

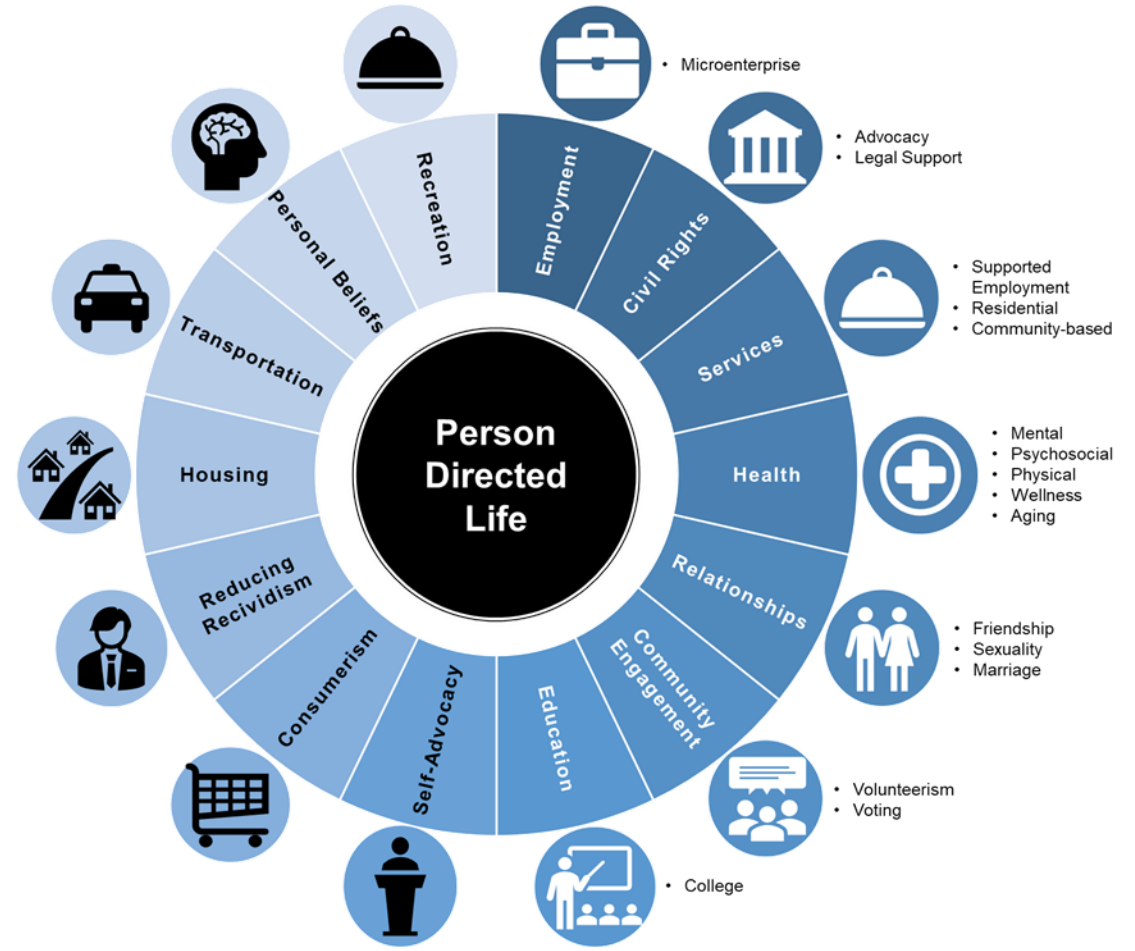
SYSTEMS CHANGE IN ALASKA

LET'S BUILD IT BETTER

The Right to Self Direct
Accessible Homes

Shared Vision

- “Alaskans share a vision of a flexible system in which each person directs their own supports, based on their strengths and abilities, toward a meaningful life in their home, their job and their community. Our vision includes supported families, professional staff and services available throughout the state now and into the future.”



