



Building Your Support Team

A Guide to Finding, Hiring, and
Retaining the Right Support
Professional



How Boundless@Home Helps Support a Successful Working Relationship

Building a strong support team is about more than completing onboarding paperwork. Establishing clear expectations early can help create positive working relationships, reduce misunderstandings, and create a foundation for long-term success.

While individuals and families direct their services and play an active role in selecting and building their support team, Boundless@Home provides the administrative, employment, and financial management support that helps self-direction work. Boundless@Home processes payroll, manages employment documentation, supports onboarding, maintains required records, and assists with many of the behind-the-scenes responsibilities associated with employing staff.

As part of the self-direction process, Boundless@Home can help individuals and families communicate important information with support staff, including:

- Service expectations and authorized supports
- Scheduling needs and availability
- Roles and responsibilities
- Documentation requirements
- Timekeeping procedures
- Communication expectations
- Required training and onboarding requirements
- Administrative and employment-related processes
- Reporting requirements and compliance expectations
- Resources available to support staff throughout their employment

Boundless@Home also helps individuals and families understand employment-related topics before recruiting staff. This may include discussing available pay ranges, reviewing authorized services and budgets, explaining onboarding requirements, and helping ensure expectations are clearly communicated before services begin.



What Is Recruitment in Self-Direction?

One of the unique features of self-directed services is the opportunity for individuals and those who support them to participate in identifying and selecting support staff.

Unlike traditional staffing models where caregivers are assigned, self-direction allows individuals and families to help build a support team that reflects their preferences, schedules, goals, and support needs. Self-direction provides greater involvement in the hiring process while maintaining the oversight and safeguards required within Ohio's waiver system.

Why Participate in Recruitment?

Many individuals and families choose to participate in recruitment because they know their needs, preferences, and goals best.

Being involved in the process may help:

- Build a more consistent support team
- Find staff with compatible interests and communication styles
- Create greater flexibility in scheduling
- Support long-term relationships
- Increase stability in services

You don't have to do this alone. Boundless@Home can provide guidance throughout the recruitment, onboarding, and employment process while individuals and families remain in control of selecting their support team.

Self-Direction Is About Choice

Self-direction is not simply about finding staff. It is about creating a support team that helps individuals pursue greater independence, choice, community involvement, meaningful relationships, and personal goals.

What If Nobody Applies?

If recruitment is taking longer than expected:

- Expand where you're recruiting
- Consider schedule flexibility
- Discuss wage options with your Boundless@Home Case Manager
- Reach out to Boundless@Home for recruitment guidance
- Continue utilizing existing supports while recruiting
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Where Do People Find Potential Staff?

Individuals and families identify potential support staff in many different ways. Some people find support professionals through existing relationships, while others expand their search into their local community.

Potential recruitment sources may include:

- Personal networks, including friends, neighbors, coworkers, and acquaintances
- Friends or relatives who may qualify and be interested in providing support
- Community connections through faith communities, clubs, sports, or volunteer organizations
- Colleges, universities, career centers, and student job boards
- Educational programs related to healthcare, education, psychology, social work, or human services
- Local organizations and community groups
- Social media groups and community networking pages
- Online job boards and caregiver recruitment websites
- Word-of-mouth referrals from friends, family members, and other support professionals
- Connections made through community events, activities, or shared interests
- Former coworkers, classmates, or trusted individuals looking for flexible employment opportunities

Think Outside the Box

The best support professional is not always someone with previous disability services experience.

Many successful support professionals come from a variety of backgrounds, including:

- College students
- Retirees
- Teachers or education professionals
- Healthcare workers
- Coaches, mentors, or volunteers
- Friends of friends
- Individuals seeking meaningful part-time employment

Sometimes the strongest support relationships develop because of shared interests, compatible personalities, and a genuine desire to help someone achieve their goals.

Important: Boundless@Home does not endorse, recommend, or require the use of any specific recruitment platform, website, organization, or individual. Individuals and families are encouraged to use the approach that best fits their circumstances. While Boundless@Home can provide recruitment guidance and resources, individuals and families are actively involved in identifying potential support staff.



What Makes a Great DSP Match?

A successful support relationship involves much more than experience alone.

Individuals and families may consider:

Reliability and Dependability

Consistency is often one of the most important qualities in a support professional. Arriving on time, following through on commitments, and communicating when challenges arise helps build trust and stability.

Strong Communication Skills

A great DSP communicates clearly, listens well, asks questions when needed, and is comfortable discussing concerns or changes. Open communication helps prevent misunderstandings and supports a positive working relationship.

Patience and Flexibility

No two days are exactly alike. A successful DSP understands that support needs, schedules, and circumstances may change. The ability to adapt while maintaining a positive attitude can make a significant difference.

