

PersonalChoice Participant Training And Reference Guide

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Getting Started

A. Some Useful Definitions	7
B. What PersonalChoice Is, and How it Works.....	11
How does the PersonalChoice Budget work?.....	11
Is help available if I need it?.....	12
What is the first step in directing my own care?.....	15
C. Roles and Responsibilities and Appeal Rights.....	17
Participant and Representative Roles	17
Participant/Representative Rights and Responsibilities ...	18
Roles of the Service Advisement Agency	21
Roles of the Fiscal Intermediary	22
Roles of the State	23
When things don't go well and the difference between a Complaint and an Appeal	23
Complaint Process	24
Appeal Rights	26

Chapter 2: Your PersonalChoice Guidebook & Start-Up Training

Getting Started: The Five Keys to success	28
Your Training	29

Chapter 3: Budgets and Individual Service and Spending Plans (ISSP)

A. Information about your PersonalChoice Budget	30
How your budget is determined	30
Thinking about your options	30
How PersonalChoice puts you in charge.....	31
What are Participant Directed Goods and Services?.....	32
Things you MAY buy	33
Things you MAY NOT buy	34
B. Budget Responsibilities	36
Writing an Individual Service and Spending Plan (ISSP) .	36
Making Purchases consistent with your ISSP	37
Keep Track of Monthly Spending	37
Reports you will Receive	38
Updating your ISSP	38
Annual Reassessment	40
C. Determining Your Needs	41
Deciding what is most important to you	41
Preferences	41
Self-Assessment	43
Addressing your personal care needs	44
Job Task Descriptions	45
How will these needs be met?	47
Person description of the kind of PA you want	48
About hiring family and friends as PAs	50
Family as Caregivers	52

Boundaries and Guidelines	53
Live-In PA problems	53
Back-up	54
Next Step: Developing a Job Description	54
Parts of a Job Description	56
How much help and how often?	57
Number of Attendants	58
Pros and Cons of Hiring an Independent Provider	58
Pros and Cons of Hiring Family Members	59
Pros and Cons of Hiring through an Agency	60
How much should I pay?	61
D. Writing your Individual Service and Spending Plan (ISSP) ...	62
Writing out your goals	62
Completing your ISSP	63
Section I. Direct Hire Services	64
Section 1a. Emergency Back-up Plan	65
Section II. Other Purchased Services	66
Section III. Purchase of Items/Goods	67
Reconciliation of ISSP	69
A few words about employment taxes and other fees	70

Chapter 4- Personnel Issues

Finding Personal Assistants (Recruiting)	73
Writing Job Ads	73
Ways to find PAs or Places to Post Ads	75
Personal Assistant Registry	77
When People Respond	77

Screening	78
Applications	79
Interviewing	79
Checking References	81
Hiring Guidelines	82
PersonalChoice Hiring guidelines	83
Criminal Background and Abuse registry checks	83
Written Agreement	84
Orienting your Personal Assistant	84
Training your PAs	85
Scheduling PAs	87
Paying your PA	88
Firing your PA	89
Grounds for Firing	89
Firing Workers	90
Supervising PAs and Recognizing Quality Service	91
Dealing with Abuse	93
Preventing Theft	95

Chapter 5- Communication Skills

Communication Tips	98
Bargaining	99
Giving Feedback	99
Documenting	100

Chapter 6- Managing Emergencies

PA staffing emergencies	101
Medical emergencies	101

Chapter 7- Working with your PersonalChoice

Support Agencies	103
-------------------------------	------------

Appendices

Appendix A- Interviews and the Law	105
Appendix B- Participant Self-Assessment	106
Appendix C- Sample Job Description	109
Appendix D- Sample PA Face-to-Face Interview ques...	110
Appendix E- Sample PA reference check questions	111
Appendix F- Sample PA Hiring Agreement	112
Appendix G- PersonalChoice PA and Representative Disqualifying Criminal Convictions	115
Appendix H- Agency Checklist	116
Appendix I- Sample PersonalChoice ISSP	119
Appendix J- Sample PersonalChoice Goals Summary ..	122
Appendix K- Grievance/Complaint Form	123

Chapter 1: GETTING STARTED

Welcome to the PersonalChoice program! This Section helps you get started as a PersonalChoice participant. There are three main parts:

- A. Some Useful Definitions
- B. What PersonalChoice Is And How It Works
- C. Roles and Responsibilities and Appeal Rights

This Participant Guidebook will provide you with the basic information you need to manage your own services and get the most out of your enrollment in the program. We have intentionally not put information in it that is for any specific age or disability type because it is not practical to do so. You know best about what you want and need and how you want to get it. This Guidebook is designed to help you prepare for the program and refer back to once you are on the program.

As you begin the planning needed to direct your own care, do not be afraid to ask for help. Surround yourself with people who support your independence and want to see you succeed at directing your own services. No matter what choices you make, we are sure your participation in the PersonalChoice program will be satisfying and rewarding for you and those around you.

A. Some Useful Definitions

As you read this guidebook you will encounter terms and words that may not be familiar to you. In order to get the most out of this guidebook, and the PersonalChoice program in general, it will be useful for you to know what they mean. Here are some of the terms and what they mean.

Advisement Agency- The agency that assesses, enrolls, trains and assists the PersonalChoice participant in developing and monitoring their program. A small portion of the participants monthly budget is set aside to pay the agency for the services it provides.

Assessment- Meetings between the PersonalChoice participant and staff from the Advisement agency for the purpose of establishing eligibility for the program and to assist the participant to identify services, equipment, home modifications and trainings that will allow the participant to increase their independence and live in the community. These happen at the beginning of the program and then yearly as long as the participant is enrolled in PersonalChoice.

Consumer (Participant) Direction- An approach to long-term care where consumers (participants) manage their own assistant services. Consumers assess their own needs, decide how their needs are to be met, and monitor the quality of the services received. PersonalChoice is a Consumer Directed program.

Fiscal Intermediary Agency- The agency that handles financial and personnel matters for PersonalChoice participants. A small portion of the participants monthly budget is set aside to pay the agency for the services it provides.

Individual Service and Spending Plan (abbreviated ISSP)- A written plan describing your personal care needs and how you will meet them by hiring Personal Assistants. It also includes a plan for handling emergencies and a list of other goods and services you will purchase with your monthly budget. You will develop this plan with input from your Service Advisor.

Monthly Budget Amount- Medicaid funds set aside for your monthly personal assistant services. The budget is determined by the PersonalChoice program office and is based on the amount of assistance a participant requires to meet his/her personal care needs.

Participant- a person who is a Medicaid recipient and has chosen to receive his/her in home services through the PersonalChoice program.

Participant Directed Goods and Services- Items and services purchased by a PersonalChoice participant as part of his/her approved Individual Service and Spending Plan that will improve his/her independence with any funds remaining in their monthly budget **after** their personal assistants have been paid.

Personal Assistant (abbreviated PA) - A person who provides assistance to you.

Personal Assistant Services- Services provided to you to allow you to increase or maintain your independence and live in the community. These services may include personal care assistance, housekeeping, homemaking and chore services.

PersonalChoice Management Test- A test you must pass to complete the PersonalChoice Management Training.

PersonalChoice Management Training- Formal training, provided by your Service Advisor which will teach you what you need to know to operate the PersonalChoice program. This must be completed prior to starting on the program and is based on the information provided in this Guidebook.

Representative- a person designated by a PersonalChoice program participant to assist him/her in managing some or all of the requirements of the program. This person **cannot** be paid to provide this assistance.

Service Advisor- a person who is employed by an Advisement agency and will provide you with the training and support needed to take part in the PersonalChoice program.

Taxes- Fees deducted from the participant's monthly budget that are required to be paid on behalf of employees:

- FICA (Federal Insurance Contributions Act)- Funds for providing care for the aging, disabled and survivors. Includes funding for Medicare for people who cannot afford medical insurance.
- FUTA (Federal Unemployment Tax Act)- Finances employment programs at the federal level.
- SUTA (State Unemployment Tax Act)- Finances employment programs at the state level.
- RITDI (Rhode Island Temporary Disability Insurance)- Provides income to employees who can't work for a period of time due to illness or injury.

Worker's Compensation Insurance- Funds that provide for monetary awards paid to individuals, who are injured, disabled or killed on the job. This is also a cost of employment paid by the participant from his/her monthly budget.

B. What PersonalChoice Is, And How It Works

PersonalChoice is a new type of Medicaid waiver funded long-term care program. It puts you, the participant, in charge of directing services and managing a monthly budget that is based on your personal care needs. You use this budget to meet your long-term care needs.

You make your own choices about who you want to help you with things like personal care, homemaking or chores. This is what is meant by “Participant-Directed”. You direct your own care. You can also choose to appoint a Representative to assist you with some or all parts of the program, if you wish. Whenever a Representative is appointed, the Representative assumes whatever responsibilities you choose. Therefore, references to the reader and to “Participant” throughout this guidebook also refer to the Representative.

To help you understand the program, and then get the best out of it day to day, you will be working with two agencies a **Service Advisor** and a **Fiscal Intermediary (or FI)**. The Service Advisor’s job is to assist you, not to make choices and decisions for you. The FI handles your PersonalChoice accounting and pays your employees, purchases and taxes. Both of their roles will be described more in depth later in this Guidebook.

PersonalChoice is designed to serve both adults with disabilities and elders. Therefore the information presented in this Guidebook is designed to provide the basic information required to manage the program successfully. The needs of adults with disabilities and elders may vary, so don’t be afraid to ask your Service Advisor for more specific information relating to your personal questions.

How Does the PersonalChoice Budget Work?

You will be given control of a monthly PersonalChoice budget – based on your personal care needs - to hire employees, and purchase equipment and supplies that will be related to your

PersonalChoice Participant Manual 1/4/2006

condition and will make you more independent. You will use the monthly budget amount to develop an Individual Service and Spending Plan (ISSP), which sets out what, how much and from whom you obtain services and other goods.

The Department of Human Services, Center for Adult Health PersonalChoice program office reviews and approves Individual Service and Spending Plans. The Department also establishes your monthly budget, based on an assessment of your personal care needs conducted by your Service Advisor.

You decide who you want to provide services – perhaps a neighbor, a member of your family or an independent provider that you hire directly. You will manage workers and tell them how you want the job done.

Within limits, you can buy services, supplies and equipment from whomever, and wherever, you choose.

How does PersonalChoice Differ from the Way Things Work Now?

In the past, your Case Manager or Support Coordinator explained the services available, set-up the services for you, and checked to make sure you were satisfied with those services. If you had any problems – for example, a worker did not show up - you called your Case Manager or Home Health Agency.

Now, you are in charge. You choose the services, set the schedule and judge the results. You hire and fire. You develop a back up plan for no show workers

Is Help Available if I Need It?

Yes, you may get help from your Service Advisor and the Fiscal Intermediary.

Your **Service Advisor** will first train you on how to plan for the services you want. He/she will also train you on how to select and supervise your workers. Your Service Advisor will then provide ongoing advice and information about managing your services.

Your Service Advisor will also give you information and support when you need it for both routine matters and for special or one-time needs. Your Service Advisor will be available to answer questions, discuss your plans for using your budget, and give you information about other resources. You can also plan special purchases, such as a special piece of equipment, by saving part of your budget each month for that purpose.

Your Service Advisor will give you tips on how other participants have learned to do things well, and also tell you about peer support activities in your community.

Service Advisors take the place of Case Managers and Support Coordinators. Instead of you being told by your Case Manager or Support Coordinator what is available to you, you get to decide how you want to tailor your budget to suit your needs. (In some cases your Service Advisor may be the same person as your former Case Manager or Independent Living Counselor, but the role is still different.)

In summary, the following are some of the things that your Service Advisor can **help** you to do (remember they can't do things for you, they can only assist you in doing them for yourself, but you have to ask, it won't happen automatically):

- Plan for your Personal Assistant services
- Find possible Personal Assistants
- Assist you in developing your Individual Service and Spending Plan (ISSP)
- Assist you in figuring out how much to pay your PAs and stay within your budget.
- Find help from other community resources

Service Advisors are also responsible to monitor your participation in the program and re-assess you on a regular basis. Service Advisors will:

- Contact you once a month during the first year you are on PersonalChoice
- Visit you in your home every three months during the first year
- After that contact you every three months and visit you twice a year
- Re-assess you and review your monthly budget every year.
- Re-asses you at your request, or the request of the PersonalChoice program office
- Notify the Program Director of the Service Advisement agency and the PersonalChoice program office when you are having major problems
- Contact you more often if the Program Director or PersonalChoice program office thinks it is necessary.
- Help you find other attendant services if you leave PersonalChoice

The PersonalChoice **Fiscal Intermediary** (or **FI**) keeps track of the money in your budget, pays your employer taxes, processes payroll for your workers and pays your vendors. The FI will also keep track of savings you have designated for purchase of items.

The FI will send you monthly reports showing you what purchases you made and how much you spent. And, in the future, if you have access to the Internet, you will be able to see your balance and other account information 24/7 on the PersonalChoice website.

In summary here are the things that the Fiscal Intermediary will do to support you in the PersonalChoice program:

- Keep an “account” for you so you can track how much you are spending out of your monthly budget.
- Do Criminal Background checks on all likely Personal Assistants and Representatives (if you have one)
- Make payments to your Personal Assistants based on your instructions and approved ISSP.
- Inform you of procedures and forms to use when hiring or changing PAs.

- Inform you of the procedures and forms to use for reporting the hours worked by your PAs (time sheets).
- Handle personnel activities for PAs.
- Advise attendants of their rights as employees.
- Review the timesheets you submit to ensure that they agree with your approved ISSP
- Pay for items or services that you purchase based on your approved ISSP
- Review all payments for items and services to make sure they are part of your approved ISSP
- Provide you with a monthly report so that you can track how you are spending your budget and also to ensure the FI is handling your budget appropriately and accurately

We will be talking about all of these duties and tasks in this guidebook later on in much more detail. But the point is that you will have help and support available to you to manage the program effectively, and get the most out of PersonalChoice.

What is the First Step in Directing My Own Care?

The first step you need to take is learning: learn, through the training offered you, to understand your role as participant. To be a success, you need to know what your own role is and the role of those who help you.

When you enrolled in PersonalChoice, you chose to have more choice, flexibility and control over your care; that choice meant your role would change as well. You now have the freedom to make choices that were not available to you before; but you also have the responsibility to choose well and get good value from the funds provided for your care.

Summary

In PersonalChoice, you have more choice, flexibility, control, and responsibility:

- You decide what services and purchases you need.
- You schedule services.

- You train workers how you want things done.
- You decide if you are happy with the quality of what is done.
- You resolve any problems you may have with your workers and even replace them, if necessary.
- Your Service Advisor and Fiscal Intermediary help keep you on track.

C. Roles and Responsibilities and Appeal Rights

To make a success of the PersonalChoice program, you need to have a good understanding of what is expected of you as a participant. You also need to understand the roles and responsibilities of the Service Advisor, Fiscal Intermediary and the state PersonalChoice program office. We will describe them here.

Participant and Representative Roles

As Participant, you have a number of roles:

You are a Participant: Your role as participant is to make decisions about the best way to meet your needs, receive and use goods and services, and then judge how well they worked for you – making changes as needed.

As a participant, you have choices about what to buy with your PersonalChoice budget, where you buy, and from whom you buy.

You are an Employer: Your role is to find and hire people to work for you. You will train your workers and schedule when you want the work done. You will also decide how much to pay your employees.

You will let your workers know if they are doing things the way you want.

You will authorize your workers' paychecks by reviewing and signing timesheets.

