new service. Since Sophia has 3 new services, we have:

3

- $80 \times 10 \text{ hours per month} \times 12 \text{ months} = \$9,600.00$
- $\$28 \times (5 \text{ hours per week} \times 4) \times 12 \text{ months} = \$7,280.00$
- $\$150 \text{ (monthly rate)} \times 12 \text{ months} = \$1,800.00$

Note 1: when the frequency of a service is listed per week, we multiply it by 4, since we usually count 4 weeks per month.

Note 2: The Regional Center can generate a report with updated service codes and rates.

Finally, we calculate the total cost of new services by adding the yearly cost for each of them.

4

Newly Identified Needs

$$\begin{aligned} &= \text{Cost of All Newly Authorized Services} \\ &= \$9,600.00 + \$7,280.00 + \$1,800 \\ &= \$18,680 \end{aligned}$$

Part 5: Budget Subtotal

The fifth part in the Certification Tool is Budget Subtotal Table. Now, we can add up all the pieces that will contribute to your budget.

For Sophia, this means adding the following components:

- Baseline Amount
- Unfunded Amount from the Annualization Table
- Contract Group Portion

Newly Identified Needs

5. **Calculate the Budget Subtotal:** Adding the total amounts from all previous tables.

Baseline Amount	\$6,915.96
Annualization Table Total	\$9,667.80
Group Contract Table Total	\$0.00
Newly Identified Needs Table Total	\$18,680.00
SUBTOTAL	\$35,263.76

Figure 5: Budget Subtotal Table from the Certification Tool

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Budget Subtotal} &= \\ &= \text{Baseline Amount} + \text{Unfunded Amount} + \text{Group Portion} \\ &\quad \text{Responsibility} + \text{Newly Identified Needs} \\ &= \$6,915.96 + \$8,573.64 + \$0 + \$18,680 + = \$34,169.60\end{aligned}$$

Part 6: Non-Continuing Services

6. **Non-Continuing Services: Determine the cost of services that are not expected to continue, regardless of participation in the SDP:** These services can include but are not limited to: initial person-centered planning services for transition into SDP, home modification, auto modification, durable medical equipment, or services that were included in the Baseline Amount but are no longer needed, regardless of participation in the SDP. Leave this table blank if this does not apply.

Service Description	Amount
Adaptive Skills Training Assessment (removed because assessments are a one-time service)	\$1,094.16
TOTAL	\$1,094.16

The sixth part in the Certification Tool is for Non-Continuing Services. Here's where we list services that will not be part of next year's budget. These can be expenses for a product that you will continue to use, like a ramp installed at home, or payment for a one-time service, like an assessment.

Sophia has received an assessment for adaptive skills training. With the assessment completed, she will now receive the training. So, the assessment will not be needed again.

Non-Continuing Amount =

Cost for services that will not repeat = \$1,094.16

Part 7: Continuing Services Outside of the Individual Budget

The seventh part of the Certification Tool is a table for Continuing Services Outside of the Individual Budget. Some specific continuing services are handled outside the individual budget and should not be included in the budget. These services are:

- Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Incentives
- Paid Internship Program (PIP) payments
- SSI/SSP restoration payments
- Insurance co-payments, deductibles, or co-insurance

7. Continuing Services Handled Outside of the Individual Budget: Determine the cost of services that are on-going but will be handled outside of the individual budget or the spending plan: These services are limited to: Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Incentives, Paid Internship Program (PIP) payments, SSI/SSP restoration payments, and costs for insurance co-payments, deductibles or co-insurance. If these items were included in the Baseline Amount, enter them here. Leave this table blank if this does not apply.

Service Description	Amount

Figure 7: Continuing Service Outside the Budget Table

Sophia does not have any services handled outside the budget. So the table for this category is empty.

Continuing Services Outside of the Individual Budget Amount
= Cost for services handled outside the budget = \$0

Part 8: Final Annual Individual Budget

The eighth part of the Certification Tool is the Final Annual Individual Budget Table.

8. **Calculate the annual individual budget:** This table pulls the subtotaled amount from #5 and subtracts the subtotal of the amounts in #6 and #7.

Subtotal in #5	\$35,263.76
Non-Continuing Services Total	\$1,094.16
Continuing Services Not a Part of the Individual Budget Total	\$0.00
SUBTOTAL	\$34,169.60
Self-Determination Annual Individual Budget	\$34,169.60

Figure 8: Annual Budget Calculation Table

To reach a final budget amount, we:

1. Copy the **Budget Subtotal** from Part 5.
2. Copy the amount for **Non-Continuing Services** from Part 6
3. Copy the amount for Continuing Services Outside the Individual Budget Total from Part 7.
4. Subtract the last two amounts from the Budget Subtotal.

