**Medicaid Alternative Pathways to Independence**

**(MAPs) Program Exception Request Resource Guide**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Exception Request Resource Guide is to provide Innovation Coordinators (“ICs”) and provider agency partners with detailed information and clear procedures for requesting specific exceptions within the Medicaid Alternative Pathways to Independence (“MAPs”) program. This guide outlines the criteria, documentation requirements, and approval processes for three known circumstances: On-Hold Requests, Milestone Repeat Requests, and Family Members Delivering Direct Support, but also acknowledges that a traditional exception process, in general, may be valuable in other circumstances and ICs are encouraged to collaborate with DDA with the identification and preparation for additional circumstances which would warrant Exception Request consideration. By following this guide, ICs can effectively support participants' unique needs; ensure consistent, well-documented Exception Requests; and improve the overall experience for MAPs participants.

**Table of Contents:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Introduction to Exception Request Resource Guide**
 | **Page** |
| * 1. Definitions
 | 2 |
| * 1. Overview of MAPs Program
 | 3 |
| * 1. Role of Innovation Coordinators
 | 4 |
| 1. **General Guidelines for Exception Requests**
 | 5 |
| * 1. Criteria for Submitting Requests
 | 5 |
| * 1. Process for Review and Approval/Denial
 | 6 |
| 1. **MAPs Services Budget Extension (On-Hold) Requests**
 | 8 |
| * 1. Background
 | 8 |
| * 1. Purpose of Budget Extension (On-Hold) Status
 | 9 |
| * 1. Eligibility and Implementation Criteria
 | 11 |
| * 1. Procedures
 | 11 |
| * 1. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
 | 14 |
| 1. **Milestone Repeat Request**
 | 17 |
| * 1. Background
 | 17 |
| * 1. Purpose of a Milestone Repeat Request
 | 18 |
| * 1. Eligibility and Implementation Criteria
 | 19 |
| * 1. Procedures
 | 21 |
| * 1. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
 | 24 |
| 1. **Family Members Delivering Direct Support**
 | 26 |
| * 1. Background
 | 26 |
| * 1. Purpose
 | 26 |
| * 1. Eligibility and Implementation Criteria
 | 27 |
| * 1. Procedures
 | 29 |
| * 1. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
 | 31 |
| 1. **Additional Resources and Support**
 | 33 |

This table of contents provides a structured overview of the "Exception Request" Resource Guide, ensuring ICs have clear and comprehensive information on how to request exceptions within the MAPs program.

1. **Introduction To Exception Request Resource Guide**
2. Definitions:
3. **Exception Request** shall mean a formal consideration submitted by Innovation Coordinators to seek approval for deviations from standard MAPs program procedures or guidelines. These requests are made to address unique or extraordinary circumstances which may impact a participant's ability to meet program requirements or benefit from standard support. Exception Requests are considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure participants receive the necessary flexibility and support to achieve their goals within the MAPs program.
4. **Family Member** shall mean an immediate a person who, by birth or marriage, is related to the MAPs participant.
5. **Medicaid Alternative Pathways to Independence (“MAPs”) Program** shall meana program of the State of Tennessee which provides services to a specified number of eligible people who have an intellectual and/or developmental disability and who meet certain eligibility criteria for services. The MAPs program is operated by the Department of Disability and Aging.
6. **MAPs Innovation Coordinator (“IC”)** shall mean the person/entity who oversees the development and implementation of the PSCP process and applicable MAPs services. The IC services are delivered through contract agreements from The Department of Disability and Aging and community vendors.
7. **MAPs Person Supported** shall mean a person supported who receives MAPs services from an approved contracted provider agency. MAPs people supported are the recipients of the services in conjunction with a Person Supported Collaborative Plan (“PSCP”).
8. **Milestone** shall mean the selected goal for the MAPs participant based on the menu of available milestones. The MAPs curriculum contains 11 distinct milestones from the outcome areas of Home, Work, and Community. Each participant will select a series of milestones each year to be incorporated within the PSCP, and these will be the goals the provider assists the participant in achieving.
9. **On-Hold Status** shall mean any period in which a person supported is unable to participate in the MAPs program or service(s). "On-Hold" typically means the person supported’s participation or involvement is temporarily suspended or put on hold. This could be due to various reasons, such as personal emergencies, medical issues, family emergencies, provider capacity, and/or other unforeseen circumstances which prevent the person from actively engaging in the program or service(s).
10. **Person Supported Collaborative Plan (“PSCP”)** shall mean the specific plan of the person supported which outlines MAPs services and milestones over the course of the MAPs program. Each PSCP will be revised, at minimum, on an annual basis identifying specific Outcomes and Milestones for the planning cycle.
11. Overview of the MAPs Program:

MAPs is a program designed to support people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities by introducing tools, concepts, and services which can help prevent a learned dependence by placing them on a pathway for individual success and achievement. The services in this program will help people supported effectively identify community interests and resources by building their Virtual Community Resource Map (VCRM), assisting in establishing true and meaningful community networks, and developing independent living skills through supports, such as technology-enhanced smart home living skills, community transportation, peer mentoring, and an array of employment services.

**Who is Eligible for MAPs?**

MAPs is funded to serve up to 1250 people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities either exiting the school system or who have recently exited and may be waiting for traditional waiver services.

**What will the program provide?**

* Identifying people and places in their local communities that share like interests or align with their future goals.
* Learning how to harness the power of accessible and affordable technologies to foster their own functional independence.
* How to navigate and travel independently in their community and how to build natural support networks.
* Independent living skills.

MAPs participants will receive an annual cap of $20,000 for up to 3 years while enrolled in the program.

