

VETERAN GUIDEBOOK

**Veteran-Directed Care
(VDC)**

How can this guidebook

HELP YOU?



This guidebook will help you to use The Veteran-Directed Care (VDC) program available to you through a partnership program of the DRCOG Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. This guidebook will help you to understand the services and supports available through VDC. It explains who is available to assist you throughout the program/process. Self-direction doesn't mean doing things all by yourself — people are available to support you along the way.

There is a section that talks about who does what. There are ideas and tips for developing your spending plan. It also explains your rights and responsibilities in VDC. Please think carefully about the information in this guidebook. With the VDC program, choice and flexibility come with responsibilities.

Important phone

NUMBERS



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Customer service: 844-381-4433

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Section 1: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

What is the Veteran-Directed Care (VDC) program?

This program is funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and allows veterans to receive care and services in their home and community by managing their own spending plan. VDC is designed to assist you in directing your own services and supports.

The program serves veterans of any age who meet functional eligibility as determined by VA. The program provides veterans the opportunity to receive services that enable them to live independently in their own homes and communities. Veterans are able to manage their monthly budgets, hire workers and/or purchase goods and services to meet their individual needs and goals.

Who is eligible for VDC?

The Denver VA Medical Center will determine a veteran's initial eligibility for the program. The veteran must be enrolled in the Veterans Health Administration and meet VA eligibility criteria. The Area Agency on Aging will then provide the case management services to the veteran and the oversight of the fiscal intermediary.

The veteran must be competent, willing and able to supervise, hire/terminate, train and monitor their attendants and the services provided. The veteran must also act as an employer in general. If the veteran is unable to do this because of a cognitive impairment, the veteran may designate an authorized representative to act on their behalf. An individual who acts as an authorized representative may not be paid for performing worker services under this program.

What does self-direction mean?

Self-direction helps people of all ages, with all types of disabilities, maintain their independence at home by choosing the mix of services and supports that work best for them. Self-direction is based on the belief that the individuals receiving the services and supports know their needs best and are in the best position to plan and manage their own services.

Research proves the following benefits of self-direction:

- improves the participants' health outcomes
- participants are very satisfied with how they lead their lives
- significantly reduces participants' unmet personal care needs
- caregivers experience less physical strain
- caregivers are very satisfied with overall care
- does not increase incidence of fraud and abuse
- high-cost services are utilized less when basic support services are provided

Every state, including the District of Columbia, has at least one self-direction program. There are over 1 million individuals self-directing their services in the United States. Most of these programs are offered through state Medicaid programs.



Self-direction in VA

In the VA health care system, veterans have two options for receiving homemaker and personal care services in their homes.

Option 1: The Homemaker and Home Health Aide Care program is the traditional model for receiving services in the home. Under this program, VA sets veterans up with a home health care agency which sends staff to provide care in the home. The program is ideal for veterans who are comfortable working with a home health care agency and do not want the added responsibilities associated with a self-directed program.

Option 2: A new option for veterans is a self-directed program known as the Veteran-Directed Care (VDC) program, which includes a small but growing number of self-directed opportunities. As of August 2018, the VDC program is serving 2,133 veterans across 35 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Among Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, 79 out of 152 offer the program. The program prohibits agency-based care. Instead, veterans privately employ individuals to provide homemaker and personal care services. VA provides a monthly budget that is primarily used to pay attendants. Self-directed programs such as VDC involve more responsibility by the veteran or their authorized representative. Veterans or their authorized representative must actively monitor their budgets, approve timesheets and find their own caregivers. The VDC program is ideal for veterans who don't enjoy working with a home health care agency and who already have family or friends who are helping them at home. Family and friends can become paid attendants and be compensated for some of the work they are already providing.

Veterans must select either (not both) the Homemaker and Home Health Aide Care program or the VDC program. Veterans are encouraged to discuss with their VA medical team which option is best for them.

Section 2: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Role of the client

If you choose the VDC, your participation comes with responsibilities. You or your authorized representative will need to:

- work with your case manager and Consumer Direct Care Network
- develop your spending plan with your case manager
- manage and maintain your health, access medical help when needed or seek assistance to do so
- demonstrate the required skills and abilities needed to self-direct your care without jeopardizing your health and safety, or designate an authorized representative to do so for you
- recruit, hire, train, supervise and, if necessary, terminate hired attendants
- be the employer of record for hired attendants, abide by labor laws and direct all services
- regularly monitor services and verify timesheets submitted for payroll
- keep records, including copies of time sheets
- maintain program eligibility and/or report any changes to eligibility
- with your case manager, complete the functional assessment, risk mitigation plan and spending plan. These forms will be available from your case manager.
- advocate for yourself and accept responsibility for meeting your own needs
- follow your spending plan carefully as unauthorized services will not be allowed nor reimbursed
- monitor your monthly spending
- communicate regularly with your case manager. If your needs increase, you are expected to contact your case manager as soon as possible.

You will be provided with all the training and tools you need to be a successful employer. Helpful information can be found in the later sections of this guidebook. If you are uncomfortable with, or do not think you can handle, the responsibilities of independent self-direction, your case

manager will talk with you about how to designate an authorized representative. Your authorized representative can manage the above tasks on your behalf.

You have the right:

- to be treated with respect
- to make decisions regarding your own life regardless of the nature of the decisions or the consequences to yourself
- to receive services where you live
- to involve family, caregivers or legal representatives in the decision-making process
- to participate in the development of a care plan to address your needs
- to be informed on a full range of services and resources available to you
- to receive assistance with the referral and application process for services available to you
- to have your information kept private
- to have your information released only in the following situations:
 - you sign a written authorization
 - you have a medical emergency
 - you or others are in danger
 - there is suspected child or adult mistreatment
 - by court order

Role of the authorized representative

If you're not comfortable with all the responsibilities associated with the VDC program, you can appoint someone to help you. The person you appoint is your authorized representative. An authorized representative's only role is to help you manage the VDC program. They will not have authority to manage any other aspects of your life. An authorized representative may be your legal guardian, a family member, friend or any other person you identify to manage the program on your behalf.

An authorized representative:

- may not provide any services for compensation
- must act in your best interest
- must respect your preferences
- must maintain regular contact with you

- must be willing and able to meet and uphold all program requirements
- must be at least 18 years old
- must sign the “Designation for Authorized Representative” form available from your case manager

Role of the VA VDC coordinator

Brigitte Lee is the designated VDC coordinator for the Denver VA Medical Center. The VDC coordinator oversees DRCOG’s case management program and ensures that DRCOG is meeting VA standards for service and quality of care.

Some of the responsibilities of the VA VDC coordinator are to:

- establish eligibility for any veterans who would like to be a part of the program
- refer new clients to DRCOG to get started with the VDC program
- determine the budget for each veteran using the VDC program
- approve all spending by signing each veteran’s spending plan
- communicate with other VA providers regarding the health and safety of veterans in the VDC program
- assist in coordinating care for veterans in the VDC program
- oversee quality assurance of the VDC program and periodically audit DRCOG
- assist DRCOG with billing and invoicing to VA



Role of the Denver Regional Council of Governments

The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) is the designated Area Agency on Aging. It has more than 40 years' experience of working with older adults and adults with disabilities in the Denver region. DRCOG has many options to help older adults, adults with disabilities, their families and caregivers remain independent in the community, including information and referral services, case management, transportation, home-delivered meals, senior centers, legal services and more throughout its network of funded providers.

DRCOG provides a number of direct services to older adults and people with disabilities including the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, its information and assistance program, transitions programs, elder refugee program and the State Health Insurance Assistance Program, which offers Medicare counseling.

The Denver VA Medical Center contracts with DRCOG to provide the VDC program in the Denver metro area which includes Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Douglas, Denver, Gilpin and Jefferson counties. Some of the responsibilities of DRCOG related to the VDC program are:

- to provide the ongoing case management services to veterans enrolled in the VDC program
- to contract with and oversee the financial management services (FMS) agency and ensure the quality of their services to veterans
- review the monthly spending of all participating veterans and ensure it is in line with VA rules and regulations
- submit monthly individualized claims to VA for reimbursement

How does DRCOG bill VA?

You will not have direct access to your monthly budget, meaning you, personally, will not receive a monthly check. Instead, every month DRCOG will advance funds to Consumer Direct Care Network so it can pay your attendants. Consumer Direct Care Network and DRCOG work together to submit electronic claims to VA. Through these claims, DRCOG only bills VA based on actual service spending. After processing, VA reimburses DRCOG for services rendered.

You will periodically receive a "Summary of VA Payment(s)" notice in the mail. The notice describes the payment VA made to DRCOG for the VDC program. VA instructs VDC sites to establish a daily rate based on the number of days for which direct care was provided to veterans in their homes. The number of days for which direct care was provided to the veteran is defined as any day when the veteran paid for an attendant to assist with homemaker or personal care services or when the case manager completed an in-home visit with the veteran. If you have any questions regarding your "Summary of VA Payment(s)" notice, contact your case manager.

How does DRCOG get paid?

Every month, VA pays DRCOG an administrative fee. The fee is set by VA Central Office and dependent on geographic location. For the Denver metro Area, the monthly fee is \$569 per veteran per month. Although this might seem like a lot, the cost of administering the VDC program is quite high. The administrative fee is used to pay for the following:

- **case management staff:** includes staff salary and benefits, necessary trainings
- **accounting staff:** includes accounting staff who monitor budgets and spending within the VDC program and who are also responsible for submitting claims to VA, tracking payments and reconciling bills
- **financial management services:** includes the fee paid to Consumer Direct Care Network to be the payroll agent for all veterans in the program
- **other overhead costs:** includes mileage costs to drive to home visits and postage for mailers



Role of the case manager

You do not have to do this by yourself. Your case manager will work with you throughout your participation in VDC.

Some of the responsibilities of the case manager are to:

- help you understand VDC
- help you develop your spending plan
- help you evaluate your spending plan and how VDC is working for you
- help you understand and complete VDC paperwork
- help you with problems when they arise
- monitor the monthly budget and address any spending concerns that may arise

If you decide to participate in VDC, you can expect, at least, monthly phone calls and quarterly visits from your case manager. The case manager will also complete a reassessment after the first six months of services and annually after that. You are expected to fully participate in reviews.

Role of the financial management service

Everyone who is enrolled in VDC must work with a financial management service (FMS). A detailed explanation of FMS can be found in the next section. The role of the FMS is to:

- act as your payroll agent and take care of all money-related issues such as timesheets, payroll, taxes and other employer-related requirements
- provide payment to the people you hire and to the places where you purchase your goods and other services
- send you a monthly spending report
- contact you and your case manager if you request something that is not approved in your spending plan
- answer questions you and the people you hire may have about payroll matters.

Effective Jan. 1, 2019, the FMS provider for the DRCOG Area Agency on Aging is Consumer Direct Care Network. Customer service agents at Consumer Direct Care Network are available to help you between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Mountain time. The phone number for customer service is 844-381-4433.

SECTION 3:

FISCAL EMPLOYER AGENT SERVICE MODEL

Fiscal/employer agent

In VDC, you or your authorized representative are the employer of record within the fiscal/employer agent (F/EA) model. In VDC, Consumer Direct functions as your fiscal/employer agent (F/EA).

What does a fiscal/employer agent (F/EA) do?

