

Disability Support Program (DSP)

Inclusion Nova Scotia Family Webinar

February 6th, 2025

Agenda



What is our agenda for today?

- Introductions
- Remedy Background
- Individualized Funding
- School Leavers
- Q/A

Introductions

Maria Medioli

Executive Director, Disability Support Program, Department of Opportunities and Social Development

Vicki Black

Director, Disability Support Program, Department of Opportunities and Social Development

Thivjan Tharmaratnam

Executive Director, Inclusion Nova Scotia

Jana Henderson

Manager of Family Leadership, Inclusion Nova Scotia

Background on Remedy

Human Rights Remedy for the Findings of Systemic Discrimination Against Nova Scotians with Disabilities

- Human Rights complaints were filed by 3 Disability Support Program (DSP) participants who resided at Emerald Hall (Nova Scotia Hospital). The complaints alleged that the province discriminated against these individuals and all persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia by not providing supportive housing in the community.
- In October 2021, the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal ruled in favour of the plaintiffs.

The Disability Rights Coalition (DRC) summarizes the ruling around four grounds:

1

Unnecessary Institutionalization

There has been unnecessary institutionalization in purpose-built institutions for persons with disabilities as well as in other institutional settings such as psychiatric hospitals

3

Denial of Community of Choice

Persons with disabilities have often been ‘placed’ in settings distant from their families/friends, and not within their community of choice

2

Right to Assistance

The right to assistance when needed has been denied to eligible persons with disabilities

4

Delays in Assistance

Persons with disabilities have experienced frequent, indefinite, extended delays in the provision of assistance (waitlists) despite statutory entitlement

Background – Remedy Key Directions

#1

Individualized Planning and Support Coordination: Individualized planning and support coordination for more person-directed planning focussing on community-based services

#2

Closing Institutions: A defined timeline and increased supports to facilitate the closure of institutions

#3

Community-Based Supports and Services: A new, broader system of community-based supports and services that will facilitate a home and life in the local community

#4

Regional Hubs and Multidisciplinary Support: Province wide multidisciplinary support program with regional hubs including clinical and mental health supports

#5

Individualized Funding: Individualized funding for all DSP participants

#6

Strengthening Disability Capacity: Strengthening the whole Disability System's capacity to enable transformation to a human rights approach

Individualized Funding | Our Journey

As part of Key Direction #5 from the Remedy recommendations, the Disability Support Program (DSP) is shifting the way we support participants, from a model of programs to a model of Individualized Funding (IF). This approach allows participants to choose which services and supports best meet their needs.



NSCA Finding of Discrimination

The NS Court of Appeal found that the Government had systemically discriminated against persons with disabilities.

2021



Release of the *Remedy* Report

The *Remedy* outlines a process to transform the Disability Support Program.

2023



Work on IF begins

DSP begins designing a new approach that gives persons with disabilities more choice to manage their supports.

2023



Initial IF Roll-out

Participants transitioning from institutions to community will gradually start to access IF.

2025

Individualized Funding | Overview

- DSP is transitioning to an Individualized Funding (IF) model, where **funding is determined by an assessment of a participant's unique support needs**. Today, some participants receive a form of IF through the Independent Living Support Program and FLEX Program.
- IF emphasizes **planning in which the individual actively participates in decisions about their support services**. It provides funding to participants to purchase the supports that work best for them.

Initial Contact & Planning



Assessment



Allocation



Purchase Supports and/or Work with Service Providers



Individualized Funding | How is this different?

This new funding model **promotes self-determination** for individuals with disabilities by providing **greater personalization and flexibility** to access the services and supports they need to live their good life in community.

Residential or Program-Based Funding Model

- Funding allocated to service providers (per bed at residential facilities) and services determined by provider. This includes day programming providers.
- The services and supports offered to individuals are dependent on the resources and capacity of the organization.
- Funding agreements are between the Department and the Service Provider.

Individualized Funding Model

- Funding is allocated to the individuals based on their unique support needs.
- Individuals identify the supports and services they need and can access them from multiple providers.
- Person-centered approach where new care coordination positions (Local Area Coordinators (LAC), Intensive Planning and Support Coordinators (IPSC), and Eligibility, Funding and Assessment Coordinators (EFAC)) support participants to allocate funds in accordance with their support plan.

**Many forms of individualized funding already exist for participants (FLEX, ILS) therefore this new funding model may feel like a smaller change.*

Individualized Funding | What does this mean?

DSP is moving away from a **fixed menu of programs** to a flexible approach to supporting **participants to live a good life in community**. Participants will receive **Individualized Funding** and decide how best to use it, and whether they will manage it themselves or ask others (i.e., family, support network, provider) to help them.

In future, participants will make choices like:



Who do I choose to live with?

- On my own
- With friends/ family
- In a home with other DSP participants
- With a community member who is paid to provide support (Home Sharing)



Where do I choose to live?

