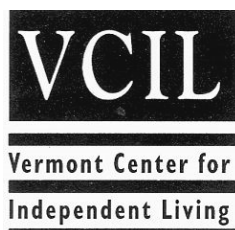




An Introduction to the Personal Assistance Training Toolkit

**Resources for Hiring and Managing Your Personal
Assistance
Services or Attendant Care**

VCIL 2006



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INTRODUCTION

Dear Personal Assistant Services (PAS) user,

Welcome to another step toward more independence!

Several Vermonters who also use personal assistants or attendants helped VCIL collect and develop a range of tools and resources for managing Attendant Care or Personal Assistance Services. We have put together this collection, or Toolkit, as a resource for individuals who are just learning how to manage their services, but some experienced managers of PAS have also found it useful. We hope this resource will be helpful to you, whatever your level of experience is!

The terms personal assistant, or personal care attendant (both referred to as PA in this document), are used in Vermont and throughout this Toolkit to describe the service used by many individuals with disabilities who need assistance with things like bathing, getting out of bed, and doing household tasks and other everyday activities. Whether a friend or family member provides the assistance or you hire someone from outside your home, access to a PA is one of the essential elements of independent living for people with significant disabilities. The better we are able to work with and supervise these important people in our

lives, the greater our independence and ability to live our lives to the fullest.

The Toolkit is still a “work in progress.” It is being shaped by the interests and needs of individuals who use PA services. As much as possible, VCIL is interested in offering peer support and training options that meet individual needs and learning styles. As we find or create new resources, we will add them to the Toolkit. Three forms of training we are also developing are described below:

1) **Self-Training** -- In this option, materials from the Toolkit will be mailed to your home. You may order any number of materials on any of the topics you want to study.

2) **One on One Training** (with or without your PA) – With this module a Peer Advocacy Counselor (PAC), or peer mentor experienced in PA management will talk to you about your specific needs and together you will design a program suited to what you need at that time. The PAC will come to your home, work with you on the phone or meet you in your community to work with you on the management skills you feel a need for at the time.

3) **Group Workshops** -- For those who enjoy and learn best in the group learning situation, we hope to offer periodic workshops

covering all the topics necessary for hiring and managing your PA.

For those who are anxious to get started on their own, we have developed a “**Quickstart**” kit to help you with some basics. It includes what we think are the three most essential elements in getting started: a guide for identifying your needs for a PA, a guide on where to find these people and how to advertise for them, and a guide for how to list the tasks your PA will need to perform so you can both understand what is expected.

This booklet includes some background on the project. We also include a list of the books and other resources in VCIL’s Personal Assistance Toolkit library, some suggestions on how to get the most from this Toolkit, and writings on Aging and Independent Living and on the Independent Living Movement and Disability Rights. We have also given you a brief summary of the Attendant Services Programs run by the state and a list of resources and organizations that will serve to guide you as you manage your personal care.

Your feedback is welcome and will help make it a truly peer designed resource. We have created an evaluation form for you to evaluate the Toolkit materials you use and would very much appreciate your comments. How helpful were they and what could be improved? Please take a few moments to complete this form and help us improve the Toolkit. Even a few short

comments would be extremely valuable. If you prefer, you may comment by phone.

“Nothing About Us Without Us,” the slogan of people with disabilities striving to make our own decisions about what works best for us, has little meaning unless those of us at the grass-roots level who use these programs are willing to enthusiastically participate in the process. We encourage you to do so and look forward to your comments.

Toward greater independence!

ORIGINS OF VCIL'S TOOLKIT

The Beginnings

In 2002, VCIL and the Department for Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living developed a survey in which many Vermonters participated. This survey asked about the need for and types of training preferred by people with significant disabilities who use personal assistants or attendants to maintain their independence. A majority of those surveyed felt training in attendant services management was an essential item in the quest for independent living.

And no wonder, since it is a real challenge to manage one's own care. Those of us who do it are basically running a business. Since we are the employers in the attendant care relationship we have the same responsibilities as other employers. There are real skills to be learned in supervising and managing employees in any business. The challenges are even greater for those who manage workers who provide the most intimate and personal kind of care, and who have access to the most personal sides of our lives. Good communication and the ability to give clear direction are essential in this "business." So the development of some tools to assist Vermont's citizens who use attendant services was begun.

