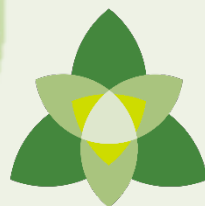


Agency with Choice Handbook Supplement

Individual & Family-Directed Supports



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Trillium Northern Regional Office

144 Community College Rd.
Ahoskie, NC 27910-9320

Trillium Central Regional Office

201 W 1st Street,
Greenville, NC 27858-1132

Trillium Southern Regional Office

3809 Shipyard Blvd.
Wilmington, NC 28403-6150

Member & Recipient Service Line 1.877.685.2415 | Administrative/Business Calls: 1-866-998-2597

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AN INTRODUCTION TO SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS

This chapter is an introduction to self-directing services through the NC Innovations Waiver. In the NC Innovations Waiver, participant-directed services are called Individual & Family-Directed Supports. Individuals and families can direct some or all of the services that are paid through NC Innovations funding. Self-directing services gives individuals and families more control over the way their services are provided. In this section, we cover important information that will provide an introduction to Self-Directed Supports:

- ▲ Principles of Self Determination
- ▲ Services That May be Self-Directed
- ▲ Advantages of Individual & Family-Directed Supports
- ▲ Individual & Family-Directed Supports Model **An Introduction to Self-Directed Supports**

SERVICES THAT MAY BE SELF-DIRECTED

Individuals and families may choose to direct one or more service. In addition to self-directing some services, individuals and families may also continue to receive provider directed services. Services that may be self-directed are:

- ▲ Community Living and Supports
- ▲ Community Networking Services
- ▲ Individual Goods and Services
- ▲ Natural Support Education
- ▲ Respite Services
- ▲ Supported Employment Services
- ▲ Supported Living

RESOURCES FOR DIRECTING YOUR SERVICES

This chapter provides a quick overview of the resources that will be available to you if you choose to direct some or all of your services. In the Agency with Choice Model, you are the Managing Employer. Trillium recognizes that it takes time for individuals and their families to feel confident about directing services.

Following are the resources that are available when you choose to self-direct your services:

- ▲ The Managing Employer (You)
- ▲ Agency with Choice Provider
- ▲ Community Navigator Agency
- ▲ Care Manager
- ▲ Representative

THE MANAGING EMPLOYER

The Managing Employer is responsible for the day to day supervision of the staff who work for person receiving services.

AGENCY WITH CHOICE PROVIDER

Agency with Choice Providers partner with you to hire and supervise your employees.

COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR AGENCY

Community Navigators provide your initial training to learn about directing your services. Community Navigators will continue to assist as you learn to take on all of the responsibilities related to directing your services.

CARE MANAGER

Care Management is provided to individuals and families who direct their services.

REPRESENTATIVE

Representatives assist you to carry out your responsibilities as a Managing Employer.

GETTING STARTED: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS TO DIRECT YOUR SERVICES

This chapter provides an overview of the steps an individual or family takes to determine if they want to direct some or all of their services.

The following sections highlight what to expect in each step.

STEP 1 - ORIENTATION FOR THE MANAGING EMPLOYER TO DIRECT YOUR SERVICES

An Orientation to Individual & Family-Directed Supports is provided by your Care Manager at the time of your Initial and Annual Individual Support Plan (ISP) planning process. Written materials are also given to the individual, family, and/or legally responsible person, providing basic information about self-directing your services.

Your Care Manager explains educational opportunities available through Community Navigator Services for individuals and families interested in learning more information about self-directing services. Your Care Manager discusses the option of having a Representative.

STEP 2 – YOU EXPRESS INTEREST DIRECTING YOUR SERVICES AND IDENTIFY MANAGING EMPLOYER

Identify who will be the Managing Employer from one of the following:

- ▲ Participant (individual receiving services);
- ▲ Parent(s) of a minor participant; or
- ▲ Legal Guardian
- ▲ A Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) **may not** be the Employer of Record or Managing Employer.

You discuss the option of Representative with your Care Manager. Your Care Manager will assist in process of identifying a Representative when needed.

Your Care Manager makes a referral to Community Navigator agency for training to direct your services when this service (Community Navigator) is not currently part of the individual's ISP. This training provides detailed information on self-directing your services.

STEP 3 - TRAINING FOR THE MANAGING EMPLOYER (YOU)

The Community Navigator works with the individual, family, the Managing Employer, and/or Representative at a time and location determined by the person receiving services and/or Managing Employer to provide required Individual & Family-Directed Supports Training. When there is a Representative, the Managing Employer and the Representative will be encouraged to attend the training together. The Community Navigator provider will give you and your Representative, if applicable, a copy of the Individual & Family-Directed Supports Employer handbook along with any other additional materials that may be helpful.

STEP 4 - TRAINING CERTIFICATE ISSUED

After the training, the Community Navigator issues a training completion certificate to the Managing Employer and/or Representative, as applicable. Copies are provided to your Care Manager.

STEP 5 - DECISION MADE BY THE MANAGING EMPLOYER TO SELF-DIRECT

The person receiving services and/or the Managing Employer makes a decision to self-direct their services or continue with provider-directed services. The Managing Employer or Representative, if applicable, will inform the Care Manager of their decision.

STEP 6 - INDIVIDUAL FAMILY-DIRECTED SUPPORTS ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

Your Care Manager completes an Individual & Family-Directed Supports Assessment, with the Managing Employer and the Representative, if applicable, if you have decided to direct your services.

If determined a Representative is needed to assist you to direct your services, the Representative is identified and attends training on the Individual & Family-Directed Support option. After training completed, the Individual & Family-Directed Supports Assessment is completed.

STEP 7 - REPRESENTATIVE DOCUMENTS ARE COMPLETED

If a Representative is desired or required, your Care Manager completes the Representative Screening Questionnaire, Designation of Representative and Representative Agreement.

STEP 8 – INDIVIDUAL FAMILY-DIRECTED SUPPORTS ASSESSMENT ARE SHARED

Copies of the completed Assessments are given to Prospective Managing Employer and the Community Navigator.

STEP 9 - INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY-DIRECTED SUPPORTS AGREEMENTS SIGNED

Rights and responsibilities of Managing Employers are outlined in an Individual & Family-Directed Supports Agreement-Agency With Choice. The responsibilities of the Agency with Choice provider are also listed in this agreement. You, as the Managing Employer, agree to and sign this agreement before beginning to self-direct your services. Your Care Manager will assist you with completing this agreement.

