

In the Company of Friends

A Guide for Individuals



Thank you for inquiring about In the Company of Friends.

This booklet was created by Innovative Life Options to help you learn more about this unique funding model.

**Innovative LIFE Options Inc.
4-120 Maryland Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 1L1
Phone: (204) 772-3557 Fax: (204) 784-4816
Toll Free Outside of Winnipeg: 1-866-516-5445
Email: info@icof-life.ca
Website: www.innovativelifeoptions.ca**

What is In the Company of Friends?

- In the Company of Friends gives you the opportunity to manage your life with support from your family and friends.
- In the Company of Friends is a unique **funding model** offered by the Department of Families.
- In the Company of Friends funding is provided directly to each individual. The amount of funding is determined through guidelines of the Department of Families based on a person's individual needs.

This chart highlights the difference between In the Company of Friends and a Service Model.

Service Model	In The Company Of Friends
Agencies have an Executive Director who manages day to day operations.	You, along with your Support Network manage things. We call this self - directed support.
An agency is responsible for hiring and overseeing staff.	You, along with your Support Network hire and guide your staff.
Agency Staff report and are supervised by the Executive Director.	Staff report and are supervised by you and your Support Network. You become the employer.
Housing is typically at a predetermined location.	You choose where you would like to live - anywhere in Manitoba - urban or rural communities - a house or an apartment.
Agencies are required to meet regulations through Residential Care Licensing, including restrictions on the location of your home.	You are not bound by licensing requirements.
Agencies typically focus on the importance of friendships and community connections. A Support Network is optional.	Friendships, relationship development and community connections are a critical and intentional part of the design of ICOF. Support Networks are not optional - they are essential!

Who is eligible for In the Company of Friends?

If you meet the eligibility criteria of the Community Living disABILITY Services of the Department of Families, you may be eligible for In the Company of Friends funding.

Why did others choose In the Company of Friends?

- ✓ *"I feel more like a citizen rather than a client. I believe it really models people self - directing their lives, making choices, taking risks and learning from these experiences."*
- ✓ *"It's about having control and choice."*
- ✓ *"The great flexibility within my budget adds much adventure to my life. I have the opportunity to save money and use it in fun, exciting and limitless ways. There are so many financial guidelines to other programs that discourage from the adventure."*

Important things to know about In the Company of Friends!

1. Receiving direct funding dollars from Family Services

- You will receive money directly from the Department of Families (CLdS) to meet your daily living and staff needs.
- You will continue receiving EIA funds.
- The money will be deposited to your own bank account every month.
- You and your network will manage your budget.

2. Support Networks

- Support Networks are a required and important component of this funding model. Each ICOF employer has their own network members.
- A Support Network is a group of people you choose to assist you in your life. They may be family members, friends or community members.
- Your Support Network is the structure that helps you to manage your ICOF responsibilities. Network members will help you with tasks such as hiring your staff, paying your bills and keeping track of your money.
- Your Support Network is in place to assist you with decisions and other processes as needed. The process of working through choices with assistance is called *Supported Decision Making*. Network members often provide suggestions, and give their thoughts and ideas as an individual is making decisions.
- Having people around you that care about you, who look out for you and who are involved in your life, will help to keep you safer.
- The relationships you will have with your network members will be unique to you. Many ICOF employers have life-long friendships as a result of having a Support Network.

3. Developing a Support Network

Developing a new Support Network can take time. If you need help, you can turn to an organization called Innovative LIFE Options Inc. (LIFE)! LIFE will help you build a Support Network by assisting you to identify potential members, invite them to learn more about being on a network and by providing guidance along the way.

- LIFE is a non-profit organization developed to provide you with resources and guidance.
- LIFE does not make decisions for you or on your behalf.
- LIFE will guide you, and all involved how to self - manage.
- LIFE will help keep your Support network strong!

These four things help build friendships and create a Support Network:

- **Time:** The amount of time people spend together and the length of time they have spent together in the past.
- **Intensity:** Some ties and connections are invested with a lot of emotion. They mean a lot to you, perhaps more than anything or anyone else. Others are less important, and some not very important at all.
- **Intimacy:** You share confidences with some people more than with others. Some of our ties and connections involve a lot of trust.
- **Reciprocity:** The exchange between people. This may range from simply following the rules of politeness, to providing practical help, sending a card, or sharing major parts of your life and work.

