



**Connecticut Department of
Developmental Services**

Remote Supports Guide

Table of Contents

Developing a Comprehensive Remote Support Service for DDS Individuals & Families	<u>3</u>
What are Remote Supports?	<u>3</u>
Related Terms defined	<u>4</u>
Settings Where Remote Supports are Offered	<u>4</u>
Settings Where Remote Supports Can Not be Offered	<u>5</u>
What is the Difference Between Remote Supports and Other Technology?	<u>5</u>
Role of the On-Call Supports (On-Call Backup Entity and Ondemand, in-person support)	<u>5</u>
Qualifications for Virtual Support Partners	<u>6</u>
Process to be connected to Remote Supports	<u>7</u>
Options for Individuals to be Connected with Remote supports	<u>8</u>
Interim Rates and Costs Associated with Remote Supports	<u>9</u>
Closing Remarks	<u>9</u>

CONNECTICUT DDS REMOTE SUPPORTS

Developing a Comprehensive Remote Support Service for DDS Individuals & Families

The Department of Developmental Services' goal is to develop a comprehensive Remote Support option that promotes independence while maintaining health and safety measures for the individuals we support.

The intent of this document is to describe the Remote Support service in a simple and straightforward manner while detailing how the service may be accessed for individuals, DDS staff, DDS Qualified Providers, and families. The document also provides a simple "road map" for those interested in moving toward implementation and utilization. DDS staff will be presented with complementary training and educational material that will assist with gaining a full comprehension of how and when a remote support service can benefit an individual we support.

Remote supports can be a valuable tool to support a person's journey toward increased independence in their homes, communities, and work settings.

As a waived service, the Department of Developmental Services has developed Remote Supports as an option that combines the benefits of the latest technological devices with access to natural or paid support to promote, improve and enhance one's independence based on their needs and vision for their future.

What are Remote Supports?

Remote Supports – the delivery of supports at a remote location through virtual means by paid staff or natural supports who are engaged with the individual through technology/devices with the capability for live two-way communication. Remote supports include a service component **and** a technology component.

Equipment used to meet this requirement must include one or more of the following systems: motion sensing system, radio frequency identification, live video feed, live audio feed, GPS tracking, web-based oversight system, or a device that otherwise meets the requirement for two way communication.

Individual interaction with the person providing virtual support may be scheduled, on demand, or in response to an alert from a device in the Remote Support Technology System.

Remote Supports may not be provided at the same time as group day, Individualized Home Supports (IHS), Individualized Day (ID), Supported Employment (SE), Respite, Personal Support, Adult Companion, Individualized Goods and Services, and/or Assistive Technology.

When a team has decided that Remote Supports is a service that will benefit the individual supported, an "in-person response plan," including identification of who will respond, must be approved by the team before services can be rendered.

The intent of Remote Supports is to provide individuals served by DDS a technology-based resource to improve functional capability while promoting independence and maintaining health and safety.

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Remote Supports and the use of technology in the capacity of the remote supports service are intended to enable independence and would not require a Human Rights Committee review (HRC). Only when the technology employed is determined to infringe upon the rights of the individual or others is an HRC review required.

Related Terms Defined:

- **Remote Support Technology System:** Technology that facilitates and provides the Remote Support service. These systems may use wireless technology and/or phone lines to link an individual's home to a Virtual Support Partner (defined below) off-site. The system may use remote sensor technology to send "real-time" data to the Virtual Support Partner, who is immediately available to assess the situation and provide assistance according with the InPerson Response Plan.
- **Remote Support Technology Supplier:** The entity with the responsibility to set up the customized Remote Support Technology system necessary for remote supports based upon each individual's needs. This entity may additionally provide the real-time virtual Remote Support, therefore also acting as the Virtual Support Partner.
- **Virtual Support Partner (VSP):** A paid support person such as an agency, qualified provider, etc. OR unpaid support person such as a family member, friend, or other natural support that provides virtual support (e.g., prompting, queuing, etc.) from a remote location utilizing the Remote Support Technology System that has been designed for the individual.
- **On-Call Backup Entity-** the entity that is responsible for the on-call service. The on-call service is the backup entity that receives a notification from the virtual support partner or from the remote technology directly that an in-person intervention is necessary. The on-call backup entity will then contact the identified person to provide the in-person support.
- **On demand, in-person support:** The direct face-to-face supports provided by the staff when they are sent to an individual's location as requested by the individual, virtual support provider, or in response to an electronic device indicating that support is needed. In-person support may be a natural support, Self-Hired Direct Support Professional (DSP), Remote Direct Support Professional (RDSP), or through a paid agency. If on-call support is a paid agency/provider, a backup respondent must be identified before services are rendered. The on demand, in-person support staff, will be paid at the IHS rate in 15-minute intervals for all direct supports provided.
- **In-Person Response Plan:** A plan created by an individual's team and providers that identifies who or what entity will serve as the On-Call Support. This plan must also provide detail on at least one backup respondent and expectations around the response times (maximum thirty minutes).