The Agency with Choice agreement defines responsibilities of the Managing Employer and the Agency with Choice provider. The Agency with Choice provider is responsible for developing this agreement, obtaining signatures, and for providing copies to you and your Care Manager.

STEP 10 - UPDATING YOUR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLAN (ISP)

The Care Manager reviews the ISP with the individual, family, legally responsible person, and representative, as applicable, making necessary changes and includes the following:

1. A decision is made about services that are self-directed, as well as any services that will be provided under the Provider-Directed option.

2. Employee Qualifications are determined. The parent or stepparent of a child under 18 or the participant's spouse may not be the employee in the Individual & Family-Directed Supports Option.
3. The plan for back-up staffing in the event that an employee hired is unable to provide services as needed, as well as a determination of the emergency and crisis plans or protocols are developed.
4. A statement of how the individual receiving services will be involved in self-directing services if the participant is not the Managing Employer is developed.
5. Long-range outcomes for Community Navigator services that focus on the supports you need to direct your services are developed.
6. The plan for monitoring services and supports, including how the Care Manager, Managing Employer, Representative, and Agency with Choice provider will jointly ensure the health and welfare of the individual receiving services is created.
7. An effective date to begin Individual & Family-Directed Supports is established to allow time for employees to be hired.

STEP 11 - SUBMITTING YOUR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLAN FOR REVIEW

Your packet includes the following and will be submitted by your Care Manager to the IDD Utilization Review department for authorization:

1. Revised Individual Budget
2. An Individual & Family-Directed Supports Assessment
3. Representative Assessment, Screening, and Designation of Representative, if applicable
4. An Individual & Family-Directed Supports Agreement
5. An Agency with Choice Agreement
6. Verification of Individual & Family-Directed Supports Option training provided by Community Navigator agency

STEP 12 – SELF-DIRECTED SERVICES BEGIN

Upon notification of approval of ISP, the Managing Employer begins to direct services.

THE EMPLOYMENT PROCESS

This chapter focuses on the process for employees selecting employees. There are three topics:

1. Recruiting applicants
2. Selecting employees
3. Dismissing employees (following the required procedure)

When you begin preparing to hire new employees, you should meet with your partner from your Agency with Choice provider. This may be the Qualified Professional or someone in the Human Resources department. It is important you work together in this process. Make sure the Agency with Choice provider is clear on the work schedule and the duties you expect your new employee to perform. Your Community Navigator will be able to give your assistance as you begin the process of hiring a new employee.

Be sure you give key information such as name and contact information of any applicants you are referring to the Agency with Choice provider who is helping you to recruit. The Agency with Choice provider will conduct their screening process to include having the applicant complete an application, participate in a screening interview and provide information for a required background checks.

RECRUITING APPLICANTS

In the Agency with Choice Model, the Managing Employer recommends applicants for hire to the Agency with Choice provider. Before recruiting, you must know what it is you want your employee(s) to do. You must consider the knowledge and skills a person should have to do the work you need. It is helpful for you to have a good idea of what you are looking for when you begin recruiting.

Finding the right employee(s) may take time. It depends on your needs and how well you have planned. Use all the resources you can. Think about whether or not you want to use friends, neighbors or family members, if allowed.

Hiring people you know can make the process easier, but it can strain your relationships. Your Agency with Choice provider will also assist you in recruiting new employees.

***Remember:** The direct service employee may not be: a parent or step-parent of a child under 18, the participant's spouse, the Managing Employee, or the Representative.*

Recruiting can be divided into several tasks:

- 🌱 Writing job ads
- 🌱 Advertising the jobs
- 🌱 Establishing Pay Rates
- 🌱 Screening interested people
- 🌱 Interviewing applicants

WRITING JOB ADS

The job description you develop with the Agency with Choice provider becomes the foundation for your job ad. To begin, you need to decide whether you want many people to respond to your ad or only a few. The rule of thumb in writing job ads is, in general, less information gets more responses; more information gets fewer responses.

It might seem better to have many people respond to your ad. However, if you get a lot of response to a particular ad, it means more people for you to screen and interview, which could make your process more involved. The goal is to get the right people responding to your ad. A well-written ad can help screen out people who are not interested in your job. However, those who do respond would likely be better applicants. So, include enough information to get "quality" applicants. Make sure your ads are written to provide equal opportunity to anyone who is interested in applying.

Below are some sample ads. Notice the "details" in the ads. The first ad is the most general. In each ad, a few words have been added to make it more specific than the ad before it. Read each ad carefully to see how adding one or more key words make them more specific.

Employee Wanted #1

Nonsmoker needed to work with adult who has disabilities, assist with housekeeping and going to volunteer in community. Days negotiable. \$9 an hour. Call (719) 555-5555 or send email to myemail@writeme.com.

Employee Wanted #2

Nonsmoker needed to work with adult female who has disabilities, assist with housekeeping and volunteering at local animal shelter. Days negotiable. \$9 an hour. Call (719) 555-5555 or send email to myemail@writeme.com.

Employee Wanted #3

Nonsmoker needed to work with adult female who has disabilities, assist with laundry, grocery shopping, housekeeping and volunteering at local animal shelter. Days negotiable. \$9 an hour. Call (719) 555-5555 or send email to myemail@writeme.com.

Employee Wanted #4

Nonsmoker needed to work with adult female who needs assistance with mobility, personal care, laundry and housekeeping. Some lifting involved. Employee would also provide support during volunteering at local animal shelter. Days negotiable. \$9 an hour; limited paid vacation included. Call (719) 555-5555 or send email to myemail@writeme.com.

In the first ad, both men and women are likely to respond. However, men are less likely to respond to the second ad. Likewise, people who do not like doing laundry may not respond to the third. People who feel uncomfortable working with people with mobility assistance needs or who cannot lift are not likely to respond to the fourth.

Regardless of your approach, it is ultimately your decision as to what to put in your ads. A suggestion is to try several ads with different information in each to see what will work best for you.

See Employer Resources and Forms Book Appendix 1 - Sample Ads for Direct Support Employees

You do not need to include your name or home address. All you need is a way for people to contact you. This could be by phone, email, or regular mail. If you want people to contact you by mail, consider renting a post office box. Although you will have to pay a PO Box rental fee, it will give you more control. Whichever way you choose to be contacted, protect your privacy as much as possible.

