



Participant Handbook

Updated: March 2021

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Section 1: Welcome!

We're excited that you're here. Community Choices is a non-profit cooperative designed by and for adults with developmental disabilities and their families. The cooperative organization is at the heart of everything we do at Community Choices. We would never be able to succeed in our mission without you. Cooperative members serve on committees, determine social events, and dedicate time, energy, and expertise to us and to each other. We appreciate your commitment to such a valuable and vital resource in our community.

This handbook will walk you through information about Community Choices, our services, and our policies. It also includes information about membership and expectations of our participants.

Individuals and their families have an opportunity to become members of Community Choices. Please see Section 4 for more information about membership. Members provide advocacy and support to their own family members, as well to Community Choices as a whole. They also provide a broad base of abilities, knowledge, and expertise to draw upon. Our members fulfill varied and countless roles and responsibilities, allowing our structure to remain small while working with many individuals. Members help guide our mission and direction, and are fundamental to our shared success.

Section 2: About Community Choices

Our Mission:

To partner with people with developmental disabilities in Champaign County in their pursuit of independence, opportunity, and choice by offering quality, self-directed supports.

Our Philosophy:

1. WE ARE NOT AFRAID TO TRY

We believe in emphasizing the dignity of risk, finding new solutions, and developing ways to figure it out together. We are committed to helping identify opportunities, utilizing effective tools to succeed and adjusting when life doesn't go as expected.

2. PEOPLE NEED PEOPLE

We strive to support people to be fully involved both in and *with* the community. We value interdependence and believe that the most powerful connections are those with other people. We believe in strengthening mutual, peer-to-peer, and community-based relationships to create more natural, meaningful, and sustainable support networks than traditional approaches.

3. SUCCESS IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

We expect individuals to take an active role in shaping the lives they envision and share the commitment to achieving that vision with all team members through the required time, effort, and dedication. We are in this together.

Our History

Community Choices grew from a parent group formed in the fall of 2007. The parent group focused on families who have adult children with disabilities. These families wanted to connect with each other and to find innovative ideas for disability services. In April of 2008, the group learned about Human Service Cooperatives, and decided they wanted to pursue developing a cooperative. A subset of families formed the Board of Directors, and incorporated in August 2008. The Cooperative was approved as an Illinois Service Facilitation agency in February 2009. The Cooperative began offering individual planning and social opportunities in 2009. In 2010, Community Choices started providing customized employment through a grant from the Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board. In 2011, a group of families received training on housing options and we started the Community Living program. The cooperative focuses on four primary areas: employment, building connections and relationships, housing, and family support. In June 2018, Community Choices was re-accredited by The Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL).

Our Staff:

Phone Number:

Email:

Executive Director

**Becca
Obuchowski.....**

217-840-4580...

becca.communitychoices@gmail.com

Connect Dept. Staff

Associate Director:

**Hannah
Sheets.....**

217-418-8359...

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Membership Coordinator:

**Kaitland
Postley.....**

217-419-6222...

kaitland.communitychoices@gmail.com

Connect & Employment Specialist:

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Rutter.....
.....**

217-722-2980...

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Customized Employment Staff:

Lead Employment Specialist:

**Ashley
Withers.....**

217-417-6997...

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Connect & Employment Specialist:

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.....**

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Employment Specialist:

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...**

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Employment Specialist:

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.....**

217-649-8628...

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Employment Specialist:

Kim 217-417-9019... kim.communitychoices@gmail.com
McGee.....
.....

Community Living Staff:

Community Life Coordinator:
Ryan 217-417-6205... ryan.communitychoices@gmail.com
Thomson.....
.....

Community Support Specialist:
Karli 217-722-4535... karli.communitychoices@gmail.com
Oxford-Jordan.....
...

Section 3: General Admission Criteria

- All admissions to Community Choices are made without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or any other protected status.
- Individuals must be at least 18 years old, live in Champaign County, and have a diagnosed developmental disability to be eligible for services.
- Community Choices must be able to meet the needs of the individual. Community Choices' ability to meet the individual's needs is based on proper documentation, communication with the individual and their family, and Community Choices' understanding of the individual's needs, and the organization's current capacity for that support.

Section 4: Membership Information

Community Choices is a “Human Service Cooperative.” Individuals and families who want to support one another are encouraged to join the cooperative. While membership is not required for Community Living or Customized Employment services, it is required to take advantage of activities and opportunities within the Connect Department - including social opportunities co-op clubs, leadership class, and others. Yearly membership costs \$25 per family. Members are eligible to:

- Access “members only” information – including social opportunity reminders, access to our ‘Members Only’ webpage, updates on state and local policy changes, resources, training opportunities, and more
- Participate in Connect Activities such as social opportunities, zoom groups, co-op clubs, advocacy, etc
- Connect to other cooperative members through the membership directory
- Get access to our Members Only Webpage with a linkable calendar of events, resources, contact information, and opportunities to reach other members
- Exchange informational and practical support with other members
- Participate as a voting member at annual membership meeting held every March
- Help shape the current services and future growth of Community Choices
- Be linked with a Connect Partner staff person who will check in with you regularly and help connect you to resources and opportunities

Members of Community Choices also have the responsibility to take an active role in the cooperative. Here are some examples of the ways members can support the cooperative.

I can offer:

- Information about Social Security, Guardianship, etc.
- Rides to social opportunities outside of Champaign County
- Connections to businesses interested in Employment 1st LEAP training
- Host a family party at my home
- Donations to Community Choices fundraisers
- Support with advocacy initiatives

I can attend:

- Quarterly Co-Op Meetings
- Family Parties
- Community Choices fundraisers
- Meetings with new families joining the cooperative
- Family Support Group
- Fundraiser/Event committees (Chili Cook-Off, Murder Mystery Dinner, Unconference, etc.)

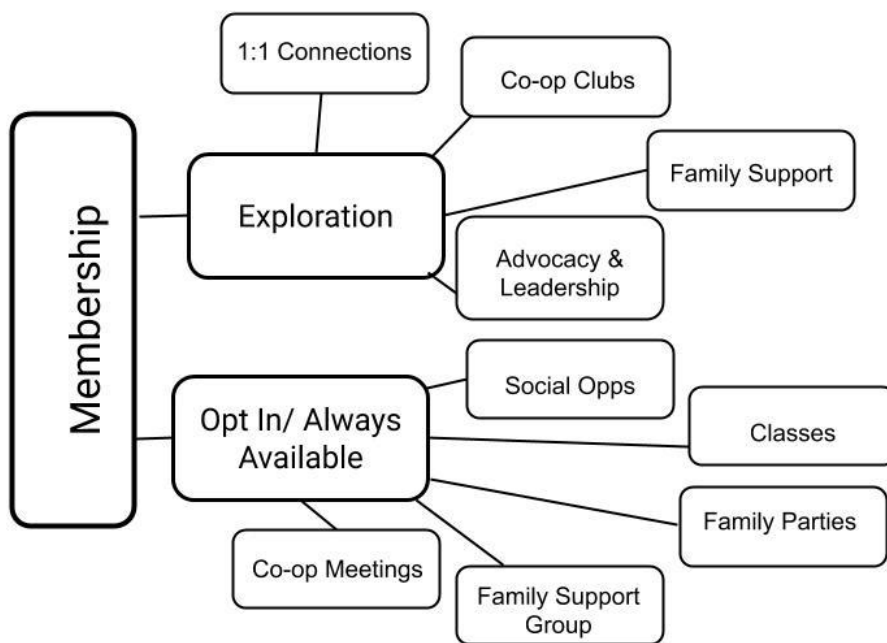
To enroll or for more information contact: Kaitland Postley, Membership Coordinator at kaitland.communitychoices@gmail.com or 217-419-6222.

