

A Provider's Guide to Interviewing for IHSS Work

People with disabilities and elders will find IHSS providers and attendants in many different ways. It could be from a registry, an online resource or a referral from a friend or family member. An initial phone interview will help determine if a more detailed, in-person interview should take place.

Phone Interview

In the initial phone interview, you and the recipient need to decide whether or not your needs and expectations are similar enough that it is worthwhile to set up an in-person interview. For example, if the recipient needs assistance on days when you are not available, there is no need to continue the interview. You should also ask any critical questions or concerns. For example, if you are allergic to cats, you should ask if the recipient has cats.

Good questions to ask in the phone interview:

- How many hours per week are you hiring for?
- What are the days and times that you need someone to work?
- When do you need me to start?
- What city do you live in? Do you require a car?
- Briefly, what are the job duties you expect to have performed?

Other vital information if it will make a difference in job acceptance, such as:

- Do you need to be lifted or transferred?
- Do you need someone who drives?
- Do you mind a smoker? Or Do you smoke?
- Does the job involve bowel & bladder care?

Be ready to describe:

- Your availability and experience
- The kinds of tasks you have performed
- Special skills or training you have had
- Why you like home care work
- "Something about yourself" such as being dependable, hardworking, able to follow instructions, etc.

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If the phone interview goes well for both, a face-to-face interview will likely be scheduled. Ask the recipient the following questions if they decide to interview you:

- What is your name and telephone number?
- When would you like to interview me?
- May I have your address?
- Is there an apartment number?

Be sure to show up on time for a scheduled interview. CALL if you won't be there as agreed or are going to be late. Your reputation as a provider depends on it!

Face-to-Face Interview

The face-to-face interview will most likely be a more in-depth version of the phone interview. Bring the following documents with you:

- References: Bring a list of 3 references including name, relationship to you (past employer, friend, etc.) and phone number. Call the people you list to make sure their phone number is correct and that they are willing to provide a good reference.
- Documents: Bring a copy of your valid ID or Driver's License and your Social Security Card or Work Permit.
- Copies of any training certificates

If you are hired, consider creating a work agreement or contract signed by both of you. It should include what tasks you will do, any special instructions or how tasks should be done, and any special arrangements about pay, expenses, shopping, driving, etc.

Be sure enrollment forms are completed accurately and submitted to IHSS when you are hired and before you begin working.

Content for this information comes from Smoothing out the Edges: A Manual on Attendant Management by Pamela Walker and produced by the Center for Independent Living, Inc. and Home Care Worker's Handbook by the Contra Costa County IHSS Public Authority.