



DDS STEP (Supporting Transformation to Empower People)

Connecticut Department of Developmental Services

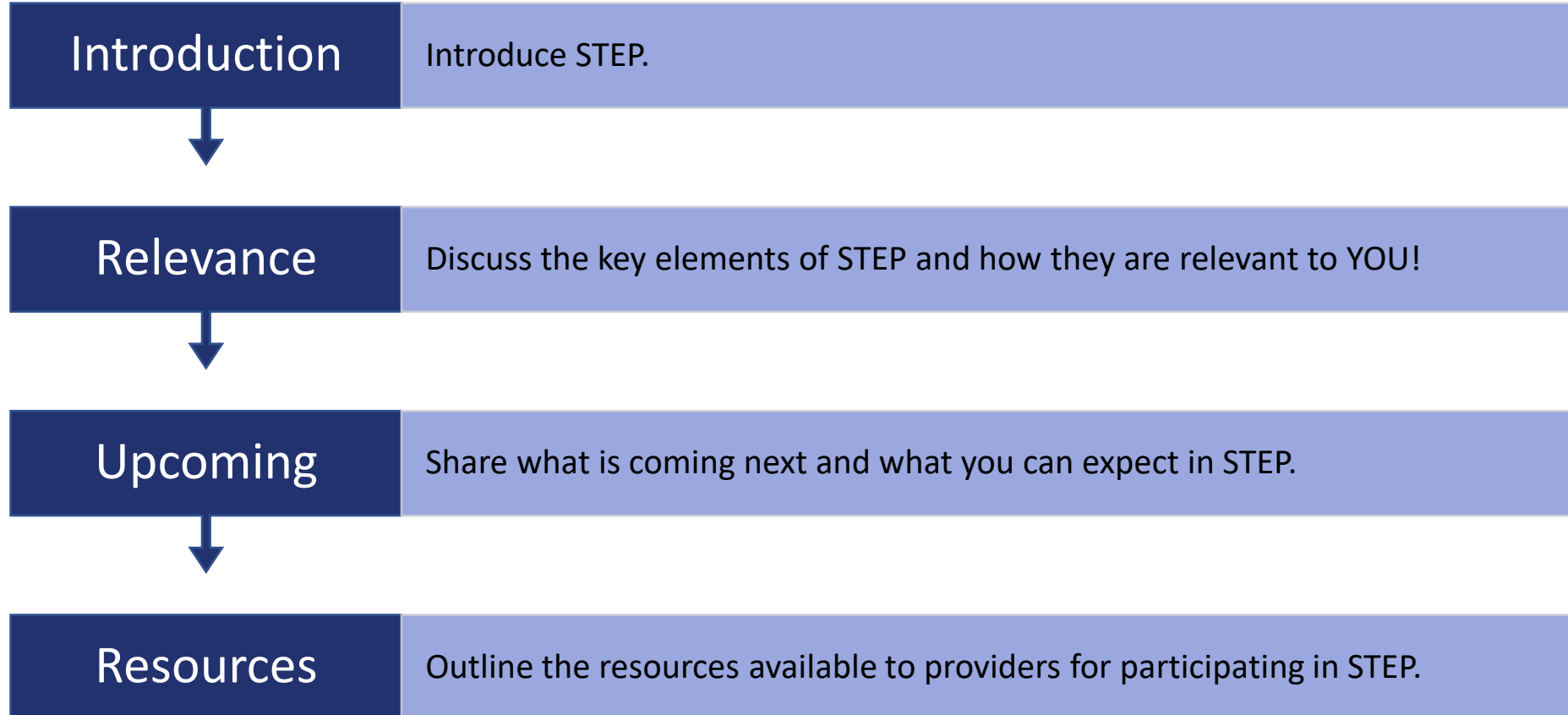
MAY 2023

Agenda

1. Welcome and Logistics
2. Opening Remarks
3. What is STEP?
4. Key STEP Elements
5. Closing & Thank You



Session Objectives



STEP Introduction

What is STEP?

STEP **highlights and promotes the supports DDS offers** that provide greater choice, independence, integration, and empowerment.

