



**The Office of Developmental Supports (ODS)** appreciates the importance of your Everyday Life, your choices, and your right to direct your own services whenever possible. There may be times when ODS makes a decision affecting your services that you disagree with. If that happens, you have the right to tell ODS why you disagree with us and ask us to change the decision. This is done by appealing the decision and requesting either a County Conference or a Fair Hearing.



Learn more about and reach ODS at [www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/About/Offices/Developmental-Supports.aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/About/Offices/Developmental-Supports.aspx), at the QR code above or call 412-253-1399.

### **How will I know if ODS has made a decision that affects my services?**

Any time we authorize a change to your Individual Support Plan, ODS will send you a letter notifying you of that change, called a “Service Change Notification.” You and your support team usually have team meetings prior to any of these changes. But if you have any questions or have changed your mind about anything, this letter tells you how to contact ODS to let us know. You can also call your Supports Coordinator (SC) with questions at any time.

### **What do I do if I disagree with ODS’s decision?**

If you disagree with the decision, the letter you receive will explain how to tell us. If you have any questions, you can contact your Supports Coordinator or the ODS staff person listed in the letter. Sometimes at ODS, we have to make changes to your services based on decisions made by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) or other state agencies. Not all of these decisions can be appealed through ODS, but you can ask your Supports Coordinator or contact ODS directly to talk about your options.

### **Can anyone help me with my appeal?**

You can have anyone you would like to help you with your appeal. For example, you can ask your Supports Coordinator, a trusted helper, or a family member. You can also work with your attorney or other paid advocate. Don’t be afraid to request assistance if you need help.

Allegheny County Department of Human Services  
Office of Developmental Supports Informational Document on Appeals Options  
August 2023

**How long do I have to file my appeal?**

The letter you received will explain how long you have to file an appeal, which is usually around 30 days. In some instances, if you appeal certain changes within 10 days, you may be able to keep those changes from happening during your appeal (but if you lose your appeal, you may have to pay for those services). If you aren't sure how long you have, please call or email your ODS contact person.

**How much does it cost?**

There is no cost unless you hire an independent advocate or attorney.

**What are the different types of appeal hearings?**

There are two types of appeal hearings: a County Conference and a Fair Hearing through the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' Bureau of Hearings and Appeals (BHA). The letter you receive will tell you which type you should request and include a form telling you how to do so. The type of appeal is based on what type of change is being made.

No matter which type you request, we will offer you a Pre-Hearing Conference, which can occur over the phone, virtually, or in person. This is an opportunity to resolve the disagreement without a formal hearing. If things can't be resolved at the Pre-Hearing Conference, then you will move forward to either the County Conference or the Fair Hearing. There, you will be able to explain to a neutral person why you disagree with the decision, and you can bring evidence and witnesses with you.

**What if I disagree with the final decision from the County Conference or Fair Hearing?**

Within 30 days of the County Conference and 90 days of the BHA Fair Hearing, you will receive notice of the final decision. If you still disagree after the County Conference or Fair Hearing, you will be able to file another appeal or request for consideration. The paperwork you receive notifying you of the decision will explain what you should do if you would like to appeal that decision as well.