

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.



Sample Job Agreement for IHSS

Job Agreement Date: _____

Recipient (Employer) _____ Provider (Employee) _____

The Recipient and Provider agree to the following general principles.

The Recipient agrees to:

- Assign and direct the work of the Provider
- Give the Provider advance notice, whenever possible, when hours or duties change and two weeks' notice, if possible, if he/she/they is being terminated
- Only ask the Provider to do work for the Recipient as assigned by IHSS
- Supply enrollment forms and cooperate with the Provider in completing them
- Sign timesheets in a timely manner and/or pay the share of cost, if applicable

The Provider agrees to:

- Perform the agreed upon tasks and duties
- Arrive to work on time
- Call the Recipient as soon as possible if late, sick or unable to work
- Not make personal calls or overuse personal cell phone on Recipient's time
- Not ask to borrow money or ask for a cash advance
- Give the Recipient two weeks' notice, when possible, before terminating from the job

The current hourly wage for IHSS is \$_____. If there is a problem with timesheets or checks, the Provider should call IHSS Payroll: 510-577-1877.

Does the Recipient have a Share of Cost that may be paid to the Provider?

NO YES If yes, indicate maximum amount \$ _____

Will the Provider use his/her/their car to drive to shopping or medical appointments?

NO YES If yes, explain agreement for paying for gas: \$ _____/mile

The Recipient will provide the following supplies and/or equipment (gloves, cleaning supplies, etc.): _____

Hours of work for this job are shown below: Changes in scheduled hours are to be negotiated by both parties, with advance notice:

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Start							
End							



Sample Job Agreement for IHSS

IHSS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Note below the tasks the Provider should do and how often, using these codes:

D (Daily) **W** (Weekly) **M** (Monthly) **O** (Other). If "Other," note details next to task:

Domestic Services:

- Mop kitchen & bathroom floors
- Vacuum/sweep
- Wash kitchen counter & sinks
- Clean stove top
- Clean refrigerator
- Clean bathroom
- Take out garbage
- Dust
- Change bed linen
- Make bed
- Routine Laundry (wash, dry, fold & store)
- Heavy house cleaning (Once per year, only if approved by IHSS)

Meals

- Prepare meals
- Meal clean-up
- Wash dishes/put away

Shopping

- Shopping for food
- Other shopping errands

Non-Medical Personal Services:

- Respiration assistance
- Bowl & bladder care
- Feeding
- Routine baths
- Dressing
- Menstrual Care
- Help with walking
- Move in & out of bed
- Oral hygiene & grooming
- Repositioning
- Rub skin
- Help on/off seats & in/out of vehicle
- Care/assistance with prosthesis

Appointment Services

- Medical appointment
- Alternative resources

Paramedical Services

- Injections
- Administration of medication(s)
- Blood sugar checks
- Other paramedical services:

Additional tasks (not authorized by IHSS) which recipient will pay for directly:

- Clerical skills such as filing or writing
- Reading
- Other: _____
- Water house plants
- Pet care/service animals



Sample Job Agreement for IHSS

By signing below, the Recipient (Employer) and Provider (Employee) agree to the terms outlined in this Agreement.

Recipient Print Name Clearly

Provider Print Name Clearly

Recipient Signature Date

Provider Signature Date

Recipient Phone:

Provider Phone:

IHSS Provider Responsibilities

1. *Respect Recipients' right to direct tasks.* Recipients have the right to determine what tasks need to be done on any given day, and how they will be done.

2. *Respect Recipients' right to express themselves.* Although Recipients have a disability, it is important not to speak for those who want to state needs, problems, and thoughts for themselves.

3. *Not to take advantage of Recipients.* Many Recipients may be in a vulnerable situation because of economic, emotional and physical limitations. Recipients have the right to feel safe in their home and not to be threatened with abuse, theft, or abandonment. Do not ask for or receive loans or presents. Likewise, do not ask your Recipient to sign a timesheet for hours you have not worked.

4. *Respect the confidentiality of Recipients.* Providers may see or hear about many aspects of the Recipients' personal life or business dealings. Providers should not share this knowledge with others outside of work.

5. *Recognize the Recipients' right to fire a Provider.* Recipients should not have to endure a situation that threatens their emotional or physical safety, or a person who is not the right Provider for them. When possible, Recipients should notify Providers 2 weeks in advance if they plan on firing a Provider.