- In a home I own
- In a home I rent
 - In someone else's home
- In a home owned by a Service Provider organization



How do I choose to manage my Individualized Funding?

- Ask a Service Provider to manage my IF
- Combination of both
- Self-manage



What supports do I need and how I choose to receive them?

- Supports will visit (these can be paid supports, a friend, or a neighbour)
- People will live with me (these can be paid supports, a friend, or a neighbour)
- Supports will be provided outside of my home (day programming, employment, community inclusion)

Individualized Funding | Who supports planning?

Key Direction #1 of the Remedy emphasizes the need for more person-directed planning and individualized, tailored support. The following new roles were identified to help support this new system.



LAC

The **Local Area Coordinator** (LAC) is responsible for:

- Building and Strengthening Community Inclusivity
- Individual Support and Planning
- Partnership and Capacity Building in Local Communities



IPSC

The **Intense Planning and Support Coordinator** (IPSC) is responsible for:

- Transition Planning and Coordination
- Intensive Individualized Support Planning
- Capacity Building Across Multidisciplinary Domains



EFAC

The **Eligibility Funding, and Assessment Coordinator** (EFAC) is responsible for:

- Eligibility Determination
- Comprehensive Assessments
- Funding Allocation & Support

Individualized Funding | What is included in IF?

Individuals accessing IF will receive funding for:

1) **Supports**, 2) **Basics**, and be eligible to receive 3) DSP **Special Needs**



Supports funding can be used to purchase services, supports and other items in accordance with policy. This includes direct support hours, day programming, and costs associated with community inclusion.

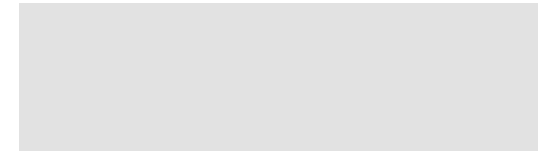
- The Supports portion of an individual's funding increases with their Support Level.

Each Support Level is associated with a **funding cap** (e.g., \$25k per year for Support Level A), representing the maximum funding level that individual can access (without a policy exception).



Basics provides funding to individuals for the Standard Household Rate (e.g. food and shelter), and predictable monthly expenses, such as over-the-counter medications and medical supplies.

- Basics do not increase with Support Level.



Special Needs will continue to be administered in accordance with the current policy. However, some recurrent, predictable special needs will move into the Basics category to reduce administrative burden (e.g., special diet, transportation).

Please note: Policies have been built around how funds within each category can be spent, and there will be reporting/accountability measures in place to ensure funds are being used appropriately.

Individualized Funding | How can funding be spent?

Individualized Funding provides flexibility for individuals with disabilities **to access the supports and services they need** and/or want. This could include:

Daily Living Support Staff

Costs associated with supports/services/hours of supports for **workers who assist in activities of daily living** or are instrumental activities of daily living (e.g., shopping, transportation).

Community Life

Reasonable costs intended to promote and **support the participant's well-being, social citizenship**, life skills, and family wellness (e.g., day programs, recreation activities).

Continuing Education

Costs associated with **employment and continuing education** for the participant or the staff they have hired, to support them to access paid employment, training, volunteering, and educational programs.



Administration

Costs associated with the management and administration of Individualized Funding (e.g., **bookkeeping and tax preparation services** for those self-managing their funding, or **admin fees to SPs** managing IF).

Medical Supports

Costs associated with medical supports, such as nursing support for injections. Only applicable to **individuals with specific funding for medical supports that can't be accessed through the public system**.