For Sophia, we subtract Non-Continuing Services from the Budget Subtotal.

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Self-Determination Annual Individual Budget} = \\ &\quad \text{Budget Subtotal} - \text{Non-Continuing Services} \\ &\quad - \text{Continuing Services Outside of the Individual Budget Amount} = \\ &\quad \$35,263.76 - \$1,094.16 - \$0 = \$34,169.60 \end{aligned}$$

Part 9: Signatures

The ninth part of the Certification Tool is a space for all the signatures needed. Each party should sign and date the document.

This part is the same whether new services are added or not. To see what this page looks like, see [Jason's example of Part 9](#).

Part 10: Rights

The tenth part of the Certification Tool is a reminder that participants in the Self-Determination Program have the same rights as consumers who receive traditional services.

This part is the same whether new services are added or not. To see what this page looks like, see [Jason's example of Part 10](#).

6.8. What Happens Next?

After completing the Certification Tool with your Service Coordinator, you will:

1. Review your budget with your Service Coordinator
2. Sign the form to reflect Regional Center (RC) certification and participant review.
3. Create your Spending Plan after you submit a signed budget. The Spending plan shows how you will use the money in your budget for specific services and providers.

This is a good time to write down any notes or questions you may have about your budget. Talk about them with your Service Coordinator.



MODULE 7: SPENDING PLAN

After your budget is set, the next step is to decide what specific services to buy. With your Individual Budget, your Service Coordinator calculated your “funding limit.” This is the amount you can spend. Your Spending Plan will detail **how you will use your approved funds.**

This module explains how to choose services and how to pay for them following Self-Determination Program rules.

7.1. What is a Spending Plan?

The Spending Plan shows **how you will use your Individual Budget over the next 12 months.**

It includes:

- What services you will purchase
- Which budget category they belong to
- Who will provide them
- How often they will be provided
- How much they will cost

7.2. What are the requirements for the Spending Plan?

Your Spending Plan must align with your goals and the services approved in your Individual Program Plan (IPP) to meet those goals.

All services paid through the Spending Plan must:

- Be approved Self-Determination services
- Be provided by qualified providers
- Support choice, independence, and community inclusion
- Comply with Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Final Rule, also known as Community Inclusion Rule.
- Comply with the SDP Service Definitions set forth by DDS:

https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SDP_Service_Definitions.pdf

Services can be vendored or non-vendored. This means providers may or may not have a contract with the Regional Center.

7.3. How Are Services Funded?

The Regional Center uses public funds to pay for services and must follow the law to be responsible with those funds.

The Regional Center is a **payer of last resort**. By law (Lanterman Act), the Regional Center must use all available **generic resources** before paying for services.

This means that if a service is available in the community or can be paid for by insurance or a public agency (like Medi-Cal or a school district), you must use those resources first before asking for Regional Center funds.

This protects limited public funds so they remain available for services that no other system will cover.

What are Generic Resources?

Generic resources are services and programs available to anyone who qualifies for them, not just people with developmental disabilities. They have a legal responsibility to provide or pay for a service before the Regional Center can fund it.

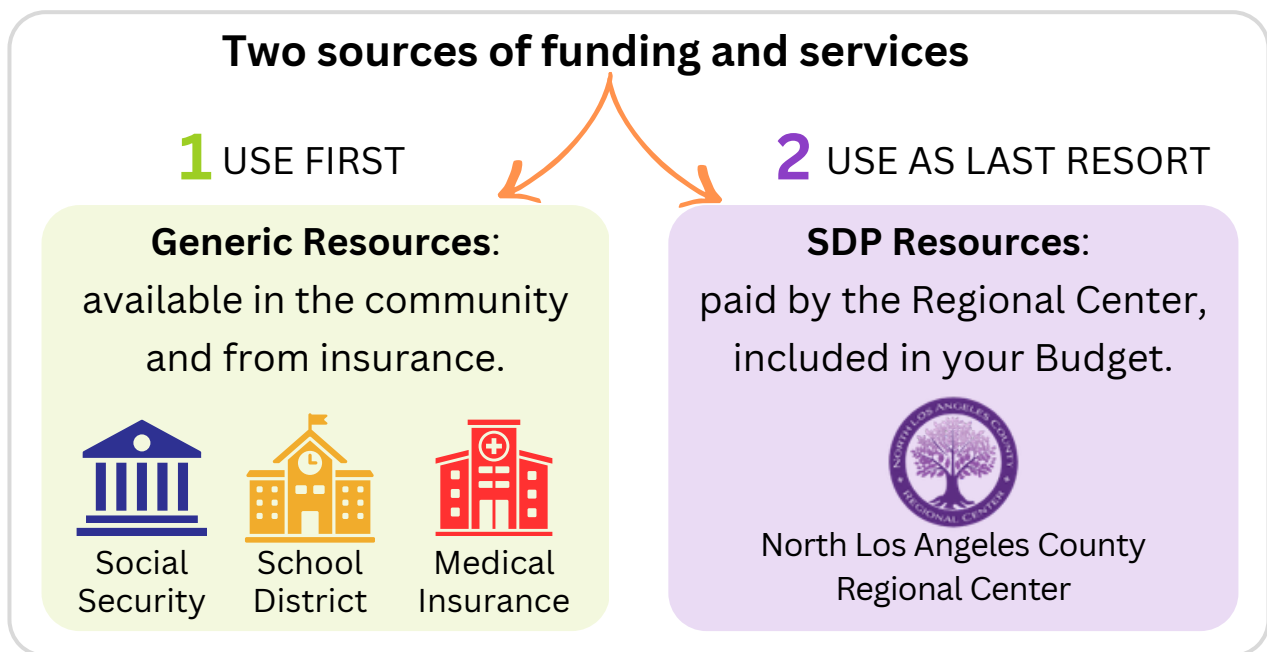
You must try to use generic resources first if they are available to you. This is the same requirement as for traditional services. These resources **help you save money** and make your SDP money last longer.

