

# Agency with Choice (AWC) Wage Ranges and Benefit Allowance for Specific Participant Directed Services (PDS) Effective October 1, 2024

## ODP Announcement 24-085

### AUDIENCE:

- Agency with Choice (AWC) Financial Management Services (FMS) organizations,
- Participants<sup>1</sup> utilizing the AWC FMS model,
- Managing Employers (MEs),
- Support Service Professionals (SSPs),
- Administrative Entities (AEs),
- Supports Coordination Organizations (SCOs),
- Supports Brokers (SBs)

### PURPOSE:

This Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) communication is intended to provide the hourly wage and benefits ranges for specific participant directed services (PDS) provided to participants utilizing the AWC FMS model effective October 1, 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this ODP Communication, the use of the word participant implies that the person is enrolled in the Consolidated, Person Family/Directed Support (P/FDS), or Community Living Waiver.

## DISCUSSION:

The hourly wage and benefit ranges in this communication are effective October 1, 2024. The high end of the hourly wage and benefits ranges either increased or remained the same. These wage and benefit ranges will be used to pay SSPs and to support claims processing in the Provider Reimbursement and Operations Management Information System (PROMISe™) in electronic format by the AWC FMS organization. ***This communication will only be updated when changes occur to the information contained within.***

### **Hourly Wage Ranges and Benefit Allowance Attachments and Tables**

There are ODP established hourly wage ranges with a benefit allowance for six participant directed services for participants using the AWC FMS model.

#### ***Attachment #1 AWC Wage Ranges and Benefit Allowance Effective October 1, 2024***

indicates the services for which ODP has established hourly wage ranges and a benefit allowance (with the assigned procedure code for each service).

#### ***Attachment #2 AWC Wage Ranges and Benefit Allowance Effective October 1, 2024 for***

***Enhanced Communication Services*** was developed for participants who have been assessed as needing a direct service by staff proficient in Sign Language and indicates the services which have an enhanced version of the service available.

The wage ranges and benefit allowance contained in Attachment #2 may **only** be used when a participant is:

- Enrolled in the Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS), Consolidated, or Community Living Waivers;
- d/Deaf; and

- Determined to need a service by staff who are proficient in Sign Language.

### **Guidance about Enhanced Communication**

The Enhanced Communication Services modifier (U1) was added to eligible services listed in Attachment #2. It allows for enhanced communication services to be included in the Individual Support Plan (ISP) and should only be added to the ISP if the participant is eligible, in need of enhanced communication supports, and the SSP has been determined qualified to provide the service by ODP. Managing employers should contact the AWC FMS or SC to determine if the participant is eligible to receive enhanced communication services.

### **Guidance about Hourly Wage Ranges and Benefit Allowance**

The “total amount” on the service details page of the ISP will need to reflect the total units and total dollar amount for each AWC service on the plan. The following components comprise the ODP established fee that is paid to the AWC FMS organization:

- Wage to the SSP.
- Benefit allowance (when negotiated).
- Employer-related taxes/insurances.
- Workers’ Compensation insurance.
- AWC Provider Liability Insurance.
- Employer-paid health care cost considerations.

**Both the Supports Coordinator (SC) and the AWC FMS organization will ensure copies of this communication and the correct attachments are provided to the managing**

**employer.** The AWC FMS organization is required to explain in detail the information in this communication including how to use the wage range/benefit allowance and an explanation of the ODP established fee for each service and how that fee is included and calculated in the ISP.

**It is important that the AWC FMS organization and the managing employers understand how the benefit allowance is applied.** It is also important that the managing employers understand how to use the wage and benefit allowance when recommending wages with the SSPs. For example, using Attachment #1, the managing employers can recommend a wage within the established ranges and can also decide whether to offer the established benefit allowance. The established benefit allowance is included in the “Hourly Wage and Benefits Range” column.

#### **How to use the Wage Ranges and Optional Benefit Allowance**

Managing employers are to use the wage ranges and benefit allowance when recommending the wages and optional benefit allowance with SSPs who are qualified and eligible to be paid by the AWC FMS organization. This wage range and benefit allowance information must be reviewed as soon as possible due to the effective date of October 1, 2024.

**The enhanced services that offer staff-to-individual ratios of 2:1 have two rows of wage ranges.** The row that has a greater high-end wage may only be used to pay a staff member who is certified, has a bachelor's degree, or is a nurse in accordance with the qualification requirements in the waivers. The row that has the lower high-end wage is used to pay a staff member who has a high school diploma and is not certified, does not have a bachelor's degree, or is not a nurse.

