

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHOOSE

A Family Guide to  
**Self-Directing Your NOW/COMP Waiver**

*Including How to Use Your Environmental Accessibility Adaptation Dollars  
(This guide is for informational purposes only. It is not to be used as legal or medical advice.  
Contact your Medicaid provider for the most up to date self-direction information.)*

Georgia Medicaid NOW/COMP Waiver • DBHDD Participant Direction Program • Service Code  
S5165-UC

## PART ONE — Understanding Self-Direction

### What Is Participant Direction?

If your family member has a Georgia NOW/COMP Medicaid waiver, you already have access to funded services and supports. But did you know you have a choice in HOW those services are delivered?

Georgia's Participant Direction (also called Self-Direction) program gives you — the family — the power to act as the employer. Instead of a provider agency telling you who shows up at your door and when, YOU decide:

- Which vendors and providers you hire
- Which services to prioritize within your budget
- How and when services are delivered
- Who comes into your home

**The bottom line:**

Self-direction puts you in the driver's seat of your loved one's care — with the same Medicaid funding you already have, just more control over how it's used.

## Traditional Model vs. Self-Direction — What's the Difference?

Right now, if you're using the Traditional Provider Model, a Medicaid-approved agency selects and sends providers to your home. They manage their employees, handle their payroll, and charge the agency fee from your waiver budget.

Traditional Provider Model	Self-Direction Model
An agency assigns you a provider	<b>YOU choose your own provider or vendor</b>
Agency sets the schedule	<b>YOU set the schedule that works for your family</b>
Agency takes a management fee from your budget	<b>More of your budget goes directly to services</b>
Limited flexibility in who enters your home	<b>You hire people you know and trust</b>
Agency handles all paperwork	You manage with help from a Fiscal Agent
Provider may change without your input	<b>You decide who stays and who goes</b>

## Who Can Self-Direct?

To participate in Georgia's Participant Direction program, the following requirements must be met:

- Must be enrolled in Georgia's NOW or COMP waiver
- Must live in your own home or the home of a family member (not a residential facility or group home)
- Must be able to act as the employer — OR designate a representative (parent, guardian, or trusted person over age 21) to do so
- Must attend one day of Mandatory Participant Direction Training
- Must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DBHDD
- Must choose a Fiscal Agent to manage your waiver funds

**Important:**

A parent, legal guardian, or trusted representative CAN direct services on behalf of a child or adult who cannot manage this independently. You do not have to be the waiver participant yourself to be the director.

## PART TWO — How to Become Self-Directed

### Step-by-Step: Enrolling in Participant Direction

The process has 6 steps. Your Support Coordinator will help you through most of them — and we can help you navigate the parts related to Environmental Accessibility Adaptation.

<b>1</b>	<b>Talk to Your Support Coordinator</b>	Contact your assigned Support Coordinator and tell them you want to explore Participant Direction. They will review your eligibility and explain the process specific to your ISP.
<b>2</b>	<b>Attend PD Training</b>	Attend one mandatory day of Participant Direction Training offered by DBHDD. This training covers your responsibilities as an employer, budget management, and program rules.
<b>3</b>	<b>Sign the MOU</b>	Sign the Memorandum of Understanding with DBHDD. This is your formal agreement to take on employer responsibilities under the self-direction model.
<b>4</b>	<b>Choose a Fiscal Agent</b>	Select one of the three approved Fiscal Agents (see below). The Fiscal Agent manages your waiver funds, processes payments to vendors, handles payroll taxes, and keeps you compliant with Medicaid rules.
<b>5</b>	<b>Update Your ISP</b>	Have your Support Coordinator submit an updated Individual Service Plan (ISP) or ISP addendum selecting Participant Direction as your service delivery method.
<b>6</b>	<b>Start Directing Your Services</b>	Once approved, you can begin selecting vendors and providers — including for Environmental Accessibility Adaptation services.

## Your Three Fiscal Agent Options

A Fiscal Agent (also called a Financial Support Services Provider) is required for all self-directing participants. They manage your budget, pay your vendors, handle employer taxes, and keep your Medicaid funds in compliance. You choose one — they work for you.

Acumen Fiscal Agent	Continuum Fiscal Services	Public Partnerships LLC (PPL)
www.acumenfiscalagent.com NOW: (866) 522-8636 COMP: (866) 522-8636 Vendor-ga@acumen2.net	www.continuumfs.com (855) 874-9311 235 Peachtree Street NE Suite 400, Atlanta, GA 30303	pplfirst.com/programs/georgia (866) 836-6792 2849 Paces Ferry Road Suite 630, Atlanta, GA 30339

## PART THREE — Using Your Environmental Modification Dollars

### What Are Environmental Accessibility Adaptation Dollars?

Every NOW/COMP waiver participant has access to a specific line item in their budget called Environmental Accessibility Adaptation (Service Code S5165-UC). This is separate from your other waiver services.