Examples of Generic Resources are:

- Medi-Cal or Medicare
- In-Home Support Services (IHSS)
- School programs
- Social Security or Department of Rehabilitation benefits
- Community supports (libraries, recreation centers, public transport)
- Private insurance

! Points to Consider

- You may need to apply for the service and show proof of denial of service. A generic resource denying the service does not necessarily mean the Regional Center will pay for the service.
- If a service is available but you choose not to use it, the Regional Center cannot fund it.
- In some situations, the Regional Center may temporarily fund a service while you are trying to get it through a generic resource. You must show proof that you are actively trying.



When can the Regional Center pay for services?

Sometimes, generic resources are not available, have a waiting list, or don't meet your needs. If that happens, you can request Regional Center help to pay for services. Remember:

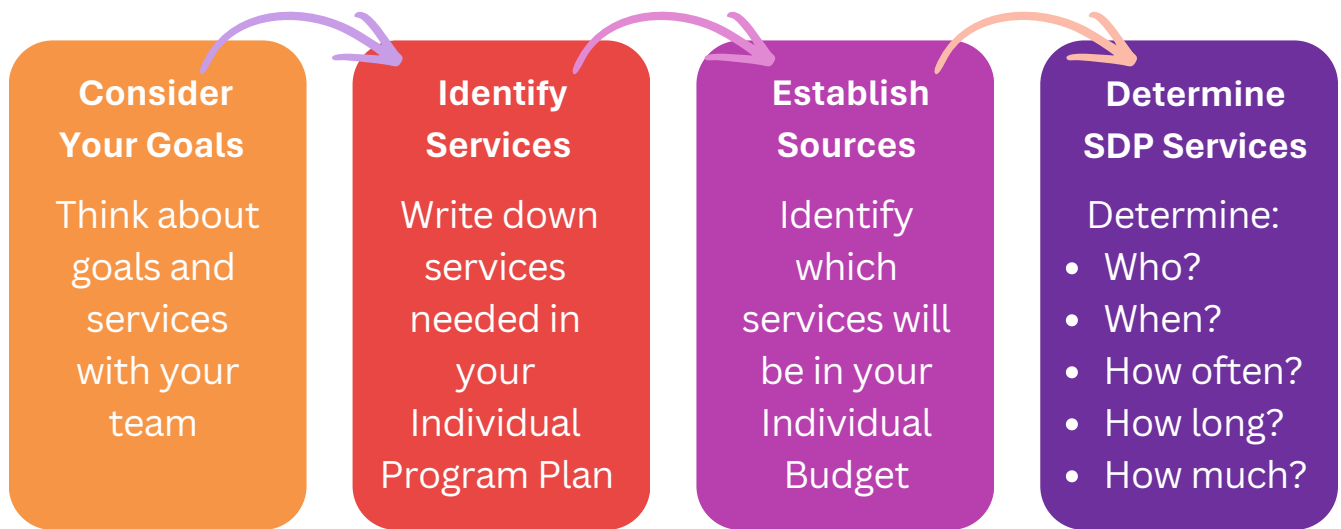
- The need must be related to a qualifying developmental disability.
- The service must be approved by the Regional Center.

7.4. Where Does the Spending Plan fit in?

Planning how you will spend your funds starts early in the process of the Self-Determination program:

1. First, you think and talk about your goals. You can create **Person Centered Plan** with support from people in your Circle of Support.
2. Second, you write goals down and identify services to support them in your **Individual Program Plan**.
3. Third, you and your team determine where services come from, and you create an **Individual Budget** for your SDP services.
4. Finally, you develop the **Spending Plan** to know exactly where your money goes.