**The wage ranges and benefit allowance apply to new hires and existing SSPs.** The AWC FMS organization is responsible for ensuring all wages/benefits for SSPs are within the ranges included in this communication. If an AWC FMS organization chooses to pay an

SSP an hourly wage that exceeds the wage and benefit ranges, the AWC FMS organization is responsible to pay the excess amounts of wages and benefits. The AWC FMS organization **may not** impose more stringent agency established wages **within** the wage ranges. For example, the wage range for In-Home and Community Support (W7060) without the benefit allowance is \$7.25 to \$22.58 per hour. An AWC FMS organization may not impose a restriction on the top payment to SSPs at \$12.00 per hour. The AWC FMS organization is required to ensure that any changes made to wages/benefits for SSPs are in accordance with Labor and Industry Standards.

**The benefit allowance, if offered, must be adjusted for the next pay date following October 1, 2024.** The AWC FMS organization and managing employer may not negotiate a benefit allowance that is different than the established benefit allowance. The AWC FMS organization or managing employer needs to explain to the SSP that the benefit allowance is an increase to the wage. The benefit allowance includes consideration for paid time-off and benefits including disability insurance, life insurance, or retirement savings.

After recommending the wages, and the benefit allowance when offered, for each SSP, the managing employer and the AWC FMS organization shall keep a record of the final wage and benefit allowance paid for each employed SSP.

The AWC FMS organization shall ensure that the SC has the necessary information to complete the ISP which includes the total units and total dollar amount for the corresponding service, procedure code and modifier, as appropriate, (e.g. U4, when a benefit allowance is not included) to the ISP.

When the benefit allowance is not offered by the managing employer and the AWC FMS is billing with two modifiers, the U4 is listed first and the U1 modifier is listed second.

Neither wage and benefit allowance nor ODP established fees were developed for the following outcome-based participant directed vendor services:

- Transportation (public)
- Respite camp
- Home accessibility adaptations
- Vehicle accessibility adaptations
- Assistive technology
- Specialized supplies
- Education Support Services
- Family/Caregiver Training and Support – registration and fees
- Participant-Directed Goods and Services

An AWC FMS organization is required to manage and process all the authorized vendor services/claims for the vendor services noted above for participants who are self-directing waiver-funded services with the AWC FMS organization. This function is included as part of the AWC FMS organization's monthly administrative fee. The AWC FMS organization must process all PDS vendor service claims at the cost of the good or service charged to the general public.

**NOTE:** Transportation mileage is reimbursed at the established rate for Department of Human Services employees for business travel.

The AWC FMS fees established by ODP are identified in a public notice published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin and are available at

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Providers/Pages/ODP-Rates.aspx>.

**LOCATION OF THIS COMMUNICATION:**

This communication may be accessed on MyODP at <https://www.myodp.org>.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment #1: *AWC Wage Ranges and Benefit Allowance Effective October 1, 2024*
- Attachment #2: *AWC Wage Ranges and Benefit Allowance for Enhanced Communication Services, Effective October 1, 2024*

**OBSOLETE:**

This communication obsoletes *ODP Announcement 22-024: Agency with Choice (AWC) Wage Ranges and Benefit Allowance for Specific Participant Directed Services Effective March 1, 2022*

**QUESTIONS:**

Questions about this announcement should be directed to the appropriate ODP Regional Program Office PDS Lead:

- Briana Smith, Central Regional PDS Lead: [sbriana@pa.gov](mailto:sbriana@pa.gov)
- Shawn Lynn, Northeast Regional PDS Lead: [shlynn@pa.gov](mailto:shlynn@pa.gov)
- Nathifa Castro, Southeast Regional PDS Lead: [ncastro@pa.gov](mailto:ncastro@pa.gov)
- Nancy Hampson, Western Regional PDS Lead: [nhampson@pa.gov](mailto:nhampson@pa.gov)

**ATTACHMENT #1 AWC Wage Ranges and Benefit Allowance Effective October 1, 2024**

Agency with Choice								
STATEWIDE								
Service	Procedure Code	Modifier	Staffing Level	Unit	Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage Range		Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage and Benefits Range	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Supports Broker	W7096	U4 <sup>2</sup>	1:1	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$25.09	\$9.92	\$27.50
Companion Services	W1726	U4	1:1	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$17.62	\$9.92	\$20.20
Supported Employment <sup>3</sup> - Career Assessment	W7235	U4	1:1	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$25.84	\$9.92	\$28.37
Supported Employment <sup>3</sup> - Job	H2023	U4	1:1	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$25.84	\$9.92	\$28.37

<sup>2</sup> For services without the Benefit Allowance, the Procedure Code would contain the modifier “U4”.

