It's Your Choice.

Hiring and Managing Your Own Care.

Call toll-free: 1-866-801-3435

The Division of Aging and Adult Services
of the Arkansas Department of Human Services

Programs that can help you stay independent.

Nobody wants to live in a nursing home if they can possibly help it. In fact, many medical studies clearly show that individuals stay healthy and happy longer when they remain at home and around friends and loved ones.

If that sounds good to you, the Arkansas Division of Aging and Adult Services has created two programs — **Alternatives** and **IndependentChoices** — that can help you stay independent and living in your own, familiar surroundings.

- **Alternatives** is for people with physical disabilities between the ages of 21 and 64. This program provides for personal care and even some home modifications to make movement and care easier for you.

- **IndependentChoices** is for people who are already receiving Medicaid in a program that pays for personal care, like SSI, ARSeniors and others. With "IndependentChoices," you can use that money to manage your own care.

Table of Contents

Getting started in a program to manage your own care

Hiring your helpers

Developing a work schedule for your helpers

What to do if problems come up

Important names and telephone numbers

Appendix 1: Interview Questions
Appendix 2: Creating a Work Schedule
Appendix 3: A sample Work Agreement
Appendix 4: Firing a helper

The colors on the edges of the pages can guide you to each section.

1

Getting started in a program to manage your own care.

Applying for one of these two programs to keep you at home is easy.
Just follow these simple steps:

1. Apply for one of the programs at your county DHS office.

Every county in Arkansas has a DHS (Department of Human Services) office.
That's where you need to go to apply for one of these programs.

At your county DHS office, people are there who will help you fill out an application for the programs. Just take this booklet with you, or tell them that you want to find out if you qualify for one of the programs that let you stay at home and not go to a nursing home. They know all the requirements for the programs, so you don't have to worry about that.

After asking you a few questions, your county DHS person will know if you're eligible for one of the programs. If you are, they'll schedule a visit to your home to see what types of

help you're going to need.

- For example, you have to be eligible for Medicaid and also meet certain nursing home admission guidelines, because these programs are designed to be alternatives to nursing homes. You also need to meet certain financial requirements. Also, if you are denied eligibility, you can appeal that decision. For more information about your rights and appeals, go to page 34 .

2. A DHS nurse or counselor visits you and creates a personalized Plan of Care.

Do you need someone to prepare your meals? Do you need help with bathing? Do you need someone to keep your home tidy and healthy? These are just some of the things that the nurse or counselor will be able to see when they visit your home and talk to you.

The nurse or counselor puts all this information together and develops a Plan of Care for you. It describes the kinds of care you need and what the program will provide to help you. You get a copy of the Plan and the DHS office keeps the original in their files, so it's safe and available if there are any questions.

- Your Plan of Care might be that you get help with dressing, housework and fixing your meals five days each week. And, you may get at least three days each week with your personal health — bathing, hair washing, etc. — based on your individual needs.

3. Your Plan of Care will change with your needs.

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As your health and mobility change, so does your Plan of Care. At least once a year, a nurse or counselor will visit you and see if you're getting the help and care you need. If you need more care, then your Plan might be adjusted to increase your care. And, if you're healthier and stronger and need less help, then your Plan may be adjusted to provide less care.

If your health or mobility changes suddenly during the year, you need to tell your nurse or counselor immediately. You don't have to wait until they come each year to review how you're doing in the program. Tell them that your needs have changed, and they may revise your program to give you more help.

- Each year, your eligibility to receive help from these programs will be reviewed, along with the amount and types of help you receive. If you remain eligible and need more care, then your Plan will be adjusted to provide more care. If you need less care, then the Plan will be adjusted accordingly.

With these programs, you manage your own care.

These DHS programs enable you to live at home or in your community. You stay independent. And, because you are independent, you hire your own helpers.

Yes, that's right: you hire your own helpers — no one does it for you. When you need new helpers, you find and hire them. You'll also get some help in doing it. Plus, it gives you the freedom to choose who you want to help you in your home, and that's a very good thing.