Planning Sequence for your Spending Plan

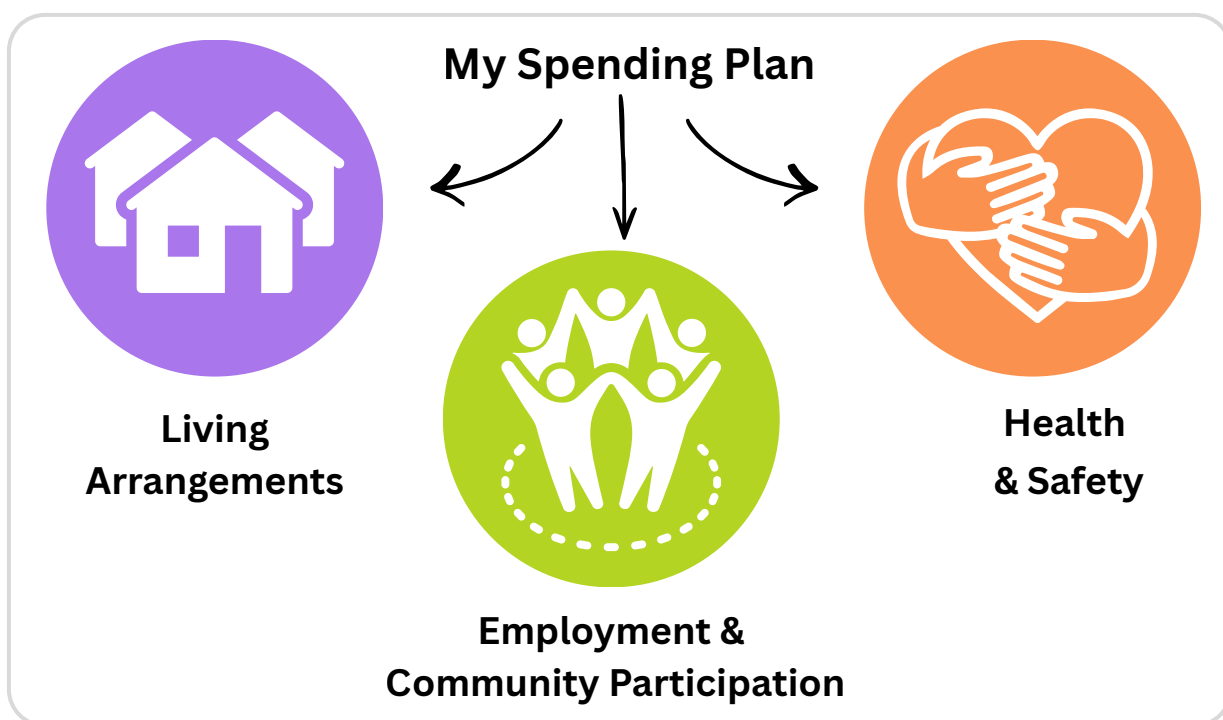


7.5. How do I Create the Spending Plan?

You are in charge of your Spending Plan. You decide how your money is used for approved services. But you do not have to create the plan alone. Your Service Coordinator and the SDP Specialist will help you look at services you can include in your Spending Plan. Only services listed in your IPP can be paid for in your Spending Plan.

You will work with your team to plan for services and complete the Provider Agreement Assessment for each service. You and your team will decide:

- What services support your needs?
- What category does each service fall under?
- Who will provide the services?
- How often will a service be provided?
- When will it start and end within the next 12 months?
- How much will it cost?



The Three Budget Categories

Every service in your Spending Plan must fit into one of three groups, called Spending Plan Categories or **Budget Categories**. These groups help organize your budget — they do not limit your choices, but they do help make sure funds are used correctly for:

1. Living Arrangements

These are supports in your home, for example:

- Respite
- Help learning home skills
- Housing supports
- Financial Management Service (FMS)

2. Employment & Community Participation

These are supports outside your home, for example:

- Job coaching
- Community activities
- Transportation
- Independent Facilitator support

3. Health & Safety

These are services that keep you healthy and safe, for example:

- Therapy
- Medical equipment
- Behavioral supports
- Home safety changes

SDP Service Codes by Budget Category

https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SDP_Service_Codes_02142019.pdf



Points to Consider

- Each service in your Spending Plan will be assigned a service code.
- Each service code belongs to one of these three Budget Categories

Can I Move Money Between Categories?

If needed, you can transfer money between categories. Always talk to your team first, but, in general, this is how it works:

All changes must be reviewed, approved, and documented in your IPP or an IPP amendment.

What If I Want to Hire My Own Staff?

You can hire people directly if you want.

