

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**

Procedure No: I.C.3.PR.003
Subject: Individual and Family Grants
Section: Services and Support

Issue Date: April 30, 2002
Effective Date: April 30, 2002
Revised: May 15, 2008
Revised: December 20, 2010
Approved: /s/Peter H. O'Meara/KdP

A. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to establish a consistent approach and process for the administration of Individual and Family Grants. Individual and Family Grants are designed to support individuals who are eligible for DDS services and who live in the community.

B. Applicability

This procedure shall apply to adults eligible for DDS services who live on their own. The procedure also applies to families and other caregivers who have primary responsibility for individuals of any age who are eligible for DDS supports and services. It shall apply to the Regional staff responsible for the administration of the Individual and Family Grants. Home and Community Based Services Waiver enrollment is not a requirement for receipt of Individual and Family Grants.

C. Definitions

Eligible Individuals: All active DDS individuals who live with their family caregivers, independently, or in a Community Companion Home (CCH) are eligible to apply for an Individual & Family Grant.

Individual and Family Grants: Cash subsidies for disability-related expenses incurred by adults who live on their own or families or caregivers who provide care at home or in a CCH for eligible individuals of any age.

CCH: Community Companion Home, formerly known as Community Training Home (CTH), is a private home that is licensed by DDS for an individual who is served by DDS to live with the family and receive support services within the home setting.

IHS: Individualized Home Supports, a service delivered in the person's own home to assist with learning the skills of everyday living.

D. Implementation

This procedure shall apply to Individual and Family Grants funded through the Family Support Grant accounts. The maximum single direct payment per individual is \$5,000 per fiscal year. The Regional Administrator (or designee) may approve, by exception, additional grant(s) or a single grant that exceeds \$5,000 in one fiscal year. Families (payees) must submit to the

Regional designee expense reports and receipts or canceled checks documenting the appropriate expenditure of the first grant before an additional grant is made.

The funding amount for family grants varies, and more than one request may be made in a fiscal year.

1. Eligibility for Individual & Family Grant Funding

Grant funds, when available, will be based upon the following prioritization:

- a. Individuals who have no DDS funded services.
 - i. Children residing with family caregivers.
 - ii. Adults residing with family caregivers.
 - iii. Adults residing independently.
- b. Individuals who have DDS funded services but could benefit from additional services or goods that are not covered through the existing funded services.
 - i. Children residing with family caregivers or in a CCH.
 - ii. Adults residing with family caregivers.
 - iii. Adults residing independently or with individualized home supports
 - iv. Adults residing in a CCH.
- c. There is no requirement for enrollment in the Home & Community Based (HCBS) services waiver to receive an Individual & Family Grant, and individuals who are not waiver enrollees will receive first priority for these funds. Priority will be given to individuals with the least amount of DDS funded services relative to their Level of Need.
- d. Based upon the availability of grant funding during a fiscal year other active DDS individuals not specified above may be considered for a Grant upon review and approval of the Regional Administrator of designee.

2. Allowable Expenses

Family grants are intended to assist the individual/family to pay for disability related expenses to help maintain the health and safety of the individual. There is a wide range of acceptable family grant expenses depending on the individual and family circumstances. The following examples include possible appropriate family grant expenditures and examples of disallowed expenses. These examples should not be considered all inclusive, but instead are illustrative of uses of the funds.

- a. Family grants may be used for respite; recreation; camp; medical or clinical expenses and co-pays; adaptive equipment and related supplies; home improvements for accessibility and safety; emergency housing and utilities; furnishings; specialized clothing; special diets; initial rent related costs for those seeking HUD or at risk for homelessness; short term habilitative and vocational support; goods or services for

people supported in IHS; goods or services to those families exiting the Birth-to-Three system; communication devices and supplies; and other items as recommended by the individual's support team and approved by the Family Grant Regional Review team.

- b. The following listing of items, goods and services will not be paid for through the use of the grants: on-going payment of utilities, rent, or mortgage; purchase or lease of vehicles; clothing unless determined to be disability related; cigarettes; alcohol; gambling; food unless determined to be disability related; expenses of other family members; or any illegal activity; or any other item/service that is not an appropriate disability-related expense as determined by the Family Grant Regional Review team and or the Regional Administrator/designee.
- c. Individuals and families requesting equipment and/or home modifications costing more than \$2,500 will obtain three bids for the equipment and/or home modifications, submit copies to DDS, and maintain documentation of those bids for three years from the date the grant is received. The lowest bid shall be selected unless justification is submitted and approved by DDS for selection of a higher bid.

