
What is IRIS?

Self-directing your services offers you a way to have control over your long-term care services and supports. In IRIS, you are provided with an individualized budget (based on your individualized needs), that you use to buy your own services and supports. Participants of the IRIS program decide what services, supports and goods they need, when to schedule services, who to select to provide services and supports, and where to receive them.

How Does IRIS Work?

Anyone Can Choose IRIS

The IRIS option is available to anyone in a county where Family Care is operational who meets eligibility requirements for Wisconsin long-term care programs.

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 Aging and Disability Resource Center will ask you questions about your abilities, strengths and needs. He or she will enter the information you provide into the functional screen, and the screen will calculate the amount of money that you can use to create your plan for how to meet your long-term care needs. Potential clients 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 independent consultant within the initial budget amount.

Receive Home and Community-Based Services

Participants of IRIS can purchase a wide array of home and community based long-term care services that are covered in the IRIS service package. You will be able to use your Medicaid card for other Medicaid covered services.

Plan Your Own Care

Initially, each person who chooses to participate in IRIS will select and meet with an independent consultant (who is contracted for by the State of Wisconsin) to receive an in-depth orientation about the program. You, and any other person providing assistance to you with self direction, will then develop your support and service plan that describes the type of supports and services you need. After you develop your plan, the consultant will review it to be sure that it is consistent with the services that are covered by the program and that it addresses your health and safety. The consultant will also ensure that necessary paperwork is completed and will refer you to sources for assistance as needed.

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 by using the same Personal Care Screening tool used for agency-based personal care and may only be used for personal care or certain other related purchases. Additional key points include:

- You will be able to hire supervise, manage and fire your personal care workers in the same ways you currently manage your IRIS workers: IRIS Financial Service Agency as your employer agent or by using a co-employment vendor.
- 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 the home.
- You may hire family members, including a spouse, to provide personal care.
- 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 if you are unable to direct your IRIS self-directed personal care services without assistance.

In accordance with Wisconsin State law, a nurse participates in the development of the personal care plan as part of Self-Directed Personal Care in IRIS. The IRIS Consultant Agency will provide a nurse who will help you to develop a Self-Directed Personal Care service plan that is integrated with your IRIS plan in a way that meets your needs and preferences. 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 the extent that it is needed to ensure health and safety, but at a minimum annually. The IRIS nurse will redo the screen that determines your budget at least annually and more often if your condition changes.

Please note that Self-Directed Personal care is not available if you live in a group residential setting such as an adult family home, community based residential facility or residential care apartment complex unless the provider is also a relative. Also your representative for the purpose of Self-Directed Personal care in IRIS cannot also be a provider of your personal care. In addition you cannot participate in both 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 the IRIS Financial Services Agency at no cost to him or her. This agency takes care of money issues like payroll, taxes, and other employer-related financial paperwork requirements. The Financial Services Agency makes payments to people you employ and to businesses or providers where you purchase other goods and services after you authorize payment.

Self-Direct Your Own Support and Services

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 how to spend your days and the types of support or assistance you need. 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 dollars and recognition of the contribution you make to your community; and
- Confirmation of the important role of self-advocates.