Your Spending Plan must include:

- Pay Amount
- Taxes
- Benefits
- Insurance

You are not alone in this. **Your FMS can help** you figure out costs, follow labor laws, and pay workers correctly.

7.6. Template and Examples

In the following pages, you will find the Spending Plan template and examples of different budgets, services, and ways to use money.

There is no one right way to build a Spending Plan—it should fit your life and your needs.

Date Prepared		
Participant's Name		
Participant's UCI#		
SPENDING PLAN		

BUDGET CATEGORY	SERVICE	IPP GOALS	SERVICE CODE	FREQUENCY	AMOUNT
Living Arrangements					
TOTAL FOR LIVING ARRANGEMENT CATEGORY					\$0
Employment & Community Participation					
TOTAL FOR EMPLOYMENT & COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION CATEGORY					\$0
Health & Safety					
TOTAL FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY CATEGORY					\$0

TOTAL SPENDING PLAN AMOUNT		
Participant's Individual Budget Amount		
Parent/Legal Representative		Date
Service Coordinator		Date
Consumer Services Director		Date



Jason's Spending Plan

BUDGET CATEGORY	SERVICE	IPP Goals	SERVICE CODE	FREQUENCY	AMOUNT
Living Arrangement	Community Living Supports	Respite	320	Employee #1 5 hours per week for 52 weeks. \$25 per hour x 20% Employee Burden Rate = \$30 per hour	\$7,800
Living Arrangement	Financial Management Services (FMS)		316	Co-Employer Model @ \$600/month (7 services)	\$0
TOTAL FOR LIVING ARRANGEMENT CATEGORY					\$7,800
Employment & Community Participation	Community Integration Supports	Respite	331	ABC Martial Arts Studio Martial Arts Class 2x per week. \$150.00 per month for 12 months	\$1,800
Employment & Community Participation	Community Integration Supports	Respite	331	XYZ Theater Camp Musical Theater Camp \$1,000.00 for 8 weeks	\$1,000
Employment & Community Participation	Community Integration Supports	Respite	331	Art A-Z Agency Art Classes 1x per week \$125.00 per month for 12 months	\$1,500



Jason's Spending Plan Continued

Employment & Community Participation	Community Integration Supports	Respite	331	Dance 123 Agency Dance classes 1x per week \$180.00 per month	\$2,160
Employment & Community Participation	Independent Facilitator	Respite	340	Facilitate PCP, Finding services	\$1,000
TOTAL FOR EMPLOYMENT & COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION CATEGORY					\$7,460
Health & Safety					
Health & Safety					
TOTAL FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY CATEGORY					\$0

TOTAL SPENDING PLAN AMOUNT				\$15,260
Reserves:				\$229.60
Participant's Individual Budget Amount				\$15,489.60



Sophia's Spending Plan

BUDGET CATEGORY	SERVICE	IPP Goals	SERVICE CODE	FREQUENCY	AMOUNT
Living Arrangement	Respite Services Summer Camp	Respite	310	ABC Respite Agency 8 hours per week \$30 per hour for 52 weeks	\$12,480
Living Arrangement	Financial Management Services (FMS)		315	Bill Payer Model @ \$495/month (6 services)	\$0
TOTAL FOR LIVING ARRANGMENT CATEGORY					\$12,480
Employment & Community Participation	Community Integration Supports	Respite	331	XYZ Art Studio Art classes 1x per week \$100.00 per month for 12 months	\$1,200
Employment & Community Participation	Community Integration Supports	Personal Assistance	331	PA Agency 5 hours a week of staff support \$28.00 per hour for 52 weeks	\$7,280
Employment & Community Participation	Community Integration Supports	Adaptive Skills Training	331	XYZ Adaptive Skills Agency 10 hours per month \$85 per hour for 12 months	\$10,200
Employment & Community Participation	Community Integration Supports	Social Recreation	331	Martial Arts Studio Karate classes 2x per week for 52 weeks \$150.00 per month	\$1,800



Sophia's Spending Plan Continued

Employment & Community Participation	Independent Facilitator		340	Facilitate PCP, Access to IPP, IEP and Public Benefits Agencies	\$1,000
TOTAL FOR EMPLOYMENT & COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION CATEGORY					\$21,480

Health & Safety					
Health & Safety					
TOTAL FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY CATEGORY					0

TOTAL SPENDING PLAN AMOUNT				\$33,960
Reserves:				\$210.00
Participant's Individual Budget Amount				\$34,170



MODULE 8:

SAFETY AND RESPONSIBILITY

As we shared in Module 1, Self-Determination is having a choice about how you want to live. *Self* means you, and *determination* means control and responsibility. With self-determination you get to make decisions about your life and take responsibility for your choices.

In the next pages, we cover how to stay safe and healthy as you make your choices.

