

Navigating Financial Management Services and Self-Direction

From Procurement and Implementation to Day-to-Day Execution



Welcome

- ▶ Navigating the procurement of a new FMS vendor for MDOA's Veteran-Directed HCBS program.
- ▶ Topics to be discussed include:
 - ▶ FMS RFP development and requirements for a fiscal agent
 - ▶ Implementation of the FMS contract
 - ▶ Transition of Consumers
 - ▶ Implementation of changing guidelines such as Overtime
 - ▶ Day-to-day expectations and interactions with Consumers, Support Planners and Attendants, from a Self-directed perspective
- ▶ Additionally, this session focuses on the natural link that FMS services has to Consumer-Direction, the Independent Living Philosophy and how ACES\$ has integrated this service from a CIL mindset.

Roll Call

- ▶ Who is from a State entity?
- ▶ County Office (AAA or ADRC)?
- ▶ Who is a provider (FMS or otherwise)?
- ▶ Who is operating a VD-HCBS/VIP?
- ▶ Who is looking to start VD-HCBS/VIP?
- ▶ Who is navigating FMS procurement?
- ▶ Who is here because there might be candy?



Overview of the Maryland Department of Aging

- ▶ Maryland receives grant funding
- ▶ Other self-directed programs (Community First Choice and Options Counseling)
- ▶ Running the Veteran Directed-Home and Community Based Services program since 2011
- ▶ Area Agencies on Aging and Centers for Independent Living provide service coordination for the programs
- ▶ 45 veterans being served
- ▶ Counties covered

Veterans Administration Maryland Health Care System



- ▶ Limited funding
- ▶ Steps for assessment and referral
- ▶ Self-direction parameters
- ▶ Expansion efforts

About ACES\$ Financial Management Services

- ▶ ACES\$ FMS is a subsidiary of the Center for Independent Living (CIL), headquartered in Northeast Pennsylvania, where we have served persons with disabilities since 1988.
- ▶ We began providing FMS in 1995. ACES\$ Financial Management Services was officially launched in 2007 as a division of the CIL.
- ▶ We approach FMS services with an *Independent Living Philosophy* behind it
- ▶ Members of our staff and Board of Directors actively use our services. As a disability services organization, the majority of our employees (55%) have a disability and 10% of our staff are retired Veterans with disabilities.
- ▶ We serve the following populations:
 - ▶ Aging, Children with LTSS needs, Children with Disabilities, Medically Fragile and/or Technology Dependent, Developmentally Disabled, Intellectually Disabled, Physically Disabled, Mental Health, Spinal Cord Injury, Traumatic/Acquired Brain Injury, Visually Impaired/Blind and Veterans.



Running a Program as a
Partnership
and
Embracing
Self-direction

Active Partners in Self-direction Working Together to Encourage Independence and Sustainability



Communication

Self-direction

- ▶ The Self-directed service option available through the Veteran-directed HCBS program is an alternative to traditionally delivered and managed services available through the VA.
- ▶ Self-directed services means that Participants, or their authorized representatives, have the ability to make decisions over certain services and take direct responsibility to manage these services.
- ▶ Self-direction promotes *personal choice* and control over the delivery of services, including who provides the services and how services are provided.
- ▶ The Support Planner is there to provide guidance and help navigate what types of support services are available.

Participant/Employer Responsibilities in a Consumer-Directed Program

- ▶ Work with Support Planner to develop an authorized plan that matches needs, while taking into consideration goals and preferences
- ▶ Recruiting, Hiring, Scheduling and Firing
- ▶ Setting an hourly rate that meets minimum wage, program requirements and works within the budget
- ▶ Training workers to provide services based on Individual preferences
- ▶ Developing a back-up plan
- ▶ Managing the authorized budget
 - ▶ Scheduling hours that fit within budget and meet needs
 - ▶ Factoring in overtime
- ▶ Approving timesheets in a timely manner
- ▶ Submitting reimbursement requests for goods and services, in a timely manner
 - ▶ Only for approved items
 - ▶ Within budget
 - ▶ Maintaining receipts

Natural link that FMS services has to Consumer-Direction

- ▶ Goal of ACES\$ is to support Individuals so they can exercise more control over their services
- ▶ FMS has primarily focused on making Self-directed programs easier for Participants, while meeting program compliance requirements
 - ▶ Manage payroll, pay taxes, file forms, etc. all while ensuring program policies are met such as background check requirements, two attendant rules, etc.
- ▶ FMS infused with CIL values further reinforces Individuals to be more effective stewards of their dollars
 - ▶ Reinforce that the Participant is an **empowered individual** rather than a passive recipient
 - ▶ ACES\$, using it's CIL mindset, inserts the Independent Living Philosophy into all aspects of service delivery, from training staff on Participant-direction, to accessibility of our services and accountability to our Participants and program requirements