Section 5: Our Services

Community Choices offers the following services: 1) Connect Department, 2) Customized Employment, and 3) Community Living. Descriptions are below:

1) Connect Department

Our Connect Department is open to Co-Op Members only. It is how we support our members to be connected with each other and the community, to build their leadership and self-advocacy skills, and access family education and support. Here's how it works:



Who is eligible: Adults with developmental disabilities who desire social connections and are members of Community Choices. Members wishing to participate in Social Opportunities, Zoom Groups, Co-op Clubs, Open Campaign Projects and Individualized Connections, Advocacy and the Step Up to Leadership course must be registered in the PUNS database to receive services. Members not enrolled in the PUNS database may continue to participate in Family Parties and Co-op Meetings. Family of adult members with disabilities are eligible to participate

in our Family Support Group. Please speak with Becca, the Executive Director, about options for additional types of participation.

How it works: Community Choices offers a range of options to get engaged with others in the cooperative and in the larger community. Some options are always available to members. Other options are available to members if they chose to participate in the Connect Department's Exploration process. The Exploration process is designed to help members figure out what types of social connections and activities they'd like to engage in, and what types of supports will be helpful.

Every member and their family are assigned a **Connect Partner**, either Hannah, Kaitland, or Jon. **Connect Partners** check in with members at least once a quarter to see how they are doing, and keep them informed of any opportunities they might be interested in attending. We hope that this helps new and longtime members feel more connected to the cooperative and informed of how to become involved.

Opt-In Opportunities: Information about these opportunities are shared on a regular basis with members. Members can choose to engage in these opportunities or not, as they are able.

Social Opportunities- Weekly activities where members can connect with each other. Social opportunities are supported by CC staff and include things such as: dinners and lunches at restaurants around Champaign-Urbana, going to the movies, attending Illini games, and checking out special events locally and around the state.

How to Get Involved:

1. You will receive the social calendar in an email from the Membership Coordinator titled: CC [Month] Social Calendar
2. Email your RSVP for events to the Membership Coordinator at kaitland.communitychoices@gmail.com or by phone at (217) 419-6222.. Example: "I would like to attend [event]..."
3. Each month's social calendar will also be available on our Members Only website. Members can RSVP through the website.
4. Attend social opportunities you RSVP for. If you cannot attend, please tell the Membership Coordinator.
5. Please bring the amount of money recommended in the social calendar to events.
6. Attend Co-Op Meetings to plan future social opportunities!

Zoom Groups - These virtual groups were started during the COVID-19 pandemic as a way for members to stay connected. Members are invited to these daily virtual meetings through emailed zoom links. There are informal morning check-in groups and more structured afternoon sessions with topics such as cooking, exercise, trivia, movie groups, and member-led workshops.

Scaffolded Connection Supports - These are opportunities for members with I/DD to participate in options available in their community, with ongoing intermittent support from CC staff. Scaffolded supports may include half-day small group social opportunities, support to attend a park district class, or other community classes. These are offered periodically through a sign-up and registration process.

Co-op Meetings - Co-Op Meetings are held quarterly and present information about developmental disability services and opportunities through guest speakers, informational lectures, and collaborative conversations with community leaders. Individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and supporters are all welcome to attend. Membership is not required!

Family Parties - Family Parties are relaxed opportunities for members with developmental disabilities and their families to connect with other families within the co-operative membership and build relationships. Family parties take place at the host's home or a public venue where members can socialize and connect over shared meals and activities. Any family within the membership can host a family party if they choose. Staff support will be provided for the planning and promotion of the party within the co-operative.

Step Up to Leadership - An eight-week leadership course created by a dedicated team of people with and without disabilities, including CC members, staff and U of I graduate students. The course focuses on many different aspects of leadership, ranging from leadership in everyday life to advocacy. Participants learn different leadership styles and skills, role-play, hold debates, conduct mock-interviews and gain insight from leaders both with and without disabilities. Ultimately, everyone discovers what type of leader we strive to be and we challenge each other to build on our leadership potential. This class is offered at select times during the year. Registration forms will be emailed to the membership during open enrollment.

Family Support Group - The Family Support group will focus on strategies and problem-solving, building relationships with other parents in the co-op, and providing mutual support. This group aims to help build relationships and provide a consistent format where you can try out strategies and share the results with opportunities for feedback and adjustments. The group is open to parents, siblings, and others important to the lives of our members with disabilities. Group meeting dates and topics will be emailed out to members before each meeting.

Exploration Opportunities: Members have access to these opportunities by working through the Exploration process with their Connect Partner. The outcome of Exploration is for members to know what types of connections and opportunities they'd like to explore within our program activities.

Co-op Clubs - Small groups pursuing shared interests. Co-op Clubs can create their own activities or join something that is already happening in the community. For example, one club might cook together. Another might go to Illini games every week. Clubs could also exercise together, enter a bowling league, or join a theater production. The possibilities are endless! CC staff work with the club organizer and members during the formation of a club, then fade out support as the club becomes more independent and natural supports are created.

Open Champaign 1:1 Connections - An initiative encouraging community building and connection through shared experiences. Members determine which interests they'd like to pursue and with the support of CC staff, take the necessary steps to connect to a community group, location, or activity. CC staff support fades out as the member develops friendships and natural supports within the group.

Advocacy and Leadership

The Human Rights and Advocacy Group- This group is made up of Community Choices members, staff, and at large community members. It meets regularly to work on advocacy projects that are chosen by the participants. It also functions as the Human Rights Committee for Community Choices. If participants have concerns that their human rights have been violated or questioned through their involvement with Community Choices programs, this group will provide oversight and decisions on how to move forward with those concerns or complaints. If you would like more information, to suggest a project, or to get involved, contact Hannah Sheets at hannah.communitychoices@gmail.com or 217-418-8359

Leadership Projects and Opportunities - Community Choices is able to support members to engage in leadership projects or opportunities. This could include preparing presentations, projects, or materials related to an issue or for an event, or could be involvement in an ongoing project. Some ongoing projects have included Mentoring in CU schools and developing Media features for local news sources. These projects are subject staff and community availability. If you have a leadership project idea, or opportunity, contact Hannah Sheets at hannah.communitychoices@gmail.com or 217-418-8359 to see if it is something we can work with you on.

