



# Support Link, Inc. Self-Direction



## Self Direction Training Manual

In order to meet the Self Direction Program training requirements, Support-Link is providing a Self-Direction Training Manual to each employee. Enclosed with the application is an Acknowledgement statement that needs to be completed along with a timesheet that you must return to Support-Link as verification of training completion, as well as verification of hours “worked” in completing all trainings contained in this training manual. This is a Self- Direction program requirement and must be met. The signed acknowledgement must be returned and must demonstrate that you have received, read, and understand the material before you can begin working.

If you have any questions, please contact Christy Kannegiser at (518) 798-2972 ext 308

[christyk@support-link.org](mailto:christyk@support-link.org)

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

# Support-Link, Inc. OVERVIEW

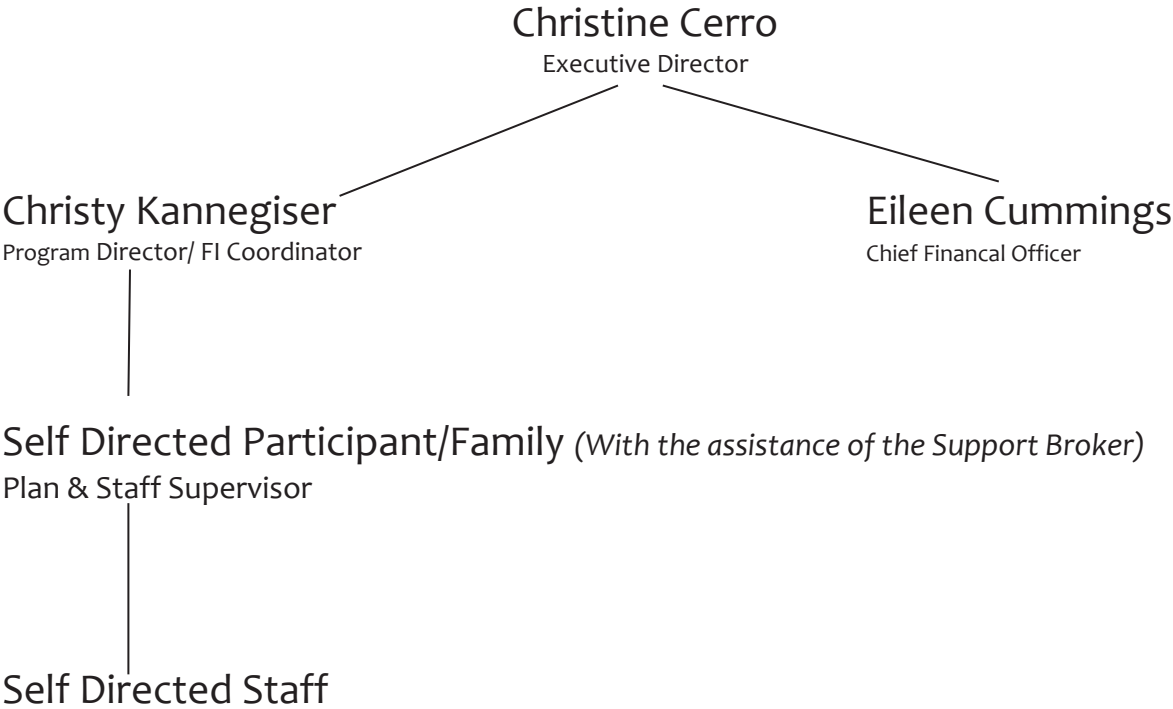
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## Self Direction Training Manual

### Section 1- Support-Link & Self Direction Overview

- 1) History of Self Direction
- 2) History of Support-Link
- 3) Support-Link Philosophy & Mission Statement
- 4) Support-Link/Self Direction Organizational Chart
- 5) Support-Link Self-Hired Staff Employee Handbook
- 6) Support-Link Self Direction Policy and Procedures

# Support-Link Organizational Chart



## **History of Self Direction**

Almost two decades ago a group of self advocates got together and decided they wanted to be in control their services. They developed an idea of how they wanted their services to look & brought this idea to OPWDD. The idea was piloted as Self Determination and was immensely successful. Individuals in this program had almost 100% satisfaction rate with their services, and the services themselves proved to be more cost effective than traditional services. This program then became known as Consolidated Supports & Services (CSS) and steadily started to grow over more than 10 years. This program was founded on the principals of Person Centered Planning & strived to meet each participant's needs in a very individualized way. In October of 2014 this service was redesigned and is now known as self direction. It is still based on person centered planning, and each plan is developed specifically for the individual receiving services.

## **History of Support-Link, Inc.**

In the late 1980's and early 1990's, the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) was undergoing a significant shift in its philosophy and its mode of service delivery. Central to this paradigm shift was a movement toward person-centered services and that funding should follow the person and not the program.

Case management or service coordination became a critical, key service in accessing new, more flexible funding streams. When New York State opted into the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid Waiver program, OMRDD expanded the service coordination options available to individuals and their families by allowing independent service coordination agencies (agencies whose sole purpose was to provide service coordination) to be certified.

For the first time, it was possible for individuals and their families to choose an agency that had no other competing considerations and that could focus singularly upon the coordination of supports and services identified and chosen by the individual.

Support-Link, Inc. was incorporated in 2008 as a truly independent, autonomous service coordination organization providing services to people with developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, and the elderly. Our mission was to assist people with various disabilities to reach their full potential and live their lives to their fullest. Our team has grown over the years to include decades of specialized, cumulative experience in the field of human services. Support-Link has expanded into self directed services in February of 2018, testifying our dedication to providing person centered, quality services.

*Today Support Link is a comprehensive non-profit organization providing Service Coordination, Independent Living Skills Training, Structured Day Program/Social Adult Day Services, Self Direction, Community Integration Counseling and Environmental Modifications through various funding/waiver programs.*

## Philosophy of Support-Link

Support-Link Inc. was founded upon the following principles. Everyone has the right to:

- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Realize their personal goals and enjoy the fruits of their efforts.
- Be fulfilled in their lives.
- Have options for where they live, work, and play.

## Support-Link Values

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We value the dreams, aspirations and goals of all individuals with disabilities and their rights to full, productive and responsible roles in society and their day to day lives.

We value the rights of all individuals regardless of their disabilities to make their own choices based on sound knowledge and informed decisions.

We value the dedication and commitment of the staff who serve people with disabilities.

As a team member of Support-Link, Inc., the importance of your contribution cannot be overstated. Our goal is to help all people with disabilities take their rightful place as a valued citizen within their communities, at home, at work and at play. You are an important part of this process because your work is how we live out our mission. It directly influences the lives of the individuals we serve. We are glad you have joined us, and we hope you will find your work to be both challenging and rewarding.

**Support-Link, Inc.**

**Self-Directed Services  
“Self-Hire” Employee Handbook**

**February  
2018**

## **WELCOME STATEMENT**

Welcome to Support-link, Inc. Support-Link, Inc. is a not-for-profit (501c-3) agency, formed in 2007. We provide high quality, comprehensive services to individuals with developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, children and seniors in Essex, Hamilton, Franklin, Clinton, Warren, Washington, Saratoga and Fulton Counties. The Mission of Support-Link, Inc. is to assist individuals with disabilities and seniors in achieving their highest potential by connecting them to desired and necessary services and supports thus allowing for them to live and work as independently as possible in their communities. Support-Link, Inc. is funded by New York State Medicaid through The Office for People with Developmental Disabilities and The Department of Health.

Support-Link, Inc. provides the following services through the Department of Health TBI and NHTD Waivers: Service Coordination, Structured Day Program, Independent Living Skills Training, Community Integration Counseling, Environmental Modifications, Moving Assistance and Community Transition Services. Support-Link, Inc. provides the following services through OPWDD: Service Coordination and Self-Directed Services which include: Fiscal Intermediary, Start up and Support Broker, Community Habilitation, Respite, and Supported Employment. Support-Link, Inc. staff are expertly trained in the delivery of these services to allow each individual to thrive as a member of their community.

### **Values**

We value the dreams, aspirations and goals of all individuals with disabilities and their rights to full, productive and responsible roles in society and their day to day lives.

We value the rights of all individuals regardless of their disabilities to make their own choices based on sound knowledge and informed decisions.

We value the dedication and commitment of the staff who serve people with disabilities.

This handbook provides an outline of what employees can expect from the agency as an employer and what the agency will expect from its employees. Employees are urged to read this handbook and keep it for future reference.

Please note that written procedures cannot be detailed enough to cover all situations that arise. Employees are encouraged to bring any questions to the Fiscal Intermediary for clarification. This handbook is not a "contract for employment" nor does it create any rights in the nature of an employment contract. Support-link, Inc. reserves the right to change, amend, modify, or terminate the policies, rules, and benefits covered by this handbook as circumstances may warrant and without prior notice.

### **EMPLOYMENT AT WILL**

Employment is at will, and neither employee, the hiring individual and/or their designee nor Support-Link, Inc. has entered into a contract regarding the duration of employment. Employees are free to terminate employment with the self –directing individual or Support-Link, Inc. at any time, with or without reason. Likewise, the hiring individual, and or their ting designee or Support-Link, Inc. has the right to terminate employment, or otherwise discipline employees at any time, with or without reason, at the discretion of the hiring individual and/or their ecting designee or



Support-Link, Inc. No employee of the hiring individual, their hiring designee or Support-Link, Inc. can enter into an employment contract for a specified period of time, or make any agreement contrary to this at-will policy without the written approval of the hiring individual, and/or their designee or the Support-Link, Inc. Board of Directors.