Settings Where Remote Supports are Offered

This waiver service is an option for those who live in their own homes or family homes as a mechanism to optimize independence while providing support as needed. The service may also be offered at a job, in the community, or in an individual day support location.

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This waiver service category cannot be billed at the same time as other individual supports such as IHS, Personal Supports, Adult Companion, Blended Supports, Supported Employment, Individualized Day, or Hourly Respite. However, these services may appear in the individual's plan together, to be used separately at specified times throughout the day or week.

Settings Where Remote Supports Can Not be Offered

When technology is used to augment support in a residential congregate setting, the cost is already included in the rate of that setting. It therefore, cannot be accessed through a technology-driven waiver service.

To this end, the Remote Support waiver service cannot be billed while another waiver service is being provided, such as in a 24-hour service or licensed setting. Examples where the service cannot be utilized and billed include Community Living Arrangement, Continuous Residential Supports, Group Day, Community Companion Homes (this is currently under review), Facility-based Respite, Assisted Living, and Live-in Care Giver, or Senior Supports.

What is the Difference Between Remote Supports and Other Technology?

It is essential to make the distinction between Remote Supports, as the waiver service approved by CMS in 2019, and the use of technology to support an individual. Individuals in all types of settings use technology as a vital component of their daily lives (e.g., cell phones, computers, etc.) While the latter does not qualify to be billed as Remote Supports, it is valued and encouraged to continue to be used across all settings, especially when the technology brings value to the individual.

Specific to Assistive Technology, Remote Supports as a waiver service, already has an assistive technology component integrated into the service and the rate. Therefore, Assistive technology cannot be provided and billed at the same time as Remote Supports.

Role of the On-Call Supports:

An agency Virtual Support Partner must be qualified to provide Remote Supports in order to provide "on-call supports."

The **On-Call Backup Entity** will receive an hourly rate during the hours an individual's Remote Supports services are in place as payment for being available "on-call."

As **On demand, in-person support**, the agency, private hire, natural support, or DSP agrees to go to the individual's location when notified in-person supports are needed. Support must arrive within 30 minutes time unless the team determines a shorter timeframe is needed, as documented in the individual response plan. With Regional Administration approval, the timeframe may be extended in certain circumstances to meet the individual's need as stated in their individual plan.

Support staff must be knowledgeable of the **In-Person Response Plan**, their equipment, and there must be a working relationship between the support person and the individual.

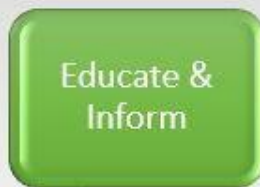
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The On-Call Support may be provided by an agency, natural support person, or a self-hired staff. Agencies that provide remote support and technology may also provide the on-call service. These combination agencies are all reimbursed differently according to the DDS Remote supports rate structure. If the **On-Call Backup Entity** is a paid agency/provider **On-demand, in-person support** must be identified before services are rendered.

Qualifications

	Support Categories	Principal of the Entity (Connecticut Administrator if an out of state corporation) Resume or summary of qualifications must Include the following: 1. Name of employer(s) 2. Dates of employment 3. Detailed supervisory/administrative experience including programs and population served. See specific requirements below	Executive Management Team Resume or summary of qualifications must Include the following: 1. Name of employer(s) 2. Dates of employment 3. Detailed supervisory/direct care experience including programs and population served. See specific requirements below.
REMOTE SUPPORTS	Virtual Support Partner *Unpaid natural supports do not require qualification by DDS	1. Three years' experience working with people with Intellectual Disability involving participation in an interdisciplinary team process and the development, review and/or implementation of elements in an individual's plan of care. One year of the experience must have involved supervision of direct care staff in OR responsibility for developing, implementing and evaluating individualized supports for people with Intellectual Disability in the areas of behavior, education or rehabilitation. AND 2. Medicaid provider status for assistive technology and supplies or agency that obtains Medicaid performing provider status 3. the provision of supports by staff at a remote location who are engaged with the individual through technology/devices with the capability for live two-way communication. Equipment used to meet this requirement must include live video feed and live audio feed. One or more of the following systems may be required based on the needs of the individual(s): motion sensing system, radio frequency identification, GPS tracking, web-based monitoring system, or a device that otherwise meets the needs of the individual(s)	At least one (1) staff member of the Executive Management Team with one (1) year experience supervising staff providing supports to individuals with intellectual disabilities or in a related field.
	On-Call Backup Entity	The on-call service is the backup agency that receives a notification from the virtual support partner or from the remote technology directly that an in-person staff intervention is necessary. The on-call back up entity will then contact the corresponding staff to provide the in-person support. Current qualified provider of Individualized Home Support Services or Three years' experience working with people with Intellectual Disability involving participation in an interdisciplinary team process and the development, review and/or implementation of elements in an individual's plan of care. One year of the experience must have involved supervision of direct care staff in OR responsibility for developing, implementing and evaluating individualized supports for people with Intellectual Disability in the areas of behavior, education or rehabilitation	At least one (1) staff member of the Executive Management Team with one (1) year experience supervising staff providing supports to individuals with intellectual disabilities or in a related field.

