

Hiring Service Providers in the Self-Determination Program

It is important to find people to help you who understands your needs, knows your community, and with whom you are comfortable. You will need to interview and speak with people who you might hire to help you. Here are some ideas to help you with finding, interviewing and selecting people to help you meet your goals and achieve your dreams.

1. If you need it, ask for help from people you trust.
2. There are many ways to find people to help you, such as:
 - Ask people you trust for recommendations, like friends, your regional center service coordinator, people you know from self-advocacy or family support groups, therapists, teachers, and others
 - Put an ad online or in a local paper. Do not put your name, address, or phone number in the ad. It is best to receive applications by email.
 - Ask for a resume and 2-3 references.
 - Find an agency that can recommend workers and staff
3. Once you have found people who you might be interested in hiring, schedule an interview. Some people like to interview potential staff on the phone first and then schedule another interview in person. For in-person interviews:
 - Schedule the interview at a time and place where you feel comfortable.
 - For your safety, have another person you trust with you at the interview.
 - Think about what you want to know about the people you hire. Have your questions ready before the interview. See the attached pages for ideas for questions. You can use some or all of these questions and come up with more questions that ask about your particular needs. You shouldn't ask any of these questions if you don't care about the answers.
 - Take notes on their answers.
 - If you have more questions after the interview, call them and ask.
4. For people you want to hire, call their references (see attached possible questions for references). If possible, you might also ask people who are not on their reference list.
5. After you offer to hire someone, meet with them to sign two papers:
 - Service Provider Agreement (also in this packet) that lists how much they will be paid and when they will work.
 - Community Inclusion Assessment Form, which makes sure that they understand you will make your own choices and be included in the community.
6. If they are providing personal care, they must get a background check. You can also ask any other people you hire to get a background check. (The background checks are specifically for the Self-Determination Program.)
7. Once their background check is approved and the regional center has signed the Community Inclusion form, the person can begin working for you. Please note that the person may also need to complete paperwork as required by your FMS. Check with your FMS on that process.
8. Remember to ask your FMS for help to make sure you are abiding by all laws and paying all taxes.

Possible Questions for Independent Facilitators

1. How much do you know about California's Self-Determination Program?

You want to make sure they understand the principles of self-determination and how the program is different from the traditional regional center system. For example, the SDP participant is in charge of who gets hired and supervising staff and agencies. Bills go to an FMS. Services must provide community inclusion. Provider does not need to be a vendor or have a contract with the regional center.

2. What experience have you had as an Independent Facilitator?

3. Have you had any training to be an Independent Facilitator?

4. Have you ever facilitated a person-centered plan?

- How many?
- What is your style?
- How do you prepare?

5. How well do you know my community?

- Are you aware of activities in my area that I might be interested in?

6. How would you go about helping me to find services to help me meet my goals?

7. How will you help me figure out my budget?

8. Can you advocate for me at my IPP?

- At my IEP?
- To get benefits, such as SSI or IHSS?

9. Do you also help manage workers?

- How do you do that?
- How would you help me if I am unhappy with the job that one of my workers is doing?

10. How will you keep in touch with other members of my support team?

11. I have certain things that are really important to me, like _____. Are you willing to adapt your services to meet my specific needs and preferences?

12. Are you willing to negotiate a price based on my specific needs?

13. Given what you know about what I need, how much would you charge?

14. When are you available to start?

Possible Questions for Financial Management Service (FMS) Providers

1. How much do you know about California's Self-Determination Program?
2. What experience have you had with being a Financial Management Service provider?
3. Which models of FMS do you provide?
Bill Payer, Sole Employer, Co-Employer
4. How will you communicate with me?
5. If I have a question about developing my individual budget, can you help me?
6. If you are a co-employer, what role will you play in the hiring of my workers?
 - What if I want to hire someone that you don't like?
 - Would you ever ask me to fire one of my workers and for what reason?
7. How will you get the time sheets from my workers?
8. If I am spending more than I should be in my spending plan, how will you tell me?
9. How will you send me monthly reports on how I am spending my individual budget?
10. If I have questions, how will I get them answered?

Possible Questions for General Service Providers

These are questions for providers who do not provide personal care or assistance in the home or community. Examples could be a speech therapist, gymnastics coach, computer teacher, or someone to help you make friends or have a relationship.

1. Tell me what you know about self-determination.

You want to make sure they understand how self-determination is different from the traditional regional center system. It is based on my person-centered plan. I am in charge of who gets hired and supervising staff and agencies. Services must provide community inclusion. Bills go to an FMS. Provider does not need to be a vendor or have a contract with the regional center.

2. What experience have you had providing this service?

3. What kind of qualifications do you have? (Licenses, credentials, certifications)

Some providers might need to provide proof of certification to the FMS.