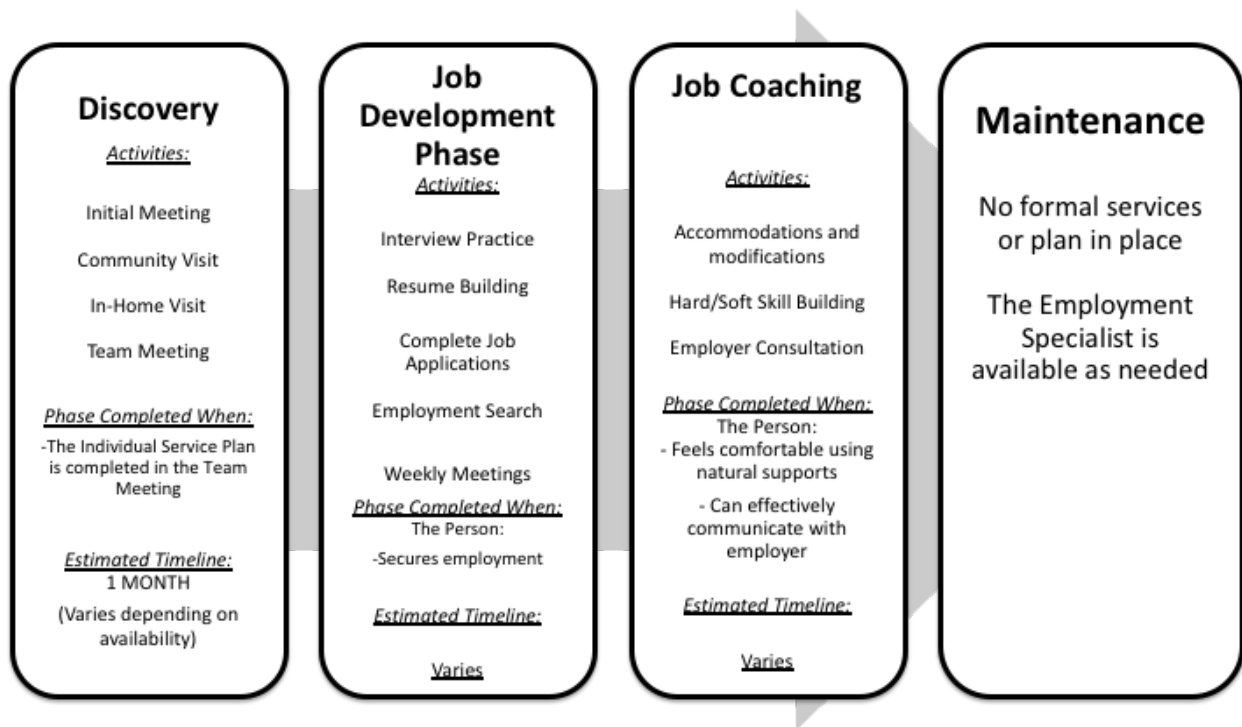
How Connect is funded: Connect Department services are funded by a yearly grant from the Champaign County Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Boards as well as donations.

Contact: Kaitland Postley at kaitland.communitychoices@gmail.com or 217-419-6222 for more information about ANY of the Connect Opportunities - she will help get you connected!

COVID-19 Precautions: Adhering to public health guidance, some Connect Opportunities may be cancelled or moved to a virtual format to allow for physical distancing.

2) Customized Employment Services

Our Customized Employment services are open to members and non-members who meet our general eligibility requirements. Through an individualized process we support people in finding and maintaining community-based jobs. Here's how it works:



Who is eligible: Adults with developmental disabilities who want to obtain a volunteer or paid position in the community. Candidates wanting long term employment services or volunteer work must be registered in the PUNS database to receive services.

How it works: To begin, a meeting is held with the individual and their family to assess employment goals and expectations. There is generally a waiting list for Customized Employment Supports. At the initial meeting, department staff will discuss the waiting list process.

Discovery: The purpose of Discovery is to learn the individual's strengths and interests through observation, interviews, and spending time with the person, in order to assist individuals with finding a job that fits their goals. Two home visits are conducted, as well as a community visit. Interviews are also conducted with family members or friends to gain more knowledge about the individual and their likes/dislikes, and strengths.

Job Development: Teaching social and communication skills necessary to be successful in the work environment, touring businesses, job shadowing, finding a job match. For some individuals, the first step will be to secure a volunteer position so they can get experience and develop their skills. We will work with the individual to create a resume that they can present to potential employers.

Employment Support: Once an individual obtains a job in the community, we work to develop accommodations and supports for the job, provide initial job coaching (2-4 weeks), establish a good relationship with the employer, and support individuals to expand job roles.

First Time Job Seekers Program - *Tentatively Beginning in FY22***** This stand-alone program is designed for people without prior community employment experience, or those who have not been successful in their previous jobs. The goal is to support people to make informed and self-determined choices about work interests and responsibilities by offering real-world experience to base their employment goals. This program will offer classroom and intensive job-shadowing at two local businesses in a structured 12 week program for first-time job seekers and others seeking additional experiences.

How it is funded: There are two options for funding for this service. One is funded by a yearly grant from the Champaign County Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Boards, the other is by individuals being referred by the Division of Rehabilitation Services. The program is supplemented by fundraising.

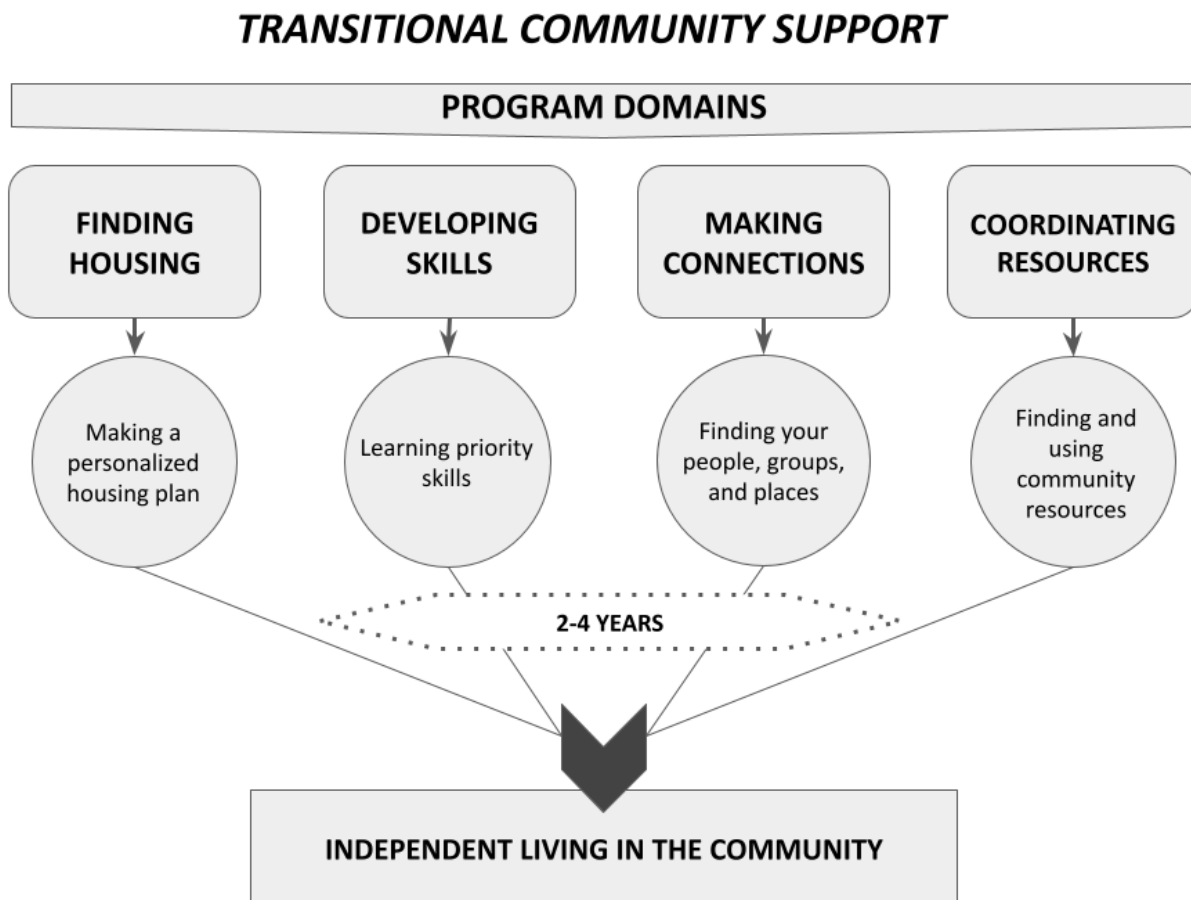
Contact: Ashley Withers at ashleychoices@gmail.com or 217-417-6997 for more information.

