

Currently, the Department of Aging and Independent Living utilizes ARIS as the ISO for people who are self or family managing their services. The following is helpful information from their website.

# ARIS

## *Peace of Mind*

Employing caregivers and support staff can be complicated. That's why thousands of people have relied on ARIS to help. When you entrust your payroll responsibilities to ARIS you become a partner in one of the most trusted financial organizations in the social services community. You'll be able to rest assured that your employees will be paid on time, that state and federal payroll taxes will be paid as the law requires and that your employees will be covered by unemployment insurance and workers compensation (when applicable).

## *A History of Supporting Others*

ARIS was created in 1996 as a cooperative effort between social service agencies to reduce expenses in the face of statewide budget cuts without diminishing the level of valuable supports within the community. Our mission quickly expanded to help individuals and their families self-direct their own funding without the burden of dealing with state and federal payroll requirements. Over the years we have continually updated our services to meet the growing demands of a complex healthcare and social services system. This ongoing commitment has made life easier for thousands of people.

## *Keeping it Simple*

We will guide you through the process of setting up your account with ARIS. Just call us at 1-800-798-1658 and request a full information packet. The contents will help you set up an account, gather the required information from your employee(s), and set up a regular payroll schedule. Once your account is established, your primary responsibility is to keep track of each employee's hours and mail a time sheet directly to us at the end of every pay period. If you have a question, you can always call us toll free and an experienced payroll specialist will help you.

## *What is an ISO?*

An Intermediary Service Organization is an organization that can act on behalf of another person or organization to do the financial tasks representing that person. Individuals choosing to manage all or parts of services which might otherwise be provided by an agency can benefit by having ARIS act as an ISO for them and administer all the handling of payments for services they receive while permitting them to operate independently to choose the services and people they want to interact with. ARIS also bills all different entities who hold the primary funding for those services.

## ***What can I expect from an ISO??***

An ISO should be able to do any fiscal function that may be associated with the delivery of your services. They will provide the funding sources with documentation of services delivered and will problem solve with any funding source or state and federal entity. They will not hire or fire your staff or make any decisions as to the employment of personnel. ARIS will provide you with the appropriate information so that you can make an informed decision.

## ***Who is eligible to receive services?***

All people of all ages who are eligible for supports through many different funding sources. ARIS currently works with individuals who are funded through PATH for Personal Care Services for children as well as with individuals who have funding from a Home and Community Based Waiver through the Division of Developmental Services ARIS also provides ISO services to individuals who have the resources to self pay as long as the service being provided is to support an individual with a disability or medical need.

## ***How is eligibility determined?***

For everyone other than those who self pay, the funding source (PATH or Developmental Services Agency) determines eligibility and then communicates this determination along with the funding limit, and billing source to ARIS. A list of these agencies is attached.

## ***Can individuals and their families manage their own services?***

Yes. If you are interested in managing services yourself, instead of having them managed by an agency ARIS-ISO will perform all of the fiscal operations such as paying your staff and contractors as well as paying for approved goods and services. They will then bill the funding source and file all state and federal reports as needed. The ISO-Setup packet contains instructions and forms that are necessary to begin the process.

## ***Will I lose benefits by using an ISO?***

Just the opposite is true. Because you are choosing your care providers and arranging your own schedule you are doing some of the work formerly done by administrators. The work that is done by ARIS, the ISO, is only administering the funds and financial support and a greater part of the funds available will be used to directly provide your services. Because financial processing is ARIS' business it is done very efficiently. This also has cut down the cost of the process.

## ***Who pays the cost of using the ISO?***

The funding source pays ARIS ISO to provide these services for you. This means you do not have to pay an accountant or other financial professional to provide your payroll.

## ***Is it true that there is an additional cost that comes from my budget when I pay my employees?***

Yes, there is an additional cost to your budget when you pay employees. As with all employers you are responsible to pay matching taxes for each dollar you pay an employee. These taxes are in addition to any taxes which are withheld from your employee's paychecks. The required employer matching taxes include: FICA, Medicare and Unemployment.

## ***How much do these taxes cost?***

For every dollar you pay an employee, ARIS pays on your behalf 9.95 cents in taxes. For example, if you are paying an employee \$100.00, ARIS will pay an additional \$9.95 in taxes. The total amount of \$109.95 will come out of your annual budget (***Developmental Services Medicaid Waiver only***)

## ***What are my responsibilities as the employer?***

As the employer, you decide who you hire, who you fire, when work and how much you pay them. ARIS will make them available to you the information you will need to make decisions that result in you abiding by state and federal rules and regulations. As the employer, you are responsible for any injury your employee may encounter in their job. For this reason, we always encourage the purchase of workers compensation insurance. It is a very small cost for peace of mind. You are responsible for assuring that anyone who works with you has the necessary training to provide safe and appropriate services. Some funding sources limit who you can employ. ARIS will make sure you have that information.

## ***What are some of the reasons my employees/contractors might not get paid?***

The primary reason that paychecks aren't generated is that the information necessary is not present. Some of these reasons include:

- Authorization with funding limit from the funding source is not present
- Employer paperwork from you is not complete
- Employee information from your worker is not complete
- Funding limit has been exhausted
- Timecards/request for payments are not received in time for processing

## ***May my workers have their pay directly deposited into their accounts?***

Yes, ARIS has the ability to deposit net pay directly into any account providing the worker has completed the appropriate paperwork with us reflecting their desire to do so.