## **OPEN DOOR POLICY**

Support-Link, Inc. has an “open door policy” at the heart of its employee relation’s philosophy. This means that any employee should discuss any problem or concern, or ask any question of the FI. Support-Link, Inc. encourages employees to regard the FI as the main sources of information and first people to contact to discuss any problems or concerns.

Support-Link, Inc. believes that one of the most important considerations is to maintain an open flow of communication to and from all employees. Support-Link, Inc. counts on employees to promote the interests of the Individuals who receive services, the agency and to keep informed about Support-Link, Inc.’s progress, problems, policies and general information that will affect an employee’s position within the agency as well as the individuals we serve. Support-Link, Inc. also encourages employees to communicate suggestions for improvements and to express opinions regarding agency policies. All employees are an integral part of Support-Link, Inc. and employee input strengthens the agency.

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Support-Link, Inc. is an equal employment opportunity employer and strives to comply with all applicable laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, as well as any other category protected by federal, state, or local laws. All such discrimination is unlawful and all persons involved in the operations of Support-Link, Inc are prohibited from engaging in this type of conduct.

In accordance with applicable federal and state law protecting qualified individuals with known disabilities, Support-Link, Inc will attempt to reasonably accommodate those individuals unless doing so would create an undue hardship on Support-Link, Inc. Any qualified applicant or employee with a disability who requires an accommodation in order to perform the functions of the job should contact the FI and request an accommodation.

## **DISCRIMINATION**

An employee must report every instance of unlawful discrimination to the FI or Board of Directors of Support-Link, Inc, regardless of whether that employee or someone else is the subject of the discrimination. Detailed reports--including names, descriptions, and actual events or statements made--will greatly enhance Support-Link, Inc’s ability to investigate. Any documents supporting the allegations should also be submitted. Support-Link, Inc prohibits any and all retaliation for submitting a report of unlawful discrimination and for cooperating in any investigation. Any employee who retaliates against the accuser or those involved in the investigation will be disciplined, up to and including termination of employment.

Based on the report, Support-Link, Inc will conduct an investigation. If the investigation determines that prohibited discrimination or other conduct in violation of Support-Link,

Inc policy has occurred, Support-Link, Inc will take disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, against those who engaged in the misconduct. Support-Link, Inc will also evaluate whether other employment practices should be added or modified in order to deter and prevent that conduct in the future. Involved employees will be informed of whatever action(s) Support-Link, Inc takes to resolve and remedy the situation.

## **HIRING PROTOCOL/BACKGROUND CHECKS**

Support-Link, Inc. recognizes the importance of maintaining a safe workplace with employees who are honest, trustworthy, qualified, reliable, and nonviolent, and do not present a risk of harm to coworkers, the people served by the agency, or others. For purposes of furthering these concerns and interests, Support-Link, Inc. will perform criminal background checks on all potential hires of Support-Link, Inc. All background checks will comply with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and any applicable New York State laws. Consistent with legal requirements, Support-Link, Inc. reserves the right to require job applicants or employees to sign the authorization and release forms as requested as a condition of employment. All hiring decisions are subject to the following successful background checks.

All positions with Support-Link, Inc. require that the Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) conduct criminal history background checks on potential employees. Based on this background check, OPWDD may, in some cases, instruct Support-Link, Inc. not to hire the applicant because of his or her criminal history. OPWDD will provide applicants with notice and an opportunity to show why the denial should not be issued. After hire, OPWDD will continue to monitor the employee's criminal record and will notify Support-Link, Inc. of any new arrests. In those cases, Support-Link, Inc. will take appropriate action, up to and including termination.

All potential employees of Support-Link, Inc. will be required to complete a New York State Child Abuse Registry form, which is then submitted to the New York State office of Children and Family Services in order to verify that the employee is not the subject of an indicated case of child abuse and maltreatment.

It is the policy of Support-Link, Inc. not to employ any individual or entity excluded from participation in federally sponsored health care programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid. An exclusion check (search of Office of Inspector General's List of Excluded Individuals/Entities) will be performed on all Support-Link, Inc. employees. If the Exclusion Check indicates that any individual is an Ineligible Person, the individual cannot be employed by Support-Link, Inc. An Exclusion Check will be performed on all employees at least annually. If it is determined that a current employee is an Ineligible Person, Support-Link, Inc. shall immediately terminate employment of the individual.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Below is a description of the types of employees at Support-Link, Inc.:

- **Full-Time Regular Employee:** An Employee who regularly works 30 or more hours per week and must attain 2080 hours per year. Full-Time Regular Employees are eligible for health insurance benefits, through the NY State Marketplace Exchange.

- **Part-Time Regular Employee:** An employee who regularly works between 10 and 30 hours per week is part time and is not eligible for health insurance benefits.
- **Exempt Employee:** Due to changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the New York Minimum Wage Act and applicable regulations: Administrative/Management staff are the only exempt employees of Support-Link, Inc.
- **Non-Exempt Employee:** Due to changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the New York Minimum Wage Act and applicable regulations: all non-Administrative/Management staff of Support-Link Inc. are now considered non-exempt employees and meet criteria for overtime wages for work performed after 40 hours per week.

## **PROBATION, ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

Orientation and training of the self-hire self-direction staff will be completed at the discretion of the hiring individual and/or their designee. Mandatory OPWDD trainings will be provided to you via email from the Fiscal Intermediary prior to starting work with the hiring individual as well as annually.

## **JOB ASSIGNMENT AND JOB DESCRIPTION**

Self-hire staff will be hired for a specific self-directed individual. As part of the initial orientation, an employee will learn the various duties and responsibilities of the position, as determined by the self-directed individual and/or the designee.

## **HOURS OF WORK**

Self-hire staff are expected to negotiate their schedule with the hiring individual and or their designee, and maintain employment standards and communication with Support-Link, Inc. Hours are entirely based on the needs of the self-directed individual. The Support-Link, Inc. office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am-4:30 pm.

**Lunch Break:** Self-hire staff are not to leave their hiring individuals alone unless otherwise specified in the plan. Essential staff shall negotiate terms of a work shift with their hiring individual.

**Travel Time:** Commuting to and from the workplace before and after hours is not part of the work day.

**Reimbursements:** Paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month.

**Medical Emergencies:** When a work related injury or illness occurs during working hours renders an employee unable to complete the workday, the employee will be paid for the balance of the workday.

**Over Time:** Over time is not permitted. All requests for overtime must be approved in writing by the FI prior to hours being worked.

## **PAYDAY**

A payroll schedule will be issued annually. Payroll is issued bi-weekly; if timesheets are not delivered by noon on Monday following the close of a pay-period **checks will be issued with the next pay-period**. Self-Directed individuals who require the brokers assistance to complete the necessary payroll and reimbursement paperwork will be assisted every 2 weeks in order to assure that you are paid in a timely fashion.

## **DIRECT DEPOSIT**

An employee may elect to have his/her paycheck deposited directly into a checking or savings account at a financial institution of his/her choosing. This benefit is available to all employees upon request to the FI.

## **MILEAGE AND EXPENSE ALLOWANCES**

Mileage will be paid at a reimbursement rate set by the Board of Directors. Request for mileage reimbursement must be submitted on a Mileage Sheet, which must be signed by the FI Coordinator. Parking fees and tolls are reimbursed for the actual amount. Receipts are required. The agency is not responsible for any traffic violation fines or costs incurred from motor vehicle accidents.

Employees of Support-Link, Inc. may transport individuals served by the agency in their vehicle only if all conditions of the transportation policy are met. Transportation must only occur as approved in the hiring individual's plan/budget. Employees of Support-Link Inc. may transport individuals in their personal vehicles once the individual reviews and signs the Waiver, Release and Hold Harmless Agreement with the agency.

## **WORKPLACE HARASSMENT**

In accordance with applicable law, Support-Link Inc. prohibits sexual harassment and harassment because of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation, age, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law. Any such harassment may violate the law and will not be tolerated. Harassment is specifically prohibited at the workplace or while conducting agency business, even if off agency premises. Harassment from customers, suppliers, or consultants, working with the agency will also not be tolerated. Any unlawful activity will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

- **Sexual Harassment Defined**

Applicable New York state and federal law defines sexual harassment as unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to the conduct is made a term or condition of employment; or (2) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the Employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Harassment of any kind will not be permitted. The following is a partial list of prohibited behavior:

- Unwanted sexual advances;
- Discussion of sex or sexual relationships in the workplace;
- Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors;
- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances;
- Visual conduct such as leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons, or posters;
- Verbal conduct such as making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, sexually explicit jokes, or comments about any Employee's body or dress;
- Verbal sexual advances or propositions;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentary about an individual's body, sexually degrading words to describe an individual, or suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations;
- Physical conduct such as touching, assault, or impeding or blocking movements; and
- Retaliation for reporting harassment or threatening to report harassment.

It is unlawful for males to sexually harass females or other males, and for females to sexually harass males or other females. Sexual harassment on the job is unlawful whether it involves coworker harassment, harassment by a Manager, or harassment by persons doing business with or for Support-Link, Inc.

- **Other Types of Harassment**

Prohibited harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, physical or mental disability, marital status, age, or any other protected basis, includes behavior similar to sexual harassment, such as:

- Verbal conduct such as threats, derogatory comments, or slurs;
- Visual conduct such as derogatory posters, photographs, cartoons, drawings, gestures, graffiti, reading materials, computer graphics or electronic media transmissions;
- Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, or blocking normal movement; and
- Retaliation for reporting harassment or threatening to report harassment.