Some answers to common questions about managing your care.

When folks get started in these programs, they always have questions about managing their own care. That's natural, because most people haven't done it before. So, here are some answers to questions that other people, just like you, have asked:

Q. What do you mean by "managing my care"?

1

A. First, you will hire your helpers.
Second, you will determine when they come to help you and for how long each day.
Third, you will decide if they are doing a good job or not.
And, finally, you will dismiss poor workers and hire new workers, if necessary.

Q. Do I have to pay my helpers out of my own pocket?

A. No. Medicaid takes care of this. Instead of paying a nursing home, Medicaid pays your helpers.

Q. How does that work?

A. Based on how much help you need (and that's written in your Plan of Care), Medicaid figures that you will need a helper for a certain number of hours each week. They then pay your helpers based on a set hourly rate.

Q. Who keeps track of how many hours my helpers work?

A. You and your helpers. Your helpers have to record the days and hours they work for you, but you have to keep track of this. Medicaid doesn't want to pay for services you didn't receive, so you need to be able to tell them that you really did get the help on those days and times.

Q. Do I get any help with bookkeeping?

A. Yes. Medicaid provides a bookkeeper for you to make things much easier. For example, the bookkeeper will:

- take your helpers' timesheets;
- make out checks to your helpers based on their timesheets;
- withhold state and federal taxes for them; and,
- prepare W-2 forms.

Q. When can I hire my helper(s)?

1

A. Once you find out that you're eligible for one of these programs, you can begin looking around. But, don't hire them until you've been told that it's OK to do so. That's because Medicaid won't begin paying your helpers until all the approval processes have been completed.

- A counselor or nurse from DHS will help you and your helper(s) fill out the necessary paperwork that has to be completed before Medicaid will begin paying them. It's important to read and understand all the materials that DHS provides, because it tells you when your helper can start working and when he/she will begin being paid.

Q. Can I hire anyone I want to?

A. No, there are some simple restrictions on who you can and can't hire. For example, **your helper has to be at least 18 years old.** In addition, neither your wife or husband nor your legal guardian can be your Medicaid-paid helper.

Q. What if I have a question or a problem and don't know where to go for help?

A. We have an individual called the **Waiver Program Ombudsman** whom you can call and talk to **toll-free at 1-866-801-3435.** This person is on your side, and can give you the information and support you need.

- An "ombudsman" is a person who investigates complaints or problems, reports findings and tries to find reasonable solutions.

Waiver Program Ombudsman

Toll-free call: 1-866-801-3435

Hiring your helpers.

2

This next section is designed to help you make good decisions in hiring the people who will provide the services you need. So, read it carefully; it's full of information that can make this job much easier.

1. Prepare a job description

This is very important, because it requires you to itemize all the things that you want your helper to do. First, you can use the description as the basis for your ad. Second, when you are screening individuals, you can go through the job details with them on the telephone. When you are interviewing applicants personally, you can simply hand them your written job description and let them read it for themselves. This eliminates any misunderstandings and disagreements, such as, "I said you needed to do this," and "No, you didn't."

When you prepare your job description, be sure to include:

- the days and hours that you want your helper to provide services for you;

- a detailed list of the services that you want your helper to do. **And, remember: these can only be services that Medicaid has approved for payment** — the ones that are listed in your Plan of Care;

- the hourly wage that you will pay (your nurse or counselor will give you this information);

- personal behavior that is not acceptable to you when your helper is in your home, such as: smoking (inside or outside), receiving personl telephone calls or bringing their children with them to work. These are the types of things that can quickly sour a good working relationship. So, make a list of all unacceptable behavior right now, while you're thinking about it, and add them to your job description:

2. Advertise the job so you will have several helpers to choose from.

2

When you have several people to choose from, your chances are better at getting someone good to work with you. There are two goals here: first, to create an ad that clearly says what you need, and second, to put the ad in several places so a lot of people might see it.