Consumer Direct performs payroll and administrative functions for self-directing individuals. Just like a regular payroll provider, Consumer Direct makes sure attendants get paid on time and that taxes are handled correctly. Consumer Direct establishes a federal employer identification number (FEIN) on behalf of you or your authorized representative. Consumer Direct also processes paperwork and performs payroll-related functions and budget tracking on your behalf. The F/EA model provides veterans with flexibility, control and responsibility. You are the employer. You recruit, interview, hire, train, schedule and, when necessary, terminate your attendants.

As a participant-employer who uses a fiscal/employer agent (F/EA), what is my status with the IRS?

The IRS has a special tax classification designated specifically for self-directing individuals who hire workers and use an F/EA. The IRS officially classifies these individuals as “home care service recipients,” a type of household employer. The Internal Revenue Manual, which instructs IRS agents on how to enforce tax regulations, has detailed instructions for home care service recipients. The manual directs IRS agents to handle participants’ tax matters with the greatest possible sensitivity. The manual also makes clear to IRS agents that an F/EA is responsible for

handling wages and taxes related to home care service recipients, and the F/EA should be the only point of contact about tax issues related to participants' program activity. In the event of a tax problem related to participation in a self-direction model, the IRS has stated publicly that they would go after the F/EA, not the participant, for any taxes and penalties due. The IRS internal databases also reflect this position, as the IRS has reported that upon establishment as a home care service recipient in the IRS systems, the participant-employer's individual filing requirements and opportunity to get notices, liens and levies from the IRS are removed and instead those filing requirements and opportunities for notices, liens and levies are connected to the fiscal/employer agent who has submitted an IRS Form 2678, Employer/Payer Appointment of Agent on the participant-employer's behalf.

Exempt relationships

In the F/EA model, Consumer Direct will help establish you (the veteran or authorized representative) as an employer with the IRS and State of Colorado. This means you will be assigned a unique federal employer identification number (FEIN) so that you are the employer of record. The FEIN is established in the name of person who has control over managing services, either you or your authorized representative.

In IRS Publication 15, the IRS has designated some familial relationships as exempt from certain taxes. This only applies if you have an attendant who is related to the FEIN holder in one of the following manners. If one of the relationships is present the attendant may be exempt from FICA (Social Security and Medicare), FUTA (federal unemployment) and SUTA (state unemployment) taxes.

Consumer Direct can help you determine the exemptions for which you and your attendants qualify. The following relationships exempt the FEIN holder from associated taxes:

Relationship to EIN holder	FICA	FUTA	SUTA
child employed by parent	exempt (18-21 years old)	exempt (18-21 years old)	exempt
parent employed by adult child	exempt	exempt	exempt
spouse employed by spouse	exempt	exempt	exempt
adoptive and/or stepparent employed by adult child	exempt	exempt	exempt

Per the IRS, the attendant or employer cannot opt out of these exemptions. It is true that the attendant would not be earning social security credits and since the employer is exempt from paying into FUTA and SUTA, the attendant could not collect unemployment. Attendants should seek advice from a tax professional if they have questions. Publication 15 applies to all businesses and isn't specific to the home care service recipient, which is the designation the IRS has given to an employee identification number holder in an F/EA situation.

Client Liability

In VDC, you assume some liability because you perform employer-related functions. Consumer Direct also assumes liability. You and Consumer Direct work together to minimize risk.

Financial management service (FMS) provider liability

FMS providers operate under Section 3504 of the Internal Revenue Code, which requires them to take on joint federal tax liability with every client they serve. In contrast, regular payroll providers do not share their client's tax liabilities. The FMS provider is financially responsible for making sure each client's tax payments, filing and reporting is done correctly. Required F/EA federal tax procedures and responsibilities are set forth in IRS Revenue Procedure 2013-39. If an FMS provider makes a tax mistake, they are liable for the mistake. This protects VDC clients from personal financial risk. In the F/EA model, you are considered a small employer (less than 50 employees) per the Affordable Care Act, and therefore are not required to offer your attendants health insurance.



What happens if the FMS provider inappropriately files payroll taxes?

Upon appointment as your fiscal agent, the FMS provider assumes responsibility for properly filing employer- and attendant-related payroll taxes with the IRS and State of Colorado. Filing is based on the information submitted by the attendant on their W-4 and exempt relationship status, if applicable. In the event there is an issue with the filing or penalties, the FMS provider assumes responsibility.

Being an employer under Colorado law and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

The federal government amended the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to allow attendants to be eligible for minimum wage and overtime requirements. Colorado law requires compensation for attendants who exceed twelve (12) hours in a single day, and FLSA requires compensation for working over forty (40) hours in a single week. An employer is not obligated to comply with the FLSA's overtime requirement with respect to domestic service employees who reside at the home, referred to as "live-in" domestic services employees. For example, if you are a veteran who employs your spouse as an attendant in the VDC program and you both live together, the spouse is not eligible for overtime.

Per VA guidelines, overtime is strictly prohibited and should be avoided at all costs. You must get written approval from your case manager to use your budget for overtime or risk having to pay the difference out of pocket. If you think your attendant may have accidentally worked overtime, contact your case manager or Consumer Direct immediately.



SECTION 4: ENROLLMENT PROCESS

How do I begin?

The Denver VA Medical Center determines your eligibility to participate in VDC. If you are eligible, the Denver VA Coordinator will send a referral to case management at DRCOG. At times there may be a delay in starting the program due to our case managers already having a full case load. If a delay occurs, you will be contacted periodically by a case manager with an estimated start date.

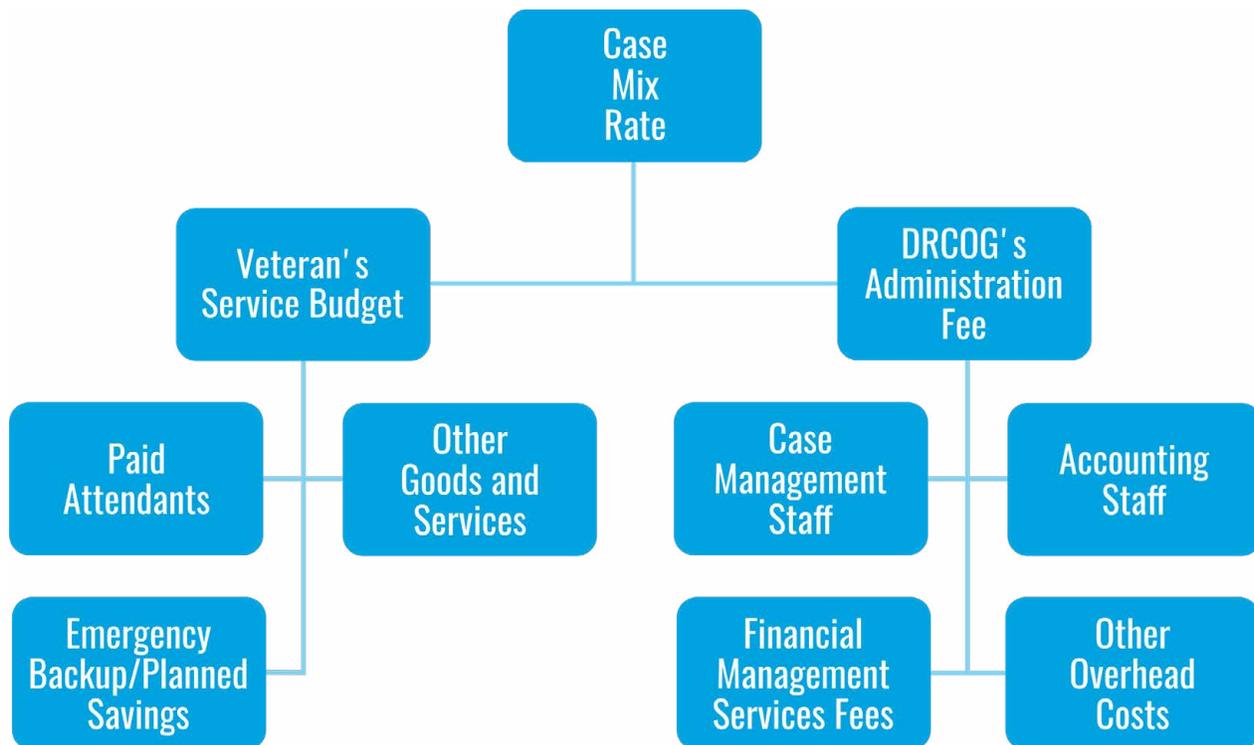
After receiving the referral, your case manager will contact you to set up a time to meet, usually in your home, within seven business days of receiving the referral. Your case manager will explain to you the VDC program, what veteran-directed services are and the benefits and responsibilities of self-directing services.

Your case manager will work with you to complete an assessment of your needs and goals. You may invite anyone you would like to be a part of the planning process.

Your case manager will also talk with you about designating an Authorized Representative if you are uncomfortable with or unable to handle the responsibilities of independent self-direction. If you have a court-appointed legal guardian, you will be required to designate an authorized representative.

How is my budget determined?

Your VDC monthly budget is dependent on your functional status and what kind of assistance you need at home. VA will determine an individual budget for each veteran by conducting a standardized assessment using the Purchased Case-Mix and Budget Tool. After completing the assessment, the veteran will be assigned a case-mix rate. For VDC, the case-mix rate is a bundled rate which includes the veteran's spending plan and DRCOG's administrative costs. Below is an overview of the components that make up the veteran's case-mix rate:



There may be times when VA needs additional documentation of your functional status. You may be asked by VA to schedule an appointment with the VA occupational therapy department and complete an assessment with an occupational therapist. If this happens, it is important to be open and honest with the occupational therapist regarding the assistance you need. The occupational therapist's evaluation could result in either an increase or decrease in your VDC monthly budget.

When do my VDC services begin?

If you are reading this guidebook, you have already started the process of enrolling in the VDC program. In the next month your case manager will meet with you several times to go over the details of the program, complete a functional assessment, finalize your budget and create your spending plan. Your case manager will submit the spending plan to VA for final approval. During the next month you and your attendants will meet with Consumer Direct to complete employment paperwork and to make sure all participants understand their roles and responsibilities.

Once these steps are completed, VDC services can begin. Generally, the enrollment process takes a month to complete, however, this depends on how quickly you can identify attendants and complete the required Consumer Direct paperwork. If there are unforeseen delays, your VDC services could also be delayed. Your case manager will keep you apprised of your official start date and Consumer Direct will send you an "OK to Work" form.

SECTION 5: SPENDING PLAN

What is a spending plan?

Using the budget given to you by VA, you and your case manager will develop a spending plan outlining the goods and services to be purchased through this program. The spending plan describes the services and goods you need to continue to live in your community (within program guidelines). It lists who will provide the services and goods and the amount of money you plan to spend. This plan will also help VA understand why you need the services and goods you chose and what the plan will cost.

The spending plan is an important document. Essentially it acts as your authorization for spending. If you submit any expenses that are not listed on the spending plan, they will not be authorized for payment and you will be responsible for the expense. DRCOG and VA have a strict policy on VDC overspending and it is your — or your authorized representative's — responsibility to adhere to the spending plan.

After you and your case manager have agreed upon a spending plan, it will be submitted to VA for final approval. If you need to buy something not within your spending plan, contact your case manager prior to the purchase. You may request changes to your spending plan monthly unless your needs and goals have significantly changed.



How do I get approval for my spending plan?

Your spending plan must be approved before your VDC services can begin. Once you have prepared your plan, your case manager will work with you to help get it submitted to the VDC coordinator at the Denver VA Medical Center.