It is the responsibility of every employee to report to a supervisor any **possible** instances of workplace harassment. Individuals who believe they are being subjected to harassment in violation of this policy are encouraged, but not required, to tell the alleged offender that the actions are unwelcome and should stop immediately.

The following procedure must be followed whenever there is any indication that any form of harassment, is taking place:

1. If an employee has a question or concern regarding harassment, he/she should contact the FI. The complaint should be as detailed as possible, including the names of individuals involved, the names of any witnesses, direct quotations when language is relevant, and any documentary evidence (notes, pictures, cartoons, et cetera).
2. All incidents of prohibited harassment that are reported will be investigated. Support-Link, Inc. will immediately undertake or direct an effective, thorough, and objective investigation of the harassment allegations. The investigation will be completed and a determination regarding the reported harassment will be made and communicated to the employee who complained and to the accused harasser(s).
3. If at the conclusion of the investigative procedure Support-Link, Inc. determines that harassment has occurred, Support-Link, Inc. will take effective remedial action commensurate with the circumstances. Appropriate action will also be taken to deter any future harassment. An employee found to have committed harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include supervision or termination. Employees who are found to have made false allegations may also be subject to discipline.

Applicable law prohibits retaliation against any Employee by another Employee or by Support-Link, Inc. for using this complaint procedure or for filing, testifying, assisting, or participating in any manner in any investigation, proceeding, or hearing conducted by a governmental enforcement agency. Support-Link, Inc. prohibits any form of retaliation, whether inside or outside the workplace. Support-Link, Inc. will not knowingly permit any retaliation against any Employee who complains of prohibited harassment or who participates in an investigation.

Any questions about this policy or the procedure for investigating possible workplace harassment should be directed to the FI.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY WITH INDIVIDUALS' PRIVATE INFORMATION**

All information about individuals served by the agency is confidential. No information about an individual should be communicated to any other person unless the following conditions have been met:

1. Support-Link, Inc. has obtained a signed release of information from the individual or the individual's legal representative authorizing the information transfer, or
2. When discussions and reports are limited only to those individuals employed by Support-Link, Inc. or other OPWDD provider who have a clear involvement with the individual's case and need for the information involved.

3. When an immediate danger exists to the individual and/or others. In those situations, information may be given only to appropriate professional and civil authorities, after consultation with the FI, if possible.

Records kept for clinical purposes should contain no unnecessary reference to antisocial or socially embarrassing behavior. Personal values and judgments are not appropriate in clinical records. It is important to describe specific aspects of problematic behavior without recording personal value judgments about this behavior.

Individual information can be used in clinical discussions and instructional efforts only when the identity of the individuals has been appropriately disguised.

Additionally, in order to protect employee privacy, Support-Link, Inc. prohibits disclosure of employees' personal information (such as home phone numbers, marital status, etc.) to the people served or their families. We encourage you to similarly protect your own personal information by not providing this information to the people served or their families.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

As an employee of Support-Link, Inc. you will not discuss your salary or benefits with other employees of Support-Link, Inc.

## **RULES OF CONDUCT**

We believe that certain rules of conduct must be observed to promote a positive and ethical work environment and pledge to abide by the laws, regulations and policies and procedures, including, but not limited to those related to the Corporate Compliance Plan.

We also understand that, as individuals working for and on behalf of Support-Link, Inc., we have the added responsibility of following specific rules of conduct, as described below:

- To work cooperatively and respectfully with all Support-Link, Inc. employees, board members and agents to provide the highest quality of services;
- To place the interests of the individuals we serve, their advocates and their family members first and foremost in all aspects of what we do;
- To represent Support-Link, Inc. positively in the community-at-large;
- To conduct all activities in a fiscally responsible manner;
- To work in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and Support-Link, Inc. policies;
- To seek training and assistance in areas that would strengthen the ability to fulfill responsibilities to the individuals and Support-Link, Inc.;
- To avoid conflicts of interest, including the acceptance and giving of other than incidental tokens of appreciation;

- To conserve resources of Support-Link, Inc. by not engaging in wasteful behavior;
- To treat confidentially information related to Support-Link, Inc. and its individuals and to respect the privacy of our individuals and fellow Support-Link, Inc. employees;
- To complete tasks in a timely manner and meet expectations for the quality of work that Support-Link, Inc. strives to achieve;
- To bill individuals and third party payers accurately;
- To report to the FI Coordinator or to the Emergency Number for Compliance issues, any potential violation of applicable laws, regulations and policies, including the Corporate Compliance Plan;
- To respect the role of the board and management and to fully implement their decisions; and
- To consult the FI when questions arise as to the conduct permitted under applicable laws, regulations and policies, including the Corporate Compliance Plan.”

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, but the following are examples of infractions of rules of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, including suspension, or termination of employment:

- Abuse or neglect of the individuals we serve.
- Engaging in criminal conduct whether or not related to job performance;
- Theft or misuse of any funds or property belonging to the agency, staff, or the individuals we serve, including cash, vehicles, or personal possessions.
- Deliberate or careless damage of Agency, staff or individual property.
- Use, possession, sale, transfer, or distribution of unauthorized alcohol or illegal drugs on Agency property.
- Reporting to work while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Falsification of employment records, employment information, or other records.
- Possession of firearms, explosives, fireworks or weapons on Agency property occupied by Support-Link, Inc.
- Removing or borrowing Agency property without prior authorization.
- Recording the work time of another Employee, allowing any other Employee to record your work time, or allowing falsification of any timesheet, whether your own or another Employee's.
- Provoking a fight or fighting during working hours or on premises occupied by Support-Link, Inc.
- Participating in horseplay or practical jokes on Support-Link, Inc's time or on premises occupied by Support-Link, Inc.



- Not reporting to work as per assigned schedule without an acceptable excuse.
- Insubordination, including but not limited to failure or refusal to obey the orders or instructions of the FI, hiring individual and/or their designee or the use of abusive or threatening language toward the FI, hiring individual and/or their designee or any other employee of Support-Link, Inc..
- Using profane or abusive language at any time during working hours or while on premises occupied by Support-Link, Inc.
- Failing to obtain permission to leave work for any reason during normal working hours.
- Poor work performance.
- Abusing paid sick leave.
- Smoking in agency buildings.
- Smoking in personal vehicles with any person served or with others who object to smoking.
- Refusing to work necessary adjusted work schedule.
- Violating any safety, health, or security policy, rule, or procedure of Support-Link, Inc.
- Organized gambling, e.g., bookmaking, running numbers
- Committing a fraudulent act or a breach of trust in any circumstances.

You must immediately report any violation of the rules of conduct as described above to the FI.

Support-Link, Inc. does not have a formal progressive discipline policy requiring a set number of warnings or counseling sessions. Each violation will be viewed on a case by case scenario and subject to Support-Link Inc's policies and procedures. Immediate termination may be appropriate dependent on the facts. This statement of prohibited conduct does not alter or limit Support-Link Inc's policy of employment at will. Either the employee or the hiring individual and/or their designee or Support-Link Inc. may terminate the employment relationship at any time for any reason, with or without cause or without notice.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE**

Consistent with efforts to promote health and safety and protect the interests of employees, the people served and community, Support-Link, Inc. does not allow anyone to use, possess, distribute, manufacture, purchase, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, intoxicants, or controlled substances at any time on Support-Link, Inc. premises or during working time. Accordingly, the use of alcohol and the illegal use of drugs, intoxicants, or controlled substances while on Support-Lin, Inc. property, or during working time is strictly prohibited.

Each employee, as a condition of employment, shall sign an Employee Notification Statement, which sets forth the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act.

## **A. Prohibited Acts**

The following rules and standards of conduct apply to all employees. Support-Link, Inc. strictly prohibits:

- Possession, use, or being under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug, intoxicant, or controlled substance while on the job or on Support-Link, Inc. occupied premises;
- Driving a vehicle on Support-Link, Inc. business while under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug, intoxicant, or controlled substance;
- Distributing, selling, manufacturing, or purchasing--or attempting to distribute, sell, manufacture, or purchase--an illegal drug, intoxicant, or controlled substance during working hours or while on Support-Link, Inc. occupied premises;
- Testing positive on a required or requested drug or alcohol test or screen;
- Refusing either to take or to release information regarding a required or requested drug or alcohol test or screen; or
- Violating any Support-Link, Inc. rule or policy regarding alcohol and drug use.

## **B. Testing Program**

Support-Link, Inc. may require drug and/or alcohol testing:

- When a reasonable suspicion exists that any employee is under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug, intoxicant, or controlled substance while on the job, or is otherwise in violation of this policy. Reasonable suspicion means suspicion based on information regarding, among other things, the appearance, behavior, speech, attitude, mood, and/or breath odor of any employee;
- When any employee is found in possession of alcohol or any illegal drug, intoxicant, or controlled substance in violation of Support-Link, Inc. policy, or when any of those items are found in an area controlled or used by the employee, such as a desk;
- When any employee is or is believed to be involved in a vehicle accident);
- When any employee is or is believed to be involved in a work-related incident or accident in which safety precautions are violated or careless acts are performed, and a reasonable suspicion exists that the employee involved is under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug, intoxicant, or controlled substance; or
- When an employee has completed a substance abuse rehabilitation program.

### **C. Prescription and Over-The-Counter Medication**

The use of prescription drugs and/or over-the-counter drugs may also affect an employee's job performance and seriously impair that Employee's ability to protect the interests of our employees, the people served and the community. Any employee who is using prescription or over-the-counter drugs that may impair his or her ability to safely perform the job or may affect the safety or well-being of others may be required to submit a physician's statement that the prescription drug use will not affect job safety. The employee is not required to identify the medication or the underlying illness. Various federal, New York State, and local laws protect the rights of individuals with disabilities and others with regard to the confidentiality of medical information, medical treatment, and the use of prescription drugs and substances taken under medical supervision. Nothing contained in this policy is intended to violate or interfere with individual rights under these laws.