Alaska is home to:

ILC

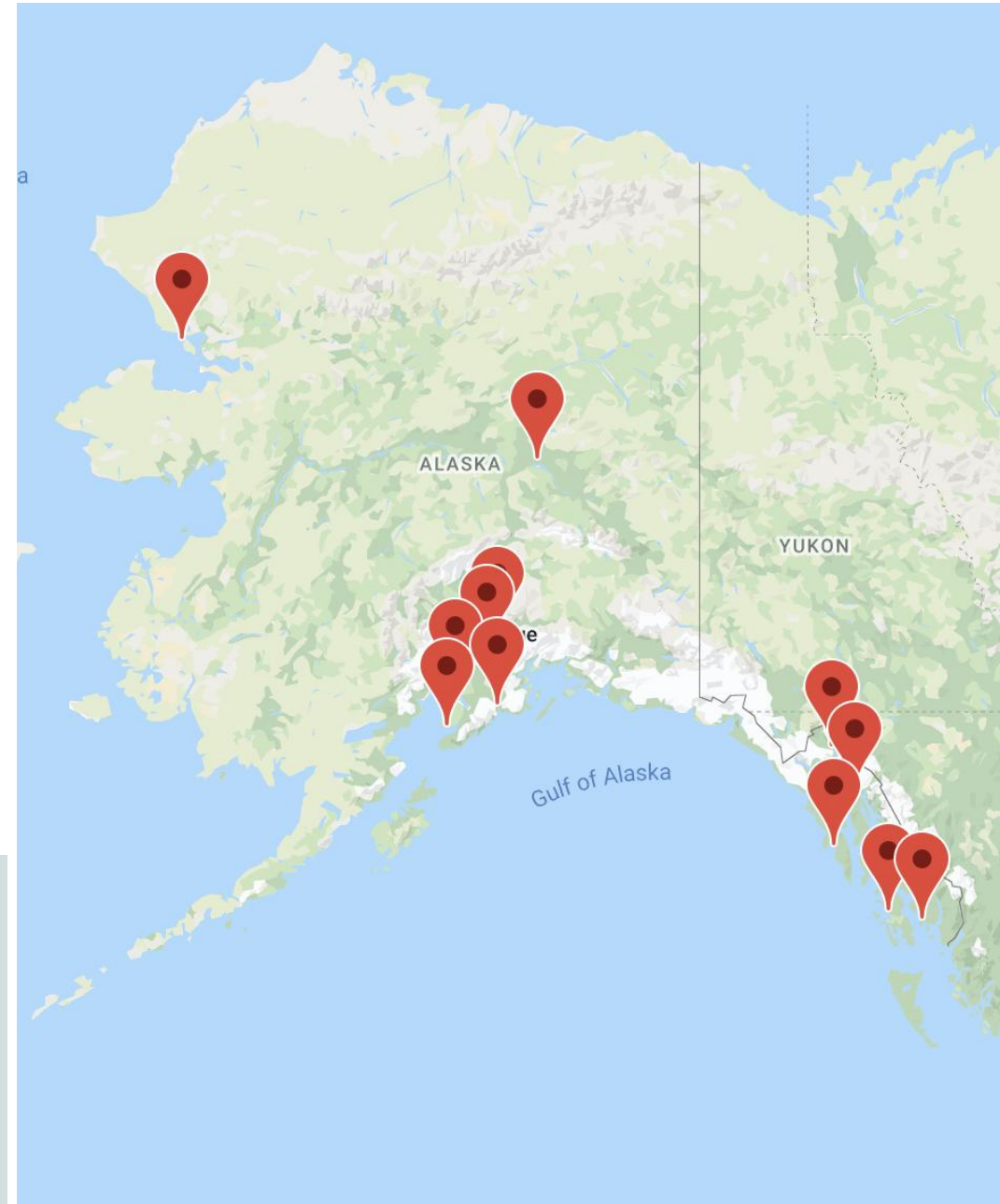
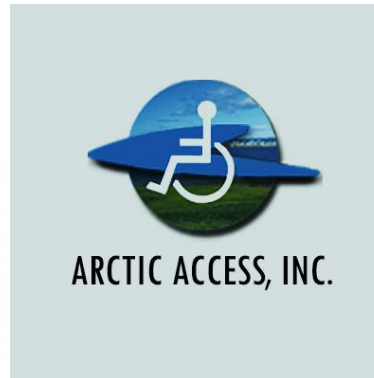
SAIL

Access Alaska

Arctic Access

SILC - Statewide Council

APRIL – regional



Centers for Independent Living Provide:

5 core services



Peer Support



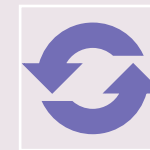
Information and
Referral



Individual and
Systems Advocacy



Independent Living
Skills Training



Transition

SYSTEMS CHANGE?

But, how?



Medical Model

I need to be "fixed" to fit in with society.