STEP is at the **heart of DDS**, representing the DDS mission and paving the way to a better future for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) in Connecticut.

STEP's Core Supports:

1. Self-Direction
2. Supportive Housing
3. Individualized Home Support
4. Assistive Technology
5. Remote Supports
6. Employment
7. Community
Companion Home



Looking Ahead

DDS will leverage STEP to continue building a strong foundation as a national leader for services and supports for individuals with I/DD.

We need **YOUR** participation to promote independence in the lives of the people DDS supports!

STEP is an incredible opportunity to empower the people we support through strategic investments in the DDS system.

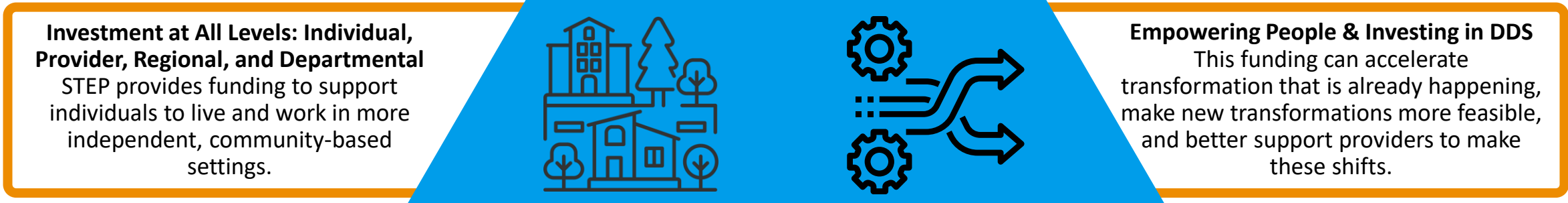
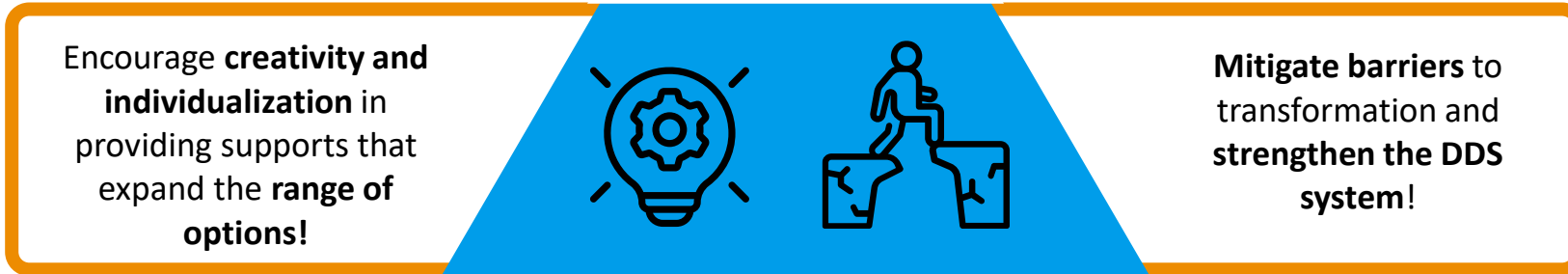


Empower people who receive supports to live more independently!



People are the Center of STEP

Ensuring that all efforts are person-centered and focused on supporting individuals to meet their goals is key to STEP's success.



DDS will leverage this opportunity to continue building a strong foundation as a national leader for services and supports for individuals with an I/DD. **We need YOUR participation to promote independence in the lives of the people DDS supports!**

Provider Role

Providers are the on the ground driving force of STEP! Provider transition plans directly create the opportunities for individuals to transition.

1. Consider STEP incentives as part of agency planning. How can you leverage this financial opportunity to best support individuals?
2. Support information sharing and discussions with individuals and their families about transitions.
3. Develop creative approaches and strategies so individual can transition to supports that are right for them and emphasize independence and choice.
4. Create transition plans and coordinate with your region, updating as necessary or requested by your region.
5. Coordinate with individuals and their families and case managers throughout the transition process to ensure that it is person-centered.