In January of 2003, surveys were sent to 335 Personal Attendant Services (PAS) users around the state. Of the 114 surveys returned, 61% of the respondents preferred self training materials (materials that could be used in their own home by themselves), and 69% wanted one on one training tailored to their needs (a peer would deliver the training). Group workshop training was preferred by only 18% of those surveyed; however, the team of developers believes this question needs to be revisited in light of information gained from focus groups. Do we really prefer individual training or is this just the method that we have become used to using? If it were a bit easier for us to get together, would we welcome the interaction and training with others who share our concerns and challenges? These are questions that still need to be addressed. What is wanted in our community in contrast to what is available?

Following the survey, VCIL received funding to partner with individuals who use attendant or personal assistance services to develop a "Toolkit" and training modules. We began gathering manuals, books, tapes and videos. These were reviewed by peers around the state. We gathered resources for the library and held two four-day intensive group trainings (one in Burlington and one in Rutland) for peers to see if we were on the right track. The end result of this first phase was that participants all agreed that development of a Toolkit was valuable and worth completing.

What We Have Now

We now have an introductory packet, including a “Quickstart Guide,” which we hope will improve user feedback. Three *Self Training Modules* available and the basics of the *One on One Training* and the *Group Workshop* have been developed. We consider this project still a pilot in its early developing phase and ask everyone who can, to help evaluate and assist us in order to develop a truly *peer* designed and peer delivered program for hiring and managing our personal attendants.

A Vision for the Future

We are trying to build on Vermont experience and knowledge and bring the best resources and wisdom from around the country into play in Vermont. That is the Vermont way: Work with the best of what has already been developed and make it the best it can be for Vermonters. We also recognize the importance of input from the caregivers, as they are such an intimate part of the success of this program. In order for this to be authentic, we need ongoing input from users of attendant services and PAS workers. Culling the resources, hearing the feedback, seeing what really works and what does not, always with the peer as the guiding force, will take some time.

The PAS Toolkit and Training Program are now maintained at VCIL. We will continue to maintain and upgrade the library and Toolkit materials. If funding is available, we also hope to coordinate different types of trainings and peer support services

in response to the interests and needs of PAS users. We need your suggestions! Please share your ideas and interests as we continue to design and implement this valuable tool for independent living.

WHY A TOOLKIT AND HOW TO USE IT

Entering the world of managing your Personal Assistance Services is not easy. You are walking into a neighborhood where you have never been before. You have been told it is a great place and will afford you great benefits – and then ... you are left on your own. You could eventually find your way around this new terrain, but you might fall into some holes, trip over some unseen rocks or make many wrong turns as you do so. Wouldn't it be so much better to have a map and some travel resources, especially in this case where the stakes are pretty high? The "neighborhood" you are in involves living with your disability and working with another human being (sometimes several) who will be responsible for looking after your needs at home and perhaps helping you to get to work and participate in your community. The more you know about how to find and keep these important people, the better.

Other people are coming to the same neighborhood from different directions and life experiences. The roadmap they need may be different from yours. Our PA Management Toolkit of self help and training resources is designed with the understanding that everyone's training and support needs may be different but the goal is the same; people want the information, experience and tools that will help them effectively recruit, hire, supervise and train their own personal care assistants.

While a training program is the best way to begin to develop good management skills, an initial orientation to a whole other way of seeing one's life can also be of great help. Some of us are just adjusting to our disability and many of us have not yet been employed, much less been an employer. As many of the peers we spoke to in the beginning of this project said, "I didn't have a clue about what was in store." You may want to learn more about disability issues and independent living.

So we offer a collection of resources that we call a **Toolkit for Hiring and Managing Your Personal Assistance Services (PAS)**. In addition to books, videos and other self help tools, we developed an introductory "Quickstart Guide" to help individuals recruit and supervise their PAs. The Guide is available on our website (www.vcil.org) or by calling the I-Line, our Information line, at 1-800-639-1522. Many peers said they wished they had had something like this Guide when they first started managing their PA services. We hope you find it helpful.