Make sure your spending plan focuses on your long-term service needs and goals and will help you:

- live at home and in the community, as independently as possible
- reach your goals
- be involved with your family and/or friends
- increase your independence as much as possible
- decrease your need for publicly funded services



What if my plan is not approved?

If your spending plan, or parts of it, are not approved, work with your case manager to figure out your options, including help to request reconsideration of the decision. You have the right to appeal the decisions — see the “What if I have a complaint?” section (page 40) for further information.

What if I don't spend my entire monthly budget?

Sometimes you may not completely spend your monthly budget. You may accumulate unspent monthly budgeted amounts into a planned savings/emergency backup fund. The backup fund may contain a maximum balance of \$100 less than one month's budget. For example, let's say your approved monthly budget is \$2,000. In this example you would only be allowed to save up to \$1,900 in the planned savings/emergency backup fund.

The backup fund may be used to cover unforeseen emergency expenses or goods and services which cannot be covered with one month's budget. After obtaining approval from your case manager, you will work with Consumer Direct to make the purchase (see “How are attendants, goods and services paid” on page 32).

The money in your planned savings/emergency backup fund must be spent by the end of the federal fiscal year. No money may be rolled over into the next year's budget. Work with your case manager to ensure that you are spending most of your budget each month. The federal fiscal year runs from Oct. 1 through Sept 30.

How do I change my spending plan?

When you want to make changes to your spending plan, you first must contact your case manager to discuss the change and, if necessary, get approval from the VDC coordinator at the Denver VA Medical Center. Depending on the change you want to make, you may have to amend your spending plan and get the change approved. Your case manager will provide you with the paperwork you need to request changes in your plans.

You must amend your spending plan and submit it for approval by the Denver VA Medical Center if:

- you want to make a big change (such as changing your attendants' payrate)
- you add new attendants
- you add a new need to the spending plan and want to buy a new service or good
- you want to increase the amounts you spend on approved purchases

You do not need to amend your plans and submit them for approval from the Denver VA Medical Center if:

- you want to spend less than the amounts you list for approved purchases
- you have unplanned, extra unpaid help from family members or friends and will spend less than you planned that month for a service or support
- you want to redistribute hours between your attendants (when you have more than one) while keeping the total number of hours and costs the same

Policy on overspending

This section outlines the VDC policy for when a veteran or their authorized representative continually overspend their monthly budget. You'll see that the following information is presented much more formally. That's because the rules in this policy are important to follow – violating this policy may result in disenrollment from the VDC program. The policy has been reviewed and approved by the Denver VA Medical Center. Keep in mind that VDC is not necessarily the best option for all veterans who meet eligibility and it's possible that the Homemaker and Home Health Aide Care program may be a better fit (see page 6 for details).

Essentially policy enforcement consists of:

- **first overage:** a warning and a letter
- **second overage:** a warning and a letter
- **third overage:** mandatory appointment of an authorized representative or mandatory change in authorized representative
- **fourth overage:** VDC disenrollment

See below for a full description on each of these steps.

I. Policy overview:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to veterans/authorized representatives (AR) and DRCOG case managers on how to manage any overspending that may occur while enrolled in the VDC program. This policy does not provide guidance for every situation, but rather provides standards for use by the Veterans/AR and case managers.

The spending plan that is created upon enrollment to the program serves as the formal authorization of the budget. It outlines how many hours an attendant can work, goods and services that can be purchased, and how much will be saved each month for emergencies or planned expenses in the future.





The emergency backup and planned savings fund accrues when a veteran/AR spends less than the approved monthly spending from the start date of the program. VA has a strict guideline on when a veteran/AR can use the emergency backup and planned savings fund. Remaining within a monthly budget is a key element of the VDC program. If the veteran/AR is unable to adhere to the overspending policy, they are at risk of being disenrolled from the VDC program.

Each month, Consumer Direct, DRCOG's financial management service, will provide a spending report to the veteran/AR and the case manager. The spending report details all spending during the month including all payments made to attendants. The veteran/AR and the case manager will review the spending report for appropriate spending within the budgeted amount. Additionally, Consumer Direct alerts the case manager via email whenever overspending occurs. The case manager is responsible for investigating the reason for overspending and in certain circumstances can approve use of the emergency backup and planned savings fund to cover expenses.

II. Using the emergency backup and planned savings fund:

The case manager will approve use of the emergency backup and planned savings fund under the following circumstances:

A. For purchase of specialty items to promote independence.

1. These purchases must be documented in the spending plan and must be approved by the Veteran/AR, case manager, and VDC coordinator.
2. Approval is granted through the signature of each person on the spending plan.
3. Purchase of the specialty item cannot occur until the veteran/AR has accumulated enough money in the emergency back-up and planned savings fund to cover the cost.
4. Purchases that occurred without approval from the case manager will not be reimbursed regardless of the circumstance.

B. Pre-approved extra attendant hours.

1. If the veteran/AR knows in advance that they will require extra attendant hours or other services, they must contact the case manager for approval to use the emergency backup and planned savings account.
2. The veteran/AR must show a specific reason for extra attendant hours or other services. For example, a sudden change in health status may require additional help at home.
3. The case manager has the authority to deny the request if the veteran/AR does not have a sufficient reason for going over budget.
4. If the case manager approves extra attendant hours, the case manager will document the approval and notify the VDC coordinator and Consumer Direct in writing. An updated spending plan may also be required.

III. Denial of the emergency backup and planned savings fund:

A. The case manager and case manager supervisor has the authority to deny the use of the emergency backup and planned savings fund. Such instances of when a denial may occur are:

- insufficient funds in the emergency backup and planned savings fund
- accidental overspending by the veteran/AR such as a math error or typo on the timesheet
- suspicion of fraud or abuse
- inadequate explanation from the veteran/AR as to why the overspending occurred
- duplicative services that are already being provided by VA
- failure to obtain pre-approval from the case manager

B. The veteran/AR is responsible for any unauthorized spending. This may include paying attendants out of pocket for the hours they worked that were not approved in the spending plan or approved by the case manager. The VDC program is designed so that the veteran/AR is designated the employer of record. It very important that the veteran/AR acknowledges this responsibility and adhere to all state and federal employment regulations.

IV. Overspending protocol

A. First and second occurrences of overspending:

1. Consumer Direct will notify the case manager with details on the overspending.
2. The case manager will contact the veteran/AR by telephone within two business days and complete the following:
 - Review the spending plan and other documentation to determine if the overspending was pre-approved.
 - Discuss the reason for the overspending and determine if the veteran experienced a change in health status resulting in the need for additional services.
 - Offer additional training if the veteran/AR report difficulty with managing the budget.
 - Develop an action plan to prevent overspending in the future.
3. The case manager will inform the case manager supervisor who will make a final decision whether to approve or deny the use of the emergency backup and planned savings fund.
4. The case manager will notify Consumer Direct of a final decision. If the overspending is approved, Consumer Direct will issue payment. Due to the extra steps to verify whether overspending is approved, attendants may experience a delay in payment.
5. The case manager will send a letter to the veteran/AR outlining the plan to prevent overspending within five business days.
6. The case manager will document all the above activities in their report of contact notes.





B. Third occurrence of overspending:

1. Consumer Direct will notify the case manager with details on the overspending.
2. The case manager will contact the veteran/AR by telephone within two business days and complete the following:
 - Review the spending plan and other documentation to determine if the overspending was pre-approved.
 - Discuss the reason for the overspending and determine if the veteran experienced a change in health status resulting in the need for additional services.
 - Offer additional training if the veteran/AR report difficulty with managing the budget.
 - Develop an action plan to prevent overspending in the future.

3. The case manager will inform the case manager supervisor who will make a final decision whether to approve or deny the use of the emergency backup and planned savings fund.
4. An authorized representative (AR) or change of AR will be required in order for the veteran to continue with VDC. The new AR will need to complete paperwork from Consumer Direct to become the employer of record. This will take place as soon as Consumer Direct can arrange.
5. The case manager will notify Consumer Direct of a final decision. If the overspending is approved, Consumer Direct will issue payment. Due to the extra steps to verify whether overspending is approved, attendants may experience a delay in payment.
6. The case manager will send a letter to the veteran/AR outlining the mandatory AR or change of AR within five business days.
7. The case manager will document all the above activities in their report of contact notes.

C. Fourth occurrence of overspending:

1. Consumer Direct will notify the case manager with details on the overspending.
2. The case manager will contact the veteran/AR by telephone within two business days and complete the following:
 - Inform the veteran/AR that the veteran will be disenrolled from the VDC program.
 - The case manager will refer the veteran to the VA VDC coordinator to arrange for traditional VA services to resume.
3. The case manager will notify Consumer Direct with the date that the veteran will be disenrolled from VDC.
4. The case manager will send a final termination letter to the veteran/AR.
5. The case manager will document all the above actives in their report of contact notes.

V. Non-compliance

The VDC program may terminate participation if the veteran/AR does not follow through with the necessary steps outlined in this policy. For consideration of continuation, the VDC coordinator must be contacted within 14 days of the date of the letter. Redeterminations will occur on a case-by-case basis.

SECTION 6: GOODS AND SERVICES

Can I purchase anything I choose?

Only goods and services approved within your spending plan will be eligible for payment. If you buy something on your own without prior approval by your case manager, you will not be reimbursed. Keep in mind that your spending plan must cover your needs for an entire year. This means you'll need to plan and budget for the services you will need on a regular basis, as well as any special, higher-cost items.

According to VA policy, goods and services must meet all the following criteria:

- help veterans meet their functional, medical and/or social needs
- ensure the health and safety of the veteran
- be the least costly alternative that reasonably meets the veteran's identified needs
- be for the benefit of the veteran.
- not be prohibited by federal and state laws and regulations
- not be available through another VA source

VA also states that any goods or services purchased using the VDC budget must lead to the following outcomes:

- support the ability of the veteran to remain in the community
- enhance community inclusion and family involvement
- develop or maintain personal, social, physical or work-related skills
- decrease dependence on formal support services
- increase independence of the veteran
- increase the ability of unpaid family members and friends to receive training and education needed to provide support

Services and goods that are covered

The following is a list of goods and services that you could potentially use your VDC budget to purchase. The categories that have an * indicate there may be a VA program that already covers the service or goods and therefore may require additional documentation or approval to use your VDC budget.