First, put in your ad:

- **the hourly wage** that the job will pay;
- **the number of hours** per day and per week that you need them;
- **a description of the job** (make this general, you can tell them about the specifics during your interview with them);
- **a telephone number** where they can reach you and when you want them to call.

But don't put your name in the ad. For your own safety, the fewer people who know that you need help around your house, the better.

Second, here are some places that you can put your ad:

- local newspapers
- church bulletins
- local colleges and community centers
- doctors offices
- nursing schools
- grocery stores
- hospitals
- pharmacies
- libraries
- fitness centers

Third, tell your family and friends that you're looking for help. It's sometimes surprising how many good helpers are found simply through word-of-mouth. Independent Living Centers and social agencies are also good places to mention that you're looking for help. **Again, just give them a telephone number they can call to get in touch with you — no names.**

Fourth, if you have access to the Internet, try searching the DHS Division of Aging and Adult Services's registry — **www.dswregistry.ar.gov** .

This is a place where people who are looking for jobs as personal helpers can register their names and telephone numbers. You can see if anyone in your area has registered, or, **if you don't have access to the Web, call your Ombudsman: (1-866-801-3435) and ask them to do it for you.**

2

- **IMPORTANT: there is no relationship between the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the individuals who post their information on the website.** Anyone can post their names and information on the registry site — they haven't been screened or approved in advance. Use the registry simply as a first step, and then make sure you verify the individuals's credentials carefully when you interview them.

3. How to screen your applicants and schedule personal interviews

Be prepared for people when they call in response to your ad. For example, have a copy of the job description beside your telephone where it will be handy.

Remember that the person calling is trying to do two things: to find out the amount of money you will pay them, and what they'll have to do on the job. At the same time, you are trying to decide if you like them enough to want to schedule a personal interview. So, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Talk to them about the job. Ask them what questions they have, and if they would like for you to read the job description to them;

- Ask them to tell you about their job qualifications;

- At some point, mention the types of behavior that you consider unreasonable;

- Don't mention your home address unless you've decided that you want to interview the individual later. Even then, remember that you can interview people at places away from your home, too;

- If a person seems to be pushing you for personal information and it's making you uncomfortable, politely – but quickly – end the conversation;

- If you plan to check the person's background for a criminal record, you should mention this to the caller;

- At the end of the conversation, ask the person if they're interested in the job. Some people will be, and others won't – it's not personal. If they're interested AND you are interested in them, go ahead and schedule a face-to-face meeting either in your home or at some other location.

- Remember, too, that if they're interested and you're NOT, you can end the involvement right then. Just thank them politely for their interest, wish them luck and hang up. But, you might want to keep their information in case you change your mind. In that case, get their telephone number for future contact and thank them for their interest.

2

- If you decide to set up a face-to-face meeting, tell the person and talk about a place and time that would be convenient for both of you. You'll also want to get the individual's telephone number in case you need to reschedule the meeting.

4. Making the most of a personal interview *

The personal interview is when you'll decide who you want to hire to be your helper. Seeing someone face-to-face and watching his or her reactions to questions gives you the human information you need to become comfortable with making this important decision. So read this section carefully and make decisions on these points **before** you place your ad.

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* In the back of this booklet in APPENDIX 1, there is a guide that may be helpful to you in developing your interview questions. It's located on page 42 .

LOCATION: You can interview applicants in your home or at some neutral location, like a library, restaurant or community center. And, you can bring someone along with you, such as a family member or friend, to put you at ease.

PAPERWORK: Take the job description you created and a piece of paper and pen to take notes.

QUESTIONS: **Go over each task in your job description with your applicant. This is important.**

For example, if your Plan of Care (that you based your job description on) will pay for someone to lift you into a chair, out of bed, into a car, etc., ask the individual about his or her physical ability to do that. They have to be strong and careful at the same time. Can they do that?

