

# BDDS Helpful Hints:

HOW TO SELECT WAIVER PROVIDERS FOR FAMILY SUPPORTS WAIVER (FSW) & COMMUNITY INTEGRATION AND HABILITATION WAIVER (CIH)



*Selecting good providers is critical.*

It's helpful to think about the issues that are important to you and your family member before you begin this process. You will be able to make an informed choice by reading information about the providers, visiting their websites, or by interviewing them in person.

Below are some questions to consider when selecting waiver service providers. A full list of questions is available at <http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2639.htm>

## GENERAL TOPICS TO DISCUSS WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS

1. Discuss all areas of service that are absolute requirements for you, such as: medications are always administered on time; there is direct supervision; you are able to attend your church on Sundays; or, staff has sign language training.
2. What makes you happy? What causes pain? How will the provider maximize opportunities for the first, and minimize or eliminate instances of the second?
3. What outcomes would you like to strive for in your life? Would you like to have a job or be a member of a church? How many housemates would you like and how close to your family would you like to live? How would the provider assist you with these outcomes?
4. What risks might you experience with which the provider would need to assist you? For example, do you have seizures? Do you need training in street safety skills? Do you need someone to help you communicate? How will the provider address those risks?
5. How would the provider ensure the implementation of your Person Centered Plan?

## QUESTIONS TO ASK PROSPECTIVE SERVICE PROVIDERS

1. Is the provider certified, accredited or licensed? What are their standards of service?
2. What kind of safety measures does the provider have to protect you?
3. How does the provider assure compliance with your rights? Will you receive copies of your rights as a consumer of services, and have those rights explained to you? Will they also provide and explain their complaint policies?
4. Is the provider interested in what you want or dream about doing?
5. Is the provider connected to other programs that you may need, such as day support and local school/education services?
6. If you are to live in a home shared with other people, can families drop in whenever they wish?
7. How are birthdays, vacations, and special events handled?
8. What is the policy on their handling of your finances?
9. How would minor and major illnesses and injuries be handled?

10. What types of events are routinely reported to families?
11. How is medication administration handled?
12. What is the smoking policy?
13. Who would be the provider contact person, how will that contact occur and how often? Is someone available 24 hours a day in case of emergency?
14. Has the agency received any abuse/neglect allegations? Who made these allegations? What were the outcomes? What is the process for addressing abuse/neglect allegations?
15. As a provider of waiver services, what are their strengths and weaknesses?
16. What is the process for hiring staff? Are background checks conducted and training required? Who provides staffing while a new staff person is hired and trained?
17. How is direct staff supervised? What training does staff receive? What is the average experience or education of staff?
18. How is staffing covered if regular staff is ill? What happens if staff does not show up for the scheduled time? How often does it happen?
19. What is the staff turnover rate?
20. What kind of supports and supervision does staff have? Who can staff call if a problem develops?

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR AND ASK DURING VISITS TO SUPPORTED LIVING SETTINGS

1. How do the staff and housemates interact? Do they seem to respect and like each other?
2. Does the environment look comfortable? Is there enough to do?
3. What kind of food is available and who chooses it? Are choices encouraged and options available? Are diets supervised?
4. Do people have access to banks, shops, restaurants and other community resources? How is transportation handled? Are trips to access these places planned or on an as-needed basis?
5. Is there a telephone available to housemates, with privacy? Is the telephone accessible (equipped with large buttons, volume control and other access features) if needed?
6. Does each person have his/her own bedroom? Can each person individually decorate the bedroom?
7. Do housemates seem to get along well? What happens if they don't?
8. Are there restrictions on personal belongings? What are the procedures for lost personal items? Are personal items labeled? Are lost items replaced?
9. Are pets allowed? What are the rules regarding pets?
10. Is there a good balance between learning new skills and leisure or unstructured time?
11. Is there evidence that personal hygiene and good grooming are encouraged?
13. Does each person have privacy when he/she wants to be alone or with a special friend?
14. Does each person have the opportunity to belong to churches, clubs or community groups of their choosing and pursue his/her own individual interests?
15. Does staff knock on doors to private rooms and wait for a response before entering?
16. What kind of "house rules" exist? Are there consequences for breaking the rules?