Some Suggestions for Using This Introduction to the PAS Toolkit

1. If you are a reader and like to take your time going through everything right away, by all means do so and enjoy. Many folks, though, find a presentation of this kind a bit much to grasp at once. In that case, we suggest you check the table of contents and resource lists, identifying the items you feel would be particularly useful to you at this point. If you need

- something you don't see, use this as a springboard for a conversation with staff at VCIL so they can help you find what you need.
2. Use the Toolkit materials to help organize your thoughts, map out the tasks you will need to accomplish and help you set timelines.
 3. We have found that discussing PAS management issues with others who use attendant care is a great way to gather further information and ideas. Managing your attendant care is an art as well as a set of learned skills and peers are a great source of creative management.
 4. Check out the websites and links. The Toolkit can be a stepping-stone to expanding how you look at your life and what you are able to do.
 5. Use the descriptive Bibliography to guide your reading choices.
 6. We have created a grid of particularly helpful chapters from books in the Toolkit Library. This resource can guide your study.
 7. Then, use the Quickstart Guide for a mini-course in managing your attendant care.

We hope you will offer your feedback on what we have provided as well your own suggestions on how to make it better.

We hope that this project will also create greater opportunities for users of attendant services to share their stories and experiences with one another and help us build a network of mentors. These mentors would be available to assist new users of PAS to develop their skills as employers. As you grow in your management skills, please consider becoming a mentor for the new guy on the block.

THREE METHODS of PAS TRAINING

The most important factor in VCIL's training program is to have it *interactively* developed *by* peers *for* peers. There are training programs being developed by professional trainers, but true to the Independent Living Movement, we have found that when we take responsibility and develop work products based on the experiences of those who needed and used these services, we end up with a better product.

The purpose for developing three types of training is to acknowledge that each person using a PA has unique questions, concerns and learning styles. As much as possible, the training options VCIL offers are intended to reflect these different interests, needs and learning preferences.

Peers identified a range of training issues but they also told us how they wanted to learn. There was a strong interest in self-help materials, interest in one-on-one support and a desire for shared learning and peer support opportunities.

- 1) **Self-Training** -- The topics of management are listed in this Toolkit for you to choose from either a section at a time or the entire book of materials. The materials will be sent to your home. The materials for each topic are taken from a variety of already published manuals that make up the VCIL PAS Toolkit Library. This approach will give you an opportunity to use the materials as presented in the packet

and if you particularly like a style of presentation, you can check out that title from the library to see how they approach the overall management of PAs.

2) **One-on-One Training** (*with or without your attendant*) --

With this choice, you would request that a Peer Advocacy Counselor from VCIL or a peer mentor experienced in PA management talk with you about your specific needs and help you design a training program suited to what you need at that time. You may only want to talk about and practice advertising, or you may need some additional help to state your needs and how your PA can help you into a workable format for the two of you to use. Or, you may want some help with communication issues. The PAC or an experienced peer mentor will call you and may make an appointment to come to your home or meet you in an accessible meeting space near where you live.

3) **Group Workshops** -- for those who enjoy group learning sessions, we hope to offer periodic workshops covering all the topics necessary for hiring and managing your attendant. These would be spread out over several sessions and facilitated by peers who use attendant care services themselves. For those who tend to feel isolated, this is a great chance to get out and see how others deal with difficult circumstances or just share information.

VCIL PERSONAL ASSISTANT SERVICES

SELF-TRAINING OPTIONS

VCIL staff can put together a self-training packet designed to address your particular needs and interests. Included in each study packet are materials taken from the Toolkit library, some fact sheets and, where appropriate, forms and models to help you design the management program that most suits your needs. For more information, call the I-Line at 1-800-639-1522 and ask to talk with someone about the PAS Management Toolkit.

LIST OF TRAINING TOPICS:

- **Understand and Make a List of Your Care Needs**
- **Writing a Job Description and Recruiting an Attendant**
- **Screening Applicants**
- **Interviewing Applicants**
- **Developing a Work Schedule**
- **Training Your Attendant**
- **Setting Personal Boundaries**
- **Giving Directions to Your Attendant on How You Want Things Done**
- **Talking About Sensitive Issues**
- **Resolving Conflicts**
- **Vermont and National Resources**

PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES TOOLKIT

Resources in the VCIL Library

Annotated Bibliography

The following books, videos and tapes are part of the PAS Toolkit and are available from the Vermont Center for Independent Living, 11 East State Street, Montpelier VT 05602; 1-800-639-1522 or 802-229-0501; www.vcil.org.

A Step-by-Step Guide to Training and Managing Personal Attendants: Volume 1: A Consumer Guide.

Ulicney, G.R., Adler, A.B., Kennedy, S.E., Jones, M.L. (1987). Lawrence, KS: The Research and Training Center on Independent Living. This **manual** is designed with a specific style of management in mind, the use of checklists. It is geared to those who require extensive care but its detail is very useful to all who need to instruct someone about their specific tasks and when to do them. The checklist offers a visual reference that is helpful to all but particularly if you (or your attendant) is a "visual learner." If you are new to using a PA this manual can help guide your thoughts about what exactly you need. The generic checklists at the back are especially helpful for training a new PA. It is what it says, namely, a "**step by step guide.**"

Avoiding Attendants From Hell: A Practical Guide to Finding, Hiring, and Keeping Personal Care Attendants.

Price, J. (2002). 2nd ed. This **manual** is meant as a guide for the live-in PA situation but is useful to all who manage their own care. Written with humor and sensitivity, the author acknowledges the difficulties in managing one's own care and reminds us that it is not for everyone and then goes on to inspire us to do it. Offers guidelines and suggestions for advertising, interviewing, hiring, training and communicating with attendants. Addresses issues such as lending food and money and about

trips to the ER. Also provides sample flyers, ads, applications and contracts.

Consumer Direction in Personal Assistance: How to Work Together. Program Development Associates. (2002). Video. Berkeley, CA: InfoUse. Introduction by Judy Heumann, wheelchair user, well-known longtime advocate for Independent Living and the former Assistant Secretary of Education. This **series of four videos and learning guides** is intended for people working for agencies as personal assistants or who are training to become personal assistants. The emphasis is on understanding that even though they might be “technically” employees of an agency, when they are in your service they are under your management and direction. You could give these resources to your attendants as part of their training but is also useful for your own general knowledge. The four units help prepare personal assistants to do their job....” These four units are: 1) Consumer Direction, What is it? 2) Health and Safety, 3) Communication, and 4) Rights and Responsibilities.

Getting From Here to There: A Manual on Personal Assistance. Ludlum, C.D. (1996). University of Connecticut: The A.J. Pappanikou Center on Special Education and Rehabilitation. (860) 486-5055. This **concise manual** answers questions on how and where to advertise, what questions to ask prospective employees, types of taxes to pay as an employer, and how to check references. It also includes useful forms for photocopying throughout the book. Written by someone who was reluctant to have attendant care because of concerns about how to find employees, how to pay them and all of the other challenges. The manual does a pretty good job of outlining the most important general issues and is a good starter guide for those who might be overwhelmed by the more in-depth manuals or who already have a really clear idea of how they will instruct and manage their employees.

Help at Home: A Guide to Finding and Keeping Your Caregiver. Hammer-Williamson, K., & Henson, K. (eds). (1997). Burlington, VT: Project Home. Primarily directed toward *home sharing* but helpful for all PA users. This **Vermont-specific**

guide focuses on the self-directed, non-medical approach to independent living and personal attendant care. It is an excellent resource and outlines everything from advertising, interviewing and screening, to scheduling and training. It also addresses sticky subjects like communication, conflict and abuse.

Hiring and Management of Personal Care Assistants for Individuals with Spinal Cord Injury. Burdsall, D. Spinal Cord Injury Project at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center: National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research; U.S. Department of Education. This is a very short **manual** and geared toward individuals with spinal cord injuries, but also generally useful. This resource *briefly* describes Personal Assistance Services, how to find, screen and interview a prospective Personal Care Assistant, and discusses your relationship with your PCA. Very brief but has good suggestions and some good usable sample forms.

Personal Assistance Services Guide: A Guide for Hiring, Management and Conflict Resolution. Interagency Outreach Training Initiative and the Utah Assistive Technology Program, Utah State University. (1998). Available in alternative formats: call 435-797-3811. "This **guide** was developed to... find, fund, train and manage personal assistance services... [it takes] you through... defining your needs, advertising, interviewing, negotiating, setting up contracts, paying taxes, training, firing, locating *potential funding sources, and accessing assistive technology.*" This manual places great emphasis on appropriate communication in managing your care. It is the only one we have seen that also addresses assistive technology and potential funding sources. It includes portrayals of real people, checklists and forms for copying.

Caregivers and Personal Assistants: How to Find Hire and Manage the People Who Help You (or Your Loved One). Degraff, A.H., Saratoga Access Publications, Fort Collins, CO. (2002) Good for managing several attendants and a very active lifestyle. An incredibly comprehensive **reference book** covering every aspect of attendant care. However, it is very dense and the amount of material can be overwhelming. Small

type, chapters overlap with information in several areas, so not user friendly from several viewpoints. As a **reference manual**, though, it is so thorough we are reluctant not to include it in this Toolkit. The author brings his personal experience of over 30 years and his passion to share this information, which is so vital to the independence of people with significant disabilities.

Personal Assistance Services Users Manual.

DisABILITY Resource Center. Everett, WA. This **comprehensive manual** discusses many very specific details about finding and hiring an attendant. For example, it covers developing a job description, interviewing candidates, creating a work schedule, checking references and training your newly hired attendant. It also discusses issues around communicating with your attendant, such as dealing with conflict, confidentiality and creating boundaries. This manual has excellent templates and samples of application forms, job descriptions, work schedules and interview questions. It also gives excellent information on the Independent Living Philosophy.

Going Home. National Council of Independent Living.

Audiotape. Sponsored by Michigan Centers for Independent Living. Brief but informative discussion of what one faces as one thinks about leaving a nursing home or rehab center in order to live in one's own home. Also gives a helpful, very *detailed* checklist describing issues and tasks that need to be done to accomplish this seemingly daunting task. The checklist is appropriate for anyone with significant disabilities attempting to change or even review living circumstances in order to be more independent.

INDEPENDENT LIVING MOVEMENT

and

DISABILITY RIGHTS

Although individuals with disabilities around the country began to take steps toward creating their own civil rights movement, Berkeley, California, is recognized as the “birthplace” of the Disability Civil Rights/Independent Living Movement. In the 1960s a group of students with disabilities at the University of California, Berkeley, worked on removing architectural barriers on the campus and in the surrounding community. They taught themselves the daily living skills needed to survive. They learned how to hire and train personal assistants to provide the physical assistance they needed. They also reached out to other people with disabilities and began to create a new model for self-help and peer support. In 1972 the group moved out from the campus to the community and opened the first Independent Living Center.

The independent living and disability rights movement that grew out of the late 1960s was unique in two critical ways. First, people with disabilities were in charge of their own advocacy organization. People with disabilities moved away from the charity-based model that dominated many existing disability organizations. Second, people with various types of disabilities began to join together in their advocacy efforts. It became apparent that the old system of single disability organizations

had separated people with disabilities from each other. The infighting that resulted prevented them from gaining any true sense of the shared power of disability rights as a social and civil rights movement. By joining together and advocating for the rights of all people with disabilities, these new “cross disability” organizations did away with the “divide and conquer” influence that had limited the effectiveness of disability-specific organizations.

Vermont’s own Center for Independent Living was formed in 1979 by a small but dedicated group of individuals. A statewide door-to-door survey of Vermonters with disabilities found that many individuals with disabilities and their families shared a common desire for disability information, peer support and the opportunity to come together to make social change. People from all over Vermont came together to create a statewide organization that could focus on disability rights and independent living and bring people together to solve problems facing people with disabilities. They established their nonprofit status and obtained the initial funding needed to set up the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL). In 1980, VCIL successfully advocated for state legislation and funding for the program that is now known as the Attendant Services Program. For many people the word independence meant being able to live outside a nursing home. At that time, there were few state or federally funded attendant or personal service options and none that allowed you to hire your own attendant, pay a spouse to provide

the service, or stay on the program if you went to work. If you didn't have the help you needed to get out of bed or carry out any of the other survival requirements for daily life, you were dependent on a facility to provide those for you. Creating the Attendant Services Program for the people who needed it was a major victory. The Vermont Center for Independent Living supports independent living goals for a diverse disability community but it started with attendant care.

AGING AND INDEPENDENT LIVING

Contributed by Dolly Fleming, Executive Director of COVE (Community of Vermont Elders)

It is exceedingly clear that Vermont and the nation are experiencing a rise in the elder population. Demographics are showing that people are living longer and that the elder population is expanding. Seniors need and deserve a comprehensive continuum of care and a care system that promotes dignity, choice, well-being and independence. People who provide attendant care and support play a critical role both within Long Term Care (LTC) facilities and in the homes of seniors who use personal services.

Seniors need and deserve care options and quality of care in whatever setting they choose. Seniors choosing to remain at home especially rely on the availability and partnership of attendant care providers. When seniors exercise this preference, the demand for support services provided in the home increases dramatically. Quality of life and independence for the seniors are significantly influenced by the attributes these workers bring to their care-giving jobs; the education and training they receive, and the quality of these jobs. **The attitudes, values, skills and knowledge of these workers, how they are compensated and rewarded, and the way their jobs are organized and**

managed, all have a role to play in determining long-term care quality.

Better supported caregivers are critical to independent living because they raise the quality of care received by consumers, increase retention, attract new caregivers and foster quality independent living. Respecting consumers and care providers go hand in hand. This causal link is critical to the needs, interests and rights of our senior citizens.

OTHER RESOURCES

National Websites on PAS Issues

The Center for Personal Assistance Services (PAS) offers an overview of current activities to improve and support personal assistance services. Their website provides excellent coverage of PAS, workforce issues, PAS and assistive technology issues at the workplace, updates on state activities and information on both informal and professional personal assistance issues. It also offers excellent web links to other senior and disability websites. Visit them at: <http://www.pascenter.org>

The Spinal Cord Injury Information Network's website offers listings of PAS training videos, checklists and books they recommend. Some of these are in VCIL's Toolkit Library. For more information, visit their website: <http://www.spinalcord.uab.edu>

American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today (ADAPT) advocates for PAS funding and for consumer controlled long-term care services. A national advocacy group, ADAPT focuses on promoting services in the community instead of warehousing people with disabilities in institutions and nursing homes through community involvement and self-advocacy. To learn more about Vermont's ADAPT organization, Green Mountain ADAPT, contact the Home and Community Access Program at VCIL. Visit the national ADAPT website at: <http://www.adapt.org/>

The Center for an Accessible Society provides information for journalists on disability rights, cultural and social issues and resources. Their site includes some excellent background on PAS and links to some key PAS policy reports and resource groups. Visit them at: <http://www.accessiblesociety.org>

Supporting and Finding PAS Workers in Vermont

The Vermont Association of Professional Care Providers is a nonprofit, membership organization dedicated to advancing the

professional growth, employment opportunities and quality of life for people who provide personal care and support services in all home, community and health care settings. For additional information contact: *Susan Gordon, VAPCP Director, PO Box 1276, Montpelier, VT 05602.*

Telephone: 802-229-4731, E-mail: APCP@vermontelders.org

The Community of Vermont Elders has taken a lead role in promoting funding and services that help direct care workers and the Vermonters who need these services. In addition to helping start and house the Vermont Association of Professional Care Providers, COVE has sponsored two health care work force initiatives and is working with other organizations on the development of a direct care registry to help caregivers and those who need personal assistance to find one another. For an update on these health care work force initiatives or for more information about advocacy and policy work of the Community of Vermont Elders (COVE), call (802) 229-4731 or visit www.vermontelders.org.

Need Other Information?

Additional disability and senior resources and websites are available at the DAIL website (<http://www.dail.state.vt.us>), at VCIL's website and through other senior and disability programs. For help finding other resources or advocacy assistance, call the

Senior HelpLine 1-800-642-5119 (V/TTY) or VCIL's I-Line at 1-800-639-1522 or visit our website: www.vcil.org.

Attendant Service Program Information and Options

What is the Attendant Services Program?

The Attendant Services Program (ASP) supports independent living for adult Vermonters with disabilities who need physical assistance with daily activities.

- The participant in the program (or a designee under Personal Services option) hires, trains, supervises and schedules his or her personal care attendant.
- The participant or designee is the employer. There is no cost to the participant. The program pays an hourly wage to the attendant.
- Any legal worker may be employed as a PA, except a spouse or civil union partner under the Medicaid funded portion of the program.
- A person who has a substantiated history of abuse, neglect, or exploitation will not be paid by this program.

What activities are covered?

Attendants may only be paid to provide assistance provided to meet the following needs:

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) include dressing, bathing, grooming, toileting, transferring, mobility, range of motion exercises, positioning and eating.

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) include meal preparation, medication management, care of adaptive & health equipment, management of finances and mail, and shopping and cleaning.

Who is Eligible?

To be eligible an individual must

- Be a Vermont resident
- Be at least 18 years old, and
- Meet all of the eligibility criteria for one of these programs

1) General Fund Personal Services

- Have a disability
- Need physical assistance with at least one activity of daily living or meal preparation, and
- Be eligible to receive Medicaid

2) General Fund PCAC – Participant Directed Attendant Care

- Have a permanent and severe disability
- Need physical assistance with at least two activities of daily living, and
- Be able to direct own personal care services

3) Medicaid PCAC – Participant Directed Attendant Care

- Have a permanent and severe disability
- Need attendant services with at least two activities of daily living
- Be able to direct own personal care services
- Be able and willing to hire an attendant other than a spouse or civil union partner, and
- Be eligible to receive Medicaid

How Does the Program Work?

- 1) After an application is received, program staff contact the applicant to screen for eligibility. (Note: Applicants who are not eligible for Medicaid PDAC may be placed on a chronological waiting list until program funds are available).
- 2) A program assessor completes an in-depth assessment of the applicant's needs in his or her home.
- 3) An Eligibility Committee (consisting of program participants) reviews the assessment and determines if

the applicant is eligible for the program, and authorizes a specific number of hours of service per day based on the information received in the Independent Living Assessment (ILA). (Note: The Attendant Services Program may not cover all needs and activities).

- 4) The participant signs an annual agreement and enrolls one or more attendants. The participant must comply with State and Federal employment laws.
- 5) The participant and the attendant complete, sign and submit biweekly time reports to the designated payroll agent.
- 6) Payments are processed and checks are mailed to the attendant on an established payroll schedule.
- 7) Participant needs are reviewed at least annually.
- 8) Participants and applicants may appeal if they do not agree with the decisions concerning eligibility or time authorized for their care.

MORE FACTS AND TIPS FROM VERMONT ATTENDANT SERVICES PROGRAM

Where to advertise for attendants:

- Put an ad in the newspaper. Area weekly papers in or near your town can be particularly useful.
- College bulletin boards
- HomeShare Vermont (in certain counties) can try to match you with someone
- Bulletin boards (such as outside your local grocery store)
- Call your local Home Health Agency

Your responsibilities as a PDAC-eligible employer:

- Hire/fire attendants
- Train
- Supervise
- Follow regulations
- Complete timesheets
- Live independently outside of a nursing home or residential care home

Appeals Process: *(If you do not agree with the decision for your eligibility or time allotted for your care, it is your right to ask for a review of your circumstances)*

- Call, Mike Meunier, Program Director, at the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, 802-241-2431.
- An informational review of the facts in the dispute issue will be discussed on the telephone with Mr. Meunier in the hopes that a resolution can be reached informally.

- If the issues cannot be resolved, the applicant/participant may request a Commissioner's Review.
- Remember, there is always an opportunity for you to express your opinion.
- Help your assessor be sure your needs are **fully and clearly documented**. Many times the problem is not with the needs themselves but how they were stated.

How to report abuse neglect and exploitation:

- Call Mike Meunier, Program Director, 802-241-2431, or e-mail him at mike.meunier@dail.state.vt.us
- Talk with your annual assessor from the Home Health Agency
- Write a letter to Mr. Meunier and explain any abuse issues in detail.
- Mr. Meunier is a “mandated reporter” and must report any instances of abuse, neglect or exploitation that come to his attention.

Mandatory Criminal Background Check

- If you are a participant in the Attendant Services Program, the state requires a criminal background check for any potential employee and they will do this as part of the employee hiring process. The ASP will send you forms that your attendant must fill out and submit for a required Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation background check. If the check reveals a conviction for abuse, exploitation or neglect, the state will not pay that employee.

Be sure to:

- Screen and adequately interview people you may possibly hire.

Other Helpful Information:

- An attendant may be paid for up to 30 days while the participant is in a hospital.
- Pay stops during the time the participant is in a nursing home.
- The program does not pay for respite care.
- An attendant may be paid for up to 6 weeks if the participant leaves the state and comes with you to work.
- You may have as many attendants as you need to help with your care; however, the ASP will only pay for the number of hours authorized.

For more information about the Attendant Service Program and Participant Directed Attendant Care options, contact Mike Meunier, Program Director, at the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, 802-241-2431 (e-mail mike.meunier@dail.state.vt.us).

Thank You!

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For more information about the Toolkit and related peer support and training resources, please visit our website (www.vcil.org) or call VCIL's I-Line, 1-800-639-1522. We welcome your questions and look forward to hearing from you.

Updated materials may be available at our website or by calling VCIL.