



Self-Directed Services

Module 6: Hiring and Managing Workers

Hello and welcome to the training on Hiring and Managing Workers. This is the sixth video in a series of seven.

Hiring and Managing Workers

Being able to hire and manage workers is key to being successful in self-direction. In this training, we will cover:

- Where to find workers
- Worker qualifications
- Worker requirements
- How to interview workers
- How to select the best candidate
- Determining the rate of pay
- Electronic Visit Verification and Monitoring (EVVM)
- The importance of training workers
- Retaining workers
- Terminating workers
- What support a support coordinator offers the participant with being an employer

Where to Find Workers

Sometimes you are lucky enough to be able to hire people you know to be workers. You have family members, friends, friends of friends, co-workers, to take your position.

If you don't know anyone to hire, you have to recruit from outside sources. A few common outside sources are:

- You can also place an ad on Indeed for free or pay extra for more exposure.
- You can put an ad on Craigslist- There is a fee for posting on Craigslist depending on what section the ad is posted in. A post can put in the "gig" section for a lower price than the actual job pages.
- Another way is to use Facebook- either posting on your own page for family and friends to see and share or posting an ad in groups on Facebook. For example, if there are neighborhood announcement pages or rummage sale groups.
- You could use Care.com or Sitter City, but these require a larger fee.
- Posts can be done on college job boards.
- You could try The Nextdoor app. It is somewhat like Facebook, but more neighborhood specific if you want someone that lives near you.



As I said in the first training, I have been self-directing and recruiting, hiring and managing my own caregivers for almost 25 years. The best way I have found to find caregivers is just networking and meeting people while living life.

Besides talking to friends and family and asking them to ask their friends and family, you can also ask people you meet while out in the community. If the waitress you had at a restaurant is really nice, see if she wants another job. Consider carrying business cards at all times, so that they can be given to people that might be a good match. Ask local businesses if you can hang up a flyer. If you like reading, see if the local bookstore will let you hang signs up. Every person that you come in contact with is a potential worker or resource to find workers- use them.

Worker Qualifications and Required Training

When recruiting, keep in mind that in order to be a worker in Alabama, the worker must:

- Be 18 or older
- Pass a background check
- Complete the training on critical incidents

Worker Training

The worker can find the link to the training on the Alabama Department of Mental Health Website. On the bottom, right hand side of the page, under the Training heading you will see a link for the training.

Interviewing Potential Workers

Once all the requirements necessary for a worker are clear and applicants are recruited, interviews should be set up.

Having a list of questions prepared to ask applicants to make sure they will be a good fit, is a good idea. General questions will help determine if the worker has the necessary skills/traits to be successful at the job. For example, if you like being up early, it would be good to know if the applicant is a morning person or at least able to get up early to be to work. If you like to be left alone, you probably want to make sure the applicant isn't a chatter box.

Questions specific to your needs, help decide if the applicant will match well with you. For example, asking if the person likes gardening, if you have a garden, you will need assistance tending.

Questions about a specific situation will help know how the applicant will handle a situation. For example, asking what they would do if their car broke down, but they had to be at work for you. Will the applicant just call and say they can't come? Will they make an effort to find a new ride? What will they do?

Sample situations of things the applicant may actually encounter is a great way to see how the applicant will handle the situation. You can see if the applicant will handle the situation as you want them to.

When doing interviewing, here a few things to keep in mind:



- Do a phone or video interview before an in-person interview
 - It is less time consuming if you end up not liking the applicant
- Do the first in-person interview at a local coffee shop or park
 - For safety reasons, it is not always good to meet at home
 - If you don't like the person, you might not want them to know where you live
 - Plus, you might not be able to get away and get them out of your house if you don't like them- especially if the person is a talker
- Have someone else with you for the interview
 - It is helpful to get a second opinion of the applicant
 - Companies often have multiple people doing interviews to get different opinions- having a friend or family member add their perspective can be helpful
 - Also, just in case the person is not who you thought they were, having others around for safety reasons is good

How to Select a Candidate

Here are a few tips when choosing which applicant to hire:

- First, make sure to have traits or requirements in mind for the ideal worker and check that the applicant possess those.
- If punctuality is important, but the worker shows up 10 minutes late for the interview and gives no reason, that applicant probably wouldn't be the best choice.
- Make the job requirements known up front and communicate them to the applicant to ensure the applicant meets the requirements.
- If driving is a requirement, but the applicant doesn't have a driver's license, they will not be a good match.