You are a Custodian of Public Money: As a Custodian, your role is to use your budget responsibly. The Medicaid waiver budget must be used to meet your long-term care needs.

You will write an Individual Service and Spending Plan (ISSP) to describe how you intend to purchase goods and services. You will have the freedom to be creative and you can change your mind along the way. However, you must make purchases that help you remain at home and keep you out of a nursing home or other institution.

The Role of the Representative

The Representative is the participant's assistant: the Representative's overall role is to help the participant make the best decisions and choices and assist the participant in managing the PersonalChoice program and financial responsibilities of it. The Representative takes the place of the participant for any program administration and financial matters that the participant decides. So, the role of the Representative can be the role of the participant.

The Representative's Relationship with the Participant

It is essential that the Representative involve the participant as much as possible in decisions about needs, services, budget and satisfaction with services. Whenever practical, the participant should be involved in writing the purchasing plan, hiring workers and setting their work schedules. The Representative **cannot be the participant's employee or be paid to provide this help.**

Participant/Representatives Rights and Responsibilities

Basic Rights and Responsibilities

As a PersonalChoice participant you have some basic rights and responsibilities. For example, you have the right to purchase services, but you share in the responsibility to make sure the services you get are meeting your needs.

The following is a brief list of your rights and responsibilities as a PersonalChoice participant. You will be given a detailed list that you will review with your Service Advisor before you start on the program.

You have the right to:

- Be treated as an adult, with dignity and respect at all times
- Privacy in all interactions with the agency and others as necessary and be free from unnecessary intrusion
- Make informed choices based upon appropriate information provided to you, and to have those choices respected, while respecting the rights of others to disagree with those choices
- Freely choose between approved providers for both advisement and fiscal intermediary services

- Feel safe and secure in all aspects of life, including health and wellbeing; be free from exploitation and abuse; but not be overprotected
- Realize the full opportunity that life provides by not being limited by others, making full use of the resources the program provides, and being free from judgments and negativity
- Live as independent a life as you choose
- Have your individual ethnic background, language, culture and faith valued and respected
- Be treated equally and live in an environment that is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination
- Voice grievances about care or treatment without fear of discrimination or reprisal
- Voluntarily withdraw from the program at any time
- Ask questions until you understand
- Manage Personal Care Assistants by:
 - Deciding whom to hire to assist you
 - Deciding what special knowledge or skills the assistant must possess
 - Training each assistant to meet your individual needs
 - Replacing assistants who do not meet your needs
- Request a new assessment if your needs change
- Change your ISSP as your needs or goals change
- Know about all Service Advisement and Fiscal Intermediary service fees
- Receive a report of how you have spent your monthly budget
- Appeal any decision made by the advisement agency, fiscal intermediary or DHS in regards to any adverse action, and expect a prompt response.

You have the responsibility to:

- Manage and maintain your health and to access medical help as needed or to seek assistance in order to do so
- Demonstrate the required skills and abilities needed to self-direct personal assistants without jeopardizing your health

and safety, or designate a surrogate representative to assist you

- Act as a supervising employer by:
 - Deciding wages, schedules and benefits (if any) for your assistants
 - Completing hiring agreements with each personal care assistant
 - Following all employment laws and regulations
 - Following all requirements of the Fiscal Intermediary/IRS in regards to hiring and paying personal care assistants including: completing all necessary forms, reviewing time sheets for accuracy and submitting them in a timely manner, and paying personal care assistants promptly
 - Treating all employees with dignity and respect
- Manage personal assistant services by:
 - Meeting and cooperating with advisement agency staff as required to complete all needed assessments and monitoring
 - Developing and monitor a spending plan (ISSP) to address personal care assistance needs within the requirements of the PersonalChoice program
 - Hiring and supervising personal care assistants and ensuring they are performing their duties as needed
 - Tracking expenses so that monthly spending plan (ISSP) is not exceeded
 - Notifying the advisement agency of any changes in medical status or admissions to hospitals or other medical facilities
 - Ensuring a safe working environment for personal care assistants
 - Developing an Emergency Back-up Plan

The Roles of the Service Advisement Agency

The Service Advisement Agency Staff are Trainers: The Service Advisement staff makes sure you have the skills and knowledge you will need to manage your services. The Service Advisor will train you before you write your first Individual Service and Spending Plan (ISSP). The Service Advisor will teach you how to select, train, and supervise your workers. The Service Advisor will also discuss your emergency back up plan. Other staff may train you to be more independent or manage your health better.

The Service Advisement staff are Advisors: They are highly experienced in matching participants to the services they need. They will also discuss and plan for future needs, such as a large purchase you may want to make. You can decide together how much you can save each month from your budget to make the purchase.

The Service Advisement staff are Coaches: They are there to answer your questions, provide information, and offer suggestions. They are available to discuss your ideas and help you solve any problems you may experience. The Service Advisor will contact you regularly to see how you are doing.

The Service Advisement staff are Resource People: They can let you know about the resources that are available to you in your community, such as peer supports.

The Service Advisement staff are Custodians of Public Money: They are obliged to see that you spend your PersonalChoice budget on meeting your long-term care needs. The Service Advisor will review your Individual Service and Spending Plan (ISSP) before it is submitted and also review the monthly report from the Fiscal Intermediary and compare it to your ISSP. The Service Advisor will call you if he/she has questions about how you are spending your budget.

The Roles of the Fiscal Intermediary

When you enrolled in PersonalChoice you were asked to designate a Fiscal Intermediary agency to assist you in managing the financial aspects of the program.

The Fiscal Intermediary is a Fiscal/Employer Agent: They will create payroll checks and pay invoices at your request (like a payroll company). They will track how much of your budget you spend and send you a report of the balance once a month (like a bank statement). The report will list how you have spent your budget funds and how much you have saved for future expenses or emergencies. They will deduct your payroll and bills from your budget, complete and file the tax forms with the federal and state governments and pay the employer taxes for you (like an accountant). They will also conduct criminal background and abuse registry checks for all of your employees and your representative.

The Fiscal Intermediary is a Resource: The role of the Fiscal Intermediary is to answer your questions and provide explanations for things you do not understand about your account. You pay a monthly fee to cover all of the services they provide to you. You can talk to the Fiscal Intermediary during regular business hours.

You can call the Fiscal Intermediary to make sure the completed forms package for your workers has been received to enroll them in the payroll system.

You can also call to verify that the Fiscal Intermediary has received your workers' time sheets and to get the balance of your account.

The Fiscal Intermediary is a Custodian of Public Money: The Fiscal Intermediary will send a monthly Budget Report that describes how you are spending your budget to you and to your Service Advisor. The Fiscal Intermediary will call your Service Advisor if it appears you are misusing your budget or that someone is taking advantage of you financially.

The Roles of the State

The State is a Contractor of Services: The role of the State is to contract with the Service Advisor and the Fiscal Intermediary on your behalf.

The State is a Trainer: The role of the state is to make sure your Service Advisor and Fiscal Intermediary has the skills and knowledge to train you and answer your questions. The State provides training to all PersonalChoice Service Advisors; before they can participate in the PersonalChoice program they have to complete this training.

The State is a Resource: The role of the state is to share information, experiences and best practices between participants, Service Advisors, and the Fiscal Intermediary. The PersonalChoice website will be the main way such information will be shared.

The State is a Monitor: The role of the state is to monitor the quality of the Service Advisement and Fiscal Intermediary services provided to PersonalChoice participants, through formal quality assurance.

The Quality Management Plan includes feedback from you about the quality of Service Advisement services and Fiscal Intermediary services. The Quality Management Plan includes feedback on complaint forms from participants, and feedback from Service Advisors about participant challenges and Service Advisor activities.

When Things Don't Go Well and the Difference between a Complaint and an Appeal

Sometimes there may be cases when the program does not go as you expect it to. If you are not happy with the service you are getting from the Service Advisement agency and/or Fiscal Intermediary, or you disagree with a decision made by the Agencies or by the State, you have a right to voice a complaint or appeal a decision. While the Department of Human Services tried to make the PersonalChoice program as participant friendly as possible, it realizes that mistakes can be made and decisions arrived at that you don't like. You do have the right to file Complaints and Appeals. There are differences

between Complaints and Appeals and what you choose to do will depend on the nature of the problem. We will talk about each now, and how to go about filing each.

Complaint Process

You have the right to tell the state and the involved agency about the quality of your Fiscal Intermediary and Advisement services. You would file a Complaint when you are not satisfied with how the agency is performing or with the services they are providing to you. For example staff is rude to you, they don't respond to questions in a timely manner, etc. Here is a suggested Complaint/Grievance process you could follow.

Fiscal Intermediary or Advisement Services:

Step 1

Talk to the person involved

If you are not happy with the service you are getting from your Service Advisor, Fiscal Intermediary or other staff of the agency, you may want to talk directly to the person involved first.

They may not be aware of the problem. It is a good idea to tell people if you are not satisfied with the quality of a service they are giving you. This gives you the chance to tell the other person what is most important to you. It also gives the other person a chance to improve.

The Agencies are not allowed to do anything to penalize you for making a complaint. In fact, if you talk to the person directly, chances are very good that you will be more satisfied with services in the future. The agencies and their staff are there to help you. The more they know about what you want and need, the better your services will be.

Step 2

If you do not think you can talk to person directly, you may want to contact the Supervisor of the person at the agency.

Fiscal Intermediary and Service Advisement services are provided by agencies. And those agencies have Directors or supervisors who are responsible to make sure the employees of the agency do a good job. Call the agency and ask to speak with the PersonalChoice Supervisor. Simply tell the Supervisor why you are not happy with the services you are getting.

Do not worry about hurting anyone's feelings or causing trouble for the staff. Your satisfaction with the quality of the services you get is very important. One way to improve things is to be honest about what you like and do not like.

Step 3

You also have the choice of making a written complaint directly to Agency or to the state PersonalChoice program office at the Department of Human Services.

You may want to try Steps 1 and 2 first. However, you do not have to try Steps 1 and 2 if you would rather talk directly to the Director of the Agency involved or to the state Program staff. There is a form to use for reporting your complaint. The form is called the Complaint Form. A copy of the form is in the back of this Guidebook in Appendix K.

Please feel free to use the complaint form any time you like. You will not be disenrolled or penalized in any way for making a complaint.

There is a copy of the Complaint Form in the back of this Guidebook. If you need more Complaint Forms, you can make copies. Or, ask your Service Advisor for more copies.

Once you file the form, your Complaint must be responded to within the time frame stated on the form.

The state PersonalChoice program office also reviews the performance of all of the Agencies on a yearly basis and part of that review looks at how many complaints are filed and how they are fixed. Our goal is to make sure you get the best service possible.

Appeal Rights

When you started getting Medicaid Waiver services you were told about your appeal rights (that is, to a fair hearing, as described in 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 431, subpart E.). As a PersonalChoice participant (and a Medicaid recipient) you have those same rights. In addition to your normal Medicaid appeal rights, you also have the right to appeal certain decisions that are unique to the PersonalChoice program. You may appeal the following PersonalChoice decisions:

- A PersonalChoice disenrollment recommendation (i.e. a recommendation that you be taken off the program);
- A recommendation that a representative be appointed for you to participate in the program;
- A recommended Corrective Action Plan.

Participants or representatives may file PersonalChoice appeals by completing the Participant Appeal Form. These forms are then submitted to the Service Advisement agency or the PersonalChoice program office. The Participant Appeal Form must contain a summary of the recommendation or action that is being appealed, the participant's objection to the recommendation or action, and any proposed solution or compromise. The Participant Appeal Form must be submitted to the Advisement agency or PersonalChoice program office within fourteen (14) days of the contested action. An appeal form is included in the Forms section of this guidebook.

If you do not know your Advisement Agency's address, call your Service Advisor and ask for the address. If you are not able to get

the address, you can mail the Appeal Form to the PersonalChoice program office. The address is on the form.

The Director of the Advisement agency or the PersonalChoice program director will review the appeal. If the Director of the Advisement agency agrees with the Service Advisor's recommendation, they will notify the PersonalChoice program director. The state Program director will review the Director's decision. The state Program director may suggest alternatives or compromises that are consistent with PersonalChoice Guidelines. Your Service Advisor will contact you within fourteen (14) days after your appeal has been reviewed.

Summary

Now that you are in PersonalChoice, your role is very different than it has been in the past. It is important that you understand your own and everyone else's roles.

- You are a participant, an employer, and a custodian of public money.
- Your Representative (if you have one) is there to help you and will do only the things you want them to do.
- Your Service Advisor is a trainer, a coach, a resource person, and a custodian of public money.
- The Fiscal Intermediary is a fiscal agent, a resource, and a custodian of public money.
- The State is a contractor of services, a trainer, a resource, and a monitor.
- You have the right to voice your complaints with any of the above.

If you have any questions about the roles of PersonalChoice participants, talk with your Service Advisor.

Chapter 2: Your PersonalChoice Guidebook & Start Up Training

This Guidebook

This Guidebook is yours to keep. Feel free to write in it if you like. Before you write on any form in this Guidebook (the forms are all at the back), make sure you make an extra blank copy in case you need it in the future.

If any of the information in the Guidebook changes, you will be sent replacement pages. To be sure you always have correct information, add any new pages to your Guidebook as soon as you receive them.

Getting Started with Your Guidebook

Your Service Advisor will use this Guidebook during your initial training to explain to you how PersonalChoice works. It also will be a resource for you later on, after the training. You will be able to go back and read the Guidebook any time you need it. It should contain everything you need to know to manage the program. But if you can't find an answer to your question, don't hesitate to call your Service Advisor and ask.

Getting Started: The Five Keys to Success

Before you can get going, directing your own decisions about your long-term care needs, we want to make sure you understand fully how PersonalChoice works. There are five keys to your success, each with its own rules and skills:

1. There are rules about how you can spend your budget. You should use existing resources whenever you can, so you can spend your budget on the things no one else will pay for. Most important, you must not overspend your **budget**, or go beyond what your **individual Service and Spending Plan (ISSP)** allows.
2. You need to know how to **hire workers** and **contract with vendors** to get the **services** you need as well as where to find equipment that you may want to purchase.

3. You will want to get the best **quality** that you can afford for your services, so you will need to **oversee** people who work for you.
4. You may need to **make changes** in your Plan, or make special requests.
5. And, in your own interest, you need a **back-up plan** for what happens if a critical employee is absent, or if there is an **emergency**.

How long before I am really on top of what I need to do?

Based on our experience to date with new participants, getting to the point where you feel really confident may take you between three and six months. But the effort is well worth it; and you are not expected to do this on your own.

Your Service Advisor is there to help you, from start to finish, beginning with teaching you how to get going.

Your Training

It is a condition of joining PersonalChoice that you complete training; and it is part of your Service Advisor's job to provide you this training, and make sure you have understood it.

There is a lot of information to cover. Take things a step at a time; do not try to learn everything in one day. You do not have to memorize anything, though in time you will find you have more and more knowledge.

Everything your Service Advisor covers during the training (and more) can be found in this Guidebook. The most important thing is that you learn how to find the information later.

After the training, using this Guidebook as a resource will be much easier. Each information section is listed at the front in the Table of Contents. The sections are organized to help you deal with the five points that are keys to your success. Your Service Advisor will also be available to answer your questions and help you find the information you need.

Chapter 3: BUDGETS AND INDIVIDUAL SERVICE AND SPENDING PLANS (ISSP)

This Chapter focuses on your budget, how to write your Individual Service and Spending Plan (ISSP) and how to keep track of your spending. There are four main parts:

- A. Information about your PersonalChoice Budget and ISSP
- B. Budget Responsibilities
- C. Determining your Needs and Deciding how to use your Budget and ISSP to meet them
- D. Writing your ISSP

A. Information About Your PersonalChoice Budget

How Your Budget is Determined

The PersonalChoice office at the Department of Human Services sets the amount of your monthly budget based on your needs for personal care assistance.