POSTING JOB ADS

The best place to put up an ad is the place that gets you the best employees. But, where is that? This is a challenge and requires you to be creative. Here are some suggestions.

- ▲ Colleges and universities can be good places for ads. Students often look to gain work experience and often need money. Many colleges provide employment services. Contact the career center about listing a job.
- ▲ Friends, family, neighbors, current employees, faith communities and area businesses may be good "word-of-mouth" resources. Let personal contacts know you are looking for a worker, but make it clear you will do the screening and selecting.
- ▲ Agencies that help people find jobs may be good resources. This might include job service centers and vocational rehabilitation offices. Ask them if they have a place where you can post your ads.
- ▲ Medical facilities, such as hospitals and clinics, may be good sources. Some of the staff may be interested in finding extra part-time work. Ask at the Human Resources/ Personnel department.
- ▲ Private employment agencies are an option but, do proceed carefully. These agencies will likely charge you or the employee a fee for a successful hire. If you do use an employment agency, you will have to sign a contract for their services. Make sure you read and understand any documents the agency gives you before you sign an agreement.
- ▲ Local publications can be a less costly resource. Many community groups have newsletters in which you may post ads. Local newspapers are usually cheaper than citywide newspapers and your ad will reach people in your own area. Call a publication and ask to speak to someone in the classified department. Be sure to place your ad in the "Help Wanted" section.
- ▲ You will be charged by the word or line, so make your ads brief but with enough essential information. Get the best price. Some consumers say this is the best way to find employees in large, urban areas.
- ▲ Use bulletin boards to hang posters or index cards in high traffic areas. This approach seems to work quite well in small towns where people tend to know each other. High traffic areas might include supermarkets, drug stores, banks, Laundromats, places of worship and community centers.

- 🌱 Check with your Agency with Choice provider to ask whether they have a pool of employees you can access. Whatever you use, develop a list of possible employees.

Remember, recruiting is an **on-going** activity. As long as you are directing your own supports, you will need to recruit employees, especially as back-up employees. Employees will not be with you forever so stay on top of your recruiting skills and activities. Be ready to recruit on very short notice. Do not forget about people you liked but did not select at first. They might make good back-up employees. They might someday become your regular employees.

ESTABLISHING EMPLOYEE PAY RATES

Your Agency with Choice provider uses the Individual & Family-Directed Budget to pay employees, employer taxes, and other employee related expenditures. The Agency with Choice provider determines the employee pay rate and employee benefits, involving the Managing Employer as indicated in their policies and procedures.

SCREENING INTERESTED PEOPLE

After putting out an ad, be ready to respond to people who contact you. Have the job description nearby or easily accessible. Review it several times, if necessary, so you can talk about it when someone calls about the job. It is important to respond quickly to people who have contacted you about the job. Good employees will not wait around very long.

During the screening process, you eliminate people who are not appropriate or who do not meet your needs. You can screen potential employees either by phone or in person. Whichever way you prefer, keep in mind you do not have to refer each applicant to the Agency with Choice for the interview process. Screening will save time and effort for you and everyone else.

When you talk to interested people, ask them what kind of pay they are looking for and how many hours a week they are available. With this information, you can screen out certain people who either want more pay or who cannot work your schedule. If the person sounds like she/he might work out, continue talking. Ask brief and important questions that will help you decide if she/he will meet your needs. Ask the most important questions first and avoid those that suggest you are not being fair. If you are unsure what might be illegal, your Community Navigator or Agency with Choice provider will help you. **Refer every person you are seriously considering to your Agency with Choice provider.**

See Employer Resources and Forms Book Appendix 6- Sample Screening Questions

INTERVIEWING APPLICANTS

You will work with the Agency with Choice provider to schedule your interviews. Take time to plan your interview, which means planning the questions you will ask. Interviews should be face-to-face meetings. Talk with your partner from the Agency with Choice provider before your interview and review your questions and any concerns. This person will assist with interviewing and may conduct his/her own screening process. Remember, the interview is when you and the applicant see if the situation will work for both of you.

Plan your interview questions. Use questions that will ask about abilities, skills and character. Once you have an idea of the questions you want to ask, write them down on paper (or computer), if possible. To be fair to each person, use the same questions for each interview.

See Employer Resources and Forms Book Appendix 7 - Sample Interview Questions

You and a staff member from the Agency with Choice provider will conduct the interview together. Prior to the interview, discuss how you will work together to ask the questions and any necessary follow up questions. When you start the interview, try to put the person at ease. You are more likely to get a true sense of what a person is like if she/he is comfortable. Start with more general questions like, "What did you like about your last job?"

Then, move to more sensitive questions later in the interview like, "What do you see will be your biggest challenge working with a person who has disabilities" or "What will be your biggest challenge working with an individual who needs personal care?" There are many ways to interview. The process involves giving and receiving information on both sides.

- 🌱 During the interview:
- 🌱 Describe the job requirements in detail.
- 🌱 Ask work-related, open-ended questions (ones that require more than a yes/no answer).
- 🌱 Tell the person what you expect in an employee.
- 🌱 Tell the person about the work schedule.
- 🌱 Ask about transportation.
- 🌱 Provide the person with a copy of the job description and employee guidelines.
- 🌱 Explain your disability or medical condition as well as you can.
- 🌱 Be very up-front and clear, especially about duties that might make a person uncomfortable.
- 🌱 Notice not only what the person says, but also how she/he says it.
- 🌱 Give the person plenty of chances to ask questions, and give honest answers.
- 🌱 Give the person general information about wages, any benefits available, and how Self-Direction works.

As you near the end of the interview, ask the person if she/he is interested in the job. If the person seems like someone you would likely select, ask for references. Do not make your decision right then, but tell the person you will speak with the Agency with Choice provider and make recommendations for hiring.

Generally you should interview more than one person. This is an important decision, and you want to have as much choice as you can. Keep notes on your thoughts and feelings about the people and their answers to your questions. This helps you avoid getting confused about details. Use these notes to help you compare the good and bad points of the people you have interviewed.

Give yourself time to think about who is most likely to meet your needs. Discuss the pros and cons of each applicant with your partner at the Agency with Choice provider. It is best to do this right after the interview so you will remember the details of the interview.

