

FAQ for Service Providers

1. What is USS and when will it be used?

Urgent Staffing Support (USS) provides a 24/7 on-call staffing response for Disability Support Program (DSP) participants when their scheduled support staff is unexpectedly unavailable, and their backup plan fails. USS does not provide medical intervention but offers other disability-related supports, such as physical assistance or supports for activities of daily living. Qualified staff are sent by the USS Service Provider organization to provide the requested support, and the DSP participant pays for the service with their Individualized Funding.

2. Who is eligible to use the USS service

Use of the USS service will be available to DSP participants who self-manage their Individualized Funding (IF) as well as DSP FLEX participants.

3. What is the role of USS Service Providers?

USS Service Providers will be responsible for coordinating and deploying staff to participants who need qualified staff to fill in when their scheduled support person is unavailable. As USS is a 24/7 service, USS Service Providers must have staff available to receive and respond to USS requests at all times. USS Service Provider organizations will be required to meet the same management standards (training, hiring, record keeping, accounting, etc.) that they are required to meet for other DSP service provision.

4. What types of services will be provided to USS participants?

USS staff must be capable of responding to a variety of requests that support participants' Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs). ADLs include but are not limited to basic self-care tasks such as bathing, dressing, eating, and other similar daily routines. IADLs include but are not limited to tasks that enable independent living and foster social inclusion, such as meal preparation, household maintenance, shopping, using transportation and attending community events.

5. What types of urgent situations are out of scope for the USS Service Provider?

The USS service is a last resort option that should only be used for backup support when day-to-day support is unexpectedly unavailable. Requests for crisis support and/or medical interventions fall out of the scope of a USS Service Provider and if received, should be promptly directed to emergency services.

6. What is the expected response time for USS Service Providers after receiving a USS request?

USS Service Providers will be expected to respond to all USS requests within a 1–3-hour window. USS Service Providers are expected to have on-call resources available to meet the demand for the service, but may, at times need to prioritize requests based on urgency. Staff will be trained and skilled in communication skills, managing crises, and prioritizing requests.

7. How will USS Service Providers be paid for delivering USS?

After providing the USS service, the USS Service Provider will invoice the DSP participant. The participant will be responsible for paying the Service Provider from their Individualized Funding.

8. How many organizations are you looking for?

Initially we will be contracting with four Service Provider organizations to provide the service – one in each region.

9. Which organizations can apply to become a USS Service Provider?

Any organization wishing to be considered for the provision of Urgent Staffing Support (USS) services may apply during the specified application window. Organizations that have already submitted the Service Provider IF Management Application (2024) are only required to complete the questions on the USS Application marked with an asterisk (*), while organizations that have not previously completed the IF Management Application must complete all questions. Organizations that are not Approved DSP Service Providers may also apply but must provide three unique references to demonstrate their capacity to meet the requirements of delivering USS services.

10. How does an organization apply to become a USS Service Provider?

To apply to become a USS Service Provider, organizations must submit an application within the specified application window. All applications will be reviewed by a team of evaluators, and top candidates in each region will be selected for interviews.

11. What criteria will be used to assess USS applications?

The USS application is designed to assess the organization's ability and capacity to deliver USS services in alignment with [*Nova Scotia's Review and Remedy For the Findings Of Systemic Discrimination Against Nova Scotians With Disabilities*](#). Applications will be assessed based on the organization's answers in the following sections: organizational philosophy, USS management, and supports provision.

12. If an organization is selected to become a USS Service Provider, will they receive any funding?

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If selected to become a USS Service Provider, the organization will receive \$50,000 in startup funding to help offset costs associated with establishing this service, such as recruitment and staffing, training, call management system setup, and administrative setup. In years two and three, funding of \$35,000 will support a 0.5 FTE for admin staffing and the call management system.