

Personal Assistance Services Information Sheet

Personal Assistant (PA) services are defined as individualized assistance with activities of daily living (e.g., eating, bathing, dressing, personal hygiene, toileting, transferring, and maintaining continence care, etc.). PA is a service that directly benefits the consumer by providing support for the tasks previously mentioned due to the developmental disability.

PA services are *not considered skill development services* (e.g., Social Skills Training, Adaptive Skills Training, Community Integration Training, Independent Living Skills, Safety and Supportive Living Skills, etc.), therefore, ELARC will utilize the category of *Personal Assistant Agency* under the *service code (062)*. On a case-by-case basis, an exception might be considered to use the *Parent Coordinated PA Service Code (093)*. If this service code is used to specific circumstances, the PA shall not be a parent, spouse, custodial grandparent, or an individual under 18 years of age. PA paid services should not supplant natural supports.

All *generic resources* need to be explored and considered before assessing, funding, and utilizing a PA (IHSS, Medi-Cal, DOR, SSI, etc.). Parental responsibility and natural resources should be considered when appropriate. PA is not intended to be a substitute for day care, respite, a behavior program, or other program that is intended to meet different specific individual needs. When considering funding to assist with suspended services (Social Recreational Activities, Camping Services, etc.), an exemption may be granted as per W&I Code 4648.5(c).

According to the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, programs providing services to consumers are also mandated to make reasonable accommodations prior to requesting a PA or a one-to-one aide from regional center. The level of supervision provided by a program (consumer ratio), the type of activities consumer engages in, and consumer's physical or cognitive abilities would guide the service coordinator/supervisor in determining the need for a personal assistant.

When considering PA services for a consumer, a description of the specific types of assistance and support needs to be part of the initial screening/assessment. A *weekly/monthly schedule or calendar that clearly details* the amount of PA support required by consumer/parent shall be requested to determine the type and level of hours necessary. In some cases, it might be necessary to consult with the Clinical Team.

The following questions might be helpful in assessing PA needs:

- What are the *special limitations* that consumer has which require support?
- If consumer displays certain *inappropriate behaviors*, what is the frequency and intensity of these behaviors?
- Does consumer require *verbal or physical prompts* to complete tasks?
- How often does consumer need to be *redirected to stay on task*?
- What are the consumer's *areas of strength* and areas in which the *most support is required*?
- Does consumer require some level of *nursing or specialized care*? In this case, the ELARC clinical team might have to be consulted.

Personal Assistance Services Information Sheet

Revising the IPP

The Individual Program Plan (IPP) will need to describe the specific areas, types of assistance and number of hours that the PA will provide assistance. The *“IPP Acknowledgement Pages”* will also verify that a discussion regarding the appropriateness of the PA services has taken place. A referral to an agency for PA services must include the areas and types of assistance required and the number of hours that the regional center is considering funding. The areas of service based on the agency’s PA assistance to consumer will reflect the PA’s objectives included in the IPP and will be consistent with the *CDER’s evaluation*. Any changes in the amount, areas and/or type of support required by consumer shall be reported immediately to the service coordinator by the PA provider. An annual progress report shall be requested and obtained from the provider.

Parent Coordinated PA

When an exception is made to utilize a *Parent Coordinator PA Service (093)*, it is necessary to know what specialized training or experience the individual providing the service has. As mentioned above, the ELARC clinical team might have to be consulted. It is recommended that once it is determined what type and level of assistance consumer requires, that service coordinator *establish parameters* to keep services within the areas of special need and PA support. Service coordinator will remind PA to *immediately* report any changes in status or need for services to re-assess level of services. The service coordinator shall obtain detailed information regarding the consumer’s need for supports that will substantiate the level of support being requested. During this process, the service coordinator will be required to complete a “PCPA Terms of Use” form with consumer/parent (*CMS #15 644 - see attachment*).

In some cases, consumers with PA services will develop skills and not need as much assistance in some areas of support. For these consumers, a reduction in the amount of support will occur over time. A *fade out plan* is appropriate. Some consumers will always require a certain level of PA services related to the developmental disability.

PA In Educational Setting

When providing supports to *students* attending adult school, community college, or university, all generic public services should be explored. *Office for Students with Disabilities and Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)* should be explored and exhausted prior to regional center funding. Service coordinator should secure documentation that shows that generic resources have been exhausted. The PA will not provide assistance to complete the academic work, tutor consumer or provide transportation to school. The number of courses taken shall be taken into consideration by the ID team in determining the number of PA hours needed. A *fade out plan* might be appropriate, as student becomes more familiar with the new environment. Information regarding any changes of support to consumer will need to be communicated by the PA to service coordinator with appropriate documentation.

When providing support to students in after-school programs, written documentation from the program director/ administrator shall be obtained to justify the need for the PA support.