During the interview, The Agency with Choice provider will confirm the work references the applicant has provided on their application. It is the responsibility of the Agency with Choice provider to get the references and let you know if there are concerns related their responses.

AVOIDING DISCRIMINATION

Certain questions can be considered discriminatory if they are asked during the interview. They are off-limits because the questions can result in discrimination against certain individuals, even if that is not your intent.

Some questions do involve issues that may be of valid concern to you in looking for a direct support worker. The best way to handle them is to identify and state clearly in your ads what your requirements are for the job.

See Employer Resources and Forms Book Appendix 8 – Avoiding Discrimination: Questions NOT to Ask

SELECTING EMPLOYEES

Now you select the person you want from the people you interviewed. In making your choice, think about these questions:

- 🌱 What important skills and experience does each person have?
- 🌱 What is your feeling about each person, based on the interview and other contacts you have had?
- 🌱 How would it feel working with each of the people you interviewed?

Some qualities in people are harder to assess. Ask yourself if you will feel comfortable giving a person directions and even corrections. This is very important if you are thinking about selecting a friend or relative. How do you feel about spending a lot of time with the person? Remember safety, reliability and quality work are the most important features for an employee to have. The lifestyle of employees may not have anything to do with the quality of his or her work.

Communicating with your Agency with Choice provider

It is important to let the Agency with Choice provider know you have made a decision about the person you are recommending for hiring as soon as possible. Good communication ensures your new employee can start working as soon as possible. The Agency with Choice will most likely wait to hear from you before they complete the Criminal Background check.

Criminal Background Checks

The Agency with Choice provider will conduct the criminal background check for applicants you are interested in selecting to work for you. The Agency with Choice providers does not disclose the results of the criminal record check to the Managing Employer or Representative.

The Agency with Choice provider may not hire an applicant whose criminal record or Health Care Registry check pose a potential risk to person receiving services.

Personnel Files

The Agency with Choice provider keeps the Personnel File on each employee.

Employer Support Agreements

You will be a part of creating an Employer Support Agreement outlining what you expect from your new employee. The Employer Support Agreement is reviewed with all new employees before they begin working for you. Your Agency with Choice provider will help you create this agreement and it will be based on the terms and conditions agreed upon by you, the Agency with Choice provider and the employee. Later, you can use the agreement to help you evaluate the employee's work performance. It can help you decide if you want to keep the person or the specific areas in which they need to improve their work. **Your Agency with Choice provider will provide you with a copy of the Employer Support Agreement.**

Again, the Employer Support Agreement should be reviewed with your new employees before they begin working for you. Agreements should include at a minimum the following information:

- 🌱 Wages
- 🌱 Benefits (if any)
- 🌱 Services the employee will provide
- 🌱 Work schedules
- 🌱 Behaviors the employee should have on the job
- 🌱 Grounds for dismissal (firing)
- 🌱 Other working conditions

You may also want to review this agreement monthly when your employee is new and still learning the responsibilities of their job. This is a great way to talk to employees about the areas where they are doing really well and the areas where they still need to learn and improve their work.

DISMISSING (REPLACING) EMPLOYEES

Most people do not like having to dismiss or replace someone. However, sometimes that "perfect" person you selected does not work out. People and situations change. If you find at some point your employee is not meeting your needs, you may have to replace that person using a well thought out procedure. Before approaching your Employee, you should speak with your Agency with Choice provider. They will work with you to develop a plan to dismiss the employee. Each Agency with Choice provider has a specific process for dismissing employees.

For example, before dismissing an employee, the Agency with Choice provider will assist in making sure you have met with your employee and provided feedback about how he/she is carrying out his/her job and your concerns with it.

You and the Agency with Choice provider's representative will also want to be sure you write down that you have met with your staff and he/she has agreed to improve.

Keeping an updated Employer Support Agreement and keeping a regular schedule for reviewing your employee's job performance can help you decide if you have grounds for dismissing. It is easy to compare the Employer Support Agreement with the work your employee is actually performing.

Some Reasons for Dismissing

- ▲ The reasons to fire someone will vary. Here are some of the most common reasons:
- ▲ The employee's work does not meet agreed upon expectations.
- ▲ The employee does not respond fast enough to meet your changing needs.
- ▲ The employee is late or fails to show up too many times.
- ▲ You feel the employee's personal habits/behaviors get in the way of doing the job you need done.
- ▲ The employee does not pay attention to your instructions.
- ▲ You find you are having too many arguments.
- ▲ You do not feel safe and comfortable with the employee.
- ▲ The employee has a schedule that is not flexible enough for you.
- ▲ The employee violates your employment conditions, seriously or often.

Reasons for Immediate Dismissals

Some actions by an employee may be reasons for dismissing (firing) the employee right away. You should have put these in your selection agreement, as we talked about earlier. Hopefully you covered these with your employee when she/he started working for you. Should any of these types of behavior occur by your employee, please **follow the guidelines put in place by your Agency with Choice provider.**

Reasons for immediate dismissal include actions such as:

- ▲ Drinking on the job
- ▲ Using illegal drugs on the job
- ▲ Coming to work impaired by alcohol or drugs
- ▲ Being caught stealing from you
- ▲ Abusing you in any way
- ▲ Violating your confidentiality

How to Dismiss or Fire Employees

Your Agency with Choice provider will review their procedure for dismissing or firing an employee. It is important you talk with your Agency with Choice provider about any work performance issues when they happen.

Together, you can decide if more training is needed or if it is time to dismiss the employee.

You and your Agency with Choice provider will want to make sure you have talked with the employee about your concerns. This would have given the employee time to improve. If you decide to give the employee another chance, have a written agreement stating what the employee is required to do in order to not be dismissed. If you decide the employee should be dismissed, consider the following in your planning:

- 🌱 How much notice should you give your employee? Be fair, but remember if you give the employee advance notice, you may risk even more problems with his or her work and behavior.
- 🌱 Who will provide your support once you fire the employee? Before you fire your present employee, have at least one backup employee ready to step in right away.
- 🌱 Are you safe and secure? If the employee is going to be dismissed and had access to the keys to your residence or car, get them back on the same day you fire the individual.
- 🌱 Learn from the experience. After you have had some time to consider the situation, think about what you have learned from it. Would you deal with the situation in a different way? Was there a question you would have asked in the interview process that would have helped you realize this was not the person for you?