### **D. Testing Procedures**

Employees are expected to report to work in a punctual manner and in a mental and physical condition to complete his/her job duties at all times. Employees are prohibited from coming to work while under the influence of any substance (prescription, over-the-counter medication, alcohol or illicit drugs) that may impair the employee's ability to perform his/her job in a safe manner.

If an employee reasonably suspects a co-worker of being under the influence of drugs/alcohol, the employee must immediately report the concern to the FI.

It is the responsibility of the FI to confront the employee under suspicion with a second party present. If both parties determine there is reasonable cause (based on information regarding, among other things, the appearance, behavior, speech, attitude, mood, and/or breath odor of any employee) the employee will be escorted to a testing center. If the employee refuses to be escorted to the testing center, law enforcement officials will be notified. The FI will ensure arrangements are made for the employee to return home without driving his/her personal vehicle.

### **E. Counseling Actions**

Employees who violate Support-Link, Inc's drug and alcohol abuse policy may be removed from the workplace immediately. Support-Link, Inc. **will** also bring the matter to the attention of appropriate law enforcement authorities. Any conviction for criminal conduct involving illegal drugs, intoxicants, or controlled substances, whether on or off duty, or any violation of Support-Link, Inc's drug and alcohol abuse policy, including having a positive drug-test result, may lead to counseling action, up to and including termination.

Support-Link, Inc. will impose corrective action, up to and including termination, on any employee who violates this policy. Any employee who is not terminated may be required to satisfactorily participate in and complete an approved drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program.

Employees must report any conviction under a criminal drug statute for violations occurring during working time, private time or on Support-Link, Inc. occupied property within five (5) days of such conviction.

Support-Link, Inc. will comply with the requirements that the government be notified of any employee's workplace-related drug conviction.

### **PPD REQUIREMENT**

OPWDD and OSHA require all Support-Link, Inc. employees complete the 2 step PPD testing prior to the commencement of employment.

### **DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

A grievance is a formal process to resolve complaints or disagreements concerning working conditions or the interpretation of Support-Link, Inc. policies. The grievance process is not for the purpose of appealing termination of employment from Support-Link, Inc. The employee must first discuss any concern with the FI.

If discussion does not solve the problem or issue, the following steps should be taken:

- a. The employee will state, in writing, the nature of the dispute and stating the relief sought. This must be submitted to the FI within ten (10) working days of the disputed action. Failure to comply with this provision results in a waiver of the grievance process. The FI will provide a written response to the employee's dispute.
- b. If the employee wishes to appeal the FI's decision, he/she must do so, in writing, to the Board of Directors, within five (5) working days after receipt of the decision. The written appeal should state the nature of the concern and state the solution that is sought. The Board of Directors will review the complaint and send a copy of their decision to the employee and the FI.

If the employee does not appeal a decision within the specified times as stated above, the grievance will be considered withdrawn.

All correspondence relating to the grievance procedure will become part of the employee's personnel file.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Support-Link, Inc. expects its employees to report to work on a reliable and punctual basis. Each staff person develops their own schedule based on the needs of the hiring individuals they serve.

Support-Link, Inc. will comply with applicable laws relating to time off from work. An employee who has a disability may be granted reasonable accommodation in complying with these policies if it does not result in undue hardship to the hiring individual they serve.

## **A. DEFINITIONS:**

Absence: full day absences

Excused Absences: Includes the following absences:

- Use of pre-approved leave where approved by the hiring individual and/or their designee.
- Use of bereavement leave
- Participation in jury duty
- Use of military leave
- An approved FMLA or PML leave
- An approved leave of absence
- Use of leave time for injuries occurring while on duty and covered by workers compensation
- Emergency visits or hospitalizations (employee and immediate family members)
- Contagious disease or condition rendering employee unable to perform job duties, as verified by Physician
- Acts of Nature rendering the employee unable to report to work
- If you report to work and the hiring individual and/or their designee determines you may have a contagious disease or condition rendering you unable to perform job duties. The hiring individual and/or their designee will determine if the absence will be excused if you provide documentation that you were seen by a physician

## **B. REPORTING TO WORK AND TRAINING**

Employees must report to the workplace or training location and be ready to work or be trained at the start of each scheduled workday or training session. Schedules are developed by the self-directed staff and/or their designee and the staff person based on the needs of their individuals.

Support-Link, Inc. recognizes that unplanned absences will sometimes occur. Employees are expected to contact the hiring individual, their designee/advocate(s)/emergency contact, and the FI coordinator as soon as possible.

### **DRESS CODE**

All staff are expected to dress professionally. Clothing should be in good condition and should not be ripped, soiled, too short or low cut, or bear any obscene or profane language or design. Additionally, you are expected to wear clothing which adequately covers their body; midriff shirts (shirts that do not properly cover the skin), excessively short shorts, halter tops, spaghetti straps that are not covered by another item of

clothing, off the shoulder shirts or any piece of clothing that is transparent are unacceptable in any work setting.

If you report to work dressed inappropriately, you may be prevented from working until you return to work wearing the proper attire.

## **PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS**

Performance appraisals are provided to the hiring individual and/or their designee to complete annually with their satisfaction survey.

## **PERSONNEL FILE**

The information recorded in your personnel file is extremely important. In order to keep personnel records up-to-date, please notify the FI of any changes to your name, address, telephone number, etc.

Only the FI will have access to your personnel file. However, Support-Link, Inc. will cooperate with--and provide access to your personnel file to--law enforcement officials, or local, state, or federal agencies, and to you, in accordance with applicable law. Current employees may inspect their personnel records upon request to the FI who will then schedule a time for inspection. Current employees may request copies of documents in their personnel file. All personnel files are kept confidential. Confidential health/medical records are not included in your personnel file. Support-Link, Inc. will provide that information only (1) as allowed by law; (2) to the Employee's personal physician upon written request of the Employee; or (3) as required for workers' compensation cases.

## **RELATED INDIVIDUALS**

Support-Link, Inc. recognizes that Employees may develop personal relationships in the course of their employment. However, in an effort to prevent favoritism, morale problems, disputes or misunderstandings, and potential sexual harassment claims, no staff person(s) are not permitted to date or engage in sexual relationships with subordinate employees. Violation of this policy may result in discipline, including termination.

It is the agency's policy to avoid introducing family or other relationships that may interfere with program operations into the workplace. For purposes of this section, a "relative" is an individual who belongs to the same household as an employee or is a spouse, parent, sister, brother, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, or child of a Support-Link, Inc. employee. A "significant other" is someone with whom an employee has a romantic relationship. A "related employee" is an employee whose relative or significant other is employed by Support-Link, Inc.

More than one family member may work for the agency, subject to the following guidelines:

- No employee shall participate in hiring a relative or significant other as a Support-Link, Inc. employee. An employee who participates in hiring a relative or significant other and fails to disclose the relationship prior to an offer of employment to the relative or significant other may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- When related employees do work for this agency, one may not supervise the other.
- An employee will not be involved in performance evaluations, recommendations for salary adjustments or promotions, or other employment decisions concerning a related employee.

## **GRATUITIES**

Employees shall not personally accept gifts in value of more than \$10.00 from people served or advocates/families. If the person served, advocates, or families insist on giving a gift, please refer them to the FI.

## **PAID POSITION OUTSIDE REGULAR WORK HOURS**

Support-Link, Inc. does not prohibit employees from holding a second job. However, an employee should not accept a position with another employer that may have an adverse impact on their job performance, availability or present as a conflict of interest to performing their job with Support-Link, Inc. If outside employment affects employment here at Support-Link, Inc., the situation must be remedied.

## **COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Staff members are encouraged to accept community responsibilities i.e. serving on a Board, committee or volunteering. In order to reduce the potential for conflicts of interest, employees must disclose such commitments to their employer(s).

## **ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

You must immediately report to the FI or designated on-call staff any situation that presents a danger to the safety or well-being of a person served by the agency. All situations are investigated by a trained party as soon as they occur. An Incident Review Committee conducts an inquiry into all incidents of a serious nature and makes appropriate recommendations. Prior to starting work with the hiring individual all new employees will be informed of the proper procedures to be followed should incidents of this type take place. It is every staff person's responsibility to report incidents according to the guidelines provided during training, failure to do so can result in disciplinary procedures, up to and including termination.

## **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

Support-Link, Inc. will not tolerate workplace violence against Support-Link, Inc. employees, visitors, or people served by the agency. Workplace violence is any intentional conduct that is sufficiently severe, offensive, or intimidating to cause an

individual to reasonably fear for his or her personal safety or the safety of his or her family, friends, and/or property.

Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal or physical action intended to create fear or apprehension of bodily harm
- Behavior or actions interpreted by a reasonable person as carrying potential for violence and/or acts of aggression (throwing objects, waving fists, destroying property, etc.)
- Any threat to destroy property.
- Surveillance.
- Stalking.
- Harassing or demeaning comments or jokes or sexual or ethnic slurs intended to provoke another person.
- Any threat to harm another individual or to in anyway endanger the safety of others.
- Any threat of use of a weapon.
- Any brandishing of weapons on Support-Link, Inc. occupied property.

All Support-Link, Inc. employees must report acts or threats of workplace violence to the FI, on-call or designee as soon as the act or threat is witnessed or overheard. Any employee who engages in behavior that violates this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action and may be subject to applicable civil or criminal legal action as well.