Your Service Advisor completed an assessment of your needs during your first meeting. He/she asked you questions about how much help you need to take care of yourself. They asked you about your bathing, dressing and using the bathroom. They also asked you if you needed help with such things as cooking, cleaning and other household chores.

Your Service Advisor then sent that assessment to the PersonalChoice office where it was used to figure out what your monthly budget amount would be.

Thinking About Your Options

How you use your PersonalChoice budget is largely up to you. However it is expected that most of your budget will be spent on addressing your personal care needs. You decide which services and other purchases to make. You decide how much you want to pay for a service. You can buy different services from what you have had in the past.

You need to decide who you want to hire to help you, what you want them to help you with, how many hours a week you want them to work and the amount of money you want to pay them.

You need to find out where you can get the best price for other things you might want to buy, such as supplies. You may also buy special equipment such as dressing sticks, special eating utensils or kitchen aids, wheelchair accessories, and other adaptive devices. You can be very creative in choosing what kinds of purchases will best meet your needs, even if those purchases would not be available in traditional Medicaid programs. Just remember that those items need to be approved before you can buy them.

You Choose

For example, you might need help with fixing meals. You could decide to hire a Personal Assistant to cook your meals as part of other things they will do for you. Or, you might find a neighbor who is willing to cook extra food and bring you a dinner a certain number of times each week. You and your neighbor could decide on a fair price for this service. Or you can ask your Service Advisor to help you apply for Meals on Wheels.

Maybe you need help with bathing and washing your hair. You could hire a worker to come to your house and help you with bathing and shampooing your hair. Or, you need help getting your laundry done, you could hire someone to come in and do just that, or maybe send your laundry out to be washed. Perhaps you need to have your walkway shoveled when it snows, you could hire a neighbor to do it for you.

How PersonalChoice Puts You In Charge

You are the person responsible to decide how your personal care needs will be met by deciding how to use your monthly budget to purchase services and goods. A good way to think about this and plan is to think of yourself as a buyer. Normally when we think of buying, we think of buying “things”, like groceries, or furniture or televisions. But you will also be a buyer of services and in a way people. The reason you are enrolling in PersonalChoice is that you need help with your personal care. You will be “buying” the services

of a Personal Assistant or PA to provide personal care “services” to you. Most of your monthly budget should be dedicated to “buying” personal care services, usually from individuals. However one of the unique aspects of the PersonalChoice program is that it also gives you the ability to “buy” other services and items that will positively effect your ability to remain independent in the community. These purchases are called “Participant Directed Goods and Services” and we will talk about them now.

What are Participant Directed Goods and Services?

We define the term in the first few pages of this guidebook, but will give a little bit more detailed definition now. Participant Directed Goods and Services are those things that go beyond the actual “hands on” personal care assistance that we just talked about. They could be services provided by a person, maybe a maintenance man, a housekeeper or a therapist. They could be services provided by a company, like a Laundromat or a landscaping company. They also might be actual “Goods” like equipment, appliances or supplies. Some of these things can be very inexpensive; some can be very expensive. What they all **have** to have in common is that they must be related to your disability **and** make you more independent or provide something that helps you remain living in the community. Sometimes there is an item out there that will help you but is too expensive for you to purchase because you won’t have enough money in your budget to pay your Personal Assistants and pay for the item. In this case you might need to save a portion of your budget for several months to have enough funds to purchase items that would help you but are expensive. For example if you lose functioning when it is hot and if you had an air conditioner you would be able to do more things for yourself. You might know someone who would install the air conditioner for you free or you might have to pay someone to do the installation. Simple adaptive devices are often less expensive than you might think. Buying adaptive devices could actually be cheaper in the long run because you would not have to keep paying a worker every week. You could use the money you save for another need.

However, there are some rules you must follow for using your PersonalChoice budget funds. The most basic rule is that everything

you buy must be related to your long-term care needs or to increase your independence. Your Service Advisor is available for guidance in using the budget according to PersonalChoice program rules.

Remember!!!! Anything you want to purchase, from personal assistance services to other goods and services must comply with PersonalChoice and Medicaid rules and **must** be approved by the PersonalChoice program office as part of your Individual Service and Spending Plan before you purchase them. Also the program **cannot** reimburse you for any purchases you make and pay for yourself, even if they are part of your approved ISSP. All purchases must go through your designated Fiscal Intermediary in order for them to be paid for utilizing your budget.

Things you MAY buy:

The PersonalChoice budget MAY be used for things such as:

- Employment of individuals, including family members (except Spouse or legally responsible individual), to provide personal assistance
- Help with cleaning, laundry, meal preparation and other household chores
- Help with personal care like bathing, hair washing, bladder and bowel care, care of your teeth
- Purchase of services from home care provider or temporary help agencies
- Chores services, including outside chores that provide for a safe environment and access in and out of the home
- Home modifications and/or equipment not currently paid for by other program resources
- Supplies and equipment that promote or enhance independence that are not currently paid for by other program resources
- Repairs to adaptive equipment
- Savings for your emergency back-up plan
- Savings for a special purchase which you cannot afford to make from one monthly budget

- Services or purchases which support your ability to live as independently as possible and avoid the need for admission to a nursing home or other long-term care facility
- Other purchases approved by your Service Advisor and the PersonalChoice program office.

Your Service Advisor first reviews your ISSP. The **final** approval of your ISSP and purchases you want to make using your budget funds rests with the PersonalChoice program office.

Things you MAY NOT buy (Prohibited Purchases)

The PersonalChoice budget and ISSP **MAY NOT** be used for:

- Gifts for workers, family or friends
- Loans to your workers
- Rent or mortgage payments
- Payments to someone to be your representative
- Clothing
- Groceries (with the exception of special foods required to maintain nutritional status)
- Lottery tickets
- Alcoholic beverages
- Entertainment activities
- Televisions, stereos, radios, or VCRs
- Tobacco products
- Utility payments (electric, gas, sewer, garbage services)
- Services which will meet your needs and are available, without charge, from community organizations

Do not use your PersonalChoice budget to purchase services or items, which are available through another source in a way that already meets your needs.

For example, the Medicaid state plan will pay for a wheelchair for some people so they should not use their PersonalChoice budget for that wheelchair.

Grey Areas? If in doubt, ask your Service Advisor

Some of the rules as to what you can and cannot buy may not be clear to you. If in doubt, ask your Service Advisor. They also will have a list of the approved items.

If, for example, you needed upgrades or repairs to a wheelchair that are not funded by the Medicaid state plan, the purchase could be made with your PersonalChoice budget. Your Service Advisor can assist you in identifying community resources, which are available.

How to get the best out of PersonalChoice

Continue to take advantage of the services, equipment, and supplies available to you from community organizations, Medicare, private insurance and the Medicaid state plan - your "regular" Medicaid.

Remember that the more things you can get covered by other means, the more budget funds you will have available to pay for something you really need.

B. Budget Responsibilities

You have several responsibilities for using your PersonalChoice budget. These include:

- Writing an approved Individual Service and Spending Plan (ISSP)
- Making purchases that are consistent with your ISSP
- Keeping track of what you are spending each month so you do not overspend
- Updating your ISSP when your spending needs change.

Let's discuss each of these responsibilities.

Writing an Individual Service and Spending Plan (ISSP)

Your ISSP serves several purposes.

1. It describes how you plan to spend your PersonalChoice budget.
2. Writing the ISSP will make sure you understand how much money you have to spend each month.
3. Purchasing only what is on your ISSP will prevent you from overspending.
4. The ISSP gives your Service Advisor and the PersonalChoice office an understanding of how your personal care needs will be met.
5. It also tells your Service Advisor and the PersonalChoice office your plans for when a worker is not available and you must have services (Emergency Back Up Plan).

You need to know the cost of the different services you plan to buy before completing your ISSP. You will also need to find workers at the rate of pay you are offering.

Use a copy of the ISSP to practice while you are still deciding what you will buy and from whom you are going to buy it. You will probably need to practice writing several ISSPs. A sample copy of the ISSP form and the instructions for filling it out can be found at the back of this Guidebook in the Appendix.

Check out at least three vendors (if you can find three) when you plan to make a large purchase. And of course, make sure you have enough savings to cover the item before you order. Also check to see if the vendor is willing to get paid with a check from your Fiscal Intermediary.

Work with your Service Advisor to develop your ISSP and make sure he/she reviews it with you before you are ready to submit it for approval.

While reviewing your ISSP, your Service Advisor will check to make sure it conforms to PersonalChoice program rules. He/she may ask you questions in order to get a better understanding of your plans. Your Service Advisor will tell you if your plans for using the monthly budget do not agree with PersonalChoice rules.

After your Service Advisor approves your final plan, it is transferred onto the original ISSP form. Both you and your Service Advisor will sign the original form; you will keep a copy, your Service Advisor will keep a copy in your file and the signed original will be sent to the PersonalChoice office for approval.

Making Purchases Consistent with Your ISSP

You should buy the services and other purchases detailed on your ISSP. This confirms you are meeting your needs and effectively managing your own services. It also guarantees your budget is being used according to PersonalChoice rules.

Keep Track of Monthly Spending

The Fiscal Intermediary will send you a monthly report listing all your expenses and the balance of funds in your account. The report will be mailed to you with the payroll checks for your workers. In the future you will also be able to view the reports online.

You must keep track of your spending throughout the month so you do not overspend. This monthly tracking can be very simple. You can use whatever system you use now for keeping track of your monthly living expenses.

PersonalChoice Participant Manual 1/4/2006

Track the Hours Your Employees Work

Make sure that every time a Personal Assistant works for you that a time sheet is filled out. Make sure that you review the timesheets and sign them before sending them into the Fiscal Intermediary for processing according to their schedule.

Reports You Will Receive

The Fiscal Intermediary will send you a report once a month, telling you exactly what you have spent in payroll, taxes, workers compensation and other purchases.

Because the report records the payments you have made, it will be sent to you too late to prevent overspending. That is why it is important for you to keep track of what you spend. **Under PersonalChoice rules, if you overspend your budget, the Fiscal Intermediary will not process payment, even if you have approved it.**

Use last month's report to help you plan next month's, and especially to correct any problems.

Updating Your ISSP

You can only purchase what you wrote down on your ISSP. However, you may increase or decrease the amounts of purchases slightly as long as the purchases are identified in your approved ISSP. For example, you may find a special offer on some supplies you need and pay less than you budgeted or it may be more cost effective to buy a larger quantity to save on future purchases.

You DO NOT Need to Update your ISSP if:

- A family member comes from out of town and provides you some assistance while he or she is visiting for a week or two. You may then spend less than you planned on a service that month and save the funds for a future purchase or for emergencies. You would not have to contact your Service

Advisor or write a new plan unless the family member will stay for an extended time period.

- Switch PAs but continue to pay the new PA the same wage and have them work the same number of hours. (**Note:** You can only do this if you DO NOT put PA names on the approved ISSP. If you do put PA names on it and then replace the PA you will have to update your ISSP. Instead put something like “PA #1, PA #2”, etc. on your ISSP and put down the hourly wage you want to pay and the number of hours a week they will work.)

You DO need to Update your ISSP if:

- You want to make a big change, such as increasing your worker's rate of pay, or adding an additional PA, you will need to write a new plan and have it approved by your Service Advisor and the State. You will need to write a new plan because if you spend more on one service means you will have to spend less somewhere else. Call your Service Advisor if you need more ISSP forms.
- You want to add a new need or a new service; you will also have to write a new ISSP. To spend funds on a new service means you will have to spend less somewhere else. To include a new need means you will have to adjust your spending to buy services or supplies to meet the new need.
- Your monthly budget amount changes.
- You have just used your savings to make a special purchase and you now want to continue saving for another item which will support your independence. You will have to contact your Service Advisor to make sure your intended purchase is allowed. You will then need to write a new ISSP that lists the item you intend to buy, its estimated cost, the amount you intend to save each month, and how long you need to save for the item.

Please call your Service Advisor at any time you are unsure if a new ISSP is needed. Your Service Advisor can discuss what you want to change and let you know if a new plan is required or not.

Annual Reassessment

Once a year, your Service Advisor and other agency Team members will visit you for an annual re-assessment (just like in your former program). At the annual re-assessment visit, your Service Advisor will ask you to write a new ISSP if your needs or what you are buying changes.

Summary

- Your ISSP must be approved by your Service Advisor and the PersonalChoice program office before the monthly PersonalChoice budget will start
- You and your Service Advisor will decide when your PersonalChoice budget will start (usually the first of the month)
- You should keep track of your spending throughout the month
- You must keep your spending within the monthly budget
- You may use your savings for emergencies or to make larger purchases
- Your purchases must meet a need listed on your ISSP
- If you need purchases not on your ISSP, call your Service Advisor to discuss the need for an updated ISSP.
- You will be re-assessed every year and your ISSP must be updated at that time

You should call your Service Advisor if you have questions about writing your ISSP.

C. Determining your Needs and deciding how to use your Budget and ISSP to meet them

Deciding what is Most Important to You

The PersonalChoice program allows you to decide what types of services and purchases will best meet your needs. So before you actually write your ISSP you need to decide the best way to use your budget to meet your personal care needs. Spend some time thinking about what is most important to you. Think about what you are currently getting help with now under your current program. Think about what things would make your life better and make you more independent. And finally, think about what you were doing before you required help with your personal care, the goal of PersonalChoice is to get you as close to that point again as possible. This information will help you when you write your ISSP.

Preferences

Everyone has likes and dislikes - things they prefer over others. What are yours? Figuring these things out will help you in the hiring process by being able to use them in your description of yourself, your job ads and to assist you in giving direction to your PA. The following are some areas where you might have preferences that are important to you. These are some ideas to start you thinking. You can make your own list.

Food

- Do you like to eat at regular times? Do you eat out? How often?
- What kinds of food do you prefer? A variety? Vegetarian? Meat? Seafood? Poultry? Pastas? Rice? Ethnic foods - what kind? Fresh, frozen, canned? Dairy products?
- Do your PAs eat with you? Do you provide them with food? Snacks? Drinks?

Grooming

- Do you have a regular schedule for bathing, hair washing, and nail care? Do you have products that you prefer to use?
- What aspects of your appearance are important to you? Personal grooming (hair, makeup, etc.)? Clothes, shoes, accessories cleaned and pressed? Looking well groomed for school/work?
- Will you allow PAs to use your personal items such as hair dryers, hand lotion, etc.?

Habits/Lifestyle

- Do you smoke or drink? Do you prefer PAs who do not smoke or drink in your home?
- What is your daily schedule? When do you go to work/school/therapy or other activities? What time do you get up and go to bed? Is your schedule different on weekends?
- Do you visit with friends or family? Do you entertain friends and family at home? Do these activities require special preparation? Do you serve food or snacks? What kind? Do friends or relatives stay overnight at your home?
- Are you a quiet person or do you like a lot of activity? What social activities do you participate in? What are your hobbies?
- What entertainment do you prefer? Reading? TV? Movies? Plays? Cultural events? Sports? Concerts?
- What kind of music do you like? Classical? Ethnic? Country western? Blues? Jazz? Rock and Roll? Spirituals?
- What do you watch on TV? News? Sports? Soap operas? Movies? Comedies? Dramas? Biography? Public television stations?

Housekeeping

- Do you prefer your house to be neat, everything in its place or can you stand it to be a little untidy?

- Do you have a regular schedule for housecleaning and laundry? Do you prefer tasks done a certain way? Do you prefer certain cleaning products?
- Do you supervise your PAs while they clean or do laundry?