The Agency with Choice provider will alert the proper agency when abuse or fraud was the reason for the dismissal.

MANAGING YOUR EMPLOYEES

This chapter focuses on how to manage your employees. There are six topics:

1. Training Employees
2. Scheduling Employees
3. Supervising Employees
4. Evaluating Employees
5. Dealing with Abuse or Neglect
6. Preventing Theft

TRAINING EMPLOYEES

Training your employees is very important. The Managing Employer and/or Representative, if applicable, work hand in hand with the Agency with Choice provider to train direct support employees. The Agency with Choice provider is responsible for making sure employees receive established training requirements. You must make sure your employees have the proper training in order to meet your needs and give you quality support. There are many ways to train. Here are some suggestions:

All Employees Will Need Some Training

Even if your new employee has performed this kind of work before, she/he does not know how you like things done. Teach your employee to complete tasks the way you want them done.

Prepare

Before you start training, have all the equipment and supplies you will need for the training. If possible, schedule training when you will not be disturbed. You and your employee need time to focus on the training.

Explain Your Disability or Your Medical Condition

Tell your employee about your disability or medical condition and how it affects your daily life. Do not leave anything out. Does your disability or condition have symptoms that could be alarming to a new employee? If so, talk about it. If your disability or condition has symptoms that could be unfamiliar to the uninformed public, prepare your employee to deal with this also. Use many examples. The more your employee knows of your disability, the better support she/he can give you.

Review Your Employee Support Agreement for This Employee

You talked about your expectations in the interview. Make sure your employee hears they are important. Explain anything that is unclear. Let him or her ask questions. If your work plan agreement causes problems, deal with it right then. If you cannot resolve the problem, you may not want him or her to continue working for you. If this is the case, do not do any further training.

Have a Training Plan

Begin each training lesson with an overview of what you will cover. At the end of the lesson, sum up what you have taught. If you need more than one lesson to cover a topic, review what you have taught in earlier lessons first. Answer any questions, and then move on to new material.

Explain Tasks

When explaining a task that must be done a certain way, tell the employee she/he must do it in a certain way and explain why. If the task must be done at a certain time, explain why. Describe each step carefully. The employee must understand all parts of a task and how they fit together.

Demonstrating New Tasks

A good way for your employee to learn a new task is to have the employee watch someone else do it first. Have a friend, family member, or another skilled employee show him how to do the new task. Make sure she/he sees several times how the task is to be done. Then, let the employee practice it and tell him how she/he is doing.

Cover the Steps in the Task

If you are using a checklist, have your employee review the checklist on the task as you work through each step. Or, you could have your employee write down each of the steps as you explain them. Review what your employee writes to be sure she/he understood all steps correctly.

Stress Safety

Stressing safety is very important. If you have life support or medical equipment, make sure the employee knows how and when to use it. Train the employee to understand and use “universal precautions” whenever needed. Make sure the employee knows what to do in case of an emergency.

Be Patient

Your employee may not get all your directions right the first or even the second time. Making mistakes is part of learning. Ask for feedback and give the employee plenty of chances to ask questions. ***Be Patient!***

Be Sensitive to Your Employee

Some people may be able to learn a whole task at once. Others may need a slower pace. Pay attention to your employee’s feelings and reactions as you train. Give thought to how much new knowledge your employee is able learn at one time.

Respect Your Employee

Respect your employee’s ability to learn and how much she/he already knows.

Give Your Employee Feedback

Giving your employee feedback during training as well as on the job is very important. Talk about what is working and, more importantly, what is not working. Like most people, your worker needs both positive and corrective feedback.

Correct Mistakes

When your employee performs a task differently than the way you wanted it done, point it out. Patiently remind your employee how you want it done. Remember, you are trying to fix the mistake, not the person.

Praise Good Work

When your employee performs tasks the way you want them done, point this out. Praise your employee for good work, and do not forget to say, “Thank you.” This is a powerful motivator for employees.

Evaluate Your Employee’s Performance and Behavior

Let your employee know you will be evaluating work and behavior regularly. These evaluations will take place together with your Agency with Choice providers. Share copies of your evaluations. We will talk more about evaluating employees later in this Chapter.

SCHEDULING EMPLOYEES

If you only have one employee, scheduling is simple. If you have more than one, scheduling is more difficult. Plan enough time for scheduling and dividing tasks among your employees. You must balance your needs to have reliable, timely support with your employee’s needs. Here are some things to consider.

How important is the schedule?

Tell your employees the schedule is important. If you do not tell them, they will not know. In your work plan agreement, be very clear about your expectations on scheduling. Also, tell your employee what she/he can expect when she/he does not follow the schedule. Post your schedule in a place where all will see it. Check it frequently so you always know what is going on.

Who decides on the schedule?

You will work with the Agency with Choice provider in developing a schedule. Remember, though, you and all your employees have to be concerned with the schedule.

You will have a better relationship with your employees if they feel you have thought about their needs when putting the schedule together. Talk to your employees about the schedule as you are putting it together. After you get their input, give them a written draft to review. As much as you can, include their input into the final schedule. Try as you might, you may not meet everyone's scheduling needs. If you cannot, explain how and why you developed the schedule as you did.

How do you set up a schedule?

There is no one right way to set up an employee schedule. To begin, you might review your support tasks checklist. Decide which employees should do what tasks on which days. You might divide the tasks among your employees equally. Or, you may assign employees based on their skills and abilities. However, you set up the schedule, remember you will have to do it again as things change.

When scheduling services, it is important they are provided in the appropriate settings as specified in the Innovations Waiver.

How Does the Schedule Get Changed?

Stress to your employees everyone must respect the schedule, including you. There could be times when you or an employee really needs to change the schedule. Decide how this will happen and be sure all employees understand the process. Decide, for example, how much notice you need before changing the schedule. Also, tell them how much notice you will give them when making a change. Explain when you might not be able to give that much notice.

Be very aware of issues around starting and ending times. You want your employees to be on time, not late. Decide how you will handle employees being late and let them know the consequences. Be very careful about asking employees to stay late. There is a **limit on the number of hours some services** may be provided in a day and you must be careful not to exceed this limit. It also important to respect the employee's time in the same way you want them to respect yours and asking them to stay late may cause some difficulties for them. If you often ask employees to stay late, you will cause problems in your relationships, and you will lose employees. On the other hand, if you respect their time, you have more right to expect employees to respect yours.

