

# Frequently Asked Questions: Agency with Choice

March 26, 2026 – Based on questions submitted during Statewide AwC webinars in February of 2026.

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## Introduction

We reviewed questions across all six sessions and grouped them into five key topic areas below. If your exact wording does not appear, your question may be included in a combined response. This document will be updated as new questions arise.

## Why are we doing this?

### **Why was Agency with Choice (AwC) created?**

AwC was created to expand service options and reduce the employer burden on individuals and families. It provides another way to receive in-home services while keeping the individual at the center of decision-making.

**Is AwC replacing other in-home service options?**

No, AwC is an additional option. Existing programs such as IHCA, CEP, ICP, and others remain available so individuals can choose the model that works best for them.

**Why isn't AwC available to OPI-M clients?**

AwC is not currently included under OPI-M program rules. Program eligibility is determined by federal and state policy requirements.

**Is AwC intended to reduce case manager workload or save funding?**

AwC is designed to reduce employer-related responsibilities for individuals and families while maintaining case manager oversight. It is not intended to eliminate core case management responsibilities.

**How was the AwC provider selected?**

The provider was selected through a formal public procurement process to ensure compliance with state contracting standards.

**Worker roles and pay**

**What is the difference between a Home Care Worker (HCW) and a Direct Support Worker (DSW) under AwC?**

The primary difference is employment structure. A DSW is employed by the AwC provider, while an HCW operates as an independent provider. In both models, the individual directs their care.

**Must a current HCW apply to become a DSW?**

Yes, a current HCW must apply and be hired by the AwC provider to become a DSW. Individuals may work in both roles if they meet requirements for each.

### **How are DSW wages and benefits structured?**

DSW wages and benefits are structured by the provider to be competitive and compliant with labor law requirements. Specific compensation details will be shared directly by the provider.

### **Are there hour limits for DSWs?**

Yes, standard labor rules apply, including applicable weekly hour limits.

### **Can a spouse be hired as a DSW?**

Yes, a spouse may apply and be hired as a DSW if they meet all hiring and background requirements. Under AwC, the spouse is treated as an employee.

## **How it works in our systems and day-to-day process**

### **How are services authorized under AwC?**

Case managers continue to authorize services as they do today. The AwC provider manages employment and payroll responsibilities separately.

### **How does time tracking and EVV work?**

DSWs use the provider's approved system to track time and meet EVV requirements. The provider ensures compliance with all state and federal requirements.

### **Who handles billing and payment issues?**

The AwC provider manages payroll and billing processes. Case managers are not responsible for handling DSW payroll issues.

### **How are service plan changes handled?**

Case managers update the Person-Centered Service Plan of Care as usual. The provider then works with the individual and DSW to implement approved changes.

### **Who should case managers contact with concerns?**

Case managers should contact the AwC provider for operational or employment-related concerns to keep communication clear and streamlined.

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