



## **Support Broker Authorization FAQ**

### **What is a Support Broker?**

Support Brokers (“Brokers”) assist people with developmental disabilities who choose to Self-Direct their Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) services with Budget Authority to develop a Circle of Support and complete and manage a Self-Direction Budget. Self-Direction provides individuals more direct responsibility in managing their supports and services. People who participate in Self-Direction may Self-Hire and manage their own staff supports (Employer Authority) and decide on the supports and services they need and how the funding allowed for these supports and services is allocated (Budget Authority).

### **How Can I Become a Support Broker?**

Potential Brokers must attend a series of four (4) trainings provided by OPWDD. These trainings are Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination; Person-Centered Planning; Broker Training Institute; and Self-Direction Budget/Template. Those interested in becoming Support Brokers should fill out interest form found here:

<https://forms.office.com/g/P3BfkCKK8T>. “An Introduction to Self-Direction” is a prerequisite for enrollment into the four (4) required trainings. Once OPWDD confirms receipt of the interest survey, potential Brokers will get an email from Central Office Broker Authorization and Review providing instructions on how to enroll in the Curriculum (OPWDD-SDBrokerP) and a training schedule. Once enrolled and approved for the Curriculum, the potential Broker is automatically enrolled in “An Introduction to Self-Direction”. This prerequisite training is mandatory and once completed potential Brokers will have access to the remaining required trainings. Failure to complete this first step prohibits your ability to progress on to the next training requirement.

After completing the prerequisite and four (4) required trainings, potential Brokers must apply to receive their official Broker Authorization Number. The application document can be found here: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/support-broker-authorization-form>. Broker Authorization Number applications must be submitted with copies of the training certificates for each required training. When this form and the required training documentation is completed, received and verified by OPWDD, Brokers will receive a confirmation email that includes their assigned Broker Authorization Number.

At this point, Brokers are able to apply to work with Fiscal Intermediary (FI) provider agencies to provide paid Broker services. Brokers may provide services independently or through an agency which provides Support Brokerage as a service. Additional background screening requirements apply, information is available at <https://opwdd.ny.gov/providers/hiring-new-employee>.

## **I intend to be an unpaid Broker for a family member. Do I need to be authorized?**

Family members who reside in the same household as the person who Self-Directs their services or who are the parents, legal guardians, spouses, and adult children (including sons and daughters-in-law) of the person may NOT be paid for providing Broker services to their family member. If a family member of a person with ID/DD is interested in providing unpaid Broker service for that person, he/she must meet the initial Broker training requirements as described above.

## **What are the trainings that I will take?**

**Intro To Self-Direction**- This is a prerequisite course that provides a background on Self-Determination and Self-Direction, and a general understanding of what it means to Self-Direct OPWDD services. This course is pre-recorded and available on-demand in SLMS.

**Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination** - An introductory course teaching the foundational concepts of self-advocacy, Self-Determination, and Self-Direction of services by individuals with developmental disabilities. This course is available through SLMS or can be delivered by an OPWDD voluntary provider, where available.<sup>1</sup>

**Person-Centered Planning** - This course provides practical hands-on experience for individuals interested in learning how to develop and implement person-centered plans. This course may be obtained through an outside provider.

**Broker Training Institute (BTI)** – Conveniently packaged into four (4) modules, BTI provides potential Brokers with the philosophy of Self-Direction, history of the movement, details regarding the responsibilities of Brokers, information regarding billing and documentation requirements, and Circle of Support training. This is a four-part training that must be completed **consecutively**. All four modules must be taken at once to receive credit.

After attending all four (4) BTI modules, potential Brokers will receive their first installment of six (6) Annual Trainings required by OPWDD. These trainings are “read and sign” and are required annually to maintain your Broker Authorization. The list of required courses is as listed below:

1. Privacy and Security of Health Information
2. Overview of Developmental Disabilities

<sup>1</sup> Credit may be given for Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination and Person-Centered Planning when obtained through a provider of Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) or a Coordinated Care Organization (CCO). These courses may only be available to employees of HCBS agencies or CCOs. You will need to send your certificates for these courses to [SDbroker@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:SDbroker@opwdd.ny.gov) prior to enrolling in later courses.

