

2015 Achievement Awards Virginia Association of Counties

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2015.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Locality: Fairfax County, Virginia

Program Title: Self-Directed Services - Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB)

Program Category: Customer Service

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Tisha Deeghan

Title: Executive Director, CSB

Signature: 

Fairfax County Government

Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board

Self-Directed Services

for Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

THE PROBLEM, CHALLENGE, OR SITUATION

The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) facilitates the provision of center and community based day support and employment services to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disability in Fairfax County and the Cities of Fairfax and Falls-Church. In Fiscal Year 2014 (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015), 1,284 individuals received day support (developmental), sheltered employment, group supported employment, or individual supported employment services¹ from eighteen not for profit organizations under contract to provide these services, and the CSB's two directly operated services, the Cooperative Employment Program and the Self-Directed Services program.

Forty eight percent (48%) of the individuals served in Fiscal Year 2014 had a Medicaid Waiver which funds these services. Fairfax County allocates funding each

See Appendix 1

year to enable the CSB to purchase or provide day support and employment services for individuals who do not have a Medicaid Waiver. This includes students graduating from Fairfax County Public Schools special education programs and adults in the community who wish to receive these services. Individuals receiving day support or employment services are likely to need these services for many years. As such, funding to support the day support and employment program has been increasing yearly as new service recipients enter the system.

The Fairfax-Falls Church community has demonstrated strong support for day support and employment services. However, fluctuations in the Northern Virginia economy and county resources have prompted concerns about the ability to increase funding every year for these services. As a result, there have been numerous studies, proposals, and cost avoidance/cost savings strategies enacted over the past few years to maintain service availability for existing and new service recipients. There are waiting lists for certain specialized services which necessitates entry into services which are not preferable to the individual with a disability or his/her family. This has been the case for many years.

The trends likely to affect the day support and employment services system locally in Fairfax County and state-wide include:

- Decrease in number and variety of community based employment opportunities.
- Aging of the service population requires more individualized services.

- Limited resources for day support and employment services necessitate less expensive service alternatives.
- Employment First, a national trend, is the first option presented to individuals seeking services. It is a more costly service option.
- There is declining utilization of sheltered employment services. The national trend is towards eliminating this service. Two out of four service providers in Fairfax County have already ceased providing these services.
- Medicaid Waiver redesign in Virginia could result in the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services redefined services, rates, and eligibility although the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, under which the CSB's state performance contract falls, is not changing service definitions, thus creating conflicting service definitions.
- Flat funding is anticipated both locally and state-wide.
- The closure of the Northern Virginia Training Center, by March 31, 2016, will place a burden on the community to establish and fund additional services for a population with increased medical, physical, and behavioral needs.

THE INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

In 2003, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, in response to reports addressing current and future day support and employment services needs of students with intellectual disability graduating from the Fairfax County Public School System, commissioned a study to recommend efficiency strategies for Fairfax County [then] Mental Retardation Services. The consultant's report, released in January 2005, recommended **"creating infrastructure for development of a new consumer-centered service option in which consumers/families select precise services with full knowledge of an individualized, capped budget."**

A collaboration of staff from the Community Services Board, the Offices of the Fairfax County Executive and Attorney, the Fairfax County Departments of Administration for Human Services, Purchasing and Supply Management, and Management and Budget, and with feedback from the community through focus groups and other communication means, **the Self-Directed Services Program (SDS) was created**, making it possible to offer families an opportunity to identify and purchase services which benefit and are most meaningful to their family member with an intellectual/developmental disability and to provide cost avoidance opportunities for Fairfax County. Guidelines adopted by the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services for the Consumer Directed Services portion of the Virginia Home and Community Based Medicaid Waiver were used as a template for the SDS program.

Introduction

SDS was added to the CSB menu of day support and employment services for individuals with intellectual disability in July 2007. Since the first five families began receiving services eight years ago, and through June 1, 2015, a total of sixty nine families and their family members with an intellectual/developmental disability (service recipients), have benefitted from the SDS philosophy **“to enhance individualized service plan’s to better meet the needs and preferences of the service recipient, build upon the natural supports of the service recipient and community, and reorient service use and expenditures toward the services each family and service recipient prioritizes.”**

As shared by one family in a SDS Program Evaluation:

“The SDS funding has allowed the flexibility and opportunity for our daughter to fully participate in activities in the community that are more meaningful and most importantly; her choice. We thank you for this choice.”

Partnership

SDS program growth and success, including the number of program participants and the diversity of services, is directly attributable to the partnership and communication between the family, the service recipient, CSB Support Coordinator, and SDS program staff.

The **family**, with input from the **service recipient** and his/her **CSB support coordinator** and Interdisciplinary Team, determines service needs, sets a service schedule, records and documents services, pays for services, submits service documentation, requests funds periodically, and abides by all requirements of SDS Service Agreement. As a result, SDS:

- Increase and expand individualized service options and plans
- Bring greater service management to the family and service recipient.
- Allow greater flexibility in scheduling and receiving services, and
- Offer service choices within the service recipient's home community.

The **CSB Support Coordinator** assists the service recipient and the family to identify and monitor service needs and the extent to which the family and service recipient are satisfied with the service they receive.

SDS program staff manage the administrative aspects of day to day service delivery. This includes, but is not limited to, identifying the amount of funding available, the timeline and process by which funds are disbursed, the person in each family to whom the funds are disbursed, how the funds are being used, and reconciling individual financial accounts. SDS program staff work within existing CSB fiscal policies and procedures to monitor the contractual and financial aspects of the SDS program.