Self-Assessment

Self-Assessment means evaluating yourself. What do you do daily? What do you want to do? What kind of help do you need to live as independently as possible? The self-assessment helps you to decide what you need. The self-assessment helps you to look at major areas of your life

- to determine what you can do for yourself
- to decide what you need help with
- when, where and how much help do you need?

If you already have given thought to your preferences you should be ready to assess what help you need. Be sure to consider all of your needs. Consider what you would like to do but don't do because it's a struggle to do by yourself, or what you don't do because you don't like to constantly ask family or friends to help you to do them. Ask yourself some questions.

- What do I want to do with my life? Dream a little - make a wish list.
- What do I have difficulty doing?
- What kind of help will enable me to do these things?

Remember that your lifestyle, abilities, health and stamina do change. You may be able to do an activity by yourself today. But things can change. At another time you might need help to do the same activity. So your need for physical assistance from others often will change, with some days requiring more help, and some less.

Most of your needs for help will occur on a daily basis, some will recur weekly; others may need to be done monthly, or once or twice a

year. Be sure your PersonalChoice Participant Self-Assessment is as complete as possible. The PersonalChoice Participant Self-Assessment lets you do the following:

- Lets you select the tasks you need done
- Lets you decide the days and times you want them done
- Provides space for you to enter your preferences or directions on how you want a task done.

Note: If you have not already completed the “PersonalChoice Participant Self-Assessment” form it will be helpful to do so now. The “PersonalChoice Participant Self-Assessment” form is located in the Appendix of this guidebook.

Helpful Hint:

Make choices carefully. Don't be tempted to let your PA do everything. If you stop doing things you can do, you are giving up some of your independence. For example, even if you need assistance bathing and dressing, you may be able to comb your own hair and brush your teeth. On the other hand, you may be able to do some tasks yourself such as dressing. But the time it would take might tire you too much or take up too much of your day, limiting your time for activities.

Once you have completed your PersonalChoice Participant Self-Assessment you can decide the kind of help you need for personal care, housekeeping, and other activities. You can decide whether or not you need more than one PA. Some of these decisions will be based on how much funding you have. Would you prefer a male or female PA?

First Things First- Addressing Your Personal Care Needs

Remember that the first priority (and major part) of PersonalChoice is that you have control and choice over who provides you with help and when and how they provide it. So the first thing that needs to be done is to figure out how much help you want, what you want the help with,

PersonalChoice Participant Manual 1/4/2006

when you want the help and how much do you want to pay for the help. Your answers to these questions will determine how you write your budget. So lets concentrate on the first two questions first.

What do I need help with?

This is where you use the “PersonalChoice Participant Self-Assessment” we mentioned before. By filling that out you decided what kind of help you want and how often you need it. Use this information to figure out how many hours of help you want to have each week. Keep in mind that how you decide to meet you needs may be different than they way they are met now.

Job task descriptions

Tasks fall into two broad categories: non-personal and personal duties. You may need several of these tasks plus some that are not listed. Or you might only need help with some of these tasks.

Non-Personal Tasks

Household examples

- Washing, drying, ironing, mending clothes; shopping, errands
- Sweeping, vacuuming, mopping, cleaning the oven, defrosting the refrigerator, washing inside of windows
- Raking Leaves, shoveling snow

Nutrition

- Cooking/meal preparation
- Planning meals, special diets
- Preparing food, clean up after meals.

Miscellaneous

- Communication
- Childcare (not babysitting)
- Banking, paying bills

PersonalChoice Participant Manual 1/4/2006

- Care for service animals and pets
- Paperwork, writing letters;
- Driving to appointments and activities and possibly other tasks.

Personal Care Tasks

Personal care tasks usually are those that involve physical contact with you.

Feeding

- Feeding if you cannot feed yourself
- Helping with tasks such as cutting food, buttering bread.

Grooming

- Bathing
- Face and body care
- Hair care
- Dental care
- Dressing and undressing
- Help with tying shoes, buttoning

Health and Hygiene

- Toileting, bladder care, bowel care
- Skin care, wound care
- Medications, respiration

Mobility

- Range of motion exercises
- Positioning
- Transfers and lifts
- Driving and escorting

- Getting in and out of bed

How will These Needs be Met?

When you have made a list of the things you see as most important, use it to help you answer the following questions. These questions are designed to assist you in making the best selection of services available to you, some of which may not cost you any money:

1. Can you get any of the things on your list for free or covered by insurance or other funding?

Do not answer this question too quickly. Sometimes there are things we need that are covered by Insurance or other funding. Sometimes we can ask a friend or neighbor to do some small things for us and they won't want to get paid (for example shoveling the sidewalk when it snows). The point of doing this is to have as much of your monthly budget available to you to pay for things that you need.

When the Team from the Service Advisement agency met with you they may have made some suggestions about things they think might help you. They can also help you figure out how to pay for it too.

Your Service Advisor is the person to ask about resources to help you get the things you want without having to spend your budget funds on it.

2. Can Equipment help me be more independent?

Sometimes we need help from someone to do things that we could do ourselves if we had the proper equipment. For example you need help preparing three meals a day and you have a person doing it, but if you had a microwave oven you could reheat meals yourself. This is an example of using equipment to make **YOU** more independent and less dependent on another person.

When the Assistive Technology assessor from the Advisement Agency met with you he/she may have suggested some

equipment that would make you less reliant on hands on assistance from others. If you can't remember what he/she told you ask your Service Advisor to get the information for you.

3. What things on the list are you willing and able to pay for?

Finding things you will pay for is often easier than finding things for free, but it still takes time and patience. After all, you want to "shop" for the best price but still make sure you make a quality purchase. Most importantly, you want to make sure what you buy meets your needs, whether it is services, equipment, or supplies.

Just like when you are looking for "free" help, ask others to help you find the best deals. The more people that know you are looking for something, the better chance you have of finding it! Be sure to let others know what you need and be specific.

Person Description of the Kind of PA you want

The kind of PA that you want depends on your needs, your preferences, your personality and the way you live. You need to decide what minimum skills, experience and other qualities you want in your PA. A PA person description is a description of the type of "person" would be your ideal PA and can be used in two ways. You can use it to discuss the qualifications in the phone or in-person interviews. You can send it to PAs along with the job description before the in-person interview. You may be able to tell from the person's reaction to the qualifications whether or not you should offer him an in-person interview. The person may decide he is not right for the job after you give the qualifications. Your most important requirements should be listed first.

Be sure that you don't discriminate against someone because of age, race, gender or disability. There are some exceptions. You will need to list a minimum age of eighteen because of PersonalChoice program rules. Your vehicle insurance may require a driver to be twenty-five years old. You should not list a maximum age, as that would be discrimination. You may specify that the PA be a male or female if the PA will be helping you with personal needs.

Sample personal assistant description

My personal assistant should

- be strong enough to lift and transfer 120 pounds
- not smoke in my home
- be willing to follow my directions
- have good housecleaning skills
- be aged 25 or over
- be reliable
- be trustworthy
- be aware of time to get tasks done
- be able to work without constant supervision
- be friendly to my cat and dog
- not wear perfume or other scented products
- be able to tolerate my sense of humor

Another sample personal assistant description

My personal assistant should

- be female
- be willing to follow my directions
- be able to tolerate my smoking
- be reliable
- be able to keep my personal information private
- be able to work on her own
- be willing to clean the birdcage
- be a good cook or willing to learn

Remember that these are sample descriptions of what kind of **qualities** that a PA should have to work for you effectively. We are not talking about what kind of **tasks** you want them to do. That will come later when we talk about developing a **Job Description**.

About Hiring Family and Friends as PAs

In the PersonalChoice program you have the option of hiring a family member or friend to work and get paid to be your PA. The **only** family member you **can't** hire is your **spouse** or **legal guardian**. There are certain things we think you should know before you decide to hire family as a PA; we will call these things **Family Issues**.

Family Issues covers some areas of family relationships, family members as PAs and other matters that can affect your relationships with family members. We'll discuss the following topics:

- Independence
- Confidentiality and Privacy
- Family as Caregivers
- How to avoid the Pitfalls

Though we are focusing on family in this section, some of the points discussed are applicable to close friends and personal assistants (PAs). Relationships between you and family members, friends or your PA are close and complex. It is important that these relationships be smooth and work well. On this page, when we say **family members**, we also mean **close friends and PAs**.

Independence

One of the hardest things for family members to understand and remember is that you are an individual in your own right. You have the right to control your own life.

You have the right to be autonomous and to have time away from family, friends and the PA. This means that they should respect your individuality. They should respect your right to make your own decisions, to have things done the way you want them done, and to make other choices. Like everyone else, you live and learn from the choices you make.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Privacy and confidentiality are basic rights. This is especially difficult for family members. They may feel that everyone in the family loves and cares about you, so they should be able to share whatever is "news" or information about you. They need to learn that any personal information about you must be kept private. It must not be shared with others without your permission. This includes all of the following:

- the tasks they do when assisting you
- your financial status
- the ups and downs of your health
- the nature of your disability
- family issues
- personal attitudes
- behaviors
- relationships
- sexual, religious or other information.

Remember- Confidentiality and privacy works both ways. You need to honor the individuality and rights of family, friends and PAs, too. All parties deserve mutual respect; information you share with each other should not be gossiped about to others.

Family as Caregivers

The easiest help you may get may be from your family. You are comfortable. You know each other. You don't have to advertise and interview for help. But, remember, the young people grow-up and move on with their lives; older people grow older and may develop their own needs. This topic addresses these and other issues related to family caregivers.

Your family may have adjusted well to caring for you, but over time everyone feels some stress. Family members can be so committed to helping you, or just being with you, that they ignore their own need for outside interests, companionship or time alone. This can lead to the family members feeling overwhelmed and depressed. Other family members may even be jealous of the attention given to you.

Well-meaning family and friends usually have your best interests at heart. However, the accumulation of life "stuff" will come out eventually. Rivalries among brothers and sisters may deepen. Overly protective parents, aunts or uncles, can become more protective of you. Friends may be concerned that something "might happen to you" and they would be responsible. All of the wonderful people who love and care about you can actually hurt your drive for independence.

It is your job to set them at ease. You can do this by being organized and in charge of how you want to live your life. If you depend on them for some personal assistance duties, see if you can get some additional outside help. This is very important for your spouse or partner. Husbands or wives usually think they can handle everything - housework, cooking, working, errands, and your care. And they can, anyone can - for a short period of time.

How to Avoid the Pitfalls

Your PersonalChoice Service Advisor will assist you in planning, setting goals, and preparing yourself to be in charge of your life. However, there are some things that you can do to help your family caregivers. These include:

- Boundaries/guidelines

- Live-in PA problems
- Backup systems

Boundaries/Guidelines

If you and your family have decided that some or all of your personal assistant services are to be provided by family members, you will want to take steps to support those family members. One way is to establish and maintain limits. A few important steps taken in the beginning can prevent problems in the future.

- Insist on being as independent as possible, doing as much for yourself as you can. It can be tempting for you to accept the loving care and attention that those who love you want to give you. However, this can make you lazy, cause you to lose skills and not develop new ones.
- Insist on hiring some outside PAs to help. This will provide support to the family caregiver.
- Insist on boundaries and a work schedule. This will prevent your care from becoming an all day, time-consuming task.
- Balance the needs of everyone concerned: the caregiver, the family, your care needs and the needs of your marriage or primary relationship.
- Schedule regular family review meetings. Use these meeting to check on how tired family members are. See what changes would make things easier such as hiring outside PA help.

Live-in PA problems

Problems can occur when your only personal assistant is a family member or a paid PA who lives in. Some of the things that can go wrong with the person providing PA services are

- He/she can become ill
- He/she may refuse to continue being your only source of help
- He/she may resign
- your personal relationship can go sour.

These are just a few of the things that can happen. That is why it is important to have some additional PA support, respite and a back-up system.

Backup

Everyone who is on the PersonalChoice program needs a backup system. It is especially important if you rely on one family member or one live-in PA. If you cannot afford to hire outside salaried PAs, you should establish a voluntary backup system. Your backup system should include at least three friends who live nearby who can help you with basic personal assistant services. These special friends would agree to help you in a crisis or other emergency if there is a reason your live-in family member or PA cannot help. Three friends assure that in a crisis you would be able to reach at least one of them. Put each of their names on a button on your telephone speed dialer. You will need to ask them to agree formally to be "on call". You will need to explain what you might need from them. Here are some examples of what you might need help with

- Help you get out of bed in the morning
- Come to your home if you are being abused or threatened
- Help you think through a crisis and make an action plan
- Help you feel empowered by being available so you know you are not alone in a crisis.

Next Step: Developing a Job Description

A job description gives you, as an employer, the opportunity to clearly define the type of person you would like to hire. It helps you to decide what qualifications and previous work experience your personal assistant (PA) should have. It will help you to develop the questions you will ask during screening and interviewing. You also can share the job description with your peers to determine whether it is sufficient. You should see the job description as a guide. The prospective employee should also know from the job description that this is a serious position.

You may not find the ideal PA. While writing the job description, you also must consider how much time you want to spend in training. A well-defined job description will make it easier to determine how much experience a person really has.

You only need to create a well-written job description for each job just once. After that, it merely needs to be updated occasionally. If you have access to a computer, you can save the job description so updating it will be easy.

Don't try to remember all the details of a job description in your head unless your routine is very brief. A well-written job description makes managing easier for you because the duties are clear to you and to the PA.

A clear list of your help needs tells both the PA applicants and newly hired PAs, "this person has his head together and knows what he needs. My job will be to follow his directions and provide the help." To summarize, you are creating a comprehensive list of your needs so that

- You will have an accurate, comprehensive view of what help you need, as well as when, where, and how you want the help provided.
- You will be able to decide the validity of asking for help with needs that occur at various times of each day, each week, each month, each season, and once or twice each year.
- You can total the weekly and monthly hours of help, and calculate and budget for these costs.
- Your first and ongoing impressions to PA applicants and employees will be that you are a decisive person who knows what help is needed. You clearly are the boss, and the PA's role clearly is to follow your directions and provide help.
- Your list will make it easier to tell your needs to PA applicants, home health aide agencies, and hired PAs whom you are training.
- Your written job description helps the applicant to understand the nature and duties of the job. It also helps the applicant to

make a more informed decision about whether they qualify for or want the job.

- You and PAs will be better able to see logical divisions of your job needs among several part-time PAs.
- The applicant will see you as a well-organized, decisive, intelligent individual who should be respected, and who can efficiently manage PAs and the assistance that they provide.

Parts of a Job Description

There are several parts to a good job description:

1. **Job Title-** this identifies what the job is called, and usually gives a potential employee an idea of what the job duties will be. Some examples are; Personal Assistant, Personal Care Assistant, Homemaker, Housekeeper, etc.
2. **Nature of the Work-** this describes the type of work expected of the employee. It can also include a brief description of yourself, your disability and the kind of help you need. You could also include an idea of what the work schedule would be.
3. **Qualifications and Qualities of the Employee-** this is where you describe any special qualifications you might want your assistant to have. The minimum qualifications that are required under PersonalChoice is that the PA is at least 18 years old, but you might want them to have additional qualifications such as CPR certification. You don't have to add any additional qualifications if you don't want to. You also would put the qualities that you expect of a PCA here. Things like, PA should be dependable, show up to work on time, respect my privacy, never report to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs, etc.
4. **Duties to be Performed-** this is where you list the things that the PA will have to do to help you. You can refer back to your PersonalChoice Self-Assessment to help with this part. This is an important part of the Job Description as it is the way to

communicate to potential PAs what they will have to do for you. Don't leave anything out as this could cause a problem down the road.

