



# Independent Facilitator Info Session

September 2026

# WHAT IS AN INDEPENDENT FACILITATOR?

## Definition

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- As defined in the [Real Lives Law](#) , the “Independent Facilitator’ is a person selected and directed by the participant to assist in the development and execution of a person-centered plan and to assist the participant in making informed decisions about the participant’s choices regarding self-determination including, but not limited to, the short and long term planning goals and vision development for self-determination and the transition to self-determination.”

## Definition Cont.

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- The Independent Facilitator (IF) is available to those who are in the Participant Directed Program (PDP)
- The IF cannot provide any services, supports or goods to the participant under the participant's individual support plan and cannot be employed by a person providing services, supports or goods to the participant.
- This is an optional service that people can use to:
  - help them get started in the PDP,
  - provide ongoing or intermittent support, or
  - provide linguistic and culturally competent support in understanding or managing their self-directed services and funding

## Definition Cont.

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- Independent Facilitators can provide both in person and virtual services based on the participant's preferences however the majority of self-directed services should be provided in person
- Independent Facilitators should be a neutral party who is focused on the participant's needs and goals

## Independent Facilitator Tasks

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- Assist participants or those in the EOR role, learn and perform employer related functions as independently as possible. To do this, the Independent Facilitators may aid the participant or EOR in skill development so that they are able to develop a plan for designing and maintaining meaningful supports.
- Help the participant with person centered planning including identifying unpaid natural supports and community networks to complement their DDS funded services.
- Assist the participant in preparing for the discussion with DDS about their ISP vision, including assistance with identifying short and long term goals.

## Independent Facilitator Tasks Cont.

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- Support the participant/EOR in communications and meetings with DDS and others.
- Educate and support participant/EOR in prioritizing expenses
- Help the participant/EOR understand the roles and responsibilities of DDS staff (support broker & regional self-direction manager) and how/when to access them.
- Provide guidance, education, and support to develop effective recruiting techniques so that the participant/EOR can perform these tasks as successfully as possible.

# QUALIFICATIONS

## DDS Qualifications

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- Must be 18+ years old
- Successful completion of DDS training curriculum
  - The required training is a self-paced online training
- Successful completion of a Commission for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities (CPPD) abuser registry check, CORI, and National Background Check
- The IF **cannot be the parent or guardian** of or reside in the same home as the person for whom they are providing IF services

## Preferred Qualifications

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- These qualifications should be considered and reviewed by the participant or employer
  - Understand and demonstrate how they will foster self-advocacy skill building
  - Be familiar with the community and resources in which the participant is connected
  - Strong organizational skills
  - Model strong problem-solving skills
  - Demonstrate strong communication skills including the ability to communicate in the participant's preferred language
  - Have experience with or connection to people with an intellectual/developmental disability

# BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

## Budget Considerations

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- IFs will be Independent Contractors and they will receive a 1099 in January to file with their taxes.
- The IF's rate will be negotiated with the participant prior to beginning work
  - DDS has set an hourly rate range of \$30-\$200 for this service
- Funds from the participant's budget will be used to pay for IF services and must be prioritized within their current budget
  - DDS will not increase a participant's budget to support the use of IF services as stated in the Real Lives Law

# HOW DO I FIND AN INDEPENDENT FACILITATOR?

## Finding an Independent Facilitator

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- DDS will maintain a list of qualified Independent Facilitators
  - The list will be posted on our [website](#) or a public facing SharePoint site
  - Participants will be able to choose an Independent Facilitator from the list of qualified provider
  - If you have someone who is not on the list, they can be referred to the training that is required by emailing [DDS\\_Self-Directed\\_Services@mass.gov](mailto:DDS_Self-Directed_Services@mass.gov). Once they complete the training, they can be added to the list of qualified IFs.

# QUESTIONS