

EMPLOYER GUIDE

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This manual is intended to be a resource guide to assist you in your role as an employer of a Personal Assistant(s). It includes general tips and suggestions that will assist you to evaluate, select, train and supervise a Personal Assistant. The goal is to create a positive work environment where mutual trust and respect are the basis of high quality and dependable in-home support services.

EVALUATING YOUR NEEDS

You will be working closely with your Personal Assistant. It is important that you have not only a clear understanding of your needs, but also an awareness of your own personal habits and skills and specific areas where assistance is needed. This worksheet will help you decide what information you feel is important to communicate to your attendant and assist you to develop a job description for your Personal Assistant.

FOOD and MEAL PREPARATION

- What kind of foods do I usually eat?
Likes?
Dislikes?
- Am I good at supervising someone who cooks?
- Where do I shop for groceries? How often?
- Do I eat at regular times or when I feel like it?
- How do I feel about eating with my attendant?
- How do I feel about giving cooking instructions to my attendant?
- If I like different foods than my attendant, will I be willing to eat what he/she likes?

HOUSEKEEPING

- How often do I like my house cleaned? How many rooms?
- How do I feel about giving cleaning instructions?
- Do I like a definite schedule for cleaning and laundry, (i.e., vacuum on Monday, scrub floors on Tuesdays, etc.) or do I prefer to be more flexible?
- Where is the laundry done?
- Do I like things very, very neat or am I not particular?

PERSONAL CARE

- How often do I need to bathe?
- Is my personal appearance important to me?
- How often do I need a shampoo?

LIFESTYLE

- Do I like to sleep late in the morning or get up early?
- Will I want to entertain friends and family?
- What time do I usually go to bed at night?
- Do I want to visit friends and to participate in other social activities?
- Do I usually like activities well planned or do I like them to be spontaneous?
- Do I like a quiet atmosphere?
- Do I like to watch TV?
- What do I like to do for entertainment?
- Do I like to listen to music?
 - What kind?
 - What volume?
- Do I consider myself a flexible person? Example?
- How do I react if I have to change my plans at the last minute?
- What are my hobbies?

DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITIES

NEEDS

Communicating your needs clearly is an important skill to have when working with an attendant. Before you can do this it's important to have your needs well defined and in as much detail as possible. The following worksheet will help you to be very specific about the different aspects of assistant care which you need.

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

PERSONAL CARE

Bowel Care: Type of bowel program if any? How often? Time of day? How long does it take?

Bladder Care: Type of bladder program, if any? How often? Time of day? How long does it take?

Toileting: Bedpan? Commode, toilet?
Bathing: Type of bath (shower, bed bath, set-up)? How often? What time of day?
How long does it take?

Dressing: Complete help? Partial help? Special consideration? How long does it
take?

Transferring: Type of transfer? When needed? Special considerations?

Oral Hygiene: How often?

Medication: Type? How often? Who administers?

Eating: Other than meal preparation, any special help? Special diet?

Rest Periods: When? How long?

Exercise: Type? How often? How long does it take?

OTHER

Job or school: Schedule of work or classes – help needed.

Social needs: Activities – help needed.

Transportation needs: Special equipment needs, equipment maintenance.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Now that you have clearly defined your needs and examined your lifestyle you are ready to make a formal job description for your Personal Assistant. Following are some reasons why it is important to do this.

- 1) In the process of developing a job description, you the employer discover a realistic picture of your own personal needs.
- 2) This will give a prospective employee some idea of what the position requires.
- 3) After an individual has been hired, the job description can serve as a checklist of duties and responsibilities of the position.
- 4) You, the employer, can use it as an evaluation tool of the Personal Assistant's performance on the job.
- 5) It can be used if there are disagreements and you need to clarify what his/her duties are.
- 6) The job description can help keep the relationship business-like and professional, and gives structure and clarity to the job of meeting your needs.

Remember to be Specific

When describing a duty to your Personal Assistant, give as much detail as possible. For instance, suppose you are describing how to bathe you, give as many specifics as possible.

- 1) Where do you bathe – shower, tub, bed bath?
- 2) What supplies do you use, where are they located?
- 3) Do you use oil or lotion afterwards?
- 4) In what manner do you like to be bathed? Where should he/she start?
- 5) Do you like your hair washed each time?

JOB DESCRIPTION

BATHING: (Bed bath, shower chair, tub, hair washing)

DRESSING: (Undressing)

TOILETING / GROOMING:

SOCIAL / ACTIVITIES:

VOCATIONAL / EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES:

TYPE OF TRANSFER: (Bed to Wheelchair, Wheelchair to commode, Wheelchair to tub, etc.)

EXERCISES:

PREPARATION OF MEALS:

HOUSEKEEPING:

LAUNDRY:

GROCERY SHOPPING:

OTHER COMMUNITY BASED INSTRUCTION AND ASSISTANCE TO ACHIEVE A SKILL TO INCREASE INDEPENDENCE:

TRANSPORTATION:

ADVERTISING FOR A PERSONAL ASSISTANT

What to remember when writing your advertisement:

1. Emphasize the positive aspects of the job you are offering.
2. Make it clear and concise, stripped of non-essentials.
3. Include a description of the position being offered, a list of qualifications needed and a means by which applicants can reach you.
4. Your telephone number and possibly first name will suffice; do not put your full name and address as you may get unwanted calls.
5. Read other help wanted ads to help with wording and ideas.