Respect for Individual Choice and Independence

The role of a DSP is to support the individual, not make decisions for them. Great DSPs respect personal preferences, encourage independence, and recognize that individuals have the right to make choices about their own lives.

Ability to Follow Directions and Routines

Many individuals benefit from consistent routines, schedules, and support strategies. A strong DSP is willing to learn what works best and provide supports in a way that reflects the individual's needs and preferences.

Willingness to Learn and Grow

No one starts with all the answers. Great DSPs are open to feedback, willing to learn new skills, and committed to continually improving the support they provide.

Shared Interests and Compatibility

Sometimes the best match comes from common interests, hobbies, communication styles, or personalities. A DSP who enjoys similar activities may find it easier to build meaningful connections and support community participation.

Availability that Matches Support Needs

Even the most qualified candidate may not be the best fit if their availability does not align with the individual's schedule. Discussing scheduling expectations early can help determine whether the relationship is likely to be successful.

A Genuine Interest in Helping Someone Achieve Their Goals

The strongest support relationships are often built with people who are interested in helping individuals work toward personal goals, develop new skills, participate in their communities, and live fulfilling lives.





Interview Questions to Ask

There is no one "right" way to interview a potential DSP. The goal is to learn whether someone is a good fit for the individual's support needs and preferences.

Consider asking:

Getting to Know the Applicant

- Tell me a little about yourself.
- What interested you in this position?
- What experience do you have supporting people with disabilities or other helping roles?

Reliability & Communication

- How do you handle unexpected changes to your schedule?
- What do you think makes someone a dependable employee?
- How would you communicate if you were running late or unable to work a scheduled shift?

Person-Centered Support

- What does supporting someone's independence mean to you?
- How would you support someone in making their own choices?
- How would you handle a situation where you disagreed with an individual's preferences?

Availability & Expectations

- What days and times are you available?
- Are there any scheduling limitations we should know about?
- Do you have reliable transportation if transportation is part of the position?

Scenario Questions

- How would you respond if plans changed unexpectedly?
- How would you help someone learn a new skill?
- What would you do if you were unsure how to handle a situation?



Red Flags to Watch For

While every situation is different, individuals and families may want to pay attention to potential warning signs such as:

- Repeatedly arriving late or missing meetings
- Difficulty communicating clearly
- Unreliable responses during the hiring process
- Lack of interest in learning about the individual's goals and preferences
- Speaking negatively about previous employers or individuals they supported
- Unwillingness to follow established routines, policies, or instructions
- Treating support as "doing things for" someone instead of helping them build independence
- Inconsistent information provided during the interview process

One concern may not necessarily mean someone is not a good fit, but patterns can be important to consider.

Remember: There Is No "Perfect" DSP

There is rarely a perfect candidate who meets every expectation. Instead of looking for someone who checks every box, focus on finding someone who:

- Respects the individual's choices and goals
- Communicates openly and honestly
- Demonstrates reliability
- Is willing to learn
- Values the relationship they are building

Often, qualities such as attitude, dependability, and compatibility are just as important as previous experience.

Remember

The first DSP you hire does not have to be your forever DSP. Finding the right match sometimes takes time.



Setting Expectations Early

Clear expectations help create positive working relationships from the start. Before services begin, consider discussing:

Schedule

- Typical workdays and hours
- Procedures for requesting time off
- How schedule changes will be communicated

Responsibilities

- Expected duties and supports
- Household expectations, if applicable
- Transportation responsibilities, if applicable

Communication

- Preferred methods of communication
- When to report concerns or changes
- Emergency contact procedures

Documentation

- Required service documentation
- Recording service time
- Any other required records

Supporting Success

- The individual's goals and priorities
- Preferred communication styles
- Important routines and preferences
- What a successful support relationship looks like

The more expectations are discussed upfront, the more likely everyone is to have a positive experience.

Tip: The best support relationships often start with open and honest conversations. Taking time to discuss expectations, preferences, and goals before services begin can help everyone feel more confident and prepared.

Building a Successful Working Relationship

- Open communication
- Consistent feedback
- Clear expectations
- Respectful problem-solving
- Celebrating successes





How Employment Works Through Boundless@Home

A common misconception is that individuals and families become the employer when participating in self-directed services. While individuals and families direct services and help identify support staff, Boundless@Home serves as both the employer of record and agency provider. This means individuals and families help select their support staff while Boundless@Home manages employment, payroll, training, and administrative requirements.

Support professionals hired through self-directed services become employees of I Am Boundless, Inc. Employees complete a hiring and onboarding process, receive required training, submit documentation and timesheets, are paid through Boundless@Home payroll, and receive a W-2 for tax purposes.

