Home Care REFERRAL REGISTRY of Washington State

Hiring & Supervising

Your Home Care Worker

For Consumers of

In-home Care Services

in Washington State

May 2010

Introduction

Managing the day-to-day details of your in-home services can be challenging. We offer this information to help you with finding and keeping good home care workers.

For those who use in-home services, the key to living independently is effectively managing their own care. This guide is separated into three sections:

1. How to Find and Hire a Home Care Worker
   Designed to help you find and hire reliable persons to provide assistance with your daily activities.

2. Supervision of Your Home Care Worker
   Offers suggestions about managing day to day activities between you and your home care worker.

3. Communication Techniques
   Ideas and tips for positive communication and recognizing your worker.

Hiring and Supervising Your Home Care Worker is intended as a guide only and does not create an entitlement to services. Please contact the appropriate resources for eligibility criteria and costs.

MEDICAID and LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES FOR ADULTS is a booklet that explains the process for applying and receiving Medicaid and long-term care services in Washington State and explores the options for getting help with your care. Contact your local Senior Information and Assistance office to request your copy.

RESOURCE SECTION **Resources and supporting documents are located in the last section of this guide.**

Definitions

Consumer/employers
People who employ home care workers for in-home services are sometimes called consumers or clients. The term “consumer” or “consumer/employer” is used throughout this guide because it recognizes hiring, training and supervision responsibilities.

Home care workers
People who provide in-home care services are sometimes called personal assistants, individual providers, aides, caregivers or workers. In this guide, we use the term home care worker or worker because it transcends the different Medicaid programs and personal services for which these people are hired.

Tip: *Definitions*

You may use the terms *personal assistant*, *aide*, *caregiver*, *worker* or *individual provider* when referring to your worker. It is important to know that some people may not like the term you choose. You should find out from them which term they prefer.

Likewise, you should be very clear which term *you* prefer them to use when referring to *you*.

Contact the Home Care Referral Registry to find workers available in your area.

Call **1-800-970-5456**

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Section 1

How to Find and Hire Your Home Care Worker

Using Your Service Plan as a Tool

When you are preparing to hire a home care worker, your Service Plan can be a helpful tool in determining job duties.

After you and your case manager have completed a Service Plan, you will also need to discuss how tasks will be done, and how often. Specifically your Service Plan includes:

- A list of services the home care worker will do.
- A description of what, when and how often the services are to be done.
- The name of an emergency contact person.

By talking over your Service Plan as soon as you hire someone, you and your home care worker will:

- Know what is expected.
- Understand the limits of the work.
- Avoid misunderstandings.
- Feel like part of the same team.

Remember, only the case manager can change your Service Plan. If you and your home care worker are in disagreement about the Service Plan, you might consider contacting the case manager for clarification.

Balance expectations by establishing a routine.

- You and your home care worker should agree to a routine and stick to it.
- A routine (or schedule) helps your home care worker to complete all tasks.
- A routine (or schedule) helps you to know if all tasks were completed.
- Both of you will know what to expect each day.
- As a part of your routine, set aside a time each week to discuss how things are going.

RESOURCE SECTION → **Service Plan Template**

What Tasks are Authorized on Your Service Plan?

Your service plan will give you a very clear understanding of the kinds of duties your home care worker will do for you. Duties could include activities of daily living such as bathing, grooming, dressing and more. Depending on the care you need, you may choose to hire more than one worker. If you have several workers, you may want each of them to do a little of every task, or you may want to divide up responsibilities among workers.

One of the most important things you, as an employer, must know is that you should not ask or expect your home care worker(s) to do things that are not listed in your service plan.

What Kind of Person Do You Need?

Spend a few moments thinking about what you might expect from someone working for you. Below is a short list of qualities you might want to consider when hiring home care workers:

- **Punctual** – being on time
- **Dependable** – being on time consistently; being available when needed
- **Helpful** – willing to do things you request
- **Goal oriented** – wanting to get things done
- **Honest** – someone you can trust
- **Clean and neat** – keeps things picked up and sanitary
- **Takes direction** – not argumentative; open to your way of doing things
- **Communicative** – easy to talk with
- **Flexible** – can respond to realistic circumstances and changes
- **Patient** – doesn't get bothered if things take longer than expected

While different qualities are important to different people, it is important that you decide which ones are most important to *you*. It may be difficult to find a person who possesses all of these qualities, so you may want to consider prioritizing the qualities you most desire from your worker.

It is your responsibility to clearly express your needs and preferences. Your home care worker works for you. Your worker should provide services in a way that respects your preferences.

You also have the right to not hire a home care worker if you are uncomfortable with him/her regardless of the reason. The person you hire will be doing very personal tasks for you in the most private aspects of your life. It is extremely important that you are comfortable with the person you hire.

Now that you have a good idea of the kind of person you are looking for, you are ready to write a job description that describes what kind of work you'd like that person to do.

Job Descriptions

When home care workers are asked what they dislike about in-home services, lack of a specific job description is among the most common of complaints.

Similar complaints might be:

- Not having a clear understanding of the duties involved *before* they are hired;
- The consumer's tendency to minimize the time and effort involved in the tasks before the worker is hired; and
- Adding on duties the home care worker did not feel they had agreed to do.

Without knowing your expectations, it is hard for a home care worker to know if they are doing the job they were hired to do.

A good job description should follow your service plan and serves several purposes:

1. It helps people you are hiring determine if they can do the job. Most people have never considered the wide variety of tasks that are involved in daily living.

2. It gives you an accurate assessment of the amount and kind of help you need. It is easy to overlook many of the minor jobs and details that are a part of your home care worker's duties, and you may be surprised by the amount of work involved.

3. When interviewing, a job description will give your potential home care worker a clear picture of the duties involved in the job.

