

Words to Know for Board Members of a Disability Agency

Accommodations: How a place or an activity is changed to make sure that a person with a disability can participate fully. For example, a ramp on a building so a person who uses a wheelchair can enter, or a support person who reads written materials for a person who cannot read.

Agencies or Developmental Services Agencies: The service agencies that get funding from the State of Vermont to support people with developmental disabilities to live as independently as possible.

Applicant List: A list of people applying for services who are eligible based on their disability, but whose needs do not meet funding priorities. This is different from the Waiting List, which is a list of people kept by the agency who are eligible for services and for funding, but who are denied services because the agency did not have enough funds available.

Authorized Funding Limit or AFL: The amount of money set by the designated agency or specialized service agency that a person can use to pay for her or his supports. The AFL is based on the person's needs assessment and is reviewed every year.

Bylaws: A set of rules that are created by a board that tells the board members what their role is and how their organization and their meetings will be run.

Community Alternative Specialist or CAS: Someone who works for the Division of Developmental Service whose job is to help agencies improve their services. Each agency has a CAS assigned to them to be their contact person. Once a year, a team of CASs goes to each agency, visit people who get services and look at their services to see if the agency is doing a good job supporting them.

Case Manager or Services Coordinator: The individual who helps a person coordinate her or his services. This often involves checking in with the person, setting up meetings and appointments, doing paperwork, supervising and supporting the person's workers, and seeing that supports meet the person's needs.

Cash Flow: When there is enough money coming into an organization or agency to cover the bills and expenses that need to be paid. For example, enough money has been received to pay the staff and the electric bills.

Chairperson or President: The board or committee person chosen to lead the group and to run the meetings. When two people share the duties of being the chairperson, they are called the co-chairs.

Confidentiality: When something is not to be told to anyone outside of the group. Something that is confidential is considered private.

Designated Agency or DA: The agency responsible for making sure that needed developmental services are available in a specific area of the state.

People go to the DA to apply for services. The DA provides direct supports to people as well as makes referrals to other agencies.

Developmental Home or Shared Living Provider: People who share their home with someone who has a developmental disability and provide supports to that person. They are also called a home provider and are paid out of a person's Medicaid waiver.

Division or Division of Developmental Services or DDS: The State Division that oversees services and financial matters for the developmental service system throughout the state of Vermont. Their main office is in Waterbury.

Director of Developmental Services: The person who manages and directs an agency. They run the agency, hire staff, report to the Division of Developmental Services, and report information to the Board of Directors and the Standing Committee. The Board of Directors and Standing Committee are responsible to give advice in the hiring and evaluation of the Director.

Executive Session: Most board or committee meetings are open to anyone interested in coming to listen. However, if confidential issues need to be talked about then an Executive Session will be called during a meeting. These special meetings may be closed to the public and sometimes only certain Board members may be present. An example is when an issue needs to be discussed concerning an agency employee.

Equity Fund: Local funding committees can apply to this fund if they do not have enough money to meet the needs of a person in their area. This money usually comes from people who no longer need it because they have died, moved away, or left services.

Expenditures: The money that is spent to run an agency, organization or a group, such as a board or committee. Expenditures can be items such as staff salaries, phone bills or insurance.

Family Member: An individual who is related to a person with a disability by blood, marriage, civil union, or adoption. For example, a family member may be someone's birth or adoptive mother or father, sister or brother, husband or wife, grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin. Other people may be considered a family member depending on the situation.

Flexible Family Funding or FFF: These funds are available to families and individuals when the person lives at home with her or his family. The money can be used in many different ways, such as for respite or buying things the person or family needs.

Funding Committee: A group of people at the designated agency who decide if a person can receive funding for their services and how much. When a person first applies for supports, the Service Coordinator takes the person's needs assessment and other information to their local funding committee. This committee then makes a decision as to whether the person is eligible for funding and if there are funds available.

Funding Priorities: A list of situations set by the State System of Care Plan that a person must meet in order for the state to pay for supports. For example, when a person is at risk of being homeless or abused. If a person's needs meet a funding priority and there are funds available, she or he will be given funding for services. If there are no funds available, she or he will be put on a waiting list. If the person does not meet the funding priorities, but is eligible for services, she or he will be placed on an applicant list.

Guardian: An individual appointed by the court to supervise and protect the interests of another person who is found to not be able to make decisions on her or his own. A guardian may be a family member or friend. If there is no one who is able to be the private guardian, a public guardian is assigned. A public guardian is called a Guardianship Services Specialist and works for the Division of Developmental Services.

Intake: What a DA does when a person first applies for services. During the intake process, individuals are evaluated to see if they are eligible for services, learn about their rights, what their choices are, and participate in a needs assessment to see if they are eligible for funding.

Individual Support Agreement or ISA: An agreement between the person, the person's guardian (if there is one), and the agency that tells about the person's services and supports. Every person who receives Medicaid services must have an ISA. The ISA tells about how the person wishes to be supported, what will be different in the person's life because of

services, and what the person and the agency's responsibilities are. A person getting Flexible Family Funding does not need to have an ISA.

Individual Support Broker or ISB: An individual hired by a person or family member to help manage developmental services. The responsibilities of the ISB may include helping the person develop and follow a budget, take care of employer responsibilities, find back-up staff coverage and anything else that needs to be done to support the person.