*Resources to help you submit plans
and answer questions!*

Provider Gateway: [STEP Resources](#)

**Visit the [Technical Assistance
Request Link](#) for technical support
or to learn more about STEP**

**Attend STEP Office Hours on Fridays
from 10 – 11 a.m. via this [link](#)**

STEP Purpose & Outcomes

What is the purpose of STEP?

STEP supports interested individuals to move from congregate settings to more individualized, community-based supports including:

- 1. Transitioning from a Community Living Arrangement (CLA) or Continuous Residential Supports (CRS) to **Individualized Home Supports (IHS)** in their own homes
- 2. Transitioning from non-vocational congregate day settings to **prevocational and vocational supports**
- 3. Transitioning from Group Supported Employment (GSE) to **Individual Supported Employment (ISE) or Customized Employment (CE)**

To achieve this, DDS identified a series of activities organized by Outcomes that will transform and facilitate these transitions.



Provide outreach and support to individuals and families considering transitions



Work with partners to connect people to diverse employment options



Provide strategic and financial support to providers



Increase availability and use of assistive technology (AT) and remote supports



Strengthen existing and develop new community connection opportunities for individuals receiving supports

STEP Details

Desired Outcomes for STEP

Based on research and stakeholder feedback, DDS identified the following Outcomes as focus areas for STEP in Phase 2:



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



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



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

Outreach to Individuals & Families

Key Outcome: Individuals and families considering transitions have the outreach and support they need to make informed decisions.

- 1 Support individuals to understand options
- 2 Increase access to benefits counseling
- 3 Provide information to providers



Helping individuals make informed decisions

- Trainings and learning collaboratives for providers to share best practices and lessons learned in STEP
- Videos and one-pagers that define and describe the different DDS support options
- Resources to support discussions with individuals and families about STEP and transitions
- Improved access to Bureau of Rehabilitative Services benefits counselors
- Opportunities for individuals to tour potential future settings to support preparation and help decrease transition anxiety

Financial & Strategic Support



Key Outcome: Providers are financially and strategically supported to be creative in transformation efforts

- 1 Incentivize transitions from congregate to non-congregate settings
- 2 Provide technical assistance to providers as they complete STEP transition plans
- 3 Support providers to explore alternative service delivery models



Supporting providers to realize change

DDS is committed to supporting system transformation and understands that transitions may be challenging. Support for providers includes:

- **STEP financial incentives** to stand up new, or expand current, programs
- **Support from Central Office and your region.** STEP planning is meant to be collaborative and iterative so you can feel fully supported creating and implementing creative and innovative service delivery models and approaches
- **Trainings, additional resources, and peer learning opportunities** to help you think through ways that STEP can be applied to your strategic planning and the long-term vision for your agency

STEP Residential Incentives



DDS provides financial incentives to assist providers in implementing approved transition plans.

For Residential Transitions

- **STEP Incentive** A one-time incentive of \$33,500 for individuals transitioning to an alternative community-based setting for at least 60 days.
- **Provider Transition Incentive** to reimburse the provider, maintaining supports in the setting until the last individual transitions as determined by the transition plan.
- **New Residential Placement Incentive**
 - Applies for transitions out of CLA or CRS settings.
 - Receive a payment equal to the support rate of the new residential setting for each hour of support in addition to the regular payment.

STEP Day and Employment Incentives



DDS provides financial incentives to assist providers in implementing approved transition plans.

For Day Transitions

- **Provider Transition Incentive** payments for vacancies left by an individual transitioning to maintain fiscal stability during the transition.
- **New Vocational Placement Incentive**
 - Applies for providers with individuals moving from non-employment day setting into one that works toward employment.
 - Receive the previous support rate in addition to the current support rate.
- **New Individualized Placement Incentive**
 - Applies for providers supporting individuals moving from a congregate setting to individualized supported employment or customized employment.
 - Receive \$71.50 per hour in addition to the current support rate.

Other Resources



To push forward transformation efforts, providers can combine these resources with STEP specific incentives.

DDS also offers

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.

Diversifying Employment



Key Outcome: Providers have the resources and relationships to connect individuals to diverse employment options.