4. It helps you avoid the natural tendency to understate and minimize the time and effort involved in the job in order to make it seem more attractive. You DO have to hire someone and it is hard to avoid feeling pressured about all the tasks you expect completed.

5. When it is time to review performance or renegotiate the agreement, the job description helps you do a thorough job. Any changes you agree to make should be noted immediately.

Budgeting Time

Without even trying, considerable time can be spent with tasks that at first glance, don't seem to amount to much. If you haven't budgeted for this time correctly, you may be disappointed in your home care worker and their ability to complete all the work you assign, or worse, your needs may not be adequately met.

RESOURCE SECTION **Sample Job Description – Task List**

What Kinds of Qualities Are Necessary?

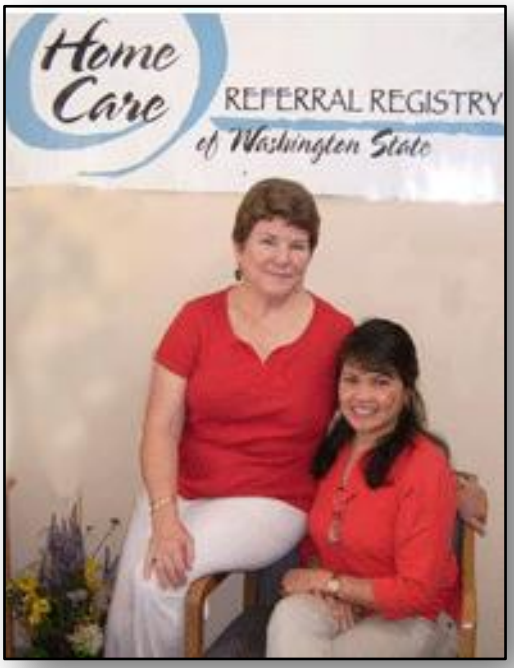
As you begin the process of hiring a home care worker, think about what it is you are looking for in your worker. Experience, training and good references are obvious. Personality, dependability, attitude and stability are equally important. Think about people who have helped you in the past and what you liked or disliked about them.

Past Experiences
Think about one or two of your past home care workers and answer the following questions.
1. What did you like about their performance?
2. What did you like about their personality?
3. What would have made you more satisfied?
4. What did you dislike about them or their performance?

Finding Potential Home Care Workers

There are a number of ways to find a home care worker. Probably the most effective way is to use the Home Care Referral Registry. The Referral Registry is a database of pre-screened and available home care workers in Washington State.

Registry staff will collect details from you and your case manager about your service needs and schedule preferences. Once information is collected, a list of the most suitable workers from your local area is created and provided to you.



Contact the Home Care Referral Registry to find workers available in your area.

Call **1-800-970-5456**

RESOURCE SECTION **Referral Registry - Frequently Asked Questions**

Pre-Screening Applicants

The purpose of prescreening applicants is to avoid wasting time interviewing people who obviously will not qualify for the job. If you elect to use the Home Care Referral Registry to find workers, their staff will help with some of the pre-screening process including, running background checks, confirming worker availability and their ability to do certain tasks.

Once you have some names to call, consider the steps below to help you prescreen applicants:

1. Call the person and introduce yourself, explain that you are looking for a home care worker.

2. If you have to leave a message, explain why you are calling, leave your name and your phone number.

3. Give a brief description of the hours and duties.

4. If they are available to work during the hours you need, fill in the remaining information on a Telephone Screening Form.

5. Set up a specific time for an interview.

6. Remind the applicant to bring contact information for at least three personal or professional references.

7. Keep in mind that you do not owe anyone an interview. If you are not comfortable about the applicant coming to your home—for any reason whatsoever—do not allow it to happen. You can always inform the applicant that you are not interested.

8. Protect yourself. Meet in a public place if at all possible. If it is difficult for you to leave your home, arrange for another person to be with you while conducting an interview.

RESOURCE SECTION → **Sample Telephone Screening Form**

Interviewing Applicants

Your approach to the interview is important. You are offering a job to someone who is looking for work.

The person you interview may be nervous. Put them at ease, call them by their first name, maintain eye contact and tell them a little about yourself.

Next, have the applicant complete the **job application** and **reference check release form,** (samples are included in the Resource Section). While you review their completed application, it would be an ideal time for them to review the job description you've prepared. Pay special attention to the following areas on their application and feel free to ask questions about:

- Length of time at previous jobs
- Gaps in employment
- Reasons for leaving each job
- Attitude about previous jobs (what did they like/dislike?)
- Phone number for each consumer

After you are satisfied with the application, go through the job description with the applicant, making sure they understand what the job involves.

Tip: Interviewing an Applicant

- Have a friend or family member with you during the interview.
- Have a copy of your service plan available.
- Write down your questions.

RESOURCE SECTION **Sample Employment Application**

What to Look for During an Interview:

- **Appearance:** Is the applicant dressed appropriately? Are they neat, well-groomed and wearing clean clothes?

- **Punctuality:** If the applicant is late, you deserve a good explanation, preferably one you can check.

- **Evasiveness:** If the applicant seems reluctant to discuss a previous consumer or there are gaps in the employment history that are not explained to your satisfaction, insist on getting information you can verify. Gaps in work history might indicate negative information, such as dismissal for cause, alcoholism or jail time.

- **Attitude:** Does the applicant seem interested? Do they ask questions and make comments about the job? Do they seem open and flexible? Does the job fit with what they state are their goals and lifestyle?

Questions to Ask in an Interview:

It is important to have a written list of questions so that all applicants are asked the same questions and you don't miss anything important. What you ask will depend on your own needs and desires.

To start making your own list, it may be helpful to again think about people who have helped you in the past:

- What did you like about their performance?
- What did you like about their personality?
- What did you not like?
- What would have made you more satisfied?