Natural link that FMS services has to Consumer Direction (continued)

- ▶ As an FMS organization that embraces the philosophy of Self-determined services, we believe that Individuals should have:
 - ▶ Freedom to plan an independent life with the supports they need
 - ▶ Authority to control their support dollars and responsibility for the use of those dollars
 - ▶ Support to live *and* be involved in the community in a way that suits their preferences
 - ▶ Responsibility to direct how and when supports and services are received



ACES\$ believes that FMS should support and enhance independent living options and improve an Individuals ability to make informed decisions about the services they are managing and receiving.

Procurement of the Fiscal Management Services Vendor Transition

The Maryland Department of Aging Request For Proposal Development

- ▶ Contract extension
- ▶ Request For Proposal (RFP) development and timeline
- ▶ Program improvement

Selecting a Financial Management Service Vendor

- ▶ Held a competitive procurement
- ▶ Multi-agency procurement panel
- ▶ Process for selection

Selecting a Financial Management Service Provider

- ▶ Financial Proposal
 - ▶ Ranked from least to most expensive
- ▶ Technical Proposal
 - ▶ Offeror's Technical Response to RFP Requirements and Work Plan
 - ▶ Experience and Qualifications of Proposed Staff
 - ▶ Offeror qualifications and capabilities, including proposed subcontractors
 - ▶ Economic Benefit to the State of Maryland

The Maryland Department Of Aging Financial Management Services Requirements

- ▶ The provision of, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), Fiscal Intermediary Services, e.g. managing the payroll and bill paying functions, to Participants and families in at least one Participant-Directed Benefits program for at least one year.
- ▶ Have knowledge of, and experience in, operating as a Fiscal Intermediary Services provider. As proof, provider must have at least one (1) reference from the past five (5) years able to confirm.
- ▶ Must have a separate Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) for the sole purpose of filing certain federal tax forms.

The Maryland Department Of Aging Financial Management Services Requirements

- ▶ Experience using and maintaining an electronic tracking and reporting system to provide Financial Management Services
- ▶ Customer Service contract specified requirements
- ▶ Established operating policies and procedures
- ▶ Experience meeting local, state and federal withholding and tax requirements
- ▶ The Financial Management Services must issue payroll, and then bill for services

Development of the Request For Proposal from a Contracting Entity: Best Practices