Can't go to the cinemas because they are Deaf

Can't go to a cafe by themselves because they are blind

Can't work here because they can't go upstairs

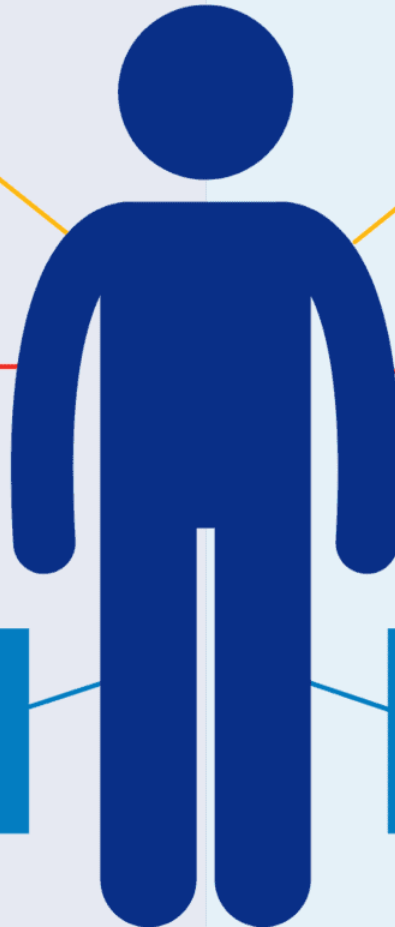
Social Model

Society needs to change so I can fit in.

Cinema hasn't provided closed captions

Cafe hasn't provided braille or electronic menu options

The building doesn't have a lift or a ramp



Language & Terms

DO SAY:

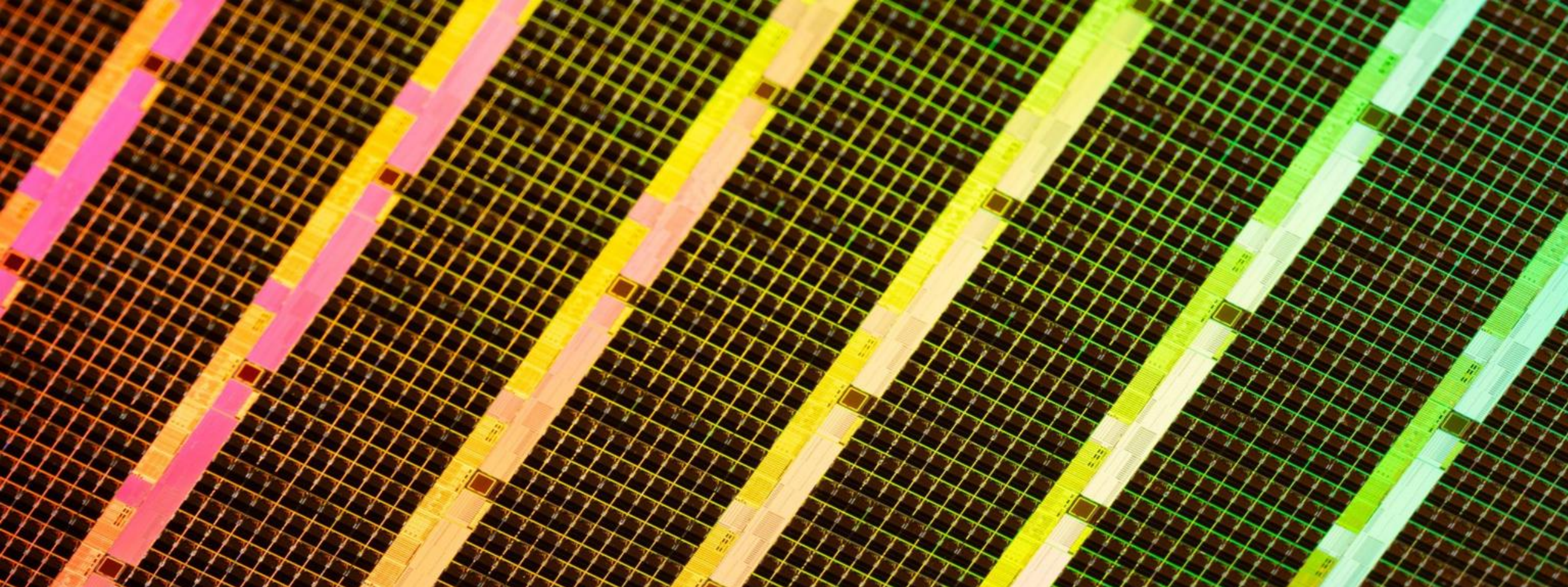
- **DISABILITY #saytheword**
It's in the title of the laws that protects us!

