

CONSUMER-DIRECTED SUPPORTS

AN INFORMATIONAL GUIDE



Consumer-Directed Supports in North Carolina

An Informational Guide for Consumers, Families, and Others

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Materials for this manual were compiled and adapted from the following resources:

- Cabarrus County Department of Social Services and Department of Aging
 - Consumer Directed Services Handbook
- Carolina East Home Care and Hospice (formerly Duplin Home Health & Hospice, Inc.)
 - Consumer Directed Choices Handbook
- Minnesota Department of Human Services
 - Consumer Directed Community Supports Consumer Handbook
- State of Colorado, Department of Health Care Policy and Financing
 - Consumer Directed Attendant Supports Training Reference Manual
- State of Florida, Health Care Administration, Department of Children and Families, Department of Elder Affairs, and Department of Health
 - Consumer Directed Care Plus (CDC+) Consumer Notebook
- The Arc of North Carolina
 - The Arc Alternative, Finding the Support You Need
- The Arc of Tennessee
 - Tennessee Personal Assistance Support & Service User Guide

Chapter 1

Overview

This chapter focuses on an introduction to Consumer-Directed Supports and this manual. There are four topics:

- A. Purpose of this Manual
- B. Consumer-Directed Supports Overview
- C. Support Team
- D. Getting Started with Consumer-Directed Supports

A. Purpose of this Manual

This manual is designed to help people with disabilities and long-term care needs, their families, and others learn about Consumer-Directed Supports. While the manual is written from the perspective of you, the consumer, it will also be a useful tool for agencies, Care Advisors/Case Managers, Financial Managers, policy makers, and others.

This manual is designed to provide information and answer questions about Consumer-Directed Supports, a service option that has gained interest in the last several years. Different programs operate in different ways, and not all programs follow the exact descriptions in this manual. For further information about a specific program and its implementation of Consumer-Directed Supports, please contact the individual program.

If you decide to pursue this option, the manual will help you learn the things you will need to know as a participant in Consumer-Directed Supports. The manual includes information about what it means to direct your own services along with suggestions, sample forms, checklists, and other resources.

You can use this manual to learn and understand how Consumer-Directed Supports work. The manual can also serve as a resource for you throughout your participation. You may refer to it many times during the initial phase and as needed after the establishment of your Participant-Centered Plan. The Participant-Centered Plan may also sometimes be called the Person-Centered Plan or the Care Plan.

There is a lot of information contained in the manual. Each section is listed by topic in the Table of Contents in the front of the manual. In the back, there are Appendices that include a Glossary of Terms and other resource information. Your Care Advisor/Case Manager (**see definitions in Appendix A - Glossary**) is available to answer your questions and help you find the information you need.

B. Consumer-Directed Supports Overview

Consumer-Directed Supports offer people the choice to take responsibility for planning and controlling the services that enable them to remain in their homes and communities. People who need assistance to remain in their homes and communities receive services in a variety of ways. In some situations, agencies or professionals plan and manage services.

Some programs offer an option for individuals and their families to make decisions about the services they need and to manage those services. This includes when, where and by whom services are delivered. This is called Consumer-Directed Supports.

When you direct your own services, you make your own decisions and take responsibility for them. Consumer-Directed Supports give you more flexibility in your daily routine. They give you the chance to take greater control of your life. Consumer-Directed Supports:

- May increase your independence and self-sufficiency;
- May improve the quality of support you receive; and
- May help you to lead a more healthy and productive life.

When you decide to participate in Consumer-Directed Supports, a Care Advisor/Case Manager will be available to help plan and manage services. You, your Care Advisor/Case Manager, and others develop a Participant-Centered Plan and a budget to implement the Plan. This may include personal care services, equipment, and supplies, which will best meet your needs and desires. You and your Care Advisor/Case Manager decide together how much assistance you want and receive.

As the consumer who has decided to become a participant in consumer-directed supports, you decide whom you want to provide the services. You manage the workers and tell them how you want the job done. Depending upon your program, you may have choices to select supplies and equipment and vendors and/or companies from which to buy.

In Consumer-Directed Supports, the program may require or allow you to have a Financial Manager to provide personnel and payroll related services. This means the Financial Manager, on your behalf and at your request, may complete background checks, process checks, manage accounts, and handle appropriate withholdings, such as taxes and benefits.

With Consumer-Directed Supports, the Financial Manager can take care of the payroll details for you, but you are still in charge. The Financial Manager pays your employees, but only if given timesheets signed by both you and the employee and only for the amount allowed. Even though you are your worker's

supervisor, you do not have to know a lot about personnel and payroll administration unless you want to learn about those things. The Financial Manager manages your money allocation, based on your Participant-Centered Plan, your instructions, your contract with the Financial Manager, and on the rules from the program that controls your public funding.

C. Support Team

You, as the consumer, have chosen to become a participant in consumer-directed supports. The first step in starting to direct your own services is to understand your role. Your role has changed – you have chosen to have more flexibility and more control over your services. You, the participant, now have the freedom to make choices that were not available to you before.

However, you have a team to assist with planning, budgeting, and managing services. This team may include:

1. Participant (you)
2. Representative (optional)
3. Care Advisor/Case Manager
4. Direct Support Worker
5. Financial Manager (if required or allowed by your program)
6. Federal, state and local government

1. Participant (you)

You are the decision-maker.

Your role is to decide the best way to meet your needs. You have choices about setting up your Consumer-Directed Support plan and a budget based on the plan, with the approval of the agency that administers your funding. You and your Care Advisor/Case Manager develop a plan and make a budget based on the amount that you are allowed by the agency approving your funding. From this, you purchase services, supplies and other special equipment that help you live at home and remain as independent as possible.

You are the manager of your supports.

As a manager, you have a variety of responsibilities, such as to:

- Find and hire people to provide services.
- Train your workers and schedule the best time for the work to be done.
- Let your workers know if they are doing things the way you want them done.
- Let your workers know if they are not doing things the way you want them done.

- Establish a back-up plan for supports.
- Authorize time sheets for payroll so paychecks can be issued to your employees.

You are a custodian of public money.

Your role is to adhere to the plan and budget that you helped to prepare with your Care Advisor/Case Manager. The budget must be used to meet your support needs. You may make changes in the plan and budget along the way; however, you will need to work with your Care Advisor/Case Manager to make changes, and the changes must be approved by the agency that administers your funding.

2. Representative

The Representative is an agent of you, the Participant.

As the participant, you may choose a Representative to make decisions and choices with you or for you. This person might be a trusted family member or friend, or a legally appointed guardian or power of attorney. If you choose to have a Representative, it is important to select someone who will involve you as much as possible in decisions about your preferences in services, supplies, and equipment. In some situations, your Care Advisor/Case Manager may recommend that you have a Representative in order to participate in consumer-directed supports.

You may want to make some decisions yourself and ask for help from your Representative with other decisions. For example, you may want your Representative to find and hire your workers and you keep the ability to set the schedule of the workers yourself. You may also choose to have your Representative make all your decisions.

If you want, your Representative can be responsible for managing the established budget. However, the two of you should agree and communicate to the Care Advisor/Case Manager about how the budget is being spent.

3. Care Advisor/Case Manager

(A Care Advisor/Case Manager may also be known as a Counselor or another term. Sometimes, depending on your program, you may have the option to have both a Case Manager and another person to help such as a Support Broker.)

The Care Advisor/Case Manager is your consultant.

The role of the Care Advisor/Case Manager is to help you in developing a plan to meet your needs, as well as developing the budget based on the plan. The Care Advisor/Case manager helps make sure you have the skills and knowledge you will need to manage your care and services, and can discuss future needs with you, like a purchase you may want to make to assist with activities of daily living. This person can teach you how to select, train and supervise your workers, and can help you plan for emergencies.

The Care Advisor/Case Manager is a coach.

The role of the Care Advisor/Case Manager is to answer your questions, provide information, and offer suggestions. The Care Advisor/Case Manager is available to discuss your ideas and help you solve any problems you may experience.

The Care Advisor/Case Manager is a resource person.

The role of the Care Advisor/Case Manager is to let you know about the resources that are available to you in your community, such as community activities, transportation for older adults and people with disabilities, or a store where you might be able to purchase an item at a discounted price.

The Care Advisor/Case Manager is a custodian of public money.

The role of the Care Advisor/Case Manager is to make sure you spend your Consumer-Directed Care budget to meet your support needs in ways that are approved in your plan. This person reviews the monthly report from the Financial Manager, or from you if you do not have a Financial Manager, and compares it to your budget. The Care Advisor/Case Manager contacts you if s/he has questions about how you are spending your budget.

4. Direct Support Worker

The Direct Support Worker is your employee.

The worker's role is to provide direct services and supports to you to meet your needs as described in your plan. The worker provides supports under your direction, and:

- works the hours you set,
- works at the location you select,
- uses materials and equipment that you provide, and
- uses methods that you prefer and request.

5. Financial Manager

(The Financial Manager may also be known as a Fiscal Intermediary.)

You may have a Financial Manager, or you may not have one, based on your program. If you do not have a Financial Manager, your Care Advisor/Case Manager will let you know if you or someone else does these tasks, and answer any questions you may have.

The Financial Manager manages the funding for your services. The Financial Manager takes care of finances to meet your service needs and processes your request for funds to pay for services, based on your approved budget.

The Financial Manager's responsibilities include:

- Issuing payroll checks.

- Paying invoices as approved by you.
- Billing Medicaid or other funding sources for the services provided to you.
- Monitoring your budget expenditures and providing a monthly report for you.
- Deducting your payroll taxes from your budget.
- Completing and filing the tax forms with the federal and state government.
- Paying the payroll taxes.

You and the Care Advisor/Case Manager provide all financial information concerning the services paid for and billed by the Financial Manager. The Financial Manager may also perform other functions, such as criminal background checks on potential workers.

The Financial Manager is a custodian of public money.