Other things to consider when choosing an applicant:

- Make job duties and expectations clear from the beginning and ensure the applicant is comfortable and able to complete them
- If lifting is a requirement of the job, make sure the applicant doesn't have lifting restrictions
- Set a schedule up front and make sure the applicant is available at those times
- If the schedule is flexible, still make parameters, so there is not conflict or confusion down the line
- Pick the applicant that you have the greatest connection with
 - You aren't just hiring a body to fill a spot
 - You will spend a lot of time with the worker- you will want to get along
 - Skills can be taught, but chemistry cannot

Determining Rate of Pay

Once you have selected the candidate, you will have to determine the rate of pay. When setting the rate, remember:



- Each service has its own minimum and maximum rate of pay set by program guidelines and state and federal laws.
- The charts on the following slides give ranges, but you can also speak with your support coordinator for more information or assistance on requested rates.
- You can determine the starting hourly rate of pay for employees within the set maximums and minimums.
- There are benefits to both paying workers higher wages and saving money for the additional purchases and services.

The next few slides give the minimum and maximum pay for different services. Remember to check with the Financial Management Services Agency to confirm the rates.

The minimum rate for Personal Assistance- Community is \$12.50 an hour, the minimum rate for Personal Assistance- Home is \$9.20 an hour, and the minimum rate for Personal Assistance- Family is \$7.25 an hour. The maximum rate for these services will be provided by the Financial Management Services Agency

The minimum rate for breaks and opportunities is \$9.20 an hour. Again, the maximum wage rate will be provided by the Financial Management Services Agency.

Community transportation is paid by the mile. The rates for individual-directed goods and services vary based on the good or service.

The minimum rate for Skilled Nursing LPN is \$15 an hour and the minimum rate for Skilled Nursing RN is \$26 an hour. Again, the maximum wage rate will be provided by the Financial Management Services Agency.

Considerations When Determining the Rate of Pay

When deciding the pay rate for workers, within the set maximum and minimums, there are certain things to consider. If a higher rate is paid, it may make it easier to recruit workers. It also may be easier to hire more qualified workers. If people are paid more, they may stay longer.

However, if the pay is set at the maximum amount for all services, there will be no way to give workers a raise if they are doing a good job. You also won't be able to set aside money for a savings balance, which means no money for goods and services or overtime.

The Importance of Consistent Training

Once a candidate has been selected and hired, training will need to be provided. In self-direction, you get to train workers on what is important to you and how you want things done.

Offering consistent training:



- Ensures all workers are on the same page- if everyone is given the same information, everyone will be doing things the same way
- Also, your home and life can run more smoothly- you can ensure the worker knows how things should go, so that things can run smoothly
- Consistent training also ensures work will be completed how you want- if you doing the training, it will be done how you want
- With consistent training, you can ensure the workers understand what is important to you

Managing Workers

Once the applicant is hired and becomes a worker, you will become the legal employer and manage the worker.

Some things to keep in mind to be a good employer are:

- Be polite
- It is not necessary to say “please” and “thank you” every time assistance is provided, but ask for things instead of demanding
- Be respectful
- Yelling, screaming or name calling are never appropriate
- Set clear expectations- tell the worker what is expected of them during their shift
- Set reasonable standards- as long as things are done well, does it really matter exactly how it was done?
- Provide feedback when appropriate- tell people when they are doing things well
 - It is also important to address problems immediately when they happen

Electronic Visit Verification and Monitoring (EVVM)

Part of managing employees is making sure employees are paid on time. In the state of Alabama, workers have to use the Electronic Visit Verification and Monitoring system or EVVM. Electronic Visit Verification and Monitoring is a way to electronically record the date, time, and place workers provided services.

Electronic Visit Verification and Monitoring replaces paper timesheets. When using the Electronic Visit Verification and Monitoring, employees log in to a portal on their mobile device, or use their phone, or use the participant’s phone to call the Interactive Voice Response system and log their time.

