



DIRECT FUNDING APPLICATION GUIDE

Self-manage your attendant services

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DIRECT FUNDING APPLICATION GUIDE



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In partnership with:
Ontario Network of Independent Living Centres (ONILC)

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(This document is also available in alternate formats and languages.)
(Ce document est aussi disponible en français.)

Direct Funding Application Guide

Direct Funding (DF) is for persons with a physical disability who want and are able to self-manage their attendants. This Guide will assist you as you fill out your **Direct Funding Application Form**. The **General Information** booklet provides an overview of the Direct Funding (DF) program. Visit www.dfontario.ca for extensive online information.

Before you start filling out the application form . . .

Eligibility

DF provides grants to self-managers for attendant services, as defined by law. For your information we are including here the conditions set out in Ontario Regulation 367/94, “Grants for Persons with Disabilities,” under the Ministry of Community and Social Services Act. To be eligible for the program, a person must be a resident of Ontario, hold a valid Ontario Health Card and meet ALL the following criteria:

A person is eligible for the program if one

- (a) is at least 16 years old;
- (b) requires attendant services* as a result of a permanent physical disability;
- (c) requires the attendant services referred to in at least two of 1) to 8) and at least one of them is from 1) to 4) of the following:
 - 1) turning in bed, lifting, positioning or transferring;
 - 2) washing, bathing, showering, shaving or personal grooming;
 - 3) dressing or undressing;
 - 4) catheterization, emptying and changing a leg bag, using the toilet, urination or bowel routines;
 - 5) breathing, or caring for a tracheotomy or respiratory equipment;
 - 6) eating;

* “Attendant services” means assistance with activities of living referred to in 1) to 8), under (c), above.

- 7) meal preparation, dish washing, laundry or other housekeeping tasks; and
 8) assistance with essential communication,**
- (d) has attendant services requirements that have been stable over a period of at least one year;
 - (e) has service requirements that can be met while residing in their home;
 - (f) understands the nature of one's their disability and its impact on one's ability to carry out the essential activities of daily living;
 - (g) is aware of the type of attendant services they require and when, how much and how assistance should be provided;
 - (h) is capable of scheduling their attendant services as well as making alternative arrangements to ensure that their requirements are met in case an attendant worker*** is not available at a scheduled time;
 - (i) is capable of training or arranging the training of, supervising, instructing and communicating with attendant workers;
 - (j) is capable of recruiting, hiring and dismissing attendant workers;
 - (k) is capable of understanding and carrying out the responsibilities as an employer of one or more attendant workers;
 - (l) is capable of managing and accounting for the expenditure of the funds that would be granted to them;
 - (m) is capable of evaluating the attendant services they would receive and of communicating their evaluation; and
 - (n) is prepared to undertake the functions referred to in clauses (h) to (m) and to assume the responsibility and risks inherent in undertaking those functions.

It is a condition of the Ministry grant to CILT that CILT “shall not transfer the grant to anyone other than an eligible person.”

Confidentiality

Your personal information will be kept confidential. Only your Regional Interview Panel, DF program staff at CILT and designated Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) will review it.

** Examples of assistance with essential communication include AAC (augmentative and alternative communication), augmentative devices, communication boards. See Questions 5 and 6 for more information.

*** An attendant worker means a worker who provides any of the attendant services in 1) to 8) above.

Application and Eligibility - Overview

Physical assistance and communication assistance in completing the form is allowed **but** you must complete the application form in your own words. Professionals, family members or others may not take the lead in planning or completing the form on your behalf.

Please answer every question. If you need any help, contact CILT or your Local Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC). To find your local ILRC you can visit our [website](#) or call us at the numbers listed on the inside cover of this Guide.

Please keep in mind that the maximum amount of attendant service allowed for any one individual is an average of *7 hours per day*. This works out to 210 hours on months with 30 days. When averaged over a year, *the maximum is 212.2 hours per month*.

Note: If you use a ventilator, require assistance to maintain an airway or have other exceptional needs that exceed our usual maximums, contact your local Independent Living Resource Centre before completing this application.

When your application is complete, sign it and send a copy to CILT. Keep a copy for yourself; you will need it later.

We will let you know when your application has been received. Complete applications will be added to the province-wide waiting list. Incomplete applications will require further communication with Program staff.

When your name reaches the top of the wait list, you will be contacted by the Direct Funding staff person at your local ILRC. You will be provided resources to help you prepare for an Eligibility interview. Please note that the interview will usually be arranged with you alone.