The Financial Manager sends a monthly budget report to you and your Care Advisor/Case Manager describing how your money was spent. This report shows if there are discrepancies between your budget and expenditures.

6. Federal, State and Local Government

The government is responsible for services that are purchased with public (federal, state, or local) money. The government does some things and delegates other local public agencies to do some things on its behalf.

The government is a funder of services.

The government provides public dollars to support services to individuals. Additionally, the Government creates ways for local human service networks to access funding to support individuals.

The government is a resource.

The role of the government is to share information and experiences among Participants, Representatives, Advisors/Case Managers and Financial Managers. The Government provides training or asks local agencies to provide training as necessary.

The government is a monitor.

The role of the government is to monitor the quality of the Consumer-Directed Supports activities. Sometimes the state or federal government monitors and sometimes a local government agency monitors.

D. Getting Started with Consumer-Directed Supports

Your Care Advisor/Case Manager is there to help you, from start to finish, beginning with teaching you how to get started. Your Care Advisor/Case Manager helps you understand how Consumer-Directed Supports works.

The manual gives you a lot of information about planning and managing services and supports, but it does not cover everything for every person. You may have ways of doing some things that work better for you than what is suggested in this manual. Your Care Advisor/Case Manager can also provide you information about how your program might be different from what is described here. There is a lot of other information available on Consumer-Directed Supports that may be helpful as well. You should feel free to use any resources that work for you.

Chapter 2

Privileges of Participants In Consumer-Directed Supports

This chapter focuses on your privileges as a participant in Consumer-Directed Supports. There are six topics:

- A. Managing Your Own Direct Support Workers
- B. Obtaining Assistance For Consumer-Directed Supports
- C. Obtaining Support With Finances
- D. Withdrawing From Consumer-Directed Supports
- E. Maintaining Eligibility For Medicaid If You Are A Medicaid Recipient
- F. Submitting Appeals And Grievances

A. Managing Your Own Direct Support Workers

You have privileges in managing your own support workers. This means you can:

- Choose the people you want to hire to provide your services and supports.
- Decide what special knowledge and skills, if any, the people you hire must have.
- Train workers to meet your needs.
- Replace (fire) workers, when necessary, who do not meet your needs.

B. Obtaining Assistance For Consumer-Directed Supports

You may choose to manage your Consumer-Directed Supports or in some programs you may have a person help you. That person is called a Representative. The Representative may be your legal guardian, family member or other person you choose to assist you. The Representative cannot be paid for this service. In Appendix B, there is a sample Screening Questionnaire for Representatives and a sample Designation form that can be used in appointing a Representative.

You also have a Care Advisor/Case Manager to help plan and manage services. The Care Advisor/Case Manager assists you in planning, budgeting, accessing resources, and learning new skills.

C. Obtaining Support With Finances

Depending on the program that provides your services and funding agency, you may be able to receive assistance with spending your allowed funds from a Financial Manager. The Financial Manager manages the money you are allowed to spend for services, based on your Plan, your instructions, your contract with the Financial Manager, and on the rules about your funding.

D. Withdrawing From Consumer-Directed Supports

Participation in Consumer-Directed Supports is always voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. If you decide to withdraw, you must contact your Care Advisor/Case Manager. If you withdraw, you may receive services in a more traditional provider arrangement, as long as you are eligible for that program.

E. Maintaining Eligibility For Medicaid If You Are A Medicaid Recipient

If you receive Medicaid, your eligibility for Medicaid does not change because of participation in Consumer-Directed Supports. Withdrawing from Consumer-Directed Supports does not affect your Medicaid eligibility. Of course, other changes in your life—income, health, living arrangement—could affect whether you are eligible for Medicaid.

F. Submitting Appeals and Grievances

As a Consumer-Directed Supports participant, you have the rights to appeal and file grievances allowed by your program. Talk to your Care Advisor/Care Manager to find out more about how to make a complaint about your services. That person can help you know how to file a grievance or make an appeal.

Chapter 3

Participant Responsibilities

In Consumer-Directed Supports, you take on many responsibilities that require work and careful planning. This chapter is just an overview. More detail on how to handle your responsibilities is provided in other chapters. In this chapter, there are six main topics:

- A. Being the Supervisor
- B. Managing Your Supports
- C. Reconciling Financial Records
- D. Managing Emergencies
- E. Ensuring Quality
- F. Following Relevant Laws

A. Being the Supervisor

Part of your role in Consumer-Directed Supports is to act as the supervisor for your direct support workers. This means you:

- Determine wages for your workers within the guidelines and rules of your program.
- Set up hiring agreements with each worker. Make sure each worker knows when to start work, what the wages and benefits will be, and what the job duties are.
- Follow all laws and regulations regarding employment of workers.
- Explain the role of the Financial Manager, if you have one, to your workers.
- Conduct criminal background checks on your potential workers. The Financial Manager, if you have one, or your program/funding agency may be able to conduct the background checks for you. A criminal background check may be required by your program. If your program does not require criminal background checks, it is your responsibility to make an informed decision about whether or not to perform a background check on your potential worker.
- If you have a Financial Manager, let the Financial Manager know the worker's start date and discuss with the Financial Manager the wages and benefits the worker will receive.
- For each pay period you:
 - Review worker timesheets to make sure they are complete and correct,
 - Make sure timesheets are signed by you and the worker, and
 - Send the timesheets to the Financial Manager for processing, if you have a Financial Manager.

1. Continue to discuss any changes in worker wages or benefits with the Financial Manager if you have one, and with your worker.
2. Keep important records on each worker. You must keep this information confidential.

B. Managing Your Supports

Under Consumer-Directed Supports, you manage your own support. Among other things, this means you, with assistance from your Care Advisor/Case Manager,:

- Decide what your support needs are.
- Budget for support workers, supplies, and equipment that you need with the money available to you.
- Recruit and interview people to be workers.
- Do reference checks on potential workers.
- Conduct background checks on workers.
- Select your workers.
- Schedule your workers.
- Train and supervise workers.
- Dismiss (fire) workers and replace them when needed.
- Follow all laws and rules on employing workers.
- Complete and manage the necessary paperwork.

If you have a Representative and/or a Financial Manager, those people can help you with some of these tasks too.

C. Reconciling Financial Records

You need to make sure your records are accurate and complete. To do this, you and/or your designated Representative need to review the monthly reports from the Financial Manager, or need to review your own records that you keep about money you are spending. You should report any problems to the Financial Manager or to your Care Advisor/Case Manager right away.

D. Managing Emergencies

You must be prepared to handle emergencies that might come up regarding your services. This includes direct support workers who are very late or do not show up for

work. You must have a plan for managing emergencies. Chapter 9 provides more detailed information on managing emergencies.

E. Ensuring Quality

Part of your role is to help your funding agency and the Government make sure that you receive quality services. Chapter 8 provides more detailed information on how to ensure quality through managing your direct support workers. To do this, you should:

- Tell your Care Advisor/Case Manager about the quality of the care you are receiving and if you are satisfied with the services your workers are providing.
- Evaluate your worker's performance and provide feedback to the worker. Feedback may include information on what skills or tasks the worker does well and information on what skills or tasks the worker needs to improve.

F. Following Relevant Laws

Another part of your role is to act as the "supervising employer" for your workers. This means you must abide by applicable federal, state and local laws governing employment, including but not limited to:

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000e, *et seq.*
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act, 29 U.S.C. §§ 621, *et seq.*
- The Americans with Disabilities Act, 42, U.S.C. §§ 12101, *et seq.*
- The Family and Medical Leave Act, 29 U.S.C. §§ 2601, *et seq.*
- The Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. §§ 201, *et seq.*

Other federal, state, and local statutes and/or regulations may apply. **See Appendix D - Federal and State Resources for Tax and Employer Related Issues.**

Your Care Advisor/Case Manager or Financial Manager can help you to understand some of these responsibilities.

Chapter 4 Communication

This chapter focuses on skills you will need for communication. There are four main topics:

- A. Communication Tips
- B. Bargaining
- C. Giving Feedback
- D. Documenting

Since you are dealing with some very personal issues, you need good communication skills. You have to train new workers and praise and correct them while they are with you. You also need to be able to talk with your Representative (if you have one), your Care Advisor/Case Manager and the Financial Manager.

Your interactions with all these people require good communication skills. This manual gives some basics in this area but it takes time to build these skills. Below are some communication tips. If improving your communication skills is important to you, think about taking a class. Some centers for independent living or community colleges might offer them. Ask your Care Advisor/Case Manager to help find resources or classes that will help you learn how to communicate effectively with workers and others involved in your Consumer-Directed Supports.

A. Communication Tips

Listen

Good communication is when both parties understand each other. If you are doing all the talking, you will not know if you are being understood. Even when you have something very important to say, you still need to hear if the other person understands your point. Also, you often learn more when you are listening than when you are talking.

Try to understand

One of the best ways to get a person to listen to you is to listen and understand them first. If you understand the other person's point, you have a better chance of responding in a clear and helpful way.

Be assertive

State your concerns, feelings and wishes clearly and directly. Be respectful and make eye contact. Deal with problems. Do not attack the other person or call names. Be clear about what your concerns are and why.

Use "I" statements, not "you" statements

State your issues from your point of view. You cannot really know what the other person is thinking or why he acts a certain way. A statement such as, "I need a worker I can rely on and who comes on time," is a much better communication than, "If you cared about me, you'd be here when you should be." An "I" statement focuses on your feelings and experiences. It is hard to argue with a person's statement of his/her own feelings. Also, a "you" statement is more likely to make your worker feel defensive.

