

Self-Determination and Self-Directed Supports

Although the terms self-determination and self-directed supports are often used interchangeably, they are actually two distinct concepts.

Self-Determination, being the broader of the two concepts, is based on five principles:

- **Freedom:** Individuals will live a meaningful life in the community and make choices about their lives.
- **Authority:** Individuals will have meaningful control over a set amount of dollars that can be used to build the supports they need by purchasing only what is needed and paying for what is received.
- **Support:** Individuals will have support to organize resources in ways that are life enhancing and assist them in reaching their dreams and goals. Individuals have a circle of supports made up of family, friends, and both paid and unpaid supports.
- **Responsibility:** Individuals assume responsibility for giving back to their community, for seeking employment, and for developing unique gifts and talents.
- **Confirmation:** Individuals are recognized for who they are and what they can contribute, having a leadership role in developing policies that affect their lives and helping others reach success.

Self-Directed Supports (SDS) is an option for service delivery for individuals with developmental disabilities who wish to exercise more choice, control and authority over their supports. SDS is founded on the principles of Self-Determination. Under this option, the individual or their designated representative has employment and budget authority. This authority allows individuals and families to hire, train and schedule their own employees, utilizing an individualized budget. Currently there are 1,753 people employed in this program.