Category	Example
adult day care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adult day care center program
assistive devices and technologies *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TTY telephone • video communication
attendant care (appointment aide)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accompanying you to medical appointments • personally assisting to obtain a needed service • filling out applications and explaining directions to you
attendant care (homemaker services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • light housekeeping • laundry • sweeping and mopping floors • dusting • changing linens • cleaning bathroom (toilet, tubs, showers, sinks, floors) • cleaning kitchen (loading/unloading dishwasher, washing dishes, cleaning countertops, sinks, floors and stovetops as needed)
attendant care (personal care services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assistance in and out of the shower or bath tub, assistance during the bathing process • assistance in getting on/off the toilet • brushing teeth/dentures • personal grooming tasks and dressing • medication reminders (workers are not allowed to administer medications)
attendant care (respite care) *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in-home services provided by volunteer or paid help, occasionally or on a regular basis

Category	Example
attendant care (socialization support services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paying an attendant to accompany you to activities such as education or exercise classes • paying an attendant to take you to the movies, religious services or other social engagements
attendant care (shopping or running errands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shopping with you or shopping for you
caregiver support, education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • caregiver support programs • home and phone visit support • referral to caregiver support services
chore and maintenance services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initial heavy-duty home cleaning • removal of trash and debris from the home • yard clean-up • snow shoveling • pest/bedbug removal
electronic monitoring *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purchase of room monitors • bed alarm • programmable or voice-activated phone • personal alarms • emergency response systems • medication dispenser
home and vehicle modification services *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • installation of grab bars, railings, specialized lighting, etc. • ramps • vehicle modifications
health maintenance services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gym or health club membership • health counseling • health education • massage therapy beyond services traditionally covered by insurance • service/support animal health • public health maintenance programs • structured weight reduction programs

Category	Example
nutritional services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • home-delivered meals • therapeutic meals or liquid supplements prescribed by a physician and managed specifically for you by the dietitian (such as diabetic diet, renal diet, pureed diet, tube feeding)
transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public transportation or other transport such as RTD Access-a-Ride required to go for socialization support or medical support activities • an attendant/companion to go with you if you have special needs when using regular transportation

Services and goods not covered

- services already being provided to you or your family caregiver by or through VA or Medicare.
- services provided for the benefit of other household members (errands, cooking, laundry, childcare, etc.)
- medical fees and copays
- all prescription and over-the-counter medications
- experimental treatments
- room and board, including rent and mortgage payments
- costs related to internet access
- gambling, alcohol, tobacco and recreational drugs (legal and illegal)
- loans, bonuses or retroactive pay to attendants
- home modifications that add square footage to your home
- home modifications for a residence other than your primary residence
- vacation expenses (except the cost of attendant care while you are on vacation)
- expenses related to training you, your representative or attendants (travel, lodging, meals)
- animals, including service animals, and their related costs
- transportation not related to a spending plan goal (recreation only)
- tickets and related costs to attend sporting or other recreational events
- maintenance of non-adapted vehicles

- personal items and services not related to your disability
- mileage costs for attendants

Personal care services cannot be provided to medically unstable veterans as a substitute for care provided by a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, licensed physician or other licensed health professionals.

How are attendants, goods and services paid?

All expenses approved through your spending plan are paid through Consumer Direct. Consumer Direct will orient you or your authorized representative on procedures for financial management including how to pay bills, your responsibilities and how budget balances are reported.

In order for you to pay your attendants, they will need to complete timesheets every week. You will approve their timesheets and submit them to Consumer Direct. Consumer Direct will pay your attendants through direct deposit or a prepaid debit card. Payments to attendants occur every two weeks.

You may select one of two ways to pay for goods and services that you are approved to purchase.

Option 1: You pay for the good or service out of pocket. You will then submit the receipt or invoice to Consumer Direct along with an expense form. Consumer Direct will reimburse you for the cost based on what was approved in the spending plan.

Option 2: The vendor pays for the good or service. The vendor then sends the receipt or invoice to Consumer Direct along with an expense form. Consumer Direct will reimburse the vendor for the cost based on what was approved in the spending plan. To set the company up as a vendor requires some extra steps and forms. Tell your case manager right away if you want to process vendor payments in this way.

SECTION 7: ATTENDANT CARE

Who can I hire as an attendant?

Family members, friends, neighbors and previous personal care providers may be hired as attendants. Anyone you may have designated as your authorized representative may not be hired as an attendant. An attendant must be at least 18 years old and must be capable of providing your care. An attendant must be approved by the case manager, Consumer Direct Care Network and VA, and complete all employment paperwork before they can be paid for providing care. VA requires that all attendants pass a criminal background check. For more information on this, please see “Criminal background check policy” on page 35. Prospective attendants must complete the employment application and criminal background check forms provided by Consumer Direct Care Network and provide proof of age and legal work status.



Your attendants are considered your employees. They are not employees of Consumer Direct Care Network or the Denver Regional Council of Governments. Once services begin, the attendant is responsible for providing services, as well as completing and submitting timesheets to you. You and your attendant are liable for any negligent or wrongful acts or omissions in which either party participates. DRCOG, Consumer Direct Care Network and Veterans Affairs are not liable for any actions of an attendant or the veteran participating in this program.

How much can I pay attendants?

Between \$11.10 per hour and \$20 per hour.

The minimum you must pay attendants is the Colorado minimum wage which is currently set at \$11.10 per hour. Additionally, VA states that VDC attendants cannot be paid more than \$20 per hour. The hourly wage cap of \$20 an hour does not include employer payroll taxes.

As an employer, both you and your employee have tax responsibilities. Your employer tax costs must be factored into your spending plan. Consumer Direct Care Network is available to explain to you and your attendants how taxes are withheld and filed with the IRS.

Hospitalizations and rehab

If you are admitted to a hospital or a skilled nursing facility, your attendants will not be paid regardless of whether you are admitted to a VA facility or a non-VA facility. Attendants cannot be paid to work in your home while a you are hospitalized or be paid to assist you in the hospital. This rule also applies if you are admitted to a skilled nursing facility (such as skilled care or acute rehab facility). If you or authorized representative allow an attendant to be paid while you are inpatient in a hospital or other long-term care facility, it will be considered misuse of the monthly budget and you will be at risk of involuntary termination from VDC.

You may pay your attendants for any hours they worked the day of a hospital admission and the day you are discharged to your home. For example, if your attendant worked two hours in the morning and you went to the hospital in the evening, you can still pay your attendant for the hours they worked before you went to the hospital. On the day of discharge, if you are discharged from the hospital at noon and need your attendant to work that night, you can pay them for that evening's work. Contact your case manager if you have questions or concerns.

Criminal background check policy

All attendants must pass a criminal background check prior to beginning work. Consumer Direct Care Network will perform the check as part of its role and communicate any problems to you. Should a potential attendant fail a criminal background check, you will be required to select an alternative attendant. Appeals may be made by contacting the Denver VA VDC Coordinator.

Attendants shall not be approved or employed if they have ever been convicted of:

- abduction
- abuse or neglect of a child or adult
- any violent felony crime (including, but not limited to, rape, sexual assault, homicide, felonious physical assault or felonious battery)
- crimes that involve the exploitation of a child or an incapacitated adult
- felony involving an act of domestic violence
- felony arson
- felony or misdemeanor crime against a child or incapacitated adult that causes harm
- felony drug related offenses (within the last five years)
- felony DUI (within the last five years)
- hate crimes
- health care fraud
- kidnapping
- murder/homicide
- neglect or abuse by a caregiver
- pornography crimes involving children or incapacitated adults, including, but not limited to, use of minors in filming sexual explicit conduct; distribution and exhibition of material depicting minors in sexually explicit conduct; or sending, distributing, exhibiting, possessing, displaying or transporting material by a parent, guardian or custodian, depicting a child engaged in sexually explicit conduct
- purchase or sale of a child
- sexual offenses (including but not limited to incest, sexual abuse or indecent exposure)

The actions in the above list are considered barrier crimes.

What if an attendant is injured?

All VDC attendants are covered by workers' compensation. Consumer Direct holds the workers' compensation policy and must be informed of an injury in the workplace. Consumer Direct advises attendants to take the following steps:

1. Get medical help if needed.
 - If the injury is serious and life-threatening, call 911.
 - If the injury needs medical treatment (but is not life-threatening), the employee should go to an urgent care clinic or doctor's office. If the employee cannot get to a clinic or a doctor's office, go to the emergency room.
2. Call the Consumer Direct Care Network injury hotline to report the injury/illness immediately. The employee must call as soon as the injury or illness happens, even if it does not seem serious.
 - The injury hotline number is 888-541-1701.
 - Injuries can be reported 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
3. The employee should tell the participant/employer of the injury or illness before leaving work.

In addition, for the employee's safety, the employee must report injuries that occur away from the workplace to the injury hotline. Consumer Direct Care Network wants to make sure that the injury will not worsen by working. If an injury occurs away from work, call the hotline.



SECTION 8: DISENROLLMENT

What if I no longer want to participate?

You may voluntarily unenroll from the VDC program by informing your case manager you no longer want to participate. Your case manager will work with you and VA to transition you to alternative care options.

Involuntary disenrollment

DRCOG and VA will take all steps necessary to assist veterans in the VDC program. However, there may be times when veterans must be disenrolled from the program. An involuntary unenrollment can occur in the following circumstances:

- if VA finds you are no longer eligible for VDC
- if you are involved with fraudulent behavior such as not paying attendants or using money for illegal or prohibited purposes
- if you are admitted into an institution such as a skilled nursing facility for long-term care.
- any type of abuse
- if you can no longer direct your services or manage your spending plan, and are unable to appoint an authorized representative
- chronic overspending of the monthly budget (see Policy on Overspending)
- if you cannot find attendants to hire

Lack of attendants

Hiring and keeping your attendants is key component to the VDC program. If at any point you lose all your approved VDC attendants without any leads on hiring another, you may be disenrolled from the VDC program. If this happens, VA may be able to arrange for in-home services to be provided through the VA's Homemaker and Home Health Aide Care program. You may reapply to the VDC program in the future if you find alternate attendants. Please alert your

case manager whenever you wish to hire an attendant or if any of your attendants stop working for you.

A note about fraud

All participants in the VDC program must understand that fraudulent activities will not be tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to guard against fraud. The following activities are example of behaviors that would be considered fraudulent:

- submitting time that an attendant didn't actually work
- forging signatures on timesheets (both paper and electronic timesheets)
- providing services while someone is in the hospital or nursing home
- billing for services not approved by your DRCOG case manager
- paying attendants for illegal or prohibited purposes

Suspected fraud should be reported to your case manager or to Consumer Direct. If it is determined that you have engaged in fraudulent activity, you will be immediately terminated from the VDC program. VA may decide to take further actions resulting in more serious consequences.



SECTION 9: ONGOING SUPPORT

Case manager activities

Case managers will be available when you need to discuss issues or concerns. However, if things are going smoothly, you can expect a phone call from your case manager once a month to check in. Case managers also complete quarterly face-to-face visits. After six months of VDC participation, case managers must complete a new functional assessment and send it to VA to confirm you are still eligible for VDC. After that, VA requires case managers complete a functional assessment once a year.

During calls or home visits, please let your case manager know how you are doing, if you went to the hospital in the past month or if you need additional resources. Case managers are familiar with community services available to veterans and their families. Let them know how they can help!

How do I handle an emergency?

Emergencies are unexpected but inevitable. Emergencies can be reduced by evaluating risk and conducting prevention activities. A sample plan to handle specific emergencies can be found on page 46 of this guidebook. VA recommends that you hire backup attendants who can help during emergencies. Your case manager may also help you prepare a risk mitigation plan to avoid negative situations. Your case manager works 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and will not be able to respond to calls or emails outside of those times. For after-hours emergencies, call 911 for immediate assistance.

Need changes or spending plan changes

Your needs may change during your time as a VDC participant. As a result of your changing needs, you may need to make adjustments to your spending plan. Changes to the spending plan may occur once a month. Contact your case manager if you would like to change your spending plan.

Adding new attendants

At some point, you may need to hire additional attendants. First, contact your case manager, who will work with you to update your spending plan. Then you must complete new hire paperwork for each attendant prior to them beginning work. Consumer Direct is responsible for processing the employment related paperwork on your behalf.

Attendant payroll questions

Consumer Direct is responsible for processing the payroll for your attendants. You and your attendant are also responsible for ensuring employment paperwork is completed accurately and submitted prior to scheduling your attendant to work. You must receive notice from Consumer Direct that the employee is cleared to begin working. If there is an issue or concern regarding payroll, contact Consumer Direct.