B. Bargaining

When you hire a new worker and you are trying to agree on terms of employment, good communication skills are important. You need to agree on many things such as schedules, required tasks, and working conditions. Here are some ideas to help you in bargaining in this and other situations. You could ask your Care Advisor/Case Manager to help you find a resource or classes to learn more about negotiating with workers. Ideas for bargaining with workers:

- Identify the problem, and focus only on that problem. Do not get off track with other issues.
- Identify the needs that you want met. You need to be clear on what you want.
- Be clear on what is most important to you. If you have to give up something, be sure it is the little things, not the big things.
- Learn what the other person's needs are. You are more likely to get your needs met if you understand and try to meet your worker's needs as well.
- Work for "win/win" agreements. You need to work together, not against each other. Try working together to meet both of your needs.
- Keep people and issues separate. Respect people, but bargain hard on issues.

C. Giving Feedback

When giving feedback to workers, your Care Advisor/Case Manager, Representative, Financial Manager, or others, make every effort to use "I" statements:

- I need . . .
- I feel . . .
- I have to have . . .

By using "I" statements, feedback is kept objective and avoids personal blame. You can also say something like "I am disappointed with . . . ; I was expecting. . . ; Did I cover . . . in training?; Did I do something to . . . ?; and so on.

D. Documenting

Documenting and keeping records is very important. You should develop a system for keeping track of all letters, forms and agreements, conversations, interactions, and events. Keeping good records will help you remember important events and conversations. In addition, it can help you in dealing with a worker or with a problem. Make sure you keep written copies of all agreements and arrangements you make with workers. This includes applications, employment guidelines, hiring agreements, schedules, job duties, instructions, time sheets, evaluations, etc. Keep a separate file on each employee with all the documents that pertain to that worker. Include notes you have made to yourself about that worker. This will come in handy if you need to dismiss (fire) a worker.

Chapter 5

Planning for Support Needs

This chapter focuses on planning for supports and services. There are three main topics:

- A. Developing a Participant-Centered Plan
- B. The Participant-Centered Plan
- C. Approval of Your Participant-Centered Plan
- D. Monitoring Your Plan
- E. Revising Your Plan
- F. Assessing Your Continued Participation

A. Developing a Participant-Centered Plan

Consumer-Directed Supports allows greater flexibility in tailoring services to meet your needs and preferences. Your first step in Consumer-Directed Supports is to create a Plan. It is through the process of developing your Plan that you determine what, where, when, how and from whom you will receive the assistance you need. Many programs with Consumer-Directed options use Participant-Centered (or Person-Centered) Planning processes to determine what help the participant needs. This will describe how Participant-Centered Plans are developed.

You, as the participant, take the lead role in directing the plan. You can invite different people to help, including family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, paid support workers, or other people who are important to you. Your Case Manager or Care Advisor is typically included in the planning process. This is because he or she plays an important role in guiding you through all the steps of Consumer-Directed Supports and will have to approve your Plan or get it approved before you can implement it.

The Participant-Centered Plan shows you as a whole person, including not only your needs and paid services, but also your strengths, talents and skills, life-goals, relationships, preferences, unpaid people and natural supports in your life. For example, the plan may include things you are good at doing; special skills or talents you have; your interests; and your preferences for activities and people involved in your life. The plan also focuses on what you want to have in life, such as finding a job or having friends.

Here are some possible things to think about during your planning process:

- What are your needs?
- How are they met now?
- What is the best and most efficient way to meet your needs?
- Who is in your life now?

- Whom do you want and need in your life?
- What areas of your life do you hope to improve?
- What areas of your life need extra support?
- What could improve your life in the community?
- Whom would you like to deliver your services?
- What are your strengths, skills, talents, and interests?
- What other paid supports do you need? For example, to learn job skills, purchase medical supplies, purchase modified bath items.
- What natural (unpaid) people or programs in the community might assist you to meet your goals and need? For example, a neighbor who provides a ride to appointments or free computer training classes at Goodwill.
- When, where, and how do you want your paid supports and services to be delivered?
- What tasks do you need people to do for you?
- How many support workers do you need?
- How often do you need assistance?
- What role do you want to take in managing the people who provide supports?
- How will you decide if you are satisfied?
- How will you know if your Participant-Centered Plan is working?

It is important to remember that when your needs and goals change, then the Plan can and should be changed too.

Various approaches to Participant-Centered Planning are being used today by many people across the country. **See Appendix E – Resources and References for additional contact information on Participant-Centered Planning.**

B. The Participant-Centered Plan

Once you have gone through the process of developing the Participant-Centered Plan, you have to put the Plan in writing. By having a written Plan, you, your Care Advisor or Case Manager, Representative (if you have one) and Financial Manager (if you have one) have the document that guides you in getting the supports to meet your needs and preferences.

Formats for the written Plan vary according to programs. In general, the written Plan includes a mix of paid and non-paid services to meet your needs, such as:

- Paid supports and services you need and plan to use.

- Unpaid supports available to meet your needs.
- Unpaid people in your life, such as family, friends, church members, and representative (if you have one).
- Paid people in your life, such as direct support workers, therapists, Care Advisor or Case Manager, and Financial Manager.
- Services, equipment, and supplies you need.
- Time, place and ways you want to receive services.
- What makes you satisfied with supports and services.
- Plan to monitor your services and supports.
- Emergency back-up plan for supports.

C. Approval of Your Participant-Centered Plan

Once your Plan is written, it must be approved before it can be put into action. Your Care Advisor/Case Manager reviews the Plan and approves it or submits it for approval to the agency administering your funding. In reviewing the Plan, your Care Advisor/Case Manager may consider various issues, such as:

- Do the services and supports meet your needs and provide for your health and safety?
- Will the services and supports help you to maintain your life and home in the community?
- Will the services and supports help you develop and/or maintain skills you need or already have?
- Are the paid services and supports allowable expenses under the funding source and state guidelines?

The Care Advisor/Case Manager either approves your Plan or submits it to your funding program for approval. You may be asked additional questions about your Plan before it is approved. Typically, you, your Support Team, and the funding agency work together to come up with a Plan that addresses your needs and fits within your budget. Your Participant-Centered Plan must be renewed and approved by your funding agency on a regular basis.

D. Monitoring Your Plan

You must remember to monitor your services and supports. Keep financial and employee related records. Review your plan on a regular basis to make sure it still addresses your needs, goals, and choices. Your Support Team can help you with reviews.

E. Revising Your Plan

You can revise your Plan at anytime to meet your needs, goals and choices. Your Care Advisor/Case Manager can help you determine if changes in your life require a formal change in your Plan and Budget.

F. Assessing Your Continued Participation

Consumer-Directed Supports is not for everybody. It requires a lot of work on your part to be sure your plan is working for you. Your Care Advisor/Case Manager can help you manage your supports.

However, if you decide Consumer-Directed Supports is not right for you, you can withdraw anytime. If you withdraw, your eligibility for receiving services does not change. Your Care Advisor/Case Manager can advise you of your options.

Chapter 6 Budgeting

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

- A. Basic Guidelines For Creating Your Budget
- B. Your Responsibilities for Using Your Budget

A. Basic Guidelines for Creating Your Budget

In Consumer-Directed Supports you have a plan and an established amount of money available to you that is designated by your agency with your funding. You must establish and maintain a budget for services and items you need that are included in your Participant-Centered Plan and are approved for purchase.

Your Participant Budget Process:

- defines how much money you have to spend each month to meet the needs described in your Participant-Centered Plan,
- describes how you plan to use the Consumer-Directed Supports funds available to you,
- describes other funds and resources you will contribute to meet your needs,
- ensures you only purchase what is approved and prevents you from overspending, and,
- allows your Care Advisor/Case Manager to understand your needs and your skills in managing your monthly budget.

In developing your budget, you, with the assistance of your Care Advisor/Case Manager and the approval of the funding agency, will need to decide things such as:

1. What services and supplies do I need that are written in my Plan?
2. What natural supports do I have to help me meet some of my needs?
3. How much money do I have to spend to meet my needs?
4. What am I allowed to purchase with my available funds?
5. What will it cost me to meet my needs?

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 services and supplies do I need that are written in my Plan?

By now you should have a very good idea of the services you need, how often you need them, and how many workers are needed. Review Chapter 5 for help in this area.

2. 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 or faith communities, clubs, community centers, etc.

3. How much money do I have to spend to meet my needs?

In Consumer-Directed Supports you have an established amount of money available to you that is designated by the agency providing your funding. Depending on your funding source, this monthly budget amount may be decided by screening and assessment tools, a Participant-centered or Person-centered planning process, or both. To learn more about how your available amount is determined, ask your Care Advisor/Case Manager.

4. What am I allowed to purchase with my available funds?

There are rules you must follow for using your available funds. What you are allowed to use your budget amount on depends on your primary funding source and program. Each funding source has specific legal requirements for the use of its funds. The most basic rule is that everything you buy must be related to your needs. If you are unsure of what the rules allow, ask your Care Advisor/Case Manager for guidance.

Here are some general examples of what may and may not be allowed in your budget:

Examples of items that could be approved for purchase:

Depending on your funding agency, your Consumer-Directed Supports budget MAY be used for things such as:

- help with personal care like bathing, hair washing, bladder and bowel care, care of your teeth
- help with cleaning, laundry, meal preparation and other household chores
- installing ramps or grab bars
- independent living supports, errands or shopping
- adaptive equipment such as mobility aids, communications devices, hygiene equipment
- repairs to adaptive equipment
- consumable medical supplies such as pads, diapers, bandages, nutritional supplements
- emergency alert response installation and maintenance

- companionship services
- supported employment services and job coaching
- services or purchases that support your ability to live as independently as possible and avoid the need for admission to a nursing home or other long-term care facility

Specific items that you can purchase will be in your approved individual budget.

Examples of items not typically approved for purchase

Depending on your funding agency, your Consumer-Directed Supports budget MAY NOT be used for things such as:

- gifts for workers, family or friends
- loans to your workers
- rent or mortgage payments
- payments to someone to be your representative
- clothing
- alcoholic beverages
- televisions, stereos, radios, or VCRs
- tobacco products
- services that are available, without charge, from community organizations
- items that are illegal

If you need some things that are not approved for purchasing through your public money, you might be able to buy these things with your own money, with the help of family and friends, or by community organizations.

