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DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Departmental Instruction 113 (TX) 20
FACILITATION OF ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS TO ENHANCE
COMMUNITY INCLUSION AND ENGAGEMENT

113-1 BACKGROUND

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) strives to ensure individuals and their families have access to helpful information about available services.

An Individual and Family Support Program (IFSP) was established at DBHDS initially through regulation in 2014 as a funding resource program to assist individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) and their family members to access resources, supports, services, and other assistance to enhance opportunities for community inclusion and engagement. (Item 315.V.3 of the 2012 Appropriation Act, 2012 Virginia General Assembly; *Operation of the Individual and Family Support Program*, 12 VAC 35-230.)

DBHDS coordinates multiple state and local efforts and collaborations with other agencies and organizations to help ensure access to the supports necessary to assist families and communities. Since adoption of the regulations, the scope of the program has expanded beyond the funding resource to include additional resource components, and state and regional program structure. Specifically, the IFSP has the following goals:

1. Ensuring that the IFSP-Funding serves individuals with DD and their family members by coordinating and blending resources to focus on the needs of the whole person, with emphasis on prioritizing those with the greatest needs and most at risk of institutionalization;
2. Creating a robust and holistic state-level family support program model that furthers the goal of continued residence of an individual with DD in his own home or the family home;
3. Enhancing the knowledge of individuals with DD, families, and community agencies about the IFSP through effective, coordinated, and comprehensive outreach; and
4. Administering a transparent and effective IFSP that seeks to incorporate the input of individuals with disabilities and their family members to ensure access to supports.

113-2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this departmental instruction (DI) is to outline the supportive policies within the IFSP. These policies relate to the administration of: Peer to Peer Mentoring, Family to Family Mentoring, Information and Referral, and the IFSP Community Coordination efforts. The community coordination efforts include the IFSP state and regional councils. DBHDS created a comprehensive and coordinated set of strategies to

help ensure that individuals with DD and their families have access to person-centered and family-centered resources, supports, services, and other assistance.

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DEFINITIONS

The following definitions will apply to this DI:

**DD HCBS
WAIVERS**

Medicaid 1915(c) Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers allow the state to fund certain community-based alternatives to institutional care. The term "waiver" comes from waiving the requirement that the individual must live in an institution in order to receive certain services reimbursed by Medicaid. Through the waivers, individuals may receive these services reimbursed by Medicaid while living in the community.

**DD WAIVER
WAITING LIST**

The names of all people statewide who requested a DD waiver and are deemed eligible for waiver services because they meet the diagnostic and functional (level of care) requirements, but for whom a waiver slot is not yet available.

**FAMILY TO
FAMILY
MENTORING
PROGRAM**

A program that matches trained “family navigators” with families of individuals with disabilities that are seeking guidance and support from others with life experience to make the best possible choices for their family member with a disability.

**FAMILY
NAVIGATORS**

Family members of individuals with disabilities who provide support, information, and discussion of service options with other families so those other families are able to make the best choices for their family member with a disability.

**IFSP
COMMUNITY
COORDINATION**

A planned strategy coordinated by the IFSP intended to facilitate an increase of resources available to individuals and their families in their home communities.

IFSP-FUNDING

Subject to the availability of funds, the IFSP-Funding available in accordance with 12 VAC 35-230 assists individuals on Virginia’s DD Waiver Waiting List and their families with accessing resources, supports, and services.

**IFSP REGIONAL
COUNCIL
LEADERSHIP
BOARD**

Regional council leadership boards are made up of volunteers who are usually people with disabilities or family members of people with disabilities. The leadership boards are responsible for leading IFSP regional councils in coordinating local activities and initiatives to increase the knowledge and capacity of local communities to serve the needs of people with DD and their families. Members of leadership boards are appointed by the commissioner.

IFSP REGIONAL COUNCILS	The five regional councils are volunteers who are usually people with disabilities or family members of people with disabilities. The councils are responsible for implementing local activities that help individuals and families obtain the additional supports needed to maintain community living.
IFSP STATE COUNCIL	This council is comprised of volunteers who are usually people with disabilities or family members of people with disabilities. It exists to advise DBHDS on the administration of the IFSP-Funding and to oversee the implementation of the State Plan. The council also provides general recommendations to DBHDS on its plan to increase family supports throughout the Commonwealth.
IFSP TARGET POPULATION	The IFSP serves: (i) individuals who, regardless of age, live in the Commonwealth of Virginia and have a DD; and (ii) their families. Certain aspects of the program specifically seek to support individuals on the DD Waiver Waiting List.
MY LIFE, MY COMMUNITY	This online website and operator-supported call center helps individuals with DD and their families by answering basic questions about services and supports. The website serves as the Division of Developmental Services' primary method to provide information to external stakeholders. The site offers a one-stop, searchable website with a variety of information including: <ul data-bbox="370 1037 1476 1297" style="list-style-type: none">• Virginia's waiver options for people with DD, including posting for the publication, <i>Navigating the Waiver</i>;• Assistance with finding community housing options;• Information about providers;• Connections to support networks of families and peers with DD across Virginia; and• Other related topics.
NAVIGATING THE WAIVERS	A publication that provides information to individuals with DD, their families, and other stakeholders on the DD Waivers in Virginia including service eligibility, access explanations, waiver descriptions, and available services.
PEER TO PEER PROGRAM	A mentoring program that connects individuals with DD with individuals who have lived experience and have received training. Peer mentors may provide guidance and advice as well as advocacy and alliance through life transitions.
REGIONAL COUNCIL	IFSP assists family support councils in five regions across Virginia. These volunteers help individuals live, work, and participate in recreation activities in their communities.

