



People On The Go Waiver Feedback
10-27-2014

People on the Go has reviewed all of the feedback that has been submitted by our partners on the Developmental Disabilities Coalition, and we agree with everything that has been stated. We feel that all of the additions recommended would be appropriate for the waiver and recommend that DDA work to integrate them as part of the waiver as quickly as possible. People on the Go's recommendations will primarily center on the areas of advocacy and self-direction.

Self-Directed Services:

Recommendation 1: The DDA support broker training must be revised and should include a more detailed level of instruction with particular emphasis on how to do budget modifications, plan modifications along with how to create a person centered plan. It should be noted that POG is aware that DDA wishes service coordinators to take over the writing of the plan and budget. However, we feel that all members of the team should at least have a working knowledge of how this is done in order to better support the person receiving the services.

Recommendation 2: With regard to parents who are acting as support brokers for their children, DDA should create a separate workshop series for them. This is not to exclude parents from the overall support broker trainings however the current support broker trainings often get overwhelmed with questions from parents about specific issues. This is why a separate training series should be offered with the guidance of the DDA self-directed advocate.

Recommendation 3: DDA should make clear to new persons on the waiver who wish to self-direct that they do not have to have a provider agency in order to access most supports and services. Much of the language that has been suggested for the waiver is often times provider focused and this could leave one with the mistaken impression that they have to use a community based provider in order to self-direct their services.

Transportation:

Recommendation 4: It is a common practice for Medicaid to use the least expensive alternative when providing funding for services such as transportation. The simple fact is that with services such as MTA Para-transit because it is a shared ride service many persons with disabilities who wish to work are often hindered in their work because of Mobility scheduling and other issues such as late pickups and drop-offs as well as excessive travel time due to poor planning. Funding for transportation should be assessed on a case by case basis with the following criteria; When the person needs to be at their place of employment or other activity, when the person needs to leave the place of employment or other activity as well as the level of assistance a person may need with navigating to the place of employment or other activity. Parking is a growing issue for those who are self-directing in the community and receive supports in order to maintain their quality of life. DDA should strongly consider adding in a line item for parking reimbursement so that staff can be reimbursed for the cost of parking. As an example, staff that work for individuals located at Virginia Towers in Towson MD are now forced to pay for parking as all guest parking was removed. Over the course of a year a single staff member would be required to pay roughly \$500+ just to park. Considering the resources that staff who work for people who are self-directing have, this becomes a significant financial hardship for them. The simple fact is less and less places in the community offer free or inexpensive parking. We at POG do not want to see this issue reach the level to where potential staff would be deterred from working due to the costs involved.

In conclusion, we at People on the Go of Maryland wish to see greater emphasis on the self-directed aspects of the waiver. These aspects should even be highlighted for those who are not currently choosing the self-directed option, they may choose to self-direct in the future.