5. **Work Schedule-** this is when you expect to need the PA to work. You should include in this part the number of hours a day and the time of day you want someone to work. Also include how many days a week you want someone to work.

There is a sample Job Description in the Appendix section of this Guidebook and your Service Advisor can help you write your Job Description.

How Much Help and How Often?

Now that you have figured out what you need help with and how often you need it you should figure out how long it will take someone to do all of the things you want done.

For Example:

I need help getting up in the morning, getting washed up, getting dressed and fixing something for breakfast. This takes about two hours to do, and I need someone to help me do this every day of the week. So that means I will need someone to do this for 14 hours each week (2 hours a day x 7 days).

I also need some help in fixing meals that I can put in the refrigerator and reheat for myself for dinner. That would take about one hour three times a week which means it would be three hours every week. (1 hour three times a week).

I also need some help with cleaning and laundry. I like laundry done once a week and my bathroom and kitchen cleaned once a week too. The person who helps me with this can do the cleaning while the laundry is in the washing machine and dryer. That would take about three hours total for the week.

So if I add all of those things up, it looks like I need 20 hours a week of help.

Number of Attendants

Decide on how many attendants you need to help you. One attendant may be able to provide all of your care most of the time. Having only one attendant makes some of the hiring process easier. On the other hand, hiring more workers has certain advantages. One attendant who is doing all of the work may be more likely to burn out. With several attendants, you have more choice in scheduling, and you have more options for back-up and emergencies. Using several people will make changing attendants less of a problem.

Now that you have an idea of how many hours of help you need on a weekly basis you can decide how you want to go about finding someone to provide this help. There are potentially three options:

1. Hire an Independent Provider (PA or Personal Assistant)
2. Hire a Family Member or close Friend
3. Hire through a Home Health Agency

There are pros and cons to each one of these options and lets briefly discuss them.

Pros and Cons of Hiring an Independent Provider (PA)

Pros

- You can choose whom to hire.
- You have the greatest consumer choice and control.
- You have control and can direct that tasks be done the way you want.
- There are no restrictions on duties or driving that you both agree to.
- Cost usually is lower than with an agency.
- You can get more hours of work for fewer dollars because the cost is lower.

- You have the flexibility of scheduling the hours for when you need them.
- You can lower some of your costs by bartering other services, or by offering room and board as partial payment.

Cons

- You have to recruit, interview, schedule and manage the worker.
- There is no back up if the worker can't work. You have to plan and develop a back-up system.
- You have to do the paper work for employee payroll and taxes, and pay your own share of employer taxes.
- It may be hard to keep workers because of the lower pay and no benefits.

Pros and Cons of Hiring Family Members

Pros

- You do not have to go through the recruiting and hiring process.
- You know and trust the person who will be helping you.
- The person knows your condition, personality, basic likes and dislikes.
- It may be easier to set a schedule with a family member.

Cons

- Your personal relationship with the family member can be at risk if she needs to provide all of your care and services.
- Family members may think they can provide all the services you need. They may want to do it. But they become overworked and do not attend to their own needs and interests. This can lead to depression, feelings of guilt and burnout.
- Problems from the past between you and a family member can come up again. Old problems between you can make you uncomfortable.

- Family members may want to protect you. If they are too protective, you could become more dependent. You may give up some of your independence. As family, they also may feel freer to tell you what you should or should not do, or feel they know what is best for you.
- It may be harder to establish an employer and employee relationship with a family member. It may be harder to get them to follow your written job description or work agreement.
- Your life can become difficult if problems develop in your relationship and you live with the family member.

Pros and Cons of Hiring through an Agency

Pros

- There is a built-in back-up system if your regular worker doesn't show up, needs time off or quits suddenly.
- Agencies generally have pre-trained and licensed staff.
- The agency does the recruiting, interviewing, and reference checking for you.
- The agency does the taxes, tax reporting, benefits and other managerial details.
- If you have problems with a worker, it is easier to arrange for a replacement worker.

Cons

- Costs are higher because the agency is dealing with the managerial tasks for you.
- You may be able to afford fewer hours of service because of the higher cost.
- Agencies may have minimum time requirements. They may require a four-hour shift. Most agencies will not permit splitting the shift (two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening).
- Some agencies may not allow you a choice of workers.

- Agency workers may not be permitted to do certain tasks.

If you decide to use an Agency we have prepared an Agency Check List, which is a list of questions that will help you decide if an Agency will meet your needs. You will find this list in the Appendix Section.

How Much Should I Pay?

First things first. You need to pay anyone who works for you at least minimum wage. That is the law and you need to follow that. The minimum wage can change from year to year, which is why we don't have it in this Guidebook. You can find out what the current minimum wage is by calling your Fiscal Intermediary or asking your Service Advisor. The major thing to remember is that you cannot pay your PA more than what your budget allows. Also remember that there are employment taxes that you, as the employer, are responsible to pay as well. Your Service Advisor will be able to help you decide how much you should pay your PAs if you need help.

D. Writing your Individual Service and Spending Plan (ISSP).

Now that you have an idea of what your needs are, know how many people you want to hire and know what goods and services you want to buy with your budget you need to put it in writing.

Your Service Advisor will provide you with the forms you need to complete your ISSP, and a Sample ISSP is included in the Appendix at the end of this guidebook. Your Service Advisor will be available to assist you in writing your ISSP as well. But we will go through the steps here as well.

Step 1- Writing out your Goals

During the Assessment process the staff from the Service Advisement agency may have helped you identify some goals that you want to achieve through your participation in the PersonalChoice program. Some goals you might have could be:

- Hire someone to help me with my personal care
- Be more independent in dressing
- Get some help with my housework

Your goals may be different, but it is vital that you write them down. Things that you put down on your ISSP must be related to the goals you have set. If you have something on your ISSP that is not related to a goal you have set it will NOT be approved.

There is a sample PersonalChoice Goal Summary sheet in the Appendix section of this guidebook.

Step 1. Write down your Goals

You can write down as many or as few goals as you want, but at least one goal must be written down

Step 2. Date Goal is Set

Put the date that you set each goal.

Step 3. Date Goal Achieved

You don't need to put anything here until you have actually achieved your goal. This will most likely be filled out with your Service Advisor when you review your goals during a home visit.

Step 4. Persons Responsible

This is where you write down who will be involved in achieving your goal. Most likely it will be you for most of them but there could be others involved as well, like your Representative, family member, your Service Advisor or someone else.

Step 5. Budget Funds Utilized

If you will be using your monthly budget to pay for something that will allow you to achieve your goal you would put a "Y" in this space, if you are not using your monthly budget to achieve this goal put down "N". *For example if one of your goals is to "get help with my Personal Care" and you will be hiring a Personal Assistant using your budget then you would put a "Y". If one of your goals is "I need a overhead lift system" Medicaid will pay for this without having to use your budget funds so you can put an "N" in this place.*

Step 2- Completing your ISSP

You can do this next step by yourself, with your Service Advisor or with anyone you choose, it is up to you. Remember that your Service Advisor will need to review and sign your ISSP before it is submitted to the PersonalChoice Program Office for approval.

Begin by filling in the Identifying Information at the top of each page, (participant name, representative name (if applicable), and Medicaid number).

For the monthly budget amount put in the figure that was given to you by DHS on **Line A**, (your Service Advisor also has that information). This amount was determined by DHS based on the Assessment that you completed with your Service Advisor.

Leave Type of Plan and Start Date blank for now, you will fill that in with your Service Advisor

Section I. Direct Hire Services

Service Type/Description: List all of the services you would like to receive by individuals that **you** want to hire and supervise directly. **Do not** put in individual workers names here; instead use an identifier like Personal Assistant #1, Personal Assistant #2, Housecleaner #1, Yard worker #1, etc. The reason for doing it this way is so that if you change workers in the future you won't have to re-do your whole plan.

Goal#: Indicate here which goal (from your PersonalChoice Participant Goals Summary), this purchase or service will allow you to achieve.

Hours per Week: Indicate the number of hours per week that you expect this person to work.

Hourly Wage: Indicate here the hourly wage you want to pay each worker type.

Total Taxes per Hour: Use the Tax table provided by your Fiscal Intermediary to indicate how much the taxes will be for the wages you have set for each worker type.

Sum of Hourly Wages & Taxes: Add up the hourly wage and the hourly tax expense for each worker type and put the total in the box. **(Example: You are paying Personal Assistant #1 \$12.00/hour in wages and the taxes for \$12.00/hour are \$1.32/hour, you would put \$13.32 in the box).**

Number of Hours per Month: Take the number of hours each worker type will work every week and multiply that number by 4.33 (this will give the number of hours of work done each month). **For example Personal Assistant #1 will work 20 hours each week, you multiply 20 x 4.33, which equals 86.6 hours a month.**

Total Monthly Cost: Multiply the Sum of Hourly wages plus Taxes by the number of Hours per month and put the result in the box. **Using the examples above, the Sum of Hourly Wages and Taxes for Personal Assistant #1 is \$13.32 and they will be working 86.6 hours per month. If you multiply that you end up with \$1,153.51 a month.**

Total Monthly Direct Hire Cost: Indicate the sum of all workers costs and put the figure in **Line B**.

Section Ia. Emergency Back-up Plan for Personal Care

Every participant must indicate how their personal care needs will be met in the event that one (or more) of the individuals listed in Section I could not provide them with assistance. This could be done in several ways from using unpaid volunteers (i.e. family members), paying existing PAs to cover for each other, to hiring a Home Health Agency.

Back-Up Provider: Indicate who will provide your care in the event a regularly scheduled Assistant could not work. If you have more than one assistant, you could indicate one will cover for the other. You could put down that a family member will help you. Or you could put down a Home Health Agency that is willing to provide someone to help you on an on call basis (in the event that you choose this option, make sure you have an agreement with the agency to do this before you submit your plan and also agreed on how much you will pay the agency).

Paid Y/N: Indicate here if the back-up(s) will be paid for the help they provide or unpaid.

Additional Cost per Month (if any): If you will be paying for back-up services and it will cost more than you would normally pay an Assistant in Hourly Wages (see above), then you would indicate this here. If, for example you want to be able to pay someone time and a half (\$20.00) to be a back-up it will cost you an additional \$6.00 an hour. You need to estimate how often you might need to use back-ups in a month. If you have people working for you every day of the

PersonalChoice Participant Manual 1/4/2006

month, you might consider having to plan to cover at least one to two days of back-ups. The best way to do it may be to plan on setting aside a certain amount of money (for example \$50.00) to cover it. If your back-up plan does not involve using a paid assistant than you don't have to worry about this at all.

If Unused, Funds to be Saved for: Remember, hopefully you won't need a back-up worker every month, so in the months you don't use it, you can put that unused money aside for some other purpose. (Maybe buying an item that you need to save for). Indicate here what you want your unused back-up funds to be used for.

Total Monthly Cost: Indicate here the cost of each back-up person you have listed.

Total Monthly Cost for Emergency Back-Up: Add up the cost(s) of your emergency back-up plan and put the amount in **Line C**.

Section II Other Purchased Services

Service Type/Description: List all of the services you will purchase directly from Providers or Agencies.

Goal#: Indicate here which goal (from your PersonalChoice Participant Goals Summary), this purchase or service will allow you to achieve.

Provider Name: Put in the name of the agency or provider that will supply the service.

Frequency: Indicate how often you will be using the service during the month. **For example you will be sending out your laundry to the Fluff and Fold once a week you would put 4 (for 4 weeks) in the box.**

Unit Cost: Indicate the unit cost for each service you will be purchasing. **For example if you will be sending out your laundry**

to the Fluff and Fold and they charge \$2.00 per pound, you would put \$ 2.00/pound.

of Units per month: Indicate the number of units of the service you will be purchasing in a month. **For example if you send 10 pounds of laundry to the Fluff and Fold every week you would put 40 in this box, (10 lbs a week x 4 weeks a month)**

Total Monthly Cost: Indicate the total monthly cost for each service by multiplying the Unit cost times # of Units per month. **For example you send 40 pounds of laundry to the Fluff and Fold every month and they charge you \$2.00 per pound you would put \$80.00. (40 x \$2.00).**

Total Monthly Services Costs: Add up the total monthly costs of each service and put the total in **Line D.**

Section III. Purchase of Items/Goods

Description of Item or Good: List all purchases of items or goods in this section. Describe the item and what it will be used for. Use this section only for items you will be using your budget to purchase. **For example, you have MS and the heat causes you to be less functional but an air conditioner would help. You would put down “Air Conditioner for MS”**

Goal#: Indicate here which goal (from your PersonalChoice Participant Goals Summary), this purchase or service will allow you to achieve.

One Time Purchase: Indicate here if you will be buying this item only once. (Note: Once you have purchased this item you should revise your ISSP so you can use the funds elsewhere).

Vendor Purchased From: Indicate the name of the vendor that you will be purchasing the item from.

Proposed Purchase Date: Indicate the month and year that you plan to purchase the Item. **For example 4/2006.**

Estimated Cost: Indicate the approximate cost of the item(s) you are buying.

Estimated Months needed to save: Indicate how many months it will take to purchase expensive items. If you don't have to save to make the purchase put N/A. **For example if the Air Conditioner you want to purchase costs \$750.00 and you want to save \$75.00 a month to buy it you would put 10 months (\$75.00 x 10 months equals \$750.00)**

Total Cost or monthly savings: Indicate the amount the item costs (for items you don't have to save for). Or the amount you want to save each month (for expensive items). **For example, you want to save \$75.00/month towards the Air Conditioner you would put \$75.00.**

Total Monthly Purchase/Savings Costs: Add up the numbers in the total cost/monthly savings column and put the total on **Line E.**

Line F Fiscal Intermediary Monthly Fee

Put the amount that your Fiscal Intermediary charges for their services every month. Your Fiscal Intermediary or you Service Advisor can give you that information. Put this figure on **Line F.**

Line G Advisement Agency Monthly Fee

Put the amount that your Advisement Agency charges for the services they provide to you. Your Service Advisor or Fiscal Intermediary has this information. Put this figure on **Line G.**

Line H Pre-Paid Fees

In the event that the Workers Compensation Insurance premiums required for your PAs need to be paid all at once, Medicaid will pay the amount in full and will allow you to pay it back on a monthly basis.
PersonalChoice Participant Manual 1/4/2006

Your Fiscal Intermediary will tell you what the amount of the premium is for the whole year, and what it will cost you on a monthly basis. Put the monthly figure in **Line H**.

Note on Fiscal Intermediary and Advisement Agency Monthly fees: The fees that these agencies charge you are to pay for the services that are required to run the program. DHS has negotiated with the agencies to insure that they are getting paid enough to cover the costs of the services they **have** to provide to you without costing you more than necessary.

Reconciliation of ISSP

Line A- Put your total monthly budget amount from **Line A on page 1**.

Line B- Put the total cost of all Directly Hired Employees from **Line B on page 1**

Line C- Put the total cost of Emergency Back-Up plan from **Line C on page 1**.

Line D- Put the total cost of Other Purchased Services from **Line D on page 2**.

Line E- Put the total cost of Purchased Items/Goods from **Line E on page 2**.

Line F- Put the Monthly Fiscal Intermediary Fee from **Line F on page 2**.

Line G- Put the Monthly Advisement Agency Fee from **Line G on page 2**.

Line H- Put the Pre-Paid Fee amount (if any) from **Line H on page 2**.

Monthly Balance- Subtract the expenses listed in B, C, D, E, F, G and H from your Monthly budget amount in A. Your monthly budget should be as close to “0” as possible without being a negative number.