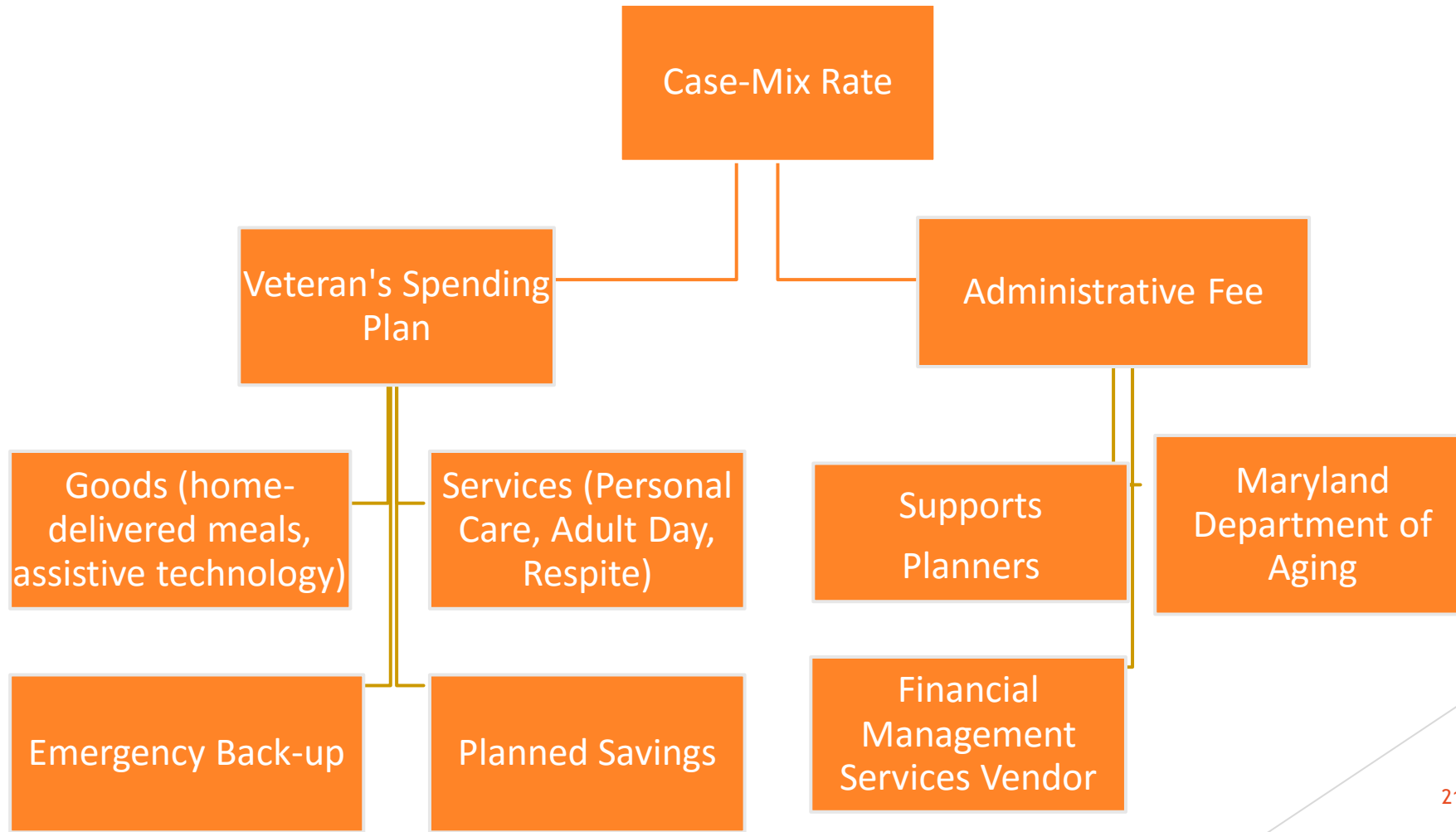


- ▶ Invited a multi-agency procurement panel, which included staff from other agencies with experience using a Financial Management Service vendor and the Veterans Administration Medical Centers
- ▶ Worked off of the Medicaid Financial Management Services Request For Proposal to have some consistent requirements
- ▶ Important to have a standardized, auto-calculating rate sheet for price bid

Development of the Request For Proposal from a Contracting Entity: Best Practices

- ▶ Financial Management Services required to advance payment for services and then receive reimbursement
- ▶ Important to emphasize self-direction and person-centeredness and need for the Financial Management Services vendor to understand those concepts
- ▶ Workers' Comp - understand and have the Financial Management Service vendor explain how this will be provided, as some methods place a greater paperwork burden on the Veteran

Veteran Directed- Home and Community Based Services Funding Chart



Development of RFP from a FMS Provider Perspective: Best Practices

- ▶ ACES\$ is a member of the FMS Procurement Committee through National Resource Center for Participant Directed Services (NRCPDS).
- ▶ Committee Members worked together with NRCPDS to identify and refine key RFP elements that would help FMS Providers produce comprehensive responses and an accurate bid.
- ▶ NRCPDS compiled this feedback into a Guide to Best Practices. This Guide is meant to assist states and other entities that want to procure FMS services.
- ▶ Guidance areas addressed include: Enrollment, Budgets and Service Plans, Payroll, Customer Service, Training, Billing, Quality Monitoring, Reporting, Business Practices, General Considerations, Pricing Structure and Transition
- ▶ For more information or a copy of the FMS RFP Best Practice Guidelines from NRCPDS please contact Merle Edwards-Orr at: merle.edwards-orr@bc.edu

Transition of Consumers from Previous FMS Provider to ACES\$

- ▶ Very short transition period.
- ▶ ACES\$ received the notice to proceed on **October 16th** and began providing services for the pay period of **November 16th**.
- ▶ ACES\$ actively worked with MDoA and former provider to collect and transfer required/missing data for all Veterans and Attendants participating/providing services in the program.
- ▶ MDoA issued a letter the first week of November to Veterans, Attendants and their Support Planners, advising of the change in providers and the transition timeline.
- ▶ Initially, ACES\$ only processed payroll for those already enrolled in the program.
- ▶ Once the transition was complete, ACES\$ began enrolling new Veterans.