4. **Philosophy**

- In the Company of Friends philosophy is aligned very closely with the Vulnerable Persons Act. In Manitoba, legislation called the **Vulnerable Persons Act** (VPA) guides the supports that people offer you every day. It trusts you to make decisions with help. It trusts you will ask and accept help from others.



This chart will help you understand the VPA, and how it will affect you if you choose In the Company of Friends.

Things you should know about the VPA:	In ICOF this means:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ It presumes you are able to make your own decisions about things that affect your life, unless you demonstrate otherwise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ You actively participate in choices and decisions. ❖ The choices that you and your network make are respected.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ You should be encouraged to make your own decisions, with support if needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Your views are sought and respected. ❖ Your preferences, likes and dislikes are important and valued. ❖ When you take risks and face challenges it is a learning opportunity. ❖ People focus on your abilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Like most of us, sometimes you will ask others for help. This is a good thing! The people who help you should be people you choose. The VPA encourages you to ask for their help with making decisions, when necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ You are surrounded by caring, knowledgeable, trustworthy people that you choose who help you with your decision making.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Your helpers should respect your privacy and dignity – not make the decision for you, or take away your right to choose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Because you hire your staff and choose your Support Network members, you ensure that you are treated with respect.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ If you were unable to make decisions about some aspects of your life, even with the help of a Support Network a substitute decision maker may be appointed as a last resort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ If you are unable to make decisions about some aspects of your life, even with the help of a Support Network a substitute decision maker may be appointed as a last resort.

In the Company of Friends is based upon a foundation of relationships and respect. We all require people in our lives to be friends, companions, and sometimes helpers and advisers

The VPA trusts that you will make decisions with assistance. Together with the guidance of your Support Network you will be involved in making decisions about every day decisions that affects you, such as how to spend your money, who to hire, where you will live, etc.

5. **Supported Decision Making – What if I make mistakes?**

- We all do - especially when we are learning how to make good decisions for ourselves. Hopefully you will be receiving good advice and if you make decisions that don't turn out very well, your Support network will be there to help you get up and start again. Sometimes the people on your Support network may have a difficult time stepping back. Remember, they are learning too. They may be used to making all the decisions for you. You may need to remind them that it is your choice and that you need to work with them as a strong team.

Responsibilities are things you need to take care of, things you need to do, things you need to act on.

**Choices and decisions are a responsibility...
Often the bigger the decision, the more responsibility.**

6. **Becoming An Employer**

- Individuals that receive In the Company of Friends Funding become the employer for their support staff. What does that mean for you? You will hire, train and manage your staff team with your Support Network.
- As a new employer, you will have a lot to learn, but with assistance from your Resource Coordinator you will learn the requirements of becoming an employer.

Does In the Company of Friends sound like an interesting funding model to you? We suggest you take time to think this funding model with someone you trust to help you make decisions.

Think about:

- Do you want to be **part of** the things that affect you every day?
- Do you want the opportunity to **learn** how to manage direct funding?
- Do you want to be involved in making **choices** in your life with support?
- Do you want your choices **heard** and **respected**?
- Do you want to **share** with others - "This is who I am"?
- Do you want the people you **trust** and **care** about to help you with your decisions?
- Are you open to the **opinions and advice** of others?
- Are you willing to learn about **hiring** your own staff?
- Are you willing to take on the **responsibilities** of hiring your own staff?



The first step to a good decision is gathering information. We hope that reading this book has helped you take a few steps towards making a decision about In the Company of Friends. Continue to explore!

- ✓ Talk to people, discuss the ICOF option.
- ✓ Call LIFE and set up a meeting to learn more about ICOF.
- ✓ Learn how LIFE can help you.

Often choices take time, especially big choices and decisions. It's important to understand all sides before making a decision to ensure that decision is the BEST decision for you! We know choosing ICOF is a big decision!



www.icof-life.ca

Revised September 2018