

## **BDDS Helpful Hints:**

### **How to Select Waiver Providers for Family Supports (FS)**

### **Waiver & Community Integration and Habilitation Waiver (CIH)**

Selecting good providers is critical. It's helpful to think about the issues that are important to you/your family member before you begin the process. A list of certified Waiver providers for each county is available through your case manager. If you are new to waiver services or your current agency has terminated your service, you will need to prioritize the providers and try to schedule interviews and visits within a small time frame so that the process does not become overextended. Individuals who are new the waiver are asked to select a provider within 14 days of receiving the pick list. Individuals who have been terminated by their current provider must select and transition to a new provider within 60 days of termination.

You will be able to make an informed choice by reading information, such as the DDRS Waiver Manual, or by discussing alternatives with the case manager, or an advocate. You may want to visit an individual who is currently receiving Waiver services or meet with various service providers. Case managers can assist in setting up visits or meeting with service providers.

Sometimes a provider can arrange for you to visit people who are receiving services from the provider. Remember, when you visit a house or apartment where Waiver services are being provided, you are visiting someone's home.

On the following pages are some questions to consider when selecting Waiver providers. The questions you ask will depend on what kind of service it is, and whether you will be served in your family home, your own home/apartment with or without housemates. Many of the questions are applicable to any setting, and others can be skipped or modified as needed.

When meeting with providers or case managers, it is important to take notes, because it is easy to forget details later. Ask for copies of any written materials, write down names, titles, phone numbers, email addresses, etc., and the date of the meeting. It's important to maintain accurate information.

#### ***General Topics to Discuss with Service Providers***

1. Discuss all areas of service that are absolute requirements for you/your family member such as: medications always administered on time, direct supervision, sign language training, etc.
2. What makes you/your family member happy? What causes pain? How will the provider maximize opportunities for the first, and minimize or eliminate instances of the second?

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3. What things do you/your family member want to have happen? A job? Attend or be a member of a church? How many housemates? Living within a half hour drive of family? Anything else? Are these wishes or requirements?
4. What are the risks for you/your family member? For example, daily seizures; no street safety skills; does not talk or use sign language; forgetful; hits others when angry, etc. How will the provider deal with those risks?
5. What is your experience working with children and/or adults with disabilities or adults who are elderly?
6. How would you ensure the implementation of my Person Centered Plan (for DD Waivers)?
7. What connections have you established in my community? How would you assist me in building a support system in my community?

### ***Questions to Ask Prospective Service Providers***

1. What is the provider's mission? (Does it match the intent you are seeking?)
2. Is the provider certified, accredited, or licensed? What are the standards of service?
3. What kind of safety measures does the provider have to protect and assure treatment?
4. How does the provider assure compliance with person's rights? Do you (and/or family members/advocates) receive copies of your rights as a consumer of services, as well as have these rights explained?
5. Is the provider interested in what you/your family member want(s) or dream(s) about?
6. Is the provider connected to other programs that you may need, such as day support, local school/education services, or work programs? How is the provider connected? Ask for specific contacts.
7. If you are to live in a home shared with other people, can families drop in whenever they wish?
8. How are birthdays, vacations, and special events handled?
9. How would family money issues be handled? What is the policy on personal/client finances?
10. How would minor illnesses and injuries be handled? Major illnesses/injuries?
11. What kinds of things are routinely reported to families?
12. Can we get a copy of your complaint policies and procedures? Is there someone else who family members can talk to if there is a disagreement?
13. How are behavior problems handled? Are staff allowed to contact a behavioral support provider? How are new staff trained on the behavior support plan? Are they trained before working with our family member? What is the relationship between residential provider and behavioral provider?

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14. How is medication handled? What happens if medication is refused?
15. What is the smoking policy?
16. How are planning meetings scheduled and conducted, and who attends? Can a family member call a meeting? How do you assure that what is agreed upon in the meeting actually is provided?
17. Who would be the provider contact person, and how will that contact occur, and how often? Is someone available 24 hours a day in case of emergencies?
18. How many people with disabilities has the agency terminated or discontinued from services? Why? What happened to them?
19. Has the agency received any abuse/neglect allegations? Who made these allegations? What were the outcomes? What is the process for addressing abuse/neglect allegations?
20. What challenges do you think my family member will create for you?
21. As a provider of Waiver services, what are your strengths and weaknesses?
22. What is the process for hiring staff? Are background checks conducted and training given? What happens to our family member while a new staff person is hired and trained?
23. How is direct staff supervised? What training does the staff receive? What is the average experience or education of staff?
24. How is staffing covered if regular staff is ill? What happens if staff does not show up for the scheduled time? How often does it happen?
25. What is the staff turnover rate? How are staff's respite needs handled?
26. What kind of supports do staff have? Who can staff call if a problem develops?

### ***What to Look For and Ask During Visits to Supported Living Settings***

1. How do the staff and housemates interact? Do they seem to respect and like each other?
2. Does the environment look comfortable? Is there enough to do? Are there things happening in the home?
3. What kind of food is available and who picks it? Are choices encouraged/available? Are diets supervised?
4. Do people have access to banks, shops, restaurants, etc? How is transportation handled? Are trips to access these resources planned or on an as needed basis?
5. Is there a telephone available to housemates (with privacy)? Is the telephone accessible (equipped with large buttons, volume control, other access features) if needed?
6. Does each person have his/her own bedroom? Can each person individually decorate the bedroom?
7. Do housemates seem to get along well? What happens when they don't?

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8. Are there restrictions on personal belongings? What are the procedures for lost personal items? Are personal items labeled? Are lost items replaced?
9. Are pets allowed? What are the rules regarding pets?
10. How much time is spent in active learning (neighborhood, home or community) and leisure activities? Is there a good balance with unstructured time?
11. Is there evidence that personal hygiene and good grooming (hair, teeth, nails, etc.) are encouraged?
12. How are personal need items, clothing, etc. paid for?
13. Does each person have privacy when he/she wants to be alone or with a special friend?
14. Does each person have the opportunity to belong to churches, clubs, community groups, etc?
15. Do staff knock on doors (and wait for a response) before entering a private room?
16. What kind of rules are there within the living situation? What are the consequences for breaking rules?
17. Does each housemate have opportunities to pursue his/her own individual interests, or do they travel in a group with everyone doing the same thing, attending the same movie, etc.?

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