1. Role of Innovation Coordinators:

The IC in the MAPs program plays a significant role which serves multiple functions in the development, implementation, and assessment of the effectiveness of the MAPs program. While performing many functions which would resemble that of a “Case Manager”, the IC is responsible for facilitating the services and ensuring the MAPs participant experiences a positive MAPs service. It is the ICs role to organize the events, activities, and documents for the MAPs participants to keep services moving in the MAPs program. Organizations are encouraged to develop specific job descriptions for each of the positions within the organization. These job descriptions are enacted with each specific employee for the delivery of the IC services within the MAPs program. For more information on additional roles of the IC, refer to the service definition.

1. **General Guidelines for Exception Requests**
	1. Criteria for Submitting Requests

The MAPs Program Review Team recognizes that unforeseen circumstances may arise, requiring flexibility to ensure the continuity of support and the delivery of truly person-centered services. To maintain the integrity of the program, while also accommodating unique participant needs, specific criteria have been established for submitting Exception Requests.

Exception Requests should be submitted when:

1. **Unanticipated Events**: Circumstances, such as medical emergencies, significant changes in the participant's living situation, or other unexpected life events, which necessitate a deviation from standard program procedures to maintain continuity of care.
2. **Participant-Centered Needs**: The participant's specific needs or goals cannot be adequately addressed within the existing program framework, and an exception is essential to provide personalized and effective support for the participant.
3. **Program Milestones and Progression**: The participant requires additional time or resources to achieve program milestones due to barriers beyond his/her control, such as the need for repeating a milestone to ensure sustainability or temporarily pausing participation to address critical issues and/or a circumstance has changed necessitating the access to repeat a particular milestone.
4. **Family Involvement**: There is a justified need for a family member of the person supported to deliver direct support to the participant, ensuring that the care provided is consistent, familiar, and in the best interest of the participant's overall well-being.

***This is not an inclusive list, DDA and MAPs recognizes there may be additional circumstances which warrant an exception consideration. ICs are encouraged to collaborate with DDA on those specific instances and submit exception requests even if not all of the requested information is entirely applicable to the categories listed above.***

Each Exception Request must include comprehensive documentation detailing the specific circumstances, the rationale for the request, and how the exception will benefit the participant if granted. This process ensures every decision is grounded on the principles of person-centered care, promoting the best possible outcomes for each MAPs participant.

* 1. Process for Approval and Review

**Step 1: Submission of Exception Request**

* Prepare Documentation: The IC must compile all necessary documentation, including a detailed description of the circumstances, the specific exception being requested, and a clear rationale for why the exception is needed.
* Submit Request: The completed Exception Request form and supporting documentation should be submitted to the designated MAPs program review team via the specified submission channel (e.g., online portal).

**Step 2: Initial Review**

* Preliminary Assessment: Upon receipt, the MAPs Program Review Team will conduct a preliminary assessment to ensure the request is complete and that all necessary documentation is provided.
* Clarification Requests: If additional information or clarification is needed, then the MAPs Program Review Team will contact the IC to obtain the required details.

**Step 3: Detailed Evaluation**

* Review by Experts: The request will be evaluated by a panel of experts, including program managers, clinical advisors, and other relevant DDA stakeholders. The panel will assess the request based on established criteria, considering the participant’s needs and the potential impact on their program experience.
* Consistency Check: The MAPs Program Review Team will ensure the request aligns with the principles of the MAPs program and adheres to regulatory and policy guidelines.

**Step 4: Decision Making**

* Approval or Denial: The MAPs Program Review Team will then decide to approve or deny the Exception Request (after the detailed evaluation). The decision will be based on the documented evidence, the rationale provided, and the anticipated benefits for the participant.
* Conditions and Limitations: The DDA review panel may impose specific conditions or limitations prior to the approval of a modified exception to ensure the exception is implemented effectively and does not negatively impact the program’s integrity or the person supported.

**Step 5: Notification**

* Communicating the Decision: The IC will be notified of the decision in writing, including any conditions, limitations, or modifications associated with the request as it has been approved. If the request is denied, then the notification will include the reasons for denial and, if applicable, any possible alternatives to the requested exception.
* Participant Involvement: The participant and his/her support team will also be informed of the decision and any subsequent steps required to implement the exception.

**Step 6: Implementation and Monitoring**

* Action Plan: For approved requests, an action plan will be developed to integrate the exception into the participant’s support framework. This plan will outline the specific steps to be taken, parties responsible for implementing the steps, and timelines for the steps.
* Ongoing Monitoring: The IC will monitor the implementation of the exception to ensure it meets the participant’s needs and maintains program standards. Regular updates will be provided to the MAPs Program Review Team (Regional Transition Guides and Youth Transition Director).

**Step 7: Review and Evaluation**

* Periodic Review: Approved exceptions will be subject to periodic review to assess their continued relevance and effectiveness. Adjustments will be made, as necessary, to align with evolving participant needs and program goals.
* Feedback and Improvement: Feedback from participants, families, and staff will be gathered to inform future decisions and enhance the overall exception request process.

This structured approval and review process ensures that Exception Requests are handled systematically, transparently, and in a manner which prioritizes the participant's best interests while upholding the integrity of the MAPs program.

1. **MAPs Services Budget Extension (On-Hold) Request**
	1. Background:

The Department of Disability and Aging (“Department”) is administering the Medicaid Alternative Pathways to Independence (“MAPs”) program to people across the state of Tennessee who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. The MAPs program provides access to three (3) years’ worth of services for each person enrolled.

The MAPs program is a pilot program, which means the Department is implementing a series of approaches to deliver cost-effective and provider innovation-encouraged support to reduce the dependency on traditional long-term services and supports. The implementation of the MAPs program was developed using a progressive approach whereby services would be rolled out incrementally across the state of Tennessee. Through this implementation, plans have been identified where a limited number of contracted provider agencies would be secured to allow for controlled and sustained growth of the program. As additional people are enrolled in the MAPs program, additional providers may be reviewed and enrolled into the MAPs network to meet that demand. As the MAPs program continues to expand, it is expected that certain delays may be experienced, and the Department wishes to ensure each participant can maximize their service time within the program.