DON'T SAY:

- **Special needs, special Ed, handicapped**
 - **But also...handi capable, special challenges, special abilities**
- **Wheelchair-bound**
- **“fell on deaf ears”**
- **“Blind to the truth”**
- **R word**
- **Spaz**

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

- **25% of Americans experience a disability – that's one out of every four people**
- **50% of Alaskans 75 and older**
- **You are HIGHLY statistically likely to acquire a disability due to age, illness or injury.**
- **What would you do?**
- **What are the options in your community?**



E-MODS

What's a Home/ Environmental Modification?

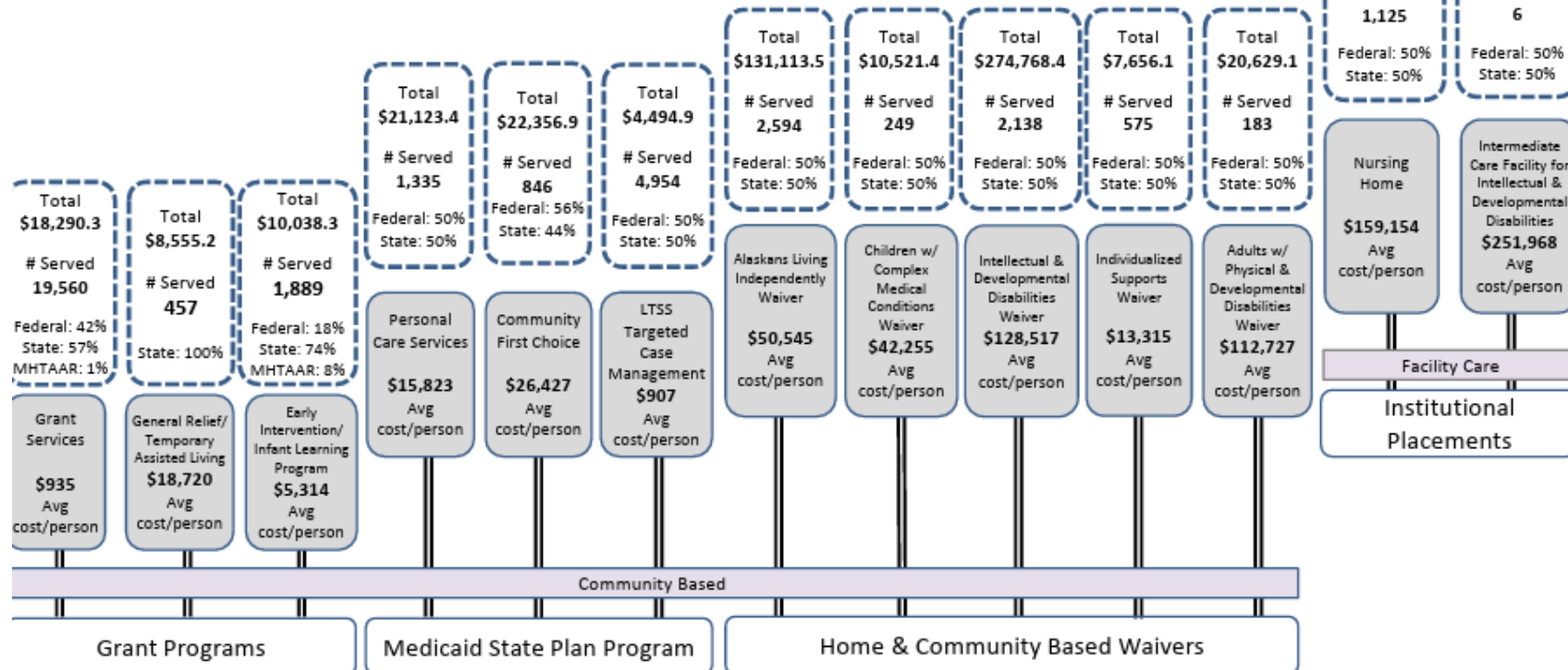


State of Alaska Continuum of Care

Senior and Disabilities Services

SFY 2025 Costs by Funding Source and Average Cost per Person by Service Type

Costs by Funding Source					Total # Served (Duplicated Counts Across some Service Types)
Grant Services	Medicaid State Plan Programs	Home & Community Based Waivers	Institutional Placements	Total Costs	
\$36,883.8	\$47,975.2	\$444,688.5	\$180,560.0	\$710,107.5	30,323



Two Avenues

To allow seniors and people experiencing disabilities to avoid falls, age in place, delay or avoid moving to a more restrictive and more expensive setting, such as a nursing home or assisted living...