Effective Communication for IHSS Providers*

1. Explain WHAT and WHY you need something or want to suggest a change on the job. This will assist the recipient in understanding your concern. It will also help them understand how important it is to you. **CLARITY**
2. Listen! Recipients probably won't listen to you unless they feel you are willing to listen to them, too. By listening, you tell them you value their opinions and respect them. Listening is also the first step needed for solving problems or resolving conflicts. **LISTEN**
3. Try to make every effort to speak in "I" statements. For example, "I am frustrated because we constantly run out of cleaning supplies. I can't clean the bathroom well without them. Can we talk about ways I can assist you in keeping supplies available?" The pattern is: "I see/hear/feel (state the issue at hand). It makes me feel (state your feelings), I need (state a possible solution). **"I" STATEMENTS**
4. Attempt to maintain eye contact, respect the feelings that your recipients show. Remember people's feelings are their own and no one can tell them they do not or should not feel a particular way. **FEELINGS**
5. Remember to accept your recipient as they are and be open to how they may change over time. Be respectful of a person's right to be an individual rather than offering criticism. **ACCEPTANCE**
6. Sometimes difficulty understanding may arise from cultural differences or language barriers. If your recipient's first language is different from yours, you may want to ask your recipient to translate key words or phrases. This will help you both communicate on a daily basis as well as prepare for an emergency. **CULTURE**
7. Keep an open line of communication. Tell them you want to discuss any concerns they have or behaviors that might be offensive or out of the ordinary. You may have cultural differences that seem unusual and need to be understood. **OPEN LINE**

*This information has been adapted from the "Effective Communication for Consumers & Their Personal Assistances" hand out by Community Resources for Independent Living (CRIL).



Negotiating Solutions to Workplace Problems

Tips for IHSS Providers

Remember that the work you do is important. Recipients depend on their providers. You have the right to ask your employer (the Recipient) to provide safe work conditions. When talking with your employer, you need to keep in mind that nothing is final until you have accepted it. For this reason, you should think about the proposals you can make, other options if he/she/they doesn't accept your proposals, and what would be your ultimate offer.

Prepare yourself for the discussion:

- 1) Be clear about the safety issue that concerns you.
- 2) Be clear about how the safety issue affects you.
- 3) Think about the way this safety issue negatively affects the recipient as well.
- 4) Think about various possible solutions you could propose. Make sure they are solutions that you can live with.
- 5) Consider the situation and needs of your employer or recipient. Seek to understand their issues: cultural practices, health needs, independence, safety etc.
- 6) Know what your "bottom line" is. Think about where you draw the line. What is the minimum change you need in order to feel ok about doing the task?

Present the issue to your Recipient:

STEP	Description	Example One	Example Two
ISSUE	State the issue from your point of view. "(When) I . . ."	"When I scrub the kitchen floor on my hands and knees with the sponge you prefer."	"When I transfer you from the bed to your chair."
FEELING	State how it affects you - physically and emotionally.	"My back is sore and my knees hurt. Sometimes my back continues to hurt for the next few days." "I'm afraid I will have an ongoing problem with my back."	"It causes me pain in my lower back and knees." "I feel frustrated because I am in pain when I do the other tasks you need me to do."
NEED	State your need for change and offer a possible solution.	"Can we talk about another way to clean the floors that would leave them clean as you like them, but would not hurt my back or knees?" "I've heard a long-handled mop can work well."	"Can you consider asking your doctor about some device to help with transfers and ask someone to show us how to use it properly?"

Negotiating Solutions to Workplace Problems Tips for IHSS Providers

DISCUSS	Discuss possible solutions. Listen to the points the recipient makes. Be honest but respectful when presenting your points.	"I hear you are concerned about your floor being clean. I am willing to try different mops and perhaps different cleaners until we find a way for the floor to be clean without hurting my back."	"I heard you say we should try a better way to transfer without using a mechanical device. You had a bad experience with one in the past. I am willing to learn a new way of assisting you with transfers, but would need someone to come show me how"
RESTATE SOLUTION	Repeat the final agreement to make sure you and the recipient are agreeing upon the same solution.	"Tell me if I understand correctly. We have agreed to try a long-handled mop with a cleaner you heard works well. We will try it for a month then talk again to see if we are both ok with the solution"	"Tell me if I understand correctly. We have agreed that you will schedule me to work when your physical therapist visits you. She can help us practice a new way to do transfers."