Review your ISSP with your Service Advisor before signing it and have your representative sign it as well (if necessary).

Your Service Advisor will review it to ensure that it follows PersonalChoice program rules and sign it as well before submitting it to DHS for approval.

A Few Words about Employment Taxes and other Fees

As an employer (remember, your PAs work for YOU, therefore you are an employer), you have a responsibility to ensure that your employees are given the same rights as other employees in Rhode Island. This includes the ability to access Social Security, Medicare, Unemployment, Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) and Workers Compensation coverage.

Taxes and Fees that are paid by both employers and employees fund these programs. Your PAs (employees) have their share of these taxes withheld from their paychecks and paid by the Fiscal Intermediary. The Fiscal Intermediary will also pay your (employer) portion for you as well out of your monthly budget amount. When you developed your ISSP, you were instructed to include these costs when figuring out how much it will cost you to hire and pay your PAs based on what you wanted their hourly wage to be.

When the Department of Human Services, PersonalChoice Office determines what your monthly budget amount will be it is aware that there are these costs involved in hiring your PAs, and makes sure that your budget is adequate in size to not only pay your PAs a reasonable wage, but also leave you with enough funds to cover these taxes and fees.

The other major payroll related expense in employing a PA is the cost of Workers Compensation insurance. This coverage is mandatory in Rhode Island and is designed to be there to help workers in the event that they get hurt on the job. Your Fiscal Intermediary will also make these payments for you and the money to pay them also needs to come out of your monthly budget. In many cases the Workers Compensation premiums need to be paid up front, that is they need to be paid all at once for a whole year instead of being spread out over twelve months. If this is the case, then Medicaid will pay the full amount up front in one payment and then you pay it back over the course of the year by setting aside a certain amount in your ISSP. The total amount of the payment and the monthly payment amount will be given to you by your Fiscal Intermediary so you can use that when you develop your ISSP. *For example, your yearly Workers Compensation Insurance premium is \$480.00, which is due in full before you start on the program, Medicaid will pay the full amount for you (\$480.00) and then you would set aside \$50.00 a month to pay it back. (\$480.00 divided by 12 months = \$50.00 a month).*

The other fees that will be coming out of your budget will be fees that go to your Advisement Agency and Fiscal Intermediary. Both of these agencies provide services to support you in managing the PersonalChoice program. They have staff that works for you (mostly behind the scenes), to ensure that the program runs smoothly and follows Medicaid rules. The services that they provide are mandatory for any PersonalChoice participant.

These fees have been negotiated by the Department of Human Services to provide enough re-imbursement to the agencies to provide the services to you and get a fair payment. Since these funds are coming out of your budget, and therefore will impact the total amount of money available to you to purchase services, the Department made sure that the fees were not too high.

Before the Department of Human Services set these fees it calculated the impact that these fees and taxes will impact your ability to have enough hours of service available to meet your needs and have enough money available to pay your employees a fair and

reasonable wage. The Department looked at people who would have different size budgets (small, medium and large) and every time it worked out that there were adequate funds available.

Chapter 4 - Personnel Issues

In this chapter we will talk about the things you need to know about finding, hiring, managing and firing (if necessary) your Personal Assistants. We will also take a look at some basic labor law.

First Part- Finding Personal Assistants (also called Recruiting)

You have several options on how to find people to help you. If you remember we previously talked about how to figure out what your needs are, what's important to you, and discussed the pros and cons of hiring friends, family or strangers. Hopefully by this point you have made some decisions on who you want to hire (family, friends, strangers). You also need to know what kind of work you expect to be done, the qualities you are looking for in a PA and the times you want them to work. This is where the job description you developed earlier comes in; use that to answer some of those questions.

Remember, finding the right PA may take some time and effort. Don't be discouraged if it doesn't go as well as you expect in the beginning. Also remember that your Service Advisor is there to help you as needed too.

Recruiting can be divided into several tasks: writing job ads; posting job ads; screening interested parties; interviewing candidates; and selecting workers. Let's take a closer look at each one.

Writing Job Ads- The job description you wrote becomes the foundation for your job ad. Use some of the information in your job description in your ad. *Helpful Hint- The more information you put in your ad, the fewer responses you may get. This may not be a bad thing, it will help screen out people you wouldn't want to hire anyway.*

It may seem better to have a lot of people respond to your ad. Yet, the more responses you get, the more people you have to screen and interview, making the hiring process much more difficult. Remember the primary purpose of a job ad is to identify people who are both qualified and interested in doing the job you need to have done. A well-written ad can help

screen out people who are not really interested in providing quality care for you. In addition, those who do respond are likely to be better candidates. So, the rule is, include enough information to get “quality” applicants.

Below are some sample ads. Notice the difference when more “details” are added to the ad. The first ad is the most general. In each subsequent ad, one word has been added to make it more specific than the previous ad. Read each one carefully to see how adding one or more key words makes them more specific.

Personal Care Worker

Nonsmoker needed to work with adult with disabilities, assist with personal care and housekeeping. Days negotiable. \$9 an hour; some benefits available. Call (555) 555-1212 or send email to: email@email.com

Personal Care Worker

Nonsmoker needed to work with adult female with disabilities, assist with personal care and housekeeping. Days negotiable. \$9 an hour; some benefits available. Call (555) 555-1212 or send email to: email@email.com

Personal Care Worker

Nonsmoker needed to work with adult female with disabilities, assist with personal care, laundry and housekeeping. Days negotiable. \$9 an hour; some benefits available. Call (555) 555-1212 or send email to: email@email.com

Personal Care Worker

Nonsmoker needed to work with adult female with severe disabilities, assist with personal care, laundry and housekeeping. Days negotiable. \$9 an hour; some benefits available. Call (555) 555-1212 or send email to: email@email.com

In the first ad both men and women are likely to respond. But, people who don’t want to work with women are not likely to

respond to the second ad. Likewise, people who don't like doing laundry may not respond to the third ad and people who don't like working with people who have severe disabilities are not likely to respond to the fourth ad. Regardless of how you go about it, it is your choice as to what to put in your ads.

How to put contact information: In any ad you have to have a way for the person responding to your ad to contact you. For safety and security you should not put your address in the ad. There are many ways you could put down to contact you: telephone # (either home or cell phone); email address, etc. The best thing to do is not put down contact information that could be used to figure out your address. It is important to protect your privacy as much as possible during this step.

Ways to find PAs or Places to post ads

There are many ways to locate potential PAs here are a few places you might want to start.

- Friends, family, neighbors- Sometimes people that you know already might be looking for this type of work. Or they know someone themselves that is looking for work. This “friend of a friend” method can work out well. Just let people know that you are looking to hire.
- Disability or Community Agencies- Sometimes local agencies that work with people with disabilities or elders have resources on matching PAs with potential employers. Many also have monthly newsletters and you might be able to put an ad in it.
- Colleges, Universities or other types of Post-Secondary Schools- These schools have a ready supply of students looking for part-time jobs to earn extra money. There are a number of ways to reach these workers:
 1. Ads in college newspapers
 2. Campus personnel or employment offices

3. Campus disability resource centers
4. Student clubs and organizations with an interest pre-med, nursing, rehabilitation, or related therapies

Usually students are available for two or more years. College students have much to recommend them. They are young, healthy, and strong with flexible schedules. Consider hiring juniors and seniors. These students are more established in the college routine and more mature. College students may not be available over holidays and vacation periods. The best time for recruitment of college students is at the beginning of the term. The worst time to recruit is the last three or four weeks of the term when papers are due and final exams occur.

- Local Community- You can place flyers or 3X5 card ads on community bulletin boards. Bulletin boards often are located in supermarkets, libraries or town information boards. Be sure to follow the directions given for posting on these boards. If you do not follow the rules, your notice may be removed. Senior Citizen organizations also provide information about resources in your community.
- Medical Facilities, such as Hospitals, Clinics or Nursing Homes- May be good sources of trained people looking for extra part-time work.
- Local Publications- Many community groups have newsletters, which you might be able to place an ad in. Local newspapers are usually cheaper than bigger statewide newspapers and will reach people who live in your area. If you do decide to put in an ad, find out first how much it will cost you, usually you get charged per word or per line, so make your ad brief but with enough information.

Whatever method you use, develop a roster of possible workers. Keep this around so that in the future you don't have to go through the process of advertising.

Remember, recruiting is an ongoing activity. As long as you are enrolled in PersonalChoice, you will need to recruit workers, especially as back-ups. PAs won't be with you forever, so stay on top of your recruiting skills and activities. Be ready to recruit on very short notice. Don't forget about people you found OK but did not hire at first. They might make good back-up workers or may eventually become your regular PAs.

Personal Assistant Registry

Another way to locate potential PAs is to utilize the PersonalChoice Personal Assistant Registry. This registry is a list of people who have indicated that they want their names given out to participants in the PersonalChoice program who are looking to hire PAs. This is a common list that is kept by all of the Service Advisement and Fiscal Intermediary agencies that work with PersonalChoice participants. Every person who is on this list has already passed a Criminal Background and Abuse Registry check and is able to work legally in this country. However, the people on this list have not had any other type of screening, so you still would need to go through the interview and reference check process before hiring them to work for you. The registry contains basic information about each person; their name, telephone number, the times and areas of the state they are available to work in, and any special skills they wish to include. You can contact either your Service Advisor or Fiscal Intermediary to get names from the registry or see them online if you have a computer and Internet access. Check with your Service Advisor to get the website information.

When People Respond

After you post your ad, or let people know that you are hiring PAs, you should expect to have interested people contact you. You need to be able to respond to them. Have your job description handy so that you will be able to tell people a little more information about the job than what was in your ad. Don't delay in replying to people who have contacted you, good workers don't wait around too long. Also have a plan in how you will respond to each person, you want to

make sure you get the same information from each applicant so you can make a choice when it is time to hire someone.

Screening

Here is where you screen out people who are not appropriate or who don't meet your needs. You can screen potential workers either by phone or in person, however it is much easier to do it by phone, especially if you have gotten a large number of applicants. Keep in mind that you don't need to interview everyone who contacts you, screening applicants first makes it easier.

When you talk with interested people, ask them what kind of pay they are looking for and how many hours a week they are available. Their answers will give you an idea on what their pay and schedule needs will be. With this information you can screen out people who either want more pay than you can afford or who cannot work to your schedule. If the person sounds like they might work out, continue asking them other questions that will allow you to figure out if they will meet your needs.

Some sample questions could be:

- Are you at least 18? (you can't ask their age, that's illegal)
- What hours are you available?
- What days can you work?
- Do you have a driver's license?
- Do you have any experience providing Attendant services?
- There might be lifting involved with this job, do you have any restrictions on how much you can lift?
- You can add other questions if you want, just make sure that the questions you ask are not illegal. (See the Interviews and the Law section in the Appendix).

Responding to Questions from an Applicant

The person applying to work for you may have questions about the job, or about you specifically. Be careful in answering them, you don't want to reveal too much information about yourself too soon,

especially personal information or your address. Use your own best judgment in answering any questions you may get.

Background Checks and Employment Status

Every person that wants to work for you will need to submit to a Statewide Criminal Background Check, have their name checked against the RI Department of Health Abuse Registry and have their ability to work in this country determined. This might be a good time to let potential employees know this. You can let them know by telling them now. It is better to know if this will be a problem now, than later on.

Applications

It is a good idea to have any person applying to work for you fill out an application, even if you already know them. An application gives you information that will help you decide if you should hire someone. Your Fiscal Intermediary has blank applications available, or you can come up with one of your own. You can send them an application by mail now, or have them fill one out when you interview them although it is better to send it to them ahead of time.

Interviewing

Take time to plan your interview, which means planning on what questions to ask. Interviews should be face-to-face meetings. In them explore what it will be like to work together. Remember, the interview is when you and the applicant will see if the situation will work for both of you.

Before you do your first interview, decide where and how it will happen. If you do not want strangers coming into your home, consider doing the interview in a public place like a library or coffee shop. If you do decide to have the interviews in your home, have someone else there with you. Make sure you have the person bring an ID with them, and the filled out application, if possible. This will save time during the interview itself.

Plan on what questions you will ask in the interview. Use questions that will get at the abilities, skills and character of the applicant. Once you have an idea on the questions you want to ask, write them down, if at all possible. Here are some possible interview questions you can use:

- What jobs have you had in the past?
- How did you feel about those jobs? What did you like/not like?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Have you had any attendant care experience? Where? How long?
- Why do you want this job?
- Why would you be a good attendant?

Important!!

There are rules involved when interviewing someone for a job. There are certain questions that you cannot legally ask someone during the interview process. If you do ask those questions you are breaking the law. A list of those questions is included in the **Appendix** of this guidebook. Make sure you familiarize yourself with it **before** you start interviewing people.

When you start the interview, try to put the person at ease. You will get better information and a better idea about the person if they are relaxed. Start with easy questions first before you get to the harder ones.

During the interview it is also important for the person you are interviewing to get an idea of what it would be like to work for you. You should provide the person with some information too. Things like:

- A detailed description of the job duties.
- Tell the person what you expect in a worker.
- Tell the person about the work schedule.
- Give the person a copy of the job description and employment agreement, so they know what they will be expected to do.
- Explain your disability as well as you can.
- Be frank and clear about duties that may make the person uncomfortable.
- Give them general information on wages, pay schedule, how PersonalChoice works, etc.

As you near the end of the interview and you think this person is a good candidate, ask them if they are interested in the job. If they say they are, **don't** hire them on the spot; ask them if they can give you references. Tell them you will call them after you have checked with their references and made your decision.

Make sure that you take notes during the interview, especially if you are interviewing several people, so you don't get confused. It will also give you ideas on what to ask each person's references and also help you decide whom to hire.

Checking References

During the interview, get **work** references. After the interview decide if you would like to hire the person. If so, check their references. References give you important information that you could not get in any other way, like if the person is difficult to work with.

Who are good references? They are usually people who know your applicant as an attendant. They know their work performance and habits. If your applicant has no prior experience as an attendant, then other good references are previous employers, teachers, former co-workers, etc. Try to avoid family members or friends as references. They will not know about the applicant's work habits and they are likely to tell you only the good things.

When you are speaking with a person's reference, explain the work the person will be doing. Tell the reference you will be keeping all information confidential so the reference will feel comfortable enough to give you honest and accurate information. Make sure to take notes, so you don't get confused later.

Here are some questions to ask references.

- What was your relationship with him/her?
- How long have you know him/her?
- What are his/her strengths and weaknesses?
- How do they handle stress?
- Would you trust him/her to have keys to your house/car?

- Do you think he/she is reliable?
- How well do they get along with others?

If the reference is a former employer, ask the following questions.

- How long did he/she work with you?
- Was he/she dependable?
- Was he/she on time to work?
- How often was he/she absent without notice?
- Can he/she handle a wide range of tasks?
- Would you hire him/her again?

You may not get answers to all of these questions, but any additional information the reference can provide will help you in making your hiring decision.

Hiring Guidelines

By now you should have enough information to make a decision on whom to hire. You need to choose which applicant to offer the job too. When you make your choice, keep the following questions in mind:

- What important skills and experience does each person have?
- What is your feeling about each person, based on the interview and other contacts you have had?
- What useful information did you get from each persons reference?
- How would it feel working with each person you interviewed?

