

Slide 1



The slide features a white background with a blue and red vertical bar on the left side. At the top center is the logo for 'in Control Wisconsin', where 'in' is in black, 'Control' is in red with a gear icon, and 'Wisconsin' is in black below it. The main title 'Self-Directed Employment Planning' is centered in a large, bold, black font. Below the title, the subtitle 'Module 9: Getting the Help You Need – Working with an Employment Support Agency' is centered in a smaller black font. At the bottom left, there is a small logo for 'Wisconsin BPDD' (Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities) with the text 'WISCONSIN BOARD FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES' underneath. A small disclaimer at the bottom center reads: 'This project was supported by federal funds given to the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities under PL 106-402 from a grant by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. Points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services'. The bottom right corner of the slide has a green rectangular background.

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Wisconsin

## Self-Directed Employment Planning

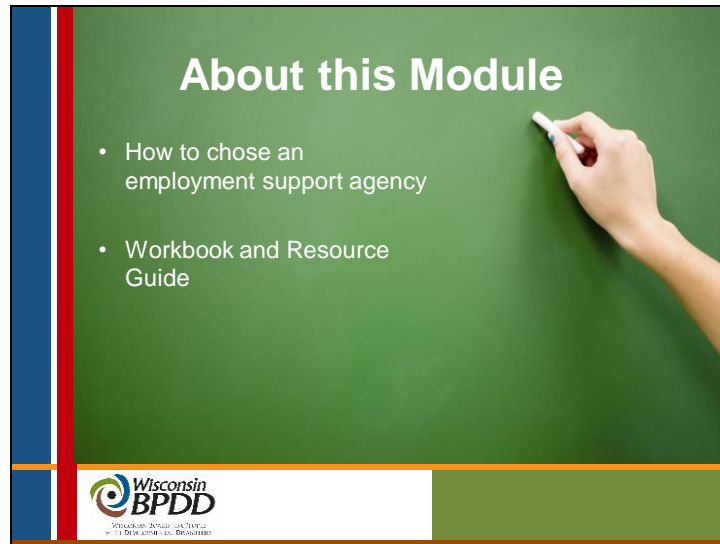
Module 9: Getting the Help You Need – Working with an Employment Support Agency

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**Wisconsin BPDD**  
WISCONSIN BOARD FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Welcome to Module 9 of the Self-Directed Employment Planning Training. This module is called “Getting the Help You Need – Working with an Employment Support Agency.”

My name is Claire. I am a self-advocate from Madison, Wisconsin. I will be your narrator for this module.



In this Module, you will learn about working with employment service providers. With the resources available to you, you can hire an agency (sometimes called a Supported Employment agency) to help you with the different parts of your employment process. Such agencies, with expertise in assessment, job development, job training, and ongoing support services, are available throughout Wisconsin.

There is a section in the workbook that goes with module nine. After you go through this module, you can use the workbook to answer the questions and continue to create your plan for employment. There is also a section in the Resource Guide that goes with this module. If you have not downloaded the workbook or resource guide yet, click on the Resources tab on the right-hand corner of the screen to download the workbook before you go through this module.

## Vocational Support Agencies

- Can help with all or some of the process
- You decide what's right for you



The image shows two individuals, a man and a woman, standing side-by-side and smiling. They are both holding white certificates or diplomas. The man is on the left, wearing a dark jacket over a red shirt. The woman is on the right, wearing a dark top and a red jacket. They appear to be in an indoor setting, possibly an office or a community center.




The logo for Wisconsin BPDD (Behavioral Pathways Developmental Disabilities) is located in the bottom left corner of the slide. It features a stylized green and blue circular graphic to the left of the text "Wisconsin BPDD". Below the main text, there is smaller text that reads "PROVIDING SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES".


In Module 7, you learned about different parts of the process of getting a job. Agencies can help with assessment, planning, goal setting, job seeking, job coaching, and ongoing support. You can hire an agency to help you with all of these parts of the process or just the parts you need. As we mentioned in Module 7, you and your team can decide what services and supports are right for you.

## Finding an Agency

Call your local Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)



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You might be wondering how you will find an employment support agency. There are several ways that you can find out about the supported employment service providers available near you. In Module 8, you learned that your local Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) can help you get connected to services in your community. In addition to helping you find out if you are eligible for Long Term Care, they have information to give you about the agencies that provide different types of employment supports. They might have a list of names and phone numbers for you to call, or they might have brochures from agencies that you can review. Someone from the ADRC should be able to meet with you to tell you what they know about the employment agencies in your area.

## Finding an Agency

Ask a:

- DVR counselor
- Transition Coordinator
- Family Care
- IRIS
- Friend



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People you can ask about the agencies available near you is through a counselor at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, a transition coordinator at high school, a Family Care case manager or IRIS Consultant. These people should have will have either a list of agencies you can contact, or they can help you to find agencies in your area.