Services

SDS funds are used by families to primarily purchase training, support, and supervision services. Training, support, and supervision services can include, but not be limited to:

- Functional self-help and daily living skills development
- Community integration and awareness skills development
- Safety skills development
- Work and work environment skills development
- Social/interpersonal skills development
- Educational activities and classes
- Travel training
- Participation in community based recreational, work, or volunteer activities.
- Referral to specialized services (which are not provided as part of SD services)

Self-Directed Services funding is not available for service activities that are fundable by another source.

SDS funds can also be used, at the discretion of the family, to pay for costs incurred by the direct service provider while providing services. Such costs can include, but not be limited to, mileage reimbursement, other forms of transportation, and activity admissions.

The SDS Participant Handbook², developed with feedback from families, assists families in understanding service operations and participant requirements.

Process

1. An eligible family expresses interest in the SDS program to the support coordinator assigned to the service recipient. If the service recipient does not have a named support coordinator, interest in SDS is expressed to the SDS program manager who then requests a support coordinator be assigned to the service recipient.
2. The support coordinator assists the family and service recipient in developing a list of desired services and notifies the SDS program manager of those services. SDS program staff are not responsible for determining or validating the individual's service needs, only authorizing and monitoring funding, documentation, and contract compliance.
3. Working with the SDS program staff, the support coordinator develops and submits a request for funding to the CSB employment manager.
4. If funding is available, the SDS program manager develops the SDS service agreement. The completed agreement is submitted to the CSB executive director for final authorization. All agreements are issued for a term of one year (12 months). Agreement renewal is based on continued documentation of individual service needs and the availability of county funding.

See Appendix 2

5. Services are provided to the service recipient.
6. The support coordinator monitors the continuing appropriateness of, and satisfaction with, services. Adjustments can be made to services and/or funding as appropriate.
7. SDS program staff work directly with the family to monitor the financial aspects of the agreement process (disbursement, documentation, utilization, and availability of funds). Adjustments are made to services and/or funding as appropriate.
8. The overall SDS program and process is evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Service Eligibility

SDS are available to individuals with intellectual/developmental disability who:

- Meet CSB service eligibility requirements
- Currently receives or will be authorized to receive local (Fairfax County)/non-Medicaid Waiver funding for day support or employment services.

Program Management and Funding Authorization

SDS is part of the CSB's Employment Services service area. SDS day to day operations are managed by a program manager (.75 full time staff equivalent) and an SDS specialist (.25 full time staff equivalent) who are directly accountable to the employment services manager and the employment services director.

Funding for SDS is part of the CSB's Employment Services budget, which requires allocation each year by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Requests for SDS funding are submitted to the employment services manager. If funding is available, the SDS program manager develops the service agreement. The completed agreement is submitted to the CSB executive director for final authorization. All agreements are issued for a term of one year (12 months). Agreement renewal is based on continued documentation of individual service need and the availability of county funding.

The funding mechanism for SDS is different from traditional day support or employment services (where the contracted service provider bills and receives funds directly from the CSB). With SDS, the CSB enters into SDS service agreements directly with families and provides funds for families to purchase services which are most beneficial and meaningful to the service recipient. The funds available to families are 80% of the funding amount that would be required if an individual with an intellectual/developmental disability received services from contracted service providers, resulting in a 20% cost avoidance per individual served. The rationale is that families provide financial support for their family member without expectation of compensation, have less overhead to raise costs for services, and can prioritize the services that are needed. Many families only use the funds they need each year even though they are not permitted to carry unused funds into the next fiscal year. It is not unusual that cost avoidance is higher than the initial 20%. In FY 2014, cost avoidance (the cost of SDS divided by the cost of traditional services) was 53%

Results

In Fiscal Year 2014, the SDS program budget was \$241,922 and cost avoidance to the county was \$212,790. Since its implementation in July 2007, cumulative cost avoidance to the county is \$493,871.³ Although Fiscal Year 2015 has not yet ended, it is anticipated that cost avoidance to the county, with 56 families receiving services, will be between \$300,000 and \$350,000. Funds realized through cost avoidance assist others, for whom funding might not be otherwise available, to receive day support and employment services.

In a recent survey of SDS participants, 100% of respondents (12) reported they are satisfied with SDS and that their families are better off as a result of SDS. Comments provided by survey respondents include:

- “The range of resources available because of SDS allows us to tailor a program for our disabled child that is better than anything we could have managed without the support of SDS.”
- “My special needs daughter is on a list a "mile long" for services from traditional sources. Self-directed services has been a god send.”
- “It is very helpful to have assistance in funding for our child's activities. The Staff has been most helpful and supportive. Thank you!”
- “Enables us to tailor program to meet our daughter's needs while receiving supports.”

See Appendix 3

- “It has been the only monetary benefit we have received from Fairfax County for our disabled adult.”
- “I am a single working mother of a 27 year old. Self-directed services are allowing my son to take night classes at NOVA with a companion whom otherwise I or the brother would not
- been able to take. Is also allowing my son to attend an amazing day program which he enjoys tremendously. Another GREAT thing is that some weekends my son goes with his job coach and do activities allowing a VERY, VERY tired mom to do some activities or just clean the house.”
- “My brother would not be able to attend his program which he loves, if it wasn't for this program's assistance! And [Staff] is wonderful to work with.”
- “WE have been able to design a program that has been in the best interests for my brother.”
- “Self-Directed Services provide a vehicle to meet the individual needs of my daughter with intellectual disabilities.”
- “Gives us flexibility to work with our disabled son.”

For the Future

With increasing numbers of families interested in the SDS program, plans for the future include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing awareness of Self-Directed Services through:
 - CSB Support Coordinators
 - Fairfax County Public Schools Employment Transition Representatives
 - The Arc of Northern Virginia
 - SD Services families
 - SD Services service providers
 - CSB communication channels
- Expanding capacity of existing SD Service providers
- Identifying new community based service providers.