**SHARED LIVING ARRANGEMENTS (SLA)**

**CERTIFICATION STANDARDS**

**Communication with Participants:**

* Individuals and stakeholders are given information in a format and language accessible to them, in a clear, accurate, and consistent manner, wherein special communication needs are identified and addressed.

**Person-Centeredness:**

* Services and supports are individualized, purposeful, and meaningful.
* Services and supports are driven by a person-centered plan, as described in the ISP Guidelines, that accurately reflects an individual’s preferences, choices, needs, desires, personal goals, and objectives.
* Each individual has the opportunity to access information about and explore resources within their communities of choice, which may include the process of community mapping.
* Staff supports are based on the informed choice and needs of the individual receiving services and supports.
* Individuals are supported to develop, maintain, and enhance relationships with others, and to develop natural supports, as demonstrated by the presence of personalized relationships or potential for relationship building.
* Individuals are supported to interact and socialize with community members (i.e., helping to make plans within the program and/or outside of the program) in activities of their choosing.

**Autonomy:**

* Services optimize autonomy and independence in making life choices, including choices regarding services and supports and the individuals who provide them.
* Individuals are supported to identify and select activities that are aligned with their skills, strengths, and interests.
* Providers support and encourage individuals to access and utilize available communication and mobility devices, assistive technology, and accommodations as needed.
* Individuals express that they feel able to effectively direct their own life to achieve their desired goals, and that services and supports are meeting their expectations.
* Individuals develop, or have input into, their own flexible and individual schedule of activities focused on their needs and desires.
* Individuals have the opportunity to choose with whom to do activities, including with people not receiving any services or not receiving services from the same provider.
* Individuals have privacy for communication.

**Addressing Risk:**

* Providers assess risk with the individual and others of the individual’s choosing to develop, enhance, fade, or remove risk mitigation strategies as needed.
* The assumption of risk is balanced with the individual’s ability to assume responsibility for that risk and the promotion of health and safety.

**Documentation of Services:**

* Case notes are entered in each participant’s record whenever a billable service is provided, including the date, time and brief summary of the support provided and signed by the recorder.
* Case notes and other documentation are reflective of each individual’s plan and goals, showing an alignment of services and supports provided with the plan.
* All documentation is in accordance with CMS rules.
* Providers are accountable to individuals they serve, as shown by documentation of periodic checks with individuals, formally or informally, on at least a quarterly basis, to gauge if the services and supports being provided are meaningful to them, meet their needs and preferences, and if any changes are needed.
* Providers communicate information that impacts the individual’s supports, as outlined in the person-centered plan, to other service areas/providers supporting the individual and promoting continuity of supports.

**Satisfaction Survey:**

* Providers survey individuals in their program annually to ensure satisfaction with program supports and services.
* Providers use survey results and other data to improve services.

**Staff Qualifications:**

* Staff are appropriately hired, trained, and receive ongoing annual training in areas relevant to their job descriptions and the unique needs of the individuals they serve.
* Staff assignments demonstrate respect for individual preferences, including but not limited to the culture and diversity of individuals who receive supports.
* Staff promote and support access and opportunities for individuals to explore and engage their preferences in ways that demonstrate an understanding of each individual’s unique needs and goals.

**Integration:**

* Providers encourage individuals they support to take advantage of existing community programs, settings, and resources in the same manner as people without disabilities, rather than developing programs solely for individuals with disabilities.
* Individuals with disabilities are supported to interact with communities of their choice at the times and frequencies of their choosing.
* Staff identify, encourage, and support opportunities for individuals to use natural supports.

**DDO Responsibilities in Managing Shared Living Arrangements:**

The DDO’s Shared Living Arrangement (SLA) program management plan includes the following:

* + Methods for recruiting qualified SLA contractors. Areas to consider in recruitment include:
* Character references;
* Personal interviews;
* Home inspection report;
* Lifestyle;
* Personal preferences;
* Cultural and religious values;
* Family and friend involvement;
* Compatibility with animals and children;
* Smoking preference.
  + Processes for evaluating potential SLA contractors, initial and subsequent annual inspections of the property/home environment, conducting a shared living arrangement study, and for conducting a new home inspection prior to any move to a new address.
* The DDO assures that any needed repairs or modifications are made to the home.
  + Criteria for selection of qualified SLA contractors and shared living respite providers that meet or exceed the minimum requirements found in regulation.
  + A process for matching qualified SLA contractors and individuals
  + Procedures for reporting and investigating suspected abuse, neglect, and mistreatment of individuals in accordance with the Rhode Island General Laws, as amended
  + An orientation program that ensures that SLA contractors have completed pre-service skill development prior to being matched with an individual receiving services, and have received any needed specialized instruction or guidance prior to an individual moving into the SLA.
* Pre-service skill development is documented and includes but is not limited to the following:
* Roles and responsibilities of the SLA contractor
* Human Rights of adults with developmental disabilities
* Self-determination
* Confidentiality
* Community integration and support of natural supports
* Annual individual Person-Centered Planning
* Mandatory reporting of abuse, neglect, and mistreatment of adults with developmental disabilities to the Department and appropriate law enforcement agencies
* Documentation required of the SLA contractor
* Access to medical and psychiatric supports
* Specialized skill development for an individual’s unique medical, behavioral, or social needs is documented.
  + A contract that is signed between the DDO and the SLA contractor before an individual moves into the SLA. The contract should self-renew and remain in place unless changes within the contract occur. Contract provisions should include:
* Rights, responsibilities, and limitations on the role of the SLA contractor.
* A requirement that the SLA will support individual needs and assist with the acquisition of individual goals as indicated in the ISP.
* A requirement for immediate notification to the DDO of any changes in NCIC or BCI status and/or DMV license status.
* Immediate notification to the DDO of any new member of the household.
* Contractually required routine communication with the DDO of the progress of the individual supported in the Shared Living Arrangement.
* Adherence to requirements for storing firearms as described in Regulation.
* Access to respite supports and stipend.
* Notification and process for termination of the contract.
* The requirement for notice to the DDO at least thirty (30) days in advance of plans to move to a new address.
  + Oversight and monitoring to ensure that SLA contractors comply with their contract provisions

**DDO Responsibilities to Individuals Served by the SLA Program:**

* + The DDO ensures that each individual is able to make a meaningful, informed choice of SLA contractor.
  + The DDO facilitates interviews between individuals to be served and qualified SLA contractors.
  + The individual makes the final decision in determining the SLA contractor.
  + The DDO will assist the individual to make decisions about family members, friends, and/or advocates or others to include when determining the SLA contractor.
  + The DDO provides any necessary ongoing support for the SLA contractor to meet the individual’s identified needs.
  + The DDO adheres to and ensures implementation of the annual ISP, and participates in the annual ISP to the extent desired by the individual.
  + The DDO’s ensures that SLA contractors support the person’s health and safety and assist the individual, as needed, in securing required preventive, routine, and emergency health care services.
  + The DDO ensures that the SLA contractor acknowledges that the SLA is also the individual’s home, including but not limited to the following:
* The individual has full access to and use of the home, with no restrictions unless identified in the individual’s ISP and behavior or medical plan.
* The participant has privacy within the home.
* The participant is not isolated within the SLA home from other members of the household.
  + The DDO has policies, practices, ~~training,~~ and oversight to ensure that the SLA contractor supports the participant in a way that respects the participant’s goals, preferences, wants, and needs, including that:
* The individual is able to make decisions without interference or undue influence by the SLA contractor.
* The SLA contractor does not act on behalf of the participant without the individual’s consent.
* The SLA contractor does not make decisions that negatively impacts the individual, including but not limited to the individual’s life choices, community involvement, employment, religious expression, and social activities.

**Written Policies and Procedures Governing the SLA:**

* + The DDO has written policies and procedures to assess the support needs of the individual to receive services in an SLA, including but not limited to medications, medical treatment, and other safety and healthcare needs.
  + The DDO has written policies and procedures for identifying and selecting appropriate SLA contractors, including a comprehensive evaluation of a SLA contractor for suitability and compatibility based on personal experience, characteristics, conduct, demeanor, integrity, capacity, and philosophy.
  + The DDO has written policies for the SLA contractor to follow regarding communication about significant changes in medication and/or medical status of the individual receiving services with legal guardians or with other family members with whom the individual chooses to share this information.
  + The DDO has written policies and procedures for when and how SLAs may be terminated, for the transition plan for the individual leaving a SLA, and for alternate living arrangements for an individual, if needed, until a new living arrangement can be found.