REFERENCES: Ask your applicants for a list of people (personal references) who can recommend them for your job, and the list should include former employers. Tell your applicant not to include his/her friends or family.

PATIENCE: **Wait until you have interviewed all of your applicants before making a decision.** You may think you've found the right person one day only to meet someone better the next. And, if you've had a friend with you during the interviews, get their opinion, too. **But — and this is important — always make the final decision yourself. You are the one who will be directly affected by the choice, not your friend or family member. So, trust your instincts and judgment, and you'll make a good decision.**

5. Conduct a criminal background check

Before you go through the trouble of checking references, conduct a criminal background check. It may seem unnecessary to you, but just keep in mind the old saying, "It's better to be safe than sorry."

For a small fee **and** with the consent of your applicant, the Arkansas State Police can perform a Criminal Background Check for you. This will reveal if the individual has ever been convicted of a crime in Arkansas.

Here's how to contact the State Police:

Telephone: 1-501-618-8500 = the Arkansas State Police Identification Bureau

Internet: https://www.ark.org/criminal/index.php

Mail: Arkansas State Police
Identification Bureau
#1 State Police Plaza Drive
Little Rock, AR 72209

6. Check all personal references you are given.

There are two things to consider in this step: first, how much importance should you place on the individual providing the reference, and second, is what they say important to your job description?

Here's one example: say one of your prospective helpers provides a personal reference. This is from a local minister that you know and like. You call the minister and she says that,

while recovering from an operation, the individual provided significant personal care for her — lifting, assistance with bathing, cooking and cleaning, etc. This lasted for six months and the minister was very pleased with the help she received.

Now a second example: a prospective helper provides a personal reference. This is from someone you've never met. You call the person and he says that the individual is his cousin. The service the individual did was work part-time in a convenience store the cousin manages. This lasted for about three weeks and he says the individual did "OK."

Obviously, the two examples are very different, but you get the idea. **Some references are much better than others, so wait for the good ones.**

To help you judge how good a reference is, consider asking the following questions to the people whose names were given as personal references:

- How do you know (the applicant's name)? (friend, family, work together?)

- How long have you known (name)? (short or long time?)

- Are you related to (name)? (family members aren't very objective)

- Did (applicant) tell you that he/she was going to use you as a personal reference? (and give you advance notice?)

For former employers:

- When did (applicant) work for you? (recently or a long time ago?)

- What did (applicant) do for you on the job? (did it have anything to do with the specific type of help you need?)

- Was (applicant) good about following instructions and completing tasks?

- Would you hire (applicant) again?

7. Offering the job

2

You've written your job description, created and posted your ad, gotten responses, talked to people on the telephone, set up interviews with the applicants that sounded most interesting, conducted the interviews, done a criminal background check and checked personal references. You've thought about the applicants and decided which one you'd like to hire.

Call the person you want to hire. Tell them that they are your first choice, but that you want to go over the details of the job again with them. Discuss the work schedule and the types of services you're going to need. Talk about the hourly pay. Discuss the types of behavior you don't like. Make sure everything is clear — your expectations and theirs. This is the time to make that last check before hiring.

If both of you are in agreement and your applicant wants to work with you, then tell him or her that she is hired and the day you would like for them to start. Also, tell them that you would like for them to sign a **Work Agreement** when they first come to work. The **Work Agreement** simply puts in writing your expectations and the tasks to be performed along with an agreed-on work schedule. This eliminates any questions later, and is an excellent thing for both you and your helper. A sample **Work Agreement** can be found in APPENDIX 3 in the back of this booklet on page 51 .

You may be tempted to think that a Work Agreement is unnecessary, but it isn't. It protects both of you — you and your helper — and most people appreciate having one.

You may also think that many of the recommendations made here are unnecessary. They aren't. By being thorough and following these steps, you will eliminate many mistakes that could affect your care.