SUPERVISING EMPLOYEES

This means you direct, oversee and manage employees in order to receive the care you need. In supervising, consider 1) quality; 2) quantity; 3) time; and 4) rules:

1. **Quality** looks at how well tasks are being done. Do employees perform tasks the way they were taught or some other way?
2. **Quantity** looks at the amount. Are employees performing every task as required or are they skipping some?
3. **Time** is about the schedule. Do employees perform tasks when they are scheduled?
4. **By the Rules** looks at whether or not employees are following your guidelines.

Let's say you tell your employees to only park in your driveway and not on the street in front of your neighbor's house. Although where the car is parked may not have a direct impact on your care, it is your rule and it is to be followed. Remember, supervising is more art than science. You will need to work with your employees on what style of supervision works best for you and them.

Be Ready to Train

Since things change, good supervision will require on-going training. If your situation changes, you may need to train the employee on how to do new tasks.

Your employee may have questions that training did not cover. When this happens, train as discussed at the beginning of this Chapter. Even though something is clear to you does not mean it is clear to your employee.

Monitor Your Employee's Performance

By monitoring employees, you can tell if they are performing tasks the way you taught them. If not, more training may be necessary. If training does not help, you may need to take a different approach with them, as we will discuss later. The main point is, pay attention to what your employees are doing. Be sure to tell them the things they are doing well. Also, provide specific directions on how you want them to improve or change the work that is not satisfactory to you.

Be Clear about What You Want

By agreeing to take the job, your worker has agreed to perform tasks the way you need them to be done. You have a right to expect it, as well. Be clear about what you want and how you want it. If you are not clear, the employee has to guess and may guess incorrectly.

Work Together

Work with your employee as a partner to solve problems. Listen to your employee's suggestions. She/he may have some good ideas or some useful experience to draw on. Remember, "two heads are better than one."

Learn To Say “No”

If you do not agree with your employee’s suggestions or ideas, say so. Be honest and respectful. It will help to develop a stronger relationship.

Be in Charge

Although your employee may have suggestions, you are in charge. Even if she/he has worked where individuals and families have had little control over decisions, she/he needs to understand you have control and the right to live your life as you choose. In addition, you do not need your employee’s approval of what you do. Respect your employee, but know she/he is there to assist you, not make decisions for you.

Deal with Problems

When your employee performs poorly, point it out. With patience, remind how to do things the way they were taught. Deal with the problem when it happens. Problems that are not handled quickly may get worse. Be respectful when correcting. If possible, tell the employee what you expect in private.

If an employee keeps making the same mistakes, consider giving him or her more training. Discuss your concerns with your Agency with Choice provider. You may ask your Community Navigator for suggestions too.

If more training does not help, discuss the situation with the employee. Try to discover if the employee understands his or her performance is not acceptable. If after the discussion she/he does not improve, try giving him a warning.

Your Agency with Choice provider would be a part of developing the warning and will assist you to explain the details to your employee. If the performance still does not improve, it will be necessary to take disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Praise Your Employees

Tell you employee when she/he does something right and especially when she/he does something more than what was required. Let the employee know that you value the support. Most people will appreciate being recognized for good work.

EVALUATING EMPLOYEES

Your Agency with Choice provider will be a part of the process to evaluate your employees. The Agency with Choice provider will give you the form to be used to give important information to your employees, as well as provide the training you need to feel comfortable completing an evaluation. To ensure you are getting the best care from your employees, evaluate them regularly. Even though you supervise your employees daily, you should still do a formal evaluation from time to time.

How often you evaluate employees will be different for each person. New employees should be evaluated frequently until you are sure of their work.

For more experienced employees, evaluations can be scheduled farther apart. You will work with your Agency with Choice provider to develop this process. Essentially, the better you feel about an employee's performance, the less you will need to do formal evaluations. If you are having problems with an employee's performance, plan to evaluate more often.

Using a formal evaluation can help you remind the worker of duties. Keep copies of all evaluations, and give copies to the worker. If the worker has had problems, refer back to past evaluations. Reviewing past evaluations can be very helpful to you if you are thinking you may have to fire the worker.

See Employer Resources and Forms Book Appendix 35 – Sample Employer Evaluations Questions

HANDLING CONFLICT

By using the interview, selection and evaluation processes described in the previous section, you will hopefully reduce the number of serious conflicts that may occur between you and your employees. The better prepared you are to address problems when they arise, the more comfortable and confident you will be in your role as an employer. A good working relationship may have conflicts, but they will likely be small and easily addressed.

See Employer Resources and Forms Book Appendix 38 - Sample Process for Handling Conflict

DEALING WITH ABUSE OR NEGLECT

You should always have good support, and you should make sure your employees treat you well. On rare occasions employees abuse the people they are selected to support. For your own safety, know what abuse really is and how to deal with it.

Physical Abuse includes hitting, slapping, pinching, kicking and other forms of rough treatment. If an employee does something intending to cause you pain, that may be physical abuse.

Verbal Abuse means any use of spoken or written words or gestures meant to insult or attack you or to make you feel bad.

Psychological Abuse includes actions or statements meant to humiliate or threaten you or to cause you emotional harm.

Sexual Abuse includes unwanted sexual attention, touching, fondling or attack. Any sexual behavior towards you by an employee that makes you uneasy is sexual abuse. You also need to be careful your interactions with your employee do not make him/her think you are making unwanted advancements toward him/her.

Neglect means an employee is not meeting your basic needs for food, hygiene, clothing or health maintenance. After you have given the employee directions about these things, the employee should make sure your basic needs are met.

If you feel an employee is abusing or neglecting you, be ready to take action immediately.

- ▲ Get away from the person to somewhere safe in your home
- ▲ If you feel you are in an emergency situation and your life is in danger, then call 911
- ▲ Call your Community Navigator, a staff from your Agency with Choice provider, or family member to be with you
- ▲ Try to get your description of what happened recorded
- ▲ Talk with people on your support team

Remember, you are responsible for dealing with employee problems. Be sure you are safe and have other supports in place. Talk with a staff from your Agency with Choice provider about your concerns. If you feel you need more help, contact your Community Navigator or Care Manager.