COVID-19 Precautions: Adhering to public health guidance, some Employment supports may be cancelled, delayed, or moved to a virtual format to allow for physical distancing.

3) Community Living Services

Community Living Services include Home-Based Support/Self-Direction Assistance and Community Transitional Support. Self-Direction Assistance is available for members and non-members, as long as you are receiving Home-Based Support funds from the state of Illinois. Community Transitional Support is for people who are interested in moving into a more independent living situation and would like some support to do so. It is also open to members and non-members who meet our general eligibility requirements. Here's how it works:

Community Transitional Support



Who is eligible: Adults with developmental disabilities who are living on their own or are living with family and want to move out within the next year. Participants must have the ability and willingness to ultimately live on their own, or with minimal support.

How it works: The purpose of the Community Living Program is to serve as the transition support individuals need to go from living in their family home to living on their own in the

community. The Community Living Program addresses four main domains: Housing, Skill Building, Connections, and Resource Coordination.

The first year generally focuses on developing a housing plan, locating acceptable housing, and moving out. Focus then shifts to building skills and connections that will help to make the person's community living set up sustainable. Assistance is also offered to connect the person with community resources that will support their community-life.

Each year the person is in the program, they will identify the priorities they wish to address in each domain. Participants generally spend 2-4 years in this program before transitioning to maintenance support where there is no formal plan, but Community Living Staff are available for consultation.

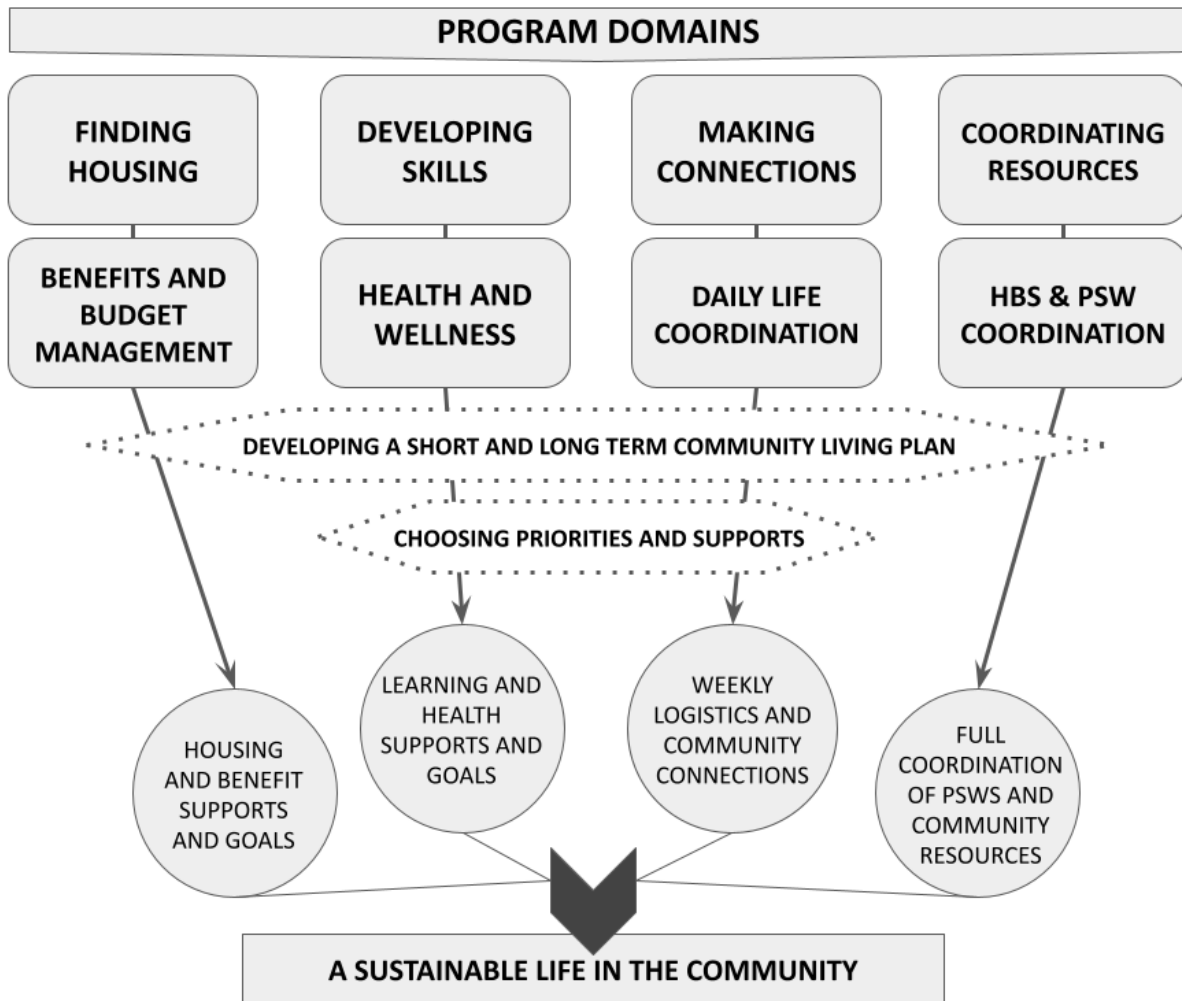
How it is funded: This service is funded by a yearly grant from the Champaign County Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Boards. The program is supplemented by fundraising.