Interview Questions

Avoid any questions about age, disability, marital status, religion, race, creed or ethnicity. It is okay if the applicant freely shares this information in their answers, but do not let this affect your hiring decision.

Suggested Questions to Ask:

You are interviewing a worker that will be spending time in your home. You may need to get more personal information about habits, preferences, likes and dislikes so that you can determine if you and the applicant will be a good fit. The following are some areas you might consider asking about:

Food and Eating Arrangements

- Do you have experience cooking?
- How do you feel about taking cooking instructions from me?
- Are you willing to accommodate special diets?

Transportation

- Can you drive?
- Do you have a valid driver's license? (Ask to see it.)
- Do you have valid insurance? (Ask to see proof of insurance.)
- How do you feel about accompanying me on errands?

Housekeeping

- Have you had experience with housekeeping and laundry?
- Do you like things very neat, or are you not particular?
- How do you feel about taking cleaning instructions from me?
- Do you like a definite schedule for cleaning and laundry (example: vacuum on Monday, scrub floors on Tuesday), or do you prefer to be more flexible?

Personal Care

- Do you think it would bother you to help me with toileting, catheter irrigations or suppositories? (if necessary)
- Will you be able to bathe me? (if necessary)
- Is there any part of my care that makes you uncomfortable?

Once you have completed the interviews and you are prioritizing all of your applicants, it may be helpful to ask yourself the following questions:

- Will this applicant be able to meet my daily living needs?
- Can I live with this person? (if applicable)
- Can I depend on this person?
- Can I trust this person?
- Can I see any conflicting areas with this person?

RESOURCE SECTION → **Sample Interview Questions**

Words of Advice from a Fellow Consumer

Obviously your employee needs to be reliable, on time, honest, and willing to do what you need. Since they perform personal tasks for you in your private space and you will spend many hours with him/her, you need someone with a flexible attitude who views you as the supervisor. Few people with disabilities have workers with whom they do not form some type of relationship other than consumer/employee. It is natural to share your life with the person who is assisting you to some degree. Therefore, his/her attitude toward you, your family and the assigned tasks is extremely important.

You need people who will respect and honor your preferences. You need people who clearly understand that you make the decisions about what is done for you and how. Some employees may think that you are not capable of making your own decisions and that he/she should intervene to decide things for you. You do not need the stress of dealing with such attitudes day in and day out. Therefore, when hiring someone, his/her attitude is a crucial qualification.

Conducting Reference Checks

You can either call or write to the applicant's personal and professional references.

Whichever method you choose, let the reference know you have the applicant's permission to contact him/her.

You should explain the nature of the job to the reference so he/she can evaluate the applicant with the job in mind.

Always check all references. As a rule, anything that can be checked, should be checked.

Letters of recommendation that the applicant provides to you can be substituted for a reference check, or they can be used as additional information about the applicant.

Know what questions you want to ask references before you call. Be prepared.

Information provided by a reference should always be kept confidential.

When checking references:

- Give the reference a brief description of the position.
- Ask how long the person was employed, or how long the reference has known them.
- Check absenteeism and dependability.
- Find out if the person handled money, does the reference consider them honest?
- Ensure the person can work independently.
- Determine if the person can take supervision and criticism.
- Ask how the rapport was between the person and their co-workers and/or supervisor.
- Determine why employment ended.
- Ask if the reference would re-hire the person.

RESOURCE SECTION → **Release for Reference Checks**

Checking Employment History

Many previous consumer/employers are reluctant to do more than confirm that a person was an employee because of the possibility of a lawsuit. When possible, talk to the former supervisor and assure them you have a signed release.

It is acceptable to fax or send a copy of the signed release to the former consumer prior to discussing employment history.

If the consumer/employer is reluctant to give anything but the most basic details, the following questions can help you verify employment history:

- How long did he/she work for you?
- Why did he/she leave?
- Was he/she recommended for raises or promotions? (If applicable)
- How was his/her attendance, punctuality and attitude?
- Would you hire him/her again? This is the key question and should always be asked. Most consumer/employers will answer this one honestly, even if they won't answer anything else.

***Employee Recommendations*:**

A bad recommendation does not always mean you should not hire the person. You can ask the applicant for a good explanation and base your decision on all the information you receive.

RESOURCE SECTION → **Sample Reference Checklist**

Making Your Choice

Once you have gone through the prescreening, interview and reference check process, you might want to give yourself some time to think before you decide to hire your candidate (it also gives them a chance to think about the job—better to know now than back out later). Set a time when you'll call and let them know your decision.

Once you have interviewed applicants and have decided which person you will hire, it is important that you give the name of the person you choose to your case manager.

If any significant revisions or changes come up later, you will need to revise the employment agreement.

Case Manager Authorization

Your home care worker cannot be paid until services are authorized by your case manager. Contact your case manager to initiate this process.

Section 2

Supervising Your Worker

Managing Your Own Care

Once you have your home care worker in place, the next step is to be very clear about your needs and preferences. This involves good communication and taking an active role in your own care. This way you and your home care worker can develop a strong working relationship where both your needs are met.

Actively managing your own care demonstrates that you are in charge. You direct your employees and are clear about how you expect care and services to be done. Some differences between being dependent on your home care worker and actively managing your own care are indicated below.

When **dependent** on a home care worker:

- Your home care worker performs tasks in a certain way with little or no input from you.
- You are the one who is told when and how to do things, such as when to get up, when to take medications, or when to shower.
- You make few decisions on your own and have little control over your own life.

When **actively managing** your care:

- Your home care worker performs tasks according to directions from you.
- You decide when to get up, when to go to bed or when to shower, and take responsibility for the administration of your own medications.
- You control your own life through decisions you make.