<sup>3</sup> Support Service Professionals must have one of the following within nine months of hire: 1. Hold a Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) credential from the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) **OR** 2. Have been awarded a Basic Employment Services Certificate of Achievement or a Professional Certificate in Employment Services from an Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) organizational member that has ACRE-approved training. Newly hired Support Service Professionals who do not have the required certification when hired must work under the supervision of someone who is certified. This can occur no longer than nine months from the date of hire to allow the new Support Service Professional time to obtain the certification.



Agency with Choice								
STATEWIDE								
Service	Procedure Code	Modifier	Staffing Level	Unit	Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage Range		Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage and Benefits Range	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Finding and Development								
Supported Employment <sup>3</sup> - Job Coaching and Support	W9794	U4	1:1	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$25.84	\$9.92	\$28.37
In-Home and Community Supports	W7060	U4	1:1	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$22.58	\$9.92	\$25.10
	W7068	U4	2:1	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$22.58	\$9.92	\$25.10
In-Home and Community Supports - Enhanced	W7061	TD <sup>4</sup> , TE and U4	1:1 (enhanced)	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$29.60	\$9.92	\$32.12
	W7069	TD, TE and U4	2:1 (enhanced) <sup>5</sup>	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$29.60	\$9.92	\$32.12

<sup>4</sup> Codes that have an enhanced staffing level can be utilized when the individual has behavioral or medical support needs that require a staff member who is certified, has a bachelor's degree, or is a nurse. While these ranges apply to any staff who meet this criteria the TD modifier should only be used when the staff member is a RN and the TE modifier should only be used when the staff member is an LPN.

<sup>5</sup> These wage ranges apply to SSPs that are a nurse, are certified, or have a bachelor's degree in accordance with the qualification criteria in the waiver. Enhanced services by a nurse are only available to participants age 21 and older.

Agency with Choice								
STATEWIDE								
Service	Procedure Code	Modifier	Staffing Level	Unit	Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage Range		Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage and Benefits Range	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
			2:1 (enhanced) <sup>6</sup>	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$22.58	\$9.92	\$25.10
In-Home Respite and Unlicensed Out-of-Home Respite Services	W9862	U4	1:1	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$14.66	\$9.92	\$17.22
	W9864	U4	2:1	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$14.66	\$9.92	\$17.22
	W9798	U4	1:1	24 Hours	\$7.25	\$14.66	\$9.92	\$17.22
	W9800	U4	2:1	24 Hours	\$7.25	\$14.66	\$9.92	\$17.22
In-Home Respite and Unlicensed Out-of-Home Respite Services - Enhanced	W9863	U4	1:1 (enhanced)	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$31.02	\$9.92	\$33.54
	W8095	U4	2:1 (enhanced) <sup>5</sup>	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$31.02	\$9.92	\$33.54
			2:1 (enhanced) <sup>6</sup>	15 Minutes	\$7.25	\$14.66	\$9.92	\$17.22
	W9799	U4	1:1 (enhanced)	24 Hours	\$7.25	\$31.02	\$9.92	\$33.54
	W9801	U4	2:1 (enhanced) <sup>5</sup>	24 Hours	\$7.25	\$31.02	\$9.92	\$33.54

<sup>6</sup> These wage ranges apply to SSPs that have a high school diploma and are not a nurse, are not certified or do not have a bachelor's degree in accordance with the qualification criteria in the waiver.

**Agency with Choice**

**STATEWIDE**

Service	Procedure Code	Modifier	Staffing Level	Unit	Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage Range		Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage and Benefits Range	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
			<b>2:1 (enhanced)<sup>6</sup></b>	24 Hours	\$7.25	\$14.66	\$9.92	\$17.22
<b>Homemaker</b>	<b>W7283</b>	<b>U4</b>	<b>1:1</b>	Hourly	\$7.25	\$11.37	\$9.92	\$13.91
<b>Chore</b>	<b>W7282</b>	<b>U4</b>	<b>1:1</b>	Hourly	\$7.25	\$11.37	\$9.92	\$13.91

**ATTACHMENT #2 AWC Wage Ranges and Benefit Allowance for Enhanced Communication Services  
Effective October 1, 2024**

Enhanced Communication Services (with U1 modifier) Agency with Choice								
STATEWIDE								
Service	Procedure Code	Modifier	Staffing Level	Unit	Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage Range (Enhanced Communication)		Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage and Benefits Range (Enhanced Communication)	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
<b>Supports Broker</b>	<b>W7096</b>	<b>U4<sup>7</sup> and U1</b>	<b>1:1</b>	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$28.23	\$12.46	\$30.64
<b>Companion Services</b>	<b>W1726</b>	<b>U4 and U1</b>	<b>1:1</b>	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$22.45	\$12.46	\$25.01
<b>Supported Employment<sup>8</sup> - Career Assessment</b>	<b>W7235</b>	<b>U4 and U1</b>	<b>1:1</b>	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$33.02	\$12.46	\$35.57

<sup>7</sup> For enhanced communication services without the Benefit Allowance, the Procedure Code would contain the modifier “U4”.