* 1. Purpose of Budget Extension (On-Hold) Status:

The “On-Hold” status provides a framework for maintaining support for services in the MAPs program during extenuating circumstances, which include, but are not limited to, behavioral crises, medical emergencies, provider capacity, and other circumstances outside the control of the MAPs person supported. Due to the MAPs program being a time-sensitive, 3-year limited program for services, an “On-Hold” status would create a space to ensure all MAPs participants receive their full 3 years' worth of services, while also ensuring diligence in monitoring appropriations for service delivery. The need for an “On-Hold” status is a circumstantial decision, which would be approved solely based on a case-by-case basis scenario by the Department. It is important to note that an “On-Hold” status is **temporary**. It should be noted that, during an “On-Hold status, the Department and MAPs program staff will be working diligently to address the underlying reasons for the “On-Hold” status so MAPs services can be resumed to minimize any negative impacts on people supported.

The specific circumstances under which benefits may be expanded to people with intellectual/developmental disabilities can vary depending on the program and the policies in place. Circumstances where benefits may be expanded are as follows:

1. **Medical emergencies:** If a person experiences a medical emergency which prevents him/her from participating in the program, then he/she may be granted an extension or additional support(s).

2. **Natural disasters:** In the event of a natural disaster, such as a hurricane, earthquake, fire, or flood, people may be unable to access services. In such cases, benefits may be expanded to accommodate the disruption caused by the disaster.

3. **Family emergencies:** If a person has a family emergency, such as a death in the family or a serious illness of a caregiver, then he/she may be granted additional support(s) or a temporary suspension of program requirements.

4. **Personal emergencies**: Certain personal emergencies, such as accidents or sudden health issues, may prevent a person from participating in the program. In such cases, benefits may be expanded or adjusted to accommodate the situation.

1. **Behavioral Crisis:** A behavioral crisis refers to a situation in which a person exhibits intense and disruptive behaviors which may pose a risk to his/her safety or the safety of others. These behaviors often surpass the person’s typical patterns of conduct and may include, but are not limited to, aggression, violence, self-harm, or other actions which create an immediate and challenging situation.
2. **Unforeseen circumstances**: There may be other unforeseen circumstances which prevent a person from program participation, such as legal issues, transportation problems, or sudden financial hardships. These situations may be considered on a case-by-case basis, and benefits may be expanded or adjusted accordingly.
3. **Circumstances out of control of MAPs participants** may be a public health emergency, a transition between service providers, or other unforeseen events which may necessitate a cause for an “On-Hold” status need, and which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
4. **Provider Capacity**: A Provider is an agency or organization that provides MAPs services to people with disabilities. The capacity of a MAPs service provider refers to that provider’s ability to effectively deliver services and support to people eligible for the MAPs program. Provider capacity encompasses various aspects which contribute to the provider’s ability to meet the needs of the people they support. Capacity is dynamic and may evolve based on each provider.

***NOTE:*** *This is not an inclusive list and other circumstances could be approved upon request.*

*It is important to note that the specific circumstances and the process for expanding benefits may vary depending on the program and the organization providing the services. It is recommended to consult the program guidelines or contact the relevant authorities for accurate and up-to-date information.*

* 1. Eligibility and Implementation of “On-Hold” Service Plan:

People supported and enrolled in the MAPs program will begin MAPs services by completing an initial interest assessment, skill assessment, and technological utilization assessment administered by the Innovation Coordination Agency. At the time of enrollment, the person supported will begin their 3-years’ worth of services *(i.e., MAPs Person Supported Budget Year begins on the date of enrollment and will renew at each enrollment date for the next 2 years totaling 3 years of MAPs services).* During this process, the MAPs person supported and/or legal representative, if applicable, will be introduced to the available MAPs providers. The MAPs person supported and/or legal representative, if applicable, will select his/her provider of choice to deliver the MAPs services.

The Department will implement a consideration process whereby a MAPs person supported may have his/her Annual Budget Date placed on a temporary “On-Hold” status in the event a provider agency is unable to accept the referral to initiate services OR if the person experiences a disruption in his/her services outside of their control. By placing the person's status “On-Hold”, the Department will be able to ensure the person supported will continue to have access to three (3) years of MAPs services.

d. Procedures for On-Hold Requests:

The following procedures shall be implemented through the “On-Hold” status consideration:

1. All “On-Hold” status requests will be submitted by the IC to the MAPs Regional Transition Guide.
	1. All “On Hold” requests will be submitted via the IC to a developed Microsoft Requesting Form:

[**MAPs Exception Request**](https://forms.office.com/g/f1UnDN14FP) **(Click Here)**

1. In the event a person-supported is requesting the “On-Hold” consideration, the person-supported will initiate this request by notifying the IC of the interest in the request AND accompanying reasons. Progress to #2.
2. In the event the request is being initiated by the IC due to provider capacity, the following procedures will occur.
3. The IC will submit a person-supported referral to all applicable providers within the MAPs network and document within the Individual Case File reasons for denial for tracking purposes (to include reasons why the provider was unable to accept the referral).
4. Upon exhausting all initial options with the MAPs provider network (including providing Technical Assistance to the already identified providers to accept the MAPs person supported within a reasonable time), the IC will communicate to the Department if a MAPs person supported has exhausted all current options for provider supports AND/OR meets “On-Hold” status request criteria based on any of the above-mentioned circumstances. This notification will be sent to the Regional MAPs Transition Guide AND a Case Note will be completed in the MAPs participant Case File.
5. The MAPs status will read as “PCSP Planning in Process OR Enrolled” based on the active status of the participant.
6. The MAPs Transition Guide will assist in potential problem-solving and planning processes to avoid a MAPs “On-Hold” status implementation with the IC staff. If unsuccessful in identifying a solution, then the following steps will be initiated.
7. The MAPs Program Review Team will review the request of “On-Hold” status and make a notification in the Case File that the request has been reviewed.