### ***What do I do if I get correspondence from a state or federal department reflecting problems?***

This is the easy part for you; you simply put it into the mail and send to ARIS, P.O. Box 4409, White River Jct., Vt. 05001. We will resolve the issue for you.

### ***Will I be able to provide workers compensation for my workers?***

Yes, ARIS can obtain worker's compensation coverage on your behalf. When you sign up with ARIS as your ISO, we will have you sign an authorization form that will let us do that for you. Unless your funding source is paying ARIS separately from your funding for this coverage, the cost will come out of your funding limit.

### ***Where can I get the forms I need to sign up?***

You can access the forms on our website. Complete them as indicated and send to us. You can also give us a call at 1-800-798-1658 and ask for packets of forms to be mailed to you.

### ***What if I have trouble with the forms?***

If you do not have access to someone to assist you, give us a call and we will be happy to help you!

### ***Why do my employees have to have background checks done?***

The Division of Developmental Services along with PATH requires that background checks be completed for all employees (and vendors/independent contractors, Developmental Services only). These background checks include information from the Vermont Crime Information Center, the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Aging and Disabilities Adult Abuse Registry, and the Social and Rehabilitation Services Abuse Registry.

### ***Must my employees have background checks repeated if they have already had background checks done by an agency or another employer using ARIS?***

Yes. Please remember that you are an individual employer. Just as with any business, employers may not share personnel information. For example, if you worked for a grocery store, and then got a part time job at a bank, the bank would have to require that you fill out all new hiring paperwork (including background checks). They would not be able to ask the grocery store for the paperwork you completed for them.

### ***Will my staff be able to get health insurance through ARIS?***

At the current time, ARIS does not have the ability to offer this to workers as an ISO. We are working on making that available and will certainly notify everyone when we are successful. We would be able to pay the premiums for private coverage if it is within your funding limit to do so.

## *What is an Independent Contractor?*

An Independent Contractor is an individual who is self employed. Some individuals who provide respite, case management or other services may be self employed. There are some specific criteria as to who may act in this capacity. The criteria varies slightly between the Federal IRS and Vermont's Dept. of Employment and Training. Vermont's Department of Employment and Training holds the stricter guidelines. The guidelines are as follows:

An Independent Contractor (IC) must provide the services outside of the home of the consumer. The IC is free from control or direction from the Home Provider or family. This includes setting their own work schedule. The IC must perform this activity for more than one consumer or client, i.e. performs the services as part of an independently established trade, occupation, profession or business.

It is important that you are clear on the above distinctions. If in question, you should err on the side of caution, and consider the individual providing care as an employee.

## *Is there a difference between the way an Independent Contractor and an employee are paid?*

Yes! While both may be paid the same rate of pay, there are difference in how employee taxes are handled. ARIS ISO will withhold and pay to the state and federal government typical payroll taxes for employees. These taxes include State and Federal income taxes, Social Security taxes, unemployment insurance, etc. ARIS ISO will also pay, on your behalf, matching employment taxes for your employees. The cost of these taxes comes from your annual budget. The amount of employer taxes paid equal 9.95% of the total wages you are paying your employee. For example, if you are paying your employee \$100.00, an additional \$9.95 will be paid by ARIS ISO in employer matching taxes. The amount deducted from your consumer's budget will be \$109.95.

Independent Contractors are not able to have taxes withheld by the payroll agent. Independent Contractors are responsible for paying all required taxes themselves, on a quarterly basis in accordance with their own personal circumstances. Employer matching taxes *are not required* for Independent Contractors.

It is very important that the individual you are hiring is in full agreement that they are acting in the capacity of Independent Contractor, and are responsible for paying their own taxes.

## *If I have personnel problems, what do I do?*

ARIS will be able to direct you to the appropriate source and assist in the explanation of the law as written. ARIS will not make any personnel decisions, that is your job as the employer.

## *Are there reasons why using an ISO and self managing are not a good idea?*

Although ARIS totally supports the concept of self management and self direction, we also realize that there are circumstances that may be present that would indicate just the opposite. Before you decide to self manage your programs, it is important that you understand all that is involved with this. ARIS can take care of the payments, can interact with state and federal agencies on your behalf, and can purchase appropriate insurance coverage. BUT, ARIS will not be able to provide substitute staff when your employee is not able to attend work. ARIS does not provide direct care services.

## *May I visit the ARIS office?*

Come on down (or up)! We enjoy having folks stop in. We are located off Highway 91, exit 11. When you come down the off ramp you will bear left if you are coming from the north and bear right if you are coming from the south. Once you make this turn, you continue until you get to the lights where McDonald's is off to your right. You turn right at the lights. You continue on this road (Sykes Ave) for a short distance and you will see a sign that says Ramada Inn on your right. Take that road (Holiday Drive) and then take the first road on the left (FarmVu Drive, our sign is on the corner of this road. Come down to the end of the road and bear right. You will see our sign on the building.

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