The Interview Panel will determine your eligibility and notify you in writing.

If You are Eligible

We will send you an agreement to sign. This describes your responsibilities and, once signed, is legally binding. CILT and your local ILRC will provide resources and support to help you get started on the Program

If you are currently living in **Supportive Housing**, and if you are eligible, you would have to make arrangements to either a) move to a new apartment that is not linked to attendant services, or b) your service provider would have to indicate that they could arrange for your Supportive Housing Services to be reallocated.

Start here when filling out your application form . . .

Note: Please use a **black pen** to fill out the application form. Alternately, you can complete a pdf fillable version online at www.dfontario.ca.

Application Form Notes

Page 1 - “Alternate contact”: Please provide alternate contact details for an individual the program can contact in the event that we cannot reach you directly. Your alternate contact is not for someone to speak on your behalf.

Questions 5 and 6 - “Assistance With Essential Communication”:

Assistance with essential communication or assisted communication includes understanding what others are saying to you and having others understand what your messages are, using your preferred communication method.

If you have a communication disability/complex communication needs, describe it fully. Include, for example, what your preferred communication method is; whether you need assistance in set-up and care of communication assistive technology; whether you need assistance with communication over the phone, writing messages, when in public, at meetings, in health care settings and/or in other circumstances.

Contact us if, as a result of a speech and/or language disability, you will need a communication assistant to help you at your Direct Funding interview.

Question 10: If you have, or expect to receive, an insurance settlement, insurance payments, private health plan or Workplace Safety and Insurance Board payments, you may still be eligible for DF. You must be able to provide full disclosure and demonstrate that your insurance payment(s), settlement(s), etc., is insufficient to meet your assessed attendant service needs. If so, the Direct Funding Program may be able to “top up” your services. The program will be the last payer.

Question 11: In order to accurately present the amount of assistance you now use, you should fill out the “Attendant Service Log” worksheets (see pages 12 to 14 of this Guide) to record a week’s worth of 24-hour days. Before you start, make seven copies of the first two worksheets so you will have enough for a full week.

Record the blocks of service you currently use, listing the activities and time each activity takes. Include incidental and unscheduled assistance if possible. Also allow for weekly tasks such as housekeeping, etc. Completing these worksheets over one week should give a good picture of your present routine. Consolidate these on the third worksheet, Sample Week. **Multiply the weekly total by 4.33 for a monthly average.**

Note: Keep and bring these sheets to refer to when answering questions at your DF selection panel interview.

Question 12 (a), (b), (c) and (d) “Your Proposed Service Plan”: This is the basis for your service plan. The only allowable services for funding under DF are attendant services, as listed in question 5 on the application form, and the following:

- looking after one’s skin, feminine hygiene needs, colostomy/ileostomy, equipment (e.g., minor maintenance of a wheelchair);
- routine range of motion exercises, taking medications, changing non-sterile dressings, shopping/banking;
- escorts for medical/health reasons;
- nurturing assistance (i.e., assistance with the care of children, with you, the parent, present and directing activities);
- other similar activities of daily living that you could do for yourself if you did not have a physical disability.

This program does **not** cover “employment accommodation.” However, assistance in the workplace with activities of daily living (e.g., washroom and lunch) is appropriate.

Do **not** include professional health-related services, such as those provided by physiotherapists, occupational therapists (OT) or nurses.

As you make your new service plan, think about your current attendant service needs and your future needs. Because of the flexibility and control of self-managed services, your life may not be the same under DF as it was before.

Consider the reality of hiring attendant workers for “worthwhile units of time” – i.e., worthwhile to them. For example, if your week includes a number of short visits, attendants may feel these shifts are not worth working. If your day includes short visits (i.e., less than an hour), you might consider rolling these into larger blocks of time, if possible.

Think about efficiency. You do one thing while your attendant is doing another, e.g., you may be washing, shaving or brushing your teeth while your attendant is preparing your meal or putting the laundry in the machine.

If you have a communication disability/complex communication needs, you may require more time training your attendants to your communication method, more time with your attendants for your ordinary daily living activities and time for assistance in communication with others.

Start with the communication between you and the attendant(s) about and during your regular activities of daily living. Do you require additional time for communication to direct your services to an attendant? If yes, please provide a break down of how much time is needed for communication in each block of assistance requested. You might require, for example, 10-20 extra minutes per hour when training attendants; however, when they get to know your routines and things become more automatic, that time may either be no longer required or may be reduced.