#### Key Facts:

- Up to \$15,000 USD available every 5 years per participant
- Covers home modifications that make your environment safer and more supportive
- Available to both self-directing AND traditional model participants
- Does NOT require you to be self-directed to access — but self-direction gives you MORE control over who does the work
- Most families never use this money because no one tells them what it can pay for

If you have never used your Environmental Accessibility Adaptation allocation, there is a very good chance that \$15,000 USD is sitting unused in your ISP right now.

### What Can These Dollars Pay For?

Environmental Accessibility Adaptation dollars are not just for ramps and grab bars. For individuals with autism and other IDD diagnoses, these funds can pay for modifications that address sensory needs, behavioral safety, and quality of life.

### Sensory Environment Modifications

- Dimmable and flicker-free lighting systems
- Acoustic panels for sound reduction
- Blackout and light-filtering window treatments
- Sensory-appropriate flooring
- Calming retreat spaces and sensory rooms
- Weighted blanket and sensory swing systems
- Low-stimulation design and color choices

### Safety & Accessibility Modifications

- Elopement prevention door systems and locks
- Impact-absorbing padded surfaces
- Grab bars and bathroom safety features
- Non-slip and seamless flooring transitions
- Furniture edge and corner protection
- Secured cabinet systems
- Temporary solutions for rental homes

## How to Hire Us Using Your E-Mod Dollars

Whether you are self-directing or using the traditional model, here is exactly how the process works when you choose us as your Environmental Accessibility Adaptation provider.

<b>1</b>	<b>Contact Us</b>	Call or email us to request a free home consultation. Tell us you have a NOW/COMP waiver and want to use your Environmental Accessibility Adaptation allocation.
<b>2</b>	<b>Sign a Release of Information</b>	Before your first visit, we will ask you to sign a Release of Information form. This lets us communicate with your Support Coordinator and OT about your loved one's needs — required by HIPAA.
<b>3</b>	<b>Home Assessment</b>	Your OT conducts a thorough sensory and accessibility assessment. They document findings and identify which modifications will make the most meaningful difference.
<b>4</b>	<b>OT Letter of Medical Necessity</b>	Your OT writes a Letter of Medical Necessity confirming the clinical need for each modification.

<b>5</b>	<b>We Create Your Scope of Work</b>	We design your customized modification plan and prepare a detailed Scope of Work with itemized costs — all within your \$15,000 USD E-Mod allocation.
<b>6</b>	<b>Prior Authorization Submitted</b>	Your Support Coordinator submits the prior authorization to Medicaid using our Scope of Work, OT letter, and cost estimate. We manage all follow-up with the coordinator.
<b>7</b>	<b>Medicaid Approval &amp; Installation</b>	Once Medicaid approves the prior auth, we schedule your installation. Our team completes all work professionally and on time.
<b>8</b>	<b>If Self-Directing: Vendor Payment</b>	If you are self-directing, your Fiscal Agent pays us directly as your enrolled vendor. Submit the invoice to your Fiscal Agent per their process. We will walk you through this.

## PART FOUR — Frequently Asked Questions

### **Do I have to be self-directing to use my E-Mod dollars?**

No. Environmental Accessibility Adaptation is available to both traditional and self-directing waiver participants. However, if you are self-directing, you have more choice over which vendor you use — including choosing us specifically.

### **We rent our home. Can we still get modifications?**

Yes. We specialize in temporary and semi-permanent modifications that do not require landlord permission. Blackout treatments, acoustic panels, sensory lighting, removable flooring and more are all covered options for renters.

### **My child has autism but doesn't need a wheelchair. Does this apply to us?**

Absolutely. Environmental Accessibility Adaptation is not just for physical disabilities. Sensory room buildouts, calming spaces, acoustic treatment, and lighting modifications are all medically necessary for many individuals with ASD — and fully fundable under this service code.

### **What if my loved one's Support Coordinator doesn't know about this service?**

We can help. With your permission, we will reach out to your Support Coordinator directly to explain the service, confirm the allocation in your ISP, and help initiate the prior authorization process.

### **How long does the prior authorization process take?**

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Typically 30 to 60 days from submission. For self-directed participants the process is typically much shorter. We manage all follow-up on your behalf so you don't have to chase anyone down.

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**Do I have to pay anything out of pocket?**

No. If your prior authorization is approved and you have available E-Mod allocation, Medicaid pays us directly. Your out-of-pocket cost is \$0 USD.

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**What if I've already used some of my E-Mod allocation?**

We will review your current ISP budget with your Support Coordinator to determine how much remains. If only a partial amount is left, we will design a modification plan that fits within what's available.

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## Ready to Use Your E-Mod Dollars?

We handle everything — assessment, design, Medicaid paperwork, and installation.  
*Beautiful, clinically-sound environments — funded by the waiver you already have.*

Phone: 404.301.2299

Email: [acs@pushministry.org](mailto:acs@pushministry.org)

Website: [www.pushministry.org/acs](http://www.pushministry.org/acs)

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