Some qualities are hard to assess in people. See if you will feel comfortable giving a person directions or corrections. This is very important if you are going to hire a friend or a relative. How will you feel spending a lot of time with the person? You are likely to develop a close relationship with a worker, but it is not necessary. **Remember that safety, reliability and quality work are the most important features for an attendant to have.**

PersonalChoice Hiring Guidelines

PersonalChoice has only a few requirements of attendants. No attendant can get paid utilizing funds in your ISSP unless they:

- Are at least 18 years of age
- Are legally able to work in this country
- Submit to, and pass a statewide criminal background check (BCI) as well as the State Department of Health Abuse Registry check
- Are not a Spouse or Legal Guardian of the participant

Before the attendant can get their first paycheck, the above information must be verified. This is done by your Fiscal Intermediary agency. Your FI has supplied you with new employee hire packets, which contain all of the necessary forms to allow this to happen. Have your attendant fill out all of the necessary forms, following the instructions provided and send them in to the FI as soon as possible. (Remember, an attendant cannot get paid until all of the forms have been received and processed by the FI and they receive word back that the attendant passed the screening. You need to allow at least ten (10) days for this to take place. So don't send the forms in one day and expect a paycheck the next day.) The sooner you get the forms in to the FI, the better.

What if something shows up on the Criminal Background or Abuse Registry check?

You will **NOT** be able to hire an attendant if the following happens:

- They have a criminal **conviction** for one of the serious crimes as listed in the "PersonalChoice PCA and Representative Disqualifying Criminal Convictions List" (a copy is in the Appendix of this guidebook)
- Their name appears on the Rhode Island Department of Health Office of Health Professionals Regulation, Abuse Registry with a current disciplinary action in place.

You **May** hire an attendant who does appear to have a prior criminal conviction (as long it is not for one of the crimes noted above) or who's name appears on the Abuse Registry as having a previous action taken against them but has had that action rescinded. You will be asked to sign a statement indicating that you are aware of the issue, but choose to hire the person and are aware of the risks. If you are unsure about any of this talk to your Service Advisor, they can help you figure out what is best. Remember, the purpose of the background check is to provide you with information that you need to make a good decision on whom to hire.

After You Hire

Written Agreement

You should complete a Participant/PA Employment Agreement after you have agreed to hire someone. This agreement, which you both will sign, will contain important information that you both agree with. Things like rate of pay, schedule, duties, job rules etc. Your Fiscal Intermediary includes this agreement in the PA Hiring Package that they have given you. It is important that this form be filled out as it basically puts in writing the rules of employment.

Orienting your Personal Assistant

Different people have different boundaries. What one person is comfortable with or thinks is OK may not be what someone else considers appropriate. It is important to talk about boundaries with any new PA.

You may want to establish some "house rules". Here are some examples of issues that you may want to address when you meet with new PAs.

- **Personal Property-** PAs should respect your personal property and ask permission if they want to use it. For instance, you may not want to share food and beverages with your PAs.

- **Personal Phone Calls-** PAs should ask to make or answer a call (either on your phone or their cell phone). Placing a time limit on calls may be a good idea. Also be aware of long distance calls; talk with your PA about costs prior to the call.
- **Smoking-** You should discuss whether it is OK for a PA to smoke in your home, or in a designated area outside your home.
- **Use of Vehicles-** Things you might want to consider if you ask PAs to drive for you include insurance and liability. These are issues whether the PAs use your vehicle or theirs.

Training your PA(s)

Training is one of the most important parts in managing your PA(s). You are the expert in knowing your care needs. Even experienced PAs need to be trained in how YOU want things done. If you have had a PA before, you probably have a good idea of what works for you.

There is more than one way to train a PA(s). Some people will respond well to verbal instructions while others may respond better to hands on demonstrations. You may feel comfortable training your own PA yourself or would like to have one of your experienced PAs assist with the training. Some people prefer to have family members help as well. The main thing to make sure of is that you get your care done in the way that you prefer.

If you are training a new PA, here are some things you might want to cover:

- Talk about your disability and how it affects you. The more your PA knows about your disability the better they will be able to meet your needs.
- Give a lot of examples and explain any technical terms you use.

- Talk about any symptoms or health concerns they need to be aware of. Include anything that may arise and how to handle that situation. Also include how you want emergency situations handled.
- As you go through your routine, explain why tasks need to be done. This will help the PA realize the importance of these tasks. For example, if you get range of motion exercises, explain that this helps you maintain movement and flexibility.
- Provide training on how to operate or use any special equipment you might use. Things like wheelchairs, lifts, shower chairs etc.
- Be Patient!!!! Learning how to do new things takes a while. Don't become frustrated if your PA does not catch on right away.
- Ask for feedback about how you are explaining things. Maybe there is a different way you could go about it that will be clearer to the PA.
- Respect your PA, his/her ability to learn and how much he/she already knows.
- Praise good work when your PA does things exactly how you want them done. Also don't forget to say "Thank You", this goes a long way.

By providing good training up front, you may increase the chances of a PA being able to be more effective at their job. Taking more time in the beginning can lead to better overall results.

Scheduling PAs

In PersonalChoice you get to decide the schedule of your PAs. If you only have one PA this is a simple job. But, if you have more than one, it gets a little more difficult. Plan enough time for scheduling and dividing tasks between PAs. You must balance your needs with your PA's needs to have reliable, timely assistance. Here are some things to consider.

- **How important is the schedule?** If you are someone who takes things easy and don't care much about time, then a schedule may not be too important. But for most people it is important that they get their assistance when they expect it, that's the point of PersonalChoice. So, make sure that your PAs know the schedule they are expected to work. Let your PAs know that straying from the schedule on a regular basis are grounds for being fired.
- **Who decides on the schedule?** Ultimately, you do. Remember though that you and all of your PAs have to be concerned about the schedule. You will have a better relationship with your PAs if they feel you have thought of their needs when putting the schedule together. Talk to your PAs as you are writing the schedule; try to put some of their ideas into it if at all possible. Remember, it is your life, so it should be your schedule, but don't make it so difficult that no PA can keep up with it.
- **How do you set up a schedule?** There is no one right way to set up an attendant schedule. To begin, you might review your Participant Self-Assessment that you used to come up with your job description. This tool allowed you to figure out what things you needed help with and how often you needed them done. Decide which attendants should do which tasks on which days. You might divide the tasks among your attendants equally. You might have some attendants do certain tasks only, based on their skills and abilities. Remember the schedule can change as your needs change, just remember to let your PAs know if you plan on changing it

- **How does the schedule get changed?** Stress to your attendants that everyone must respect the schedule, even yourself. There could be a time when a PA really needs to change the schedule. Decide how this will happen and be sure everyone knows about it if you decide to do it. Also think about how much notice you will give when you change a schedule. It is only fair to let people know in advance if their work schedule is going to change. Also be aware of issues around starting and ending times. If the schedule is important to you, you want your attendants to be on time, not late. Make sure you emphasize how important it is to show up on time. On the other hand, be very careful about asking PAs to stay late without any warning. Respect their time in the same way you want your time respected. If you constantly ask your PAs to stay past the time you agreed to, you may risk losing them. Remember, your PA is doing what they are doing for you as a job, and no one wants to have a job that changes constantly.

Paying your PCA

Your Fiscal Intermediary is responsible for paying your PAs. They will be paying them every two weeks based on the wages that you have set in your ISSP. Each Fiscal Intermediary might have different rules and procedures for submitting time sheets and cutting paychecks. These rules and procedures should be included in the Welcome Packet the FI sent you when you enrolled with them. There are some general rules for paying PAs however:

- PAs cannot earn less than minimum wage.
- The FI will not pay your PA a higher hourly wage than what is listed in your approved ISSP. So make sure that you make sure that the wage you tell your PA they will earn is the same as what has been approved.
- PAs will get paid every two weeks. You will need to make sure that all of your PAs time sheets are sent to the FI before their deadlines to ensure your PA will be paid.
- You are responsible, as an employer, to pay your share of the PAs employment taxes and their workers compensation

coverage. You should have figured this amount in when you were developing your ISSP.

- Your PA is also responsible to pay their share of taxes as well; they will be withheld from your PAs paycheck by the FI. **DO NOT ask your FI to not withhold your PA's taxes this is ILLEGAL.**

Firing Your PA

Most people don't like having to fire a PA. However, sometimes that "perfect" person you hired will not always work out. People change, situations change, and so on. So, if you find at some point your PA is not meeting your needs, you may have to fire that person. Remember that firing someone is very difficult; so only take that step when all else fails.

Some Grounds for Firing

The reasons to fire someone will vary. Here are some of the most common reasons.

- The PAs work is not good enough
- The PA does not learn fast enough to meet your changing needs
- The PA is late or fails to show up too many times.
- The PAs personal habits bother you.
- The PA does not pay attention to your instructions.
- You find you are having too many arguments.
- You don't feel safe and comfortable with the PA, even after working with he/she for several weeks.
- The PA has a schedule that is not flexible enough for you.
- The PA violates your employment conditions, seriously or often.

Grounds for Immediate Firing

Some actions by a PA may be grounds for firing them right away. You should have put them in the hiring agreement we talked about earlier.

PersonalChoice Participant Manual 1/4/2006

Hopefully you covered these with the PA when he/she started working with you. These grounds include such things as:

- Drinking or doing drugs on the job.
- Coming to work drunk or under the influence of drugs.
- Stealing from you
- Abusing you in any way

What we are talking about are things that put you at risk, things that are very serious.

Firing Workers

Weigh all options before firing a PA. Try to work things out first. Hiring a replacement PA will take time and effort, and there is no guarantee your new PA will be a better worker. But, if firing is your decision, consider the following questions. How you decide to handle this difficult task will depend upon your personality, your attendant's personality, and the situation.

- **How should you tell the attendant you are firing them?** Doing it by phone or letter may feel safer/easier, but doing it "in person" is more respectful. Having a third person tell the attendant he/she is fired is also an option, but again it is not very respectful.
- **What reasons should you give the PA for firing him/her?** If you have been giving plenty of corrective feedback and letting the PA know that you have not been happy with the quality of their work, then they should know what the problems are. They should also know what you have said are grounds for firing. In some cases, something may come up that you have not addressed in your guidelines. In most cases, give the attendant some idea of why you are firing him/her, but you do not have to go into great detail.

- **How will the PA react?** Have a neighbor, friend or relative in the room with you and the PA if you feel there may be a problem when you bring up the subject of firing.
- **How much notice should you give your PA?** Be fair, but remember that if you give the attendant advanced notice, you risk even more problems with his/her work or behavior.
- **Who will provide you with assistance once you fire a PA?** Before you fire a PA, have at least one backup PA available to take their place.

Once you fire a PA make sure that you contact your Fiscal Intermediary so that they know. Also make some arrangements for the PA to get their last paycheck.

Supervising PAs and Recognizing Quality Service

In PersonalChoice, you (or your representative) supervise your PAs. This means that you direct, oversee and manage them in order to receive the care you need. In supervising, consider 1) quality 2) quantity 3) time and 4) rules. **Quality** looks at how well tasks are being done. Do PAs do tasks the way you want them to or some other way? **Quantity** looks at the amount. Are PAs doing every task as required or are they skipping some? **Time** is about the schedule. Do PAs do tasks when they are scheduled? Finally **By the Rules** looks at whether attendants are following the guidelines that you set when they were hired. For example, if you allow your PAs to eat your food if they replace what they eat, do they do that? Even though eating your food may not have a direct impact on your care, it is still your rule and it is to be followed. Remember, supervising is more of an art than a science. You will need to work with your PAs on what style of supervision works best for you and them.

Be ready to train- since things change, good supervision will require on-going training. If your needs change, training on new tasks may be needed. And, your PA may have questions that the training did not cover. When this happens do training like we talked about before.

Even though something may be clear to you doesn't mean it is clear to the PA.

Monitor your PA's work- good supervision is like watching the compass during an ocean cruise. You will know if you are off course. Likewise, by monitoring PAs, you can tell if they are doing their tasks the way you taught them. If not, more training may be necessary. The main point is, pay attention to what your PA is doing.

Be clear about what you want- by agreeing to take the job, your PA has agreed to do the tasks the way you need them to be done. And, you have a right to expect it, as well. Be clear about what you want and how you want it. If you are not clear your PA may guess and that's not a good thing.

Work together- work with your PA as a partner to solve problems. Listen to your PA's suggestions. He/she may have some good ideas or some useful experience to draw on. Remember, "Two heads are better than one".

Learn to say "No"- if you do not agree with your PA's suggestions or ideas, say so. But be respectful. It will help develop a stronger relationship.

Be in Charge- although your PA may have suggestions, you are in charge. Even if he/she worked where participants had little control, in PersonalChoice you do have control and the right to live your life as you choose. Also, you do not need your PA to approve of what you choose to do. Respect your PA, and know that he/she is there to assist you, not to decide things for you.

Deal with Problems- When your PA performs poorly, point it out. With patience remind him/her how to do things the way you instructed. Deal with the problem when it happens. Problems that are not handled quickly may get worse. Be respectful when correcting. Remember; fix the problem, not the person. If a PA keeps making the same mistakes, consider giving him/her more training. If more training doesn't help, the problem is performance, not skills. In this case discuss the situation with the PA. Try to discover if the PA

understands that his/her performance is not acceptable. If after the discussion he/she still does not improve, try giving a warning. If the performance still does not improve, it may be necessary to take disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Make sure the PA is aware of the consequences of his/her behavior. Consider using “If-Then” statements:

“ If _____ continues, then _____ will happen.”

Praise your PA- tell your PA when he/she does something right and especially when he/she does something more than what was required. Let him/her know that you value the assistance that they provide to you. Most people will appreciate being recognized for good work.

Treat your PA like a person- in all things; treat your PA like you yourself want to be treated. Talk to your PA like a partner. Avoid calling them names or insulting them. Respect them as a person and the work they do for you. Good PAs are not easy to find. Treating them poorly will lead them to look for work elsewhere.

Dealing with Abuse

Even though we may not want to talk about it, we need to discuss how do deal with abuse. The vast majority of PAs provide excellent care and never have any problems with the people they work for. But for your own safety we want to take a minute and talk about what abuse really is and how to deal with it.

Physical Abuse- includes hitting, slapping, pinching, kicking and other forms of rough treatment. If a PA does something intending to cause you pain, that may be physical abuse.

Verbal Abuse- means any use of spoken or written words or gestures that are meant to insult or attack you or to make you feel bad.

Psychological Abuse- includes actions or statements that are meant to humiliate or threaten you or to cause you emotional harm.

Sexual Abuse- includes sexual annoyance, touching, fondling or attack. Any sexual behavior by an attendant that makes you uneasy is sexual abuse.

Neglect- means a PA is not meeting your basic needs for food, hygiene, clothing or health maintenance. After you have given the PA directions about these things, the PA should make sure your basic needs are met.

If you feel a PA is abusing you, take action. Remember in PersonalChoice you are responsible for dealing with PA problems. No home health agency or other provider is there to take care of things for you on a daily basis. Your Service Advisor can be a resource to help you deal with this issue, but it is still your ultimate responsibility. You have to decide what to do about an abusive PA.

If the abuse is slight, you can try talking to the PA. Tell him/her what actions or behaviors you do not like. Also tell the PA that if the behaviors do not stop right away you will be forced to find another PA. This may work for some PAs who may not be aware of how you are feeling. Be ready to take action right away if the behaviors do not stop.

In most abuse cases, you should fire the PA immediately. Don't put up with it; protect yourself. Hopefully you covered how you would handle abuse in your PA guidelines. **You have every right to fire the PA right away.** Just make sure that you are safe and have a back-up plan in place.

Preventing Theft

Another thing that we don't like to talk about, but have to, is making sure that PAs do not steal from you. Again, the vast majority of PAs are honest but there are some hints to make sure that temptation doesn't get the best of people.

Check out references- always check a person's references. Ask the reference about the person's honesty. If a reference causes you to believe the person may not be honest, think carefully about hiring him/her. You could be taking a risk.