Then add the additional time you need from your attendant(s) in assisting you in your communication with others. Describe the type or location of this assistance, whether it's, for example, over the phone or writing messages or with others in person, at health care appointments, at meetings or when in public, etc. Add the time for set up and care of communication/assistive technology, if this is needed.

Itemize all these occasions with the individual amounts of time so you can explain your communication needs fully at a later date in the eligibility interview.

In calculating your Direct Funding attendant service requirements, remember that:

- Self-managed attendant services are about **personal “care.”** DF is not intended to substitute for nursing or rehabilitation services, nor is it a program for persons who need only housekeeping. DF is for the person who needs hands-on physical assistance from an attendant, who they direct. (The upper limit for “housekeeping”, not including meal preparation, is 4 hours per week.)
- Under most circumstances, DF will be your **only** source of government-funded attendant services.
- The maximum amount of attendant services allowed for any one individual is an average of 7 hours per day. When averaged over a year, the maximum is 212.2 hours per month.
- You may not hire immediate family members – parents, children, siblings, spouses or the equivalent.
- Services can be received anywhere you go in Ontario – at home, in the community or while travelling within the province.
- You are responsible for training your own attendants. You may want to arrange for your new DF attendants to shadow your current providers to learn your routines.

Note: Direct Funding has been found to be a very efficient model of service. Unlike services delivered by service provider organizations, Direct Funding is not use-it-or-lose-it. If you don't use as much time as planned on one day, it's not lost; it will be available for you to use on another day. It's important not to over-estimate your needs or automatically ask for the maximum.

Question 12 (d) “Occasional Assistance Requiring Extra Hours”: This section asks you to consider the assistance you may need outside of your regular daily/weekly routines. Think of what is most likely to happen. For example, consider a little staff turnover and therefore some training of a new attendant, you getting sick or getting a pressure ulcer, escort to medical appointments and your vacation time. Any hours in 12(d) will be in addition to your regular hours. Remember, you will be allocated these hours each month, and they will accumulate over the course of a year. For example, 1 hour here would accumulate to give you 12 extra hours per year.

When you have a “**Total Monthly Hours**” worked out for this page and entered on line (7), carry this amount forward to the next question and enter it in line (11).

Question 13 “Monthly Budget Calculation”: Your budget is the second part of your proposed service plan. It itemizes the funds you will need to cover your staffing requirements and related expenses. This budget is for an **average** month.

Question 13(a) “Optional Arrangements Cost”: If your needs go beyond the total monthly hours worked out in question 12, complete this section 13(a). You may not require extensive (or any) “optional arrangements,” especially if your needs are predictable or you are not living alone. But if you require, for example, on-call availability or overnight assistance (night turns), outline your proposed solution in this section.

Please note that “**Optional Arrangements Cost**” is divided into two parts:

- The first part is for any arrangements you make with your own attendant(s). These should be totaled on line (8).
- The second part is for any other arrangements you make with outside agencies, companies, etc. Total these on line (9).

A variety of optional arrangements is open to you. For example, some DF participants routinely need assistance in the middle of the night and may want to cover nighttime assistance by having an attendant stay overnights. Often this time would be paid at a flat rate per night, depending on how much “hands-on” work the attendant is expected to do. However, if your attendant will not be able to get 6 hours of continuous sleep, to comply with the Employment Standards Act

you would need to budget the overnight hours at no lower than Ontario's minimum wage rate. List this arrangement under 13(a), **point one**, since it is paid to your attendant.

Another option may be to negotiate an agreement with a nearby service provider (agency) to cover emergency requests or night turns on a fee-for-service basis. If this is your choice, list it under 13(a), **point two**, since it is with an agency.

If you occasionally require an attendant to be available on-call for unscheduled/emergency/urgent/back-up assistance during certain hours, you could have an arrangement to pay the attendant at a higher wage rate, i.e., time-and-a-half, for an unscheduled urgent call. For example, if you need help to clean up on average one bladder accident per month, your calculation could be, 1 hour @ \$22.00 x 1.5 = \$33.00/month.

Some ways to plan for back-up or emergency assistance include:

- asking your attendants to take responsibility for arranging temporary replacements for themselves if they are sick or otherwise unable to work as scheduled;
- maintaining a list of casual part-timers to call on short notice;
- hiring a service provider or agency, on a fee-for-service basis (this is permitted on an exceptional or emergency basis);
- having an attendant available by phone between certain hours;
- arranging in advance to call family, friends or neighbours to assist.