The Financial Management Services Agency will pay each worker based on the time they recorded through Electronic Visit Verification and Monitoring.

When Conflicts Arise

Also, part of managing employees, is dealing with conflict. As with any employer/employee relationship, conflict will arise. If it does:

- Address the issue as soon as possible
 - Don’t wait a week and then bring up 5 different things that are bothering you



- Provide examples of what isn't working and why it isn't working
- Create a plan for improvement
- Document the incident
- Get the employee to sign the documented incident
- Do not bring it up again if the worker changes the behavior
- It is a good idea to have someone with you when disciplining a worker, not only for obvious safety reasons, but also as a witness

The Importance of Retention

If communication and conflict is handled well, a worker will stay around longer. Keeping a great worker is always better than having to recruit, hire and train a new worker.

Some tips for retaining workers are:

- Be invested in the worker, because then the worker will be invested in you
 - Ask about the worker's day, family, life, etc.
- Ask for and take feedback and suggestions
 - Workers that feel heard and valued will stay longer
- Give praise when warranted
 - Workers that feel appreciated will stay longer
 - Make sure it is genuine or it will lose the effect
 - Don't compliment everything that is done- the compliments will lose the sincerity

Terminating Workers

Even the best managers still have to terminate workers at times. Workers who show dangerous or threatening behavior should be terminated immediately.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical, verbal or emotional abuse or neglect
- Stealing
- Working under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Pressuring you to commit illegal actions, such as approving timesheet hours that the worker did not actually work

You should never continue to employ anyone if you feel unsafe.

Other Reasons for termination could include:

- Being frequently absent or late to shifts
- Poor communication or attitude
- Not changing unacceptable behavior after being talked to

You should report terminations to the Financial Management Services Agency immediately.

Terminating a worker can be a scary and intimidating task. Some tips to try to make it go smoother are:



- Be professional
- Do not yell or swear, no matter what is said to you
- Be respectful
- No name calling, again, no matter what is said to you
- Stay calm, again, no matter what is said to you and no matter what happens
- Give specific examples of what isn't working and why
- Review the steps that have been taken in the past to fix the problem

Make sure to document the termination, including why the worker was terminated and details about the meeting that took place to inform the worker of the termination. Document:

- Who was there
- When the termination took place
- Why the termination is happening, including previous action plans that were put in place to correct the behavior
- What was talked about at the meeting
- How the termination happened- in person, by phone, etc.
- The employee's response
- Try to get the employee to sign the termination form if possible

Never do a termination at home. This is also for safety reasons, because the worker is less likely to become aggressive in public. But also, so you can leave. If the terminated employee is at your home, you might not be able to get them out. People love to argue about their terminations. However, if you are at a coffee shop or something, you can just leave.

Support Coordinator Assistance for Being an Employer

Finding workers and being an employer can be a difficult task. The participant is not alone though! The support Coordinator is there to provide assistance as needed. The support Coordinator helps with recruiting by brainstorming who workers could be and providing resources or suggestions for finding potential workers.

The support coordinator helps with hiring by providing education on hiring strategies and promoting safe hiring practices.

The support coordinator also helps with training by:

- Ensuring the Incident Reporting Training is done before the worker starts working
- Ensuring the participant can identify and report fraud, abuse, and neglect

And finally, the support coordinator helps with firing by ensuring:

- The participant is physically safe
- The participant has a backup plan



Wrap-Up

This module covered a lot of information. It covered the nuts and bolts of being an employer. Some key things to remember are:

- The Employer of Record is the boss- not the support coordinator, not the Financial Management Services Agency, no one else
 - Remember, the Employer of Record is the participant or the participant's representative
- Even though recruiting, hiring and managing can be scary, there are supports available
 - There are several places to find workers, but the best way is to network and live life
 - An important part of being a good boss is treating workers well, so they want to stay around for a long time
 - Another important part of being a boss is ensuring that required paperwork and training is completed before a worker starts providing care, so that the worker can be paid

Thank You

Thank you for listening to this information about hiring and managing workers.