TEXAS COUNCIL for DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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Service Coordination Position Statement

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities supports the position that the full inclusion and meaningful participation of people with disabilities in community life requires that individuals with disabilities know about the array of service and support options available, and are central in planning and directing their own future. In order to achieve these goals, individuals and their families must receive person-centered, comprehensive, conflict-free and effective service coordination to help navigate multiple, complex systems.

Service coordination assists individuals through planning, coordinating, identifying, accessing, and monitoring services and supports to achieve the best quality of life and full community participation. It is the responsibility of the service coordinators to serve as advocates for individuals and their families and provide support by encouraging self-advocacy. Service coordination should be a distinct benefit available to all people with disabilities who require information and assistance to access services and supports for full participation and community inclusion.

The Council supports the position that service coordination must be independent from service delivery to ensure the service coordinator has no conflicts of interest and their role is separate from the delivery and/or payment of direct services received by the individual and/or family. Service coordinators who are employees of public or private agencies, family members or individual contractors should not be placed in situations of conflict of interest.

An independent service coordination system will enable service coordinators to maintain the integrity of their advocacy role. Individuals should be able to choose a qualified service coordinator and make changes in their selection, as desired.

Service coordination must be available on an ongoing basis and support individual(s) rights to:
- be central to the development of their service plan;
- have access to the general community;
- access or refuse specific services and supports, as desired;
- request changes to services and supports, providers or service coordinators;
- make inquiries or complaints and appeal decisions made about the services and supports they receive; and
- receive services in their preferred language in a culturally effective manner.

Access to service coordination should be available as necessary and upon request to all persons with disabilities who have functional needs for an array of services and supports. Eligibility should not be based on specific diagnoses, but rather on functional need for services. Service

coordination should be done by one well-trained and culturally sensitive person who spends most of their time in support and coordination activities for a reasonable number of individuals.

It is the responsibility of the service coordinator to:
- advocate on behalf of the individual to address individual goals and preferences;

- coach the individual to know his or her rights and to advocate on his or her own behalf; and

- support the right of each individual to make decisions and to take risks based on informed choice and individual goals and values.

Service coordinators should:
- be knowledgeable about public and private resources including eligibility and how benefits may be properly used with limited personal financial resources or to maintain access to benefits while working;

- be creative in their ability to make public and private supports and services work to meet individual needs;

- be engaged in monitoring and revising service and person centered plans;

- work effectively on behalf of the individual across systems and agencies; and

- serve a facilitative role in bringing individuals, families and providers together.

While service coordinators should be available to assist and consult with providers to ensure services are delivered, they also have a responsibility to monitor the quality of services and supports received to ensure access and satisfaction.

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