5. What will it cost me to meet my needs?

Here you decide what it costs you, in total, for your workers, supplies and equipment. This may include the Financial Manager service fee (depending on your funding source), wages, taxes, insurance, any additional benefits, and costs of supplies and equipment. Also, you need to decide how you will cover "unexpected" situations. We can look at each of these.

Financial Manager Service Fee

Some of the money available to you may be used to pay for the financial and personnel services provided to you by the Financial Manager.

Wages

When thinking about what to pay your workers, here are some things to think about:

- Does the program have an established pay range?
- What is the going rate for workers in your area?
- What rate will you need to pay to attract workers that meet your needs?
- Will you pay different wages based on the person's skill and experience?
- Do you need workers with skills that will require a higher wage?
- If you need workers to work at odd times, like very early mornings or Saturday nights, will you pay more for those times?
- Will you give raises to workers who have been with you a long time?

Taxes

What you pay workers may include payments for state and federal taxes (see appendices). Therefore, you must budget for more than the wages you will pay. The Financial Manager if you have one, or your Care Advisor/Case Manager can provide you with a table or chart listing the actual cost for wages and taxes.

Worker's Compensation Insurance

Depending on how many employers you have and what kind of work they do, North Carolina may not require Workers Compensation Insurance for your employees. You may wish to explore whether you need coverage for workers who are injured on the job. The Financial Manager or Care Advisor/Case Manager may be able to provide you with information about options.

Benefits

You may want to use some of your money to buy benefits for your workers, like limited vacation or sick leave. North Carolina does not require you to provide your workers with benefits. However, employee benefits are often a point of concern for some workers. It could have some influence on whom you may be able to hire and how much you will pay that person. As you think about benefits for your workers, the following questions may help you with this.

- Will the cost of extra benefits be worth it to get workers who best meet your needs?
- Are workers more likely to stay if they have benefits?
- Will some extra benefits make a lower wage acceptable?
- Should I pay part or all the costs for benefits for my workers?
- Which benefits will be most attractive to workers?
- Will higher wages offset the lack of benefits?

Your Financial Manager, or your Care Advisor/Case Manager may be able to help you find out about benefits that are available to purchase.

Supplies and Equipment

You may be able to use some of your authorized funds to purchase health-related supplies and equipment. You must plan for your monthly supplies and for any one-time large purchases that may be allowable. You may have choices about which vendor you can use to make these purchases. If you have a choice, contact two or three suppliers or vendors and request estimated price quotes on the items you need. Your Care Advisor/Case Manager can help you identify potential vendors.

Unexpected Situations

You must plan for "unexpected" situations that may come up. This means you must budget for this, as well. Some may be small; others may be emergencies. For example, what if a worker is one hour late or does not show at all? If workers always show up and on time, everything is okay. However, if an unplanned situation comes up and you have not budgeted for it, you could run out of money. So, budget for these situations. Emergencies are covered in Chapter 9. For now, ask yourself if you will need to pay for:

- Higher wages for back-up attendants to come on very short notice
- Wages for the back-up workers on top of those you are paying your regular worker, if you pay sick leave
- Charges for a provider agency to cover your emergencies

B. Your Responsibilities for Using Your Budget

You have several responsibilities for using your Consumer-Directed Supports budget. These are:

1. Submit your budget for approval by the agency providing your funding.
2. Make purchases that are consistent and allowable with your individual budget and Plan.
3. Keep track of what you are spending each month so you do not spend more than your monthly budget.
4. Revise your individual budget when your needs change, along with your Plan.

1. Submit your budget for approval by the agency providing your funding.

The Care Advisor/Case Manager will most likely have been very involved with you in providing guidance and resources to you as you created your individual budget. However, once you have made your decisions and have created an individual budget you must submit it to your funding agency for approval before you can request any payments. Your Care Advisor/Case Manager helps you do this. Often, the budget is approved at the same time that your Plan is approved.

When reviewing your individual budget for approval to begin payments, your Care Advisor/Case Manager informs you of any items on your budget which do not agree with the rules of the Consumer-Directed Supports program. Your Care Advisor/Case Manager works with you to fix these budget problems to meet the program rules and regulations.

When your final budget is approved, both you and a person from your funding agency sign the original budget form. The following people will receive copies of your approved budget:

- You
- Your Representative (if you have one)
- Your Care Advisor/Case Manager
- Your Financial Manager, if you have one
- Your Funding Agency

2. Make purchases that are consistent with your budget.

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

3. Keep track of monthly spending.

You need to keep track of your spending throughout the month so you do not overspend your budget. This monthly tracking can be very simple. Your Care Advisor/Case Manager can provide you with training and guidance on how to track your expenses. If you have a Financial Manager, the Financial Manager provides you and your Care Advisor/Case Manager a report each month listing all of your expenses and the balance of funds in your account. This report should be consistent with what you have recorded that you spent.

Some general examples of things you will want to write down:

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

If you have a Financial Manager, the Financial Manager sends you a report each month, telling you exactly what you have spent in pay to your workers, taxes, and other purchases. However, the report will be sent to you too late in the month to prevent overspending. This is why it is important for you to keep track of what you spend. The

report from the Financial Manager is a way for you to verify your expenses and your balance.

4. Revise your individual budget.

You should purchase what you wrote down on your individual budget. However, you may need to change your purchases slightly as long as the purchases are related to the needs you identified as part of your approved Participant-Centered Plan and budget. You can revise your budget with your Care Advisor/Case Manager. *Remember, your funding agency must approve your revised budget.* Your Care Advisor/Case Manager will help you do this according to the rules of your funding source.

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

Typically, your Care Advisor/Case Manager conducts an annual re-assessment with you. At this time, you develop a new budget according to changes in your Participant-Centered Plan.

Summary

- You create a budget based on your allocated funds and your Participant-Centered Plan.
- Your budget must be approved by the funding agency before any purchases are allowed.
- You should keep track of your spending throughout the month. This includes worker pay, pay-related taxes, supplies, equipment, etc.
- You must keep your spending within the monthly budget.
- Your purchases must meet a need listed on your Participant-Centered Plan.
- If your needs are different from your Plan, call your Care Advisor/Case Manager to discuss the need for a revised Plan and/or budget.
- You should call your Care Advisor/Case Manager if you have questions about developing or using your budget.

Chapter 7

The Employment Process

This chapter focuses on the process for employing direct support workers. There are three topics:

- A. Recruiting Workers
- B. Selecting and Hiring Workers
- C. Dismissing Workers

A. Recruiting Workers

Before recruiting, you must know what it is you want your worker(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 worker(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 by your program. Using people you know can make the process easier, but it can strain your relationships.

Recruiting can be divided into several tasks:

1. Writing job ads
2. Posting job ads
3. Screening interested people
4. Interviewing candidates

1. Writing Job Ads

The job description you develop 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 in ads triggers more responses; more information in ads triggers 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 candidates. So, include enough information to get "quality" applicants. Make sure your ads do not illegally discriminate.

Below are some sample ads. Notice the effects of "details" in the ads. The first ad is the most general. In each subsequent ad, one word has been added to make it more specific than the preceding ad. Read each ad carefully to see how adding one or more key words make them more specific.

PERSONAL CARE WORKER

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

PERSONAL CARE WORKER

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

PERSONAL CARE WORKER

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

PERSONAL CARE WORKER

Nonsmoker needed to work with adult **female** who has **quadriplegia**, assist with personal care, **laundry** and housekeeping. **Some lifting involved.** 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 should not 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 quadriplegia 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 Appendix B - Sample Documents and Forms for more Sample Ads for Direct Support Workers.**

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.

2. Posting Job Ads

The best place to post an ad is the place that gets you the best workers. 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 workers, 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 hiring.
- 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 personnel department.
- Private employment agencies are an option but do proceed carefully. These agencies will likely charge you or the worker 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 workers 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.

Whatever you use, develop a roster of possible workers. Keep a list of former workers and talk to other consumers for suggestions and advice.

Remember, recruiting is an **on-going** activity. As long as you are directing your own supports, you will need to recruit workers, especially as back-ups. Workers 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 found OK but did not hire at first. They might make good back-up workers. They might some day become your regular workers.

3. Screening Interested People

After posting an ad, be ready to respond to people who contact you. Have the job description nearby or easily accessible. Have it memorized, if necessary. You may be able to arrange with a friend or organization to take applications and handle questions for you. However you decide to handle recruiting, respond quickly to people who have contacted you about the job. Good workers 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 workers either by phone or in person. Whichever way you prefer, keep in mind that you do not have to interview or take an application from everyone. 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 s/he might work out, continue talking. Ask brief and important questions that will help you decide if s/he will meet your needs. Ask the most important questions first and avoid those that suggest illegal discrimination. If you are unsure what might be illegal, talk with your Care Advisor/Case Manager. **See Appendix B - Sample Documents and Forms for Sample Screening Questions.**

Have every person you are seriously considering complete an employment application. Some people may seem great in a conversation, letter or e-mail message. However, you need to get specific information from them before setting up an interview. Your application should be designed to get information you will need for making employment decisions. You can make your own application or get pre-printed general-purpose application forms at business supply stores. An application gives you another opportunity to screen a potential worker. It also gives you a written record of the person's interest and qualifications. What you discover in an application may give you a different perspective about the person. **See Appendix B - Sample Documents and Forms for a Sample Employment Application.**

Once you have reviewed the application, if the person seems appropriate, set up an interview. Never hire anyone without interviewing first.

4. Interviewing Candidates

Take time to plan your interview, which means planning the questions you will ask. Interviews should be face-to-face meetings. Explore what it will be like to work together. Remember, the interview is when you and the applicant see if the situation will work for both of you.

