



# Tell Me More about... IRIS



## What is IRIS?

IRIS is a program that allows you to direct your own services and supports. IRIS recognizes that you are the decision-maker in your life, including determining your daily activities and the types of support or assistance you need to meet your long-term care needs. IRIS is grounded in the core values of self-determination. These values include:

- Freedom to decide how you want to live your life;
- Authority over a specific budget;
- Support to organize resources in ways that are life enhancing and meaningful to you;
- Responsibility for the wise use of public funds and recognition of the contribution you make to your community; and
- Confirmation of the important role of self-advocates.

## How Does IRIS Work?

### IRIS Overview.

Self-directing your long-term care services offers you a way to have control over your services and supports. In IRIS, you control an individualized budget that is based on your individualized needs. Participants of the IRIS program decide on the needed services, supports and goods within this budget. IRIS participants schedule services, select providers of services and supports, and select the settings for services. When participants hire their own caregivers, participants must follow Department of Health Services (DHS) policy that prevents a single caregiver generally from working more than 40 hours a week.

*People who live in a Community Based Residential Facility (CBRF) or nursing home are not eligible for IRIS, while living in those settings.*

### Purchase Services Within an Individualized Budget Amount.

The amount of funding available for your plan will be determined by the results of a tool called the Long-Term Care Functional Screen. A worker at the ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Center), will ask you questions about your abilities, strengths and needs. He or she will enter the information into the functional screen, and the screen will





calculate an estimate of the amount of money that you can use to create your plan for how to meet your long-term care needs. Potential or current participants in IRIS may apply to the Department for an adjustment to their initial budget, if they are unable to develop a support and service plan with their IRIS consultant that is within the initial budget estimate.

### Receive Home and Community-Based Services.

The providers of supports and services to IRIS participants receive payment through a fiscal employer agent. The IRIS program includes a wide array of home and community based long-term care services. You will be able to use your Medicaid card for other Medicaid covered services.

### Plan Your Own Care.

Each person who chooses to participate in IRIS selects an IRIS consultant agency. This agency oversees and supports a network of IRIS consultants. The IRIS consultant will introduce you to the IRIS program and the concept of self-direction, as well as guide you through plan development and the final steps in the IRIS enrollment process. The IRIS consultant will work with you, and any other person providing assistance to you, to develop and approve your initial IRIS plan. This plan is developed by prioritizing long-term care goals and identifying natural and paid supports. In addition, the plan will address your health and safety. The consultant will ensure that necessary paperwork is completed and will provide you with ongoing assistance and support after you enroll in the program. The IRIS consultant services are contracted by the State of Wisconsin at no cost to the IRIS participant.

### Obtaining Workers.

There are several ways to obtain workers to provide services such as supportive home care, respite, job coaching, or personal care. Individuals who select IRIS have different rights and responsibilities based on the options chosen. Each person can choose:

- To be an employer and hire workers directly (fiscal employer agents serve as employer agent and pays workers from submitted time sheets). These workers are referred to as “participant hired workers.”
- To manage their workers with assistance of an agency with choice provider (e.g., you help select workers).
- Recommend workers to be hired and managed by a leasing agency.
- Use a provider agency to supply the services you need using workers they have on staff.



*The service plan will be developed using a person-centered process that builds on your preferences, choices and abilities.*

## Self-Directed Personal Care.

Individuals who select IRIS also have the option of choosing agency-based personal care or self-directing their own personal care. If you choose to use the Self-Directed Personal Care option, you will manage a personal care budget that is in addition to the IRIS budget. The budget amount is determined using the same Personal Care Screening tool used for agency-based personal care. This budget amount may only be used for personal care or certain other related items. Additional key points include:

- You will be able to hire, supervise, manage and fire your personal care workers in the same ways you manage your IRIS workers. This includes using the IRIS fiscal employer agent (FEA) as your employer agent or by using a co-employment vendor. (Your IRIS consultant can explain these options.)
- You will have flexibility to coordinate personal care with supportive home care, transportation and other services, and you may use your IRIS self-directed personal care budget for personal care in community settings outside your home.
- You may use your IRIS self-directed personal care budget to purchase certain items that increase independence or substitute for human assistance. For example, a lift chair that will allow you to transfer without assistance.
- You may choose a representative to assist you in directing your IRIS self-directed personal care services.

In accordance with program rules, a nurse participates in the development of the personal care plan as part of Self-Directed Personal Care in IRIS. A Self-Directed Personal Care nurse will help you develop a Self-Directed Personal Care service plan. This is integrated with your IRIS plan. The service plan will be developed using a person-centered process that builds on your preferences, choices and abilities and can involve other individuals of your choosing. On-going nurse support will be available to ensure health and safety, but at a minimum annually. The IRIS nurse will complete a personal care screen at least annually and more often if your condition changes.

*My Notes and Questions.*

Please note that Self-Directed Personal Care is not available when you live in a group residential setting such as an adult family home. If you have chosen to use a representative for Self-Directed Personal Care in IRIS, then you cannot also use that person as a provider of your personal care. In addition, you cannot participate in agency-based personal care through your Medicaid ForwardHealth card and IRIS Self-Directed Personal Care at the same time.



**Coordinated Payment to Providers.**

An IRIS participant has access to an IRIS fiscal employer agent at no cost to him or her. This agency takes care of payroll, taxes, and other employer-related financial paperwork requirements. The fiscal employer agent makes payments to people you employ and to businesses or providers that deliver goods and services as authorized on your IRIS plan.

You cannot select the same organization to provide ICA/FEA services that also provides a paid service to you such as personal care or transportation. If this situation occurs, the IRIS consultant agency will share information with you and you will have the opportunity to make a decision of ICAs or FEAs that is best for you. You will be referred to the ADRC if you decide to explore another ICA.

***My Notes  
and  
Questions.***

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