## **OPERATION OF VEHICLES**

Employees of Support-Link, Inc. will only transport individuals served by the agency in their vehicle if all conditions of the current transportation policy are met and the transportation is an approved service in the hiring individual's plan/budget.

Support-Link, Inc. expects all employees to operate vehicles in a safe and responsible manner and comply with all vehicle safety and maintenance rules. Employees who fail to comply with applicable state and local law or who do not follow vehicle safety and maintenance rules may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the agency.

You must provide us with a copy of your license, registration and proof of automobile insurance annually. It is the responsibility of the employee/driver to notify the FI of any lapse in insurance or policy change and will discontinue driving duties, if applicable, until evidence of auto liability insurance is provided.



## **WORKPLACE SAFETY**

It is essential to our employees, people served, and visitors that we maintain a safe and healthy workplace. Should an accident or injury occur at work, you should contact 911, if necessary, and immediately contact the FI.

## **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

This policy applies to all technical resources that are owned or leased by Support-Link, Inc., that are used on or accessed from agency occupied premises, or that are used on agency business. This policy also applies to all activities using any agency-paid accounts, subscriptions, or other technical services, such as Internet and World Wide Web access, voice mail, and e-mail, whether or not the activities are conducted from Agency premises.

All materials, information and software created, transmitted, downloaded or stored on the agency's computer system are the property of Support-Link, Inc. and may be accessed only by authorized personnel.

The agency may access its electronic communications systems and obtain the communications within the systems, with or without reasonable notice to users of the systems, in the ordinary course of business when the Agency deems it appropriate to do so. The reasons for which the Agency may obtain such access include, but are not limited to: maintaining the system; preventing or investigating allegations of system abuse or misuse; assuring compliance with software copyright laws; complying with legal and regulatory requests for information; and insuring that the Agency's operations continue appropriately during an employee's absence.

No one other than the FI may access, or attempt to obtain access, to another individual's electronic communications without appropriate authorization.

- **Prohibited Uses:**

The agency's policy prohibiting harassment, in its entirety, applies to the use of our electronic communications systems. No one may use electronic communications in a manner that may be construed by others as harassment or offensive based on race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious beliefs or any of other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law.

Employees may not transmit any of Support-Link's confidential or proprietary information, including individual's information and other materials covered by Support-Link's confidentiality policy.

Inappropriate Internet use includes: transmitting obscene, harassing, offensive or unprofessional messages; accessing any site that is sexually or racially offensive or discriminatory; displaying, downloading or distributing any sexually explicit material.

- **Productivity:**

Your use of Support-Link's electronic communications systems must not interfere with your productivity, the productivity of any other Employee, or the operation of Support-Link's electronic communications systems.

- **Copyright Restrictions - Permissions Required:**

Any software or other material downloaded into Support-Link's computers may be used only in ways consistent with the licenses and copyrights of the vendors, authors or owners of the material. Prior authorization from the FI is required before introducing any software into Support-Link's computer system. Employees may not download entertainment software, games or any other software unrelated to their work.

- **No Agency Representation:**

Only authorized employees may communicate on the Internet on behalf of Support-Link, Inc. This communication must be pertinent to employment with Support-Link, Inc. and the individuals whom they serve. Employees may not express opinions or personal views that could be misconstrued as being those of Support-Link, Inc. Employees may not state their agency affiliation on the Internet unless required as part of their assignment.

- **Violations:**

Any violation of this policy may result in loss of computer access and disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination. Possible criminal acts will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

## **USE OF EQUIPMENT**

All Support-link, Inc. property--including furniture, desks, storage areas, work areas, lockers, file cabinets, , computer systems, office telephones, cellular telephones, modems, facsimile machines, Copy machines: must be used properly and maintained in good working order. Employees who lose, misappropriate, or misuse Support-Link, Inc. property may be personally liable for the replacement or repair of the item and may be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

Support-Link, Inc. reserves the right, at all times and without prior notice, to inspect and search any and all of its property to determine whether any agency policy has been violated, or when necessary for purposes of promoting safety in the workplace or compliance with applicable law. These inspections may be conducted during or after business hours and in the presence or absence of the Employee.

Employees may be otherwise permitted to use Support-Link's designated equipment for occasional, non-work purposes with permission from The FI. Nevertheless, Employees have no right of privacy as to any information or file maintained in or on Support-Link, Inc. property or transmitted through Support-Link, Inc. For purposes of inspecting, investigating, or searching Employees' files or documents, Support-Link, Inc. may override any applicable passwords, codes, or locks in accordance with the best interests of Support-Link, Inc., its Employees, or its individuals or visitors. All bills and other

documentation related to the use of Support-Link, Inc. equipment, property, and technical resources are the property of Support-link, Inc. and may be reviewed and used for purposes that Support-Link, Inc. considers appropriate.

Employees may access only files or documents that they have permission or are authorized to enter. Unauthorized review, duplication, dissemination, removal, damage, or alteration of files, or other property of Support-link, Inc., or improper use of information obtained by unauthorized means, may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

### **STOLEN/DAMAGED PERSONAL PROPERTY**

The Agency does not assume responsibility for the loss of money or property. Employees are urged to use precautions in safeguarding their possessions. Support-link, Inc. will generally not repair or replace personal items damaged during working hours. Employees will refrain from wearing or bringing to work, expensive, favorite, or delicate personal items

### **CORPORATE COMPLIANCE/FALSE CLAIM REPORTING**

Support-Link, Inc. is committed to prompt, complete and accurate billing of all services provided to our individuals. Accordingly, Support-Link, Inc. has adopted policies and procedures to comply with the federal and New York State laws that prohibit fraud, waste, and abuse in Medicare, Medicaid, and other federal health care programs. Examples of prohibited conduct include billing for services that were not actually performed or billing for more costly services than were actually performed (“upcoding”); Support-link, Inc. and its employees shall not make or submit any false or misleading entries on any bills or claim forms, and no employee shall engage in any arrangement or participate in such an arrangement at the direction of another person, including the FI or Chief Financial Officer, that results in such prohibited acts.

Any employee who becomes aware of a potential non-compliance concern, such as improper coding or billing by an employee of Support-link, Inc., must report the concern promptly to the FI. Any fraudulent documentation for billing purposes or cases of use of agency funds for employee’s personal gain should be reported to the FI or on-call designee. All calls are confidential. The anonymity of the caller will be protected at all times.

Under New York State law, employees who report certain kinds of illegal or improper activities to the FI or to a government authority, or who refuse to participate in illegal activity of the employer, are protected against retaliatory personnel actions such as discharge. To be protected against retaliation, the employee must first report the violation to the FI, or the on-call designee and give the employer a reasonable opportunity to correct the problem.

Several federal and New York State laws enable the government to impose administrative remedies, civil sanctions, and criminal penalties for false claims and statements made in connection with federal health care programs. For example, the federal False Claims Act allows the United States government or a private citizen to sue an individual or an entity for knowingly making certain false claims in connection with government business, such as knowingly submitting improper bills to a federal health

care program. Under some circumstances, a private citizen who initiates an action under the False Claims Act may be entitled to a portion of the court award or settlement that is recovered by the government. An employee who brings or participates in a False Claims Act suit is protected by law from certain retaliatory actions by the employer.

For further information on Corporate Compliance programs, and for detailed information on federal and state laws concerning the detection and prevention of fraud and abuse in federal health care programs and employee whistleblower protection rights, please refer to the Corporate Compliance Manual.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

As described above, this Handbook contains only a brief description of the various benefit plans provided to eligible employees. For the actual descriptions of the benefits available, reference must be made to the individual benefit plans. Where benefits are governed by a formal plan document or master policy, the exact terms of that policy will govern. While it is Support-Link's intent to continue all current benefit plans and policies, Support-Link, Inc. reserves the right to change, amend, or terminate at any time, any benefit plan or policy presently in effect.

## **HOLIDAYS**

The following are observed as holidays for all self-hire employees:

- 4<sup>th</sup> of July
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

It is expected that self-hire employees, with the broker, the hiring individual and/or their designee, discuss and negotiate up to double time for holidays at the time of budget development/review. Any staff not negotiated for holiday pay on these 3 recognized holidays are not expected to work. Wages agreed upon must not exceed the allowable Medicaid billable limit.

### **Paid-Time-Off (PTO):**

Earning PTO commences after the close of the first quarter of employment. A vacation is to be requested 14 days in advance of said vacation and approved by the hiring individual and/or their designee. PTO does not carry over from year to year, it expires on December 31.

- Quarterly, 1 prorated week of PTO will be earned based on the average hours worked in the previous quarter.

## **WORKER'S COMPENSATION**

If an employee becomes unable to work as a result of a job-connected accident or illness, he/she may be entitled to worker's compensation benefits. In the event that an employee becomes injured, he/she must obtain necessary medical attention. If working alone, the employee should contact the FI if needed. Once an employee's condition has stabilized, the employee must complete a Support-Link, Inc. "Incident Report" and return it to the FI. All accidents need to be reported to the FI within two (2) business days.

During a Worker's Compensation leave, an employee's insurance coverage will be administered as is done for disability leave.

## **DISABILITY**

Disability payment is provided as per New York State Disability Benefits, which may be instituted if the employee is unable to work for duration in excess of one week due to a non-job related illness or accident.

An employee must notify the FI of his/her intent to apply for disability benefits as soon as possible. The employee must provide written notice and proof of disability within 30 days of commencement of the disability. The employee and the FI will plan and document the anticipated usage of disability benefits on the Support-link, Inc. PTO Leave Request Form. The FI will verify the usage.