PREVENTING THEFT

It is possible, although rare, an employee will try to steal something. You are responsible for dealing with an employee who may try to steal from you. Below are some ideas to help prevent theft and what to do if an employee does steal from you.

Keep Track of Your Money and Valuables

Do not keep a lot of cash around your home. Keep small valuables such as jewelry and cash locked away. Keep track of how much money you have on hand. Know where your purse or wallet is at all times. If you need your employee to handle cash for you, make sure she/he does so under your direction. If you have several employees, consider giving only one of them access to your valuables. In this way, you only have to be concerned about one person.

Be Careful with Checks and Credit Cards

Do not give an employee your credit card, credit card number or a blank signed check to use when you are not with him or her. Doing so could tempt a dishonest employee to steal from you. If your employee must shop for you, always get a receipt showing what was spent. In these cases, keep careful watch on your bank accounts.

Keep Track of Your Medications

Some medications are more valuable than cash. Many individuals say stealing medications is a bigger problem than stealing money. Store your medications in a locked drawer or cabinet. Keep track of when you need to reorder your medications. Know how much medication you have on hand and how much you order. If you have more than one employee, consider giving only one of them access to your medications. This limits the number of people to be concerned about regarding your medications.

Keep Track of Your Possessions

Keep an up-to-date list of all your valuables such as TVs, stereos, computers, antiques and jewelry. If something is missing, this list will be helpful to police and to your insurance company. Let your employee know you have such a list. Being aware you have such a list may discourage theft.

Be Careful About Use of Your Car

Do not let your employee use your car or van without you. If you must, make sure you have known the employee very well for a long time before allowing use of your car. Even then, keep track of the miles your employee puts on the car.

Be Careful with House and Car Keys

In many cases, you may have to give your employee a key to your home. At the same time, you do not want your employee to enter your home without your permission.

One idea for keeping your home safe is to have two door locks, which take different keys. Give your employee a key to one lock. You keep the key to the other one. This way you can lock the door so even your employee cannot enter.

Consider a combination lock system. Give the combination to your employee while she/he is with you. You can easily change the code if she/he stops working for you. A combination lock can be very useful when you have to fire an employee.

Be very careful about keys when an employee stops working for you, or when you have to fire an employee. You may consider getting your locks changed even if the employee returns your keys.

Talk about Honesty in Your Employee Support Agreement

Keep your Employee Support Agreement with your employee(s) up to date. In that agreement, talk about what happens if the employee is not honest. Be clear you expect honesty and you will not allow a person who is not honest to work for you.

The above tips will help prevent theft. Sometimes, no matter what you do, an employee will steal from you. If that happens, remember you are responsible for dealing with the issue.

If you find small things missing here and there, tell the employee. Do not accuse the person of stealing without proof. Say something like "I seem to be missing things. I'm going to have to pay more attention to where we put things." Letting the employee know you are paying attention may prevent any more theft.

If the stealing is more serious, call the police. Also, tell your Agency with Choice provider and your Care Manager. You may or may not get back what was stolen, but taking action could help keep that employee from stealing from you again or from other consumers.

BACK-UP STAFFING AND EMERGENCIES

This chapter focuses on planning for emergencies, such as when an employee is unable to come to work or when there is emergency weather. There are four topics:

1. Planning for Employee Emergencies & Back-up Staffing
2. Planning for Medical Emergencies
3. Planning for Weather Emergencies

4. What to Include in Your Individual Support Plan

Planning for employee vacancies and absences is one of the most important things an Employer and/or Representative will do to prepare to direct services. In Self-Direction you must have a plan for managing emergencies. This plan will be part of your Individual Support Plan.

The Individual Support Plan (ISP) must include a back-up staffing plan used when:

- ▲ There is a need to change or dismiss an employee.
- ▲ The employee quits unexpectedly.
- ▲ The employee is sick or on vacation.

PLANNING FOR EMPLOYEE EMERGENCIES & BACK-UP STAFFING

No matter how carefully you plan, and no matter how good your employees are, you are likely to have some employee emergencies. Your employee may get sick or have a family problem.

Back-up staffing may include paid or unpaid supports. You may recommend applicants to your Agency with Choice provider to be considered to provide back-up supports. Agency with Choice providers are responsible for providing back-up staffing should the persons identified to meet your back-up staffing needs be unavailable. You may have an employee fail to show up once in a while. Be prepared for this. Here are some tips for covering employee emergencies.

- ▲ Select more than one regular employee to work for you. If one employee is sick or something comes up, the other might be able to fill in. For example, select one person for weekdays and another for weekends.
- ▲ Keep an updated list of people you liked but could not select as regular employees. Check with them from time to time to see if they are still able to work for you as back-ups.
- ▲ Ask family, friends or neighbors if they would fill in when you have an emergency.
- ▲ Let them know whether you might be able to pay them when they help. Make sure you refer these individuals to your Agency with Choice provider. They will need to be hired and properly trained before they can be paid Back-up staff.
- ▲ Make sure your back-up staff are fully trained in how to support you and how to handle any emergencies that may arise.
- ▲ The Agency with Choice provider is responsible for the back-up staffing needs of individuals and will provide staffing as outlined in your ISP, so be sure to notify them if you need assistance.

PLANNING FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

As you train your employees, make sure they know what to do in case of emergencies. After all, if you have a medical emergency, you may not be able to direct your employees. Here are some tips related to medical emergencies:

- ▲ You should discuss both routine emergencies, such as cuts and burns requiring first aid, and other emergencies specifically related to your disability or medical condition.
- ▲ Inform your employees about your medical insurance information.

- 🌱 Provide all your employees with a list of emergency contacts and procedures
- 🌱 If you have life support or medical equipment, make sure the employees know how and when to use it and what to do if the equipment fails.
- 🌱 If you have advanced health directives, make sure your employees know where they are located.
- 🌱 Tell your employees who they need to call if a medical emergency happens.
- 🌱 People's names, telephone numbers and a description of what kind of emergency each person is to be contacted for to provide help needs to be included in your crisis plan.