Another way to find out about employment service agencies in your area is to talk with your friends who have jobs. Find out from them who they worked with to get a job and what their experience was like.

## Choosing an Agency

- Interview the agency first
- Show them your employment inventory the workbook



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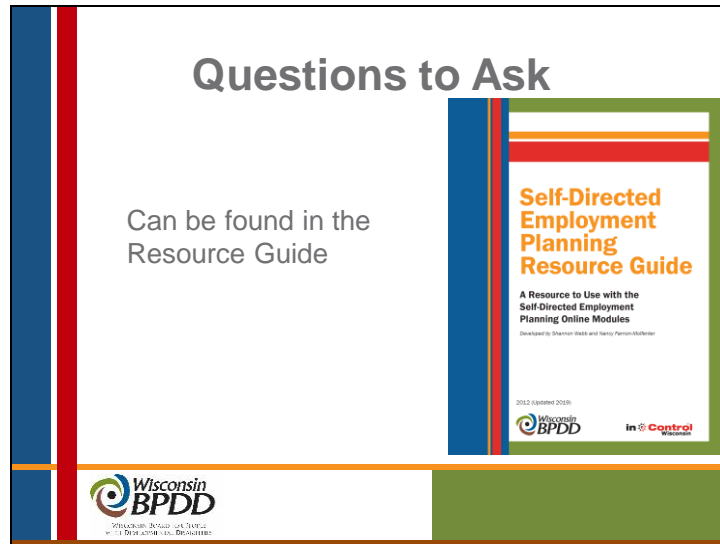


PROVIDING SUPPORT TO THOSE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

You may live in an area where there are several agencies that provide employment supports or you may live in an area where there only one or two are available. Whether you have multiple options or not, it is still good for you to have an idea of what you are looking for before you agree to work with an agency.

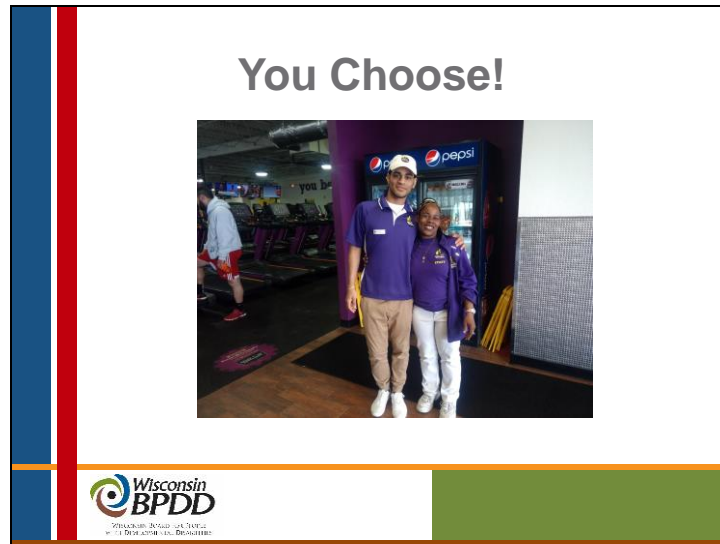
When you contact them, ask to have an interview about their agency and the services they offer, the qualifications they have and the types of help they have given other people to reach their goals. This will help you to find out if the agency can offer the types of supports you want need in the way that meets your expectations.

If you complete the questions for each module in your workbook, you can transfer your answers into the employment inventory section at the end of the workbook and use that during your search for an employment support agency. If you have a few agencies to choose from, having a good idea of what you want will help you make your decision. If you only have one employment support option available, then your employment support inventory will help that agency understand some things about you from the beginning of your working relationship.



One of the best ways to plan for an interview with a prospective employment support agency is to develop a list of interview questions that you want to ask. If your goal is to get a job working for someone else the questions you ask an employment service provider will be different than the questions you ask an agency that might be helping you to be self-employed. In the resource guide there are example questions you can ask an agency about both regular employment supports and self-employment supports.

You can make copies of these question pages and bring it along to interviews with employment service providers if you want to. You do not have to use the sample questions we have provided. You might have other questions in mind that are more important to you. If that is the case, then you should think about what those questions are and write them down when you are preparing to interview employment support agencies.



Remember, you should hire an employment support agency to help you in the ways that YOU choose and with the parts of the process that YOU need support with. Having a clear idea of your goal and support needs BEFORE you start working with an agency will help you work out an agreement that works for you.

Once you decide on an agency to help you with your search for employment or start a business, it is wise work with that agency to create a service agreement. This agreement should summarize your expectations for the agency, as well as the responsibilities that you will have during the process of working with them. It is important to remember that the relationship you will have with the employment support agency is a business relationship. The agency will be getting paid to provide you with the supports that you want and need to seek and obtain employment or start your business.