Internal Case Note to include:

* Date of Request
* Date of Review
* MAPs Program Review Members of the Department
* Summary of Circumstances
* Resolution by the Department
* Effective Dates of Extension

EXAMPLE*: 3/21/2024 DDA received a request for “On-Hold” status and met to review on 3/26/24 with the MAPs Program Review Team—Brea, Jay, and Carly. Participant’s family home was impacted by a natural disaster on 12/10/23 and the family has been displaced, impacting the finalization of completion of the Home Safety Milestone. Initial 30-day request granted until 3/26/2024, additional 30-day extension granted until 4/26/2024.*

1. At the conclusion of all efforts, the MAPs Program Review Team will prepare a written statement to the MAPs person supported/stakeholder, provider agency, and IC agency regarding the recommendation of an “On-Hold” status to ensure the MAPs person supported does not lose any possible MAPs support time due to circumstances outside of the control of the MAPs person supported. This publication will include the following:
* Name
* Date
* Summary of Circumstances
* Resolution by the Department
* Expected engagement criteria during “On-Hold” Status
1. Once this notice has been sent to the stakeholders, the MAPs Transition Guide will ensure the notification is included and attached to the Extension Request SharePoint Site (internal use only).
2. The Department and/or IC agency will review each “On-Hold” case frequently to ensure plans for correction are being developed to remove the “On-Hold” status and resume MAPs services.
3. Upon conclusion of the “On-Hold” status, the SharePoint site will be updated to reflect an “Enrolled” status, and dates will be updated to represent the time in which the person supported was “On-Hold”.
4. The MAPs person-supported Budget Tracker will be updated by DDA staff to reflect the new ending date of the planning year to account for the “time” while a person was “On-Hold”. This will result in adjustments to Years 2 and 3 budget start and end dates.

*NOTES:*

*“On-Hold” status consideration and this resource are subject to change at any time pending program advancements, funding implications, and/or changes in the delivery approach of MAPs services. The Department reserves the ability to adjust this consideration without notice.*

***The Department will not implement a review/appeal request process for this consideration. The decision made at the onset of the request shall be the initial and final review for that consideration.***

1. MAPs Budget Extension “On-Hold” Status Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**What circumstances might warrant pausing services (placing the status to “On-Hold”) under the MAPs?**

This resource is intended to recognize situations where a MAPs participant may not be able to receive the intended MAPs services. It is expected that, when these situations occur, a participant will be able to go to “On-Hold” status and not lose service time associated with the time-sensitivity of the MAPs services. Some circumstances which could warrant consideration for someone going “On-Hold” include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Medical Emergencies
* Natural Disasters
* Family Emergencies
* Personal Emergencies (e.g., Behavioral Crises)
* Provider Capacity
* Unforeseen Circumstances

**How can a participant request to pause his/her services, OR have his/her status temporarily changed to “On-Hold”?**

The assigned IC will be responsible for initiating the request for an “On-Hold” status for the participant. The MAPs participant would need to communicate to the assigned IC his/her need to be considered for an “On-Hold” status, while also including specific reasons why the services cannot be received. The IC will forward these requests to the MAPs Program Review Team for review. These requests can be sent directly to the MAPs Transition Guide OR Youth Transition Director in writing via an identified process within the On-Hold Resource Guide.

**What documentation or process is required to initiate a pause in services?**

The Department must receive all requests via writing from the assigned IC. If the MAPs participant wishes to request this status change, then he/she may do so directly to the assigned IC, however, the Department will only accept requests in writing directly to the assigned Regional Transition Guide. Once received, the Transition Guide will initiate the associated procedure for review and consideration.

**Are there specific criteria or eligibility requirements for pausing services?**

This recognition intends to ensure the MAPs participant has access to a full 3 years’ worth of MAPs services. In the event access to MAPs services is disrupted/unavailable for a reason outside of the control of the MAPs participant, then consideration will be given to credit the participant with any time lost because of the disruption. The Department will review each request case-by-case basis to determine if the circumstance(s) warrant consideration. In the event it is determined that adequate justification exists, the Department will grant the “On-Hold” status providing additional time for the MAPs participant. MAPs participants should reserve requesting for “On-HOLD” consideration as a last resort, as it is not intended to be utilized as a convenience for the MAPs participant or other stakeholders.

**How long can services be paused, and is there a maximum duration?**

MAPs services will be eligible for pausing for up to 30 days at a time, to be possibly extended at the end of that 30-day time-period. During a planning year for the MAPs participant, the maximum duration that can be considered is 90 days. Any disruption beyond 90 days would require disenrollment from the MAPs program. That participant would be eligible to re-enroll in MAPs services (pending availability, funding, and other considerations) when they can resume services. Participants can request for “On-Hold” consideration a maximum of 3 times per year (pending circumstances).

**Will pausing services affect the participant's eligibility or access to other benefits?**

No. As long as the participant continues to communicate with the IC during their “On-Hold” status, the participant will be able to resume the services as expected upon the completion of the” On-Hold” status.

**What happens to the participant's support plan and goals during the pause in services?**

All services, plans, and milestones are placed on “pause” while the participant is “On-Hold” from the MAPs program. In the event the participant needs to revise the chosen milestones AFTER the “On-Hold” status expires, a collaborative roundtable meeting would be necessary to review all changes within the Person-Centered Support Plan (“PCSP”) and identification of new milestones.

**Can services be resumed after they have been paused, and what is the process for doing so?**

It is expected that services will resume after the pause. At the conclusion of the “On-Hold” period, the IC will notify the participant of the intent to resume services. This notification will also include notifying the selected provider agency so services can resume.

