

## Transforming Communities One STEP at a Time: Important Information for Providers

Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is excited to collaborate with providers, individuals who receive supports, and their families to support individuals to live and work in more independent, integrated settings as part of STEP (Supporting Transformation to Empower People). Providers have already submitted plans with creative approaches, and we look forward to seeing them – and others – become a reality!

**As a provider, you can access additional funding and flexibility to create more options for individuals to receive supports in the best setting for them. You will coordinate with individuals, their families, case managers, and regional staff in planning and implementing transitions. DDS encourages providers to think of creative and innovative approaches to transform the ways they provide supports while keeping the individual front and center.**

STEP is a rare opportunity for **significant additional financial support** to enable your agency to provide the people you support with more options. So, don't delay – there is no better time than the present to begin planning!

**Take advantage now of the opportunity to enhance your strategic plan and distinguish yourself as a forward thinking provider.**

### How will STEP improve the lives of the individuals we support?

- ✓ Expand options to live and work in more individualized and integrated settings.
- ✓ Collaborate between providers, case managers, and individuals and their families to ensure transition plans remain individualized to each person's unique needs.
- ✓ Increase supports for people with greater behavioral or medical support needs.
- ✓ Reduce the residential emergency list by opening spaces up through transitions.
- ✓ Support the use of assistive technology and remote supports through incentives to providers.
- ✓ Empower provider innovation, including addressing staffing challenges, through additional financial support.

### Additional Information

#### [Provider Gateway- ARPA STEP Resources](#)

This page includes:  
Transition Plan Templates  
STEP FAQ  
And more!

Contact [dds.arpa@ct.gov](mailto:dds.arpa@ct.gov) to request technical support or learn more about STEP

## What's Next for STEP?

STEP cannot be successful without partnership between providers and DDS. DDS has a STEP plan comprised of a series of activities that work together to achieve the five STEP outcomes. Each outcome includes upcoming STEP resources and requests from DDS to providers. The table below highlights the outcomes with some examples.

### STEP Outcomes



**Individuals and families considering transitions have the outreach and support they need to make informed decisions**



**Providers have the resources and relationships to connect individuals to diverse employment options**



**Individuals have more access to assistive technology (AT) and remote supports**



**Individuals have increased opportunities to strengthen existing and develop new community connections**



**Providers are financially and strategically supported to be creative in transformation efforts**

Upcoming in STEP				
Resources and trainings about STEP for providers	More opportunities to engage in Project SEARCH and other internship programs	Technology champions to set up and troubleshoot assistive technology and remote supports	Guidance on strengthening natural supports through existing waiver services	Incentives! Technical assistance! Flexibility to explore new approaches!
Request for Providers				
Support sharing information with individuals and their families	Participate and share partnerships with employers when appropriate	Engage in meetings to share challenges and lessons learned	Use the guidance with interested individuals	Develop Transition Plans for how you will participate in STEP

**People are the Center of STEP - Keeping all efforts person-centered and focused on supporting individuals to meet their goals is key to STEP's success!**

## Where can I start?

DDS and Regional Resource Administrators are here to support providers throughout this process. Your region is a key collaborator in the creation of your Transition Plan, and is available to answer questions, think through potential transition approaches, and provide feedback on your plan. If you're not sure where to start, we suggest:

- Reviewing the STEP Forward Guide, Transition Plan Template Instructions, and the Transition Plan Templates for more information about STEP incentives and transition planning—all of these documents are available on the [Provider Gateway](#).
- Contacting your region to discuss any questions about STEP or the transition planning process.
- Attending weekly Technical Assistance Office Hours with the STEP Support Team or requesting [One-on-one Technical Assistance](#).
- Start creating your transition plan! DDS will review plans on a rolling basis, and a plan does not have to be perfect in order to submit—your region can work with you to update as needed.

## What financial incentives are available to support transformation?

### STEP transition incentives

DDS provides financial incentives focused on assisting providers electing to implement transition plans.

#### Residential supports:

- **STEP Incentive** A one-time incentive of \$33,500 for individuals transitioning to an alternative community-based setting for at least 60 days.
- **New Placement Incentive** A payment equal to the support rate of the new residential setting for each hour of support in addition to the previous support rate, for a total of 20 weeks for each individual that moves out of the CLA or CRS setting.
- **Provider Transition Incentive** to reimburse the provider, maintaining supports in the setting until the last individual transitions as determined by the transition plan. Paid for up to six months or when the last individual transitions from the setting.

#### Day supports:

- **New Placement Incentive** paid to agencies serving individuals moving from a non-employment day setting into an employment setting or a setting that works toward employment. Applies for each hour billed up to 30 hours per week for six months in addition to the individual's current rate. Agencies will supporting transitions from a congregate setting to individualized supported employment or customized employment will receive an additional hourly rate of \$71.50 per hour for each hour billed of these supports up to 25 hours per week for six months.
- **Provider Transition Incentive** payments for vacancies left by an individual transitioning to maintain fiscal stability during the transition.

### Other ARPA resources

Program and workforce funding opportunities that augment provider capacity

#### Program Supports:

- **Assistive Technology** grants to provide equipment, installation, maintenance costs, and training for technologies that increase independence for individuals in day or residential settings.
- **Supportive housing** grants to provide non-project based settings; making affordable, accessible, and supervised housing more readily available.

#### Workforce Supports:

- **Stability** funding to assist with maintenance and staffing of a provider's workforce.
- **Infrastructure technology** funding to develop systems and processes that reduce the overall administrative workload of providers.
- **Increased rates** for individualized supports to reflect the rising minimum wage.