PLANNING FOR WEATHER EMERGENCIES

It is important to have a plan for weather or environmental emergencies and to practice them with your staff. Your Agency with Choice provider has procedures for emergency response plans related to weather and environmental emergencies you could use. On the other hand, you may create your own plan to be approved by Agency with Choice provider. The plans will teach your employees what to do in case of weather emergencies. This might include:

- 🌱 Back-up power for equipment
- 🌱 Water and food supply location
- 🌱 Emergency evacuation routes and shelter locations
- 🌱 Medication and supplies to take with you, in case of necessary evacuation from your home
- 🌱 Who to call for help

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLAN

- 🌱 Minimum requirements for back-up plans in Individual & Family-Directed Supports are:
- 🌱 The plan provides immediate coverage when the absence of the employee would jeopardize the health and welfare of the participant.
- 🌱 The Plan indicates whom to call when back-up staffing is needed.
- 🌱 The Agency with Choice provider's procedures for testing back-up staffing plans are clearly described.
- 🌱 The plan identifies any risks and ways to manage those risks.
- 🌱 The plan uses formal and informal supports.

BUDGETING

This chapter focuses on the Budgeting Process and covers creating your budget, and keeping track of spending. There are two main topics:

1. Basic Guidelines for Creating Your Budget
2. Your Responsibilities for Using Your Budget

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR CREATING YOUR BUDGET

In Self-Direction, you have an Individual Support Plan and a set amount of money available to you through the Innovations Waiver. You must make and maintain a budget for services and items you need that are included in Individual Support Plan and are approved for purchase.

Your Budget Process will:

- ▲ Define how much money you have to spend each month to meet the needs described in your Individual Support Plan. The Agency with Choice is responsible for making sure dollars are spent as noted in your ISP.
- ▲ Describe how you plan to use the funds available to you through the Innovations Waiver, goals and outcomes in your plan
- ▲ Ensure you understand purchases are approved as part of your plan in an effort to prevent you from overspending

In developing your budget, you, with the assistance of your Care Manager will determine things such as:

1. What natural supports do I have to help me meet some of my needs?
2. What are costs related to Employees?

When you have answered these questions--*in detail*--you have developed the basic ingredients for a good individual budget. Let us look at each of these questions.

1. What natural supports do I have to help me meet some of my needs?

As a responsible citizen, it is important for you to spend public money wisely and contribute some of your own resources for your support. Think about how you can meet your needs with your own money, or help from friends and family. Also think about supports you might find in your community that do not cost anything, such as churches of faith of communities, clubs, community centers, etc.

2. What are costs related to Employees?

The expenses related to your Employees are paid through your budget. All these expenses will be paid by the Agency with Choice provider. It is important you have an understanding of what employee costs are part of your budget.

WAGES

When thinking about what to pay your employees you will work closely with the Agency with Choice provider.

The Agency with Choice provider partners with you to establish the pay rate, but makes the final decision regarding the pay for your employees. Here are some things to think about when considering wages for employees:

- ▲ Does the Agency with Choice provider have an established pay range for employees?
- ▲ What is the usual rate for employees in your area?

- 🌱 What rate will you need to pay to get employees who meet your needs?
- 🌱 Will you pay different wages based on the person's skill and experience?
- 🌱 Do you need employees with skills that will require a higher wage?
- 🌱 If you need employees to work at odd times, like very early mornings or Saturday nights, will you pay more for those times?
- 🌱 Will you give raises to employees who have been with you a long time?

TAXES

What you pay employees must also include payments for state and federal taxes as required (see appendices). The Agency with Choice Provider makes sure taxes are deducted from your employee's wages.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE

North Carolina will require Employees Compensation Insurance for your employees. The Agency with Choice provider makes sure your employee's are covered. If any of your employees are injured while working, it is important they report it to the Agency with Choice provider as soon as possible. As the Managing Employer, you should make certain this takes place within 24 hours of the injury.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR USING YOUR BUDGET

You have several responsibilities for using your approved Self-Direction budget. These are:

1. Work with your Care Manager to submit your budget for approval by IDD Utilization Management.
2. Work with your Community Navigator and Agency with Choice provider to keep track of what you are spending each month so you do not spend more than budgeted.
3. Work with your Care Manager to revise your individual budget when your needs change, along with your Individual Support Plan.

1. Submitting your budget for approval to IDD Utilization Management.

The Care Manager will have been very involved with you in providing guidance and resources to you as you created your individual budget. Once you have made your decisions and have created an individual budget, your Care Manager will submit it to IDD Utilization Management for approval. Approval of your budget must be received before you can start to self-direct your services. Often, the budget is approved at the same time your Individual Support Plan is approved.

When reviewing your individual budget for approval to begin payments, your Care Manager will let you know of any items on your budget that do not agree with the rules of the Innovations Waiver Self-Direction. Your Care Manager will work with you to fix these budget problems to meet the program rules and regulations.

The following people will receive copies of your approved budget:

- 🌱 You
- 🌱 Your Representative (if you have one)

🌱 Your Agency with Choice provider

2. Make purchases that are planned in your budget.

You should buy the services and other purchases you put into your budget and Individual Support Plan. This means you are meeting your needs and effectively managing your own services. It means your budget is being used according to the established rules. Making purchases you have put in your budget will keep you from overspending.

3. Keep track of monthly spending.

The Agency with Choice provider will send you a report each month, telling you exactly what you have spent in pay to your employees, and other purchases. Your Community Navigator can provide you with training and guidance on how to track your expenses.

Some general examples of expenses include:

- 🌱 Hours each of your employees worked
- 🌱 Supplies that were purchased
- 🌱 Special equipment purchased
- 🌱 Special service purchased, e.g. job skills class
- 🌱 The costs of all the items or services you purchased

4. Revise your individual budget.

If there are changes in your needs you can revise your budget with your Care Manager. Your Care Manager will help you do this according to the rules of IDD Utilization Management. Your Care Manager will help you make decisions regarding the needed changes to your Individual Support Plan and/or budget.

Call your Care Manager any time you are unsure if a new budget or Individual Support Plan is needed. Your Care Management can discuss what you want to change and let you know if a new Individual Support Plan or budget is required.

SUMMARY

- 🌱 You can create a budget based on your allocated funds and your Individual Support Plan.
- 🌱 Your budget must be approved by IDD Utilization Management before any purchases are allowed.
- 🌱 If your needs are different from your Individual Support Plan, call your Care Manager to discuss the need for a revised Individual Support Plan and/or budget.
- 🌱 You should call your Care Manager if you have questions about developing or using your budget.