The employee may choose to use any/all PTO. It is not required that an employee utilize accrued time in lieu of disability payments. Disability payments will not commence until the employee no longer utilizes accrued PTO (payment for sick time and disability cannot be concurrent).

A disability leave may also qualify as a leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act and Paid Family Leave Act.

The employee's anniversary date will not be affected by a disability leave.

## **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT POLICY: (FMLA)**

New York State Family Medical Leave: (FMLA): Employees are eligible to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid family/medical leave within any 12 month period and be restored to the same or an equivalent position with no change in pay upon return from leave provided: (1) the employee has worked for the Agency at least 12 months, and has worked at least 1250 hours during the past 12 months. The 12-month period will be calculated by a "Rolling" 12-month period, measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave.

Reasons for Leave: An employee may take family/medical leave for any of the following reasons:

1. the birth of a son or daughter and in order to care for such son or daughter;
2. the placement of son or daughter with you for adoption or foster care and in order to care for the newly placed son or daughter;
3. to care for spouse, son, daughter, or parent ("covered relation") with a serious health condition; or
4. because of your own serious health condition which renders you unable to perform the functions of your position (including those qualifying for workers' compensation/NYS disability).

Leave because of reasons "1" or "2" must be completed within the 12 month period beginning on the date of birth or placement. In addition, where both spouses are

employed by the Agency who request leave because of reasons "1" or "2" or to care for an employee's parent with a serious health condition, they may only take a combined total of 12 weeks leave during any 12 month period.

Notice of Leave: If the need for family/medical leave is foreseeable, the employee must give the Agency at least 30 days prior written notice. If this is not possible, the employee must at least give notice as soon as practical (within 1 or 2 business days of learning of need for leave). Failure to provide such notice may be grounds for delay of leave. Additionally, if an employee is planning a medical treatment the employee must consult with the FI first regarding the dates of such treatment. Where the need for leave is not foreseeable, the employee is expected to notify the Agency within 1 to 2 business days of learning of the need to leave, except in extraordinary circumstances. Please make your request to the FI and provide as much information as possible, including the anticipated length of leave, anticipated return date, etc.

Medical Certification: If an employee is requesting leave because of his/her own or a covered relation's serious health condition, the employee and the relevant health care provider must supply appropriate medical certification. If an employee provides at least 30 days notice of medical leave, medical certification must be submitted before leave begins. Failure to provide requested medical certification in a timely manner may result in denial of leave until it is provided.

Reporting While on Leave: If an employee takes leave because of his/her own serious health condition or to care for a covered relation, you must contact the FI regarding the status of the condition and the intention to return to work. In addition, an employee must give notice as soon as practicable (within 2 business days if feasible) if the dates change or are extended or initially were unknown.

Leave is Unpaid: Family/medical leave is unpaid, although an employee may be eligible for short or long-term disability payments and/or workers' compensation benefits under those insurance plans. These plans are described elsewhere in the handbook. Paid leave, such as vacation or sick leave, will be substituted for unpaid FMLA leave. FMLA leave will run concurrently with other types of leave. Substitution of paid leave time does not extend the 12-week period. Further, in no case can substitution of paid leave time for unpaid leave time result in your receipt of more than 100% of your salary.

Intermittent And Reduced Schedule Leave: Leave because of a serious health condition, may be taken intermittently (in separate blocks of time due to single health condition) or on a reduced leave scheduled (reducing the usual number of hours you work per workweek or workday) if medically necessary. If leave is unpaid, the Agency will reduce an employee's salary based on the amount of time actually worked.

Returning From Leave: If an employee takes leave because of his/her own serious health condition, (except if you are taking intermittent leave), the employee is required to provide medical certification that he/she is fit to resume work. As stated in the leave policy, the employee will be restored to the same or equivalent position with no change in pay upon return from leave. Employees failing to provide the Return to Work Medical Certification Documentation will not be permitted to resume work until it is provided.

## **PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE: (PFL)**

**NEW YORK STATE PAID FAMILY LEAVE (PFL)**: New York's Paid Family Leave (PFL) provides job-protected, paid time off so you can: Bond with a newly born adopted or fostered child, care for a close relative with a serious health condition, or assist with family situations when a family member is deployed abroad on active military service. You will continue your health insurance while on leave and are guaranteed the same or comparable job after your leave ends. If you contribute to the cost of your health insurance, you must continue to pay your portion of the premium cost while on Paid Family leave.

PFL and FMLA will run concurrently with designated FMLA leave when the reason for leave qualifies under both PFL and FMLA. Eligible employees must apply for both if both are to be used.

You may NOT receive short-term disability and PFL at the same time. You may not take more than 26 combined weeks of short-term disability and PFL in a 52 week period.

If you are unable to work and qualify for Worker's Compensation Benefits, you cannot use PFL at the same time as you are receiving Worker's Compensation.

Accruing time: Time spent on paid vacation or sick days will be counted toward an employee's eligibility determination.

**Benefits-Time:** Paid Family Leave benefits phase in over 4 years. Eligible employees can take Paid family Leave for up to 8 weeks in 2018, 10 weeks in 2019 and 2020 and 12 weeks in 2021. Leave can be either all at once or in full-day increments. You may take the maximum time-off benefit in any given 52 week period.

**Benefits-Pay:** Paid family leave pay benefits phase in over 4 years. Benefits are a percentage of you average weekly wage, capped at the same percentage of the NY State Average Weekly Wage, as calculated annually by NY State's DOL. These benefits are 50% of your average weekly wage for 2018, 55% in 2019, 60% in 2020 and 67% in 2021.

**Eligibility:** all eligible employees are entitled to participate in Paid Family leave, regardless of citizenship and/or immigration status.

**Full-Time Employees:** Employees who work a regular schedule of 20 or more hours per week and eligible after 26 consecutive weeks of employment.

**Part-Time Employees:** Employees who word a regular schedule of less than 20 hours per week are eligible after working 175 days, which do not need to be consecutive.

**Funding:** Paid Family Leave is funded though employee payroll contributions that are set each year to match the cost of coverage. Our Insurance carrier for this benefit is Shelter-Point and all needed forms can be gotten through the Chief Financial Officer of Support-link, Inc.

**Intermittent And Reduced Schedule Leave:** Leave because of a serious health condition, may be taken intermittently (in separate blocks of time due to single health condition) or on a reduced leave scheduled (reducing the usual number of hours you work per workweek or workday) if medically necessary. If leave is unpaid, the Agency will reduce an employee's salary based on the amount of time actually worked.

**Returning From Leave:** If an employee takes leave because of his/her own serious health condition, (except if you are taking intermittent leave), the employee is required to provide medical certification that he/she is fit to resume work. As stated in the leave policy, the employee

will be restored to the same or equivalent position with no change in pay upon return from leave. Employees failing to provide the Return to Work Medical Certification Documentation will not be permitted to resume work until it is provided.

## **MILITARY LEAVE**

Leaves of absence without pay for military or Reserve duty are granted to full-time regular and part-time regular employees. If an employee is called to active duty or to Reserve or National Guard training, or if an employee volunteers for the same, the employee should submit copies of his/her military orders to the FI, the hiring individual and/or their designee as soon as is practical. The employee will be granted a military leave of absence without pay for the period of military service, in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. If an employee is a reservist or a member of the National Guard, he/she will be granted time off without pay for required military training. Eligibility for reinstatement after military duty or training is completed is determined in accordance with applicable federal and New York State laws.

## **MILITARY SPOUSE LEAVE**

Support-Link, Inc. provides employees with up to 10 days of unpaid leave when the employee's spouse is on leave from the armed services during periods of military conflict.

## **JURY DUTY LEAVE**

Support-Link, Inc. encourages employees to serve on jury duty when called. Employees must notify the FI, the hiring individual and/or their designee of the need for time off for jury or witness duty as soon as a notice or summons from the court or a subpoena is received. Jury Duty leave will be handled on a case by case scenario at the discretion of the FI, the hiring individual and/or their designee.

## **NO WORK WHILE ON LEAVE**

The taking of another job while on Family/Medical Leave or any other authorized leave of absence is grounds for immediate termination.

## **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

Support-Link, Inc. recognizes the importance of family and the difficulties employees face following the loss of a loved one. For that reason, Support-Link, Inc. grants paid leave for bereavement.

All regular part-time and full-time employees are eligible for bereavement leave. The number of hours paid are pro-rated based on the employee's status as full or part-time.

Following the death of an employee's immediate family member, the employee can take up to 5 consecutive days off with pay. Immediate family member is defined as an employee's parents, spouse, children, grandparents, siblings and grandchildren (this includes in-laws). Significant others may be included, where approved by the FI, the



hiring individual and/or their designee. Additional time off may be granted at the discretion of the FI, the hiring individual and/or their designee.

## **HEALTH BENEFITS**

Support-Link, Inc. will provide referral for assistance with application to the Marketplace for NYS Exchange Insurance. The agency's ability to provide employer provided health benefits will be evaluated annually.

## **RETIREMENT**

Support-Link, Inc. employees have the opportunity to participate in a retirement plan which allows employees to save a portion of their compensation for retirement. Any employee who has earned \$5,000.00 in the prior year and is expected to earn more than \$5,000.00 during the current year is eligible to participate in the plan. Contributions to this plan are pre-tax dollars, which means the amount specified by the employee is taken from their salary before federal income taxes are taken out. The employee is then taxed on the remaining salary, resulting in additional savings. It should be noted that any distribution from the Simple Plan will be subject to tax, whether that be early or qualified distribution. Early distribution may also carry a monetary penalty. See our representative for more details and a copy of the Simple Plan.