Before you do your first interview, decide where and how it will happen. If you do not want strangers coming into your home, consider doing the interview in a public place, such as a restaurant or at the offices of an organization, if the organization agrees. If you hold an interview at your home, have a friend or family member there, too. Most

importantly, hold the interview when and where you are least likely to be interrupted. Make sure you comply with nondiscrimination requirements. Ask the person you will be interviewing to bring a picture ID to the interview, such as a driver's license or passport.

Plan your interview questions. Use questions that will reveal 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. Sample Interview Questions can be found in Appendix B.

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 s/he is comfortable. Start with questions that are more general 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 a 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 (one that requires more than a yes/no answer).
- Tell the person what you expect in a worker.
- 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 s/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 Consumer-Directed Supports work.

As you near the end of the interview, ask the person if s/he is interested in the job. If the person seems like someone you would likely hire, ask for references. You should also ask the person to complete an application, if this has not already been done. Do not make your decision right then, but tell the person you will call after you have checked references and made your decision.

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.

During the interview, get **work** references. After the interview, decide if you think you would like to hire the person. If so, check references. References may give you important information that you could not get any other way; for example, whether the person is dependable.

Who are good references? The best references are usually those people who have used your applicant as a worker. They know about the person's work performance and habits. If your applicant has no prior experience as a direct support worker, then other good reference sources would be previous employers, teachers and former co-workers. Try to avoid family members or friends as references. They will not know about the applicant's work habits and they are likely to tell you only good things.

When talking to a reference, explain the type of work the person will be doing. Tell the reference that you will keep all information confidential. A reference must feel comfortable enough to give you an honest and accurate assessment of the person. Take notes of what the reference says. If you are checking many references, you can get confused about who said what about which person. Sample Questions for References can be found in Appendix B.

You may not get many answers from references. Some people do not want to say anything bad about another person. If a reference does not give you much information, be thankful for what you do get, and move on to the next reference. You cannot know why a reference gives you little information or if the lack of information means something negative. Remember, reference checks are just one way to get information you can use to decide about hiring someone.

B. Selecting and Hiring Workers

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?
- What useful information did you get from each person's references?
- 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 hiring a friend or relative. How do you feel about spending a lot of time with the person? Remember that safety, reliability and quality work are the most important features for a worker to have. The lifestyle of a worker may not have anything to do with the quality of his or her work.

Criminal Background Checks

Before offering the person the job, it is recommended that you conduct a criminal background check. The Financial Manager or the Care Advisor/Case Manager may be able to do this for you. If you decide to ask the Financial Manager or the Care Advisor/Case Manager to conduct the criminal background check, provide the person's name, date of birth and Social Security number.

The Job Offer

When you decide to hire a worker, you can hire:

- On a trial basis (for example, for three months).
- As a relief or back-up worker.
- As a permanent worker.

When you decide to hire a new worker, do the following in your job offer:

- Review important points from the interview and the job description.
- Explain the terms of employment for the worker. Be sure to explain the role of the Financial Manager, if you have one.
- Agree on pay, working conditions, benefits, and your "guidelines for workers." (Review Chapter 6—Budgeting, for more on pay and benefits)
- Agree on a starting date, starting time, and work schedule.
- Exchange phone numbers so that you can contact each other if plans change or in case of an emergency.
- Make sure the information provided on the application is correct.

Contact the Financial Manager (if you have one)

Be sure you give key information about your new employee to the Financial Manager before s/he starts work. The Financial Manager needs this to do necessary paperwork to get your employee on the payroll. In addition to basic contact information, such as name, address and phone number, tell the Financial Manager about the pay and any benefits for your new employee.

Remember, your worker will not be paid before being enrolled on the payroll. For this reason, check with the Financial Manager to know how many days to allow between the time you hire the person and when s/he actually starts work.

If you do not have a Financial Manager, you will need to do the legal paperwork yourself. Your Care Advisor/Case Manager may be able to give you advice on how to do this.

The Hiring Agreement

You should have a hiring agreement between you and your worker. It must meet your needs. Base it on the terms and conditions agreed upon by you 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. **See Appendix B - Sample Documents and Forms for a Sample Hiring Agreement.**

The hiring agreement should include the following information:

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

C. Dismissing (Firing) Workers

Most people do not like having to dismiss or fire someone. However, sometimes that "perfect" person you hired does not work out. People and situations change. If you find at some point that your worker is not meeting your needs, you may have to fire that person. Keeping a hiring agreement up-to-date and keeping a regular schedule for reviewing your employee's job performance can help you decide if you have grounds for firing.

Some Grounds for Firing

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 learn fast enough to meet your changing needs.
- The employee is late or fails to show up too many times.
- The employee's personal habits bother you.
- 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.

Grounds for Immediate Firing

Some actions by a worker may be grounds for firing him right away. You should have put these in your hiring agreement, as we talked about earlier. Hopefully you covered these with your worker when s/he started working for you.

These grounds 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 Workers

Weigh all your options before you fire a worker. Maybe trying to work things out with the employee might be better. Trying to hire a new one will take time and effort and there is no guarantee your new employee will be a better worker.

How you decide to handle firing a worker will depend upon your personality, your employee's personality, and the situation. You might want to get advice from your Care Advisor/Case Manager, and make sure your back-up plan is available before you fire your worker. However, if firing is your decision, consider the following questions.

- How should you tell the employee you are firing him/her? Doing it by phone or letter may feel safer and/or easier, but doing it "in person" is more respectful. Having a third person, such as your representative, tell the employee s/he is fired is also an option.
- What reasons should you give the employee for firing him/her? If you have been giving plenty of feedback and doing regular evaluations, the worker should not be surprised. S/He should also know what you have said are grounds for firing. In some cases, something may happen or some very serious problem may arise that you have not addressed in your guidelines or evaluations. In most cases, give the employee some idea of why you are firing him/her, but you do not have to go into great detail.
- How will the worker react? Have a neighbor, friend, or relative in the room with you and your worker if you feel there may be a problem when you bring up the subject of firing.
- How much notice should you give your worker? Be fair, but remember that if you give the worker advance notice, you may risk even more problems with his or her work and behavior.
- Who will provide your support once you fire the worker? Before you fire your present employee, have at least one backup worker ready to step in right away.

- Are you safe and secure? If the worker you fired had access to the keys to your residence or car, get them back on the same day that 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 that this was not the person for you?

Once you fire an employee, contact your Care Advisor/Case Manager and the Financial Manager right away. The Financial Manager will need to make changes to the employee's work file and to your records.

Chapter 8

Managing Your Workers

This chapter focuses on how to manage your direct support workers. There are six topics:

- A. Training Workers
- B. Scheduling Workers
- C. Supervising Workers
- D. Evaluating Workers
- E. Dealing with Abuse or Neglect
- F. Preventing Theft

A. Training Workers

Training your workers is very important. 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 Workers Will Need Some Training

Even if your new employee is on the Nurse Aide registry and/or has performed this kind of work before, s/he does not know how you like things done. Train your worker to do 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 worker need time to focus on the training.

Explain Your Disability or Your Medical Condition

Tell your worker **everything** 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 alarming to the uninformed public, prepare your worker to deal with this also. Use many examples. The more your worker knows of your disability, the better support s/he can give you.

Review Your Hiring Agreement for this Worker

You talked about your hiring expectations in the interview. Make sure your worker hears they are important. Explain anything that is unclear. Let him or her ask questions. If your hiring 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 worker s/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 worker must understand all parts of a task and how they fit together.

Demonstrating New Tasks

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

Cover the Steps in the Task

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

Stress Safety

Stressing safety is critical. If you have life support or medical equipment, make sure the worker knows how and when to use it. Train the worker to understand and use “universal precautions” whenever needed. Make sure the worker knows what to do in case of an emergency. **See Appendix E – Resources and References for the Centers for Disease Control contact information.**

Be Patient

Your worker 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 worker plenty of chances to ask questions. ***Be Patient!***

Be Sensitive to Your Worker

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

Respect Your Worker

Respect your worker's ability to learn and how much s/he already knows.

Give Your Worker Feedback

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

Praise Good Work

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

Evaluate Your Worker's Performance and Behavior

Let your worker know you will be evaluating work and behavior regularly. Share copies of your evaluations. We will talk more about evaluating employees later in this Chapter.

B. Scheduling Workers

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

How important is the schedule?

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

Who decides on the schedule?

Ultimately, you do. Remember, though, that you and all your workers have to be concerned with the schedule. You will have a better relationship with your workers if they feel you have thought about their needs when putting the schedule together. Talk to your workers 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 workers should do what tasks on which

days. You might divide the tasks among your workers equally. Or, you may assign workers based on their skills and abilities. However you set up the schedule, remember you will have to do it again as things change.

How does the schedule get changed?

Stress to your workers that everyone must respect the schedule, including you. There could be times when you or a worker really needs to change the schedule. Decide how this will happen and be sure all workers 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 workers to be on time, not late. Decide how you will handle workers being late and let them know the consequences. Likewise, be very careful about asking workers to stay late without warning. Respect the worker's time in the same way you want them to respect yours. If you often ask workers to stay late, you will cause problems in your relationships, and you will lose workers. On the other hand, if you respect their time, you have more right to expect workers to respect yours.

C. Supervising Workers

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 workers perform tasks the way they were taught or some other way?
2. **Quantity** looks at the amount. Are workers performing every task as required or are they skipping some?
3. **Time** is about the schedule. Do workers perform tasks when they are scheduled?
4. **By the Rules** looks at whether or not workers are following your guidelines. Let's say you allow workers to eat your food if they replace what they eat. Although eating your food 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 worker on how to do new tasks. Your worker 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 worker.

Monitor Your Worker's Performance

By monitoring workers, 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 workers are doing.

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 worker has to guess and may guess incorrectly.

