



Service Coordination Position Statement

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities supports the position that the full inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in community life requires that individuals be aware of the services and supports available, that they have an array of service and support options from which to choose, and most importantly, that they have the central role in planning and directing their own future. These goals are most readily achieved when individuals and their families receive the benefit of effective, conflict-free service coordination.

Service coordination involves assisting individuals through planning, coordinating, locating, accessing and monitoring services and supports that will result in an optimal quality of life and level of community participation. It is the responsibility of the service coordinators to also serve as advocates for the individuals and their family and provide support for people who are receiving services to advocate for themselves. Service coordination should be viewed as a distinct benefit available to people with disabilities who require assistance, information and advocacy to obtain access to various services and supports to participate fully and be fully included in their communities.

The Council supports the position that the service coordination system should be independent from service delivery such that, the service coordinator is free from conflict of interest, and independent or separate from the direct delivery of other services received by the individual and/or family. Service coordinators who are employees of public or private agencies, family members or individual contractors should be independent from conflict of interest. An independent service coordination structure also enables service coordinators to maintain the integrity of their advocacy role. Individuals should be able to choose a qualified service coordinator.

Service coordination must be available on an ongoing basis and support individual(s) rights to:

- access or refuse specific services and supports, as desired;
- develop their own service plan;
- request alternate services and supports, providers or service coordinators; and
- appeal decisions made about the services and supports they receive.

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 diagnosis. Service coordination must be readily accessible and must have sufficient staff to provide assistance to individuals in a timely and responsive manner. Service coordination should be provided by one person who:

- is committed;
- is well trained;
- is culturally competent;
- serves a reasonable number of individuals; and
- spends most of the time in support and coordination activities.

It is the responsibility of the service coordinator to: (1) advocate on behalf of the individual; (2) help the individual become empowered to act on his or her own behalf; and (3) support the right of that individual to make decisions and to take risks based on informed choice and individual goals and values.

Service coordinators should: (1) be knowledgeable about public and private resources; (2) be creative in their ability to make public and private supports and services work to meet the individuals' needs; and (3) 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.

Approved May 3, 2012