> ***Actively managing*** your own care allows you more flexibility on how and when care and tasks are completed.

Training Requirements

All home care workers are required to take several courses in order to continue getting paid, and in some cases, keep their job. Below is a list of the types of training required in order to become and remain a home care worker in Washington State:

- All home care workers are required to complete ***Caregiver Orientation***.
- All individuals are required to complete ***Safety Training for Home Care Workers.***
- Nearly all home care workers must complete a course called, ***Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving***.
- All home care workers (except parent providers) are required to complete ***continuing education*** annually.

Training as described above is typically conducted in a classroom setting and is the responsibility of your home care worker to schedule and complete in a timely fashion.

Training, Specific to Your Needs

You are, however, responsible for much of the ***hands-on*** training of your home care worker. In order to meet your specific needs, you will help your worker understand how you want tasks to be completed.

This means you will sometimes show an employee, but many times it means you will be giving verbal direction. There are times you will be correcting your worker to ensure tasks are completed in the way that you prefer.

Timesheets

Each month, you will be signing your name to each employee's timesheet. You should compare the scheduled hours you asked the home care worker to work with what they wrote on their timesheet. If there is a discrepancy, you will need to point it out to the home care worker and make corrections as necessary.

When you sign the timesheet, you are confirming that the home care worker worked the hours listed. Your worker will be paid based on the number of hours recorded. The information on the timesheet must be accurate in order for your worker to be correctly paid for services provided.

Your case manager may ask to see completed timesheets. The home care worker keeps one signed copy; you keep another signed copy. Copies of timesheets should be kept for two years.

RESOURCE SECTION → **Sample Time Sheet**

Payments and Benefits for Home Care Workers

Payment is made to your worker through the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Social Service Payment System (SSPS). Payment is once per month. DSHS pays Social Security and unemployment taxes. Contact your case manager if you have questions regarding payment and invoicing.

SEIU Healthcare 775NW is the representative bargaining unit for home care workers serving DSHS clients.

Planning Ahead: Worker Emergencies, Vacations or Illnesses

There will be times when your home care worker will need to change plans, sometimes at the last minute. Additionally, your home care worker may be a student, have a family or have other jobs. Negotiating emergencies, vacation and what to do if your home care worker is sick can be challenging.

It is suggested that you keep a list of back-up workers in the event your home care worker can't make it to work. Be clear with your worker that you need adequate notice when he/she will be unavailable. When you offer the job, ask if he/she knows of times that they will be unavailable, no matter how far in the future. This shows that you are willing to accommodate his/her needs if possible.

Replacement Workers

Home care workers are required to give at least two week's notice prior to any vacation. Some consumers ask their home care worker to help locate a replacement in emergencies or event of illness. Be sure that replacement workers are also in contact with your case manager before they start working for you.

Whatever your preference in regard to emergencies, vacations and illnesses, be very clear about what you expect from your home care worker.

Contact the Home Care Referral Registry to find workers available in your area.

Call **1-800-970-5456**

Planning Ahead: Your Emergency Action Plan

Preparation is the best tool you can have for unexpected emergencies. Help your home care worker to be well prepared to quickly and efficiently respond to a health related emergency. If an emergency does occur, they may be the only person in the home to provide assistance. Talk about what to do and who to contact and when to contact them. Use the topics below and the Emergency Contact List in the Resource Section to guide your discussion.

Calling for Help

Your worker needs to know:

- **When** to call for help
- **Who** to call for help
- **What** to tell emergency responders

Your worker is trained to call for help in any situation he/she thinks might be an emergency. For example, if you:

- Have serious trouble breathing.
- Pass out and cannot be easily awakened.
- Have fallen and cannot get up on your own.
- Accidentally take a poison.
- Have any serious change in your health.

Examples of Safety Emergencies

- Fires that cannot be put out quickly and easily.
- Any threat that puts you or your worker in danger.

If you experience abuse, neglect or exploitation
call 1-866-END-HARM (1-866-363-4276). If it's an emergency and you are in immediate danger, call the police.

DSHS Toll-free
1-866-END HARM
1-866-363-4276

RESOURCE SECTION → **Emergency Contact List**

Workplace Safety

All home care workers in Washington State are covered by workers compensation. Workers compensation is a program that pays for medical expenses and lost wages for workers who have been injured on the job.

Safety Training for home care workers is a big part of the workers compensation program. All home care workers have to attend a safety training class. In this class, they learn how to protect themselves from injuries and illnesses. They learn to lift people and objects safely, what to do in the event of an emergency, how to reduce the risk of tripping or falling, and other topics.

You, as a consumer, play an important role in keeping your worker safe. Your home is also a workplace and you are considered the direct manager of your home care worker(s). This means that you should take measures to help keep your worker(s) safe. If your employee becomes injured, this will ultimately affect your own quality of life as you may need to find a replacement.

Loose carpets, clutter and rickety stairs all are examples of potential safety hazards that could cause injury to your employees.

You may want to complete a Hazard Assessment and take measures to reduce accidents and injuries in your home.

RESOURCE SECTION → **Hazard Assessment Check Sheet**

Evaluations

Evaluations provide a time for you and your home care worker to review goals, tasks and performance. Evaluations can serve as a means of providing constructive feedback and encourages open discussion.

Evaluation Styles:

You can use this time to be positive and provide encouragement. However, if there are issues you need to address with the home care worker, this is the time to correct an issue before it becomes a habit (constructive feedback). Be sure to document issues and discussions in the event the behavior continues and you need to take further action.

Be specific in pointing out any problem areas and be prepared to work with your employee in solving the problems. Develop your own evaluation process – use your job description to help you define areas for improvement for your worker.

Do not wait until the evaluation time to address issues or skills that need immediate attention.