Tax questions

Consumer Direct is responsible for processing attendant taxes based on how they completed their federal W-4 form. Consumer Direct issues your attendant's W-2 form to report wages earned. They are also responsible for filing taxes on your behalf as an employer of record. If you have issues or concerns on these tax topics, it is your responsibility to contact Consumer Direct.

What if I have a complaint?

The DRCOG Area Agency on Aging, Denver VA Medical Center and Consumer Direct have written procedures explaining how participants can submit formal complaints about services in situations for which issues cannot be resolved informally.

You are encouraged to speak openly and honestly with your case manager and Consumer Direct customer service representative about any concern related to your VDC services.

Complaints can be brought to the attention of:

DRCOG

Area Agency on Aging

1001 17th St., Suite 700,
Denver, CO 80202
303-480-6700

VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System

1700 N. Wheeling St.
Aurora, CO 80045
720-563-9148

Consumer Direct Care Network

7951 East Maplewood, Suite 125
Greenwood Village, CO 80111
844-381-4433

DRCOG's grievance procedure

If you have a complaint with the case management services you received, you are encouraged to discuss it with your case manager. You may also call the case management program manager at 303-480-6755. If you wish to include an advocate, you are welcome to do so. If it is necessary to pursue your complaint further, please use the following procedure:

Either call or mail written complaint to:

Jayla Sanchez-Warren, Director, Area Agency on Aging
Denver Regional Council of Governments
1001 17th St, Suite 700
Denver, CO 80202

The Area Agency on Aging's administrative assistant may be reached at 303-480-6723.

You will need to file your complaint with the Director, Area Agency on Aging within (30) thirty days of the incident. Your complaint will be reviewed and you will receive a response within (14) fourteen business days of its receipt. If your complaint still is not resolved, you may file an appeal with the Executive Director.

Either call or mail written appeal to:

Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director
Denver Regional Council of Governments
1001 17th St, Suite 700
Denver, CO 80202

DRCOG's front desk administrative assistant may be reached at 303-455-1000.

You will need to file your appeal with the Executive Director within (10) days of the Director, Area Agency on Aging's decision. Your complaint will be reviewed and you will receive a response within (14) fourteen business days of its receipt.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal to the Executive Director, you may send a written appeal within (10) ten business days of the receipt of the Executive Director's decision to:

State Unit on Aging
1575 Sherman Street, 10th floor
Denver, CO 80203

The phone number for the State Unit on Aging is 303-866-2800.

The State Unit on Aging Director or their designee will review your complaint. Your complaint will be reviewed and you will receive a response within (30) thirty calendar days of its receipt. This is the last step of the grievance procedure.



SECTION 10: HEALTH AND SAFETY

This section provides you with information intended to keep you safe from health-related emergencies, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Your health

Recognizing health care warning signs

As a VDC participant or authorized representative, you are in control of your services. You need to monitor your health and communicate your needs to your attendants. You must make sure you and your attendants know how to spot health problems and know what to do about them.

Here are some questions to consider about your health:

- Do you tend to have certain illnesses or health problems?
- Can you monitor those symptoms? If not, have you trained your attendants to assist in monitoring? Do you know what to do if those symptoms show up?
- What happens when you do not deal with health issues?
- Do you take any medications that might have side effects? Do you know how to watch for those side effects? Do you know what to do if you experience such side effects?
- Do your attendants understand your medications?
- Are there any routine medical procedures that health care professionals have managed in the past for you? Do you have a plan to handle those procedures? What is your plan?
- What is your plan for handling emergency health problems?
- In the case of an emergency, have you trained your attendants so they know what to do if you are not able to provide direction?

Recognizing health-related emergencies

As an important part of managing your health, you should know how to recognize when you might be having a life-threatening medical emergency. Here are some typical indicators:

- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- severe bleeding
- worsening infection
- color change or drainage of a sore

Acute episodes

An acute health need is a short-term care need that arises from such things as a sudden downturn of a chronic illness, a wound, a serious infection or the need for care after surgery. As a VDC participant, you could experience an acute episode which could cause you to need care from a hospital or home-care agency. If you have an acute care need while a VDC participant, your regular medical benefits will cover it. It will not be covered as part of VDC.

If an acute care need requires hospitalization, your attendants will not be paid while you are hospitalized. Your attendant cannot work in your home while you are hospitalized or be paid to assist you in the hospital. This rule also applies if you are admitted to a long-term care facility (such as a skilled care, acute rehab or an assisted living facility). If you or your authorized representative allow an attendant to be paid while you are an inpatient in a hospital or other long-term care facility, it will be considered misuse of the monthly allocation and you will be at risk of involuntary termination from VDC.

Contact your case manager and inform them of your hospitalization as soon as possible. Your case manager will ask for the exact dates of hospitalization and details of the situation. Once you return home, your case manager may visit you to determine if you are eligible for a budget increase due to a change in your functional status. Please keep all your discharge paperwork and show it to your case manager (it may assist your case manager in advocating to VA for an increased budget).

Planning your backup care

Planning for unexpected circumstances is essential when using self-directed services. A written plan may help you think about what to do when you need attendant care right away. This plan may be a simple call list of your backup attendants or a more complex decision tree that can help you problem-solve and find an attendant immediately. Your case manager will provide you with an example of a plan for backup care in the form of a decision tree. You can use or adapt the decision tree in this section based on your needs and preferences.

Consider the following tips and issues when making your plan.

If you live in a rural area, the emergency response number may be different than 911.

Contact your local police department to find out the local emergency number.

If your attendant does not arrive when scheduled, think about how long you will wait before calling the attendant, or a backup attendant. Make sure all attendants know about your policy concerning lateness, cancelations and no-shows.

If your first attempt to arrange for a backup attendant fails, try calling each one a second time and explain that none of the others are available. If possible, you may consider offering additional payment as an incentive to an attendant to come during an emergency. Consider whether the situation might become dangerous and at what point you may need to call 911 or another emergency number. Remember: calling 911 is for emergencies and not for routine care.

Is there information that you wish for police officers, firefighters, paramedics and other emergency responders to know when they respond to your call? In the City of Denver, you can provide voluntary disability-related emergency information to the Denver Police Department by calling 720-913-2000. In other communities, contact your local police department to find out how to provide disability-related information to 911 responders or other emergency responders.

Preparing your health care backup plan form

With a health care emergency form, you can tell attendants, paramedics or physicians how to provide care if an emergency occurs and you cannot direct them. Review the guide with your current and new attendants as needed. Update the instructions when changes occur. An example of a change that would require you to update your health care backup plan would be if you change doctors or your authorized representative.

You can complete the following Health Care Backup Plan Form and customize it to fit your specific needs. Additional copies can be found on the Consumer Direct website forms page.

Health Care Backup Plan Form

A backup plan can help you tell attendants, paramedics or physicians how to provide care if an emergency occurs and you cannot direct them. Customize your plan to fit your needs. Make sure your backup plan is available and your attendants know where to find it. Review the plan with current and new attendants and keep it up to date as changes happen.

Personal

Name _____

Today's date _____

Phone number _____ Age _____

Address _____

Height _____ Weight _____ Blood type _____

Emergency contacts

List two people you trust who can help you in an emergency.

Name _____ Phone number _____

Name _____ Phone number _____

Your case manager

Name _____ Phone number _____

A backup emergency contact if the first two cannot be reached

Name _____ Phone number _____

The person who has your medical durable power of attorney (also called durable power of attorney for health care)

Name _____ Phone number _____

Note any advance directives you have for your care. _____

Indicate your religious preference, if any.

Equipment needs

List the types of adaptive equipment you rely on for basic functioning in any setting including wheelchair, scooter, braces, communication device, service animal, etc.

List instructions on the care, maintenance and proper handling of adaptive equipment.

List location of supplies and spare parts for your equipment and any instructions on how to get replacement parts.

List phone numbers of people who can make repairs to your equipment.

Name _____ Phone number _____

Notes _____

Name _____ Phone number _____

Notes _____

Communication needs

List specific communication needs. For example, sign-language interpreting (and mode), communication technologies or preference, etc.

List specific instructions for communication, such as interpreters' phone numbers, etc.

Insurance

List the name of your insurance companies and all insurance identification numbers.

Insurance company _____

Phone number _____ Policy number _____

Name on policy _____

Notes _____

Insurance company _____

Phone number _____ Policy number _____

Name on policy _____

Notes _____

Primary physician

List your primary care physician's information.

Name _____

Phone number _____ Fax number _____

Address _____

Preferred hospital

List the information of the hospital to which you would prefer to be taken in case of emergency.

Name _____

Phone number _____

Address _____

Pharmacy

List the information of the pharmacy where you prefer your prescriptions be filled.

Name _____

Phone number _____ Fax number _____

Address _____

Specific diagnoses

List physical and mental conditions.

Warning signs

List warning signs of possible emergency situations. Describe symptoms of the kind of complications and problems you may experience, such as hyperreflexia, hypoxia, insulin shock, hypoglycemia, hyperglycemia, respiratory problems, depression, manic episodes, seizures, etc.

Allergies

List reactions caused by medications, foods or environmental factors.

Emergency care plan

Provide clear and complete instructions for care during emergencies (attach separate sheets if needed).

Phone list

As a handy resource, keep this list posted near your telephone, or add these numbers to your mobile phone's contacts. Fill in phone numbers for your local:

Police department _____

Fire department _____

Neighbor _____

Neighbor _____

District attorney _____

Case manager _____

Victim assistance _____

Advocacy group _____

Independent living center _____

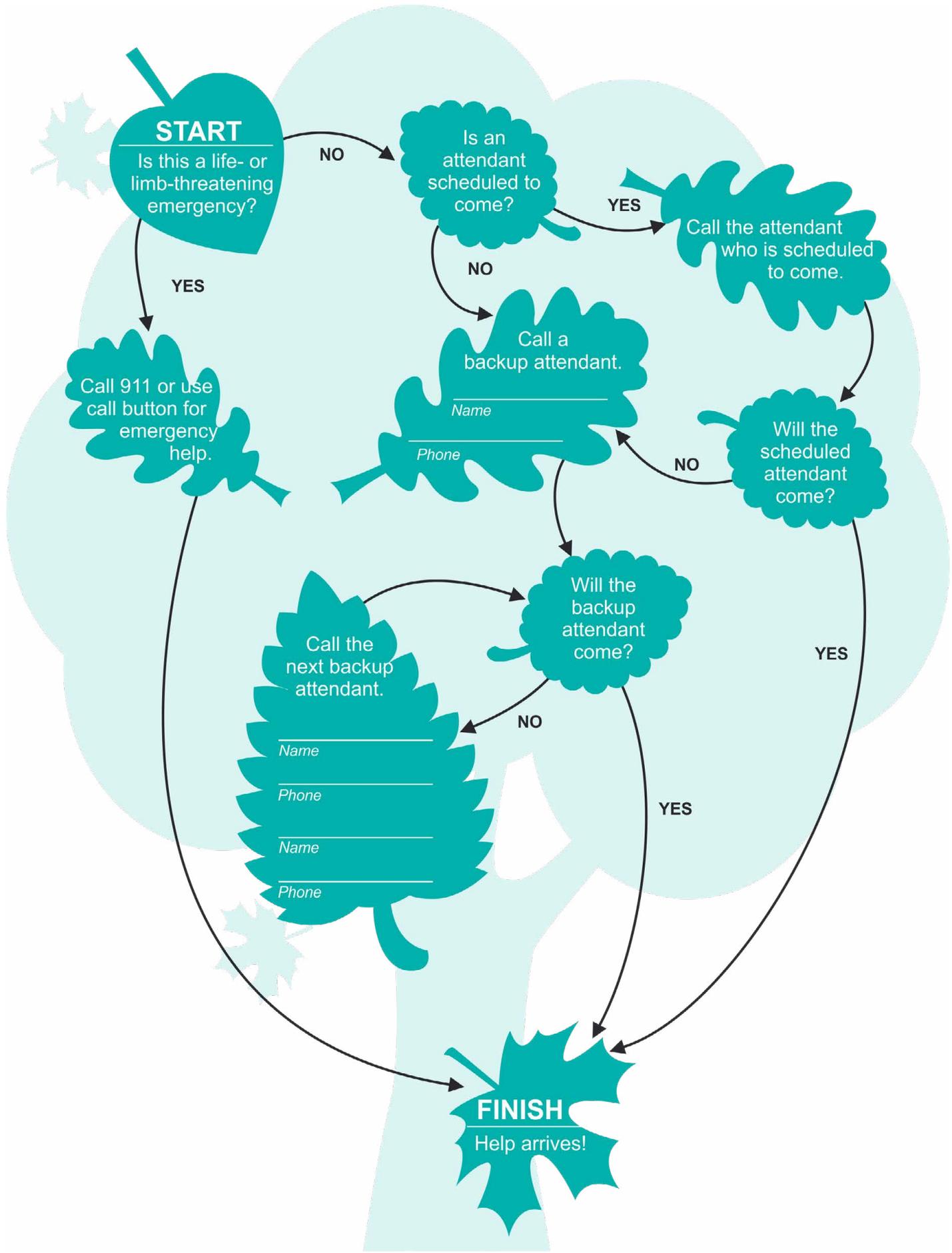
Other _____

Other _____

Other _____

Other _____

Other _____



Abuse, neglect and exploitation

Although participation in the VDC program is generally positive, there are factors you must consider in regard to your personal safety. Even if you have done everything you can to ensure the quality of your attendants, there are times when you might encounter dangerous situations in relationship to your attendants. Although such events are rare, you must consider the possibilities and take action to ensure your safety.

Physical abuse includes:

- hitting
- kicking
- burning
- confining
- restraining an adult

Signs of injuries include:

- bruising
- welts
- burns
- lacerations or abrasions
- fractures

Sexual abuse is sexual activity or touching without consent or understanding. Signs are:

- sudden behavior changes
- withdrawal
- self-reported sexual misconduct

Self-abuse is the infliction of injury to the person by his or her own hand. Signs are:

- head injuries
- hair loss from pulling
- self-inflicted cuts or bruises

Neglect is a lack of physical care or concern for a person's needs by a caregiver. Signs are:

- improper administration of medications, other drugs or alcohol to "control" the adult
- malnourishment
- dehydration
- unclean physical appearance, soiled clothing, bedsores
- unsanitary living conditions

Financial exploitation is using an at-risk adult's money or property for another's benefit. Signs are:

- unpaid monthly bills
- missing personal items
- transfer of assets
- abuse of a power of attorney
- denied access to funds

Self-neglect occurs when an at-risk person cannot or does not care for him or herself. Choice of lifestyle, by itself, is not proof of self-neglect. Signs are:

- non-compliance with or inability to take medicines as prescribed
- malnutrition and/or dehydration
- inadequate or inappropriate diet
- unclean physical appearance, soiled clothing, decayed teeth, broken glasses, overgrown nails
- unsanitary conditions in the home
- wandering or getting lost
- confusion, disorientation or memory impairment

How to recognize potential abuse, neglect and exploitation

If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, there may be potential for abuse, neglect and exploitation.

- Do you sense that your attendant is deliberately ignoring your instructions and requests?
- Does your attendant make mistakes and then blame you or other people?
- Does your attendant ask personal questions unrelated to your care, such as how you manage your finances?

- Does your attendant eat your food without asking?
- Does your attendant make unwanted comments about your appearance, weight, clothing, speech, eating habits, disability, etc.?
- Do you sometimes find less money in your wallet than you expected?
- Are there unfamiliar charges on your checking or credit card accounts?
- Is your attendant eager to access your car or credit card?
- Does your attendant want to work all of your shifts?
- Does your attendant want to control your choices such as what you wear and what you eat?
- Does your attendant place items you need out of your reach?
- Does your attendant try to isolate you from your family and friends or restrict your contact?
- Does your attendant make unwanted comments about your family, friends or choice of activity?
- Does your attendant look around your home or through your personal belongings without your permission?
- Does your attendant use your computer without your permission?
- Are you uncomfortable asking your attendant to do routine tasks?
- Does your attendant take naps, watch TV or talk on the phone instead of providing your care?
- Are any of your medications missing?
- Has your attendant tried to gain access or control of your medications?



How to prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation

Here are some tips on how to prevent and stop abuse, neglect, and exploitation:

Do not become overly dependent on any one attendant.

Do not allow your relationship with your attendant to become too personal.

- Do not allow your attendant to make choices for you such as what to wear or what to eat.
- Connect with family members, friends and other people directing your care for support in addressing and preventing critical incidents.
- Seek help or advice if you suspect a situation may be harmful.
- Make a list or take photographs of personal belongings such as jewelry, antiques, silverware and other valuables.
- Inventory controlled medications after each attendant leaves.
- Do not leave cash or medication lying around.
- Use a password to restrict access to your computer.
- If you rent your home, consider purchasing renters insurance.
- Find a local self-defense class and talk with the instructor about the possibility of adapting the class to your disability, if necessary.
- Carefully screen potential employees. Require references and check them before hiring.
- With anyone – employee, friend, family member or stranger – you always have the right to say “no” or “stop” if they do anything wrong or uncomfortable.

Reporting abuse, neglect and exploitation

As in all life experiences, there are risks. Participating in the self-direction of your services is no different. If any type of abuse is happening to you, report it immediately to someone who can help you. This could be:

- your authorized representative
- your case manager
- your VDC coordinator
- your financial management service
- a friend or family member
- Office for Victims Programs (part of the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice); 303-239-5719 (within Denver area) 888-282-1080 (outside Denver area) or colorado.gov/dcj/ovp

Recognizing and reporting critical incidents

As mentioned above, your case manager can be a resource for you in addressing issues of abuse, neglect or exploitation. You need to report these incidents to your case manager even if you have already dealt with the situation and no longer feel you are in danger. While VDC affords participants a great deal of freedom in how they choose to receive services, it is still subject to the same quality oversight as other service delivery methods. VA is responsible for identifying and addressing instances of abuse, neglect or exploitation and trying to prevent them. To do this, you must report critical incidents to your case Manager. These may include:

- suspected abuse/neglect/exploitation
- serious illness
- hospitalizations
- injury to yourself
- damage to, or theft of, your property
- medication management issues

Reporting a critical incident does not necessarily mean that you will be removed from VDC or that your budget will change. It is a means of ensuring you are receiving the support and follow-up necessary to keep you safe.

Adult Protective Services

In addition to the previously mentioned resources, Adult Protective Services is a valuable resource for reporting abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The purpose of the Adult Protective Services is to protect adults who cannot protect themselves. These adults are known as at-risk adults.

In the Colorado Adult Protective Services statute (law), an at-risk adult is defined as “an individual eighteen years of age or older who is susceptible to mistreatment or self-neglect because the individual is unable to perform or obtain services necessary for the individual’s health, safety, or welfare or lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make or communicate responsible decisions concerning the individual’s person or affairs.”

Adults who might meet the definition of an at-risk adult include:

- adults who are being mistreated or exploited

- adults with a developmental disability, acquired brain injury, Alzheimer's, dementia, or neurological or cognitive defect
- adults with major mental illness or physical disability
- frail or elderly persons who are unable to perform typical activities of daily living

To learn more and find out how to contact Adult Protective Services in your county, visit coloradoaps.com.

Mandatory reporting

In Colorado certain professionals are required by law to report physical abuse, sexual abuse, caretaker neglect and exploitation of at-risk elders and at-risk adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Your case manager is a mandatory reporter under this law. Your case manager will contact the police or county adult protective services if:

- they suspect or observes abuse, caregiver neglect, exploitation or self-neglect
- you disclose abuse, caregiver neglect, exploitation or self-neglect regarding yourself or another individual
- any other person discloses abuse, caregiver neglect, exploitation or self-neglect regarding yourself or another individual

Who is an at-risk adult?

In Colorado, an at-risk adult is defined by law as a person who is:

- 70 or older
- 18 or older and is an individual with a developmental or intellectual disability

What is mistreatment of an at-risk adult?

- Caretaker neglect occurs when an adult's caretaker fails to make sure the adult has adequate food, clothing, shelter, psychological, physical or medical care or supervision.
- Exploitation means taking an adult's money or other assets against their will or without their knowledge (stealing). It also means deceiving, harassing, intimidating or using undue influence to get the adult to do something against their will.
- Self-neglect occurs when an adult cannot or does not care for him/herself.
- Physical abuse is hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, burning, confining or restraining an adult.
- Sexual abuse is sexual activity or touching without the adult's permission or understanding.

SECTION 11: TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR BEING AN EMPLOYER

Recruiting

Before recruiting, you must know what you want your workers to do. You must consider the work to be performed and the knowledge and skills a person needs to have in order to be able to perform that work. A sample job description is included at the end of this section. Finding the right worker takes time. How much time depends on your needs and how well you have planned. Use all the resources available to you. Think about whether you want to use friends or family members. Using people you know can make the process easier, but it can also be tough on your relationships. Recruiting can be divided into several areas:

1. Writing job ads
2. Posting job ads
3. Screening interested potential employees
4. Interviewing candidates
5. Selecting workers

You may hire your own service workers, a family member, or a friend. Start your search for potential attendants with:

- People you already know
- Local organizations for people with disabilities
- Your religious organization
- Your doctor
- Employment agencies
- Local newspapers
- Bulletin boards at local organizations
- Local colleges or universities

Job description

A well-written job description will help you screen and interview people. It will help you make sure that your potential attendants are comfortable with all aspects of the job. List in the job description the skills and experience you want attendants to have. State other capabilities you want in attendants, such as physical strength, cooking skills, etc.

A good job description can:

- Help you to identify your needs
- Be used as the basis for your ads for attendants
- Provide applicants with a list of your daily physical needs
- Help you and applicants ask appropriate questions during the interview
- Provide a checklist of duties and responsibilities for your attendants
- Be used as an evaluation tool of attendants' work
- Help solve disagreements between you and attendants about their duties



SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

DUTIES: The person in this position will assist with activities of daily living. The employer is a 25-year-old man who has a physical disability, lives in his own apartment and uses a wheelchair. Specific activities include assistance with bathing, dressing, personal hygiene, toileting (includes bowel and bladder care), eating, transferring to and from the wheelchair, taking medications and range-of-motion exercises. The position also involves meal preparation, housekeeping, shopping, laundry and other household chores. The position requires a valid Colorado driver's license, as the attendant will drive the employer's adapted van occasionally.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE: Nothing specific is required, though some experience providing attendant services in the home of a person with a disability is helpful.