1) Medicaid Waiver Environmental Modification (E-MOD) Service

All Alaskans on Medicaid Home and Community Based Service (HCBS) Waivers, except for the Individualized Support Waiver, can access Environmental Modification (E-MOD) services. In FY25, 5,164 people were enrolled in Medicaid waivers offering health and safety-related home modifications (E-MODs) for those who need them, yet less than 30 projects were approved. Clearly the service is underutilized.

1) Home Modification and Upgrades

Home Modifications and Upgrades provides capital funding to the Department of Health for grants for home modifications.

PARTICIPANT DIRECTED SERVICES IN ALASKA

The Right to Self Direct

What is Self Direction?



Flexible, Person-Centered, and Cost-Effective

Self-directed services are a flexible, person-centered, and cost-effective alternative to nursing homes, other institutional settings, and more traditional, agency-driven home and community-based services.

- In self-direction, typically the participant is the legal employer of their staff.
- Participants often choose to hire family members and friends to provide needed services.
- Often, states also include options to purchase goods and services that can reduce the individual's need for ongoing services. For example, a participant who uses a wheelchair might choose to purchase a front-facing washing machine and dryer, which would reduce their ongoing need for a worker to assist with laundry.
- In Medicaid programs, the specific services and supports that can be self-directed depend on the state in which the participant lives. Nationally, services that are most often self-directed include personal care, transportation, and respite.

Built-in Guidance and Support

When it comes to being an employer, people who self-direct are not required to figure everything out on their own. Instead, support is available every step of the way. Federal Medicaid rules require certain supports to be in place in Medicaid-funded self-direction. Supports include:

- **Financial Management Services** helps participants manage payroll and other administrative responsibilities.
- **Information and Assistance (I&A)** helps people develop spending plans based on their budget allocation and learn how to be an effective employer.
- **Representatives** are available for any individual who wants to self-direct but is unable or unwilling to perform employer duties themselves. For example, children who self-direct typically have a parent or guardian serve as the employer.

Supports help ensure **self-direction is accessible to everyone, regardless of their age or disability.**

Who is right for self-direction?

EVERYONE is right for self-direction!

- Avoid being a gatekeeper
- Build upon strengths
- Identify support needs
- Find ways to mitigate risks
- Provide resources on the role of an employer



VOICE

- Veterans Options for Independence Choice and Empowerment is a Veterans Directed Care (VDC) program that enables eligible Veterans to choose and direct their own care, in their homes. VOICE supports Veterans to have greater access, choice and control over their long-term care services.
- Since 2015, serving over 200 veterans on the Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak Island, Mat-Su Valley and Southeast Alaska
- Veterans are assessed by their VA provider to determine what their physical needs are and based on the assessment the Veteran is given a budget for services. The Veteran and family or representative are then responsible to decide how the budget will be used. There is no tax burden for the Veteran
- Four-part team:
 - Veterans Administration
 - Veteran or representative (Employer)
 - Aris Solutions (Fiscal Intermediary)
 - Advocate/Options Counselor (Information, Assistance, Support)



Veteran's budget provides:

- Personal care services using workers hired by the Veteran/Representative
- Transportation
- Light housework, meal preparation and other chores
- Respite for family members
- Worker's compensation for Veteran's staff

What is possible?

- Assistive Technology and equipment
- Home Modifications
- Transportation
- Individuals can stay/come home to their community
- Day Hab, supported living, employment services, PCS, respite
- Supported Decision Making Agreements
- Community Based Support Brokers

We get to build it the way we want it!



What's next?

- Alaska, the only state WITHOUT Self Direction for Waiver services, is in the early phases of “Participant Directed Services” planning:
 - interRAI will determine budget*
- Currently contracting with Applied Self Direction & Effective Health Design (Thank you Trust!)
 - Monthly planning meetings
 - Community Leaders Training March 24 9am-12pm
 - Community Training Forums in hub areas in June: Fairbanks, Kenai, Anchorage, Matsu Valley and Juneau



Real Consequences

Service shortages

Institutional bias

Caregiver burnout

Preventable barriers to community living

Continuing to delay implementation perpetuates inequity



— SELF DIRECTION = CIVIL RIGHTS