Contact: Ryan Thomson at ryan.communitychoices@gmail.com or 217-417-6205 for more information.

COVID-19 Precautions: Adhering to public health guidance, some Community Living supports may be cancelled or moved to a virtual format to allow for physical distancing.

Sustained Community Support ***Tentatively Starting FY22*** - The introduction of this program is dependent upon funding that has not yet been secured. The Community Choices staff will be in communication with members and participants with any updates and announcements about this program.

SUSTAINED COMMUNITY SUPPORT



Who is eligible: Adults with developmental disabilities who would like to live in the community, but need support with some or all of the the program domains:

- Housing, Developing Skills
- Making Connections
- Coordinating Resources
- Managing Budgets and Benefits
- Maintaining Health
- Coordinating their daily and weekly schedule

- Finding, managing, and scheduling PSWs for additional support needs

Participants will need to be able to spend extended periods of their day on their own, or be working toward that.

How it works: Many adults with I/DD are able to live happy, fulfilling lives in the community with the right supports. Often these supports are provided by family members who help to manage self-directed PSWs, manage benefits and budgets, and generally coordinate large parts of the person's routines and engagements. The purpose of the Sustained Community Support Program is to shift some of these duties away from the family, so that every person's community life can be sustainable for the long term.

The program starts with the person and their family developing a Community Living Plan that addresses goals for the near term as well as the long term. Participants can take this plan and use it to fully self-direct their path toward their goals. Community Choices staff can also take information from that plan and recommend a set of support options. Participants will have the opportunity to choose those supports that are priorities to them. This could include intensive supports from all eight domains or just one or to specific service options.

Support will be provided by a team of up to three staff depending on the number of services that person has opted in for. The person's plan will be revisited each year to determine what new goals or if there are any new or adjusted supports needed. Some participants will need support on an ongoing basis. Others may use supports for a more time-limited period.

How it is funded: In the first year of this program, it will be fully funded by a grant from the Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board and supplemented by fundraising. For those with Home Based Support (HBS) funding. These services will be able to be billed through this waiver at a rate between \$30 and \$50 per hour.

Contact: Hannah Sheets at hannah.communitychoices@gmail.com or 217-418-8359 for more information.

COVID-19 Precautions: Adhering to public health guidance, some Community Living supports may be cancelled or moved to a virtual format to allow for physical distancing.

Home-Based Support/Self-Direction Assistance

Who is eligible: Individuals with developmental disabilities who are enrolled in PUNS (Prioritization for Urgency of Need for Services) are randomly selected by the state of Illinois to receive services, like Home-Based Support (HBS). With HBS, selected participants can choose to

purchase Self-Direction Assistance (SDA) from Community Choices to help them manage their HBS award.

How it works: Self-Direction Assistance can help participants enroll in the program; oversee their HBS budget; complete and submit required paperwork; find, hire and train Personal Support Workers; connect with other community resources when needed.

How it is funded: HBS is a state funded program overseen by the Illinois Department of Human Services/Division of Developmental Disabilities (IDHS/DDD). Self-Direction Assistance fees are determined by DHS and deducted from participants' monthly HBS award. As of Jan 1, 2021 the rate for this service is \$50.26/hr. Community Choices charges a minimum of 2 hours per month which comes out of the person's monthly HBS Budget.

Contact Karli Oxford-Jordan at karli.communitychoices@gmail.com or 217-722-4535 for more information.

COVID-19 Precautions: Adhering to public health guidance, some SDA supports may be moved to a virtual format to allow for physical distancing.

Personal Development/Life Skills Classes

Who is eligible: Adults with developmental disabilities who want to learn life skills.

How it works: Personal Development/Life Skills Classes are up to eight sessions of instruction on specific topics. Previous topics have included: cooking; budgeting; computer skills and safety; healthy relationships and sexuality; safety tips at home and in the community. Instructors may include Community Choices' staff, people from other groups or organizations in the community, or interns from the University of Illinois.

How it is funded: This service is funded in part by a yearly grant from the Champaign County Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Boards. The program is supplemented by fundraising and participant registration fees.

Contact Hannah Sheets at hannah.communitychoices@gmail.com or 217-418-8359 for more information.

COVID-19 Precautions: Adhering to public health guidance, Classes may be cancelled or moved to a virtual format to allow for physical distancing.

Section 6: What You Can Expect From Us

A. Dignity and Respect

- a. All personal information will be kept confidential. Access to personal information, including medical information, is limited to the individual, Community Choices' staff and persons specified in the individual's Release Form.
- b. Community Choices' staff are committed to working in ways that recognize and respect individuals' culture. We value diversity and work to respect others' ideas, values, beliefs, customs, behaviors, and attitudes.
- c. We emphasize the need for the organization and our members to connect to diverse groups that reflect a wide range of cultures and values.
- d. We realize that being culturally responsive is a process and we continue to grow in this area by developing an annual cultural competency plan and engaging in assessment and professional development. We welcome member feedback and ideas to help us continue to improve in this area.
- e. If a participant requires interpretation/communication support to communicate with Community Choices' staff, please contact Kaitland Postley at kaitland.communitychoices@gmail.com or 217-419-6222 for information on requesting support.

B. Rights Protection – the following are your rights:

- a. You maintain all your legal, civil and human rights while receiving services.
- b. You have the right to be treated fairly without regard to your sex, race, religion, ethnic background, disability, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender expression, financial standing, or any other protected class.
- c. You have the right to be free from abuse and/or neglect. If you think someone has treated you badly, you should tell someone you trust. Any incidents of abuse or neglect shall be reported to the Inspector General of the Department of Human Services or the state police for investigation.
- d. Personal information about you and the services you receive is private and may be shared with someone else only with your permission or if allowed by state or federal law.
- e. You have the right to look at your file.
- f. You have the right to participate in any team meeting about you.
- g. You have a right to continue to receive services unless you voluntarily withdraw or you meet the criteria for discharge from services. You have the right to terminate services at any time.
- h. You have the right to express complaints in writing to the Executive Director who will work to resolve the complaint. If the Executive Director cannot resolve the

complaint, it will go to either the Quality Assurance Committee or the Human Rights Committee. Their decision will be final.

- i. You shall not be denied, suspended from or terminated from services, or have services reduced for filing a complaint or for exercising any of your rights.
 - j. You have the right to know if Community Choices is not meeting quality standards and to look at written survey reports describing the quality of the services.
 - k. You have the right to report any violation of your rights to the Champaign County Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Boards, the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission, the Human Rights Authority, or Equip for Equality.
- C. Complaint Procedure - Community Choices takes complaints very seriously. All involved will work to successfully resolve the complaint. Below is the process for making a complaint:

- Step 1: Direct conversation. When possible, we encourage people to resolve conflicts by having a conversation with the parties involved. If the conflict is not resolved through direct conversation, or the person does not feel safe contacting the other party directly, proceed to step 2.
- Step 2: Person/family member shares their concerns with the Executive Director to develop a solution.
- Step 3: If a satisfactory solution is not obtained in two weeks, The Executive Director will direct the complaint to the Human Rights Committee if it involves a potential rights issue or to the Quality Assurance Committee if it involves a personne or services issue.
- Step 4: The appropriate committee Chairperson will meet with the person who submitted the complaint and discuss the nature of the complaint. If necessary, the individual and his/her family will meet with the appropriate Committee, the involved employee(s) or volunteer(s), and the Executive Director to develop an effective and suitable solution for all parties.