The following are some sample ads:

ASSISTANT NEEDED

Part time Personal Assistant needed for female with developmental disabilities.
8 a.m. – 10 a.m. and 9 p.m. – 11 p.m. daily. Help with personal care, grocery shopping, and housekeeping. \$_____ per hour. Call _____.

Female young adult with developmental disabilities needs part time Personal Assistants to maintain independent living. Modern three-room apartment centrally located. Call _____ after 9:30 a.m.

26-year-old man with developmental disabilities wishes to hire an attendant for assistance with personal care, mornings and evenings, flexible schedule, please call _____.

INTERVIEWING A PROSPECTIVE PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Through your telephone screening you have arranged to interview only those applicants who are good candidates for the job. These interviews will give you a much better idea of who will be the best assistant for you and it is important that you be as thorough as possible. You will be working with this person very closely, and hopefully for a long time, so it's important that you learn as much about him/her as you can. Also, it's important for the prospective assistant to ask questions about you, so encourage this.

On the following page is a suggested format for the interview. When interviewing as assistant, it is very important to check work references, as sometimes this is the only way to find out if they've had work problems in the past. You can call their previous employers, explain the job description, and ask questions regarding that person's dependability, honesty and ability to relate well to others. There may be other questions you wish to ask.

Be sure to set a specific time and place for the interview and be prepared to give travel directions. Ask the applicant to begin by completing the application. Use the information reported on the application to structure your interview. Once the application is complete, references have been checked, and you decide to hire, the application must be mailed /faxed to: JEVS Supports for Independence. Before you can hire any assistant, a criminal records check and child abuse check will be performed by JEVS. Following these procedures helps to ensure that every assistant you employ is fully screened.

INTERVIEWING A PROSPECTIVE PERSONAL ASSISTANT

1. Break the ice with simple conversation and make the applicant feel comfortable.
2. Review the application and begin to ask questions where you need more information.
3. Ask the prospective attendant about jobs he/she has had in the past. For example:
 - A) What job have you held in the past?
 - B) How did you feel about those jobs – what did you like, what didn't you like?
4. Explain your disability and functional limitations to the degree you feel comfortable.
5. Give a job description to him/her to read.
6. After giving the prospective attendant the job description, you may want to ask these questions:
 - A) Do you feel uncomfortable about performing any of these duties and responsibilities?
 - B) Do you have any questions?
7. Ask for at least 2 work references.
8. Ask the prospective attendant why he/she likes and wants this kind of work.
9. Talk about how you will evaluate his/her performance. Let him/her know that you want feedback about how things are going for them too.
10. Use questions from Interviewing Tips that are appropriate – try to get to know something about this person's likes, dislikes and habits.

INTERVIEWING TIPS

As part of the interview you may want to ask additional questions from the attached list. These questions will further clarify specific concerns and help you to assess if there is a good fit between your needs and the applicant's ability to meet them.

After the interview, it is a good idea to immediately write down your impressions, noting special characteristics. If you interview several people it can be hard to recall things you liked or disliked. It is also helpful to list and rank in order the characteristics you feel are important in an attendant. Then after each interview you can determine which of these characteristics the prospective assistant has.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

TRANSPORTATION

1. Can you drive, and do you have a car?
2. Do you have a valid driver's license?
3. How long did it take you to travel here?
4. How do you feel about running errands or accompanying me on errand?

PERSONAL CARE

1. Do you think it would bother you to help me with toileting?
2. Will you be able to bathe me?
3. Is there any aspect of personal care that you feel uncomfortable with?
4. How do you feel about assisting with the care plan?

PERSONAL HABITS, ETC.

1. Do you smoke? Do you drink alcohol?
2. Do you have any problems that might interfere with your work?
3. What hobbies do you have?
4. How do you handle frustrating problems? Ex: Communicate your feelings, tell person what's on your mind, let issue drop, etc.
5. What personal habits of others do you find irritating?

There are certainly many other questions, which you may want to ask a prospective assistant in addition to or instead of the questions listed above. Once you have made your decision as to which assistant to hire, it is important that you immediately check references and/or submit the Employment Application to JEVS Supports for Independence for criminal records check and abuse clearance.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. At least once a year it is recommended that you provide your Personal Assistant with a performance evaluation. This process is intended to give your employee important feed back information and indicate strengths, weaknesses and areas for growth. This evaluation can also be used at any time to document problem areas.
2. An evaluation form is attached which you may use as a tool to assess job performance. If you need any additional forms or if you have further questions pertaining to the Self Directed Initiative, please feel free to call the Program Coordinator or your Case Manager.

Personal Assistant: _____

EMPLOYER EVALUATION OF PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Please rate your Assistant in the following areas with this scale:
1 = Rarely, 3 = Usually and 5 = Always

Punctuality: Arrives on time, ready to begin work	<u>Rarely</u>		<u>Usually</u>		<u>Always</u>
	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

Attendance: Is present each day as scheduled	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: _____

Dependability: Can be counted on to perform duties as requested	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: _____

Responsibility: Appears to perform all duties listed on Care Plan willingly, to best of ability	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: _____

Ability to Follow Directions: Can perform assigned tasks after instruction with little supervision	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: _____

Flexibility: Can adapt to changes in schedule; has appropriate attitudes toward change; capable of handling emergency situations	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: _____

Initiative: Assumes tasks as necessary without being assigned	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: _____

Attitude toward Supervision: Accepts supervision and constructive criticism; makes efforts to improve if necessary	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: _____

Attitude Toward Other Household Members: Maintains consistent and appropriate behavior when encountering other household members	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: _____

Employer Signature: _____ Date: _____