RESOURCE SECTION **Job Description**

Termination and Resignation

Sometimes the most difficult part of being a consumer is terminating employment of a home care worker. Some employees do well when they start a new job, but as they become comfortable with your relationship they may begin to take advantage of your willingness to be flexible. Other issues can arise, such as safety or honesty that make it imperative that you terminate an employee.

When you must confront an employee, be sure to take appropriate steps to ensure your own safety. If necessary, arrange for someone else to be with you during the discussion. Refer to any documentation you have kept that shows work patterns, past evaluations, or records of attendance or punctuality.

You, as the consumer, have the right to terminate an employee at any time. You should always be comfortable with your employee and satisfied with his/her work. Otherwise, you should replace him/her if the issue in question hasn't improved after counseling.

When addressing your home care worker:

- State your reasons clearly without attacking him/her personally.
- Give a period of notice, usually two weeks. This allows him/her time to find a new job or place to live; it also allows you time to find a different home care worker.
- Be sure to terminate the employment agreement and carefully document reason(s), discussions and outcome.

Tip: *When to Make a Decision:*

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, things just will not work out. It may be time to re-evaluate your working relationship and decide if it is time to make a change. Contact your Case Manager regarding your plans.

Resignation

If your home care worker resigns they are required by contract to give you a two-week written notice and notify your case manager so that you will have time to find a new worker.

Rights and Responsibilities

Excerpts taken from DSHS form – *My Responsibilities as the Employer of my Individual Providers (IPs)*:*

The following are my responsibilities as an employer:

- Supervising the daily work and activities of my Individual Provider (IP).
- Arranging work schedules, locating a back-up IP as needed, and replacing an IP who resigns.
- Contacting my case manager if:
    - I have any concerns about my individual service plan or about the quality of the care that I am receiving from my Individual Provider.
    - I am not receiving the services for which my IP is billing.
    - I am not receiving the services authorized in my service plan.
    - I choose to change or add a provider.

* *Individual Provider* is another term used to describe people who provide in-home services. They are also called personal assistants, aides, caregivers or home care workers.

Your case manager will review your rights and responsibilities with you when you receive services.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Since your home care worker will be assisting you with personal tasks, they will come to know a lot of personal information about you, your family, your home, and how you function.

If your home care worker is learning for the first time how you live, it can be tempting for them to tell their friends, spouse and/or family. This may be from excitement about the job and could even be complimentary of you, but nevertheless, it is a clear violation of your right to privacy. This is serious enough that it could be cause for termination.

Other instances of privacy invasion include times when your home care worker develops a relationship with one or more of your family members and the family member shares information about you without your permission. This is not acceptable. Remember the home care worker works for you and only you.

Of course, privacy and confidentiality works both ways. Since you have a relationship with your home care worker, you will probably learn things about them that are private. You may have multiple workers that never have the opportunity to meet. Although it may be tempting for you to share information about one worker with the others, resist this temptation.

Contact the Home Care Referral Registry
to find workers available in your area.

Call **1-800-970-5456**

Privacy and Confidentiality and Case Managers:

Your home care workers can share information about you or your condition ***only with the case manager. In the following instances your home care worker may contact your case manager if they***:

- See that you develop any new problems or have personal care needs that are not being met;
- Have worries or questions about changes in your physical condition including any falls or not eating;
- Have concerns about changes in your mental condition, including talk of suicide or other patterns of serious mental illness or confusion;
- Have suggestions or know of additional resources (for example, durable medical equipment to help with daily living tasks) that would add to your quality of care or independence;
- Have suspicions, questions, or concerns about abuse, neglect, or exploitation;
- Have questions about changes made to the assigned schedule (days and time of work schedule);
- Plan on taking a vacation;
- Change their name, telephone, or address;
- Have questions about the number of hours they are approved to work or which tasks they are authorized to do;
- They are unable or uncomfortable performing the tasks outlined in the service plan;
- They are asked to perform tasks not outlined in the Service Plan or for other people living in the household;
- Decide to stop working for you.

They must also contact the case manager if you enter a hospital or move into a residential setting.

The case manager or social worker relies on both you and your employee to keep them aware of any concerns or changes in your mental or physical health.

Section 3

Communication and Recognition

Types of Communication

Communication has been under development for millions of years. We currently use many ways to get our point across and to understand what others are trying to tell us. Types of communication can include:

- Listening;
- Speaking—through words or sounds;
- Observing;
- Body Language;
- Action or inaction;
- Writing; and
- Sign Language.

Communication doesn't always occur face-to-face. Other methods of communication using technology, such as phone, fax, e-mail, video and teleconferencing are examples of how our communication methods have developed in the past few decades.

Communicating with Your Worker

Knowing how to communicate with simple, clear statements will lead to more positive interactions with your employees. Developing good listening skills to better understand what your employees are telling you will increase your effectiveness as an employer.

Being assertive involves speaking up for your personal rights and expressing thoughts, feelings and beliefs in direct, honest and appropriate ways. It is also important to communicate in a manner that does not violate another person's rights.

Respect also includes respect for yourself (expressing your needs and defending your rights), as well as respect for another person's needs and rights.

Giving Verbal Directions

- Make sure you have the person's attention before you give the direction.
- Begin by making a statement about what the directions are supposed to accomplish.
- Minimize the number of directions given.
- Individualize the way directions are given. Some people may respond well to verbal direction, while others may need a demonstration or prompts.
- Give clear directions and avoid directions that are vague, such as "be careful" or "get me a jacket." These directions could be substituted with "hold on to the railing" or "please get me my yellow rain jacket."
- Maintain a positive rather than negative tone when you give directions.
- Give the person the opportunity to respond to a direction. Avoid giving multiple directions at one time without giving the person a chance to respond.
- Present steps in the order to be followed.
- When appropriate, give choices and options for following directions. For example, say "while waiting for the dryer to finish, would you prefer to vacuum the living room or start preparing lunch?"
- Follow through with positive acknowledgment when needed to convey that the person is following the directions.