<sup>8</sup> Support Service Professionals must have one of the following within nine months of hire: 1. Hold a Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) credential from the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) OR 2. Have been awarded a Basic Employment Services Certificate of Achievement or a Professional Certificate in Employment Services from an Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) organizational member that has ACRE-approved training. Newly hired Support Service Professionals who do not have the required certification when hired must work under the supervision of someone who is certified. This can occur no longer than nine months from the date of hire to allow the new Support Service Professional time to obtain the certification.

Enhanced Communication Services (with U1 modifier)								
Agency with Choice								
STATEWIDE								
Service	Procedure Code	Modifier	Staffing Level	Unit	Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage Range (Enhanced Communication)		Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage and Benefits Range (Enhanced Communication)	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Supported Employment - Job Finding and Development	H2023	U4 and U1	1:1	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$33.02	\$12.46	\$35.57
Supported Employment - Job Coaching and Support	W9794	U4 and U1	1:1	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$33.02	\$12.46	\$35.57
In-Home and Community Supports	W7060	U4 and U1	1:1	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$28.80	\$12.46	\$31.32
	W7068	U4 and U1	2:1	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$28.80	\$12.46	\$31.32
In-Home and Community Supports - Enhanced	W7061	TD <sup>9</sup> , TE, U4 and U1	1:1 (enhanced)	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$37.85	\$12.46	\$40.41
	W7069		2:1 (enhanced) <sup>10</sup>	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$37.85	\$12.46	\$40.41

<sup>9</sup> Codes that have an enhanced staffing level can be utilized when the individual has behavioral or medical support needs that require a staff member who is certified, has a bachelor's degree or is a nurse. While these ranges apply to any staff who meet these criteria, the TD modifier should only be used when the staff member is a RN and the TE modifier should only be used when the staff member is an LPN.

<sup>10</sup> These wage ranges apply to SSPs that are a nurse, are certified or have a bachelor's degree in accordance with the qualification criteria in the waiver.

**Enhanced Communication Services (with U1 modifier)  
Agency with Choice**

**STATEWIDE**

Service	Procedure Code	Modifier	Staffing Level	Unit	Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage Range (Enhanced Communication)		Effective 10-1-2024 Hourly Wage and Benefits Range (Enhanced Communication)	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
		<b>TD, TE, U4 and U1</b>	<b>2:1 (enhanced)<sup>11</sup></b>	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$28.80	\$12.46	\$31.32
<b>In-Home Respite and Unlicensed Out-of-Home Respite Services</b>	<b>W9862</b>	<b>U4 and U1</b>	<b>1:1</b>	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$18.60	\$12.46	\$21.16
	<b>W9864</b>	<b>U4 and U1</b>	<b>2:1</b>	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$18.60	\$12.46	\$21.16
	<b>W9798</b>	<b>U4 and U1</b>	<b>1:1</b>	24 Hours	\$9.79	\$18.60	\$12.46	\$21.16
	<b>W9800</b>	<b>U4 and U1</b>	<b>2:1</b>	24 Hours	\$9.79	\$18.60	\$12.46	\$21.16
<b>In-Home Respite and Unlicensed Out-of-Home Respite Services - Enhanced</b>	<b>W9863</b>	<b>U4 and U1</b>	<b>1:1 (enhanced)</b>	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$39.67	\$12.46	\$42.23
	<b>W8095</b>	<b>U4 and U1</b>	<b>2:1 (enhanced)<sup>10</sup></b>	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$39.67	\$12.46	\$42.23
			<b>2:1 (enhanced)<sup>11</sup></b>	15 Minutes	\$9.79	\$18.60	\$12.46	\$21.16
	<b>W9799</b>	<b>U4 and U1</b>	<b>1:1 (enhanced)</b>	24 Hours	\$9.79	\$39.67	\$12.46	\$42.23
	<b>W9801</b>	<b>U4 and U1</b>	<b>2:1 (enhanced)<sup>10</sup></b>	24 Hours	\$9.79	\$39.67	\$12.46	\$42.23
<b>2:1 (enhanced)<sup>11</sup></b>			24 Hours	\$9.79	\$18.60	\$12.46	\$21.16	

<sup>11</sup> These wage ranges apply to SSPs that have a high school diploma and are not a nurse, certified or have a bachelor’s degree in accordance with the qualification criteria in the waiver.