**How does pausing services impact the participant's relationship with their assigned support coordinator or case manager?**

The IC agency will continue to maintain an OPEN record for the MAPs participants while they are placed on “On-Hold”. At the conclusion of the “On-Hold” period, the IC will resume monitoring of services. Each MAPs participant should expect that the IC will routinely communicate with the participant during the “On-Hold” status to ensure all necessary planning is to resume MAPs services.

**What are the potential consequences of not adhering to the guidelines for pausing services?**

In the event it is determined that a participant is not acting in good faith to adhere to the reception of MAPs services, the participant may be disenrolled from the MAPs program.

**Who can participants or stakeholders contact for further clarification or assistance regarding pausing services under the program?**

MAPs participants are encouraged to communicate directly with the assigned IC for information relating to their MAPs program and services. The Department will also ensure additional information can be accessed via the DDA MAPs Transition Guides and Youth Transition Director.

1. **Milestone Repeat Exception Request**
	1. Background

The MAPs program is designed to foster greater independence for participants over a span of three years by guiding them through 11 distinct milestones over 3 main Outcome Areas (Home, Work, and Community). Each milestone represents a specific goal or set of skills that participants work towards achieving, contributing to their overall journey towards living independently. The sequential attainment of these milestones is integral to the program’s success where each step/milestone builds upon the previous one, culminating in the attainment of comprehensive skill development, sustainment, and self-sufficiency.

While the program is structured to promote steady progress through each milestone, the Department acknowledges that individual circumstances may necessitate a different approach. Participants may encounter various factors which impact their ability to achieve milestone independence on the first attempt OR may need to repeat a milestone based on various factors. These factors can include, but are not limited to:

* **Health Issues**: Medical conditions or health crises that temporarily impede progress.
* **Personal Circumstances**: Significant life changes, such as housing instability, family emergencies, housing relocation, or other personal challenges, etc.
* **Learning Pace**: Variations in learning styles and paces which require additional time and practice to master certain skills.
* **Support System Changes**: Changes in the participant’s support network, such as loss of a caregiver or transition to a new support team.

Recognizing these potential challenges, the Department has established an exception process which allows participants to repeat milestones when necessary. This process ensures the MAPs program remains flexible and responsive to individual needs, providing participants with the opportunity to fully develop their skills and achieve their goals without being penalized for circumstances beyond their control.

The exception process empowers ICs to advocate for their participants by submitting a formal request to repeat a milestone. This request is based on a thorough assessment of the participant’s situation and a clear rationale for why repeating the milestone is essential for their continued progress. By allowing for milestone repetition, the Department upholds its commitment to person-centered planning and support, ensuring that each participant receives the individualized attention and resources they need to succeed.

This approach not only addresses immediate needs but also reinforces the program’s overarching goal of fostering long-term independence. Through a structured and compassionate exception process, the MAPs program can adapt to the unique paths of each participant, facilitating their journey towards a more independent and fulfilling life.

1. Purpose of the Repeat Milestone Exception Request

The purpose of the Repeat Milestone Exception process is to provide a structured and compassionate mechanism within the MAPs program which allows participants to repeat specific milestones when necessary. This process is designed to accommodate individual circumstances which may impede a participant's ability to achieve milestone independence on the first attempt or require additional support to sustain milestone independence based on contributing influences. By doing so, the Repeat Milestone Exception process ensures:

1. **Person-Centered Support**: Participants receive tailored support that recognizes and addresses their unique challenges and needs, fostering a more individualized and effective pathway to independence.
2. **Continuous Progress**: Participants can maintain their engagement and momentum within the program, even when faced with setbacks/adversity, ensuring that they remain on track toward achieving long-term independence and self-sufficiency.
3. **Holistic Development**: The process supports the overall goal of the MAPs program by ensuring that each participant has the opportunity to fully develop their capabilities and reach their potential across all milestones, contributing to a comprehensive skill set by the end of the three years.
4. **Program Integrity and Quality**: By providing a formalized exception process, the MAPs program can maintain high standards of support and accountability, ensuring all participants are given a fair and equitable chance to succeed while having access to the necessary flexibilities.

Overall, the Repeat Milestone Exception process is a critical component of the MAPs program, reinforcing its commitment to adaptability, person-centered care, and the ultimate goal of independent living for all participants.

1. Eligibility and Implementation Criteria

**Eligibility Criteria**

To qualify for a Repeat Milestone Exception within the MAPs program, participants must meet the following criteria:

1. **Demonstrated Effort**: The participant has shown a consistent and genuine effort to achieve the milestone, including active participation in related activities and engagement with support services.
2. **Documented Challenges**: There must be documented evidence of specific challenges or circumstances which have impeded the participant’s progress or justification for repeating a milestone. These challenges can include, but are not limited to:
	* Health issues or medical emergencies
	* Significant personal or family circumstances
	* Changes in living situation or support network
	* Learning difficulties which require more time to master the skills associated with the milestone
3. **Support Team Recommendation**: The participant’s support team, including their IC and other relevant staff, must recommend the milestone repeat based on a thorough assessment of the participant’s needs and progress.
4. **Participant’s Consent**: The participant and/or legal guardian, if applicable, must consent to the milestone repeat request and be willing to continue working towards the milestone.

