

Individual and Family Fact Sheet – HIRING AND MANAGING YOUR OWN SUPPORTS

June 2003

Who Can Hire Their Own Supports?

In the past, individuals served by DDS could only obtain needed supports through private provider agencies. Now, if you have an individual support agreement, or ISA, you can continue to obtain services from a provider or you can hire your own staff. Hiring your own staff provides increased flexibility, control and responsibility and expands the pool of people available to help meet your support needs. You can use your individual support funds to hire acquaintances, neighbors, students, retired persons, coworkers and others that you know.



What Are My Responsibilities If I Choose To Hire My Own Supports?

When you choose to hire your own staff, you become the boss or “employer of record.” This means you are responsible for recruiting, interviewing, hiring, training, managing and supervising the people you hire. Your circle of support and your case manager or support broker can assist you with this. You are also responsible for conducting background checks for the people you want to hire. The fiscal intermediary you have chosen can assist you with background checks and will assist you to complete employment forms, process payroll, ensure tax compliance and prepare end-of-year reports.

How Do I Start?

If you have never hired your own staff before, it may feel like a big responsibility. It helps to be prepared. The following are descriptions of common tasks for which you may be responsible when you hire your own staff.

Recruitment: As a first step, refer to your individual plan for information about the supports you need. Use this information to develop a brief job description to recruit employees. Some potential employees may already be helping you on an informal basis. It is helpful to start by recruiting family, neighbors and other people that you already know. You can also place help wanted ads at your local library, in your church bulletin, at a local community college or university, or through other local bulletin boards. Some people choose to place ads in the newspaper. Your case manager or support broker may also have some ideas about how you can recruit employees.

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Interviewing: It is helpful to prepare a list of questions to ask during interviews. In general, you will want to ask interview questions about the candidate's background and experiences as they relate to the job description you prepared. It is important to remember there are some questions that cannot be asked in an interview. For example, you cannot ask someone about the person's age or religion. Your fiscal intermediary can provide sample interview questions. Your case manager or support broker can also provide assistance in helping you to get ready for your interviews.

Hiring: When you find a person you are interested in hiring, you must have the individual complete an employment application that contains permission to conduct a required criminal background check and DDS registry check. Remember, these checks are required. Once you obtain the registry and criminal background check results, you can then make a decision to offer a position and negotiate the terms of employment. Your fiscal intermediary will have the required employment forms, forms for criminal background checks and other hiring information that you may need. If the person you plan to hire as an employee also works for DDS or a private provider agency, please refer to the fact sheet describing special requirements of this private hire employment situation.

Training: To help ensure good communication with people you hire, it is often useful to develop a written list of expectations you have for your employees. You can use this list to help you decide what your employee already knows and where you may need to provide training. The training you provide can be informal or formal according to what you think will best meet your needs. There are some things you may want an employee to know before they start working for you and some things that you may want to teach them after they have gotten to know you a little better. Since the training you provide to employees is always tailored to your specific needs and preferences, you can provide high quality and timely training that is easy to access because it comes directly from you.

Management and Supervision: Your fiscal intermediary (FI) will assist you to complete the necessary payroll and tax forms so your employees can be paid. The FI will also assist you to obtain all necessary insurance such as worker's compensation and proof of vehicle insurance. You will be responsible to provide employee timesheets to the FI and to authorize payment of other related expenses as outlined in your individual support budget. Your FI is knowledgeable about labor laws and other personnel information. You may find this information helpful with the management and supervision of your employees.

I Want To Be A Good "Boss" To My Employees. How Can I Become A Model Employer?

Planning ahead will help you to become a better employer. A well-defined job description, clearly articulated interview questions and a concise written description of employee expectations will help ensure that potential problems are minimized. Good communication with your FI will also help ensure that you are a model employer. The positive relationships you develop with your employees can result in a better life for you!