8.1. Safety and Responsibility

**Self-Determination
is**

FREEDOM.

**And, with freedom,
comes
responsibility!**

You have the **freedom** to:

- Make choices
- Set goals
- Decide who supports you
- Live the life you want

You are **responsible** for:

- Protecting yourself
- Managing risks
- Taking care of your health
- Speaking up if something is wrong



**Staying safe is part of
being in control
of your life.**

8.2. What Does “Staying Safe” Mean?

Staying safe means ensuring your wellness and protecting yourself from risks, abuse, and financial exploitation. You and your support team should:

- Learn what abuse looks like
- Know the warning signs
- Make a plan for what to do if something happens

Take Care of Your Wellness

Staying safe also means staying healthy. You can:

- Build a health support network: doctors, therapists, helpers
- Create a daily schedule that supports your wellness
- Plan social activities that keep you connected

Keep Healthy Relationships

Healthy relationships should make you feel safe, heard, respected, and supported. Part of staying safe is:

- Learning about consent and your right to say “no”
- Understanding that you have choices
- Asking for help when you need it

You can ask for support or education about consent, personal boundaries, and healthy relationships.



Make a Personal Safety Plan

Being prepared is an important part of safety. Work with your support team to:

- Identify people you trust
- Write down emergency phone numbers
- Plan what to do in unsafe situations
- Review your plan regularly

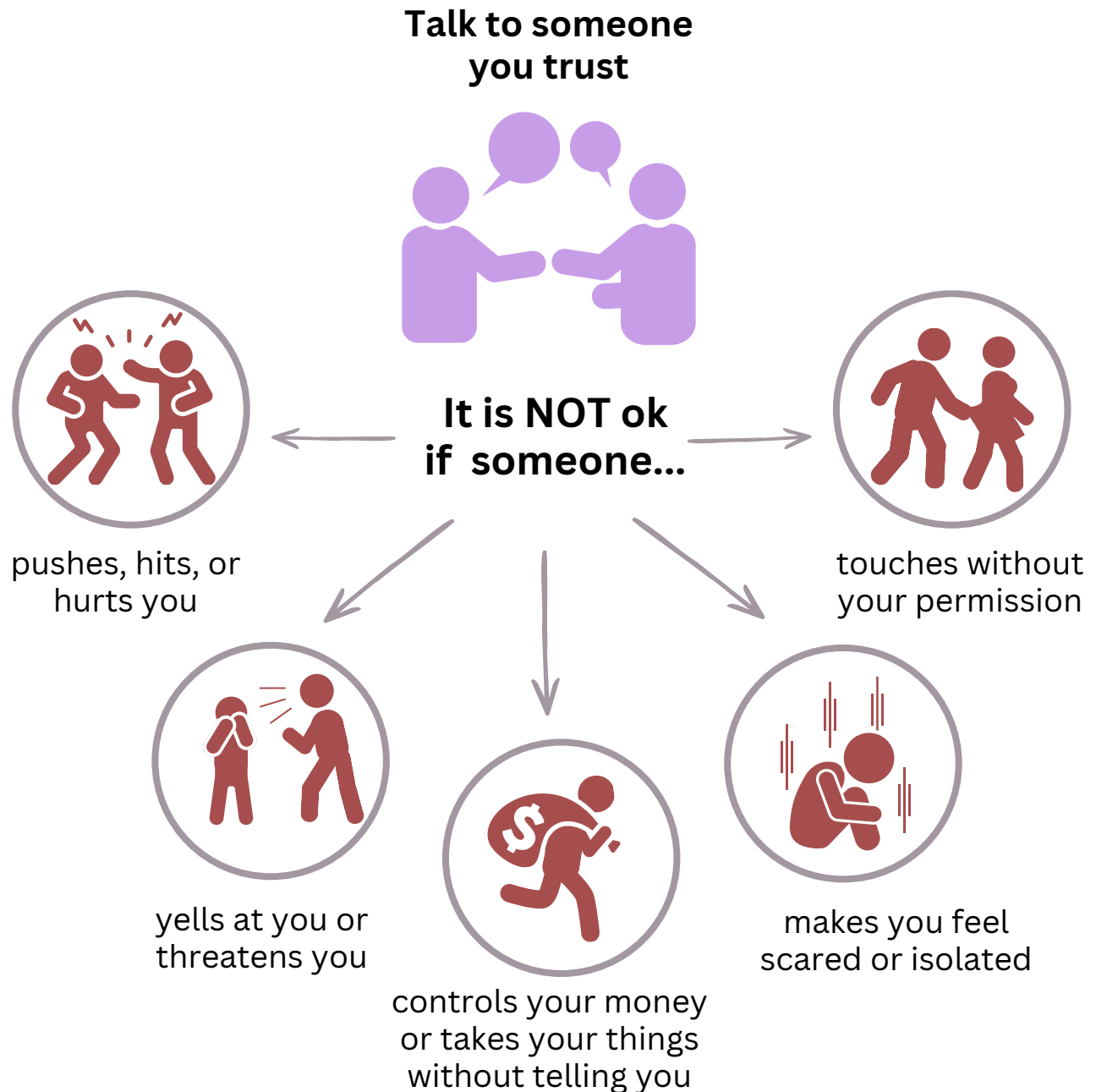
Types of Abuse

There are different kinds of abuse. Learn about them with your support team, so you can recognize them early and find help when needed.