Contributions by Support-Link, Inc. are based on the amount contributed by the employee, with Support-Link, Inc. matching 1 dollar for every dollar you contribute up to 3% of your compensation. As with employee contributions, taxes on company contributions and their related earnings are deferred until distribution from the plan. All employees are immediately 100% vested. Due to the nature of the Simple Plan, if the employee does not contribute to the retirement plan, Support-Link, Inc. does not contribute to the retirement plan.

Employees are urged to seek advice from a financial expert prior to any distribution from the Simple Plan.

## **TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

RESIGNATION: When submitting a resignation, a minimum of 30 days written notice is requested for all Support-Link, Inc. employees. Once written notice of resignation is given, the following benefits are frozen: use of PTO. There is no pay out in the event that this time was not used during your employment with Support-Link, Inc. In the event an employee terminates employment with Support-Link, Inc., the employee is required to return all property owned by Support-Link, Inc. to the FI, the hiring individual and/or their designee prior to departure.

INVOLUNTARY TERMINATIONS: While the decision to commence employment is consensual, the same is not always true when the time comes to end the employment relationship. As an at-will employer, Support-Link, Inc. and/or the hiring individual and/or their designee reserves the right to end the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or notice. In the event an employee's employment is terminated, he/she

is required to return all property owned by Support-Link, Inc. to the FI, the hiring individual and/or their designee prior to departure.

## **REFERENCES**

All reference requests should be directed to the FI. No other Employee is authorized or permitted to release references for a current or former Employee. In response to a request for a reference, Support-Link, Inc. will release only dates of employment and position(s) held.

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **Self-Directed: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for Training Employees**

POLICY: All providers of self-directed services within Support-Link, Inc., will be trained in incident reporting, HIPAA and corporate compliance, as well as understanding ID/DD.

1. The hiring Individual, and/or their designee and the FI will assure the training of all staff according to OPWDD regulations and the training manual of Support-link, Inc.
2. The FI will maintain and retain copies of all training records for self-hired staff.
3. Annually all self-hired staff will be trained and updated utilizing the Support-Link, Inc. self-direction training manual which will include but not be limited to: incident reporting, Corporate Compliance, and HIPAA.
4. Should the hiring individual and /or their designee require more advanced training for the self-hired staff, the FI will assist in locating said training and the cost will be incurred through the self-directed individuals PRA.

Board Approved: **2/2018**

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for Intake and determining eligibility for services**

POLICY: Support-Link, Inc. will assure that all individuals who receive OPWDD SD services from Support-Link, Inc. are deemed eligible for services and are provided with prompt and accurate opening of their cases, thus allowing for quicker access to necessary and desired services.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

1. All referrals will be made to the Fiscal Intermediary.
2. The FI will assure eligibility and appropriate documentation is received from the MSC/CC and DDRO.
3. Referrals will be accepted based on caseload availability and location of hiring individual.
4. Each referral will be given equal opportunity for services without regard to race, color, creed, sex, national origin or disability.

Board Approved: 2/2018

**Support-Link, Inc.**

**OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for Canceling Services and/or Providing Back-up Staffing**

**POLICY:** To Provide a continuum of care for our individuals by assuring a minimum of disruptions to their services under all circumstances.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. In the event of illness or conflict in schedule, the FI, hiring individual and/or their designee shall arrange for substitute coverage when appropriate. All hours are scheduled based on the hiring individual's needs.
2. In the event of a long term illness or absence of a self-hired staff another self-hired staff, may provide coverage to the participant to assure no lapse in self-hired staff services.

Board Approved: 2/2018

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for Documenting Participant Contacts and Service Notes**

#### **POLICY:**

Support-Link Inc. will maintain a comprehensive record of services of each individual receiving self-directed services.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Each participant will have a folder for contact notes for weekly and running notes of all contact made with self-hired staff.
2. The self-hired staff will utilize the Support-Link, Inc. Self-Directed Service weekly and running casenote forms.
3. The Self-Directed Service billing documentation must contain the following: the date, location, time and description of the activities which are related to the goals established in the Habilitation/Service Plan as well as the participants name and Medicaid number, and the signature and date of the self-hired staff. The running Self-Directed Service casenote requires the individual's full name, an appropriate 3 part date, brief description of the contact as well as the self-hired staff's signature and date at the end of each entry.
4. The FI will review the Self-Directed Service casenote weekly. Casenotes are due to the FI no later than the 12 pm each Monday. Possible disciplinary action will ensue at the discretion of the FI if completed Self-Directed Service casenotes are not turned in by 12 pm on Mondays.
5. Complete Contact notes and Casenotes are to be filed in the participant's record weekly.

Board Approved: 2/2018

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for Billing**

**POLICY:** To assure timely submission of billings, thus assuring timely turn around in reimbursement.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Self-hired staff are to track all encounters with the hiring individual on the Support-Link, Inc. SD Weekly Billing Sheet. Self-hired staff assures that the hiring individual or their designee signs the weekly billing sheet after each encounter, thus providing testament to the provision of services.
2. By the close of business on each Monday, the weekly billing sheet along with the supporting casenotes will be given to the FI for review for accuracy and sign off. The billing can be submitted to MMIS each Wednesday.
3. The FI will retain copies of the weekly billing sheets in the event of a financial audit.

Board Approved: 2/2018

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for Remittance of Services Rendered by Third Party Vendors**

**POLICY:** To assure quality providers are receiving timely turn around in reimbursement.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

1. When a new provider or vendor is requested, an agreement packet will be sent to the desired provider/vendor from the FI.
2. Agreement Packets will be kept on file with the FI and will include the following:
  - a. Tax Documentation
  - b. Proof of Credential(s)
  - c. A copy of Background Check Material
  - d. Memorandum of Understanding
3. Independent Contractors: FI will issue payment on the 15<sup>th</sup>, monthly.
4. Third Party Vendors: FI will issue payment on the 15<sup>th</sup>, monthly.
5. Paid Neighbor: FI will issue payment on the 15<sup>th</sup>, monthly.
6. Other Reimbursements: FI will issue payment on the 15<sup>th</sup>, monthly.
7. Housing Subsidy: FI will issue payment on the 1<sup>st</sup>, monthly. All payments will be made to the Landlord/Utility provider(s).
8. Live-In Caregiver: FI will issue payment on the 1<sup>st</sup>, monthly. All payments will be made to the Landlord/Utility provider(s).

Board Approved: 2/2018



## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for Changing Providers**

#### **POLICY:**

Support Link Inc. will allow the hiring individual the opportunity to change providers with the least amount of turmoil and disruption to their services. When a hiring individual and/or their designee expresses a desire to change a provider the following procedure will be implemented.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Should the hiring individual request a change in self-hired staff, the broker will work with hiring individual and/or their designee, the FI and the self-hired staff to resolve any issues that may exist. If the issue cannot be resolved, the broker will assist the individual with identifying replacement staff and the current staff will be terminated.
2. Termination from the hiring individual's case will not preclude the employee from moving to another individual's case within the agency unless the employee was found negligent, abusive, or has committed other act(s) deemed unfit for continued employment by the FI.
3. If a hiring individual and/or their designee expresses the desire to change Broker or FI provider, the Broker will work with the participant and their MSC/CC to make the desired change.
4. When a change in FI or Broker service provider is decided upon, the broker, FI and the service coordinator will complete the necessary paperwork for transition and submit it ASAP to the appropriate parties for approval.
5. The MSC/CC will coordinate a transition meeting with the Broker and FI, all exiting and entering providers will attend the transition meeting. Providing the necessary paperwork to the new FI and/or Broker provider.

Board Approved: 2/2018

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for establishing and maintaining hiring individuals records**

**POLICY:** To insure that the hiring individual's case records are complete according to OPWDD regulations, Support-Link, Inc. policy and procedure and that they are accurate and reflective of the person's Self-Directed services.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

The FI shall maintain a file for each participant that includes:

1. Waiver Approval Documentation.
2. All approved budgets and amendments
3. All LOCED documentation applicable to the FI.
4. Service Plans and reviews;
5. All Addendums;
6. All Habilitation Plans;
7. Documentation of all billing/services provided;
8. Any/All Memoranda of Understanding or vendor agreements;
9. Participant's Rights and Responsibilities
10. Records will reflect the last 2 years of service provision to the individual, with the Initial Service Plan and LOCEDs retained in the active binder indefinitely. Alternate records will be safely stored for a period of 7 years beyond the active binders.
11. Hiring Individuals and/or their designee will maintain records in their home. They are informed that they are the manager of their staff/program and must be prepared for an audit.
12. Self-Hire staff are expected to keep a running note of service delivery/progress in the person's home/file. Confidentiality must be upheld at all times.

Board Approved: 2/2018

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

**OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for completing and distributing habilitation plans, budgets and budget amendments, and expenditure reports including timelines for supervisory review and submission to the MSC/CC, hiring individual and/or their designee and other service providers.**

### **POLICY:**

Self-Direction habilitation plans, budgets and budget amendments, and expenditure reports will be completed, submitted and distributed within the proper timeframes to assure no lapse in service provision or Medicaid billing.

### **PROCEDURE:**

1. A referral is received from the MSC/CC by the Broker and a file is created to ensure complete approved referral is received.
2. The individual will be assigned a Start-Up Broker if requested.
3. The Start-Up Broker will develop a budget with the hiring individual and their designee and prepare the plan(s) for launch.
4. The Start-Up Broker will ensure the hiring individual has made an uninfluenced choice of FI provider.
5. FI referrals will be assigned to an FI and employee applications/training will begin as requested.
6. The Broker will ensure all Habilitation Plans and budget documents are delivered to the hiring individual, their designee, the FI, and MSC/CC within 30 days of any meeting or requested change.
7. The FI will forward expenditure reports monthly to the hiring individual, their designee, their broker and the MSC/CC.
8. No Medicaid billings will be submitted for reimbursement without the appropriate eligibility and documentation.