If you are in danger of falling or otherwise becoming unable to call an attendant for help yourself, you could consider using a medical alarm/alert system, also known as a personal emergency response system. For those who need this option, budget between \$40-\$60/month.

Attendant travel allowance may be a consideration when the attendant lives a fair distance away, if you have short shifts, shifts that are very early morning or late at night, you are in a remote location or public transit is not readily available. You might offer a flat rate of \$3.50-\$5.00 per shift depending on whether you are urban or rural. You might budget, for example, \$3.00/shift x 7 shifts/week x 4.33 weeks/month = \$90.93/month. An attendant's travel to work (one way) is the **only** travel expense that can be paid under DF.

Note: If you ask your attendants to run errands for you, any travel expenses they incur as a result would be paid out of your own pocket.

Question 13 (b): The program has set a **wage rate of \$25.00/hour** on line (12) as the **average** available for your attendant workers. Your budget will be calculated using this average hourly wage cost. Under DF, this is the maximum allowable average wage rate.

Participants in the program are required to pay rates that are consistent with rates currently paid to attendants across the province. For workers in this field who have finished a probationary period (maximum 3 months), the current starting rate minimum is \$17.20 per hour.

It is good practice to use several different wage levels within a range for your attendants, if possible. You could have a starting rate for those with no experience, progressing to a higher level when the attendant finishes probation, and then one or two more levels, which provide an incentive for experienced attendants to stay with you long term.

Note: The Selection Panel may ask you about your plans for paying attendants. You should think about what pay rates you would offer your attendants. To be able to recruit and retain attendants, you should at least match your pay with the going rates in your area, if possible. Having an idea of the pay rate you would offer makes it easier to advertise and check out potential staff in your area.

Question 13 (c): “Employer’s Portion of MERCs and Benefits” on line (15) refers to the Mandatory Employment Related Costs an employer must pay by law. We provide the funding for this expense. MERCs cover the following:

- Canada Pension Plan (CPP),
- Employment Insurance (EI),
- Vacation pay of 4%, (increased to 6% after 5 years of continuous employment),
- Public holidays (public holiday and premium pay),
- and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

As a small employer you will be exempt from Employer’s Health Tax (EHT). The employer’s portion of MERCs is calculated at 21% of the total of employees’ earnings from line (14).

Note: The program does **not** cover sick pay for attendants.

Question 13 (d): This question covers “**Miscellaneous Expenses**”. We have included typical expenses for most self-managers. Any payments made from these amounts require corresponding invoices from 3rd parties.

“**Bookkeeper/Payroll Services**” on line (16) cover services of a bookkeeper to help you manage your payroll and comply with program reporting requirements. You should hire a good bookkeeper with payroll experience, e.g., calculation of Public Holiday and Premium pay, T4s and Records of Employment (ROE), etc. Your local ILRC can refer you

to a bookkeeper who is familiar with Direct Funding. If you are organized and update your books regularly, the bookkeeping charges should be no higher than **\$200.00 per month** for general record keeping, payroll and preparing quarterly reports.

“Advertising, Postage” is set on line (17) at **\$25.00 per month** to cover, for example, business supplies such as paper or ink for a printer (to print pay stubs or time sheets), postage where required for mailing T4s and other documents, or a paid advertisement when recruiting new staff.

“Bank Charges” are set on line (18) at **\$25.00 per month**. The program requires participants to open a personal chequing account or business chequing account at a bank where they have no other bank accounts or credit cards.

“Liability Insurance Portion” is set on line (19) at **\$10.00 per month**. It is expected that you have or will purchase your own home or tenant insurance. This normally comes with \$1 million liability coverage. You are required to raise your personal liability insurance to \$2 million. You may only reimburse yourself for the additional premium cost for the extra \$1 million liability. Check with your agent and explain that the policy must have coverage for employed “domestics” by including employer’s liability coverage.

Question 13 (e): “Contingency Amount”: This covers unforeseen events requiring hours/funds in excess of your normal budget, e.g., recovering from surgery, or a broken limb. Contingency is set at 5% over and above your total monthly budget and is retained by CILT in the event that you need to access it.