**Implementation Criteria**

Once eligibility is established, the following implementation criteria will guide the Repeat Milestone Exception process:

1. **Submission of Request**: The IC will complete and submit a formal Repeat Milestone Exception request, including all necessary documentation and a detailed rationale for the request, to the MAPs Program Review Team.
2. **Review and Approval**: The MAPs Program Review Team will evaluate the request based on the provided documentation and the established eligibility criteria. The MAPs Program Review Team will determine within a specified timeframe, typically 30 days, and communicate the decision to the IC.
3. **Development of Action Plan**: If the request is approved, then the IC, in collaboration with the participant and their support team, will develop a detailed action plan outlining the steps to be taken during the milestone repeat period. This plan will include:
	* Specific Repeat Milestone selected with a potential amendment made to the PSCP.
	* Roles and responsibilities of the participant, support team, and other stakeholders (as applicable).
4. **Monitoring and Support**: Throughout the milestone repeat period, the IC will closely monitor the participant’s progress, providing ongoing support and adjustments to the action plan, as needed. Regular monthly check-ins from the provider agency will be conducted to ensure the participant is on track.
5. **Evaluation and Feedback**: At the end of the milestone repeat period, the participant’s progress will be evaluated to determine if the milestone has been achieved through the Pre-Claim Validation process. At that point, the provider agency **WILL** be able to receive Value-Based payment for the successful completion of the Repeat Milestone implementation process.
6. **Documentation and Reporting**: All aspects of the milestone repeat process, including the initial request progress monitoring, and final validation, will be thoroughly documented and reported to ensure transparency and accountability.

***NOTE****: Repeated Milestones will NOT be credited to the progression toward the Person Supported Establishment Incentive Payment. To qualify for the Person-Supported Establishment Incentive, the participant must complete 6 distinct and MAPs validated milestones over the course of the 3 years.*

By adhering to these eligibility and implementation criteria, the Repeat Milestone Exception process will provide a fair and supportive framework which enables MAPs participants to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals, ultimately fostering greater independence and success.

1. Procedures for Milestone Report Request

**Step 1: Initial Assessment**

1. Identify Need: The IC, in conjunction with the provider agency, identifies the need for a repeat Milestone based on the participant’s circumstances.
2. Gather Documentation: Collect all relevant documentation, including evidence of the participant’s effort, the challenges encountered, and any other pertinent circumstantial information supporting the need for a milestone repeat.

**Step 2: Preparing the Request**

1. Complete Request Form: Fill out the official Milestone Repeat Exception Request form. Ensure all sections are completed, including:
	* Participant’s name and all applicable identifying information
	* Description of the milestone to be repeated.
	* Detailed rationale for the request. This should include specifics related to the actual justification to repeat a milestone.
	* Recommendations from the support team
2. Attach Supporting Documents: Include all supporting documentation as applicable (PSCP, Amendments, Pre-Claim Validation Confirmation, Budget Analysis, etc.).

**Step 3: Submission of Request**

1. Submit to MAPs Program Review Team: Submit the completed Repeat Milestone Exception Request form and all supporting documents to the designated MAPs Program Review Team via the specified submission channel (e.g., online portal as primary).

**Step 4: Review Process**

1. Preliminary Review: The MAPs Program Review Team conducts a preliminary review to ensure the request is complete and all necessary documentation is provided.
2. Request for Additional Information: If needed, the MAPs Program Review Team may request additional information or clarification from the Innovation Coordinator in collaboration with the provider agency.

**Step 5: Detailed Evaluation**

1. Evaluation by Panel: The request is evaluated by the MAPs Program Review Team including regional MAPs Transition Guides, Youth Transition Director, members of the Division of Innovation, etc. The MAPs Program Review Team assesses the request based on the established eligibility criteria and the participant’s documented needs.
2. Decision Making: The MAPs Program Review Team decides to approve or deny the request. The decision is based on the evidence provided and the anticipated benefits for the participant.

**Step 6: Notification of Decision**

1. Communicate Decision: The IC is notified of the decision in writing, including any conditions or limitations associated with an approved request. If the request is denied, and, if applicable, any possible alternatives to the requested exception.
2. Inform Participant: The participant and his/her support team are informed of the decision and any subsequent steps required to implement the exception.

**Step 7: Implementation of Approved Request**

1. Develop PSCP Plan (amendment if applicable): For approved requests, the IC, in collaboration with the participant and their support team, updates the PSCP to ensure selected milestones are a confirmed function of the annual plan.
2. Provide Support: The IC provides ongoing support and adjustments to the action plan, as needed. Regular check-ins are conducted to ensure the participant is on track toward milestone achievement.

**Step 8: Monitoring and Evaluation**

1. Monitor Progress: Throughout the milestone repeat period, the IC monitors the participant’s progress, providing support and making adjustments to the plan, as necessary.
2. Final Evaluation: At the end of the milestone repeat period, the participant’s progress is validated through the Milestone Pre-Claim validation process to determine if the milestone has been achieved.

**Step 9: Documentation and Reporting**

1. Document Process: Thoroughly document all aspects of the milestone repeat process, including the initial request, action plan, progress monitoring, and final evaluation.
2. Report to the Department: Submit a final report to the Department through the MAPs Pre-Claim Portal to confirm validation OR denial, ensuring transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Repeat Milestone Exception.

By following these specific procedures, the Repeat Milestone Exception Request process ensures participants receive the necessary support and flexibility to achieve their milestones, fostering a person-centered approach and promoting overall program success.

1. Milestone Repeat Request Frequently Asked Questions

**What is a Milestone Repeat Exception Request?**

A Repeat Milestone Exception Request is a formal petition submitted by an IC on behalf of a participant in the MAPs program, seeking approval to repeat a milestone due to specific challenges or circumstances that have prevented the participant from achieving the milestone on the first attempt or due to unforeseen circumstances where a participant would benefit from repeating the milestone completion.

**Who is eligible to submit a Milestone Repeat Exception Request?**

Participants who have demonstrated genuine effort to achieve the milestone, but have faced documented challenges, such as health issues, personal circumstances, or are eligible. The request must be recommended by the participant’s support team and consented to by the participant or their legal guardian.

**What documentation is required to submit a Milestone Repeat Exception Request?**

The request must include a completed Repeat Milestone Exception Request form, a detailed rationale for the request, and supporting documentation such as progress notes, and other relevant records that demonstrate the participant’s circumstances.