Board Approved: 2/2018

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for hiring staff and verifying qualifications**

#### **POLICY:**

To assure qualified staff are hired to fill the position of Self-Directed, Self-Hired staff, all Support-Link, Inc. staff will be chosen in a non-discriminatory process. The most qualified person who best meets the needs of persons receiving services will be offered the position for which they are qualified.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

1. The hiring individual and/or their designee selects the employee(s) and provides a copy of Support-Link's employment application.
2. The agency receives resume/application.
3. The applicant will complete the following forms: SEL Check, OMR 104–107 giving permission for a criminal background check as well as the NYS Statewide Central Registry Form.
4. After the criminal background check/Statewide Central Registry and SEL are completed and the applicant is cleared, the applicant can be offered the position. Upon their acceptance, a letter of hire with job specifics will be sent to the new employee by the FI.
5. Once the applicant accepts the job they will have a 2 step PPD and submit a physical.
6. The FI will provide the employee with training materials which must be completed before employee start date.
7. During the first two weeks of employment the following will be completed with the employee and obtained: W-4, Copy of drivers' license, social security card, proof of vehicle insurance, Policy and Procedure and Personnel Policies signature sheet, Employee Training Record Sheet.
8. All completed forms, reports and identifying information will be maintained in the employees personnel file. The Background Check results, Central Statewide Registry and SEL provider results are maintained in a separate binder by the FI.

Board Approved: 2/2018

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for quality assurance and assessing consumer satisfaction.**

POLICY: Consumer satisfaction and quality services are of utmost importance. Annually, consumer satisfaction will be assessed.

#### PROCEDURE:

1. Each Spring a consumer satisfaction survey and Self-Hired Staff Appraisal forms (as appropriate) will be mailed with a self-addressed stamped envelope to all hiring individuals and their designee receiving Self-Directed services through Support-Link, Inc. by the FI.
3. When the surveys are returned they will be reviewed by the FI as well as the named staff if applicable. If any problem areas are noted they will be dealt with swiftly either verbally or in writing by the FI. Consumer Satisfaction Surveys will be retained by the FI.
4. A summary of the Consumer Satisfaction Surveys will be presented to the Board of Directors by the FI that will identify areas of concern and corrective actions to be taken.
5. Monthly there will be a review by the FI of the individual's budgets to provide expenditure reports to the teams. Files will be reviewed for compliance once annually by the FI.

Board Approved: **2/2018**

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for safety and medical emergencies**

POLICY: All hiring individuals receiving services with Support-Link, Inc. will be provided the necessary supports and assistance when faced with a safety or medical emergency.

1. In the event of a safety or medical emergency in which the individual is in imminent danger, 911 will be called for immediate assistance.
2. In the event of a safety or medical emergency that does not require immediate intervention the self-hired staff, the hiring individual and/or their designee will contact their MSC/CC, the FI or the Support-Link, Inc. emergency cell phone (518-361-0803) for assistance. Each hiring individual and/or their designee will be provided with these phone numbers at the time of intake and assist as necessary to post this information near their phone.
3. 911 will be called for all medical emergencies.
4. Incident reports will be completed as indicated in the current regulatory manual.

Board Approved: 2/2018

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for lifting, handling and transferring**

POLICY: Hiring individuals will be moved and transferred by appropriately trained staff in the safest manner possible in order to prevent injury to the self-directed staff as well as to the hiring individual.

1. Should the hiring individual require special lifting, handling, and transferring supports by the self-hired staff, the hiring individual and/or their designee will provide the MSC/CC, FI and Broker with said information.
2. The FI will assure that appropriate training for the self-hired staff is provided, prior to the commencement of employment with the hiring individual by the most appropriate parties possible. ie: the hiring individuals PT or other appropriate medical provider.
3. Self-hired staff will be annually refreshed in the lifting, handling and transferring techniques of the hiring individual.

Board Approved: 2/2018

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for medication handling**

**POLICY:** Self-hired staff are not to handle, dispense or monitor any medications or remind the hiring individual to take their medications. Self-directed staff are not to assist the hiring individual in calling in prescription refills. It is the expectation of the self-directed program that all hiring individuals are able to self-manage their medications.

1. For hiring individuals without any other plan to assure medications are taken as prescribed, there will be a pre-staffing checklist that will be reviewed by the hiring individual and/or their designee prior to the start of each self-hired staff shift as appropriate.
2. Should the hiring individual need to use an Epi-Pen or a VNS Stimulator, the FI with the MSC/CC and the hiring individual and/or their designee will assure that the self-hired staff are appropriately trained in the use of these medical devices by a trained medical professional, ie.: PCP/RN/RN/LPN etc.
3. Should either of these medical devices need to be used by the self-hired staff, 911 will be called and the hiring individual's designee and the FI will be notified. The appropriate incident form will be completed as soon as possible.

Board Approved: 2/2018



## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for splitting shift with CDPAP responsibilities**

POLICY: There are times when the hiring individual requires the assistance of CDPAP staffing who can provide services to the hiring individual that are not allowable under the regulations of self-directed/self-hired staff that are allowable under the CDPAP program.

1. The MSC/CC will alert the FI, Broker and the self-hired staff that the hiring individual is in need of the CDPAP services.
2. When a hiring individual requires services not allowable under the self-direction/self-hire program and allowable under the CDPAP program, ie. medication management, the hiring individual will work with their MSC/CC to obtain an assessment for the CDPAP program.
3. The self-hired staff agrees to be hired by the CDPAP chosen agency.
4. Services needed through self-direction by self-hired staff will not commence with the hiring individual until the needed services through CDPAP have been approved and the self-directed staff has been hired by the CDPAP chosen agency.
5. The hiring individual and/or their designee agrees to hire and train the CDPAP staff/self-hire staff in the allowable services and supports through the CDPAP program as per the CDPAP regulations.
6. The self-hired staff will sign out of the self-direction/self-hired program and into the CDPAP program (in 15 minute increments) in order to provide the allowable services to the hiring individual through the CDPAP program.
7. Once the services are completed with the hiring individual through the CDPAP program, the self-hired staff will sign back into the self-direction/self-hired program and commence providing services to the hiring individual.

Board Approved: 2/2018

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for working in shared living situations**

POLICY: Hiring individuals may live with their family, friends or with another individual who may be self-directing their services. It is imperative that in these situations, the services provided to the hiring individual by the self-hire staff are for that person, thus avoiding double billing situations, or situations of exploitation of the self-hired staff by the hiring individuals' housemate/s or family members.

1. The MSC/CC, the hiring individual and/or their designee will alert the FI and Broker if the hiring individual resides in a shared living situation.
2. In the event that the hiring individual resides with any person, regardless of their relationship to the hiring individual, who does not receive self-directed services through Support-Link, Inc. The FI, Broker and MSC/CC will assure that the hiring individual and/or their designee is made aware that the self-directing service is strictly for the hiring individual and that the self-hire staff cannot provide any services to the other individuals residing in the home.
3. Should the individuals residing with the hiring individual and/or the hiring individual request that the self-hire staff perform activities for unauthorized individuals in the household, the self-hired staff will explain that this is not allowable and report the situation to the FI.
4. The FI will talk with the hiring individual, the other individuals residing in the household, the Broker and the MSC/CC to explain that this is not allowable under the self-direction plan and must not occur.
5. Should the individuals residing with the hiring individual and/or the hiring individual continue to request that the self-hire staff perform activities for unauthorized individuals in the household, services will be terminated.
6. Should the hiring individual reside with another hiring individual who is being provided self-hired services through Support-Link, Inc. The FI will assure via the Support-Link, Inc. SD Weekly Billing Sheet that no double billing has occurred.
7. If the self-hire staff is working with more than one hiring individual, documentation of such will be completed on a separate Support-Link, Inc. SD Weekly Billing Sheet for each individual. The FI will assure that each hiring individuals medicaid billing is adjusted accordingly, ie: If 2 hiring individuals are receiving services at the same time from the self-hired staff, each hiring individuals billing amount is cut in half and so forth.

Board Approved: 2/2018

## **Support-Link, Inc.**

### **OPWDD Self-Direction: Self-hired staff Policy and Procedure for transporting individuals in personal vehicles**

POLICY: Hiring individuals will receive transportation in self-hired staff vehicles in order to access the community safely as indicated in the hiring individual's habilitation plans and according to their valued outcomes.

1. The MSC/CC, hiring individual and/or their designee indicate the need for transportation in the self-directed staff's vehicle.
2. The FI, Broker, hiring individual and/or their designee will assure that transportation is a part of the hiring individuals PRA.
3. The FI will review and obtain necessary signatures with the hiring individual and/or their designee on the Waiver, Release and Hold Harmless Agreement.
4. The self-hired staff will provide the FI with the following documents: a copy of their NY State Driver's License, registration and proof of automobile insurance annually.
5. It is the responsibility of the employee/driver to notify the FI of any lapse in insurance or policy change and will discontinue driving duties, until evidence of auto liability insurance is provided.
6. Should an accident occur when self-directed staff are transporting the hiring individual the self-hire staff will assure the safety of the hiring individual, call 911 and when able to report the accident to the hiring individuals designee and the FI.
7. Incident reports will be completed as indicated in the current regulatory manual.

Board Approved: 2/2018