

## 4. Obtaining Supports, Services, and Funding

Once individuals and families have explored an individual's dreams, desires for life, and needs, the next step is to consider how to actually put the planning into action.

For many individuals moving in to adulthood, the next step means building on existing supports and obtaining some paid supports and services from the adult service system.

### **Who actually provides the identified supports or services?**

This is a very important consideration that is often included in the service planning process. While there is a key role for formal programs offered through the Government of Alberta, supports for individuals can come from family or friends, other natural supports, or community resources, including PDD Service Providers.

Finding the right balance of supports from among the many potential sources is important, and often elusive. It is important to ensure that there is consideration of this – both for the benefits of the individual and as part of the effort to ensure public funds available through the PDD program are used as effectively and efficiently as possible.

#### *Family and Natural Supports*

Natural supports refer to the range of family and friends that may have been involved with an individual during that person's childhood and who still provide important friendship and support. Natural supports can be cultivated within groups that may have interests similar to the individual. Natural supports mirror the same type of connections and relationships experienced by all people. Natural supports may have as much or more importance than any paid services may be able to provide.

#### *Community Resources*

Many individuals with developmental disabilities live independently using the supports and services available in their communities.

These can include everything from the range of family and friends, health care facilities, schools and colleges, local housing authorities and services, churches, recreational groups and facilities, libraries, businesses and employers, volunteer opportunities and government programs.

#### *Government Program and Resources*

The governments of Alberta and Canada provide a number of programs that may be helpful to individuals with developmental disabilities. Two of the most commonly accessed programs for individuals making the transition to adulthood are provided by the Government of Alberta. They are:

- **Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH)**
- **Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD)**

#### **AISH**

The AISH program provides financial and medical benefits to adults with a permanent disability that severely impairs that person's ability to earn a livelihood.

For eligible adults, AISH provides an assured monthly income of \$1050 (April 2006) plus a number of dental, optical, and other medical benefits. Benefits provided through AISH may be reduced by other income a person has.

Although individuals are not necessarily compelled to apply for or use AISH, many individuals use funds received for basic rent, food, medical, and other needs.

Those involved in Transition Planning should be aware that:

- an application for AISH can take up to 3 months to be approved
- applications can be started 3 months prior to the individual's 18th birthday
- a complete medical report is required as part of the AISH application

A person can apply for AISH through offices of the *Alberta Seniors and Community Supports*.

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See the [AISH Fact Sheet for more info](#)

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### **Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD )**

Many adults with developmental disabilities receive support through the PDD program. PDD supports can be an important source of funding and services. More information about PDD support is outlined in the next chapter.

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See the [What is PDD Fact Sheet for more info](#)

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*Who are those guys?  
Butch Cassidy*