The timeline for the resolution should not exceed 30 days. The Executive Director and/or the appropriate chairperson will conduct follow-up calls or correspondence with the person who submitted the complaint to ensure that the solution of the complaint was reached to the satisfaction of the individual.

D. Health and Safety Policies

- a. Health care: Health care decisions are up to the individual and their family. Community Choices does not have the capacity to make health care decisions for

individuals. Community Choices staff will have access to emergency contact information if staff are with the person when an emergency occurs.

- b. CPR and First Aid: Community Choices' staff are trained in CPR and First Aid, and are recertified every 2 years.
- c. Medication: Community Choices' staff members are not allowed to administer medication to individuals. Individuals must be able to self-administer or receive support from their family or other support workers for medication administration.
- d. Safety: Community Choices strives to create safe and healthful environments for individuals. Staff will help individuals think about their own safety and how they can contribute to the safety and well-being of others. If needed, Community Choices' staff will work with individuals to develop safety plans in order to participate in services.
- e. Accident Reporting: If you get sick or injured at a Community Choices event, please let a staff member know immediately so we can make sure you get the help you need and so we can complete a report.
- f. Illness: Community Choices wants to ensure that everyone remains free from contagious viruses or diseases. You should stay at home if you have any of the following symptoms: vomiting, diarrhea, elevated temperature, or infection.
- g. Public Health, Contagious Disease, Pandemic: Community Choices will follow all relevant and current public health guidance regarding contagious diseases such as COVID-19. Until advised otherwise and in order to maximize the safety of our participants, our staff, and the community, we will use the following mitigation guidelines:
 - Community Choices strongly encourages all participants and their families to get the COVID-19 vaccine and any other vaccines against contagious diseases. We are happy to assist with relaying vaccine access information.
 - Visitors to the Community Choices offices must wear masks and maintain social distancing of 6 feet whenever possible. The office will be open to participants on an appointment-only basis.
 - Participants will be asked to wear masks and maintain physical distance whenever meeting with Community Choices staff in their homes or the community.
 - If someone tests positive for COVID-19 and has been in contact with Community Choices staff or other participants, we encourage them to communicate this to the Executive Director, Becca, so that all contacts have the opportunity to get tested and isolate if necessary. If a staff person tests positive for COVID-19, Becca will communicate this to any participant that they have been in close contact with.

- If a person has tested positive for COVID-19 they will be unable to participate in Community Choices programs for a minimum of 10 days and have received two negative COVID-19 tests.
- Some or all of Community Choices in-person supports and events may be cancelled or transitioned to a virtual format depending on COVID-19 trends in the area and public health guidance.
- Anyone who feels sick, or has been in contact with someone sick should stay home and/or request virtual supports.

E. Protection from Abuse and Neglect

- a. Community Choices is dedicated to the safety and well-being of all participants and individuals that we serve. The organization screens staff appropriately before hiring, and undergo annual training to recognize and prevent abuse and neglect.
- b. Community Choices explicitly prohibits the use of restraint or seclusion by staff or other individuals involved in the organization. Instead we promote the use of individualized coping strategies, de-escalation techniques, and conflict resolution.
- c. Definitions of Abuse and Neglect:
 - (a) Physical Abuse: An employee's non-accidental and inappropriate contact with a participant that causes bodily harm. This includes actions that cause bodily harm as a result of a staff member telling a participant to physically abuse another participant.
 - (i) Example: A staff member hitting, slapping or pushing a participant.
 - (b) Mental Abuse: The use of demeaning, intimidating, or threatening words, signs, gestures, or other actions by a staff member towards a participant.
 - (i) Example: A staff member calling a participant a bad name, or giving them “the finger”, etc.
 - (c) Sexual Abuse: Any sexual behavior, sexual contact, or intimate physical contact between a staff member and a participant, including a staff member’s coercion or encouragement of an individual to engage in sexual activity that results in sexual contact, intimate physical contact, sexual behavior or intimate physical behavior.
 - (i) Example: A staff member touching a participant inappropriately.
 - (d) Financial Exploitation: Taking advantage of an individual's assets, property, or financial resources through deception, intimidation, or theft; for the employee's or agency's own benefit.
 - (i) Example: A staff member taking money from a participant.
 - (e) Neglect: A staff member’s failure to provide adequate medical care, personal care, or maintenance that causes a participant pain, injury, or emotional distress, or places a participant’s health or safety at substantial risk.

- (i) Example: A staff member refusing to help a participant in an emergency.
- d. Reporting Abuse and Neglect
 - i. If you feel you have been a victim of abuse and/or neglect by a member of the Community Choices staff, or a volunteer, you should tell someone you trust. You may also contact one of the offices below:
 1. Guardianship and Advocacy: 421 E Capitol, Springfield, IL 62701, 217-785-1540
 2. Equip for Equality: 235 S 5th St, Springfield, IL 62705, 800-758-0464
 3. Office of Inspector General: 901 Southwind Rd, Springfield, IL 62703, 800-368-1463

Section 7: What We Expect from You

Your Responsibilities

1. You have the responsibility to treat others as you would want to be treated no matter their gender, race, religion, ethnic background, national origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, or disability.
2. You have the responsibility to keep other people's private information private.
3. You have the responsibility to follow through on your goals set forth by you, your team, and the Community Choices Staff.
4. You are responsible for following the schedule for any appointments with the Community Choices' staff.
5. Transportation to and from social events, and meetings with staff members is the responsibility of individuals and their families. Transportation for social events will be provided or arranged if the social event is outside of Champaign County.
6. You have the responsibility to follow Community Choices' Code of Conduct.
 - a. Any participant, family member, or staff member who violates the Code of Conduct is subject to discipline, up to and including removal from Community Choices Membership or program participation.
 - b. **Code of Conduct** – the following activities are prohibited on Community Choices' property, at events or activities sponsored by Community Choices and while directly receiving services from Community Choices:
 - i. Violation of any local, state or federal laws.
 - ii. Abusive, racist, derogatory, harassing, sexual, or threatening language towards a staff member, participant, volunteer, or community member.
 - iii. Possession or use of illegal drugs or reporting to programs/activities while under the influence of drugs.
 - iv. Bringing dangerous materials such as explosives, firearms, weapons, drugs, or other similar items.

- v. Actual or threatened violence toward any individual or group.
- vi. Conduct endangering the life, safety, health, or well-being of self or others.
- vii. Bullying or taking unfair advantage of any participant.

