

Guidance for Individuals Who Currently Live in a DDD-Funded Residential Setting: Understanding the Shift of Housing Payments from DDD Contracts to the Supportive Housing Connection

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) is transitioning from a contract-based system to a Medicaid-based fee-for-service system. This change will impact the way that provider agencies are paid for housing-related costs for the individuals who live in their DDD-funded residential settings (such as a group home or supervised apartment).

What will change?

As DDD transitions to the fee-for-service system, there are three primary housing-related changes for individuals who live in a DDD-funded residential setting:

- DDD-funded housing payments will shift from being paid through DDD contracts with provider agencies to being paid through the Supportive Housing Connection (SHC).
(The SHC is a collaborative effort between the NJ Department of Human Services and the NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency to administer housing payments on behalf of DDD.)
- The individual (or his/her guardian) will be required to sign a written lease or Residency Agreement that includes information about **tenant rights**.
- The amount and the process by which an individual contributes to his/her housing-related costs – currently called Contribution to Care – will change.

What are ‘tenant rights’?

In DDD-funded residential settings, the provider agency that owns or leases the home is the landlord, and the individual who lives in the home is the tenant. Individuals in residential settings will be required to sign a lease or residency agreement that includes information about the individual’s basic rights with regard to living as a tenant in the home, or ‘tenant rights.’

- In cases where an individual (or guardian) has already signed a lease with his/her landlord, that lease will be used.
- In cases where the service provider owns or leases the home and an individual has not signed a lease, service providers will have the option of putting either a lease or Residency Agreement in place.

What documents does the individual need to sign?

The individual (or his/her guardian) must sign two documents at the outset and then annually upon their renewal:

- Lease or Residency Agreement
- DDD Rental Subsidy Agreement, which explains the requirements of receiving a DDD-funded housing payment (“rental subsidy”).

How will this affect an individual’s income and financial resources?

In the current system, individuals living in a DDD-funded group home or supervised apartment (or their representative payee) are required to pay a Contribution to Care amount equal to 75% of the

individual's monthly income to the State of New Jersey. Once an individual's lease or Residency Agreement goes into effect, the Contribution to Care payment to the State will no longer be required.

Instead, an individual will pay 30% of his/her income to the residential service provider (landlord) toward the cost of rent. The residential service provider may also determine an additional portion of an individual's monthly income that must be paid toward other living expenses, such as food and utilities. Individuals will receive a letter in the mail indicating the date their rental payment to the residential service provider will begin, which will also be the date the Contribution to Care payment to the State of New Jersey will end. *Individuals will receive a letter indicating the date their rental payment to the residential service provider will begin, which will also be the date the Contribution to Care payment to the State of New Jersey will end.*

What do I need to do?

If you are the guardian of an individual, you will need to review and sign all required documents and assist the individual with obtaining required income information.

If you are the payee for an individual, you will need to pay the required 30% of the individual's monthly income toward the cost of rent plus any additional required amount toward living expenses to the provider (rather than to the State).

If you are neither the guardian nor the payee, there is nothing you need to do other than provide financial information related to the individual if you manage or have access to accounts that are in the individual's name.

How can I prepare?

In addition to signing the lease or Residency Agreement and DDD Rental Subsidy Agreement, individuals and/or their guardians must provide the following information/documentation to their residential service provider (required in order to qualify for a DDD-funded housing payment/rental subsidy):

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) award letter
- Social Security Disability (SSD) award letter, if applicable
- If employed, last four consecutive pay stubs
- Statements from any assets retained if the amount exceeds \$5,000
- Any other benefit/income/award documentation

What happens if payments are not made?

The Supportive Housing Connection will pay its portion of the individual's rent (housing payment) each month, on behalf of DDD. The individual/payee must pay 30% of the individual's monthly income plus any additional provider-determined fee toward living expenses. Failure of the individual/payee to make these housing-related payments may result in the loss of housing and/or services.

For additional information or assistance, please contact one of the following:

Jonathan Seifried, Director, Housing and Community Transitions
Jonathan.Seifried@dhs.state.nj.us | 609.689.1786

Courtney Davey, Supervisor, Housing Subsidy Unit:
Courtney.Davey@dhs.state.nj.us | 732.968.4344