Once you identify someone who may be a good fit, simply refer them to Boundless@Home so we can begin the onboarding process. Our team will help guide the prospective employee through the required hiring steps, including employment paperwork, background checks, training requirements, and any other onboarding activities needed before services can begin. Throughout the process, we will keep you informed of their progress and let you know when all requirements have been completed and the employee is approved to begin working.

Unlike traditional staffing models, individuals and families help identify and select the people who support them. Support professionals are hired to work specifically with that individual and are not assigned to other homes by Boundless@Home.

Understanding Pay

Available pay rates may vary based on waiver authorizations, approved services, budget allocations, and other funding considerations. Before recruiting potential staff, individuals and families are encouraged to discuss available pay options with their Boundless@Home Case Manager to better understand the wage ranges available within their specific situation.

Individuals and families who are considering self-directed services with Boundless@Home, but are not yet enrolled in the program, may contact us at pdpadmin@iamboundless.org to learn more about self-direction, recruitment, and potential wage ranges.





How a DSP Opportunity Might Be Described

When recruiting support staff, many individuals and families choose to create a simple posting that outlines the responsibilities of the role and the qualities they are looking for in a support professional. The example below demonstrates one approach.

Keeping Everyone Safe

When posting online, avoid sharing personal or identifying information. General information is usually best. Consider using broad location information (for example, "near the Columbus area" rather than a specific address) and avoid sharing details that could identify the individual receiving services.

Responsibilities may include:

- Supporting someone as they pursue their goals, interests, and independence
- Attending community events, activities, and outings together
- Assisting with daily routines and skill development
- Providing transportation to approved activities or appointments, if applicable
- Encouraging new experiences, confidence, and personal growth
- Offering companionship, encouragement, and positive support
- Respecting individual choices, preferences, and routines
- Completing required documentation and maintaining communication with the support team

Who Might Be a Great Fit?

We're looking for someone who is:

- Reliable and dependable
- Patient, flexible, and willing to learn
- Respectful of individual choice and independence
- A strong communicator and active listener
- Encouraging, positive, and supportive
- Comfortable building meaningful relationships
- Interested in helping someone achieve their goals
- Open to learning new skills and receiving feedback
- Able to follow routines, expectations, and support plans
- Available during the times support is needed (list out days and hours you are looking for)

Include contact information:

- Your phone number (indicate whether you prefer calls or text messages)
- Your email address if you would like to communicate by email or request a resume
- Consider requesting references and contacting individuals who can speak to the applicant's reliability, communication skills, and work experience



Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need experience hiring employees?

No. Many individuals and families participating in self-directed services have never hired support staff before. Boundless@Home provides guidance and support throughout the recruitment, onboarding, and employment process.

Can I choose someone I already know?

Many individuals and families recruit people they already know and trust, such as friends, relatives, neighbors, coworkers, or community connections. In some situations, parents, guardians, or other family members may also be eligible to provide paid services, depending on waiver requirements and service authorizations.

How do support professionals get paid?

Support professionals are paid through Boundless@Home payroll and receive a W-2 for tax purposes. Employees complete required hiring, onboarding, and training requirements before providing services.

Do support professionals receive benefits?

Because support professionals are employees of I Am Boundless, Inc., they may be eligible for employee benefits depending on their position and hours worked. Information about available benefits and eligibility requirements is shared during the hiring and onboarding process.

How do I determine what pay I can offer?

Available pay rates vary based on waiver authorizations, approved services, budget allocations, and other funding considerations. Current Boundless@Home individuals and families should contact their Boundless@Home Case Manager to discuss available wage options within their specific situation. For individuals and families exploring services with Boundless@Home, our team can help explain available wage options based on the individual's authorized services and budget.





Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

What if a support professional is not a good fit?

Not every match will be the right long-term fit, and that's okay. Open communication and clear expectations can often help address concerns before they become larger issues. If a change is needed, individuals and families can continue recruiting and identifying potential support staff.

Boundless@Home is here to support individuals, families, and employees throughout the process. In some situations, a support professional who is not the best fit for one individual may be a great fit for another opportunity within our self-directed services program. We can help navigate transitions and explore available options when appropriate.

What if a support professional leaves?

Staffing changes can happen. Individuals and families can recruit and identify new support staff while working with Boundless@Home through the onboarding and employment process.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

Current Boundless@Home individuals and families should contact their Boundless@Home Case Manager for assistance. If you are interested in learning more about self-directed services, recruitment, employment, or getting started with Boundless@Home, please contact:

Matthew Chapman

Boundless@Home Administrator

Call or Text: 614-391-2070

Email: mchapman@iamboundless.org

Building a support team takes time, but you don't have to navigate the process alone. Whether you're exploring self-direction for the first time or ready to begin recruiting support staff, Boundless@Home is here to help every step of the way.

