

independence | northwest

21 August 2008

Dear Customer,

The Oregon Department of Human Services has informed us of an increase to the benefit level for the majority of Support Services Brokerage customers. **As of October 1st, 2008, you will be eligible for a 10% increase to your current benefit level.**

At the same time you are receiving an increase to your benefit level, providers of support services may also raise their rates. The Department of Human Services has increased the rate ranges (how much a provider can charge) by 10%. This doesn't mean that your providers *will* raise their rates, but you should be aware that there is a decent likelihood of this occurring, given the increasing costs of doing business.

If you are currently working with providers, a couple of things could happen:

1. **If you contract with an Independent Contractor or Provider Agency**, they may approach you and let you know that as of a certain date (as early as October 1st), they are increasing the rates they charge for their services. If this happens and you agree to the increase, this will require a quick revision to your plan and an amendment to the contract you hold with your Contractor or Agency. You should call your Personal Agent and s/he can assist you through the process.
2. **If you are the Employer of an individual (a Domestic Employee)**, you can decide to raise their rate of pay by up to 10%. You don't have to, but you now have that option. If you need assistance understanding this further, call your Personal Agent and s/he can assist you with what to do next. It will require a revision to your plan and a change to the Job Description.

There's also the possibility that your providers' rate(s) will stay the same. In such a case, you may use the additional 10% available to you to purchase additional supports.

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Please note that just because the funds become available on October 1st, it doesn't mean that you can't wait until a later date to access them. Your benefit level for the *whole year* has changed. If you are getting what you need right now, nothing has to happen. If a time comes when your needs increase or change, we can work with you then. Also, a revision to your plan may take time, so for plans ending in the fall, please keep this in mind. Your patience is always appreciated as we currently have 200 customers enrolled in our services and we are working hard to serve everyone during this change.

We recognize that sometimes these types of changes can be confusing. That's what your Personal Agent is here for. S/he can answer your unique questions and guide you through any processes necessary to ensure you receive the services you need.

Example:

Customer MK's plan runs from January 2008 through December 2008. She will receive a 10% increase in available funds for the months of October, November and December since the funds become available on October 1st.

For more information, please visit our website at www.independencenw.org.