

# Decisions! Decisions! Decisions!

How Do I Choose the Service Providers  
that Are Best for Me?



*An interview guide to help people with disabilities and their family members, friends, and advocates choose a service provider(s) that best meets their needs.*



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## Steps to Consider When Selecting a Service Provider

1. Talk to other self-advocates or family members who are using the services you are interested in. Ask what works and what does not work.
2. Obtain a current Jefferson Parish Resource Directory of Services for People with Developmental Disabilities. Call Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority at 838-5357 or Families Helping Families at 888-9111.
3. Contact Waiver Supports and Services to obtain a complete and current list of service providers at 599-0292.
4. Select at least two or three providers to interview.
5. Review this Interview Guide and choose the questions most important to you.
6. Make a list on the "I want, I need" checklist on page 3 of the things that are the most important about how you wish to be assisted. Say as clearly as possible what is necessary to meet your needs.
7. If you need help doing the interview contact Families Helping Families at 888-9111. If you have a case manager, request help from them.
8. Interview the service providers using the interview questions and the 'I want, I need' checklist.
9. Choose a provider that you feel would best meet you and your families' needs.
10. Notify your case manager of your choice in a service provider.



## Agency Policies and Practices

- Do you provide transportation or mileage reimbursement for staff? Does your agency provide automobile insurance coverage to your employees that provide transportation?
- What is the pay range for your employees? Do your employees receive raises? How often?
- What benefits and incentives does your agency provide to Direct Support Professionals?
- How do you show rewards and recognition to your direct support staff?
- How do you determine if employees have good references and work history? What kind of background checks do you use to assure that employees are not involved in abuse, mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation?
- Do I have the final 'say so' over who works with me to provide my support services?
- What recruitment strategies do you use to hire direct support staff?
- What kind of documentation do you use? For example: time sheets, progress notes, incident reports, etc.?
- What is the policy for reporting critical incidents? Do you report critical incidents to the parent/guardian? To Community Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities?
- How is my confidentiality and my family's confidentiality protected?
- Is there someone that you serve that I can talk to who has concerns and needs similar to mine?

## Staff Education and Training

- ❑ What trainings do your employees attend? Who does the training? Are they knowledgeable and experienced? What are their credentials?
- ❑ What information is provided to the staff about respecting my rights and the boundaries of my home? For example: bringing children/grandchildren to work, talking on the phone, having visitors, running personal errands, using family's property for personal use, i.e. refrigerator, food, drinks, TV, computer, washer and dryer.
- ❑ Do employees receive training on recognizing and preventing abuse, mistreatment, neglect, and exploitation?
- ❑ What kind of training do you provide to employees so that they can understand my or my family's uniqueness such as culture, gender, and age-related issues?
- ❑ Does your agency organize staff into support teams? (Support team: administrator and other supervisors work together with direct support professionals to provide feedback and problem solve issues related to quality service provision to me.)
- ❑ How do you provide staff time for team building between direct support professionals and their supervisors?
- ❑ What staff from your agency will make up my support team?
- ❑ Does your agency do pre-employment orientation and training? What topics are addressed?
- ❑ Do you require staff to spend time getting to know me and my family in my home before they begin work? How much time is allowed before they officially begin work?





## I Want, I Need Checklist

Write below the most important things you want or need from service providers when they are supporting you everyday and/or when they support you to achieve your hopes, dreams, and goals for your future. State as clearly as possible what is necessary to meet your needs.

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*For more information about your service provider options in Jefferson Parish contact:  
Families Helping Families of Jefferson at 888-9111  
JPHSA Community Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities at 838-5357*

## General Agency Information

- What disabilities do the people have that your agency serves?
- How many people does your agency provide services for?
- How many people are you serving close to or in the general area where I live?
- What are your policies regarding my friends who visit in my home?
- What is your turn-over rate with your direct support staff?
- What qualities do you look for in screening possible direct support staff?
- What are the qualifications and experience of the agency's director?

## Quality of Programs

- How do you handle disagreements or conflicts between me, my family members, and friends?
- Do you provide health care supplies, gloves, back-support belts, etc.? If not, do you know how to obtain these resources?
- How do you show respect to me and my family when you are in my home?
- How do you help your direct support staff with assisting individuals to participate in community, social and recreational activities?



## Involvement in Decision Making

- How do you encourage individuals receiving services to interview their direct support staff? How do you facilitate an interview of a possible direct support staff with the individual and their family before the staff is hired?
- Is your Board of Directors or Advisory Committee composed of at least 50% people with disabilities or their family members?
- How do you assure that the goals important to me are on my personal support plan and that direct support professionals assist me to achieve my goals?
- How do you incorporate person-centered planning principles into daily schedules and activities?
- How will your staff show flexibility to my needs?
- How is my or my family's information used as part of the employee's evaluation?
- How do you encourage individuals to speak up for themselves?



## Quality Review and Improvement Practices

- How do you monitor and supervise your staff?
- Do you monitor your employees by calling me or my family for feedback?
- How do you use the information from me, my family, or my friends for your quality improvement plan? Give me an example.



## Response to Emergencies

- What procedures will staff implement in a crisis situation for me or my family member?
- What procedures will your supervisor implement in a crisis/emergency situation that happens for the support staff?
- How is 24 hour emergency assistance provided?
- How do you assure back-up staff coverage so that I am not left without assistance?
- Do you have procedures in place to obtain my permission before you send a back-up staff member to my home? What are the procedures?
- Do you know how and when to use the Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority Crisis Team for emergency behavioral psychiatric assistance?
- Will the facilitator/administrator have a back-up key to my or my family members' apartment/home?
- Do you have staff that can evacuate with me or my family member in an emergency?
- Does your agency have an emergency preparedness plan?

## Grievance and Complaint Policy

- Describe your complaint process.
- Do you have an appeals process if I am not satisfied with my services?
- How do I make a grievance if I am not satisfied with an agency decision that affects the quality of my life?
- How do I report abuse or neglect?
- What if someone threatens me about making a complaint?
- Can I get help to make a complaint?

