
PAID FAMILY CAREGIVERS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If you self-direct the services you get from the Division of Development Disabilities (DDD), you may hire support staff. These staff are called **Direct Support Professionals (DSP)**. You can hire DSPs of your choice. Your DSP may be:

- Family such as, siblings, parents, or stepparents; or
- Non-family members such as a friend or another person.

Is there a limit on the number of hours DSPs can work?

You cannot regularly schedule your DSP to work more than 40 hours a week. You also cannot regularly schedule your DSP to work more than 12 hours a day. If you choose to hire two family caregivers as DSPs, they cannot work more than 40 hours a week combined.

There may be circumstances in which family caregivers need to work over 40 hours a week. In extraordinary circumstances, you may fill out a form to request approval to work over 40 hours. You must request the form from the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals (BHDDH).

The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** requires the State to make reasonable accommodations to its policies when required for a person with a disability to access the State's services and programs. To be able to access a public service to the same extent as other people, a person with a disability can ask for **reasonable accommodation**.

Can I ask for a reasonable accommodation for my family caregivers to work over 40 hours combined?

It is best to make your request in writing. Tell DDD the reason you need the accommodation. For example, you use American Sign Language and need a DSP who can sign. You keep looking but cannot find a DSP who signs. You can request an accommodation for your family caregivers to work extra hours each week, because they can sign.

Where can I get more information about limits on the hours of paid family caregivers?

BHDDH's "Things You Can and Can't do When Hiring Support Staff in Self-Directed Services:"
<https://bhddh.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkqbur411/files/2024-05/RequirementsForEmploymentSelfDirectedParticipant2024.pdf>

Guidance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services supports the request for increasing the number of hours family caregivers are allowed to work:
https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/migrated_legacy_files/43551/primer10.pdf