

Qualitative Evaluation of Self Direction in Massachusetts

OVERVIEW OF THREE YEARS OF
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

VALERIE BRADLEY

YOSHI KARDELL

HUMAN SERVICES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

DECEMBER 7, 2022



Overview



In late 2021, the Department of Developmental Services contracted with Human Services Research Institute to:

1. Conduct a qualitative analysis of the PDP and AWC programs building on the 3-year evaluation that HSRI conducted previously
2. Analyze current assessments and budget allocations
3. Develop a budget allocation process

Tasks

1. Complete a document review of materials relevant to PDP and AWC
2. Conduct key informant interviews
3. Categorize information into common themes that could be used to inform recommendations for enhancements to self-direction



Documents Reviewed

1. Support Broker Toolbox
2. Agency with Choice Program Service Implementation
3. Home & Community Based Services, Adult Intellectual Disability Waiver Programs Guide
4. Participant-Directed Program Allocation Methodology
5. Community-Based Day Supports Assessment Tool (and supplemental materials)
6. Appendix J, Participant-Directed Program Non-Waiver Service Description and Guidance for Brokers
7. Participant Directed Program Fact Sheet
8. Material and informational videos found at: [DDS Self-Directed Services](#) | [Mass.gov](#)

Over 50 Interviews

Regional DDS
Directors

Self-direction
Coordinators

AWC providers

DDS central
office staff

Support brokers

Family members

Members of the
Self-Directions
Advisory Board

Self-advocates
and area office
staff



Themes

1. Learning about self-direction
2. Choosing self-direction
3. Managing self-direction
4. Getting support to navigate self-direction
5. Developing the budget
6. Clarifying what is allowable



Recommendations: Dissemination

1. Provide guide for individuals and families
2. Ensure there is an accessible venue for self-direction materials
3. Create partnerships with family support centers and autism support centers
4. Develop a support broker guide
5. Prepare materials for transition age coordination
6. Carry out outreach to minority participants



Recommendations: Equitable, Transparent and Streamlined Policies

1. Consolidate service codes
2. Move to an a la carte menu
3. Create budget transparency
4. Create menu transparency



Recommendations: Enhanced Infrastructure

1. Provide support for people self-directing
2. Focus on natural supports
3. Clarify roles of support brokers versus service coordinators
4. Build a bridge between DESE and adult self-direction
5. Increase waiver reimbursement
6. Lobby for a dedicated funding stream
7. Resolve Agency with Choice Issues



Recommendations: Staff Recruitment

1. Assist families to identify a network
2. Generate PPL list of staff
3. Clarify respective roles of support brokers versus service coordinators
4. Build a bridge between DESE and adult self-direction
5. Develop On-line employment packages for staff hired by participants
6. Examine the precedent of paying parents



Recommendations: Sustainability

1. Consider issues facing aging caregivers
2. Support learning communities
3. Consult with participants

Going Forward



What Is In Progress?



- Drafting a guide for individuals and families
- Expanding support broker training opportunities
- Consolidating service codes
- Identifying, through the PPL system, staff who may have availability to work for self-directing participants
- Contracting to provide *Rewarding Work* as a resource to help individuals and families find staff



What Happens Next?

Identify assessment tool and complete procurement process

Pilot new assessment with existing participants

Develop a support needs framework and budget process

Seek stakeholder feedback

Develop plan for implementation



Stay Tuned