Giving Feedback

Feedback is also an important communication tool. Feedback is the process of giving information, instruction, support and guidance to another person based on their actions. Feedback therefore requires good communication skills.

Here are some guidelines about giving feedback:

- Feedback should describe behavior, not pass judgment on it.
- Feedback should be specific rather than vague.
- Feedback should describe what you observed, rather than what you assume to be the reason it happened.
- Feedback should focus on behavior rather than the person.

Creating a Positive Work Environment

Engaging good communication skills is a definite step toward creating a positive working environment. A working environment that is positive and open is one of the most important factors in keeping a great worker. Below are some suggestions and examples for creating a positive environment.

- Express appreciation to your employees for the work they are doing. Most everyone wants to feel needed, appreciated and important.

- When you must correct something your home care worker has or has not done, it is important to be open and honest and to criticize the action, not the person.

- Don't let small irritations build up. If you feel irritated about something that is happening, talk about it as soon as possible.

- Respect your worker. They are human beings and should be treated accordingly. Use the Golden Rule, and treat your employee as you would like to be treated. Be honest, fair, kind, respectful and patient.

- Home care workers have their own lives, too. Flexibility and compromise are important qualities for both of you.

- Ask your home care worker how he/she feels about their work and about you as a consumer. Set a regular time to share feelings about your relationship. Be open to making changes in the routine if necessary, or in attitude, or anything else that can help you to correct a problem. Negotiate a plan that will work for both of you.

Recognizing a Job Well Done:

There are times you may want to recognize your worker(s) performance. How you do that is up to you, but make it meaningful to people who work for you.

The following are suggestions for no-cost and low-cost ways to recognize home care workers:

- Give routine verbal thanks and encouragement.
- Mention their good work to others in their presence.
- Nominate someone for a special award.
- Say positive things about workers in front of their peers.
- Give recognition for birthdays and important life events.
- Send a note of thanks to the worker's home.
- Post recognition cards on a bulletin board, refrigerator, or other work space.
- Submit articles or letters to the editor to the local newspaper about the value of care giving and recognizing worker(s).

Problem Solving and Stress

Being an employer can be stressful. Managing multiple employees, juggling their time and needs with yours, and managing their behavior can be emotionally stressful. Having to find replacements at the last minute and worrying about being stranded can be a regular stressor.

How do you deal with stress? Finding ways to rest and rejuvenate is essential, doing something you enjoy doing can be relaxing.

One way many people deal with stress is by putting off a necessary confrontation. Putting it off will add to your stress by imagining what will happen when you do confront your employee. Many times what you imagine is worse than the reality. The sooner you confront your home care worker about an issue the less stressful it will be.

Find a support system made up of people with whom you trust. These are people who will listen to you and give you suggestions on how to deal with your issues.

About Good Communication

You have the opportunity to create a positive work environment for your home care worker, but this is a team effort. Good communication between the two of you is the key to this interdependent relationship.

Resource Section

Service Plan Summary Template: (To be completed by Case Manager)
When you are preparing to hire a home care worker your Service Plan can be a helpful tool in determining job duties.
See Section One: *Using Your Service Plan as a Tool.*

Client Name: **Office:** **Evaluation Date:**

Social Worker Name: **Employee:** **Printing Date:**

Service Summary

Client Name: **Evaluation Date:**

SAMPLE

Address:

Telephone: **Ext:** **Social Worker:**

Gender: **Age:** **Social Worker Telephone:** **Ext.**

Emergency Contact: **Telephone:** ( ) - **Type:**

Backup Caregiver: **Telephone:** ( ) - **Type:**

Primary Language: **Speaks English?** **Interpreter required?**

Substitute for decision making:
Type:

Name: **Telephone:** ( ) - **Type:**

Primary Doctor: **Telephone:** ( ) - **Type:**

Service Plan Summary Template, continued

Informal support:

Name and Lastname		Telephone

Formal support:

Name and Lastname		Telephone

SAMPLE

Services
The Client is elligible for:

Plan:

Clasification: **Daily Rate:** **Hours per Month:**

Personal Care
Waiver #1 _____

Waiver#2 _____

Waiver#3 _____

Total Authorized hours _____

The client has declined help in the following tasks:

These are the client's needs, who helps the client, doing what and the preferred schedule for the client:

Provider Information:
Assignments:

Schedule:

Day	Time Period	Starting Time	Ending Time

Service Plan Summary Template, continued

Provider Information:
Assignments:

Schedule:

Day	Time Period	Starting Time	Ending Time

Provider Information:
Assignments:

Schedule:

Day	Time Period	Starting Time	Ending Time

SAMPLE

Equipment:

Type	*Who?*	*Completion Date*

Client Goals
Short Description

State: **Who?**

Long Description:

Short Description

State: **Who?**

Long Description:

Short Description

State: **Who?**

Service Plan Summary Template, continued

Long Description:

Short Description

State: **Who?**

Long Description:

NSA Plan:
NSA Description:

SAMPLE

Primary CM at Assessment Creation:

Case Manager Name:

Telephone: **Ext:**

The role of the Case Manager is to:

1. Conduct assessments and reassessments to determine program eligibility and to authorize payment for service.
2. Develop a plan of care with participation from the client.
3. Verify that services are provided in accordance with the plan of care and to modify the plan as needed.

Clients have the right to waive case Management services other than those listed in items 1, 2, and 3 above.

I am aware of all alternatives available to me, and I agree with the Service Plan indicated above. I authorized the Department of Social and Health Services and the Aging Network Representative to obtain and disclose the necessary information for the development of my service plan.