Remote Support Implementation



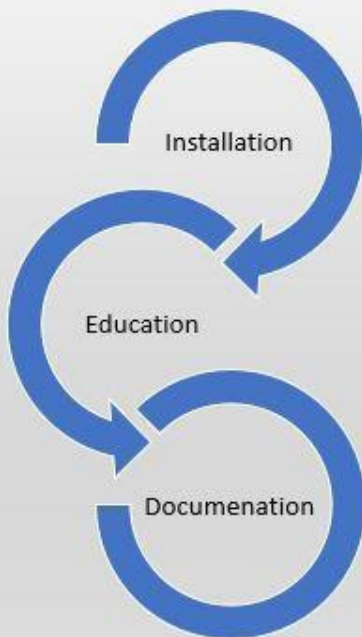
- Ensure that individuals and PSTs are aware of the RS service option
- Direct those that want to learn more to available materials, including the [DDS Website](#)
- If there is interest, the team should complete the *Is RS right for me* tool to determine if there are barriers to moving forward



- The team would use the RS Checklist to move through set up activities. These include identifying:
 - entities to fulfill roles and
 - what technology will be used to enhance independence.
- An Enabling Technology Assessment may be requested if it is not clear what tech would be best to assist.

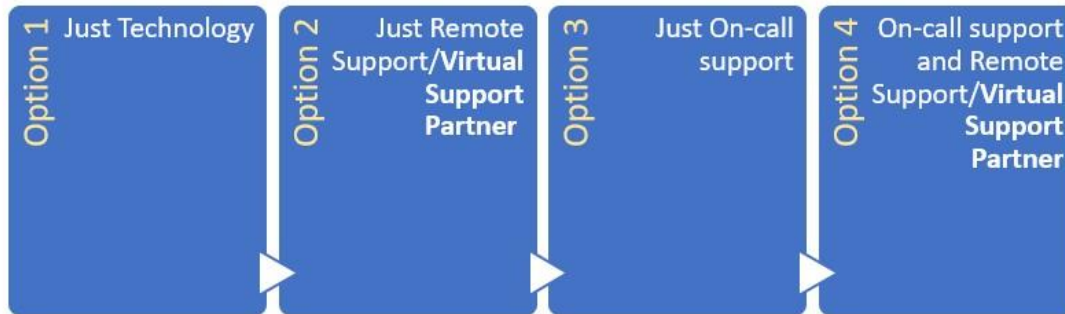


- If needed, the Case Manager requests funding for ongoing, annualized virtual support partner costs as well as remote support technology system evaluation and/or set up.
- Once allocated, a PNF initiates provider authorizations.



Once Remote Support is decided upon, planned, and authorized, a *Remote Support Technology Supplier* will set up the system. Education around the use of the technology, times of availability, contact information, etc. will need to occur for the supported person, staff, *Virtual Support Partner*, and anyone else involved. Details of how the remote support will be used should be documented in the plan. This will include Remote Support as a waived service in the *Summary of Supports and Services*, as well as in the *action plan* and other areas of the planning document as appropriate.

Options for Individuals to be Connected with Remote Supports:



Interim Rates and Costs Associated with Remote Supports

There are cost guidelines within the waiver service category for technology connectivity and maintenance, as well as for the real-time data and communication component, which includes notification to an **On-call Backup Entity** if an **on demand, in-person support** is necessary or requested by the individual being supported. The service component of this waiver category involves the availability of such **On-call Backup Entity**. The service provides a rate to the support agency that is retained as an on-call service during the specific hours identified on the person’s plan.

What are the rates?

Both the virtual support partner rate and the On-Call Backup Entity rates are predicated on the expectation that one remote support DSP will support multiple individuals. Rates may be adjusted following the remote support pilot. Rates are per person as follows:

Service - Per Person/Per HR	First 3 Months of Service	Next 3 Months of Service	Ongoing
Virtual Support Partner	\$ 10.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 10.00
On Call Staff Support	\$ 18.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 6.00
Total	\$ 28.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 16.00
On Demand, In Person Support (Billed as I.H.S)	\$ 48.50	\$ 48.50	\$ 48.50
Purchase and Installation of Technology	Paid At Cost	Paid At Cost	Paid At Cost
Monthly Lease/Payments for Technology	Paid At Cost	Paid At Cost	Paid At Cost

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On-Demand In-Person Support will be paid at the IHS rate via web-res-day. Virtual Support Partner and the On-Call Backup Entity will be billed in 15-minute increments through web-res-day.

How will this work with Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)?

Virtual and On-call support is exempt from EVV. In the event that in person response is required, EVV would be applicable.

Closing Remarks

DDS continues to collaborate with partner states, providers, and other stakeholders to further define what remote supports as a waiver service looks like in Connecticut and how it can benefit individuals receiving supports and services from DDS. This document will be updated and revised with best practices and other specificity as we continue to learn from each other on remote supports. As an agency, we look forward to offering a comprehensive remote support service that maintains health and safety for the individuals we support while allowing for the highest level of autonomy and independence.