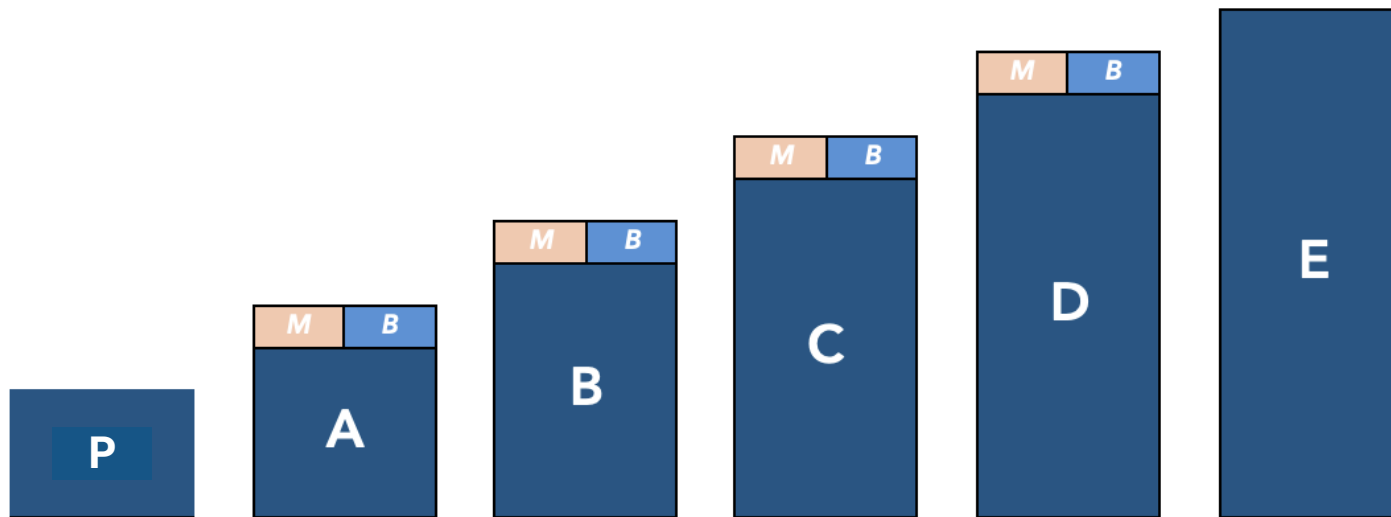
*Other

Other reasonable disability-related supports and services. **This category should only be used to report on a purchase made after approval by the EFAC and does not fit into another category.**

Often when considering where funding can be spent, the category of funding being referred to is the **supports funding previously mentioned.*

Individualized Funding | How is supports funding determined?

- To determine supports funding, an EFAC will review documentation submitted by the participant and make an eligibility decision based on DSP policy.
- If eligible, an assessment will be completed, and a **Support Level** will be identified.
- The amount of supports funding will be calculated based on an individual's plan and their **Support Level** as identified through the **InterRAI assessment**.



- In addition, individuals across levels A-D may receive funding for:
 - Medical Support Needs
 - Behavioral Support Needs

Individualized Funding | Funding Bands

- Historical data and case studies were used to inform the development of funding bands.
- Funding Bands represent what an Eligibility Funding and Assessment Coordinator can approve based on the individual's assessment and plan
- If funding above the cap is required existing exceptions processes (i.e. approval thresholds) and/or funding innovation panels would be used

Support Level	Funding Cap for General Support Needs	Behavioral Top-up Amount	Medical Top-up Amount
P	\$0	\$0	\$0
A	\$45,000	\$40,000	\$20,000
B	\$55,000	\$40,000	\$20,000
C	\$75,000	\$40,000	\$20,000
D	\$120,000	\$40,000	\$20,000
E	Custom with Innovation Panel		

Individualized Funding | Common Questions

What does this mean for me? When will my family member be able to access Individualized Funding (IF)?

- The Remedy indicates that access to the new system of supports (IPSCs, LACs, new assessment, IF, etc.) should **prioritize persons with disabilities who are on the Service Request List (SRL) and currently not receiving DSP support, and those currently living in institutional settings.**
- Should your family member not fall into one of the prioritized groups, it does not mean they will not receive IF. Over the next three years, **all participants will gradually have access to these supports as DSP expands the capacity of the new system.**
- If your family member is enrolled with DSP, they will **continue to work with their Care Coordinator until an LAC or IPSC is assigned to begin support planning with them, and a new assessment occurs.**
- For DFSC families, nothing is changing as this is already an individualized funding program. However, in the coming year, DSP will be developing new programs and services for children/youth.
- This is the initial roll-out of individualized funding – more information and updates will be provided as we continue to navigate through the Remedy's implementation.

School Leavers

The Disability Support Program (DSP) and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) are supporting the delivery of Remedy recommendations through the **School Leaver Program**.

Why is this program important?

- Many students with disabilities, School Leavers, **opt to stay in school until they are 21** years old.
- Some students may not have had a lot of planning, while others have **limited awareness and/or access to community resources, supports, or post-school options**.
- The goal of the School Leaver Program is for **students with disabilities to have more choice** after leaving high school.
- LACs will help navigate pathways for graduating students so that they are **more prepared for next steps after high school** as they transition to adulthood.



School Leavers

? What does this mean for me? What will happen next with this School Leavers?

- An **engagement survey will be shared with a small sampling** of current students who are preparing to graduate and transition to community/adulthood (and their families), recent graduates who have transitioned to community (and their families), as well as a number of Learning Support Teachers who work with students who are preparing to graduate. This will **support ongoing research to inform the program's** development.
- Work has begun on a School Leaver registration/consent form, transition materials and templates.
- EECD and DSP will be working with Regional Centres for Education (RCEs) and le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) to identify students to participate in the **soft launch of the School Leavers Program starting in fall 2025**, which will include 100 students in the first year.
- As DSP continues to hire new LACs, **implementation will be gradual**. It is anticipated that, over time, as more LACs are hired and the program continues to expand, that more students will be able to access the support of LACs and the School Leavers Program.
- More updates will be provided in the monthly messaging that DSP plans to share with Inclusion NS.

Q & A Period

Thank you!