Plus, doing these things gives your helper a respect for you as his or her employer. You're thorough. You're businesslike. You're fair. And, even more importantly, **you're demonstrating clearly to your helper that you can take care of yourself.**

Developing a work schedule for your helpers.

This is another important step that many people omit. Don't be one of them. Remember, the better you describe the job — and, here, we mean the days, hours and tasks — the better everyone understands what is expected of them.

Some important things to remember when you create your work schedule are:

4

- **Medicaid will only pay for the types of care and hours that are in your Plan of Care**, so review that before you make your work schedule;

- Medicaid payments are based on weeks beginning on Sundays, not Mondays. So, **begin the work shifts on your schedule on Sundays and end them on Saturdays for a seven-day work week**;

- **If you have multiple helpers, consider the different types of care they're providing when you schedule their work shift.** For example, if you have a helper to clean your house three days a week, have them come Monday, Wednesday and Friday, rather then Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

In the back of this booklet in APPENDIX 2, you'll find a sample Work Schedule that you can use as a guide in making your own. This is found on page 45 .

What to do if problems come up.

Hopefully, this section will be helpful to you when problems come up. Though it sounds a little pessimistic, problems between individuals and their helpers are pretty common. It really depends on the people involved as to whether they're big problems or little ones and how quickly they can be resolved.

You can't think of everything, nor plan for every possible problem that could come up. But, you **can** read the following section and follow some of the suggestions, because they are good ones. For example:

- **TALKING IS GOOD:** Many problems start small and become big because the people involved don't talk enough to each other, so make open and honest communication with your helper part of your routine.

- **BE A GOOD LISTENER:** If your helper has a complaint about something work-related, make time to listen and hear them out. You don't have to agree with them about it, but you should listen carefully. The complaint may be right. Or not. But you have to listen to find out.

- **BE CLEAR IN WHAT YOU WANT:** In your Plan of Care, the types of services that Medicaid pays for are clearly set out. But, one service isn't given a higher priority than another. For you, though, some of these services are going to be much more important than others. So, make your helper aware of which services you want them to spend more of their time doing.

- **BE FRIENDLY, BUT BE THE BOSS:** The relationship you have with your helper is up to you, but maintaining a bit of a distance from your helper's life outside of work is probably good. You're giving the orders and you want them taken seriously, there needs to be a line created between the employer (you) and your helper.

- **PLAN FOR ABSENCES:** Your helper is going to need to be away from work from time to time for planned absences, such as vacations. These shouldn't be surprises, and they won't be if you have a good relationship with your helper. Ask him

or her to give you plenty of advance notice about planned vacations so you can arrange for help in their absence.

- **PREVIEW THE MONTH AHEAD WITH YOUR HELPERS. This is a really good idea, so make it part of your routine.** Sit down with your helpers around the end of the month, get out your calendar, and ask them if they know of anything that's coming up in the next month that will require them to be away from work.

  Many, many people don't think beyond a day or two ahead of time, so this may help jog their memory about upcoming events. And, keep this review positive and helpful.

- **EXPECT OCCASIONAL, UNPLANNED ABSENCES, BUT NOT TOO MANY:** Car trouble. Bad weather. Family problems. Sick children. These things happen to most people, from time to time, but they shouldn't occur very often. If they start to do that, sit down with your helper and get it out in the open quickly. Find out what's going on.

  Also, tell your helpers that, if they know they're not going to be able to come to work, they need to call you as soon as they find out so you can make other arrangements. This is simple courtesy.

- **PREPARE A BACK-UP PLAN:** Regardless of how good they are, your helpers are sometimes not going to come to work. That's a fact. So, what do you do about it? Simple: you have a back-up plan in place for emergencies.

  A back-up plan just means that you have some replacements — pinch-hitters, in baseball— who can come and help you out on relatively short notice. Usually, this means family or friends. **Whoever it is, you need to have them arranged in advance. You need to talk to them about it, and they need to agree that they're your pinch-hitters.** And, you need to have more than one, because, sometimes, the pinch-hitters can be unavailable, too.