Connect Department Expectations

1. In all Connect Department Services, individuals share the responsibility of working towards the outcomes and life they want.
2. We expect participants to honor commitments to scheduled meetings and activities with CC staff and within the Connect Department.
3. Family members are encouraged to support individuals in having as much autonomy as possible.
4. To ensure safety, please update Connect Department Staff of any changes to emergency contact information or changes in health status. We encourage individuals and families to provide back-up emergency contacts if and when possible.
5. RSVPs are required for social opportunities so that staff can provide adequate support for all participants and to ensure that the venue can accommodate everyone. Members who do not RSVP may be asked to leave.
6. Transportation to and from social opportunities and other Connect Department programs is the responsibility of members and their families.
7. Costs of social events are outlined on the social calendar prior to each event. Please ensure that you are prepared for any events that include meal, entry, or additional fees.
8. Community Choices is unable to provide one-on-one support at social events. If you need one-on-one support at an event, contact us and we'll talk about options for meeting those needs.

Customized Employment Expectations

Starting Services:

1. All paperwork, including copy of social security card, state ID, proof of disability, guardianship papers, and all intake documentation needs to be completed and in the file in order to be put on the waiting list or start services.

Meetings:

2. People active in job development will be seen weekly or bi-weekly depending on the situation. Some meetings may be cancelled or rescheduled due to holidays or vacations.
3. People working with the Customized Employment department are expected to be active participants in their job support including participating in mutually agreed upon weekly responsibilities.

4. Your Employment Specialist will talk with you when you start about what works best for organizing support and communication, but there is an expectation that participants be open and responsive.
5. Cases may also be subject reevaluation if participants consistently do not comply with set expectations, such as timeliness and follow-through on weekly responsibilities.
6. While in active Discovery or Job Development, participants are expected to attend all scheduled appointments with staff members. If an individual needs to reschedule, they should contact staff as soon as possible. If someone consistently misses appointments without notice in a 90-day period, their participation will be subject to a re-evaluation. During that time, the Lead Employment Specialist will decide whether it is appropriate to continue Customized Employment services and if a corrective action plan will be put in place.

On-the-Job Support:

7. The standard job coaching support is as follows: 80-100% coverage the first two weeks, 50% coverage the third week, during the fourth week staff support will fade to check ins. A job coaching plan can be discussed with the team prior to the first day of work based on the support needs of the individual. Job coaching is not available for 3rd-shift positions. This schedule is up to the discretion of the staff.
8. After three months on the job, participants will move into maintenance. For the next 9 months of their employment, they will receive monthly visits and updates from CC staff. After this period, staff will conduct a quarterly visit and update. At 18 months, the case will be closed and an updated Individual Support Plan will be placed in their file at CC and at their place of work. After your case is closed, feel free to contact your Employment Specialist who will help you on a consultation basis.
9. If an individual quits their job or is fired, a 6-month wait and a Corrective Action Plan is required before the person can be re-evaluated for services or return to the waitlist. Special circumstances can waive the 6-month timeframe. This is up to the discretion of the Lead Employment Specialist. After the 6 months, a team meeting will be scheduled and progress will be evaluated according to the goals listed in the Corrective Action Plan.

General Expectations:

10. Services can be terminated if an agreement on reasonable goals cannot be agreed upon by the team after corrective action or team meeting.
11. Transportation is the responsibility of the participant. As much as possible, staff will accommodate participant preferences for meeting location, such as the office, participant's homes, or in the community. Bus training can be provided as needed.
12. In our efforts to respect everyone's right to privacy, we will not be able to release information regarding a participant's case unless we have a signed Release of Information form from the participant or the individual's legal guardian.

13. If you are looking for new employment while you are currently employed, please speak to your Employment Specialist. We review these on a case by case basis to determine the best action plan.

Community Living Expectations

Sustained and Transitional Community Support Programs

1. Participants will be expected to meet regularly with CC staff. If an individual needs to reschedule, they should contact staff as soon as possible. If someone consistently misses appointments without notice in a 90-day period, their services will be subject to a re-evaluation. During that time, staff will decide whether it is appropriate to continue Community Living services or put an action plan in place.
2. Individuals are expected to actively participate in their own progress. They will have weekly tasks or assignments. If a participant does not fulfill these expectations, they will be subject to re-evaluation.

Home Based Support Self-Direction Assistance

1. HBS recipients and families who elect to use Self-Direction Assistance (SDA) are expected to communicate their support needs to the SDA provider. The SDA can only best support the person and their family when there are open lines of communication.
2. Participants are expected to keep appointments and notify their SDA of a cancellation.
3. Any paperwork that requires a signature should be signed and returned in a timely fashion or by the deadline given.

Section 8: Service Termination

Exclusion, suspension, and termination of may occur when:

- A. an individual desires to stop participation
- B. agreement on reasonable goals cannot be reached by the team after team discussion and negotiation
- C. negative behavior that places the individual or others in danger occurs
- D. there is a violation of the rules and/or Code of Conduct as outlined in the Participant Handbook
- E. the medical or mental health needs of the individual cannot be met
- F. the individual moves or is transferred to a program offered by another agency

In the event of one of the above, the individual's services may be suspended and decisions regarding services will be referred to the individual's planning team (which includes the individual, family, staff, and others selected by the individual at the start of services). This team will determine whether a corrective action plan will be put in place and decide the criteria under which the individual may re-enter the program. Based on the recommendation of the team, the Executive Director, or his/her designee, will make a decision in writing regarding an individual's eligibility to continue receiving services.

This decision can be appealed to the Chairperson of the Quality Assurance Committee by submitting a letter of appeal to the committee. The Quality Assurance Committee will review the facts of the case and make a decision within 10 business days. Their decision is final and cannot be appealed.

For State funded services ONLY:

- Participants who have state funding will have the opportunity to appeal CC's decision to exclude, suspend, or discharge them to the Department of Human Services (DHS).
- Upon entry into state-funded CC services, individuals and guardians will receive notification of the right to appeal actions to deny, modify, reduce, or terminate any services received by CC from their ISC.
- If actions to deny, modify, reduce, or terminate services are to be taken, the participant and/or guardian must receive a written notice, at least 10 days in advance.
- Authorized DHS representative's decisions on the grievance will constitute a final administrative decision and will be subject to review in accordance with the Administrative Review law.

A discharge summary and transitional program plan will be prepared upon the discharge of each individual and forwarded to the receiving agency.

Section 9: Using Our Services - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

In the previous sections of this handbook, you learned about all the services and supports that Community Choices offers. Because we do not always operate like traditional adult service providers, below you will learn a bit more about how to use our services.

MEMBERSHIP AND THE CONNECT DEPARTMENT -

1. I just became a member, what's next? How do I get involved?

One of the best ways to start getting involved with Community Choices is to attend our Social Opportunities. These are a chance for you to get to know other members, find people with similar interests as you, and get to know the staff who work in all of our departments. It's also a way for us to get to know you, so we can help get you connected to other opportunities that you might like! Social Opportunities are sent out monthly via email, and are also on our members only website, www.communitychoices.inc - members only. Check to see what is available.