STATE PLAN

The strategic plan developed by DBHDS establishing the Commonwealth’s priorities for addressing the needs of individuals with DD who are awaiting waiver services, formally known as “*Virginia’s Individual and Family Support Program State Plan for Increasing Support for Virginians with Developmental Disabilities*” (State Plan).

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RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

DIVISION OF
DEVELOPMENTAL
SERVICES

The DBHDS Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Developmental Services is responsible for ensuring compliance with this DI. The DBHDS Director of Administrative Community Operations (ACO) is responsible for ongoing interpretation and monitoring of this DI.

The IFSP Manager shall:

- Ensure the functioning of the IFSP state and regional councils.
- Oversee all contract management activities necessary for the implementation of this DI including collaborative agreements and contracts with external organizations.
- Collaborate with the DBHDS Director of Provider Development and the Director of Waiver Operations to ensure:
 - The effective communication and dissemination of information on DD Waiver Program policies and procedures; and
 - That all family engagement activities are current and accessible to individuals with disabilities and their family members.
- Provide overall program vision, and maintenance of partnerships to implement, the State Plan.
- Collaborate with the DBHDS Director of Community Integration and Office of Integrated Health to ensure individuals leaving training centers, ICFs/IID, and nursing facilities:
 - Are referred, and have access, to family and peer mentoring supports; and
 - General information regarding community resources and assistance is made available at the time of transition.

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SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

IFSP FAMILY AND
PEER MENTORING

IFSP shall coordinate efforts to offer peer to peer and family to family supports to individuals with DD and their families.

MY LIFE, MY
COMMUNITY

IFSP shall arrange for information and referral via a web-based portal known as My Life, My Community. The portal shall provide accessible user friendly information on DD resources and services. Maintenance and management of the portal shall include an explanation of the direct services that are available and shall include a plan for documenting the number of people assisted.

**IFSP STATE
COUNCIL**

IFSP shall identify, recruit, and recommend for appointment individuals from across the Commonwealth to serve in a volunteer advisory capacity and assist DBHDS with updating and maintaining the State Plan. The state council will receive annual progress updates on the State Plan and shall provide input on the creation of ongoing outcomes and progress indicators.

**COMMUNICATION
PLAN**

IFSP shall support the Division of Developmental Services by developing strategies to communicate critical information about DD including program policies and procedures and general updates on services and supports to individuals, families, and other stakeholders. DBHDS will maintain communication contact lists, manage the dissemination of information, develop additional informational materials as needed, and coordinate information dissemination to individuals with DD, their families, other stakeholders, and the public.

**IFSP STATE PLAN
ANNUAL UPDATE**

IFSP shall develop an annual agency update on progress toward the measurable program outcomes delineated in the State Plan, including:

- The number of individuals who receive annual IFSP-Funding;
 - The number of individuals on the DD Waiver Waiting List who receive outreach materials;
 - Participant satisfaction with the IFSP-Funding program;
 - Status of the family and peer mentoring support programs; and
 - Utilization of information resources including My Life, My Community.
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PROCEDURES – CENTRAL OFFICE

The ACO shall ensure that procedures are developed to comply with this DI. Specifically, the procedures shall include:

- Processes and procedures to support the implementation of the State Plan and the state and regional council structure to build the local infrastructure to promote person-centered and family-centered resources, supports, services, and other assistance;
 - A process for providing family and peer mentoring to provide one on one support and information to individuals and families;
 - A process to establish criteria for identifying applicants most at risk for institutionalization; and
 - A process to maintain accessible, user-friendly information including information on eligibility for IFSP-Funding, case management, and other DD resources and services through a website and other mechanisms that shall be shared with individuals upon their placement on the DD Waiver Waiting List.
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REFERENCES

- [Item 315.V.3 of the 2012 Appropriation Act \(Chapter 3, Acts of Assembly, Virginia General Assembly\).](#)
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- [Operation of the Individual and Family Support Program, 12 VAC 35-230.](#)
 - DMAS regulation, Community Waiver Services for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities [under development, 12 VAC 30 - 122].
 - [United States of America v. Commonwealth of Virginia \(United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Case No. 3:12-cv-00059\).](#)
 - [https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/.](https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/)
 - [Joint Position Statement on Family Support by American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities \(AAIDD\) and The Arc of the United States.](#)
 - [Supporting Families: The National Community of Practice.](#)
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Alison G. Land, FACHE
Commissioner

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 4, 2020
ATTACHMENT: YES

No