**How do I submit a Milestone Repeat Exception Request?**

The completed request form and supporting documents should be submitted to the designated MAPs Program Review Team via the specified submission channel, such as email or an online portal.

**How long does the review process take?**

The MAPs Program Review Team typically decides within 30 days of receiving the request. The Innovation Coordinator will be notified of the decision in writing.

**What happens if the request is denied?**

If the request is denied, then the notification will include the reasons for denial.

**How will the participant’s progress be monitored during the milestone repeat period?**

The IC will closely monitor the participant’s progress, provide ongoing support and make necessary adjustments to the PSCP, as necessary. Regular monthly check-ins will ensure the participant is on track to achieve the milestone.

**Can a participant request to repeat more than one milestone?**

Yes, participants can request to repeat multiple milestones if they meet the eligibility criteria for each request. Each request will be evaluated individually based on the participant’s documented needs and circumstances.

**How does the Repeat Milestone Exception process support person-centered planning?**

The process is designed to accommodate individual circumstances and provide the necessary flexibility to ensure each participant receives tailored support. By allowing milestone repeats, the program promotes a person-centered approach, helping participants achieve their goals at their own pace and according to their unique needs.

**Who can I contact for assistance with the Repeat Milestone Exception Request process?**

For assistance, you can contact the designated Department Regional Transition Guide or your IC. They can provide guidance on the submission process, required documentation, and any other questions you may have.

These FAQs provide clarity and guidance on the Repeat Milestone Exception Request process, ensuring that ICs and participants understand the requirements and procedures involved in requesting and implementing a repeat milestone request exception.

1. **Family Members Delivering Direct Support**
	1. Background

In many support programs, policies typically prohibit immediate family members from providing direct services to their loved ones to maintain objectivity, reduce conflicts of interest, and ensure professional standards of care. However, the MAPs program recognizes that, in certain circumstances, having a family member deliver support may be in the best interest of the participant. These circumstances might include cultural preferences, unique medical and/or behavioral needs, or the availability of qualified providers in remote areas. Allowing family members to deliver direct support can ensure continuity of care, foster stronger trust and communication, and leverage the intimate understanding of the participant’s needs and preferences that only a family member can provide. Therefore, the Exception Request process enables ICs to formally request the approval of a family member as a service provider, ensuring that such arrangements are carefully considered and appropriately managed.

* 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Family Member Direct Support Exception Request is to provide a structured and equitable process within the MAPs program that allows for the possibility of family members delivering direct support to participants. This exception recognizes and accommodates unique circumstances where family involvement may be the most effective and beneficial option for the participant's well-being and progress. The key purposes include:

1. **Ensuring Continuity of Care**: In situations where continuity and consistency in care are critical, allowing a family member to deliver direct support can provide a stable and familiar environment for the participant.
2. **Addressing Unique Needs**: Participants with specific medical, behavioral, or cultural needs may benefit from the intimate understanding and personalized care that a family member can provide.
3. **Overcoming Provider Shortages**: In areas where there is a shortage of qualified service providers, permitting family members to step into this role can ensure that participants receive the necessary support without interruption.
4. **Enhancing Trust and Communication**: The strong, pre-existing relationship between a participant and a family member can enhance trust, improve communication, and foster a more effective support dynamic.
5. **Promoting Person-Centered Care**: This exception aligns with the MAPs program’s commitment to person-centered planning by respecting the participant’s preferences and optimizing their support network to best meet their individual needs.

By formalizing the process through an exception request, the MAPs program can ensure that the involvement of family members in direct support roles is appropriately evaluated, justified, and monitored, maintaining high standards of care and program integrity.

* 1. Eligibility and Implementation Criteria

**Eligibility Criteria**

To qualify for the Family Member Direct Support Exception within the MAPs program, the following criteria must be met:

1. **Demonstrated Need**: The request must demonstrate that having a family member provide direct support is in the best interest of the participant. This could be due to unique medical, behavioral, or cultural needs that a family member is best suited to address.
2. **Documentation of Circumstances**: Provide thorough documentation of the specific circumstances which justify the need for a family member to deliver direct support. This could include:
	* Medical or behavioral assessments
	* Statements from healthcare providers or other professionals
	* Evidence of cultural preferences or practices
3. **Lack of Available Providers**: Show there is a shortage of qualified service providers in the participant's area, making it challenging to find appropriate support outside the family.
4. **Participant and Family Consent**: Obtain documented consent from the participant and/or legal representative, if applicable, and the family member who is proposed to provide the direct support. This ensures that all parties are fully aware of and agree to the arrangement.
5. **Support Team Recommendation**: The participant’s support team, including their IC and other relevant staff, must support the request based on a thorough assessment of the participant’s needs and the proposed family member’s ability to meet those needs.

**Implementation Criteria**

Once eligibility is established, the following implementation criteria will guide the Family Member Direct Support Exception process:

1. **Submission of Request**: The IC must complete and submit a formal Family Member Direct Support Exception Request form, including all necessary documentation and a detailed rationale for the request, to the MAPs Program Review Team.
2. **Review and Approval**: The MAPs Program Review Team will evaluate the request based on the provided documentation and the established eligibility criteria. The MAPs Program Review Team will decide within a specified timeframe, typically 30 days, and communicate the decision to the IC.
3. **Training and Certification**: The family member must complete any required training or certification to ensure they are adequately prepared to provide direct support according to MAPs program standards.
4. **Monitoring and Support**: Throughout the period in which the family member provides direct support, the IC will closely monitor the situation (in conjunction with the provider agency) providing ongoing support and making adjustments to the support plan, as needed. Regular monthly check-ins will be conducted to ensure the arrangement remains beneficial for the participant.
5. **Evaluation and Feedback**: Periodically, the participant’s progress and the effectiveness of the family member’s support will be evaluated. Feedback from the participant, the family member, and the support team will be gathered to assess the arrangement and inform any necessary adjustments.
6. **Documentation and Reporting**: All aspects of the family member's direct support process, including the initial request, support plan, monitoring, and evaluations, will be thoroughly documented and reported to the Department to ensure transparency and accountability.