Work Together

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

Learn To Say "No"

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

Be in Charge

Although your worker may have suggestions, you are in charge. Even if s/he has worked where consumers have had little control, s/he needs to understand that you have control and the right to live your life as you choose. Also, you do not need your worker's approval of what you do. Respect your worker, but know that s/he is there to assist you, not make decisions for you.

Deal with Problems

When your worker 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 a worker keeps making the same mistakes, consider giving him or her more training. If more training does not help, discuss the situation with the employee. Try to discover if the employee understands that his or her performance is not acceptable. If after the discussion s/he does not improve, try giving him a warning. If the performance still does not improve, it will be necessary to take disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Make sure the worker is aware of these consequences. Consider using "If-Then" statements:

"If _____ continues, then _____ will happen."

Praise Your Worker

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

D. Evaluating Workers

To ensure you are getting the best care from your workers, evaluate them regularly. Even though you supervise your workers daily, you should still do a formal evaluation from time to time.

How often you evaluate workers will be different for each person. New employees should be evaluated frequently until you are confident of their work. For more experienced workers, evaluations can be scheduled further apart. Essentially, the more confident 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.

For formal evaluations, use a prepared evaluation form. Be sure your form has the same or similar items as the worker's job description and hiring agreement. Include items on the evaluation important to your care and comfort. **See Appendix B - Sample Documents and Forms for a Sample Evaluation Form.**

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.

Handling Conflict

By using the interview, selection and evaluation processes described above, you will hopefully minimize the number of serious conflicts that may occur between you and your workers. 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 Appendix B - Sample Documents and Forms for a Sample Evaluation Form for a Sample Process for Handling Conflict.**

E. Dealing with Abuse or Neglect

You should always have good support, and you should make sure your workers treat you well. On rare occasions workers abuse the people they are hired 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 that are meant to insult or attack you or to make you feel bad.

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

Sexual Abuse includes sexual annoyance, touching, fondling or attack. Any sexual behavior by an employee that makes you uneasy is sexual abuse.

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

If you feel an employee is abusing or neglecting you, be ready to take action immediately. Remember, you are responsible for dealing with worker problems. Be sure you are safe and that you have other supports in place. Contact your Care Advisor/Case Manager for assistance.

F. Preventing Theft

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

Check Out References

Always check a person's references. Ask the reference about the person's honesty. If a reference causes you to believe the person may not be honest, think carefully about hiring him or her. You could be taking a risk.

Pay Attention to Background Checks

You should always consider having a background check conducted on each employee, and it might be required by your program. Read carefully the background check report on each person. If a person has a history of theft or other "small" crimes, s/he is more likely to steal from you. If you find anything that causes you to think s/he is not honest, think twice before hiring the person; it could be risky.

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 worker to handle cash for you, make sure s/he does so under your direction. If you have several workers, 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 worker to steal from you. If your worker 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 consumers 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 worker know you have such a list. Being aware that you have such a list may discourage theft.

Be Careful About Use of Your Car

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

Be Careful with House and Car Keys

In many cases, you may have to give your worker a key to your home. At the same time, you do not want your worker 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 worker a key to one lock. You keep the key to the other one. This way you can lock the door so even your worker cannot enter.

Consider a combination lock system. Give the combination to your worker while s/he is with you. You can easily change the code if s/he stops working for you. A combination lock can be very useful when you have to fire a worker. Be very careful about keys when a worker stops working for you, or when you have to fire a worker. You may consider getting your locks changed even if the worker returns your keys.

Talk about Honesty in Your Hiring Agreement

Keep your hiring agreement with your worker up to date. In that agreement, talk about what happens if the worker is not honest. Be clear that you expect honesty, and that 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 worker. 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 worker know you are paying attention may prevent any more theft.

If the stealing is more serious, call the police. Also, tell the Financial Manager, if you have one, and Care Advisor/Case Manager. You may or may not get back what was stolen, but taking action may help keep that worker from stealing from you again or from other consumers.

Chapter 9 Emergencies

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

- A. Planning for Employee Emergencies
- B. Planning for Medical Emergencies
- C. Planning for Weather Emergencies

In Consumer Directed Supports you must have a plan for managing emergencies. This plan will be part of your Participant-Centered Plan.

A. Planning for Employee Emergencies

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

- Hire 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, hire one person for weekdays and another for weekends.
- Keep an updated list of people you liked but could not hire as regular workers. 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 have informed the Financial Manager (if you have one) of your backup workers. You may want to consider conducting background checks on your backup workers.
- Make sure your back-up workers are fully trained in how to support you and how to handle any emergencies that may arise.

B. Planning for Medical Emergencies

As you train your workers, 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 workers. 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 workers about your medical insurance information.
- Provide all your workers with a list of emergency contacts and procedures.
- If you have life support or medical equipment, make sure the workers know how and when to use it and what to do if the equipment fails.
- If you have advanced health directives, make sure your workers know where they are located.
- Tell your workers who they need to call if a medical emergency happens.

C. Planning for Weather Emergencies

Train your workers 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

Chapter 10

Using Community Resources

This chapter focuses on the topic of using community resources.

One of the fundamental principles of Consumer-Directed Supports is that people with disabilities or long term care needs have much to give to their communities. As a Consumer-Directed Supports participant, you have chosen to remain in your home and community with supports. There are studies that show that people who are integrated and involved in their communities have a better quality of life.

Your Care Advisor/Case Manager can help identify and connect you to community resources. Many programs and agencies can be sources of support for you and can provide opportunities for you to participate meaningfully in community life. You may know of some already. There may be other resources that you have not explored.

Some of these resources include:

- Community colleges
- Public libraries
- Community centers
- Churches and faith communities
- Senior centers
- Parks and recreation programs
- YMCA and YWCA
- Neighborhood businesses
- Social clubs
- Hobby and leisure clubs
- Civic clubs
- Support groups
- Museums

Each person will have somewhat different needs, and each community will have different resources. You should develop a list of resources to use in your community.

For more information about how to identify resources in your community, see Appendix E – Resources and References for Asset-Based Community Development Institute contact information.

Appendix A

Glossary

Below are terms used in Consumer-Directed Supports that are important. Become familiar with them.

Care Advisor/Case Manager— a person who works for a funding source—an agency that provides funding for services. The Care Advisor/Case Manager approves your Plan, assists you with developing and implementing your Plan and monitors your services.

Consumer — person who has chosen to participate in Consumer-Directed Supports. (See Participant)

Consumer-Directed Supports — an option for long-term support in which participants manage the supports and services they receive. Participants are in charge of assessing their own needs, deciding how and by whom these needs are met, and monitoring the quality of the services they receive.

Direct Support Worker — the participant's employee who provides services as determined in the Participant-Centered Plan.

Financial Manager — agency or individual that handles financial and personnel matters for participants.

Individual Resource Allocation — public funds, such as Medicaid, which are available for your monthly support services.

Participant — individual with a disability or long-term support need who chooses to take part in Consumer-Directed Supports. (See Consumer)

Reassessment — meeting with you and your Care Advisor/Case Manager and anyone else who is important, to determine your level of functioning and your continued needs for services. You and the Care Advisor/Case Manager determine if your supports should change to meet your needs.

Representative — person who serves as an agent to the Participant by helping make decisions. The Representative cannot be paid for this role.

Supports — paid and unpaid services that allow individuals to remain in their homes and communities. Examples include home health, personal care, community inclusion, job coaching, transportation, medical equipment, and supplies, to name a few.

Participant-Centered Plan — document that describes your strengths, skills, life-goals, support needs and plans for services. It also includes your plans for handling emergencies. You develop the Plan with your Care Advisor/Case Manager and others you choose to assist. The Plan can change as needed.

Taxes — Fees program participants are required to pay on behalf of employees:

FICA (Federal Insurance Contributions Act) — Funds for providing care for the aging, disabled, and survivors. Includes funding for Medicare for people who cannot afford medical insurance.

FUTA (Federal Unemployment Tax Act) — Finances employment programs at the federal level.

SUTA (State Unemployment Tax Act) — Finances employment programs at the state level.

Appendix B

Sample Documents and Forms

On the following pages are samples of various documents that may be helpful. You may use them as they are presented here or you may alter them to address your specific situation. For documents and forms available online, see Appendix E.

Sample Representative Screening Questionnaire

Name of Participant: _____

Phone #: _____

Name of Proposed Representative: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ Relationship: _____

If you are not a family member, please describe your relationship, how long you have known the participant and how often you have contact with the participant:

Do you receive money from the participant or anyone else to care for the participant?

Yes: _____ No: _____

If yes, please identify the source and purpose of the funds:

After reading the description that outlines the responsibilities of the representative, do you understand your functions and are you willing to volunteer to serve as the participant's representative?

Yes: _____ No: _____

Are you willing to sign a designation form stating that you will serve in this capacity?

Yes: _____ No: _____

Do you understand that you cannot pay yourself for this role and cannot become a paid caregiver? Yes: _____ No: _____

Sample Form for Designation of Representative

Name of Participant: _____

Medicaid #: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

I hereby designate:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

to serve as my representative in the Consumer-Directed Supports program. My representative will complete and sign all forms and agrees to meet all documentation requirement of this Program. My representative will assist me in using the Consumer-Directed Supports monthly allowance to purchase the services and items to meet my support needs.

Participant's Signature

Date

I hereby agree to serve as the representative for the above named participant and understand my responsibilities and duties under the Consumer-Directed Supports Program.

Authorized Representative's Signature

Date

Witness Signature
(Required if either the Participant or Representative signs with a mark.)