Client Representative Signature **Date**

Provider **Date**

Social Worker/Case Manager Signature **Date**

Job Description – Task List:
Job description should follow your service plan.
See Section One: *Job Descriptions.*

SAMPLE

Version One, by Task:

HOUSEHOLD TASKS	FREQUENCY/COMMENTS
☐ Sweep and mop bathroom floors	Wed. & Sat.
☐ Vacuum living room and dining room	Wed. & Sat, empty vacuum bag 1x/mo
☐ Do dishes after meal preparation	Empty dishwasher before leaving
☐ Empty and take out all garbage	Trash pick-up every Tues.
☐ Change Sheets	Every Friday

PERSONAL CARE TASKS	FREQUENCY/COMMENTS
☐ Assist with foot care	Apply lotion, trim nails
☐ Transfer, stand by for bath	Help with shampoo
☐ Assist with dressing	Assist with buttons, zippers

OTHER ACTIVITIES	FREQUENCY/COMMENTS
☐ Essential shopping	Use list on Refrigerator
☐ Transport to Appointments	PT every other Monday
☐ Assist with exercises	Range of motion and weights, per PT

Version Two, by Date:

WEDNESDAYS
- ☐ Sweep and mop bathroom floors
- ☐ Vacuum living room and dining room
- ☐ Do dishes after meal preparation
- ☐ Assist with foot care – lotion, massages, trim nails if needed

SATURDAYS
- ☐ Sweep and mop kitchen and entryway floors
- ☐ Do laundry
- ☐ Wipe down all kitchen and bathroom counters
- ☐ Vacuum bedrooms
- ☐ Do dishes after meal preparation

AS NEEDED
- ☐ Straighten up and organize
- ☐ Essential shopping
- ☐ Transfer, stand by for bath
- ☐ Assist with dressing
- ☐ Empty and take out all garbage

Telephone Screening Form:
Use when prescreening applicants prior to interviewing.
See Section One: *Pre-screening Applicants.*

Name: _____ Age:_____

Address: _____

_____

Phone:_____

Has own transportation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Experience: _____

_____

Training: _____

_____

Notes: _____

_____

Currently employed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Where? _____

Looking for: ☐ Part-time Work ☐ Full-time Work

Hours/Days Available: _____

Interview Date: _____ **Time:**_____
REMINDER: Bring contact information for all employers and references

SAMPLE

Employment Application:
To be completed by applicant.
See Section One: *Interviewing Applicants*

Application for Employment

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip code

( ) ( )
Day Phone Evening Phone

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

Please list your last three employers, starting with your most recent consumer:

( )
Name Phone Number

Address: _____
Street City State Zip code

Date Employed From Date Employed To Supervisor Name

( )
Name Phone Number

Address: _____
Street City State Zip code

Date Employed From Date Employed To Supervisor Name

( )
Name Phone Number

Address: _____
Street City State Zip code

Date Employed From Date Employed To Supervisor Name

EDUCATION

SAMPLE

Please list any relevant training, education or courses you have completed (i.e., Orientation, Fundamentals of Caregiving, Safety Training, Becoming a Professional Home care worker, continuing education classes):

_____

_____

_____

_____

OTHER

Are you legally authorized to work in the U.S.? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please provide date and details below:

Have you ever been placed on an abuse registry? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please provide date and details below:

Do you have any health issues that require special accommodations? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Hours you are willing to work: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT

_____ ( ) _____
Name Phone Number

Address: _____
City State Zip Code

I authorize my previous employers be contacted for reference purposes.

_____
Applicant Signature Date

Interview Questions: Have a written list of questions so that all applicants are asked the same questions and you don't miss anything important.
***See Section One**: Interviewing Applicants*

Most Important Questions:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What experience do you have with in-home services?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Have you ever been convicted of a felony?
- Do you have any questions about the job?

SAMPLE

General Questions to Ask:

- Why do you want to be a home care worker?
- What would your co-workers say about you?
- What would your last consumer say is your strongest point?
- How long do you expect to work with me?
- Have you ever been asked to leave a position?
- Why do you think you will do well at this job?
- What part of this job would be the most difficult?
- Tell me about a problem you had with a past supervisor and how you handled the problem.
- What would you do if you had a disagreement about any job responsibility?
- Tell me how you would know if you were doing a good job.
- What was your favorite and least favorite jobs and why?

Reference Check Release Form:
To be completed along with Application.
See Section One: *Conducting Reference Checks*

TO: _____
(Name of Reference)

I, _____,
(Name of Applicant)

have applied for a position as an home care worker for

_____
(Name of Potential Consumer)

SAMPLE

and have given your name as a reference. I would appreciate it if you would supply him/her or his/her designee with information regarding my character, dependability and/or performance.

Thank you,

_____ _____
Signature of Applicant Date

Employment Reference Checklist:
Use to track responses from applicants prior employers.
See Section One: *Checking Employment History*

Date: _____

Name of Reference: _____

Reference Phone Number: _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Dates of Employment: _____

Job Title: _____

Duties: _____

Reason for Termination: _____

Attendance: _____Punctuality: _____

Relationships with supervisor and co-workers: _____

Dependability: _____

Job performance: _____

Ability to learn new tasks: _____

Ability to follow directions: _____

Honesty: _____

Responsibility: _____

Would You Hire Again?: _____

Other Comments:_____

SAMPLE

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
ADSA Aging & Disability Services Administration

AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

INDIVIDUAL PROVIDER TIME SHEET

Time Sheet: Be sure to verify hours before signing time sheet.
See Section Two: *Time Sheets*

CLIENT/EMPLOYER NAME	INDIVIDUAL PROVIDER'S NAME	MONTH	YEAR

Day of Month		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
A	TIME SERVICE																
B	TIME SERVICE																
C	TOTAL HOURS																
D	MILEAGE																