Question 14 “Self-Assessment”: Although this section is optional, it can be a positive feature of your application. It is your opportunity to provide additional information about your capabilities. You might consider including continuing education; responsibilities involved in work or volunteer activities; and any experience you have in managing or coordinating people, organizing and scheduling, or bookkeeping and handling money. Highlight anything you feel has helped you develop self-management skills. Specifically, you could show that you can self-manage attendants by indicating experience in:

- training and supervising;
- recruiting, hiring and dismissing;
- understanding the legal responsibilities of an employer;
- managing and accounting for the expenditure of funds and keeping records.

In presenting yourself as a potential self-manager, remember that support is available to those who are new to the program. ILRCs have a Direct Funding resource person available to answer questions and provide advice. New self-managers receive helpful resource materials, and are invited to share information with others through the Self-Managers’ Network, which can be accessed through the DF Website. You can also log into www.dfontario.ca to review more information that will help you become a successful self-manager.

Question 16 “Declaration”: The “Applicant’s Signature or Mark” must be that of the applicant, the person who will be directly using the attendant services for themselves. If writing a signature is physically difficult for you, you may make a mark (such as an “x”). Holding a pen between your teeth is an option many people use, if holding one by hand is not possible. Another alternative is using a rubber stamp made of your signature or mark. If you choose the latter method, you will need to keep the stamp in a secure place, so it can only be used by you.

“Release of Information Request Form”

The “Release of Information Request Form” (Application Form, page 6) will allow CILT to verify, if necessary, any information you have supplied in writing or during your interview with the Regional Interview Panel. This form, filled in and signed by you and a witness, allows others who know your situation to release information to the DF Program.

Note: Your application cannot be processed without a signed Release.

Selection Panel Interview

The Eligibility interview is very important. You, the applicant, will present your application and discuss how you believe your knowledge and experience demonstrate your ability to self-manage your attendants.

- Bring along a copy of your application; you will be asked to review your original application and update it if necessary prior to your interview.
- Be prepared to spend up to 3 hours at the interview. It is common for a second interview to be scheduled.
- Present a clear picture of your service needs. Bring a copy of your current, completed Attendant Service Log (the worksheets you used from the end of this Guide).
- **Be prepared to answer questions of a personal nature regarding your application.**

Review your application before the meeting. Make sure you understand how you see yourself managing on the program. Be prepared to explain your proposed service needs and demonstrate your self-management skills to the Selection Panel. They may ask you questions about your disability, your need for services, and related matters. The panel is not doing this because they doubt your application, but because they need to understand your unique circumstances. In this way, the panel can verify your service requirements. Respect for you and your lifestyle are important to us, and all information is kept confidential.

Day: _____ **Attendant Service Log: Morning/Afternoon**

Make **seven copies** of this worksheet and use them to record a week’s worth of your attendant services. Record the services you’ve used, at what time, and approximately how long each service took to complete. Consolidate this information on the **Sample Week** worksheet on page 14.

Time AM	Morning	Time PM	Afternoon
6:00		12:00	
:15		:15	
:30		:30	
:45		:45	
7:00		1:00	
:15		:15	
:30		:30	
:45		:45	
8:00		2:00	
:15		:15	
:30		:30	
:45		:45	
9:00		3:00	
:15		:15	
:30		:30	
:45		:45	
10:00		4:00	
:15		:15	
:30		:30	
:45		:45	
11:00		5:00	
:15		:15	
:30		:30	
:45		:45	

Day: _____ **Attendant Service Log: Evening/Night**

Make **seven copies** of this worksheet and use them to record a week’s worth of your attendant services. Record the services you’ve used, at what time, and approximately how long each service took to complete. Consolidate this information on the **Sample Week** worksheet on page 14.

Time PM	Evening	Time AM	Night
6:00		12:00	
:15		:15	
:30		:30	
:45		:45	
7:00		1:00	
:15		:15	
:30		:30	
:45		:45	
8:00		2:00	
:15		:15	
:30		:30	
:45		:45	
9:00		3:00	
:15		:15	
:30		:30	
:45		:45	
10:00		4:00	
:15		:15	
:30		:30	
:45		:45	
11:00		5:00	
:15		:15	
:30		:30	
:45		:45	

Attendant Service Log: Sample Week

Use the Attendant Service Logs to collect the number of hours of assistance you use each day, then total them up and record them below.

Day Time	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	
Morn.								
Aft'n.								
Eve'g.								
Night								
Daily totals →								Weekly total ↓

