

a guide to CHOOSING YOUR PROVIDER



There are many different agencies licensed to provide residential and day services through the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). It is important to choose the provider that works best for you. We recommend that you visit and interview at least 3-4 adult service providers during your transition planning process so you can make an informed choice when the time comes to choose your future supports.

The following guide includes some questions to get you started - consider what else is important to you and feel free to expand on this list. Once you have completed your agency visits, be sure to write down your top choices to share with your circle of support.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- How long has your agency been providing services?
- What is the size of your agency?
- How many people do you serve?
- Where are your offices located? In what areas of the state?
- Do you have any people you serve or family members who would give permission for me to talk with you about their experiences?
- What information is available about your agency (such as brochures, newsletters, website, social media, annual report)? Can you send me copies?

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

- What are your staff qualifications and training requirements?
 - How does your agency ensure quality and address continuous learning for staff?
 - Will my family member or I have input in hiring staff who will be assisting me?
 - What is your staff turnover rate?
 - Can I receive results of any family/client satisfaction surveys?
 - Can I receive a copy of your agency's most recent certification review or audit report?
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SUPPORTING THE PEOPLE YOU SERVE

- How would you help me in fostering relationships and building friendships with others?
- How would you support me in making my own choices and decisions?
- How would you support me in achieving my own personal goals?
- What types of community and recreational activities does your agency provide or coordinate?
- What kinds of clubs or community organizations do the people you support belong to?
- How does your agency support people with activities?
- How do you meet transportation needs?
- What makes your agency unique from other service providers?
- Is there an area you specialize in?
- Do you have staff who can teach me how to use technology to engage and connect with others and be more independent?

RESIDENTIAL - ASSESSING THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

- As I arrive, do I like the location and outward appearance?
- Is the home close to my friends and relatives?
- Is the home on a noisy street?
- Is the home neat, clean and odor free?
- Is the home accessible (for example, is there a sit-down shower, grab bars as needed, etc.)?
- If Supported Living, how many people will be sharing the household and what will be my share of the rent, utilities, etc.?
- If a Companion Home, what does my room and board cost?
- What furniture will I need to purchase?
- Do I have common interests with other potential housemates?
- Can I have a pet? Will my housemates own a pet?
- Do any of my potential housemates smoke?
- Do I have a say in who my future housemates might be?
- How do you resolve conflicts between housemates?

source: www.informingfamilies.org

DAY AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- Is transportation provided?
- What is the agency's inclement weather policy?
- Is there a nurse on staff?
- What kinds of complex medical needs do you support?
- What is your approach to supporting people with behavioral needs?
- What types of activities do you offer?
- Do I have choices in which activities I do?
- What is the the role of the parent/family/caregiver?

DAY AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (CONTINUED)

- Do you offer assistance in developing social skills?
- Do you offer meal choices?
- What kind of support do you provide in finding employment?
- Do I have choices about where I work?
- What kinds of jobs do the people you support have?
- Do you offer job coaching? If so, what is the ratio of job coaches to people you support?
- Do you provide training on office skills?
- What other opportunities do you provide for job skills training?
- Do you assist with conflict resolution at work?
- What happens if I lose my job?
- What would I do if do not have a job?
- How long does it typically take for your agency to help someone find a job?

PREPARING FOR YOUR VISITS: DOCUMENTS NEEDED

Here is a checklist of documents you should be prepared to bring with you on your agency visit:

- Completed application
- Agency visit form
- Psychological Evaluation
- Current IEP
- Behavior Plan
- Any Pertinent Medical Documents
- Photo ID (Government-issued)
- DDA Eligibility Letter (if available)