## Service Agreements

- Clearly define tasks and timelines
- Responsibilities
- Assessing progress
- How to handle concerns



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Given that this is a business relationship, a written agreement can help everyone (including you) to stay on track and complete steps in a timely manner. Whether you are looking for a job where you will work for someone else or you plan to start your own business, it can take some time to reach your goal. It can take even longer, however, if you and your support team members are not working well together. Each person must do their part to keep the process moving along.

An agreement can be as simple as one page of the information that you have discussed with the agency prior to hiring them to work with you. Some important parts of the agreement should include:

When they will begin working with you,

A list of the tasks they will help you to complete,

Timelines for each task,

A list of the person or people responsible for completing each task (you too),

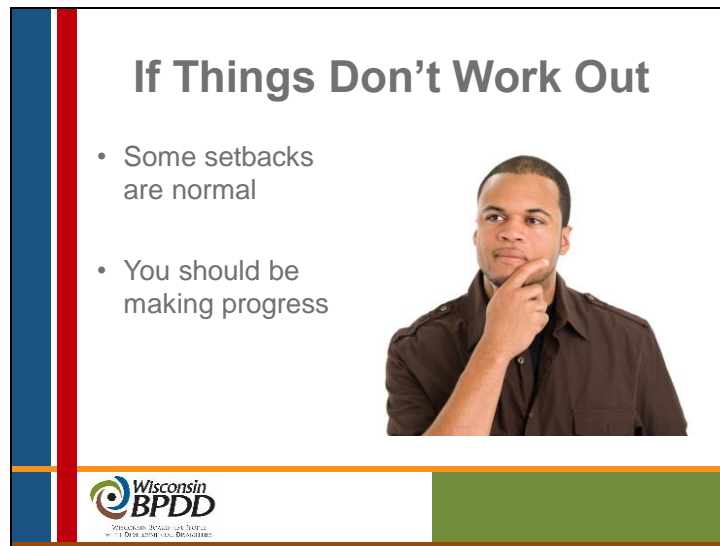
A tentative schedule of meetings to check in and discuss progress,

A description of what will happen if timelines are not met within reason, and

An end date to the contract – a date when a new agreement will be created or when the relationship will stop.


A sample Service Agreement is in the Resource Guide. As with the interview questions, you may want your agreement to be different. That is OK. You do not have to have one, but it is a good idea to have clear expectations of roles and responsibilities.






**If Things Don't Work Out**

- Some setbacks are normal
- You should be making progress





Sometimes plans go smoothly and sometimes there are things that happen along the way to slow the process down. You can probably think of times in your life when things did not go exactly as you expected them to go. This may happen with your employment planning. Sometimes things happen that are not expected or things that you and your employment support agency have no control over. For example, a prospective employer might have an informational interview set up with you and then need to postpone the meeting with you. Or, you might have a work experience lined up and then come down with the flu. The staff at the employment agency might have unexpected things come up too.


It is reasonable for you to expect that the timelines for tasks related to your employment support planning do not get too far off track due to too many unexpected issues with your employment agency. Generally, your employment support provider should follow through on the things that they say they are going to do for you. If they do not, then you may need to go through a process to find out why things are not getting done and why you are not making progress in your employment search.

If a period of time goes by when you are not pleased with the progress you are making and you feel that it is because your employment agency is not following through on the tasks they are responsible for, then you may need to ask for a different job developer or find a new employment support agency to work with.




## Check out Module 10

- Hiring Individual Employment Supports (not an agency)




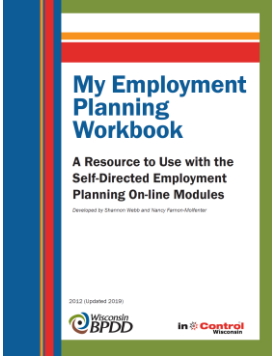
The image shows a woman with blonde hair, wearing a light blue top, holding a white sign that says "HELP WANTED!". She has a surprised or excited expression on her face, with her mouth open and eyes wide. The sign is held in front of her chest. The background is plain white.

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PROVIDING SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Another way that people get the help they need is by hiring individual employment supports, not an agency. This is done through Individual Budgets and Self-Directed Support (or SDS for short). If you are interested in learning more about hiring individual employment supports, check out the next module, module 10. If this doesn't sound interesting to you, you can skip to the conclusion module.

## Workbook and Resource Guide

- ✓ Answer questions in workbook
- ✓ Explore resources



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Congratulations, you have completed the ninth module of the Self-Directed Employment Planning series. Now it is time to answer the questions for this section in your workbook and explore some of the resources for this section listed in the Resource Guide.