Date

Sample of Calculations for Determining Wages for Direct Support Workers
--

For a part-time employee who works 34 or under hours a week:

To find the annual salary: hourly rate X number of hours/week X 52 weeks (for the year)

$$\$10.00 \times 20 \times 52 = \$10,400$$

Then take the annual salary and add on 20%. This will cover all taxes the *employer* needs to file on behalf of his/her staff.

$$\$10,400 \times 20\% = \$2,080$$

To complete budget grid: Annual salary \$10,400

Fringe	\$2,080
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For a full-time employee who works 35 or more hours a week:

To find the annual salary: hourly rate X number of hours/week X 52 weeks (for the year)

$$\$10.00 \times 35 \times 52 = \$18,200$$

Then take the annual salary and add on 20%. This will cover all taxes the *employer* needs to file on behalf of his/her staff.

$$\$18,200 \times 20\% = \$3,640$$

To cover the Long Term Disability and Accidental Death & Dismemberment add on \$3.17 for every \$1,000 of the salary.

$$18 \times \$3.17 = \$57.00$$

Total taxes to budget \$3,697

Sample Direct Support Needs Inventory

PERSONAL CARE NEEDS:

Bathing:

- Type of bath (shower, bed bath, set-up) _____
- Frequency _____
- Time of day _____
- How long does it take _____

Dressing:

- Level of assistance _____
- Special considerations _____
- How long does it take _____

Oral Hygiene:

- Frequency _____
- Type of assistance required _____

Bowel Care:

- Type of bowel program (in bed, on commode, etc) _____
- Frequency of bowel care _____
- Time of day _____
- How long does it take _____

Bladder Care:

- Type of bladder program (ICP, condom cath, suprapubic) _____
- Frequency of bladder care _____
- Time of day _____
- How long does it take _____

Transfers:

- Type of transfer (Dependent, sliding board, etc) _____
- Amount of assistance required _____
- When needed _____
- Special considerations (shoulder pain, special techniques, etc) _____

Eating:

- Other than meal preparation, any special help
(adaptive equipment; set-up) _____
- Special diet _____

Medication:

- Type of medications
- Frequency
- Who administers

Exercise Program:

- Type of exercise program (ROM, strengthening, etc)
- Frequency
- How long does exercise program take

HOMEMAKING NEEDS:

Laundry:

- Level of assistance required
- How often
- Where is laundry done

Housecleaning:

- Frequency
- Specific chores

Meal Preparation:

Time of meals

Who will plan

Grocery Shopping:

- Frequency
- Where is shopping done
- Who is responsible

OTHER NEEDS:

- Employment
- School
- Visiting Friends / Relatives
- Meetings
- Recreation / Entertainment
- Paperwork / Paying Bills

Sample Worker Task Checklist

- ___1. Explain what will be done and the reasons for the various techniques.
- ___2. Place a cover over the top bedcover to be used as a bath blanket. Sew several large towels together to make a bath blanket. Slide the top covers from under the bath blanket. Help remove bed clothes as needed.
- ___3. Place a towel under the person's head.
- ___4. With washcloth, make a bath mitt by wrapping washcloth around fingers and palm, anchoring it with the thumb; fold over the part extending beyond the fingers and tuck under at the bottom edge of the cloth at the palm. (This eliminates dangling ends, which may be uncomfortable to the person.)
- ___5. Wash eyes with clear water, cleansing from outer corner of the eye to the inner part of the eye (as the normal flow of tears is from the outer to the inner part of the eyes), using opposite corners of the cloth for each eye.
- ___6. Wash the face from the midline outward using a firm but gentle motion, using clear water for the face unless the skin is oily (some people prefer creams for cleansing); wipe from the outer to inner part around eyes.
- ___7. Wash, rinse and dry ears.
- ___8. Place towel under arm and another towel near the hand to set the basin on.
- ___9. Lower person's hand into basin; allow it to soak as the arm is being washed.
- ___10. Wash and rinse the other arm and soak hand, drying carefully, especially between the fingers. Push cuticle back and clean under the nails. File nails as needed.
- ___11. Put towel over chest and abdomen; bring bath cover down to the thighs.
- ___12. Wash, rinse and dry neck, chest and abdomen. Cover chest and abdomen. If the person has an ostomy (a surgery opening into colon), the worker will need to give careful attention to care of the skin around it.
- ___13. Remove bath cover to expose the leg and place towel under the leg.
- ___14. Place a towel under the basin placed near the foot.
- ___15. Lower foot into basin to soak; this helps soften the nails and skin, and it feels nice.
- ___16. Wash, rinse and dry leg.
- ___17. Repeat above steps with other leg.
- ___18. Dry carefully between each toe.
- ___19. Check feet. Use pumice stone/emery board to smooth calluses. Clean under the nails.
- ___20. Turn the person on side; drape towel around the back and buttocks.
- ___21. Tuck the towel along under buttocks and shoulders.
- ___22. Wash, rinse and dry back and buttocks; cover back.
- ___23. Place towel under buttocks. Teach worker to wash carefully between buttocks and genitals. Rinse and dry thoroughly. Remind female to wash from front to the back to avoid bringing germs from rectal area to vagina and bladder. For male, if unable to wash buttocks and genitals, the worker should complete this part of the bath for him. Also, if person has urinary catheter, the worker should be taught to wash carefully around catheter with soap and water and dry area well.
- ___24. Apply body lotion or powder, as desired.

Sample Job Description

DUTIES: The person in this position will assist the employer with activities of daily living. The employer is a 25 year-old man who has a physical disability, lives in his own apartment and uses a wheelchair. Specific activities include assistance with bathing, dressing, personal hygiene, toileting (includes bowel and bladder care), eating, transferring to and from the wheelchair, taking medications and range of motion exercises. The position also involves meal preparation, housekeeping, shopping, laundry and other household chores. The position requires a valid North Carolina driver's License, as the worker will drive the employer's adapted van occasionally.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE: Nothing specific is required, though some experience providing attendant services in the home of a person with a disability is helpful.

SALARY RANGE: \$9.50 to \$11.50 an hour depending upon experience.

BENEFITS: Health insurance, sick and vacation leave, worker's compensation.

HOURS: 2 hours a day in the early morning, typically 6:00 to 8:00 a.m., and some weekend hours.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS: The person selected should be prompt, reliable, able to work independently and have good personal hygiene. The person selected must submit to a criminal background check.

Sample Ads for Direct Support Workers

Good Ads:

- Describe the interpersonal qualities you seek in staff
- Express positive attributes about you and the position you offer
- Describe aspects of the job that are enjoyable and exciting

Adventures in inter-personal relationships

Wanted: An interested, interesting person to provide support and companionship to a 15 year old teenager with autism in his home and at his school. Creativity, intuition, good problem solving skills and a sense of humor a must. Must be fit and ready for high levels of physical activity. Previous experience helpful, but not necessary. Paid training period for the right person. Full and part time positions available. \$10 per hour to start.

CHALLENGE, OPPORTUNITY, ACCOMPLISHMENT...*"Life is What You Make It"* Live the Values of Community Inclusion

Bill is looking for one or two roommates to share his beautiful home in rural Quietville. Bill's roommates will receive free rent, along with wages and benefits in exchange for the support they provide. Bill is looking for someone who enjoys hanging out at home, cooking, swimming, going for walks, watching movies, being outdoors and doing things in the community. Bill prefers people who are quiet, intuitive, creative, dependable, consistent, use common sense and can listen carefully. Flexible situation.

Ineffective Ads:

- Use language that focuses on disability and limitations
- Make the position sound like unpleasant work
- Fail to describe the intrinsic values of the job

Share your home with hyperactive 15 year old boy with autism and mental retardation. Training in behavior modification and managing aggressive behavior will be provided. Earn \$1,000 per month, tax-free.

Full time, round-the-clock caregivers needed to work in shifts providing full care for non-verbal wheelchair-bound retarded man at his home. Overnight stays required are includes feeding, lifting, bathing and attending to personal care. Free immunizations will be provided. Man is Hepatitis B carrier. Earn \$12.50 per hour.

Sample Screening Questions

Ask for name, address, and phone number. Give a short description of the job duties.

Questions:

- Are you at least 16 years of age?
- Do you have a Social Security number? (They must have one to be paid.)
- What hours are you available?
- What days can you work?
- Do you like and/or are you allergic to animals? (If you have animals)
- Do you mind working in a smoke-free environment? (If smoking bothers you)
- Do you mind working in a smoke-filled environment? (If you are a smoker)
- Are there any reasons you would not be able to travel to my neighborhood?
- Do you have a **valid** driver's license? (If driving is a part of work)
- Do you have experience providing support services? Do you mind assisting me in bathing, toileting, and dressing?
- There might be some heavy lifting involved in this job. Do you have any limitations or restrictions regarding lifting weight?

Tell the person you will be back in contact with them if you decide to interview them. Tell them to expect a call within a week if they are going to be interviewed. Thank them for calling.

Sample Employment Application

Applicant Information

Name: _____
Street Address: _____
City/State: _____
Zip Code: _____
Phone Number: _____

How long have you lived at this address? _____

In case of emergency, notify:

Name: _____
Relationship to Applicant: _____
Street Address: _____
City/State: _____
Zip Code: _____
Phone: _____

Job Experience

Have you had previous experience working as a personal care assistant, nurse's aide?
Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please describe your job duties: _____

How long were you employed in this capacity? _____

Please list two previous employers to be used as references:

Employer: _____	City/State: _____
Address: _____	Zip Code: _____
City/State: _____	Phone: (____) _____
Zip Code: _____	
Phone: (____) _____	Dates Employed: _____ to _____

Dates Employed: _____ to _____

Employer: _____
Address: _____

Sample Interview Questions

- Do you have any questions about the information in the job description or what I have explained about the job?
- Is there anything (due to health conditions, transportation availability, etc.) that would prevent your being able to perform the duties as they are outlined in the job description?
- Why are you interested in this job?
- What training and experience do you have that would make you a good choice for this position?
- What did you like least/most about previous jobs you have held?
- How do you feel when given detailed instructions about how a task is to be done?
- Can you assist and support me in the community if it means going to places you care nothing about and have no personal interest in?
- My personal appearance is very important to me. I always want to look neat and clean and expect you to keep a neat and clean appearance. Do you have any concerns about this?
- I expect you to never drink alcohol or take drugs on the job and to never arrive “under the influence.” Why, as my personal assistant do you think that this would be important to me?
- When you have a conflict or a disagreement with someone, how do you usually handle or resolve it?
- How long do you anticipate keeping this job?
- If you could not work when scheduled, what would you do?
- Do you have personal health insurance?
- I plan to check your references. Is there anything I should know about your references before I call them?

