

CAS/CANS & Your Self-Directed Budget

Effective June 1, 2026, OPWDD implemented a new requirement that all CAS and CANS assessments must be current and up to date before a budget can be submitted. As a result, budgets cannot be submitted for review or approval until these required assessments have been completed.

To avoid delays in the budgeting process, please work with your Care Coordinator to ensure that your CAS or CANS assessment is reviewed and updated as needed.

- CANS assessments are required for people under the age of 18 and must be completed annually.
- CAS assessments are required for people age 18 and older and must be completed every two years.

Ensuring that assessments remain current will help prevent delays in budget development, submission, and approval.

IDGS Transportation and Staff Activity Fee Reminder

Many Community Habilitation activities take place in the community, such as shopping, dining out, attending events, or participating in recreational activities. To ensure these activities are clearly connected to each person's service plan, IDGS Transportation and Staff Activity Fee (SAF) requests must now include the name of the goal that was being worked on during the activity. The name of the goal comes from the Community Habilitation Staff Action Plan (CH SAP).

- **IDGS Transportation example:** A self-Hire takes someone to the grocery store for grocery shopping, the IDGS Transportation description would be *"Grocery Shopping-Teach skills for independent living"*.
- **OTPS Staff Activity Fees example:** A Self-Hire takes someone out to lunch so that they can practice their money transactions, the OTPS SAF description would be *"Lunch-Money Management Skills"*.

For Respite Services, there are not any goals being worked on, so this will remain a brief description of the trip or activity.

This clarification is intended to better reflect the purpose of the activities being completed and does not change how services are provided. Self-Hired Associates will continue to document the details of each activity and the progress made toward goals in Community Habilitation service notes.

By clearly linking activities to goals, we can better demonstrate the meaningful work being done every day to support each person's growth, independence, and success in the community. For any additional needed guidance or information, please contact your FI Coordinator.

Self-Hire Trainings



All Self-Hires were required to complete the following trainings by 06/30/2026:

HIPAA Annual Update 2026

First Aid/CPR/ AED Update 2026

Once those trainings are complete, the next training that will be due on 8/31/2026 is:

Safety Issues and Fire Safety Update 2026

It is crucial that all Self-Hires remain informed and compliant with all New York State and OPWDD requirements. **Failure to complete these trainings by the due date can result in disabled eVero access, corrective action, and termination.** If your Self Hire need assistance with the Relias System—such as logging in, resetting a password, or navigating tests please contact your FI Coordinator or email the training department at the following address: Training@thearcas.org

Reminder for Self-Hires; Texting Is Not Secure

To help protect privacy and maintain compliance, Self-Hires cannot use text messages for any work-related communication. This includes communication with FI Coordinators, the people they support, authorized representatives, family members, and other employees.

Please remember that texting is not an approved communication method, regardless of whether Protected Health Information (PHI) is included in the message or not.

Instead, please use approved communication methods, such as phone calls or agency email. Thank you for helping us protect confidential information and remain compliant with program requirements and Privacy Laws.

Additional Communication Expectations

Self-Hires are responsible for reviewing all communications received through email, eVero messages, and telephone calls on a regular basis.

They must remain reachable during scheduled service sessions. All emails, eVero messages, phone calls, and other work-related communications requiring a response must be addressed within 24–48 business hours during my regularly scheduled workdays, recognizing that employee work schedules may vary. Consistent and professional communication is an essential job responsibility. Failure to comply with these expectations may result in corrective action.

Q & A

Q: What do CAS and CANS stand for, and why are they important?

A: CAS stands for Coordinated Assessment System and is used for people age 18 and older.

CANS stands for Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths and is used for people under age 18. These assessments help identify a person's strengths, needs, and support requirements, and are used to inform service planning and budget development.



Q: Why is it important to keep CAS and CANS assessments current?

A: Updated assessments are now a prerequisite for budget submission. Keeping assessments current helps prevent delays in budget development, review, and approval.



Q: What should people and their families do to avoid budget delays?

A: Work closely with your Care Coordinator to ensure your CAS or CANS assessment has been completed and updated as needed before the budgeting process begins.



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For any questions regarding information found on this newsletter, please email:
FIConnect@thearcas.org

