

## ***Information from Service Coordination***

# **Working with Providers**

### **SELECTING A DDA LICENSED PROVIDER AGENCY**

One of the most difficult decisions is choosing which DDA (Developmental Disabilities Administration) agency to provide you with Residential, Vocational, and/or Support Services. Most important is to pay attention to how you feel when you talk to a provider as well as the information they share. In addition, ask to visit the site where services will be provided. Be sure to visit when people are receiving services. For services where there is no site location, ask for at least three examples of how the agency is currently supporting others.

Here are some questions that you might want to think about asking as you consider your agency selection:

- How do you balance treating people with respect and the need for privacy and safety?
- How individualized, available and consistent are recreational and socialization opportunities?
- How do you respond to life changes (marriage, retirement, etc.)?
- What are some names of people and/or families who are currently receiving services that I could talk to about your agency?
- How many people with developmental disabilities and family members are on your board?
- How long have you been in business?
- Are you accredited by any accrediting bodies and what professional organization(s) do you belong to?
- Will staff supporting me be hired by the agency or by me and my family?
- What is your hiring and on-going practice for ensuring well-trained qualified staff?
- How are people's finances handled in your agency? How often is a report available to me on how my funds are being used?
- How do I get a hold of someone "after hours"?
- How do you communicate to the family in case of an emergency?
- What is your access to outside resources for information, medical guidance, dietary guidance, behavioral modifications, etc.?
- Do you provide personal care service?
- Is transportation available during the week? On weekends?

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- What is your policy on participants and staff taking sick and vacation days?
- What emergency back-up systems do you have in place for behavioral and medical issues?
- Are staff qualified to administer both prescription and non-prescription medications?
- Do you have good relationships with neighbors and/or other community connections where people live?
- If a problem arises, who do I speak to? What is the best way to contact this person?
- 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 appeals process?
- How do you deal with allegations of abuse, neglect and rights violations?
- Additional information about the agencies is available through the Office of Health Care Quality under Maryland's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and can be contacted by calling 1-877-402-8218 or by visiting the website <http://dhmh.me.state.us/ohcq>.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A DDA LICENSED PROVIDER AGENCY:**

To receive supports and services funded by the DDA (Developmental Disabilities Administration), many people will need to choose a provider agency. This may require some negotiation with the agency to ensure you and the provider have agreed on exactly what they will be providing.

### **From your chosen provider, you should expect:**

- That you have staff you like who you feel help you and do their job.
- That you are treated with respect and kindness.
- That your privacy and right to confidentiality are respected.
- That what you want is discussed at your annual planning meeting and that what you want then happens in a reasonable amount of time.
- That the plan and your services are flexible and change as you need them to change.
- That you are supported in making choices, including where you live, work and the social activities you participate in.
- That your health and safety needs are met with dignity.
- That you have access to your money to do what you prefer and need to do.
- That you are happy with your life and your supports and services, and that you receive help when you have problems.
- That your provider acts ethically and with honesty and integrity.

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## COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR DDA LICENSED PROVIDER AGENCY

We all hope that once we are accessing service from a DDA (Developmental Disabilities Administration) provider that everything will be smooth sailing. Often that is the case, but unfortunately, there are times when something may just not be working out. 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 a larger issue or is unable to be resolved.

### Some tips to help you in this process are:

Write down what you want before you meet with the provider. This will help you to remember anything that you want to share with the provider. Take some notes at the meeting as well.

- Tell them as specifically as you can what you want in terms of supports and services, and include what is important to you or your family member in how you live your (or they live their) life.
- Make a list of the things in your life you “have to have” and also note areas in which you are willing to compromise.
- Listen to what they tell you they can do. Ask questions if you do not understand exactly what they are saying they will provide.
- Get things in writing. Look at the plan and ask for changes if it is not what you think you agreed to have. Include timelines and who is responsible for getting what done.
- Find out who to talk to if you are still unhappy with the services being provided to you. Know your rights and the appeal process.
- Keep in mind, your Service Coordinator can be contacted to assist you in resolving matters with your provider agency.
- Remember that DDA funding is assigned to you, and if necessary, you can change to another provider agency. Be aware that the actual amount of funding may possibly change with this process, and includes the possibility of leaving you with less funds for a given service. Your Service Coordinator will help you with changing your provider agency.

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you have problems that you cannot solve with your provider, call your Service Coordinator or your Developmental Disabilities Administration Regional Office (DDA).

Central Region: 1-877-874-2494

Western Region: 1-888-791-0193

Southern Region: 1-888-207-2479

Eastern Shore: 1-888-219-0478

Call the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) 1-877-402-8218 for abuse or neglect problems.

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