Medicaid: A state administered program that is a type of insurance for people who have a low income and/or have a disability. Benefits include things like medical and hospital care, medical equipment and supplies, and community based supports and services.

Mentor: A mentor is someone with experience who helps another person who is learning a new skill. For example, an experienced board member can mentor a new board member to help learn about the agency and the responsibilities of being a board member.

Needs Assessment: An assessment done by the agency when a person first applies for developmental services to see if she or he is eligible to receive funding. The person and members of her or his circle of support take part in the assessment. Each year, before the ISA is updated, the person's needs are reviewed to see if there are any changes in support needs. If there are, the amount of the money the person can use to pay for services may increase or decrease.

New Caseload Funds: The funds put into the state budget by the legislature for people who are new to services or have received only very small amounts of funding. The funds are divided among designated agencies throughout the state and are given to people, as needed, by the local funding committees.

Per Diem: This word means “per day”. It means being reimbursed a set dollar amount for the time period of one day. For example, a person getting paid \$50/day to help present at a conference is getting paid a “per diem”.

Psychological evaluation: An evaluation performed by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist that evaluates a person’s current developmental status and needs. It is part of the intake process that helps the DA make a decision about whether a person is eligible for services.

Quorum: The smallest number of people who are on a board or committee who must be present at a meeting to take a vote. The board or committee decides the number of people in a quorum. For example, if there are 11 people on a committee and the bylaws say that six have to be present to take a vote, if there are six committee members present, there is a quorum and the group may vote.

Qualified Developmental Disability Professional or QDDP: A person who must meet state and federal requirement to oversee and approve specific developmental services. If a person meets these requirements they can perform other important services. For example, a QDDP must review and sign a person’s ISA each year.

Receivables: Money that is owed to the agency that makes up part of their budget. It may refer to monies that have not yet arrived at the agency, but that are expected soon.

Reimbursement: Money that is given to a person or organization to pay back expenses or something that had been allowed and paid for in advance. For example, a board member may be reimbursed by the board for the cost of gas to go to a meeting. Many boards and committees have policies that say what expenses they will cover for their board or committee members.

Respite Care: Short term or temporary care of a person with a developmental disability to provide relief for the caregiver.

Self-Advocate: A person with an intellectual disability who speaks up - alone or with others - for their rights, equality, and freedoms in our communities and around the world.

Self-Advocate Group: A civic organization run for and by people with intellectual disabilities. The purpose of self-advocate groups is to provide leadership experience, community involvement opportunities and to support the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in the community.

Secretary: A member of a board or committee who is responsible for taking notes at the meetings and making copies for other members. These notes are called the minutes of the meeting. The secretary may also be

responsible for keeping copies of the minutes and other important documents.

Self-Directed Services: All people who receive developmental services have the right to provide input into the services they receive. The amount an individual chooses to be involved in directing her or his services is up to the individual and varies from person to person. For example, a person may choose to be very involved with deciding where she or he is going to work as well as interviewing the workers who will be providing job support.

Self/family-Management: When an individual or a family member chooses to manage all of her or his services. This means that the person or family member has the responsibility of hiring workers and overseeing the funding and other parts of her or his supports. The person or family member may choose to hire an Independent Support Broker to help manage their affairs.

Shared-Management: When an individual or family member chooses to manage some, but not all, of her or his developmental services. For example, the agency may provide service coordination and home supports, but the person may choose to hire and oversee work supports separately.

Specialized Service Agency or SSA: An agency similar to a DA that provides supports to people with developmental disabilities. The SSA does not do intake but does take referrals from other agencies.

Supported employment: A program that supports a person with developmental disabilities to work in the community.

System of Care Plan: A statewide plan developed by the Division of Developmental Services every three years and updated every year. It describes what supports will be provided, who may be eligible for funding, how funds will be spent, and what programs need to be developed. To create this plan, the Division gathers information from people with disabilities, advocacy groups, family members, State and Local Standing Committees, caregivers and agencies. Each Designated Agency also develops a system of Care plan.

Treasurer: A member of the board or committee that puts together and reviews a report that shows the budget of the organization. Sometimes the Chief Financial Officer prepares this report. The person is responsible for sharing this information with other board or committee members.

Waiver or Home and Community Based Waiver: Funding that allows community services to be provided to people eligible for Medicaid who otherwise would be at risk of being in an institution.

Waiting List: A list of people kept by the agency who are eligible for services and for funding, but who are denied services because the agency did not have enough funds available. This is different from the Applicant List, which is a list of people applying for services who are eligible based on their disability, but whose needs do not meet the System of Care Plan funding priorities.

These definitions were adapted from:

Department of Developmental and Mental Health Services. (June, 2003). Administrative Rules on Agency Designation (Manual). Order Information: Division of Developmental Services. 103 S. Main St., Weeks Building, Waterbury, VT 05671, (802) 241-2614 or in Vermont only (888) 468-4860.

Department of Developmental and Mental Health Services. (January, 2000). You Can Get There from Here, Finding Your Way Through the Service System (Manual). Order Information: Division of Developmental Services. 103 S. Main St., Weeks Building, Waterbury, VT 05671, (802) 241-2614 or in Vermont only (888) 468-4860.

Gobel, S., and Flynn, J. (1994). Not Another Board Meeting! Guide to Building Inclusive Decision-Making Groups (Manual). Order Information: Oregon Developmental Disabilities, 540 24th Place, NE, Salem, Oregon, 97301-4517, (503) 945-9941.