Self-Direction 101 Understanding Self-Directed Waiver Services

A simple guide to how self-directed services work in Ohio and how families can build a support team that fits their life.

A Boundless@Home Educational Resource

What Is Self-Direction?

Self-direction is a service delivery option available within several Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) waivers that allows individuals and families to take a more active role in how services are arranged and delivered.

Instead of relying only on traditional agency staffing models, individuals may participate in selecting the people who provide their supports and help shape how services are scheduled.

Many families choose self-direction because it can create greater flexibility, consistency with caregivers, and supports that better fit daily routines.

Self-directed services must still:

- Be authorized within the Individual Service Plan (ISP)
- Follow Ohio DODD waiver rules and service definitions
- Be approved and monitored by the County Board and SSA
- Be delivered by providers who meet DODD enrollment requirements

Self-direction provides greater choice while maintaining the safeguards and oversight required within Ohio's waiver system.

Benefits of Self-Direction

Self-direction allows individuals and families to build a support system that works best for their daily lives.

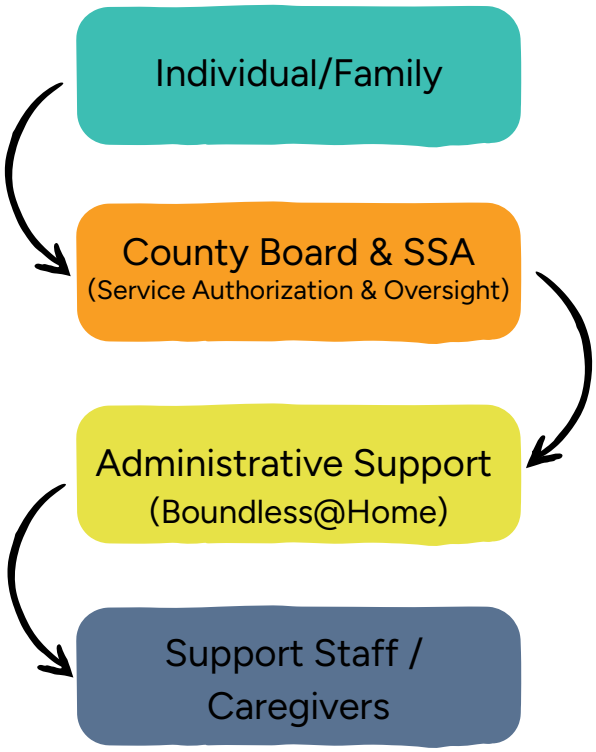
Benefits may include:

✓ Greater flexibility in scheduling supports
✓ Ability to build a consistent support team
✓ More involvement in choosing caregivers
✓ Supports that better fit everyday routines
✓ Greater stability in support relationships

How Self-Directed Services Work

Self-direction works through a partnership between several roles within the waiver system.

The Self-Direction Team



Each role helps ensure services are delivered in a way that supports individual choice while maintaining compliance with Ohio DODD waiver requirements.

Roles and Responsibilities

Individual / Family
The waiver participant and their support network help direct how services are delivered.

Responsibilities may include:

- Helping identify and select support staff
- Participating in scheduling services
- Communicating support needs and goals
- Providing feedback on service delivery

County Board & SSA

The County Board remains a central partner and provides oversight of waiver services.

Responsibilities include:

- Determining waiver eligibility
- Developing and authorizing the Individual Service Plan (ISP)
- Authorizing services and service levels
- Providing Service & Support Administration (SSA)
- Monitoring service delivery and compliance

Administrative Support & Financial Management Services

Organizations such as Boundless@Home provide the administrative and financial support that makes self-direction possible. These supports help families navigate payroll, documentation, and compliance requirements.

Responsibilities may include:

- Processing payroll for support staff
- Managing Medicaid billing
- Handling employment documentation and tax reporting
- Assisting with onboarding support staff
- Maintaining required financial records

When Self-Direction May Be a Good Fit

Self-direction may be a good option for individuals and families who want a more active role in building and coordinating their support team.

Self-direction may work well for individuals who:

- Want greater flexibility in scheduling supports
- Have identified a trusted caregiver
- Want more involvement in coordinating services
- Have experienced difficulty maintaining consistent staffing
- Prefer a more individualized support structure

The SSA and County Board can help determine whether self-direction is an appropriate option.

Common Misconceptions About Self-Direction

Misconception: *Families have to manage everything themselves.*

Reality: Families receive support from the County Board, SSA, Financial Management Services, and organizations like Boundless@Home.

Misconception: *Self-direction means families are on their own.*

Reality: Administrative partners help manage payroll, onboarding, and documentation.

Misconception: Self-direction removes oversight.

Reality: Services remain authorized through the ISP and monitored by the County Board.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can family members be paid caregivers?
Some relatives may be eligible depending on waiver rules and authorization.

Who pays the staff?
Support staff are paid through Medicaid waiver funding processed through Financial Management Services.

Do families have to recruit staff?
Families may help identify staff, and support organizations assist throughout the process
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Is self-direction more work for families?
Administrative tasks such as payroll and billing are handled by organizations like Boundless@Home.

What happens if a staff member leaves?
Families and support organizations work together to recruit and onboard new staff so services can continue

How Boundless@Home Supports Self-Direction

Boundless@Home partners with families and County Boards to helpimplement and manage the administrative components of self-directed waiver services.

Support may include:

- Guidance through the onboarding process
- Administrative coordination and documentation support
- Assistance implementing services
- Communication with County Boards
- Helping families maintain waiver compliance

Next Steps

Families interested in self-direction may consider:

- Talking with their Service & Support Administrator (SSA)
- Learning more about self-directed services
- Contacting Boundless@Home for guidance

Connect with Boundless@Home:

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This guide is intended as an educational resource and does not replace guidance from your County Board or Service & Support Administrator.