3. Medicaid Compliance
4. PICA
5. PRAISE (replaces Incident and Abuse Reporting)
6. Rights and Responsibilities of Persons Receiving Services

**Self-Direction Budget/Template** - This half day course will provide information and instructions on how to create and amend Budgets for people with developmental disabilities who choose to Self-Direct their OPWDD services with Budget Authority. **You must have access to a full version of Microsoft Excel for this course and to complete Self-Direction Budgets.**

### **How do I attend these trainings?**

The trainings are currently offered virtually via the Statewide Learning Management System (SLMS). You will need to create an account in SLMS to register and attend. For more information about SLMS, please visit <https://opwdd.ny.gov/providers/statewide-learning-management-system-slms>.

The required classes will appear in SLMS under the Curriculum once your enrollment has been accepted and An Introduction to Self-Direction” has been completed.

### **Is there an order that trainings must be taken?**

Yes, an Introduction to Self-Direction must be taken prior to being registered for the Self-Direction training series. After completing the pre-requisite, the series is offered, Self-Advocacy-Self-Determination, Person Centered Planning, Broker Training Institute (BTI) modules 1-4, and Self-Direction Budget. These trainings should be taken in this order.

### **Do I have to complete the whole series at once? What if I miss a day?**

Trainings do not all have to be completed at once however they still must be completed in order. Missing a day would mean you would have to wait until the next training series with an opening where you can continue the series. If you miss classes you are registered for often enough, you may be given last priority in registering in the future. The Broker Training Institute Modules (1-4) must be taken within the same series to receive credit. If you do not attend or complete the requirements for a BTI Module 2-4, you must retake the series beginning with BTI Module 1.

### **Do trainings have a testing component?**

Some do! The Person-Centered Planning training has a test after completion. The Broker Training Institute (BTI) has a test after the second and fourth modules. Prospective Support Brokers must receive a satisfactory score to receive a certificate and continue

to the next training. Trainers may also deny prospective Brokers a certificate if there is evidence that the prospective Broker did not participate or attend the full training.

### **Are classes prerecorded? Can I just listen in?**

Self-Direction Broker trainings, despite being available virtually, are live trainings and require active participation to be successful. Calling in is not recommended and you will need a device with a screen so that you can see the presentation and participate in questions/prompts. If you choose to call in, it is your responsibility to inform the trainer of your identity to ensure credit is received.

### **Is there anything I need to be successful in these trainings?**

To successfully complete Self-Direction Budget Template training you will need access to a computer that has a current version of Microsoft Excel. **This class cannot be completed without access to Excel.**

### **What do I do after I've completed the four training courses and six additional courses?**

After completing the four training courses, potential Brokers must complete the Support Broker Authorization form and submit the form with your training certificates to [SDBroker@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:SDBroker@opwdd.ny.gov) Copies of the six BTI ancillary trainings do not need to be sent. The form should be completed in Adobe Reader (<https://get.adobe.com/reader/>) to minimize the possibility of file corruption when databasing. The form must be submitted as a PDF with a digital signature and is password protected to prevent printing. Forms that are scanned or reproduced in another manner will be rejected. If your form is rejected, you must also include your certificates when resubmitting your form. Authorizations are not processed in July.

### **When will I receive notification whether I have been approved?**

If your form is accepted, it will be saved for processing. If your form is not accepted, your form will be returned to you with instructions on how to correct. Accepted forms are batch processed on a biweekly basis, after which the approval letter with your Authorization number will be e-mailed to you.

### **How do I build a caseload after I am authorized?**

Brokers are responsible for building their caseload. This is typically done by referrals from the "Public List" (if the Broker chooses to be listed publicly when authorizing), through employment at an authorized provider, or networking in the community. Brokers must apply for Reauthorization annually and provide verification of ongoing professional development.

### **How long will I remain authorized?**

Unless revoked by OPWDD, or surrendered by the Broker, a Broker's Authorization is active from the effective date of the Authorization until the following July 31. Brokers must be reauthorized by July 31 to continue providing services after that date.

