

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**

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December 21, 2018

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: INDEPENDENT FACILITATORS

Participants in the Self-Determination Program (SDP) may choose someone who helps them implement their program. That person is called an independent facilitator. The purpose of this correspondence is to describe the roles and requirements for paid independent facilitators in the SDP.

**Roles of an Independent Facilitator**

Independent facilitators, as defined in Welfare & Institutions (W&I) Code §4685.8(c)(2) (see enclosure), are people who are selected and directed by the participant and who are able to provide assistance in the following ways:

- Assisting the individual with making informed decisions regarding their individual budget;
- Locating, accessing and coordinating services and supports consistent with the participant's Individual Program Plan (IPP);
- Identifying immediate and long-term needs and developing options to meet those needs;
- Leading, participating, and/or advocating on behalf of participants in the person-centered planning process and development of the IPP; and,
- Obtaining identified services and supports.

**Requirements of Paid Independent Facilitator(s)**

An individual who serves as an independent facilitator is required to receive training, at his or her own cost, in:

- The principles of self-determination;
- The person-centered planning process; and,
- The other responsibilities described above under "Roles of an Independent Facilitator".

**"Building Partnerships, Supporting Choices"**

Participants and their financial management service providers will verify that the prospective independent facilitator has met the training requirements, outlined above.

The following individuals may not act as paid independent facilitators:

- A person who is providing other services to the participant pursuant to his or her IPP;
- A person employed by a person/agency providing services to the participant;
- The parent of a minor participant; or,
- The spouse of a participant.

### **Selecting an Independent Facilitator**

If an SDP participant chooses to hire one or more independent facilitators, the costs for those services are negotiated between the independent facilitator and the participant, and are paid from the participant's individual budget. Participants decide what services they need from a facilitator and may choose to have more than one facilitator that fulfill different roles. The individual's budget shall not be increased to cover the cost of the independent facilitator(s).

If a participant chooses not to hire an independent facilitator, the participant may use his or her regional center service coordinator to provide the services identified under "Roles of an Independent Facilitator".

Participants should choose an independent facilitator with whom they feel comfortable, and one who understands their needs and knows their community. Although certification of independent facilitators is not required, some training providers may issue a certificate or something similar to those who complete training. This may help participants in verifying the extent of training received by the facilitator. Sample interview questions provided during SDP orientation may be used by participants to help in choosing an independent facilitator.

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If there are any questions regarding this information, please contact [sdp@dds.ca.gov](mailto:sdp@dds.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

*Original signed by:*

JIM KNIGHT  
Assistant Deputy Director  
Community Services Division

Enclosure

cc: Regional Center Administrators  
Regional Center Chief Counselors  
Regional Center Community Services Directors  
Association of Regional Center Agencies  
State Council on Developmental Disabilities

## **Enclosure**

### **Independent Facilitator from Welfare & Institutions (W&I) Code**

§4685.8(c)(2) “Independent facilitator” means a person selected and directed by the participant who is not otherwise providing services to the participant pursuant to his or her IPP, and is not employed by a person providing services to the participant. The independent facilitator may assist the participant in making informed decisions about the individual budget, and in locating, accessing, and coordinating services and supports consistent with the participant’s IPP. He or she is available to assist in identifying immediate and long-term needs, developing options to meet those needs, leading, participating, or advocating on behalf of the participant in the person-centered planning process and development of the IPP, and obtaining identified services and supports. The cost of the independent facilitator, if any, shall be paid by the participant out of his or her individual budget. An independent facilitator shall receive training in the principles of self-determination, the person-centered planning process, and the other responsibilities described in this paragraph at his or her own cost.

§4685.8(d)(3)(F) The participant may utilize the services of an independent facilitator of his or her own choosing for the purpose of providing services and functions as described in paragraph (2) of subdivision (c). If the participant elects not to use an independent facilitator, he or she may use his or her regional center service coordinator to provide the services and functions described in paragraph (2) of subdivision (c).