A. Be dependable, be ready to work at the agreed-upon time.

1. If you need to be absent for any reason, please give a minimum of 48 hours' notice for the employer to make other arrangements.
2. If you are unable to be on time, call as soon as possible.
3. If you plan to arrive more than one-half hour early, please phone ahead to find out if it is acceptable to do so.
4. Be responsible.
5. Be able to work independently.

The employer wants to trust you to do your work unsupervised. This means the employer does not want to have to be with you every minute.

B. Be observant, motivated, self-starting and pay attention to details.

C. Do not leave work unfinished or for someone else to do. Do what is your responsibility to do.

D. At all times, your performance and conduct must be appropriate for state inspection.

E. Although the employer may enjoy visiting with you, your job has priority over conversation.

F. Sanitation and hygiene

1. Good health begins with cleanliness. Please wash your hands with soap before handling kitchen items and preparing food and after using the toilet, including when you assist the employer.

SALARY RANGE: \$11.10 to \$12.50 an hour depending upon experience

BENEFITS: This position does not include paid vacation, paid sick time or health insurance, but covers workers' compensation.

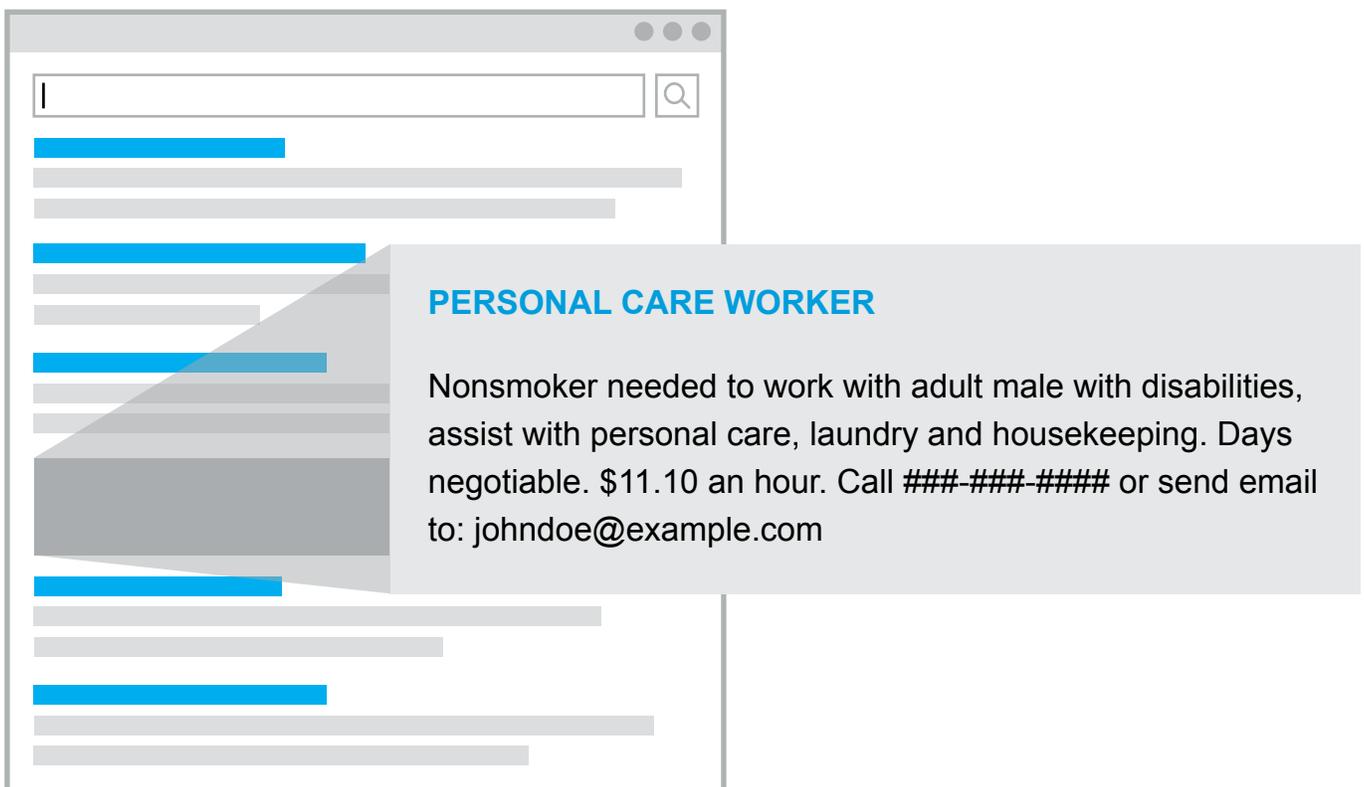
HOURS: Two hours a day in the early morning, typically 6 to 8 a.m. and some weekend hours.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS: The person selected must submit to a criminal history check.

Writing job ads

The job description you develop becomes the foundation for your job ad. To begin, you need to decide how many people you would like to respond to your ad. Generally, less information brings more responses; more information gets fewer responses. You might think that it is better to have a lot of people respond to your ads. Yet, the more responses you get, the more people you have to screen, making your hiring process more involved. Identifying parameters that are important to you is a key component to writing your job description (such as requesting a nonsmoker or identifying allergens to which the worker may be exposed).

Remember the primary purpose of a job ad is to identify people who are both qualified to do what you need done, and interested in doing it. A well-written ad can help screen out people who are not qualified or interested. Include enough information to get quality applicants. You must be sure your ads do not discriminate. You should think about your privacy, safety and security as you create and post your job ads. For your safety, never include your name or home address. Make sure you include important information in your ad such as the hours you want someone to work, a general description of what you want them to do and how to contact you or your authorized representative. Below is a sample ad:



PERSONAL CARE WORKER

Nonsmoker needed to work with adult male with disabilities, assist with personal care, laundry and housekeeping. Days negotiable. \$11.10 an hour. Call ###-###-#### or send email to: johndoe@example.com

Posting job ads

You may have to place an ad in a newspaper, on a bulletin board or on a radio station to find help. Check ads in each of those places to see what they are like and how much they cost. The cost of placing an ad may be included in your spending plan. Develop a list of possible workers and keep a list of former attendants and people you liked but did not hire. They might make good backup workers. Recruiting is an ongoing activity. As long as you are directing your attendant services, you will need to recruit workers, both permanent and backup. Attendants may not be with you forever, so stay on top of recruiting. Here are some ideas:

1. Colleges and hospitals
 - College and medical students often look for part-/full-time work to gain experience, further their training and earn extra income. Contact the public relations department to place an ad in a hospital or university publication. Be sure to get permission before posting ads on bulletin boards or in public places.
2. Friends, family, neighbors, other workers and area businesses
 - Let personal contacts know you are looking for an attendant, but make it clear you will do the screening and hiring. Word-of-mouth can be an effective advertising tool.
3. Job service center
 - Agencies that help people find jobs can be good resources.
4. Local publications: Local newspapers can reach people in your area.
 - If there is a cost, you may be charged by the word or line, so make your ads concise and include key words to describe your needs. Call the newspaper and ask for the classifieds department.
5. Bulletin boards
 - High-traffic places such as supermarkets, drug stores, coffee shops, laundromats and religious organizations are good places to hang posters or index cards. Be sure to get permission first!

Screening

You need to be sure that when you hire someone they will treat you the way you want to be treated. Screening out people who are not appropriate or who do not meet your needs is very important, as it will save time and effort for you and them. One way to do this is to talk with them over the phone before you meet them. This will help you eliminate applicants who do not meet your criteria.

Guidelines for telephone screening:

1. Call people back as soon as possible.
2. Be friendly and pleasant on the phone.
3. Talk about the job duties, hours and days, hourly wage and then ask about things such as their ability to lift, provide personal care or about their smoking habits.
4. Ask them to provide their name, address, phone number and previous work experience, and to describe why they are interested in this kind of work.
5. Ask them to send a resume with references, and complete an employment application.
6. Thank them for calling and, if you desire for them to proceed to the next step in the hiring process, schedule an in-person interview.



Interviewing

Once you have reviewed employment applications and finished pre-screening, you should conduct interviews. Interviews should be face-to-face meetings. Do not hire anyone without interviewing them first. Before you conduct interviews, decide where and how they will happen. If you do not want strangers coming into your home, consider a public place such as a restaurant or library. You may also want to have a family member or friend present.

Guidelines for a face-to-face interview:

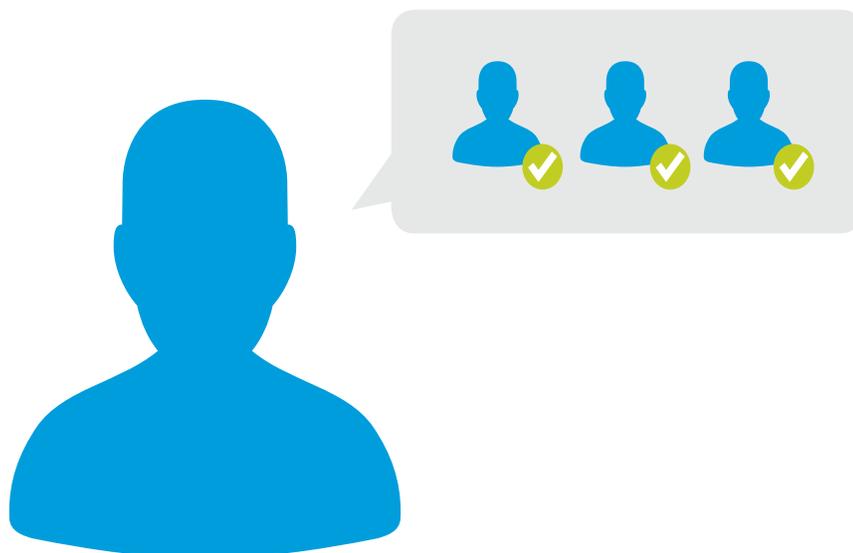
1. Choose a safe place to conduct the interview
2. Sit facing the applicant so you can observe eye contact and body language
3. Eliminate distractions—turn off the TV and radio, make sure pets and children won't interrupt the interview.
4. Be prepared—have a job description, a list of interview questions and information about your care
5. Take notes during the interview, or have someone there to help you remember what is said
6. Introduce yourself
7. Tell them about the job and what you want them to do
8. Talk about when you need help (hours, days, situations)
9. Talk about VDC and how Consumer Direct will be handling their payment and ensuring that their payroll taxes and workers' compensation are handled
10. Talk about what the job pays
11. Ask them why they want to work with you
12. Ask them why they think they would be good at working with you
13. Ask them about their experience and past employment
14. Tell them you are required to do a criminal history check
15. Thank them and tell them you will call when you make your decision

Checking references

If you wish to proceed with an applicant you've interviewed, you will need to check their references. To check references, call the people listed as references and ask about the applicant. Some good questions are:

1. How do you know the applicant and for how long?
2. Have they worked for you previously and when?
3. What are the applicant's strengths?
4. What are the applicant's weaknesses?
5. Would they recommend the applicant to work with you?
6. Do they show up on time?
7. Do they do the job required?
8. Do they show up regularly?
9. Do they call when they will be late, or may not be able to work?
10. Do they bring personal problems to the job?
11. Do they drink or do drugs on the job, or come to work impaired?
12. Are they honest?

Now that you have learned about the applicant, make the best decision you can about whether the applicant is right for you.