Types of Abuse	Examples of what it can look like
Physical Abuse	• Hitting, slapping, pushing, grabbing • Causing injuries • Finding unexplained bruises or illnesses
Emotional Abuse	• Yelling • Insulting or putting you down • Saying hurtful things
Sexual Abuse	• Touching you without permission • Kissing or sexual contact without your consent
Neglect	• Not giving you food, clothing, or shelter • Not helping with medical or dental care • Ignoring your basic needs
Financial Abuse	• Using your credit card without permission • Hiding bank records from you • Not giving you money for food, rent, or medicine

Warning Signs

If it feels wrong, uncomfortable, or unsafe — it is NOT OK. Tell someone you trust so they can help you.



8.3. What To Do If Something Happens

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

Step 1: Get Away

If you are scared, uncomfortable, or being hurt, your goal is always to get to safety. Do what you need to do to get to safety. You can:



Make eye contact

NO!

Say “NO” loudly



Yell to get attention



Run or move away quickly



Call 911

As a last resort, you can use your elbow, heel, fist, or knee, or your wheelchair or cane to protect yourself.



Step 2: Tell Someone You Trust

If someone hurts you, scares you, or makes you uncomfortable, you can seek help. Tell someone you know, like:

- A family member or friend,
- Someone at school or at work,
- Your Service Coordinator or a medical professional.



Step 3: Report to the appropriate places

You can report abuse to:

- Adult protective services
- Child protective services
- Local law enforcement
- Your regional center





MODULE 9: NEXT STEPS

Now that you understand the key parts of the Self-Determination Program, the next step is to move through the enrollment process. Each step builds on the one before it and ensures your services are based on your goals and approved budget.

This module explains what happens after you decide to enroll and outlines each step required before you can begin using your Self-Determination funds.

9.1. Moving Forward with the Self-Determination Program

You have learned about the key parts of the Self-Determination Program (SDP). Now it's time to take action. Below is a step-by-step summary of the enrollment process so you know what to expect.

Enrolling in the Self-Determination Program happens in several steps. Breaking the process into phases helps you see where you are, what comes next, and how each step connects to your goals. Think of it as a roadmap from interest to enrollment.

Phase 1: Getting Ready

There are three steps in this phase:

SDP Orientation → Person-Centered Planning → Transition Supports
(Optional) (Optional)

Phase 2: Planning

There are two steps in this phase:

Individual Program Plan (IPP) → Budget Development

Phase 3: Setting Up Services

There are two steps in this phase:

Create Spending Plan for Final Approval → Choose FMS

In the next section, we will review each step and share a visual map of the process.

9.2. Enrollment Process

Once you decide to participate in the Self-Determination Program, there are specific steps you must complete before services can begin.

These steps help ensure your budget, services, and supports align with your Individual Program Plan and your personal goals.

Once you get final approval, you can begin using your Self-Determination budget for services!

1. Attend SDP Orientation

You must attend two mandatory orientation sessions to learn about:

- Your rights and responsibilities
- The rules of the program
- How budgets and services work

The SDP Orientation is offered in two parts. Each session is two hours long, and participants must complete both Part A and Part B before beginning the SDP transition process.

2. Complete Person-Centered Plan (Optional)

You may choose to participate in a person-centered planning process.

This is optional but recommended.

Although optional, this step often makes the rest of the process smoother and more meaningful.

3. Pre-Enrollment Transition Supports (Optional)

Up to 40 hours of support with an Independent Facilitator (IF) before enrolling in SDP. This support helps you learn about the program, prepare for the transition, and make informed choices about your services and supports.