Some options are Opt-In (like our Social Opportunities and our *Step Up to Leadership Course*). This means that we will tell you what's going on and you can choose if you want to participate or not (we hope you do!). Other options are more personalized, like Co-Op Clubs, or Open Campaign connections. These options are based off of what *you* are interested in, which means, *we need you to tell us!*

When you become a member at Community Choices, you'll also be assigned a Connect Partner - either Kaitland, Jon, or Hannah. Your Connect Partner is your go-to person in the co-op. They'll give you a call or shoot you an email periodically to see how you're doing, tell you about a new class that is starting, or remind you about a social opportunity you might enjoy.

Your Connect Partner will also guide you through our Connect Exploration process to find out more about your interests and what types of connections you'd like to make in the co-op and the community. Your Connect Partner will work with you if you'd like to start a co-op club, master a new hobby, or build a connection to people, groups or places in the community.

If you already have an idea about something you'd like Community Choices to help you work toward, let us know! We can work with you on how to make that happen! Talk to your Connect Partner about what you're interested in! Don't know who your Connect Partner is? Contact Kaitland, our Membership Coordinator, who can help get you connected!

2. I am a member, does that mean that I have access to all Community Choices services and supports?

By becoming a member, you are now able to participate in any of our Connect department activities and programs. Check out the Social Calendar to see what we're up to each month! It is sent out monthly via email and is on our members only website. Keep an eye out for emails from Kaitland about other opportunities, and let us know if you'd like to set up a Co-op Club or work with us to connect to community opportunities.

You are also able to participate in any of our Community Living and Customized Employment supports. Some of these services do have a waitlist, so if you are interested, it is a good idea to talk to us about it! While you are waiting to start working actively in these areas, you have the option of participating in our Job Club and Personal Development Classes when they are offered. If you are a member but are *not* registered on the PUNS waiting list, there are some services that you may not be able to access. Talk to Becca or Kaitland for more information.

3. *I am a parent. I have questions and need a little support, how do I get involved?*

At Community Choices we are a cooperative, so we always work to not just connect our members with disabilities, but to connect families as well. If you are a family member and would like to get to know other family members, consider participating in our Family Support Group! We also have quarterly Co-Op meetings where you can get information about issues affecting our community and supports for people with developmental disabilities. Just looking for a little fun? Be sure to join us for our Quarterly Family Parties! We're also always looking for families who want to help plan these and other events. Talk to Becca if that's something you are interested in.

4. *I want to get involved in some of your programs and opportunities, but it's outside my comfort zone - I'm uncomfortable. How can you help?*

We believe that Success is a Shared Responsibility. This means that we have high expectations of our members, but it also means that we are here to help them think through problems and find solutions! If you have a barrier that is keeping you from being as involved as you'd like, let us know! Sometimes just getting to know one or two people can help you to feel more confident! We can work together to figure it out!

5. *I want to participate in one of your events, but I don't have a ride. What should I do?*

We don't have the capacity to provide rides to people to participate in our events, but we are here to help you figure out other options! We want you to be able to participate *and* we want you to expand the transportation options in your day to day life. Transportation is going to be a little different for everyone, but we are happy to think through some choices with you. Some people are able to take the fixed route MTD busses or the ADA door to door bus system. There are options like Uber, Lyft and some other private ride services in town. We are also a cooperative, which means that we try to support each other. Often there are other members who would be happy to help with rides. There are lots of possibilities! We're here to help you find one that will work for you, so don't let transportation be a barrier without talking to us first.

Here are some of the things that will help your chances of working out transportation to events:

- Talk to us ahead of time - we won't be able to help nearly as well if you talk to us the day of the event.
- Be willing to take responsibility for some of the work - we're here to partner with you - not do things for you.

6. *I would like to meet other people who are interested in the same things. How can you help me do that?*

There are a lot of different ways to do this! The best first step is to talk to your Connect Partner and tell them about what you like and what sort of people you'd like to connect with. From there they will have some suggestions on how we might be able to help. If you're not sure who your Connect Partner is, contact is Kaitland, who can help you get connected!

CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT -

7. *I want a job, can you help?*

We've got a whole department for that! We regularly work with people to find community-based employment. Our process is person-centered, which means that we look for the type of job and work that you want and the working conditions that will help you be most successful. Because there is a lot of demand for employment support, there is a waiting list to work directly with one of our Employment Specialists, but we strive to begin our Discovery process within 30 days of joining the waiting list. After finishing Discovery, you'll be on standby and our Employment Specialists will be on the lookout for any jobs that seem like they could be a good fit until we're able to work with you on an individualized job search.

8. *How long does it take to get a job?*

Finding the right job can be tricky! We use a Discovery process before we begin actively applying for jobs with you, so that we know more about what you are looking for and what type of environment is going to work the best. This process usually takes 4-6 weeks. After that, you'll be on standby or we begin looking for jobs. Some people find jobs really quickly, for others it takes longer. We encourage our participants to be patient and to communicate with us if they have concerns or ideas. We believe it's better to wait for the right job than to start something that you won't like.

9. *I already have a job, but would like to try something new, can you help with that?*

Yes! We understand that even if you like your job it can get boring after a while. Everyone should have the chance to build their skills and their careers. We are happy to work with people looking for a new job, but we do ask that you maintain a good work performance before and during that process. Having a good relationship with your current employer will help your chances of getting a good reference. Sometimes we may encourage new participants to do some volunteering to build their resumes and positive references. Talk with our Employment Staff if you have any questions.

COMMUNITY LIVING -

10. I am living independently, but I need some extra support. Can you help me?

There are different ways that we can support you with this. The best plan is to set up a time to talk with someone from the Community Living department about what some options might be.

11. Can you help me find support workers?

Yes! We keep a database of people who are interested in working as Personal Support Workers (PSWs) through the Home Based Support Program and privately. We can also refer you to other organizations in town that help with this. Talk to Karli - karli.communitychoices@gmail.com

12. I am looking for live-in support/a supportive roommate, do you do that?

There are a number of members of the cooperative who have set up supportive housing models for themselves or their family members. We are happy to talk through some options and to connect you with others who have been through the process.

14. Wow, that's a lot of information... I can't remember what all you even do!

Sometimes it's easier to use a picture! Here's a graphic that shows all the different services and supports we offer. Remember - these are the general options we have, but we always want to hear from you about how they can be personalized to fit what you need! Never be afraid to ask!

Membership Required		No Membership Needed!	
Connect Opt-In <i>(Just Sign-Up or Show-Up)</i>	Connect Personalized <i>(Talk to Us about getting involved)</i>	Customized Employment	Community Living
What's Offered:	What's Offered:	What's Offered:	What's Offered:
Social Opportunities	Exploration - figuring out what connections you'd like to build!	Discovery	Transitional Community Support
Virtual Zoom Groups	Co-Op Clubs	Job Development	Sustained Community Support
Step Up to Leadership Course	Personalized Connections to the community	On-the-Job Support	HBS Self-Direction Assistance
Quarterly Co-Op Meetings	Open Champaign Group and Events	First Time Job Seekers Program	Personal Development Classes
Family Support Group	Leadership & Advocacy - Human Rights and Advocacy Group - Leadership Projects	LEAP - Employment 1st Business Training	
Family Parties			

