

An Introduction to Brokerage Services

Transitioning into Adult Services

Presented by:

Self Determination Resources Inc (SDRI)
Independence Northwest
Mentor Oregon Brokerage

The Birth of Brokerage Services in Oregon

Brokerages are the result of a class action suit against the State of Oregon in 2000. It is commonly known as The Staley Settlement. The settlement was a response to a lawsuit filed on behalf of five Oregonians with developmental disabilities who were eligible for services, but were not receiving them in a timely manner. They had been on the “waitlist” for services for years.

What Is A Brokerage?

- A Brokerage is a private organization created to help people identify their support needs and assist them (through use of natural resources and individualized budgets) with meeting their goals.
- Brokerages are regional and currently there are eleven brokerages in Oregon and three of those Brokerages serve Washington County.

The Philosophy of Self-Determination

- Self-Determination is not a type of service, but a way of thinking.
- Four Basic Principles
 - Freedom
 - Authority
 - Autonomy
 - Responsibility

Eligibility for Adult Services

- Mental Retardation Diagnosis (Cognitive Disability)
 - Must have documented evidence of mental retardation before the age of 18.
- Developmental Disability
 - Must have documented evidence of developmental disability before the age of 22.

Application for DD Service

- The individual needs to apply for DD (Developmental Disabilities) services with their local county DD office.
- Determination of eligibility is established through their county of residence.
- Once deemed eligible, the individual is assigned a Case Manager.
- The Case Manager is responsible for referring the individual to the Brokerage.

County Contacts

Multnomah County

503.988.3658

Clackamas County

503.655.8558

Washington County

503.846.5760

The Personal Agent

- Once enrolled in a Brokerage, the individual will be assigned a Personal Agent.
- The individual ALWAYS has the ability to choose their Personal Agent as well as the Brokerage who will serve them.

The Personal Agent

- The PA is responsible for assisting the individual to identify their goals and support needs.
- The PA assists the individual to create a plan to meet these goals and needs, known as an Individual Support Plan (ISP).
- The PA assists the individual to gather both paid and natural resources that will best assist the individual to meet the goals of the plan.

The Personal Agent

- Carry a caseload of up to 45 individuals.
- Advocate for the individuals on their caseload.
- Coordinate supports between various agencies, including counties, provider agencies, and community-based resources.
- Provide fiscal intermediary supports and monitor spending of plan dollars.
- Maintain records and files for each individual on their caseload.

Individual Support Plan (ISP)

- The individual, working with their PA and other members of their support circle, develops a written plan based on their personal needs and goals.
- Plans are fluid, and can be revised at any time. They are renewed at least annually.
- Once the plan is completed, it is submitted to the County DD program for their review and authorization. This is a QA mechanism to ensure proper usage of Medicaid and State tax dollars.

The ISP: Natural Supports

- Natural supports are always outlined in the Brokerage ISP.
- Natural supports *must* be identified and used prior to spending any plan dollars.
- “Natural supports” can include state and federal agencies, Vocational Rehab (VR), the Blind Commission, Independent Living Resources, and the school districts, among others.
- Natural supports can also be the supports provided by a family member, friend, neighbor, church, community center, etc.

The ISP: Funding

For Brokerage plans, money is not given directly to the individual. Instead, each person is entitled to a certain benefit level that can be used to create a service budget and to purchase needed services. The Brokerages are responsible for ensuring payment for services rendered.

How Benefit Levels Are Determined

An individual's benefit level is determined based on:

- Medicaid Status
- Level of Support Need

Benefit Levels

General Fund Only

All funds for this group are taken from State of Oregon General Fund tax dollars.

Everyone who is eligible for a Brokerage service is eligible for the General Fund benefit level.

Benefit Levels

Base Benefit

40% of these funds are from Oregon General Fund tax dollars; 60% of these funds come from federal matching Medicaid dollars.

Benefit Levels

- For individuals with extensive support needs, an assessment known as “Base Plus” is completed by Brokerage management.
- Individuals with extensive support needs in the areas of personal care, behavioral supports, mobility and caregiver capacity may receive a higher level of funding (depending on the level of need identified in the assessment).

Limits on Use of Public Funds

- The choice cannot do harm or be illegal
- The choice must be available to all
- The choice must not be devaluing
- The choice cannot *require* congregation of people with disabilities
- The choice cannot supplant an existing natural resource.

