FAQ

Individual Budgeting Tool

Cardinal Innovations
HEALTHCARE

1 What does Resource Allocation mean?
Resource allocation refers to the method by which an assessment tool is used to categorize members with similar needs and to predict the cost of the supports required to meet those needs, while promoting flexibility in the planning process. The state will refer to this as the Individual Budgeting Tool (IBT).

2 What is the Individual Budgeting Tool and who designed this system?
The Individual Budgeting Tool is part of the planning "toolkit" to help members make decisions about the services and supports they need, within available resources. The system was developed by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) as a component of the amended NC Innovations waiver that will be effective November 1, 2016.

3 Who sets the budget?
The budget is set by a vendor of the state, the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI), based on information from the SIS® assessment, where people live, how old they are and whether they are in school or have graduated with a diploma.

4 How will a change in the budget impact the services members are currently receiving?
The individual budget will be used as a guideline for planning. Ultimately, the team – driven by the member – will decide what services need to be requested.

5 Will member's services be cut once individual budgets are implemented?
Members will receive the services that they need, regardless of the individual budget.

6 When will the change occur?
The state will implement the system beginning with members on the waiver who have October birth months and plans that will be effective November 1, 2016. Members will receive notification of their budgets approximately three to four months before their birth months.

7 How will the member get the budget information?
The individual budget information will be mailed to each member or legally responsible person (LRP).

8 How will providers access the budget information being mailed to members/LRPs?
Providers will receive the budget information as part of the planning process. If there are questions or concerns prior to the plan developments, providers can discuss the budget with the member/LRP.

9 What if the member/ LRP has questions about the level, category or budget information?
Questions about the individual budget should be referred to the member's Care Coordinator.

10 Once a team has the budget information, how do they plan using the new system?
The team will continue to use person-centered practices to determine what services would best support the member. The assigned budget amount is to be used a guide in that discussion.

11 What happens if a member's needs are greater than his/her assigned level?
There are several different ways within the Individual Budgeting system that ensures needs can be met on a short term/long term basis that may exceed the budget aligned with the member's assigned level. Within the individual budgeting tool, members may qualify for a temporary increase, permanent increase or intensive review. Regardless of your level of budget, you will be able to receive the services you need.

12 What are the budget numbers based on?
The budgets are based on "service packages" that represent average amounts of supports that people with similar needs might receive. These "service packages" are guidelines and are not intended to be prescriptive.

13 Where can members find the budget amounts for each level/category?
Care Coordinators can give members a copy of the budget amounts that are assigned to each level. The budget amounts will be posted on the Cardinal Innovations website.

14 What is the SIS®?
The SIS® is the Supports Intensity Scale®. The SIS® identifies supports someone needs to do certain things in a manner similar to a non-disabled peer. It is an assessment tool used as part of the planning process.

15 How does the SIS® assessment relate to the Individual Budgeting Tool?
The SIS® is the standardized assessment that informs the level of support needed by the member. Members with similar support needs are grouped together based on their needs, where they live and their age.

16 How is the Individual Budget Developed?
Prior to the development of the Individual Support Plan (ISP), there are a few steps.

1. First, the SIS® is completed. This assessment helps to indicate where a member needs support.
2. Next, a level is assigned to the member based upon their SIS®, age and living situation. A category is a description of a group of people who have similar clinical characteristics
3. Then, based upon the assigned category, an individual budget is assigned. A budget is a guideline for services based on individuals with similar needs, which allows a member to customize their services.

17 How can the Planning Calculator help me?
The Planning Calculator helps members explore every option to mix and match services to best meet their needs. Members have the flexibility to choose the services that will meet their life goals. The Planning Calculator is used to assist members and their planning teams to look at every possible option that might meet their needs.

18 How involved are the Care Coordinators in this process?
The Cardinal Innovations Care Coordinators are very involved with members and will continue to be. If members and their planning teams agree that there is a need for additional supports beyond the assigned category and/or individual budget amount, they may request Intensive Review through their Care Coordinators.

19 What is the Support Needs Matrix?
The Support Needs Matrix is the method Cardinal Innovations has used to develop the individual budgets for members in the Piedmont region since 2011. The Support Needs Matrix will be replaced by the Individual Budgeting Tool.

20 Will members' services end or be cut?
Members will still be able to receive the services that they need, regardless of their individual budgets. Cardinal Innovations is committed to ensuring that members have flexibility and choice in the services available to them.

21 Are there appeals rights if the member does not agree with the budget?
The individual budget amount is a guideline and can be grieved if members/LRPs have concerns. If any services requested through the ISP are denied or reduced, appeal rights will be offered.

22 What happens if the budgets that are assigned to members living in residential programs will not cover the costs of operating the facility?
Residential Supports and Supported Living are Non-Base Budget services and will not be impacted by the Individual Budget.