Hiring your attendants

When you identify someone you'd like to hire as an attendant, call to let the individual know you want to hire him or her for the job and restate what the job pays. Be sure to have them complete all necessary paperwork as required by the case manager and Consumer Direct. When all employment documents are complete (including an employment agreement between you and the worker), you can set a start date and begin paying the worker for providing your care. Veterans Affairs will not pay an attendant for hours worked before they are on the payroll. If you do start an employee prior to VA approval, you are responsible by law for paying the attendant for hours worked.

Terminating an attendant

Most people do not like having to fire someone. However, if you find your worker is not meeting your needs, you may have to terminate them. Keeping an up-to-date employment agreement and performing regular performance evaluations with your workers can help you decide if you should terminate an attendant.

Grounds for termination may include:

- The attendant's performance is not within acceptable limits
- The attendant is a no-show or frequently late
- The attendant's personal habits are bothersome
- The attendant does not attend to verbal instructions
- The attendant is often argumentative
- You do not feel safe or comfortable with the attendant
- The attendant is unable to accommodate a flexible schedule
- The attendant violates the employment agreement
- Arriving to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Theft
- Any form of physical, sexual and/or psychological abuse

Terminating an attendant can be difficult. It is important to be respectful when terminating an attendant but your safety comes first. You may terminate someone face-to-face, have an authorized third party handle it, or tell them over the phone. The worker should know the reason for termination, if you feel it will not compromise your safety. Keep in mind, Colorado is an employment at-will state and an explanation is not required by law. Have a backup worker ready to provide care right away. Contact your case manager and Consumer Direct right away.

Avoiding discrimination

You can have strong feelings about the characteristics (age, gender or race) you seek in a worker. However, federal labor law prohibits you from discriminating. Be sure your job descriptions and other hiring materials reflect this nondiscrimination policy.

It can be discriminatory to ask:

- About arrests
- About children: Number of, names, ages, childcare arrangements
- Marital status
- General questions about disabilities which do not relate to applicant's fitness to perform the job
- Questions concerning pregnancy
- Direct or indirect questions which would indicate an applicant's ancestry, national origin, race or color
- Any questions that would reveal religious affiliation, denomination, customs or the holidays they observe
- Questions about age, except to ask if the person is of legal age to work
- Questions about gender identity or sexual orientation

**SAMPLE
PERFORMANCE
EVALUATION**

Worker's name: _____ Date of hire: _____

Each area is coded as follows:

1 (poor), 2 (below expectations), 3 (mostly meets expectations), 4 (meets expectations), 5 (exceeds expectations)

Area evaluated	1	2	3	4	5
1. Punctuality	<input type="radio"/>				
Comments:					
2. Reliability	<input type="radio"/>				
Comments:					
3. Ability to do required tasks	<input type="radio"/>				
Comments:					
4. Respectfulness	<input type="radio"/>				
Comments:					
5. Shows initiative	<input type="radio"/>				
Comments:					
6. Organized	<input type="radio"/>				
Comments:					
7. Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>				
Comments:					

Goals for next three months/six months/year: _____

Attendant comments: _____

Signature of worker: _____ Date: _____

Signature of employer: _____ Date: _____

Glossary of terms

Adult Day Care — Daytime care during any part of the day, less than 24-hour care. A daytime care program provides a structured, comprehensive program that is designed to meet the needs of adults with functional impairments through an individual plan of care by providing health, social and related support services in a protective setting other than the veteran's home.

Budget — The amount of available funding for each individual participant. The participant's consultant receives the individual budget from the VA Medical Center and informs the participant when they are deciding whether to select self-direction over traditional VA services and during the planning process. Any requests for adjustments to the budget, based on a change in the veteran participant's needs, are initiated by the participant through their case manager.

Caregiver Education and Training — Access to a resource library, informational resources, support groups, seminars and focus groups, individual or group counseling and education services to caregivers of the veteran participant.

Case Manager — A trained individual who assists individual VDC participants with understanding the VDC requirements, developing their spending plan, explaining the budget and identifying where or how the developed spending plan and budget can be implemented.

Chore Maintenance — Initial and/or periodic heavy cleaning chores. Some initial assessments may reveal that a home is unhealthy due to prior neglect of household chores by the veteran. Chore maintenance allows a heavy-duty level of cleaning to get the home into a healthy environment for the veteran. This may include removal of trash and debris from the home, heavy cleaning (scrubbing floors, washing walls, washing outside windows) moving heavy furniture, yard clean-up and walk maintenance and repair.

Consumer Direction — A belief that emphasizes the ability of older people and people with disabilities to make decisions about their own needs and make choices about what services would best meet those needs. The individual has the right to include anyone they would like in the decision-making process. Consumer direction and self-direction are sometimes used interchangeably.

Denver Regional Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging (DRCOG AAA) — DRCOG AAA holds a contract with the Department of Veterans Affairs and hires case managers to work at the local level and provide supports to individual VDC participants.

Electronic Monitoring — This may include the purchase of room monitors (similar to baby monitors) to place in the veteran’s room and a family member’s room to enable movement monitoring and other monitoring services not covered by VA or other insurance programs.

Environmental Services

- Gutter cleaning
- Home injury control (installation of grab bars, railings, specialized lighting, etc.)
- Minor home repair (windows, screens, shower pans, etc. as indicated by the veteran)
- Painting (interior or exterior)
- Plumbing
- Building or maintaining ramps
- Leaf removal and lawn care (mowing, flower planting, shrub trimming)
- Specialized lighting (motion sensors, outside lighting, etc.)

Medical Escort Services — Accompanying and personally assisting the veteran to obtain a needed service. This may be provided by a paid attendant, a paid escort or service provider. It may include assisting the veteran in understanding and filling out applications for services (such as Social Security benefits, VA benefits, food stamps, etc.).

Financial Management Service (FMS) — The FMS is under contract with DRCOG AAA to act on behalf of each VDC participant to handle employer-related functions, pay participants’ workers and help the participant keep track of their funds.

Health Maintenance — The provision of services, prescriptions and medications and/or other assistive devices which will prevent, alleviate and/or cure the onset of acute or chronic illness, increase awareness of special health needs and/or improve the emotional well-being of the veteran. This may include the cost of an attendant to escort the veteran to facilitate participation as needed. Some health maintenance services include the following:

- Continued health maintenance and monitoring not available through insurance or VA benefits
- Cooking classes for the attendant
- Gym or health club membership
- Health counseling
- Health education

- Massage therapy beyond services traditionally covered by insurance
- Pet therapy
- Public health maintenance programs (like water exercise classes or cardio-aerobic exercise classes)
- Structured weight reduction programs

Homemaking Services — These include, but are not limited to, laundry, sweeping and mopping floors, dusting, changing linens, cleaning the bathroom (toilets, tubs/showers, sinks and floors), cleaning the kitchen (loading or unloading a dishwasher, washing dishes, washing off countertops, cleaning sinks, cleaning floors and cleaning stovetops as needed). This may also include the preparation of meals, home management and/or medical escort services.

Information and Referral Services — Consists of activities such as assessing the needs of the veteran, evaluating appropriate resources, assessing appropriate response modes, indicating organizations capable of meeting those needs, providing information about each organization to help the veteran make an informed choice, helping the veteran for whom services are not available by locating alternative resources when necessary, actively participating in linking the veteran to needed services and following up on referrals to ensure the service was received or provided.

Nutritional Services — Hot, cold, frozen, dried or supplemental food which provides a minimum of one-third of the daily recommended dietary allowances (RDA) as established by the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academy of Sciences – National Research Council.

- Home-delivered standard meal — the regular meal that is served to the majority of participants.
- Therapeutic meal or liquid supplement — a special meal or liquid supplement that has been prescribed by a physician and is specifically developed for the participant by the dietitian (such as diabetic diet, renal diet, pureed diet, tube feeding).

Participants in VDC — All veterans enrolled in the VA Health System that meet requirements for the program and state an interest in veteran-directed services are eligible to participate in the VDC program. When participants have cognitive impairments, the participant may designate a person (family member or trusted friend) to be their authorized representative to make decisions or take action for them.

Personal Care Services — Service tasks provided directly for the veteran's person and include, but are not limited to, assistance in and out of the shower or bathtub, during the bathing process, in getting on/off the toilet, brushing teeth/dentures, with personal grooming tasks and dressing, as well as providing verbal prompts for taking medication or placing pills from the medication minder into the hands of the veteran and verbally reminding or physically guiding the veteran to take them.

Respite Care — Respite care provides short-term breaks that relieve stress, restore energy and promote balance for veterans and for the veteran's caregivers.

In-home respite services can be provided by volunteer or paid help, occasionally or on a regular basis. Services may last from a few hours to overnight and may be arranged directly with an individual, family member or through an agency. Respite services may include meal preparation, housekeeping, assistance with personal care and/or social and recreational activities.

Out-of-home respite care programs include an array of services provided in a congregate or residential setting (nursing home, assisted living center, adult day care center) to the veteran in need of care. Services may include contracted short stays at area nursing homes or other specialized facilities that provide emergency and planned overnight services, allowing caretakers 24-hour relief. In addition to supervised services, the facility is expected to provide meals, social and recreational activities, personal care, monitoring of health status, medical procedures and/or transportation.

Safety Services — These may include a personal emergency response system or a combination key box for the door. Safety services may include a home-safety evaluation by a professional to ensure safety of travel paths and needed durable medical equipment that may create a safer environment for the veteran.

- A personal emergency response system includes the installation of an individual monitoring unit; training associated with the use of the system; periodic checking to ensure that the unit is functioning properly, equipment maintenance calls; response to an emergency call by a medical professional, paramedic or volunteer; and follow-up with the veteran.
- A combination key box for the door that keeps a key available for easy access to the home by emergency personnel.

Self-Determination — A broad concept that means veteran participants have overall control of their lives and the ability to take part in society. The veteran has the ability to succeed and/or fail based on their own decisions. Self-determination rests on five basic principles:

1. freedom to lead a meaningful life in the community
2. authority over money needed for support
3. support to organize resources in ways that are life-enhancing and meaningful
4. responsibility for the wise use of public dollars
5. confirmation of the important leadership that self-advocates must hold in a newly designed system.

Self-Direction — A process through which older people and individuals with disabilities have high levels of direct involvement, control and choice in identifying, accessing and managing the services they obtain to meet their personal assistance and other health-related needs. The individual has the right to include anyone they would like in the decision-making process. Self-direction and consumer direction are sometimes used interchangeably.

Spending Plan — A participant plan that contains the services that the participant chooses; the services' projected cost, frequency and duration; and the type of provider who furnishes each service. The plan also includes other services and informal supports that complement services in meeting the participant's needs.

Shopping or Running Errands — Shopping with or without the veteran. No mileage costs will be reimbursed.

Socialization Support Services — Activities to which an attendant may accompany the veteran, such as education or exercise classes, support groups, movies or other social engagements as indicated by the veteran. Counseling and support advisory counseling is provided beyond services traditionally reimbursed by VA or other insurance.

Transportation — Access-a-Ride, Medicaid transportation or other transport required for socialization support or medical support activities with the designated attendant may be reimbursed as agreed-upon with the veteran. Provision of transportation assistance may include an escort for a veteran who has special needs (physical or cognitive) when using regular vehicular transportation.

Veteran-Directed Care (VDC) — The VDC is a pilot partnership program of the Denver Regional Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging (DRCOG AAA) and the Department of Veterans Affairs through which eligible participants have the option to control and direct services and supports using the essential elements of person-centered planning, individual budgeting, participant protections, quality assurance and quality improvement.





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DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

