

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT AGENCIES AND PROVIDERS

Because most of us have never been trained to choose a provider or agency to care for our family member or ourselves, it is helpful to have access to a list of possible questions to ask a provider. If you have another tool that has been helpful in selecting providers, please share that with us and we will try to compile an even more complete list of useful questions. Below is a list of questions as least some of which you may want to ask a provider before making your choice.

1. How do you make sure people are treated with respect? _____

2. What is your access to outside resources for information, medical guidance, dietary guidance, behavioral modifications, and other services? _____

3. Are there any contracts the individual and/or family is to sign? _____

4. What criteria do you use in selecting professional consultants, such as therapists? _____

5. How do you actively assist people to make choices? _____

6. How do you make sure people get both the assistance and the freedom they need? _____

7. What are some names of people and/or families who currently use your services that we can talk with about the agency? _____

8. How many people with developmental disabilities and family members are on your board of directors? _____

9. How can I obtain a copy of the most recent licensing survey? _____

10. Do you have any written materials about the agency we can take with us? _____

11. Are you accredited by any accrediting bodies? _____

12. Does the agency hold memberships in any professional organizations? _____

Do any of your employees? _____

13. How long has the agency been in business? _____

14. Do you have a parent organization? _____

What role does it play? _____

15. How does this agency handle a person's finances? _____

16. Do you provide reports to people and/or their families on individuals' finances and how they are being used? _____ If so, how frequently? _____

17. Describe the screening process you use when hiring staff. _____

18. What training do you offer staff? _____

19. How is direct services staff supervised? _____

20. What types of educational background do they have? _____

21. What is your turnover rate for direct service staff? _____

For administrative staff? _____

How long has the average direct care staff been with the agency? _____

22. What mechanism is used in supervision, evaluation, and dismissal of staff? _____

23. How can families and consumers reach different staff at all levels during an emergency outside office hours? _____

24. What backup systems are in place for medical or behavioral emergencies? _____

25. What are your policies regarding medication and its administration? _____

26. Is staff certified in any specialties or skills, or do they have unusual skills, such as sign language? _____

27. How do you individualize services to meeting individual needs? _____

28. How many people have you discharged from your program in the last year? _____

29. What procedure do you use to discharge an individual? _____

30. Why did the people discharged from your program leave? _____

31. How many of the people discharged from your program move into less supervised settings or situations with fewer supports? _____

32. How do you respond to life changes such as marriage, retirement, shift work, complications of again, and so on? _____

What are your arrangements for backup staff in case a staff member calls off? _____

33. What recreational, religious and social activities do people participate in - are they individualized, available, and consistent? _____

How do people participate in these activities? _____

What happens when individuals choose not to participate? _____

34. What kind of transportation is available? _____

How often? _____

How is it paid for? _____

35. Does the agency have good relationships with neighbors and/or neighborhood associations where people live? _____

How are these relationships nurtured and maintained? _____

36. What is your agency's grievance procedure for residents? _____

37. How/when do you keep parents/guardians informed? _____

38. Do you inform parents who are not legal guardians when their child has signed a consent form for activities, treatment, etc.? _____

39. What is your policy toward visitors, unannounced visits, etc.? _____

Does it make any difference if the visitors are family members? _____