By adhering to these eligibility and implementation criteria, the Family Member Direct Support Exception process ensures participants receive personalized, high-quality care while maintaining program integrity and standards.

* 1. Procedures

**Step 1: Initial Assessment**

1. Identify the Need: The IC identifies the need for a family member to provide direct support based on the participant’s unique circumstances.
2. Gather Preliminary Information: The Department will collect preliminary information, including the participant’s medical, behavioral, or cultural needs, and discuss the potential benefits and challenges with the participant and their support team.

**Step 2: Preparing the Request**

1. Complete the Exception Request Form: Fill out the Family Member Direct Support Exception Request form. Ensure all sections are completed, including:
	* Participant’s full name and identification number
	* Description of the specific direct supports needed
	* Detailed rationale for why a family member should provide these supports
	* Documentation of the participant’s needs and circumstances
	* Statements of consent from the participant (or legal guardian) and the family member
2. Submit Supporting Documents: Include all relevant supporting documentation, such as medical reports, behavioral assessments, cultural justification, evidence of provider shortages, and recommendations from healthcare providers or professionals.

**Step 3: Submission of Request**

1. Submit to MAPs Program Review Team: Submit the completed Exception Request Form and supporting documents to the MAPs Program Review Team via the specified submission channel (e.g., online portal).

**Step 4: Review Process**

1. Preliminary Review: The MAPs Program Review Team conducts a preliminary review to ensure the request is complete and all necessary documentation is provided.
2. Request for Additional Information: If needed, the MAPs Program Review Team may request additional information or clarification from the IC.

**Step 5: Detailed Evaluation**

1. Evaluation by MAPs Program Review Team: The request is evaluated by a panel of experts (chosen by DDA) including program managers, clinical advisors, and other relevant stakeholders. The Department assesses the request based on the established eligibility criteria and the participant’s documented needs.
2. Decision Making: The panel decides to approve or deny the request. The decision is based on the evidence provided and the anticipated benefits for the participant.

**Step 6: Notification of Decision**

1. Communicate Decision: The IC is notified of the decision in writing, including any conditions or limitations associated with an approved request. If the request is denied, then the notification will include the reasons for the denial and, if applicable, any possible alternatives to the requested exception.
2. Inform Participant: The participant and his/her support team are informed of the decision and any subsequent steps required to implement the exception.

**Step 7: Implementation of Approved Request**

1. Provide Training and Certification: Ensure the family member completes any required training or certification to prepare them to provide direct support according to MAPs program standards.

**Step 8: Monitoring and Support**

1. Monitor Progress: Throughout the period in which the family member provides direct support, the IC will closely monitor the situation, providing ongoing support and making adjustments to the support plan, as needed.
2. Conduct Regular Check-ins: Regular monthly check-ins will be conducted to ensure the arrangement remains beneficial for the participant.

**Step 9: Evaluation and Feedback**

1. Periodic Evaluation: Periodically evaluate the participant’s progress and the effectiveness of the family member’s support. Gather feedback from the participant, the family member, and the support team to assess the arrangement and inform any necessary adjustments.
2. Document and Report: Thoroughly document all aspects of the family member's direct support process, including the initial request, support plan, monitoring, and evaluations.

By following these procedures, the Family Member Direct Support Exception Request process ensures participants receive personalized, high-quality care while maintaining program integrity and standards.

* 1. Family Members Delivering Supports Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### What is a Family Member Direct Support Exception Request?

#### A Family Member Direct Support Exception Request is a formal petition submitted by an IC to allow a family member to provide direct support to a participant in the MAPs program. This request is made in recognition of unique or extraordinary circumstances where a family member is deemed the most suitable provider of care.

#### Who can submit a Family Member Direct Support Exception Request?

The request will be submitted by an IC on behalf of a MAPs program participant. The request must include thorough documentation and be supported by the participant’s support team.

#### Under what circumstances can a family member provide direct support?

Family members may provide direct support in cases where there are documented medical, behavioral, or cultural needs, a shortage of qualified service providers, or other unique circumstances that justify the need for a family member's involvement.

#### What documentation is required for the request?

Required documentation includes a completed Exception Request Form, medical or behavioral assessments, cultural justification, evidence of provider shortages, recommendations from healthcare providers or professionals, and consent statements from the participant (or legal guardian) and the family member.

#### How is the request evaluated?

The MAPs Program Review Team conducts a preliminary review to ensure completeness, followed by a detailed evaluation by a panel of experts (as selected by DDA). The panel assesses the request based on eligibility criteria and the participant’s documented needs before making a decision.

#### How long does the review process take?

The review process typically takes 30 days from the submission of the request. The IC will be notified of the decision in writing.

#### What happens if the request is denied?

If the request is denied, then the notification will include the reasons for denial and, if applicable, any possible alternatives to the requested exception. The participant and their support team can consider these alternatives and may choose to address the identified issues and resubmit the request if appropriate. There is no appeal process.

#### What are the responsibilities of the family member providing direct support?

The family member must complete any required training or certification, follow the detailed PSCP developed by the IC and support team, and participate in regular check-ins and progress evaluations to ensure the effectiveness of the support provided.

#### Can a family member provide direct support for multiple participants?

Each request is evaluated individually. If a family member wishes to provide direct support for multiple participants, separate requests must be submitted and approved for each participant.

#### Who can I contact for assistance with the Family Member Direct Support Exception Request process?

For assistance, you can contact the designated MAPs Program Review Team or your IC. They can provide guidance on the submission process, required documentation, and any other questions you may have.

1. **Additional Resources and Supports**

For more information, send inquires to DDA.Maps@tn.gov.