Sample Questions to Ask References

- What was your relationship with the person?
- How long have you known the person?
- What are the person's strengths and limitations?
- How does s/he handle stress?
- Do you think s/he is honest?
- Would you trust the person to have keys to your house and car?
- Would you trust the person to have access to your bank account?
- Do you think s/he is reliable?
- How well does s/he get along with others?
- Do you think s/he would be good at this type of work?

If the reference is a former employer, ask the following questions.

- How long did s/he work for you?
- Was s/he dependable?
- Was s/he on time for work?
- Was s/he able to work independently?
- How often was s/he absent without notice?
- How did s/he deal with handling money on the job?
- What was it like to supervise the person?
- Can s/he handle doing a wide range of tasks?
- Why did s/he leave the job?
- Would you rehire the person? If not, why not?

Sample Hiring Agreement

1. **Parties:** The parties to this agreement are _____ (employee), who will be responsible to _____ (employer). Both parties agree to assume the duties and the responsibilities of the employer-employee relationship as described in this agreement.
2. **Place of Employment:** Employee's duties shall be primarily carried out at the employer's Residence, but may involve local travel for medical appointments, shopping and similar purposes.
3. **Hours of Employment:** Regular days and hours shall be:

It is understood that these days and/or hours may change. Any permanent change must be noted in writing and initialed by both parties.
4. **Pay Schedule:** Employer agrees to pay employee at the rate of \$ _____ per Hour/day/week/month. Payday will be on the _____ day of the day/week/month. Reimbursement for mileage for use of employee's car shall be at the rate of _____ cents per mile. Payment will be made by cash/check.
5. **Employee Duties:** Employee's duties are for the benefit of the employer only, not for other household members (unless otherwise contracted). The employee shall perform only listed duties on a regular basis.
6. **Supervision:** Supervision and direction of employee shall be the sole responsibility of the employer, unless otherwise agreed to in writing. Special medication shall be under the direction of a physician.
7. **Expertise:** It is understood that the employee has no special medical knowledge or skills unless otherwise stated in advance, and is not responsible for professional nursing service.
8. **Termination:** Either party may terminate this agreement with two weeks notice in writing. Any wages and/or reimbursement due will be paid on termination if at the instigation of the employer and on the next regular payday if instigated by the employee.
9. **Vacation/Sick Leave:** Employee will request vacation time (not to exceed two weeks per year) at least two weeks in advance to allow the employer to arrange coverage. In the event that the employee is sick, he or she will notify employer at least one hour prior to the start of the shift, except in the event of an emergency.

Agreement signed on this _____ day of _____, _____
Month year

Employer Signature: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Sample Employee Evaluation Form

Employee's Name: _____ Date _____

Attendance

Does the employee report to work when scheduled?

Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

When the employee is late or absent, does he or she give enough notice?

Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

Does he or she give a good reason for being late or absent?

Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

Performance

Does the employee do the work to my satisfaction?

Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

Does the employee follow my instructions well?

Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

How would I rate the employee on the following tasks?

Bathing (dressing, etc.) The list will be unique to your situation.)

Great Very Good OK Not so good Poor

How much supervision does the employee need for the following tasks?

Giving medication (shopping, etc. The list will be unique to your situation.)

Nearly None Very Little Some Lots Total

Next steps

Does the employee need more training?

No Yes In what areas? (List)

Does the employee need to make changes in his/her performance?

No Yes In what areas? (List. For example, showing up and on time)

Do there need to be changes in the "Employee Procedures"?

No Yes In what areas? (List. For example, scheduling, tasks, etc.)

Date of next evaluation _____

Comments:

Sample Process for Handling Conflict

Because the employment relationship involves such close and frequent contact, there are many opportunities to address conflicts, or even potential ones, early. These opportunities can be anytime from the informal conversations that take place during daily routines to the times that you review the Performance Checklist with your worker. In order to have a good relationship with your employee, you need to find a way to be at ease with each other, while still respecting each other's rights to express needs and opinions openly and honestly. When issues or conflicts come up, try to address them as soon as you can rather than letting them build up or linger unresolved. Use the following points to help you prepare yourself for addressing conflict with your employee.

1. Tackle one thing at a time. Few of us can handle more than one conflict or complaint at a time. Always show respect and concern for the other person.
2. Provide privacy. To keep the complaint between two persons, avoid an audience. Even one person can equal an audience.
3. Allow space. Allow the other person the physical space, time and the emotional space to deal with what you have presented. When confronted, you want time to think. Give the same to others when you confront them. In other words, talking with your worker near the end of his or her shift is probably better than raising an issue as soon as they arrive.
4. Be concise. Think through what you plan to say thoroughly so that you do not lose your focus in a barrage of words. Be very specific in naming both the events and behaviors that are the source of the problem and the changes that you think would solve or lessen the problem. If you do not have suggestions for changes and need help from the other person in finding a solution, be very clear in stating that as well. Do not leave the other person guessing what you want done differently.
5. Take responsibility for yourself. If you are raising an issue with someone else, then it is your issue. Express this to the other person by using "I" rather than "you" statements. For example, say, "I feel..." rather than "You make me..."
6. End with appreciation. You do not need to shower the other person with insincere compliments, but try to end on a positive note. At the very least, you could thank them for their willingness to listen or talk with you openly.
7. Once you have brought an issue up with your employee, it is your responsibility to monitor, or follow-up on the situation. If the suggestions or requests made in your initial discussion were well-received, thank the other person for their cooperation and occasionally, over time, continue to do so as reinforcement. If your initial discussion was partially well-received, thank the person for the good part of their response, and repeat your request about the part that still needs improving.
8. If things still do not get better, you should ask yourself if the request is "doable" by your employee. Second, did the employee understand the request? If repeating the request does not prompt your employee to try to accommodate the changes

you have requested, you will have to make a decision as to whether or not this is someone who you want to continue to employ. If it appears that you are not going to be able to resolve the issue, it is a good idea to take some notes for your records. These notes can be helpful if a fired employee files for unemployment compensation.

Appendix C

Avoiding Discrimination

Examples of Questions That Are Discriminatory

There are certain questions that 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.

- How old are you?
- What is your native language?
- What is your marital status?
- What is the lowest salary you will accept?
- Do you have children?
- What is your height and weight?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- What church do you attend?
- Do you belong to any clubs or organizations?
- What is your credit rating?
- Do you own or rent our home?
- Do you own a car?
- What country were you born in?
- Do you have any addictions?
- What is your star sign?
- Do you have a disability or medical condition?
- What is your political affiliation?
- What are your family members' names?
- What is your race?
- Where are your family members employed?

Appendix D

Federal and State Resources For Tax and Employer Related Issues

Federal Government Resources

General website: www.firstgov.com
Disability related website: www.disabilityinfo.gov
Benefits related website: www.benefits.gov

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (for information about discrimination)

www.eeoc.gov

General Information: 1-800-669-4000
TTY: 1-800-669-6820

Internal Revenue Service (for forms related to employment and taxes)

www.irs.gov

General information 1-800-829-1040
Business information 1-800-829-4933
TDD 1-800-829-4059

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (for safety issues for workers)

www.osha.gov

General Information: 1-800-321-6742
TTY: 1-877-889-5627

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (for information regarding how to assure you are hiring a legal citizen)

www.uscis.gov

General Information: 1-800-375-5283
TTY: 1-800-767-1833

U.S. Department of Commerce

www.commerce.gov

U.S. Department of Labor

www.dol.gov

General Information 1-886-487-2365
TTY: 1-877-889-5627

U.S. Department of Justice

www.usdoj.gov

General Information: 1-202-514-2000

TTY: 1-202-514-1888

U.S. Small Business Administration

www.sba.gov

General Information 1-800-827-5722

U.S. Social Security Administration

www.ssa.gov

General Information: 1-800-772-1213

TTY: 1-800-325-0778

North Carolina State Government Resources

www.ncgov.com

N.C. Department of Commerce

www.nccommerce.com

General Information: 1-919-733-4151

N.C. Department of Labor

www.dol.nc.state.nc.us

General Information: 1-800-625-2267

N.C. Department of Revenue (for information about N.C. taxes)

www.dor.nc.state.us

General Information: 1-877-252-3052

Appendix E

Resources and References

There is a wealth of information available on Consumer-Directed Supports and other relevant topics. Some links to other information are included here.

Asset-Based Community Development Institute (community mapping)

www.northwestern.edu/jpr/abcd.html

General Information 1-847-491-8711

Centers for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov

General Information: 1-800-311-3425

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (for information about Medicaid or Medicare services and funding)

www.cms.hhs.gov

General Information: 1-877-267-2323

TTY: 1-866-226-1819

Human Services Research Institute (for information about support systems for people with developmental disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health needs)

www.hsri.org

General Information: 1-617-876-0426 (Massachusetts office)

1-503-924-3783 (Oregon office)

National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services

www.nasdds.org

General Information: 1-703-683-4202

North Carolina Care-Line (Information and Referral on Consumer-Directed Supports in North Carolina)

www.dhhs.state.nc.us

General Information 1-800-662-7030

TTY: 1-877-452-2514

Participant-Centered Planning General Information, Resources, and Links

www.pdd.org/Central/resources/personcp.shtml

Clearinghouse for the Community Living Exchange Collaborative (information about consumer-directed and other supports)

www.hcbs.org

National Association for State Units on Aging website regarding consumer direction

www.consumerdirection.org

Information about Cash and Counseling

www.cashandcounseling.org

Information about Arkansas' Independent Choices Program

www.independentchoices.org