

As a family new to the IRIS program, you may not know the role your **IRIS Consultant** has or how it differs from a Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS) support and service coordinator. This resource will help you as you start using the adult long-term support program IRIS (Include, Respect, I Self-direct) and explains the types of supports an IRIS consultant may provide.

IRIS is built on the principle of **self-direction** which means you can control your future and have the freedom to decide how you want to live your life.

In this Fact Sheet **you** means the **IRIS participant**. But we know that parents, caregivers, other family members or friends may help guide and support adults with disabilities to make decisions.



GETTING STARTED

When you're found to be functionally and financially eligible by the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) to get long-term support, you will be asked to choose a long-term care program. If you choose to enroll in IRIS, you will need to choose an **IRIS consultant agency**. A list of choices can be found at dhs.wisconsin.gov/iris/directory.htm.

Once you choose an IRIS Consultant Agency, the ADRC sends the agency a referral and you can expect a welcome call within 72 hours. During that call, you will be supported in choosing an IRIS Consultant (IC) from those available in your area. You can also request another IC at any time if you prefer a different consultant.



THE ROLE OF YOUR IRIS CONSULTANT (IC)

The IC will partner with you to navigate the many programs and services available in Wisconsin. The IC provides orientation and training about the IRIS program, helps you understand how to self-direct your supports, and helps you to understand the role of your **fiscal employer agent** (FEA). Like your CLTS support and service coordinator, your IC will have contact with you at least once a month and face-to-face visits at least once a quarter. These visits can be at your home, where you work, at school or another location.



WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS

If you are already enrolled in IRIS and need help, contact your IC or the Department of Health Services' IRIS Call Center at **888.515.4747**. Your county's ADRC dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc/consumer can also be a good source of information to find programs and services for adults with disabilities in your community.

HOW TO PARTNER WITH YOUR IRIS CONSULTANT (IC)

- The IC can work with you to create long-term and short-term outcomes or goals.
- The IC will help you create a yearly plan that fits your budget.
- The IC can connect you with community programs, resources and agencies that can help you reach your goals.
- The IC can share ideas about employment or vocational training opportunities and residential options. The IC can also connect you to **Vocational Futures Planning Services** that support you in exploring different employment choices dhs.wisconsin.gov/employment-skills/futures.htm.
- The IC can help submit an amendment, or changes, to your plan if you need more services or supports than were included in your IRIS yearly plan.
- The IC can attend team meetings, like your IEP meeting, vocational team meetings, or residential care meetings, if invited.
 - The IC **cannot** be a direct advocate during these meetings, but as a member of the team the IC can brainstorm ideas and find resources.
- The IC can help you complete Medicaid renewal paperwork.
- Most importantly, your IC **will not** make decisions for you. For example, your IC won't tell you what supports or programs are best for you or which direct care providers to hire.
 - In IRIS, full budget authority gives you the **power to make your own choices**.

HOW OTHERS CAN HELP & SUPPORT YOU

- Your IC should not set up meetings without your consent. Some IRIS consultant agencies will ask that only you, or those who help you, ask for meetings.
- Your IC cannot do direct service coordination, but if you need a service coordinator the IC can help you hire others like community living agencies or support brokers to do this. The IC can also find others who can help you recruit direct care workers.
- Your family, friends or other caregivers can help you with any paperwork that your IC can't complete. The IC may also be able suggest someone to hire to help you with paperwork if needed.

The IRIS Participant Handbook dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p01008.pdf has details about the program. Your county's ADRC dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc answers questions and helps with enrolling. Wisconsin's DHS dhs.wisconsin.gov/iris/directory.htm has a list of all IRIS consultant agencies.



Thank you!



for their financial support for this Family Voices of Wisconsin publication!