  Sometimes, it may be something as simple as running to the grocery store for you. But, it can also be for things that are more important. So, impress upon your pinch-hitters that you won't ask them for help unless it's really necessary and important. They'll understand.

If things really go bad: disciplinary action.

OK, you've done everything right. You've conducted interviews. Checked references. Done background checks. Prepared a Work Agreement. Prepared a Work Schedule. Communicated clearly with your helper. Talked with your helper about the things they're doing wrong. Been a good person. And, things still go bad!?

Yes, it happens. Whatever the reasons, work situations can, and do, go bad from time to time. And, they need to be solved **quickly.** Bad situations never get better; they only get worse. And, the faster you can resolve it, the better for you. So, let's first look at some important things to always keep in mind:

- **Everyone deserves to be treated with care and respect.** If your helper is not giving you the care and respect you think you deserve, it's time to part ways.

- **Never doubt your self-worth.** You need some help? So did President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Physicist Stephen Hawking. Author Helen Keller. Actor Michael J. Fox. The fact that you need help doesn't diminish your value in the slightest. It does, however, put you in excellent company.

- **You should always feel safe and secure when your helper is working.** And, that means not only **physically** safe, but **emotionally** safe, as well. It's your home. You are the boss. Your helper works for you. If you ever — *ever* — feel unsafe when your helper is there, it's time to find a new one. Immediately.

  A helper should always be polite and respectful. Inappropriate behavior — cursing, becoming angry or sullen, slamming doors, etc. — cannot and should not be tolerated. If it occurs, tell the helper immediately that their behavior is unacceptable, and begin looking for a replacement that day.

4

  Sometimes, people let their helpers act badly and they don't do anything about it because they think, "It would be so hard to find someone to replace him/her, I'll just try to ignore it." Don't make that mistake.

  Some "helpers" will try to take advantage of others, and they see tolerance of bad behavior as a sign of weakness, instead of kindness. If you find yourself with a "helper" like this, you need to replace them quickly. And, here's how:

1. **Call a friend or family member and have them come to your home.** Explain the situation to them and tell them you've decided to fire your helper. Ask them to sit in with you for support, but tell them that you will handle the firing yourself.

2. **Ask your helper to come in. Explain in clear terms that they have violated the terms of your Work Agreement, and, because of that, you no longer wish for them to work for you. They should leave your home immediately**, and your friend or family member will watch them until they reach their car. Keep this conversation short. There is no room for discussion and argument is inappropriate. The decision has been made.

3. **If you feel as though a face-to-face meeting would be too stressful for you, you can mail them a letter to their home**. Make sure it will arrive well before their next scheduled work shift. An example of such a letter can be found in the back of this booklet in APPENDIX 4 on page 55 .

4. **Take care of your own health and safety first. Call 911 if it is an emergency, or your Case Manager if you are concerned about your safety. If anyone who is providing care attempts to harm you physically, verbally or emotionally, you should call Adult Protective Services at 1-800-482-8049.**

Your rights before, during and after applying for one of the programs.

These two programs are designed to help you live a more active, healthy and happy life by staying in your community. We've already discussed the rights you have as an employer dealing with your helper(s). In addition, you also have rights in dealing with us — the Department of Human Services — about the services you receive or don't receive — from Medicaid. Read this list carefully.

4 **You have the right to:**

1. be treated with dignity, worth and respect;

2. be told, ahead of time, of the services you will get in these programs, and the things that you can't do that might result in those services being cut off;

3. be told, ahead of time, of any changes in your services;

4. choose the agency or individual that will provide you services;

5. have your personal information respected and kept private;

6. have any forms that you are asked to sign explained to you, so you know exactly what you are agreeing to;

7. help the nurse or counselor assess your needs and develop your Plan of Care;

8. know the name and telephone number of your nurse or counselor (the person who supervises your Plan of Care) at DHS;

9. ask questions/complain about the services you're receiving under your Plan of Care without having to worry about angering someone;

10. file an appeal of any decision that says you are no longer eligible to receive care under one of these programs; and,

11. be free from any kind of abuse: physical, verbal, sexual, or taken advantage of financially.