4. Have you had experience providing this service in a person-centered way, meaning I get to direct how you provide me the service?

5. How would you learn more about me to work with me?

6. I have certain things that are really important to me, like _____. Are you willing to customize services to meet my specific needs and preferences?

7. How do you determine if people are happy with your services?

8. When and where are your services available?

9. How many hours of are you available per week?

10. When would you be able to start?

11. How would I make changes in my services or schedules if I need to?

12. Are you willing to attend team or circle meetings to share information with other people who support me?

13. How will you keep in touch with other members of my support team?

Possible Questions for Personal Care Workers, Personal Assistants, Aides

1. Tell me what you know about self-determination.

You want to make sure they understand how self-determination is different from the traditional regional center system. It is based on my person-centered plan. I am in charge of who gets hired and supervising staff and agencies. Bills go to an FMS. Services must provide community inclusion. Provider does not need to be a vendor or have a contract with the regional center.

2. What experience have you had providing this service?

3. What kind of certification or training have you done to help you provide services?

Some providers might need to provide proof of certification to the FMS.

4. Have you had experience providing this service in a person-centered way, meaning I get to direct how you provide me the service?

5. How would you learn more about me to work with me?

6. I have certain things that are really important to me, like _____. Are you willing to meet my specific needs and preferences?

7. Are you willing to attend team or circle meetings to share information with other people who support me?

8. What days and times are you available?

9. How many hours are you available per week?

10. When would you be able to start?

11. How would I make changes in my services or schedules if I need to?

12. Because you are providing personal care services for me, you will need to have a background check done at your own expense. Are you willing to do that?

13. The salary is \$___ per hour and the benefits you will receive are _____. Will this salary work for you? OR How much will you need to be paid?

Possible Questions for Agencies that Will Provide Staff

If you are thinking about hiring a company or agency who will provide you services and staff, you also may want to ask some of the following questions:

1. Tell me what you know about self-determination.

You want to make sure they understand how self-determination is different from the traditional regional center system. It is based on my person-centered plan. I am in charge of who gets hired and supervising staff and agencies. Services must provide community inclusion. Bills go to an FMS, not to the regional center. Provider does not need to be a vendor or have a contract with the regional center. No reports need to be provided to the regional center.

- 2. Have you had experience providing this service in a person-centered way, meaning I get to direct how you provide me the service?**
- 3. What kinds of qualifications does your agency have? (Licenses, credentials, certifications)**
- 4. How will I choose who will work with me?**
- 5. Will I be able to choose what I do each day and who I spend my time with?**
- 6. What kind of experience does your staff have?**
- 7. What kind of training does your agency give to the people that will work with me?**
- 8. How will you supervise the people that will work for me?**
- 9. How long do staff people usually work at your agency?**
- 10. How will you handle if I want to choose a different person to work with me?**
- 11. How will you keep in touch with other members of my support team?**
- 12. How will you check with me to make sure the services are working out for me?**
- 13. What would I do if I have a problem or complaint?**
- 14. Do you have any references you can provide?**

Questions You Cannot Ask During an Interview

California and federal laws tell us that there are questions that you are not allowed to ask during job interviews. We want to make sure you follow the law when you are conducting interviews.

1. You can't ask their age.
2. You can't ask whether they are married or have children.
3. You can't ask their gender.
4. You can't ask about their sexual orientation.
5. You can't ask about their race.
6. You can't ask about their religion.
7. You can't ask if they have a criminal record.
8. You can't ask what their previous salary was.

9. Possible Questions to Ask References for People You Want to Hire

References are the people your potential service provider gives you to provide important information on their experience. In general, references will provide very positive things to say about the person you may want to hire. It is important to ask questions that might give you a complete picture about the person you want to hire. You can use all or some of these questions or come up with other questions on your own. Some of these questions may relate to you or the prospective service provider. Be sure to tell the potential worker that you will be calling their references.

1. My name is _____. You have been put down as a reference for _____.
2. Is this a convenient time to talk?
3. This person has applied to be a _____ for me/my family member and I want to ask you some questions.
4. How do you know _____?
5. How long have you known _____?
6. What work did _____ do for you?
7. What did you think of how _____ did their job?
8. Were there areas where _____ could have improved?
9. How many hours per week did they work for you?
10. Why did _____ leave the position?
11. How did _____ react in stressful situations?
12. _____ will need to be person-centered and follow the directions of a person with a disability/family member. Do you think that will work for _____?
13. If there was a disagreement with _____, how did they handle it?
14. Do you have any concerns about _____?
15. If you were to give me advice on managing _____, what would you tell me?
16. Would you hire _____ again?