Suggestions for a negotiation:

- 1) Respect yourself!
- 2) Be respectful; speak with confidence and be calm.
- 3) Understand your rights, as well as the rights of the recipient.
- 4) Stay focused on your issue. Keep in mind your issues and the various solutions you can offer.
- 5) Listen to the recipient; try to understand their concerns and needs.
- 6) Do not make threats. Do state your "ultimate offer" or bottom line if you need to.

Guidelines for Protecting Health Care Workers from Infectious Diseases

You can't tell whether someone is infected or not with a disease like HIV or hepatitis B just by looking at them. Using universal precautions means that we protect ourselves as if every client we care for could have hepatitis B, hepatitis C, or HIV/AIDS. Universal precautions are a kind of infection control that protects our clients and us.

What kinds of precautions are you talking about?

- Wash your hands often. Washing your hands is the single best way to kill germs. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before putting on latex gloves and immediately after taking off the gloves. Wash your hands immediately if you touch anybody's blood, urine, feces, vomit, semen, or vaginal fluid.
- Treat all blood and other bodily fluids - including urine, feces, and vomit - as if they contained the hepatitis B virus, the hepatitis C virus, or the AIDS virus.
- Cuts, sores, or breaks in the caregiver's skin or the client's skin should be covered with bandages.
- Bag soiled laundry in a leakproof plastic bag and tie it shut to avoid contaminating the floor or other surfaces. Wear gloves when handling or sorting laundry. When carrying the bag, do not hug it close to your body. If it's leaking, you don't want to be contaminated.
- Wear latex gloves when there is a chance of being in contact with blood or other bodily fluids. Wearing gloves is especially important when you have a cut or rash on your hands because any tear in your skin can allow the virus to get into your body. Some people are allergic to the powder in gloves or the latex. If you are one of those people, there are other kinds of gloves that will work, such as powderless gloves or nitrile gloves.
- Wear a mask and eye protection during job tasks likely to splash or spray blood or bodily fluids – like emptying a Foley catheter, caring for a draining wound, or disconnecting a feeding tube.
- Avoid handling sharp objects (such as razors or needles) that might have come in contact with blood or bodily fluids. Dispose of them carefully by placing them in a puncture-resistant container for disposal (also called a sharp container or red box).

Body Mechanics for Providers

The most important thing to lifting safely is the right kind of equipment, but proper body mechanics is helpful too. Using the body mechanics tips below can help you lift more safely, even if you're using some kind of lifting or transfer device.

Wide Base of Support

Stand with your feet 8-12" (shoulder width apart) with one foot a half step ahead of the other. You will then be able to move the client or object by using a weight shift rather than a dead lift.

Bend Knees

Bending your knees rather than your back makes the legs do the work instead of your back.

Keep Your Back Straight

Keeping your back straight or maintaining its natural curve minimizes the risk of injury. Muscles that support your back work optimally in this position.

Bring Weight Close to Your Body

A heavy object that is held close to your body is easier to carry. There is less load on your back and less stress on your back muscles.

Lift With Your Legs

The muscles of your legs are stronger than your back and should be used for lifting.

Adjust the height of the bed when possible. If the client is in a hospital bed, raise the bed to the best height so that stress on your back is minimized when assisting with transfers, dressing, toileting, positioning, or range of motion exercises.

To Turn, Move Your Feet

If you turn without moving your feet, you are twisting your back. This causes wear and tear on your discs, which can raise the risk of injury.

Source: *"Body Mechanics-Positioning, Moving and Transfers"* The Comfort of Home.

Lifting Solutions

As a provider, you often must work alone and lift or move recipients by yourself, which could lead to a back injury. However, there is a lot of equipment available, called “durable medical equipment” that can help you avoid injury on the job and also make getting around easier for your recipient(s). Some of this equipment has been developed for the home to be more portable and to fit in the bedroom.

These devices include:

- **Lifting equipment** – to help people get in and out of bed, or in and out of the bathtub, or to walk with the aid of a lift.
- **Shower chairs** – that can be used to wheel the client over the toilet and into certain kinds of showers.
- **Wheelchairs** – with removable armrests and footrests to make it easier to lift the client.
- **Transfer benches** – to transfer in and out of the bath more easily.

Most durable medical equipment is covered free of charge under your client’s Medi-Cal coverage, but they need to ask either their doctor for a prescription or explain their need to a social worker.

Here are some photos of a few kinds of lifting and transfer devices:

