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Common Misconceptions about Self-Direction

Currently, recipients of the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW), Children's Choice Waiver and Residential Options Waiver have the option of receiving services through a provider agency or through Self-Direction. The self-directed option gives you the most control over your supports, but also more responsibility. A number of misconceptions exist about Self-Direction. It is important to be aware of these misconceptions and know the facts.

MISCONCEPTION #1: THERE IS A WAITING LIST FOR SELF-DIRECTION AND/OR NO SELF-DIRECTION "SLOTS" ARE AVAILABLE. According to Mark Thomas, Assistant Secretary of the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD), there is not a waiting list for Self-Direction and opportunities for Self-Direction are available. OCDD is currently processing individuals statewide for Self-Direction. The Human Services Districts/Authorities are completing plan-of-care revisions in the order in which the application for Self-Direction is received. Individuals interested in Self-Direction should contact their Support Coordinator to begin the enrollment process.

MISCONCEPTION #2: SELF-DIRECTION IS TOO DIFFICULT. Many who self-direct have stated that the initial process of getting enrolled in Self-Direction is tedious because of the required paper work and the lack of knowledge of some professionals in the service system to assist you. However, they also say once enrolled, Self-Direction is not difficult and the benefits far outweigh any inconvenience experienced getting enrolled.

MISCONCEPTION #3: INDIVIDUALS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS CAN'T SELF-DIRECT. With the help of family or friends, people with significant developmental disabilities are able to use self-directed supports to live the life they choose.

MISCONCEPTION #4: IF I SELF-DIRECT, I'LL HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING MYSELF. You don't have to do everything yourself. An authorized representative, such as a family member, may make decisions on your behalf. Your Support Coordinator will provide you with ongoing support and assistance and a fiscal agent will process payroll for your employees and make the tax withholdings and deposits on your behalf.

On the fence about Self-Direction? A great way to learn about self-direction is from those who are actually doing it. Reach out to a self-advocate or family who is self-directing for guidance. If you don't know anyone, your local Families Helping Families Center may be able to help identify someone. If you are ready to enroll, contact your Support Coordinator.