

What is the Self-Determination Program?

The California statewide Self-Determination Program is a voluntary alternative to the traditional way of providing regional center services. SDP was developed by the Department of Developmental Services to allow participants to have more control over selecting their services and supports. One of the ways this can be done is by giving participants (or their parents or legal representatives) a specific budget to purchase the services and supports that they need to make their person-centered plan work better for them. Participants may choose their services and pick which providers deliver those services. Participants are responsible for staying within their annual budget.

The program has five principles that are part of the law:

Freedom (to plan a good life) – to have the same rights as everyone, to choose family and friends that can help, where you want to live, how you want your time to be spent, and who supports you

Authority (over your personal resources) – You have a budget, and you get to decide exactly what to spend that money on in order to reach your goals

Support (for building a life in the community) – to choose what you need to meet your personal goals and hire people that will help you live the life you want in your community

Responsibility (and pride in making your own decisions) – to be accountable for your budget and the way money is spent

Confirmation (of the important role you play) – In the Self-Determination program, you play a critical role as the person who makes decisions. You and your family get to choose the services and supports that will help you accomplish the goals in your IPP

How is it different than my current service coordination?

One of the elements of the Self-Determination Program that makes it so exciting is that it gives you flexibility in choosing your services, supports, and providers. In the Self-Determination Program, you can buy different services, not just those through the regional center. The program offers a lot of flexibility. Services can include, but aren't limited to: individual training; vehicle adaptations; or support with communication. Your services and supports can be from almost anyone in the community. Right now, your Service Coordinator from the regional center is the person who helps you find the services you need.

In the Self-Determination Program, you get to decide who else you want to help you. This could be your family or friends, or an Independent Facilitator. There will be money in a budget and you will choose which services and supports to have to meet your goals. Self-Determination offers you the opportunity to be creative, think outside the box, and make your own plan for how you want to live.