### **Where can I find additional information about Support Broker requirements?**

Additional information regarding Broker Authorization, Reauthorization, and Broker Review may be found in Administrative Directive Memorandum 19-ADM-05R Authorization Standards for Support Brokers.

Additional information regarding Broker Billing and Documentation standards may be found in Administrative Directive Memorandum 19-ADM-05R Service Documentation for Support Broker Services.

These can be found on the OPWDD Home Page ([www.opwdd.ny.gov](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov)) via the search function or by selecting "Regulations & Guidance"

### **Where can I find additional information about Broker updates?**

A Fiscal Intermediary/Support Broker WebEx is held on a quarterly basis to provide Self-Direction training, presentations, policy updates, and illustrative case examples to Fiscal Intermediary agencies, Support Brokers, and OPWDD Self-Direction Liaisons. The WebEx is held on the second Thursday in March, June September, and December. This three-hour WebEx may be applied toward yearly professional development hours for Reauthorization.

This WebEx is also recorded if you are unable to attend at the scheduled date and time. The recording will be posted to SLMS until the last day of the month prior to the next Fiscal Intermediary/Support Broker WebEx.

**How do I know which region I am in? How can I contact the regional office?**

<b>Regional Contact Info</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Counties</b>
<b>Region 1</b> <a href="mailto:SPS.R1.SD@opwdd.ny.gov">SPS.R1.SD@opwdd.ny.gov</a>	Finger Lakes	Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
	Western New York	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans
<b>Region 2</b> <a href="mailto:SPS.R2.SD@opwdd.ny.gov">SPS.R2.SD@opwdd.ny.gov</a>	Broome	Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Tioga, Tompkins
	Central New York	Cayuga, Cortland, Herkimer, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego
	Sunmount	Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, St. Lawrence
<b>Region 3</b> <a href="mailto:SPS.R3.SD@opwdd.ny.gov">SPS.R3.SD@opwdd.ny.gov</a>	Capital District	Albany, Fulton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren, Washington
	Hudson Valley	Orange, Rockland, Sullivan, Westchester County
	Taconic	Columbia, Dutchess, Green, Putnam, Ulster
<b>Region 4</b> <a href="mailto:SPS.R4.SD@opwdd.ny.gov">SPS.R4.SD@opwdd.ny.gov</a>	Bernard M. Fineson	Queens
	Brooklyn	Kings
	Bronx Metro NY	Bronx
	Manhattan Metro	New York (Manhattan)
	Staten Island	Richmond (Staten Island)
<b>Region 5</b> <a href="mailto:SPS.R5.SD@opwdd.ny.gov">SPS.R5.SD@opwdd.ny.gov</a>	Long Island	Nassau, Suffolk

## Support Broker Authorization Checklist

- Fill out interest Form
- Enroll in the “Self-Direction Broker Program in SLMS”
- Take “Intro to Self-Direction” Prerequisite
- Register For Training Series on SLMS

### Complete Trainings in this order:

- Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination
- Person Centered Planning
- Broker Institute Module 1
- Broker Institute Module 2 and pass test
- Broker Institute Module 3
- Broker Institute Module 4 and pass test
- Self-Direction Budget/Template

### Complete 6 Additional Courses:

- Privacy and Security of Health Information
- Overview of Developmental Disabilities
- Medicaid Compliance
- PICA
- PRAISE (replaces Incident and Abuse Reporting)
- Rights and Responsibilities of Persons Receiving Services

- Complete Authorization Form in Adobe Reader
- Submit Authorization Form to [SDbroker@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:SDbroker@opwdd.ny.gov) and attach training certificates
- Receive approval email and receive broker number
- Maintain Authorization by completing required hours of professional training per year for Reauthorization.

## Contacts:

**Central Office Broker Authorization and Review:** [SDBroker@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:SDBroker@opwdd.ny.gov)

**Technical issues with SLMS can be directed to:** [talentdevelopment@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:talentdevelopment@opwdd.ny.gov)