Steps Taken During Transition of Consumers

- ▶ ACES\$ prepared packets with required forms and instructions for both Veterans and Attendants to fill out as part of the transfer process. These were sent out within three (3) weeks of Notice to Proceed.
- ▶ ACES\$ Customer Service reached out to all Veterans in the program to confirm the packet was received and determine if assistance was needed.
- ▶ Support Planners and Veterans were also provided with a Vendor Packet as needed. These packets were also provided directly to the Vendors.
- ▶ During the transition period, ACES\$ spent much time validating data from the previous provider, such as missing EINs, over-budget expenditures, missing budget data, missing receipts, etc.

Role of The Supports Planner During Transition

- ▶ Conference calls with Supports Planners
- ▶ Challenges due to the transition process
 - ▶ Confirm receipt of paperwork
 - ▶ Timely completion and submission of new paperwork
 - ▶ Managing the payroll process

Impact of changing guidelines involving overtime

- ▶ Provider Education
- ▶ Temporary Solutions
- ▶ Long-term Procedures

Program Perspective: Roles and Interactions

Supports Planners Responsibilities

- ▶ Provide monthly phone monitoring calls to Veterans
- ▶ Quarterly in-person visits
- ▶ Informs the Maryland Department of Aging of hospitalizations or rehabilitation stays
- ▶ Notifies the Maryland Department of Aging of changes in level of care



Program Perspective: Roles and Interactions

Consumer Responsibilities

- ▶ Hiring, firing and delegating work to Attendant
- ▶ Scheduling and approving timesheet hours
- ▶ Contacting Supports Planners when additional assistance is needed
- ▶ Contacting the Financial Management Service vendor when Attendants no longer work for them

Program Perspective: Roles and Interactions



Attendants Responsibilities

- ▶ Provide personal care services to Veteran
- ▶ Fill in timesheets and submit for approval

FMS Roles and Interactions

- ▶ New Enrollments can be performed in multiple ways, based on the preference of the Participant
 - ▶ Phone, Online, Mail/Fax (with phone support as needed)
 - ▶ Face-to-face - we make every attempt to perform most new Veteran enrollments in-person
- ▶ When Participants or Support Planners call with questions they get a LIVE person in the local area office, not a call center. No call queue, long waits for a returned call, or unanswered emails
- ▶ Online system automatically rejects timesheets that go over-budget and flags reason for rejection.

FMS Roles and Interactions (continued)

- ▶ Payroll Department immediately follows up with Veterans when a paper timesheet (mail, fax or email) is submitted that causes an over-budget error. Issues are explained, and FMS staff work with the Veteran to submit a revised timesheet. Veterans and Attendants do not wait until a missed paycheck to find out why it was not paid.
- ▶ Supplemental Payroll
- ▶ Real-time access to online budget information and pending, approved and historic timesheets support Veterans to make educated decisions about their scheduling and item purchases.

Oversight and Monitoring Efforts



- ▶ Host monthly coaching calls for Supports Planners
- ▶ Host bi-weekly conference calls with the Financial Management Services vendor to resolve pending issues
- ▶ Review and approve invoices in comparison with the Veterans' approved budget
- ▶ Use the Financial Management Services vendor's online portal to keep track of Veterans spending activity
- ▶ The Maryland Department of Aging reviews overages or late invoices for processing
- ▶ Issues participant quality of life surveys

Quality of Life Survey



- ▶ Veterans complete this evaluation on the following areas:
 - ▶ Providers
 - ▶ Activities and Community Integration
 - ▶ Personal Relationships
 - ▶ Dignity/Respect, Autonomy, Privacy, and Safety

Oversight and Monitoring Efforts

- ▶ Flagging and rejecting timesheets automatically that cause a Veteran to go over authorized budget
- ▶ Flagging and rejecting reimbursement requests for goods and service items that were not approved. If an item is in question, ACES\$ obtains approval from MDOA to reimburse.
- ▶ ACES\$ obtains MDoA approval for overages or late invoices that exceed the 30 day submission requirement
- ▶ Ability to provide information to Veterans, Attendants, Support Planners and Administrators via our on line system and customer service regarding budgets, timesheets and reimbursements

Troubleshooting, Policy Changes and Successful Resolution

- ▶ Bi-weekly meetings between ACES\$ and the Maryland Department Of Aging
- ▶ Joint training between the Maryland Department Of Aging, the Veteran's Administration and ACES\$ for Supports Planners
- ▶ Navigate changing guidelines for the Veteran Directed-Home and Community Based Services as a Team
- ▶ Maintain ongoing communications

Questions?



Contact Information

▶ MDOA

▶ Chrystle D. Samuels

Veteran-Directed HCBS Program Manager

chrystle.samuels@maryland.gov

▶ ACES\$

▶ Kristy Westpfahl Michael

Director of FMS Research and Development

kmichael@mycil.org

www.mycil.org