
Suggested Questions to Learn More About Agencies and Services

I. Getting to Know the Agency Better

- Are there any contracts the person and/or family is to sign?
- How do you make sure people are treated with respect?
- How do you make sure people are given both the support and freedom they need?
- How do you allow (actively help) people to make choices?
- How do you ensure safety for people you serve?
- What is your access to outside resources for information, medical guidance, dietary guidance, behavioral modifications, etc.?
- What criteria do you use in selecting professional consultants?
- What are some names of people and/or families who are currently receiving services to talk to about the agency?
- How many people with developmental disabilities and family members are on your board?
- Do you have any written material about the agency (brochures, service descriptions, etc.)?
- How could I go about getting the most recent licensure survey?
- Are you accredited by any accrediting bodies?
- What professional organization/s do you belong to?
- How long have you been in business?
- Do you have a parent organization? What is its role?
- How are people's finances handled in your agency?
- How do you routinely report to people and their parents/family members, how people's funds are being used?
- What is the screening process for hiring staff?
- How are direct service staff supervised?
- What training do you offer staff?
- On the average, what is the experience and education of your staff?
- What is the mechanism for supervision, evaluation and dismissal of staff?
- What type of 24-hour emergency access does consumer and family have to staff (i.e. direct care staff, managerial staff, administrative staff)?
- What is the staff turnover rate, for both administrative and direct care service staff?
- What emergency back-up systems do you have in place for behavioral and medical issues?

Suggested Questions to Learn More About Agencies and Services continued

- What is your policy regarding medication and its administration?
- How is staff certified to administer medication to people?
- Which staff is certified?
- How do you individualize services to meet individual needs?
- What is the procedure to discharge people from your program?
- How many people have you discharged in the last year?
- How many of the individuals discharged from your program were because of behavioral/medical issues?
- How many of the individuals discharged from your program moved to less supervised situations?
- How do you respond to life changes (marriage, retirement, etc.)?
- What recreational and social activities are available for people?
- How individualized, available and consistent are recreation and socialization opportunities?
- How often do people participate in these activities?
- What kind of transportation is available during the week? On weekends?
- Do you have good relationships with neighbors and/or neighborhood associations where people live?
- What is the general location of the houses, work, and work training sites for people served?
- Will anyone you support allow a tour of his or her home or work? Go on a tour, if available.

II. The Role of Planning Meetings

- Do people attend their own meeting?
- How free is the person and/or family to choose the location of their home or work?
- Who gets to decide who attends the meeting?
- Are families always invited to the meeting?
- When and how are meetings scheduled?
- How does a person or a family go about calling a meeting?
- How long are the meetings?
- How often are the meetings?
- What do you see as the main purpose of the meeting?
- What is done to help the person get ready for the meeting?
- Can the person change the format/agenda of the meeting if they choose?
- What is the person's role in advocating for himself or herself?

Suggested Questions to Learn More About Agencies and Services continued

- How do you create an agenda that is flexible enough to accommodate the individual's needs?
- How do you allow the process to grow with the person?
- What is the person's right with regard to making decisions in his/her meeting?
- How do you individualize services to meet individual needs?
- What happens when the person's decision is in conflict with the agency's decision?
- How does the team encourage progress?
- How are creative ideas developed for a person to explore new and different opportunities?
- Does the team maintain that there are prerequisite skills that prohibit moving forward with future goals/plans?
- How do you ensure that services and supports agreed upon at the meeting are implemented?
- How does the plan ensure safety?

III. Effectively Dealing With Problems

When you have a problem with a provider agency or you believe they have one with you, it is best to discuss it early before it becomes larger or unresolvable.

- When an individual has a problem with the agency, staff or services, who can they talk to?
- Who can the family talk to?
- How quickly can people expect the agency to act upon issues raised?
- When the provider and the family cannot agree, is there someone the family can talk with?
- What is the appeal process?
- How do you deal with allegations of abuse, neglect and rights violations?
- How will you let the individual and/or family know if you have a problem with them?

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