Appeals

You have some additional rights to appeal decisions that affect your right to services under these programs.

First, if a decision is made that you don't qualify for the programs, **you can appeal.**

And, second, if you begin receiving care under one of the programs and later are found to not qualify, **you can appeal that decision.**

Any decision that deals with the services you receive, or don't receive, under these programs will be put in a letter and sent to you from your local DHS office. In that letter, there will be instructions about how you can appeal the decision. Just follow those instructions.

5

Important names and telephone numbers

IF IT IS AN EMERGENCY, FIRST CALL 911

THEN, call these people in this order:

1. Name: _____

Telephone #: _____

2. Name: _____

Telephone #: _____

3. Name: _____

Telephone #: _____

My Doctors:

Name: _____

Telephone #: _____

Name: _____

Telephone #: _____

Department of Human Services:

Ombudsman/My Advocate: 1-866-801-3435
Adult Protective Services: 1-800-482-8049
Aging & Adult Services: 1-501-682-2441
IndependentChoices: 1-888-682-0044

Information about paying my helpers:

Palco: 1-877-753-0999
EDS: 1-800-457-4454

My DHS Counselor/Nurse:

Name: _____
Telephone #: _____

5

My Helpers:

Name / Telephone #: _____

My Helpers (continued):

Name / Telephone #: _____

Name / Telephone #: _____

Name / Telephone #: _____

Name / Telephone #: _____

Name / Telephone #: _____

Name /Telephone #: _____

Name / Telephone #: _____

Other Names and Telephone Numbers:

Name / Telephone #: _____

Name / Telephone #: _____

Name / Telephone #: _____

Name / Telephone #: _____

Name / Telephone #: _____

Name / Telephone #: _____

APPENDIX 1: Interview Questions

Developing good questions for your helper interviews

With good questions, the interviews you have with the people who have applied to be your helper(s) won't be difficult. You'll know you're covering the important points, so you can listen carefully to what they say and decide if you like what you hear.

What follows are some general questions that other folks have found helpful. Write new questions as you think of them. When you get finished developing your own list, practice on a friend. Ask your questions, then listen closely to see if you get the information you're seeking in their answers. If you don't, change the questions and try again.

Finally, the interview should last less than one hour. Listen carefully to your applicants: simple, direct answers are a good thing.

Some sample interview questions:

- Do you have a job now? If so, why are you applying for this job?
- What experience do you have as a personal helper or caregiver?
- Have you had any formal training doing this type of work?
- Let me read the job description to you. And, as I read it, tell me if there is anything in it that you think you couldn't do or might have trouble doing.
- Do you have a driver's license and a car?
- I would like to have background checks with the state police done on **all** my applicants. Would you mind if I request one on you?
- _____
- _____

Interview questions continued

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

APPENDIX 2: Creating a Work Schedule

Preparing a task chart and Work Schedule

This exercise will help you develop a Work Schedule for your helpers that fits into your Plan of Care. Use your questions as a guide.

1. What **tasks** have been authorized in your Plan of Care, and which **days of the week** will you need them performed?

Example:	**TASKS:**	**DAYS NEEDED:**
	Dressing	Sunday through Thursday
	Housework	Monday, Wednesday, Friday
	Meal Preparation	Monday through Friday
	Grooming	Sunday, Tuesday, Friday

2. How many **paid work hours** does your Plan of Care authorize?

Example: 24 hours a week

3. What activities are especially important to you? Think about the ones that are outside your home and let you spend time with your friends and family.