4. Develop Your Individual Program Plan (IPP)

Your IPP is created with your planning team. It outlines:

- Your goals
- The supports and services you need
- How those services will help you live the life you choose

5. Budget Development and Certification

Your regional center will:

- Calculate your individual budget draft
- Ask you to review and agree to the budget
- SDP Accounting will certify and collect signatures when approved

6. Develop Your Spending Plan and Obtain Final Approval

You and your team will:

- Decide how your budget will be used
- Make sure all services align with your IPP goals
- Submit the Spending Plan for review

7. Select Your Financial Management Service (FMS)

You will choose an FMS provider. The FMS does not decide your services — you do. The FMS helps you:

- Manage payments
- Track your Budget
- Onboard all staff and service providers
- Comply with employment and tax responsibilities

9.3. Before You Begin Services: A Quick Checklist

When all of these steps are complete, you are officially enrolled and ready to move forward:

- ✓ Completed SDP **orientation**
- ✓ **IPP** reflects your current goals
- ✓ **Budget** certified
- ✓ **Spending Plan** approved
- ✓ **FMS** selected and paperwork submitted
- ✓ All staff and providers **onboarded**

9.4. A Final Reminder

The Self-Determination Program is designed to give you choice and control. While there are required steps, you are at the center of every decision.

Take your time. Ask questions. Build the team that supports your vision.

You are not just enrolling in a program — you are designing how your supports work for you.

Thank You!

Contact us at: selfdetermination@nlacrc.org

Hiring Toolkit

This toolkit will help you choose the right people and services to support you.

STEP 1: What Support Am I Hiring For?

What type of support do I need?

- ☐ Independent Facilitator
- ☐ Personal Assistant / Direct Support Staff
- ☐ Community-Based Service Provider
- ☐ Agency That Provides Staff
- ☐ Financial Management Service (FMS)
- ☐ Other: _____

What is most important to me in this support?

STEP 2: Interview Questions

You do not have to ask every question. Pick the ones that matter to you.

For Independent Facilitators

Name of person: _____

- ☐ What do you know about the Self-Determination Program?
- ☐ Have you helped someone create a Person-Centered Plan before?
- ☐ How many people have you worked with?
- ☐ What is your style when helping people plan?
- ☐ How do you prepare for meetings?
- ☐ Do you know resources in my community?

STEP 2: Interview Questions continued

For Individual Staff (People I Hire Directly)

Name of person: _____

Service you want: _____

Experience and Skills

- ☐ What experience do you have providing this service?
- ☐ What training or certification do you have?
- ☐ Have you worked in a person-centered way before?
- ☐ How would you learn about what is important to me?
- ☐ Are you willing to complete a background check (if required)?

Availability

- ☐ Are you willing to follow my preferences?
- ☐ Are you willing to attend team meetings?
- ☐ What days/times are you available?
- ☐ When can you start?
- ☐ Does the pay rate work for you?

STEP 2: Interview Questions continued

For Agencies That Provide Staff

Name of agency: _____

Services you want: _____

Experience and Skills

- ☐ What experience does your agency have providing this service?
- ☐ Can you provide references?
- ☐ What qualifications and training do your staff have?
- ☐ Do all staff complete required background checks?
- ☐ If I want a different staff person, how does that work?
- ☐ How do you supervise your staff?
- ☐ How are concerns or complaints handled?

Availability

- ☐ How will I choose who works with me?
- ☐ How will you communicate with me and my team?
- ☐ What days/times can you provide staff?
- ☐ How do you handle backup staffing?
- ☐ When can services start?
- ☐ What are your rates and what do they include?

STEP 2: Interview Questions continued

For Financial Management Service (FMS)

FMS Name: _____

- ☐ What experience do you have with SDP?
- ☐ Which model do you offer? (Bill Payer / Sole Employer / Co-Employer)
- ☐ How will you help me with my Spending Plan?
- ☐ Will I receive monthly spending reports?
- ☐ How do you handle payroll and timesheets?
- ☐ How will you tell me if I am overspending?
- ☐ How do I contact you with questions?

STEP 3: Reference Check

Before hiring, call at least 2 references.

Person or Agency I want to hire: _____

Name of reference: _____

- ☐ How long have you known this person?
- ☐ What type of work did they do?
- ☐ Were they reliable and on time?
- ☐ How did they handle feedback?
- ☐ How did they handle challenges?
- ☐ How did they interact with the person they supported?
- ☐ Would you hire them again?
- ☐ Is there anything else I should know?

STEP 4: Background Check

Person or Agency I want to hire: _____

Does this person provide personal care (bathing, dressing, hygiene)?

- ☐ Yes → Background check is required
- ☐ No → Background check may still be requested

Important:

- Background checks must be done specifically for SDP
- The worker pays for the background check
- Work cannot begin until approved
- FMS provides the required forms

Status:

- ☐ Background check requested
- ☐ Background check approved

Date approved: _____

Notes:

STEP 5: Before They Start Working

Person or agency I want to hire: _____

Make sure you:

- ☐ Agreed on pay and schedule
- ☐ Signed a Service Provider Agreement
- ☐ Completed Community Inclusion Form
- ☐ Completed FMS paperwork
- ☐ Received background check clearance (if required)

Start Date: _____

Final Decision

Why I chose this provider:

How I will know this support is working well:
