

Section 4(I) - Personal Assistance Services

This guidance is intended to assist counselors when personal assistance services (PAS) are a necessary part of employment planning for their consumer. Any time that personal assistance services are being considered, the counselor must give a copy of this Guidance section to the consumer so that they understand the role of BRS in considering this service.

*“Personal assistance services means a range of services provided by one or more persons designed to assist an individual with a disability to perform daily living activities on or off the job that the individual would typically perform without assistance if the individual did not have a disability. The services must be designed to increase the individual's control in life and ability to perform everyday activities on or off the job. The services must be necessary to the achievement of an employment outcome and may be provided only while the individual is receiving other vocational rehabilitation services**.* The services may include training in managing, supervising, and directing personal assistance services.” * 34 CFR 361(b)(39)

**Similar to transportation services, Personal Assistance Services in support of Placement services may be provided to a consumer who has been placed into employment, until the consumer receives his/her first pay, if the consumer does not have other funding sources already in place and will need to use earnings to pay for all/part of their PA Services. When a counselor and consumer decide that personal assistance services are required to support a consumer's participation either in an evaluation or in training they should consider the following:

1. Who is providing personal assistance services now for the consumer?
2. When is that personal assistance provided (A.M., P.M. all day)?
3. What services are the personal assistants providing?
4. Is the personal assistant being paid?
5. How is the personal assistance being funded?
 - a. Is the consumer receiving Medicaid?
 - b. Is the consumer on the Medicaid PCA waiver?
 - i. If so, how many hours of personal assistance are authorized per week through the Medicaid PCA waiver?
6. Where will the consumer be living? Is that different than their current residence?
7. Is there technology or a simple modification that could be used instead of a personal assistant to complete some or all tasks?

The counselor should document the answers to the questions listed above and begin a discussion with the consumer about possible solutions to their personal assistance needs. There may be times when the counselor and consumer can discover ways to meet the consumer's personal assistance needs without actual provision of paid services, or through use of other resources available to the consumer.

The counselor may also want to consider using the BRS Case Conferencing model to create other appropriate solutions.

Consultation with Supervisor, District Director or BRS Personal Assistance consultant may be considered to assess appropriate “next steps”. To initiate a consult with the PAS consultant, use the PAS Consult Form; also refer to BRS Guidance on PAS (on the shared drive).

One outcome of a BRS case conference or BRS personal assistance consultation may be a recommendation to evaluate the consumer's PAS needs in the workplace and/or their ability to direct workplace personal assistants. When this information is needed, the PAS consultant can work with the counselor to authorize a vendor to evaluate the consumer's PAS needs in the workplace. The PAS Assessment Referral and the PAS Assessment Report can be found on the shared drive.

The counselor may decide that an evaluation of the consumer's needs in the home by an Occupational Therapist (OT) or Physical Therapist (PT) would provide appropriate recommendations for treatment to strengthen the consumer's abilities (PT, OT, etc.), or, for equipment to allow the consumer to be more independent (such as portable lifts, reach/grab equipment, etc). If equipment or devices are being considered, the counselor must also confer with the BRS Assistive Technology consultant for advice and assistance.

The counselor and consumer should also discuss “life planning” for the consumer and consider the option of applying for Medicaid and/or the Medicaid PCA waiver if there is no other coverage, and/or be able to explain how they will pay for personal assistance after BRS funds for personal assistance services in support of evaluation and/or training have ended.

What if the consumer does not currently have any funding for personal assistance?

- Sometimes a consumer may have all of their personal assistance needs met by family members and/or a paraprofessional at school (prior to exiting high school), and may not have explored funding.
- Since BRS will not be providing funding for personal assistance after an evaluation or training has ended, the consumer needs to have alternative funding in place when BRS funding ends. BRS expects that the consumer will apply for Medicaid and/or the Medicaid PCA waiver as soon as possible. Planning to pay for personal assistance "out-of-pocket" is generally not a reasonable solution, for most consumers due to the cost of this service.
- The counselor should advise the consumer to apply for Medicaid as soon as possible. A Medicaid application and Medicaid PCA waiver application can be found on the DSS website.

- If a consumer has no other funding available, BRS can pay for personal assistance for Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) needs as well as PAS in the community and for educational purposes, as an evaluation, or as a service on the IPE, until the consumer becomes eligible for other funding.

What if the consumer is receiving Medicaid?

- If the consumer is receiving Medicaid, BRS would expect that Medicaid coverage would be used for the consumer's ADLs (toileting, transferring, dressing, bathing and eating) in their residence (home or dormitory).
- If the consumer is receiving Medicaid, but will not be eligible for the PCA waiver or is on the waiver waiting list, BRS would expect the consumer to make every effort to use home health aides paid for through Medicaid (See BRS Personal Assistance/Home Health Aide Services for Post-Secondary Students; this can be found on the BRS website <http://www.ct.gov/brs/cwp/view.asp?a=3955&q=465120>).

• CAUTION

- Currently both the BRS Personal Assistance Services and Medicaid PCA waiver services are using the same fiduciary agency.
- If the consumer is receiving funding for personal assistance through the Medicaid PCA waiver AND BRS, the consumer and their personal assistants may be confused about what hours are funded by each program.
- It will be very important for the BRS counselors and Allied to be very clear with the consumer and their personal assistants about what is being funded by each program.