- 1 Expand participation in Project SEARCH and other internship to employment programs
- 2 Expand alternative opportunities for self employment including microbusinesses



Giving individuals agency over their careers

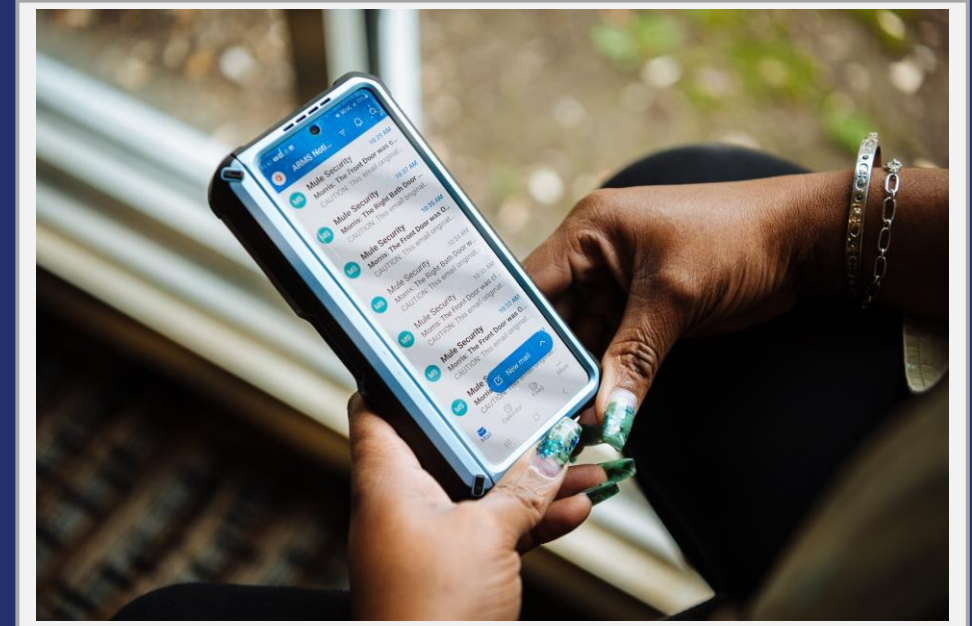
- Curated list of businesses who employ individual(s) receiving DDS supports to use as a resource for individuals seeking employment
- Increased flexibility for individuals to begin careers that align with their goals and aspirations
- More opportunities for individuals to build skills in settings that translate to opportunities for competitive, integrated employment

Access to AT & Remote Supports



Key Outcome: Individuals have more access to assistive technology (AT) and remote supports.

- 1 Increase capacity for Assistive Technology assessments
- 2 Create menus of available Assistive Technology and remote supports options



Using technology as a tool for independence

- More opportunities for individuals to grow their independence in a supported environment
- Improved information on the available options for assistive technology and remote supports
- Increased utilization of AT and remote supports can help increase staff capacity
- Mechanisms to help providers implement AT and remote supports, troubleshoot technology issues, and understand specific technology requirements

Community Connections



Key Outcome: Individuals have increased opportunities to strengthen existing and develop new community connections.

- 1 Support people to identify and strengthen natural supports in their communities
- 2 Identify and expand opportunities for individuals to engage in community events and activities