Individual and Family Grants are not entitlements and are limited by availability of funds.

3. Application and Approval Process

a. Application Process

Case Managers, Help Line Workers, and/or Service Coordinators shall provide families and individuals with information about Individual and Family Grants and the eligibility criteria. Eligible individuals and families may apply at any time. The Case Manager, Help Line Worker, or Service Coordinator shall assist the individual or family to complete the request using the Individual and Family Grant Request for and Needs Checklist and any other supporting documentation to assist in the evaluation of the request.

b. Authorization Process

Each region shall have a Family Grant Regional Review team for the award of family grants, that includes the Regional Administrator (or designee) and at least one other individual designated by the region. The Review Team will review all grant applications based on the criteria outlined above and determine if a grant will be awarded.

c. Award Process

The Regional designee will notify families or individuals of grant approval and will assure that an Agreement and Authorization form is executed.

- i. The Individual and Family Grant Agreement and Authorization shall specify the total amount of grant; specific purpose of the grant including description of approved purchases; special conditions as applicable; requirements for receipts; cancelled checks and expenditure reports.

ii. The Individual and Family Grant Agreement and Authorization form shall be signed by the payee/vendor and sent to the Regional Administrator or designee for final approval. A new Family Grant Agreement and Authorization shall be signed by the family (payee/vendor) for each grant.

iii. Notification of approved requests shall be forwarded to the regional business office for payment processing.

iv. Individual and Family Grants are to be used for the purpose indicated in the Agreement and Authorization form. Any change in use must be prior approved in writing by the Regional administrator or designee and forwarded to the Regional family grant designee.

4. Expenditure Reporting

- a. Individuals and families shall submit a signed expenditure report and copies of receipts or canceled checks for each authorized grant within 30 days of the receipt and use of all of the grant funds as authorized, but no later than 90 days after the close of a fiscal year (June 30th). The Regional designee will review and approve this report as appropriate.
- b. Individuals and/or families shall maintain documentation supporting the expenditures of grant funds in the form of original receipts or cancelled checks for three full years after the end of the fiscal year in which they received an Individual and Family Grant.
- c. If an individual/family fails to submit an acceptable expense report and copies of receipts or canceled checks, and/or uses the grant funds for purposes other than what is authorized, no additional family grant funds will be authorized to the individual's payee/vendor who used the grant funds inappropriately and/or did not meet the expenditure reporting requirements. In exceptional circumstances in order to maintain the immediate health and safety of the individual, and when approved by the Regional Administrator or designee, an additional grant for the individual can be made to an alternate payee/vendor even if the expenditure reporting requirements are not met by the original payee/vendor for the individual.

5. Audit Process

In order to ensure that individuals/families are spending DDS funds according to their signed Agreement, an annual audit will be performed based upon a sampling of each Region's grant recipients. The audit sample will be representative of the population and conducted in accordance with a standard auditing plan established by the DDS Central Office Audit Unit.

- a. The audit sample will be selected by November 1 following each fiscal year.
- b. There may be instances in which the Regions will audit specifically identified individuals because of concerns around the proper expenditure of grant funds.

- c. All individuals selected for audit will be notified in writing and given a due date to submit, in addition to the Expenditure Report previously submitted, documentation of goods and services purchased. Whenever possible six weeks will be allowed for submittal of required documentation.
- d. Documentation shall include copies of paid receipts normally obtained for purchased goods and services and/or copies of cancelled checks that evidence payments.
- e. By exception, such as costs related to mileage, documentation of expenditures may consist of an itemized listings (including purpose of travel, dates, mileage and rate per mile) signed by the payee.
- f. The audit to review documentation will be conducted by an agency designee. The audit findings will be reviewed with the Regional Administrator or designee.
- g. Unsatisfactory results of an audit may lead to the individual or family (payee) being ineligible for future Individual and Family Grants.

6. Taxable Income Status

The purpose of subsidy payments provided to individuals or families from these accounts is to meet the special needs of individuals and their families who are eligible for DDS services. The payments are in the nature of disbursements by a governmental unit in the interest of the general welfare and are not taxable.

E. References

Section 17a-218(e) of the Connecticut General Statutes
Federal Tax Guide Report, pp. 1612

F. Attachments

I.C.3.PR.002 Attachment A Individual and Family Grant Request and Need Checklist
I.C.3.PR.002 Attachment B Individual and Family Grant Agreement and Authorization
I.C.3.PR.002 Attachment C Individual and Family Grant Program Expenditure Report