Non-Allowable Expenditures

- Brokerage services are a social benefit and may only be used to purchase services related to someone's disability.
- A good rule of thumb is to ask – would a person *without* a disability have to purchase this item? If the answer is yes, then it may not be an allowable expenditure. You can always ask Brokerage staff for clarification.

Non-Allowable Expenditures

- Some items Brokerage dollars cannot pay for:
(note: this list is not all-inclusive)
 - Mental Health Supports or Therapy of any type
 - Medications
 - Food, Shelter, Clothing
 - Admission Fees
 - Tutoring
 - Services that are wholly recreational (must have a support element)
 - Moving expenses

Support and Fiscal Conservation

When support must be purchased, people will get what they need, pay only for what they get, make real investments, spend money more efficiently and make adjustments when they are needed. To find the best quality for the most reasonable price, people are free to purchase in and out of the system.

Types of Services Available

- Community Inclusion Supports
- Community Living Supports (Skills Training)
- Respite Care
- Non-Medical Transportation

Types of Services Available

- Chore Services
- Environmental Adaptations
- Personal Emergency Response Systems
- Supported Employment Services (once Vocational Rehabilitation resources have been utilized)

Types of Services Available

- If an individual's private insurance, Medicare or OHP resource has been exhausted, Brokerage dollars may also purchase:
 - Physical Therapy
 - Speech and Language Therapy
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Medical Equipment and Supplies
 - Specialized Diet
 - Specialized Supports (Behavioral, Social/Sexual, Nursing)

Providers

In the brokerage system, the paid services and supports are not performed by the personal agent, but rather from a group of independent support service providers. The Personal Agent acts as a liaison between the provider and the individual.

Types of Providers

- A “qualified” provider is defined as someone who:
 - Must be at least eighteen years of age
 - Must be legally allowed to work in the US
 - Must have the skills necessary to help the customer meet his/her goals
 - Must be a Mandatory Abuse Reporter
 - Must be able to pass a Criminal History Check through DHS
 - Cannot be on the debarred status list with the Center for Medicaid Services

Types of Providers

- Domestic Employee
- Independent Contractor
- Provider Organization
- General Business

IEP and ISP Interface

- When an individual is transitioning from high school, often they are referred before they have completed their transition program.
- When this is the case, the Personal Agent can become a member of the IEP team, creating a smooth transition between services.

IEP and ISP Interface – PA Roles

- Advocate for the individual during the IEP meeting.
- Assist the individual and their family navigate such systems as SSI, Medicaid, food stamps, public housing, VR and One Stops, etc.
- Facilitate Person-Centered Planning (PCP) on behalf of the individual.
- Ensure continuation of supports after the transition period ends.

ISP and IEP Interface – PA Roles

- Often, especially in the case of new referrals to the brokerage, the PA will talk to the IEP team to gather more information about the individual.
- Overall, the PA's participation in the IEP process allows for a more total picture of supports to be developed.

ISP and IEP Interface – PA Limits

- The Brokerage ISP cannot supplant any services for which the individual is receiving *or is eligible to receive* through the IEP or school services. This could include transportation supports, job development or coaching (except to work with VR), communication services, etc.

Communication!

- **Please note** – Customers are referred by the County to the Brokerage. By interacting with the individual's Case Manager, school staff can ensure timely enrollment into the Brokerage. Brokerages do not control when an individual is referred to them. While it is an expectation that an individual enroll in Brokerage services several months before they transition out of school, this is not always the case. The key is communication between schools, the individual, their support circle and the County Case Manager.

Resources for More Information

Independence Northwest Brokerage

(Serving Multnomah, Washington & Clackamas Counties)

– Erin Graff – Assistant Director

503.546-2950 X 11

Resources for More Information

Mentor Oregon Brokerage Services

(Serving Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas Counties)

– Nathan Deeks, Lead Personal Agent

– Jennifer Gulzow, Personal Agent

503.258.2440

Resources for More Information

Self Determination Resources, Inc

(Serving Washington County)

-Dan Peccia- Executive Director

503-292-7142

Resources for More Information

www.independencenw.org

www.sdri-pdx.org

www.oregon.gov

www.disabilitycompass.org

www.orpti.org IEP partners