Examples:
- Therapy appointment
- Family visit on Sundays

4. Now, make a form like the one below, and transfer this information to it.

Task Chart

Tasks authorized	**Amount of time authorized**	**Days I want them performed**	**Notes**
Dressing	5 days a week	Sunday through Thursday	I have a therapy appt. on Thursday morning, and will need to dress early.

Task Chart (continued)

Tasks authorized	Amount of time authorized	Days I want them performed	Notes
Housework	Three days a week	Mon / Wed / Fri	Vacuum on Friday because Mike does a good job.
Meal preparation	Five days a week	Mon through Friday	Dorothy is a better cook. I can warm leftovers on Saturday Family cooks on Sunday

Task Chart (continued)

Tasks authorized	Amount of time authorized	Days I want them performed	Notes
Grooming	Three days a week	Sun / Tues / Fri	

Now transfer the information you've put on your Task Chart into a Staff Work Schedule. Use the sample on the following pages as your guide.

My Staff Work Schedule

Day	Dorothy	# of hrs.	Mike	# of hrs.	Tasks
Sun	OFF	= 0	8–10 a.m.	= 2	Dressing and grooming
Mon	8–noon	= 4	OFF	= 0	Dressing, housework, meals
Tues	8–noon	= 4	OFF	= 0	Dressing, take me to grocery store, housework, meals
Wed	8–noon	= 4	OFF	= 0	Dressing, grooming, meals, housework
Thurs	8–noon	= 4	1–4 p.m.	= 3	Dressing, meals

My Staff Work Schedule (continued)

Day	Dorothy	# of hrs.	Mike	# of hrs.	Tasks
Fri	OFF	= 0	1-4 p.m.	= 3	Housework, meals, grooming
Sat	OFF	= 0	OFF	= 0	

Hours: 4+4+4+4 = (16) 3+2+3 = (8)

Total hours per week for helpers: 16 + 8 = (24)

APPENDIX 3: A sample Work Agreement

Here's a sample Work Agreement that you can use with your own helpers and personal situation. Just change the wording and tasks to fit your needs.

Work Agreement

1. This Work Agreement is between (your name) and (your helper's name). Both agree that (your helper's name) will report to work on the days and hours listed below:

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
OFF	8 a.m.–Noon	8 a.m.–Noon	8 a.m.–Noon	8 a.m.–Noon	OFF	OFF

Work Agreement – continued

2. In addition, we agree that on those days and times, (your helper's name) will be responsible for doing the following for (your name):

    - Dressing (your name)
    - Preparing meals
    - Cleaning the house
    - Transportation on Tuesdays to the grocery store and on Thursdays to the hospital for a therapy appointment

3. (Your helper's name) is allowed to use (your name's) car while at work and when doing the jobs listed above. (Your name) will maintain insurance on the automobile.

4. (Your helper's name) will have (your name's) evening meal ready to serve by no later than 5 p.m. (Your helper's name) is welcome to join (your name) for meals that she prepares for her.

Work Agreement – continued

5. (Your helper's name) is not permitted to smoke cigarettes at any time while working for (your name). There will be no exceptions.

6. (Your name) and (your helper's name) will discuss this agreeement every six months and will change it, if needed, if both parties agree to do so.

7. This agreeement may be terminated by either party with two weeks' notice.

(your signature) _____ (your helper's signature) _____

(the date you sign) _____ (the date your helper signs) _____

APPENDIX 4: Firing a helper

- Here's an idea for a **short conversation** with a helper that you have decided to fire:

  "Ms. (helper), I'm sorry that this arrangement is just not working out. As you and I talked about before, I need to eat an early dinner. I've decided to end your employment today, so I can find someone else who can do this for me."

- And the **text of a short letter** to the helper telling them that they've been fired:

  Dear Ms. (helper),

  On February 15, I spoke to you about my need to eat dinner before 5 p.m. Then, on February 25 — after you continued to serve my meals late — I reminded you again that I needed to eat before 5 p.m. Unfortunately, this problem still continues, so I am ending your employment with me effective immediately.

  Sincerely,
  (your name)

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