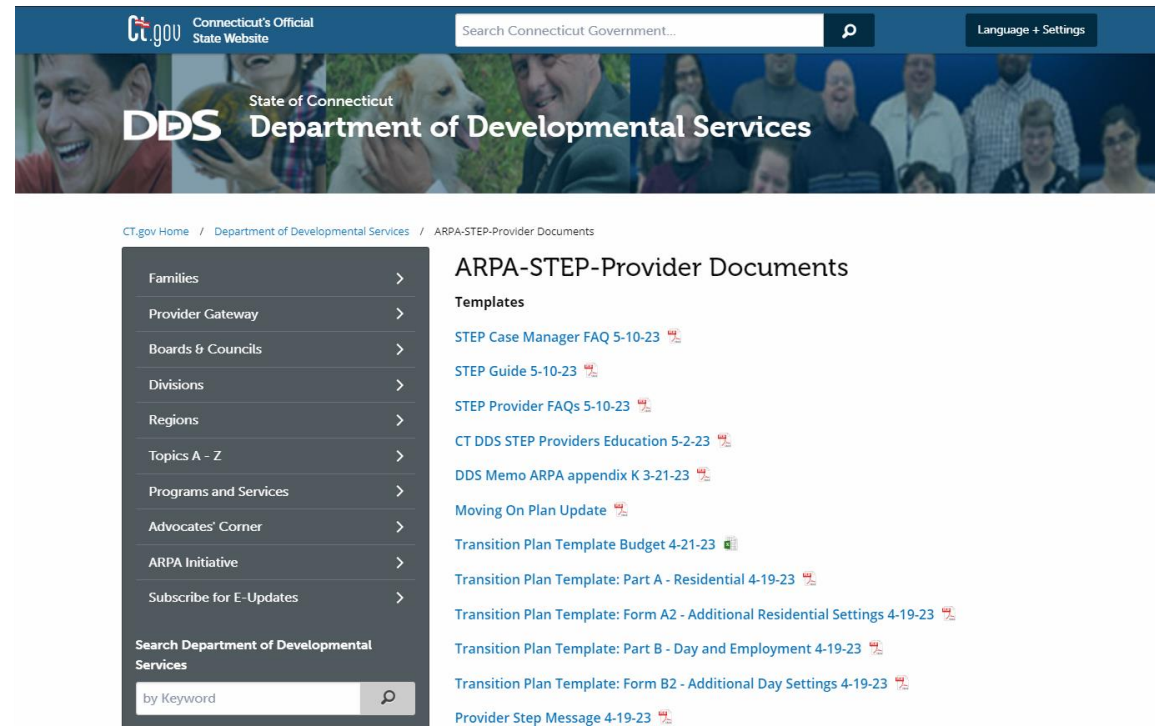


Supporting individuals to be part of their community

- Facilitate connections to existing community groups and clubs to help individuals meet friends and forge connections
- Create regional Community Engagement Champions to support coordination with community events
- Work with providers and case managers to emphasize identifying and developing natural supports during IP sessions
- Solicit and fund proposals from nonprofit organizations to facilitate community engagement activities

Coming Next in STEP

- Trainings in June
- Additional resources (e.g., updated FAQ)
- Additional resources for case management
- Trainings and information sessions for DDS staff so they can support providers with innovation in STEP
- One-pagers and videos about service approaches from DDS to use with individuals/families



The screenshot displays the Connecticut State Website header with the logo and search bar. Below the header is a banner for the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) featuring a group of people and a dog. The main content area shows a breadcrumb trail: CT.gov Home / Department of Developmental Services / ARPA-STEP-Provider Documents. A left sidebar contains a navigation menu with categories like Families, Provider Gateway, Boards & Councils, Divisions, Regions, Topics A - Z, Programs and Services, Advocates' Corner, ARPA Initiative, and Subscribe for E-Updates. The main content area is titled "ARPA-STEP-Provider Documents" and lists several templates and documents, including "STEP Case Manager FAQ 5-10-23", "STEP Guide 5-10-23", "STEP Provider FAQs 5-10-23", "CT DDS STEP Providers Education 5-2-23", "DDS Memo ARPA appendix K 3-21-23", "Moving On Plan Update", "Transition Plan Template Budget 4-21-23", "Transition Plan Template: Part A - Residential 4-19-23", "Transition Plan Template: Form A2 - Additional Residential Settings 4-19-23", "Transition Plan Template: Part B - Day and Employment 4-19-23", "Transition Plan Template: Form B2 - Additional Day Settings 4-19-23", and "Provider Step Message 4-19-23".

Next Steps

- Complete the Informational Session Evaluation Poll
- Join TA Office Hours or request a TA session
- Sign up for upcoming Provider Trainings about STEP
- Visit the resources page on [Provider Gateway](#)
- Share the public [STEP page](#) which is now live!
- Stay tuned for more information and updates

Thank you!
