



Case Manager Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

CT DDS STEP

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General Questions

1. What does STEP stand for? What does it mean?

STEP stands for Supporting Transformation to Empower People. STEP encourages more individualized supports. It empowers people to live more independently and mitigates barriers to change. STEP aims to create more community-focused and person-centered options for individuals receiving supports. STEP will make it easier for providers to assist individuals who are looking to increase their independence and community involvement. Case managers should support discussions with individuals receiving supports in congregate settings about how STEP can help to improve their quality of life.

2. Who will be part of STEP?

STEP is open to all providers operating congregate settings for DDS programs. This includes residential, day, and employment supports. Participating providers must submit a Transition Plan to their region outlining the transformation plan including individual transitions. As a part of STEP, individuals will be asked to consider transitions into new and expanded support options. If someone wants to transition and their provider chooses not to participate in the STEP transformation process, they can consider moving to a provider with more options. Case managers should work closely with individuals, families, and providers to ensure person-centered supports are provided that best meet their goals. Value-based decision making where individuals have options to stretch to new levels of independence is an important part of STEP with support across divisions of DDS.

3. If an individual gets residential, day or employment supports in a group setting, will they have to move?

No. STEP will make more options for individuals. This includes current group settings and new, more individualized supports. DDS set a goal to support 300 individuals to transition from congregate settings into more independent community-based settings for both day and residential programs. People have the choice to move, based on their goals. Case managers and providers will work with individuals they support who choose to move to a more independent setting.

4. What training and education materials educate individuals, families, and case managers about the different options available?

Currently, DDS is working with a communication consultant, different committees, and a transformational consultant to develop training and education materials for families, case managers, and providers. This includes one-page descriptions of community-based services and Commissioner Forums and a resource section on the DDS website. Case managers can use these materials with individuals and families, and they can also access it themselves through the DDS website and social media.

5. Is it the intention of DDS to close all group homes?

The goal of this initiative is not to close all group homes. There are incentives for providers to restructure group homes to provide supports to individuals with significant medical, behavioral, or clinical support needs. Although some providers may decide to close a home due to a variety of reasons, this is not the focus of this initiative. Case managers may need to support transition planning for individuals between CLA or CRS supports if their current home is closing.

Residential Supports

1. What does STEP mean for residential supports?

STEP will support interested individuals to move from group settings, like Community Living Arrangements (CLA) or Continuous Residential Supports (CRS), to more independent community-based options. Examples of more independent settings include using Individualized Home Supports (IHS) in their own home or moving into a Community Companion Home (CCH). As some individuals transition to other community-based options, the CLAs will have more capacity to support other individuals who have greater support needs including people on the residential emergency list.

2. Can individuals access funds for a security deposit?

DDS created a Rent Subsidy committee to figure out ways to support individuals to move out of a congregate living setting. The committee is looking into options like increasing the availability of the individual's funds for personal needs, increasing the amount of rent allowed for rent subsidy, and how to address the issue of security deposits for those unable to pay this upfront. Case managers will receive updates on these efforts to inform their planning discussions with individuals.

3. Will Department of Housing, Rental Assistance Program (RAP) Certificates be available for the people transitioning out of a congregate setting into an apartment?

DDS is working with the Department of Housing to explore the possibility of expanding the use of RAP certifications to be used in non-project-based apartment settings.

4. Can families who are willing to provide some supports including housing for their child as well as other individuals do so?

If this comes up in a planning meeting, DDS has developed guidelines to assist families in securing housing, rental agreements and other issues related to purchasing a home for their child. The document is called [Related Party Ownership of Homes](#).

Day and Employment Supports

1. What does STEP mean for congregate day settings?

STEP supports individuals to transition from non-vocational (non-employment) to prevocational (preparing for employment) and vocational (employment) supports to help individuals gain and keep meaningful employment. As some people change programs, it will make more space in the day programs for other people who need them.

2. What does STEP mean for employment supports?

STEP allows individuals to transition from Group Supported Employment (GSE) to Individualized Supported Employment (ISE) or Customized Employment (CE). These transitions allow individuals to work in areas that best fit their personal goals.

3. Will the number of hours for employment be comparable to the standard day program hours?

DDS case managers are allowed to authorize individuals moving into an employment setting to be able to utilize their full Level of Need funding. This will provide individuals with the ability to use any excess funding not utilized for employment to help assist with other day activities if requested. Individuals transitioning through STEP may receive some non-vocational supports in addition to the new employment supports.

Transition Plans

1. How will support teams create individualized transition plans for individuals who require more intensive support needs or adaptive equipment?

All providers should assess the needs of individuals who are interested in moving out of congregate settings including those that may have more intensive medical, physical, or behavioral needs. Case managers and other members of the individuals' teams will work with providers to resolve issues that may restrict an individual from moving.

2. What criteria will DDS use to determine that the agencies seeking incentives can adequately provide the supports and services?

Regional teams, including representatives from case management and resource management, will thoroughly review all provider transition plans. The teams are to ensure participants are willing and able to move into the designated settings with the appropriate health and safety oversight. All plans are reviewed equally. These teams may ask case managers not on the teams for their insights into the potential impact of a

plan on individuals they support. DDS is committed to working with individuals, their families, and providers to support interested individuals to transition as part of STEP even if there are challenges.

3. What role do case managers play in creating provider transition plans?

Providers must complete Transition Plans for regional review and approval to participate in STEP. Case managers are not responsible for creating these plans but can assist. Providers must collect stakeholder input as part of planning. Case managers can provide input and feedback during this process. They might also support individuals to share their concerns or ideas with the provider. Case managers will then use the Individual Planning process following the submission of the transition plan, to ensure the team is involved and all is documented.

Transportation

1. Transportation is a challenge across the state. How will providers address this for people who move?

Providers will create a transition plan as part of STEP. The plan template includes sections for providers to address the needs of the individual including transportation requirements prior to moving. Case managers can support this planning by making sure individuals understand their transportation needs and options.

2. Are there ways to use ride-share options to support individuals? How can Uber and Lyft be approved?

Uber and Lyft supports are an approved method of transportation under the Transportation waiver service. Case managers should review other transportation options before utilizing transportation network companies.

Assistive Technology and Remote Supports

1. What role does assistive technology play in transitions?

Assistive technology is one way an individual may be empowered to do more for themselves. Providers are encouraged to include appropriate assistive technology in their transition plans. Some will add it to congregate settings so individuals can get comfortable with it before moving to more independent settings. Case managers can support individuals to understand available options and how to access them.

2. What role do remote supports play in transitions?

Remote supports are one way an individual can have staff support without having someone physically there with them. This makes it easier to provide staff when people are not in the same location. It also lets people have more independence and control over their own space. More providers will offer remote supports because of STEP. Case managers should explain remote supports in planning discussions with individuals.

Acronyms

This document uses the following acronyms:



Acronym	Term
CCH	Community Companion Home
CE	Customized Employment
CLA	Community Living Arrangement
CRS	Continuous Residential Supports
DDS	Department of Developmental Services
GSE	Group Supported Employment
IHS	Individualized Home Supports
ISE	Individualized Supported Employment
RAP	Rental Assistance Program
STEP	Supporting Transformation to Empower People