Day of Month		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	TOTALS
A	TIME SERVICE																
B	TIME SERVICE																
C	TOTAL HOURS																
D	MILEAGE																

CHECK TASKS PEFORMED DURING MONTH

- ☒ Meal Preparation
- ☐ Eating
- ☐ Escort/Transport to Medical
- ☐ Dressing
- ☐ Personal Hygiene
- ☐ Bed Mobility/ Positioning
- ☐ Walking/Locomotion
- ☐ Transfer
- ☐ Application of Lotion/ Ointment
- ☐ Bathing
- ☐ Toileting
- ☐ Toenails Trimmed
- ☐ Housework
- ☐ Wood Supply
- ☐ Dry Bandage Change
- ☐ Essential Shopping
- ☐ Medication Management
- ☐ Passive Range of Motion Treatment

INSTRUCTIONS

A. Enter time service began – indicate AM or PM as appropriate.

B. Enter time service ended – indicate AM or PM as appropriate.

C. Enter total hours worked each day.

D. Mileage: All miles traveled transporting or shopping for a client when authorized per SSPS.

DO NOT send these time sheets to Case Managers. Keep completed time sheets in our records for two (2) years. Copies will be requested by Case Managers at the time of reassessment.

CLIENT'S SIGNATURE	INDIVIDUAL PROVIDER'S SIGNATURE

DSHS 15-051(X) (REV. 12/2004)

COPIES TO: Individual Provider; Client/Employer

SAMPLE

Emergency Contact List:
Consumer and employee should develop this plan and post next to all phones
See Section Two: *Planning Ahead - Your Emergency Action Plan*

911
dial 911 first

Emergency Contact List

created on: ___/___/___

Your Name: _____ Date of Birth ____/____/____

Home Telephone Number	(___) ___- _____
Street Address include street, apartment, numbers, zip code	_____
Nearest Cross Streets landmarks, apartment complex name	_____
Physician and Hospital names and phone numbers	Physician:_____ Hospital:_____ (___) ___- _____ (____) ___- _____
Case Manager Name:	Phone: Cell/Pager: (___) ___- _____ (____) ___-
Contact Persons names and phone numbers	Name/Relationship: Name/Relationship: (___) ___- _____ (____) ___- _____

Keep a copy at every phone

Hazard Assessment Check Sheet:
Use this Check Sheet to help identify and reduce potential for accidents and injuries in your home. ***See Section Two:*** *Workplace Safety*

- ☐ Emergency Plan - Emergency Contact List complete
- ☐ Adequate Protective Equipment
  (gloves, leak proof apron, disposable towels, leak proof containers, etc…)
- ☐ Outside walkways are well lit, cleared of debris/material
- ☐ Inside floors are cleared of furniture, debris
- ☐ Stairs have handrails and are well lit
- ☐ Rug edges are non-frayed and tacked down
- ☐ Throw rugs are removed or non skid mat in place
- ☐ No exposed electrical wires
- ☐ Extension cords are not frayed and do not pose a tripping hazard
- ☐ Used needles are placed in sharps or closed durable container
- ☐ Sharp objects are padded (bed frames etc.)
- ☐ Oxygen hoses are out of walkway
- ☐ Medical equipment stored properly
- ☐ No smoking or open flames with oxygen use
- ☐ Liquids such as water, ice, snow, grease are cleaned up immediately
- ☐ Materials are stored at proper height and safely
- ☐ Proper lighting
- ☐ Home is free of infestation and animal waste
- ☐ Animals are controlled
- ☐ Medications and chemicals are labeled and stored correctly
- ☐ Fire Extinguishers are readily available and serviced
- ☐ Smoke alarms are in working condition
- ☐ Lifting and moving objects are kept to a minimum

SAMPLE

Home Care REFERRAL REGISTRY of Washington State

Frequently Asked Questions About the Referral Registry

What is the Referral Registry?

The Referral Registry is a web-based service, used to match those who need in-home long-term care services with pre-qualified,
pre-screened individual providers that are ready to work.

How does it work?

- ✓ **Individual Providers** can visit or call their local Home Care Referral Registry (HCRR) center to submit an application specifying personal care tasks they are willing to do, availability and clientele they are willing to serve.
- ✓ **Consumers-employers** and/or their Case Manager/Social Worker can call the local HCRR center to start the referral request process.
- ✓ **The *Referral Registry*** generates a list of individual provider names that best match the referral request. The list is sent to the employer-consumer who is responsible for interviewing and selecting their Individual Provider!

Who can use the Referral Registry?

- ✓ Consumer-employers who are receiving COPES or Medicaid Personal Care services through DSHS
- ✓ A person representing the employer-consumer
- ✓ Individual Providers
- ✓ Case Managers/Social Workers

Why should I use the Referral Registry?

- There are more options for choosing a provider
- Each provider has been screened with up-to-date information
- Providers have more opportunities for employment

What's the next step?

Request an application and information on how to enroll on, or request a referral from, the Registry by contacting your local Home Care Referral Registry at 800-970-5456.

For more information contact the Home Care Referral Registry Center in your area at: 1-800-970-5456

Additional Resources
The following materials are available through the Home Care Referral Registry. Please call 1-800-970-5456 to request your copies.

- **SAFETY TIPS**
  for Home Care Recipients (brochure)
- **STAY RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE**
  Resources for Seniors and Adults with Disabilities Living at Home in Washington State (booklet)
- **YOUR CHOICE – Part One**
  How to Hire the Right Individual Provider (DVD)
- **YOUR CHOICE – Part Two**
  Supervising Your Individual Provider (DVD)
- **Becoming a Professional Individual Provider**
  An Introduction to In-Home Care Work (booklet)

Home Care REFERRAL REGISTRY of Washington State