Pay attention to background checks- in PersonalChoice, your Fiscal Intermediary must do a Criminal Background Check on **anyone** you want to hire. Make sure that you read the report carefully on each person. If the person has a history of theft or other "small" crimes, he/she may be more likely to steal from you. If you find anything that causes you to think someone is not honest, think twice before hiring him or her.

Keep track of your money and valuables- do not keep a lot of cash around your home. Keep small valuables, such as jewelry and what cash you do have locked away. Keep track of how much money you have on hand. Know where your purse or wallet is at all times. If you need your PA to handle cash for you, make sure he/she does so under your direction only in a way you can watch. If you have several PAs, consider giving only one of them access to your valuables. In this way, you will only have one person to be concerned about.

Be careful with checks, credit and debit cards- DO NOT give your PA your credit card, debit card, credit or debit card number or a blank signed check to use when you are not with him/her. Doing so gives the PA the chance to steal from you. If your PA must shop for you, always get a receipt showing what was spent. In these cases, keep careful watch on your bank accounts.

Keep track of your medications- some medications are more valuable than cash. Many participants say stealing medications is a bigger problem than stealing money. Store your medications in a

locked drawer or cabinet. Keep track of when you need to reorder your medications. Know how much medication you have on hand and how much you order. If you have more than one PA, consider giving only one of them access to your medications. This limits the number of people you have to be concerned about regarding your medications.

Keep track of your possessions- Keep an up-to-date list of all your valuables such as TV's, stereos, computers, antiques and jewelry. Should anything turn up missing, this list will be helpful to police and to your insurance company. Let your PA know you have such a list; this may discourage the attendant from stealing from you.

Be careful about use of your vehicle- don't let your PA use your car or van without you. If you must, make sure you have known the PA very well for a long time before allowing use of your car. Even then, keep track of the miles that your attendant puts on your car.

Be careful with house and car keys- in many cases, you may have to give a PA a key to your home. At the same time, you do not want your PA to get into your home without permission. Keep track of who has keys and for what. Be especially careful to get all keys back from any PA that no longer works for you. Also remember that PAs could always make copies of your keys without you knowing it, so if a PA leaves under bad terms, you might want to think about changing the locks even though you got your keys back.

Talk about honesty in your hiring agreement- keep your hiring agreement with your PA up to date. In that agreement talk about what happens if the attendant is not honest. Be clear that you expect honesty, and that you will not allow an attendant who is not honest to work for you.

The above hints will help prevent theft. Sometimes no matter what you do, a PA will steal from you. If that happens, remember you are responsible for dealing with that situation yourself.

If you find small things missing here and there, tell the PA. Don't accuse him/her of stealing without any proof. Say something like "I

seem to be missing things. I'm going to have to pay more attention to where we put things". Letting the PA know you are paying attention may prevent any more theft.

If the stealing is more serious, call the police. Also let your Service Advisor and Fiscal Intermediary know. You may not get your stuff back, but taking action can prevent it from happening to someone else.

Chapter 5- Communication Skills

Communication Tips

Since you will be dealing with some very personal issues, you will need good communication skills. You will have to train new workers and praise and correct them while they are with you. You will also need to deal with your Service Advisor, your Fiscal Intermediary and PersonalChoice program staff. Clearly, these situations require good communication skills. This guidebook gives some basics in this area but it takes time to build these skills. Below are some communication tips.

Listen. Good communication is when both parties understand each other. If you are doing all of the talking, you won't know if you are being understood. Even when you have something important to say, you still need to hear if the other person understands the point you are trying to make. Also, you often learn more when you are listening than when you are talking.

Try to understand. One of the best ways to get a person to listen to you is to listen and understand first. If you understand the other person's point of view, you have a better chance of responding in a clear and helpful way.

Be assertive. State your concerns, feelings and wishes clearly and directly. Be respectful and make eye contact. Address problems or keep quiet when things are uncomfortable. Deal with problems. Don't attack the other person or call them names. Be clear about what your concerns are and why.

Use "I" statements, not "you" statements. State your issues from your point of view. You can't really know what the other person is thinking or why he/she acts in a certain way. A statement such as, "I need a PA I can rely on and who comes in on time," is a much better communication than, "If you cared about me, you'd be here when you should be." An "I" statement focuses on your feelings and experiences. It's hard to argue with a person's statement of his/her

own feelings. Conversely, a “you” statement is more likely to make a PA feel defensive. It is more likely to start a useless argument.

Bargaining

When you hire a new employee and you are trying to agree on terms of employment, good communication skills are important. You will need to come to terms on wages, benefits and other working conditions. Here are some ideas to help you in your bargaining in this and in other situations. Some of the ideas may be difficult to understand, but give it a try.

- Identify the problem, and focus only on that problem. Don't get off track with other issues.
- Identify the needs that you want met as a result of the bargaining. You need to be clear on what you want if you ever hope to get it.
- Be clear on what is most important to you. If you have to give up something, be sure it's the little stuff, not the big stuff.
- Learn what the other person's needs are. You are more likely to get your needs met if you understand and try to meet his/her needs as well.
- Work for “win/win” agreements. You need to work together to meet the needs of both parties.
- Keep people and issues separate. Respect people and bargain hard on issues.

Giving Feedback

Although we covered this before, it is good to review again because giving feedback to people is a good way to make sure you are getting what you want. When giving feedback, make every effort to use “I” statements: “I need...; I feel...; I have to have... etc.” By using “I” statements, feedback is kept objective and avoids personal blame. You can also say something like: “ I am disappointed with...; I was expecting...; Did I cover ... in training?; Did I do something to confuse you...?”; etc.

Documenting

Documenting and keeping records is important in PersonalChoice. Develop a system for keeping track of all letters, forms and agreements that are associated with PersonalChoice. Keeping good records will help you remember important events and conversations. And it will help you if there are ever any problems with a PA or with PersonalChoice program staff.

Make sure you keep written copies of all agreements and arrangements you make with PAs. This includes applications, employment guidelines, hiring agreements, schedules, instructions, time sheets, etc. If possible, keep a separate file on each PA you have work for you with all of the documents that pertain to that PA.

Chapter 6 - Managing Emergencies

In PersonalChoice you must have a plan for managing emergencies. When we talk about emergencies we are talking about two major types:

1. PA staffing emergencies
2. Medical Emergencies

We will talk briefly about each.

PA staffing Emergencies

No matter how well you plan, and no matter how good your PAs are, you are likely to have some PA staffing emergencies. Your PA may get sick or have a family problem. You may have a PA fail to show up once in a while. Be prepared for this. No one will come to your rescue if you don't have back-up plans. Here are some ideas for covering PA staffing emergencies.

- Hire more than one PA to work for you. If one PA is sick or something comes up, the other can fill in. For example, hire one PA for weekdays and another for weekends.
- Keep an updated list of people you liked but could not hire as regular workers. Check with them from time to time to see if they are still able to work for you as back-ups.
- Ask family, friends or neighbors if they would be willing to fill in when you have an emergency. Let them know they could be paid when they help out. Get everyone who might be paid to help signed up with your Fiscal Intermediary and have their background check done so they can get paid promptly if they are needed.

Medical Emergencies

Medical emergencies are just that, times when your health declines rapidly or you have an accident. It is important that you be able to recognize a medical emergency, and know what to do if one occurs.

PersonalChoice Participant Manual 1/4/2006

It is also important to instruct your PAs and anyone else involved in your care in what to do in the case of a medical emergency. There could be times when you are unable to direct your PAs in what to do, so make sure you tell them ahead of time. Also let them know whom your emergency contacts are, so they can let them know too.

Also remember, if a medical emergency causes you to be hospitalized for more than a few days you have to contact both your Service Advisor and Fiscal Intermediary. Again you may not be able to do it yourself if you are in the hospital, so you need to let someone else know about this ahead of time.

IMPORTANT- Having an emergency back-up plan is a REQUIREMENT for enrollment in PersonalChoice, so make sure that you spend some time in setting one up.

Chapter 7 - Working with Your PersonalChoice Support Agencies

As we have talked about in this guidebook already, there are TWO distinct services that are in place to assist you, the participant, get the most benefit from the PersonalChoice program. Those services are provided to you by community agencies that have been certified by the Department of Human Services, PersonalChoice office. For agencies to become certified PersonalChoice providers they had to undergo a thorough evaluation to make sure that they had the proper staffing, experience and capabilities to provide Consumer directed services. The TWO services are: Service Advisement and Fiscal Intermediary. These services may be provided by two different agencies, or the same agency. When you applied for the PersonalChoice program you were given a list of the agencies that are currently approved by the Department of Human Services and you were asked to choose which agencies you wanted to work with.

The first thing to remember is that everyone is different; some people can run the PersonalChoice program easily and won't need a lot of help from the support agencies. And some people may need more help in the beginning as they get used to the program. There is nothing wrong with contacting the support agencies when you have a question, remember; they are getting paid to help you as needed. So don't be shy about picking up the phone!!!

The second thing to remember is that both agencies have to provide a minimum level of service to you. For example the Advisement Agency is required to contact you, either by phone or in person on a regular basis. This is a requirement of the program and of Medicaid. So even though things may be going great and you have no problems whatsoever, you still need to be available when needed. Failure to cooperate with the agencies could be grounds for removal from the program, so it is important to keep all of your appointments and return phone calls promptly.

Having two agencies to help you with the program could be confusing at times, and you may not know which agency to contact with any questions you may have. Each agency has different responsibilities in helping you manage the PersonalChoice program. The following table should help you decide which agency to contact with particular questions or issues.

Question or Issue	Service Advisor	Fiscal Intermediary
1. Time Sheets, Paychecks		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Results of Criminal Background Checks		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. How much money you have left in your budget		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Taxes, TDI, Workers Compensation, etc.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Monthly Budget Statement		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Payments to vendors for approved purchases		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Assessments or Monthly budget amount	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8. Individual Service and Spending Plan (ISSP)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
9. PersonalChoice Participant Manual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
10. Training, Equipment or Health questions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
11. Home visits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
12. Information on other programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
13. Recruiting, hiring, managing and firing Assistants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
14. Tax forms, employment applications and forms		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
15. Finding new workers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
16. Enrolling in or Leaving the program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

If your question doesn't fall under any of those topic areas, feel free to contact your Service Advisor, if he/she can't answer the question they will direct you to where you need to go.

Remember that both agencies are there to help you when needed so don't be afraid to contact them as needed.

Appendix A- Interviews and the Law

There are certain questions that you cannot ask an applicant for a job at any time during the interview process and also after you have hired someone. As an employer of Personal Assistants, you fall under these requirements. The following are on what you can and cannot ask or do during an interview. If you ask these types of questions you are breaking both Federal and State employment laws.

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Do NOT Ask or Do</i>	<i>May Ask or Do</i>
Marital Status	Are you married? Single? Divorced? Engaged? Separated? Maiden Name?	AFTER hire, marital status for insurance or tax needs only
Children	Do you have any children at home? How old? Who takes care of them? Do you plan to have children?	AFTER hire, number and ages of children for insurance needs only
Housing	Do you own your own home? Do you rent? Do you live in an apartment or House?	If you have no telephone, how can I reach you?
Criminal Record	Have you ever been arrested or spent time in jail?	Have you ever been convicted of a serious crime?
Military Status	What type of Military discharge do you have? In what branch of the military did you serve?	Are you a veteran? Do you have job-related military experience?
National Origin	Of what country are you a citizen? Nationality of applicants parents. Native-born or naturalized? Languages used by the applicant	Are you a US citizen? If not do you have the legal right to remain permanently in the US?
Age	How old are you?	Are you over 18? AFTER hire, exact age or date of birth can be asked
Ethnic Background	Any questions about ethnic origin. Any notes regarding complexion or color of skin.	
Religion	No questions about religious affiliation	AFTER hire, you may ask about religious observances that might interfere with work
Disabilities	No questions about disabilities	AFTER hire, only relating to job duties

Appendix B- Participant Self-Assessment

This form is designed to help you, the PersonalChoice participant, figure out what you need help with, how much help you need and how often you need it. After it is completed use it to figure out how many people to hire, how many hours you need, write your job description and write the employment agreement.

Directions: Check the box that comes closest to the amount of help that you need to do each thing. Make any comments you need about how you want each thing done and how often.

Task	No Help	Some Help	Total Help	Comments
Bathing (tub/shower/bed bath) includes getting into tub/shower, washing hair and body, getting out of tub/shower, drying off or bed bath procedure				
Dressing Includes choosing clothes, reaching clothes, getting dressed and/or undressed				
Grooming Includes brushing and styling hair, brushing teeth, shaving, applying makeup and/or lotions, nail care, cleaning and putting on eyeglasses or contact lenses, jewelry etc.				
Mobility (walking) Includes assistance with crutches, walkers, balance or general help with walking				
Mobility (wheelchair) Includes pushing of a manual wheelchair, clearing a path for the wheelchair, opening doors, daily maintenance of the wheelchair				
Positioning Includes amount of help needed for comfort or to relieve pressure while sitting or sleeping or positioning of pillows or wedges				
Toileting Includes assistance needed for bowel program, catheter and/or colostomy care and general toileting assistance				
Transfers Includes moving from one position to another (Ex. Moving from bed to wheelchair or sitting to standing)				

Appendix B- Participant Self-Assessment Cont'd

Directions: Check the box that identifies the help you need to complete daily tasks. Use comments to add how often you need these things done.

Task	Assistance Needed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments
Menu Planning and Food Preparation	Menu Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Grocery Shopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Putting food away in cupboards and refrigerator	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Preparing food (cutting, cooking)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Putting food on plates and table	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Serving food	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Clearing the table	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Putting away leftovers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Washing dishes/ putting dishes in dishwasher	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Laundry	Sorting Clothes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Putting soap in the washing machine	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Putting clothes in the washing machine	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Putting clothes in the dryer	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Folding clothes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Ironing clothes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Putting clothes away	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Medical Appointments	Assistance into vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Driving (or arranging for transportation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Help into/out of the building and office	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Registering as a patient	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Going into exam room	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Taking notes during the exam	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Filling prescriptions	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Appendix B- Participant Self-Assessment Cont'd

Other Living Supports continued			
Task	Assistance Needed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments
Light Housekeeping and Essential Chores	Sweeping		
	Mopping		
	Vacuuming		
	Dusting		
	Take out the garbage		
	Making the bed		
	Cleaning the refrigerator		
	Cleaning the bathroom		
Shopping	Preparing a shopping list		
	Assistance into a vehicle		
	Driving (or arranging transportation)		
	Help into/out of the store		
	Selecting the items off the shelves		
	Carrying the items		
	Putting them away at home		
Accompany To events Or outings	Keeping track of events		
	Getting directions		
	Assistance into transportation		
	Driving (or arranging transportation)		
	Help into/out of building or event		
	Help at the meeting		

Appendix C-Sample Job Description- Personal Assistant

Duties

The person in this position will assist the employer with activities of daily living. The employer is a 25-year-old male who has a physical disability, lives in his own apartment and uses a wheelchair. Specific activities include assistance with bathing, dressing, personal hygiene, toileting (includes bowel and bladder care), eating, transferring to and from wheelchair, taking medications and range of motion exercises. The position also involves meal preparation, housekeeping, shopping, laundry and household chores. The position requires a valid Rhode Island driver's license, as the Assistant will drive the employer's adapted van occasionally.

Education and Experience

Nothing specific is required, though some experience providing attendant services in the home of a person with a disability is helpful.

Salary Range

\$10.00 to \$12.50 an hour depending on experience.

Benefits

Worker's Compensation included, health insurance (paid by attendant at group rates) is available.

Hours

2 hours a day in the early morning, typically 6:00 to 8:00 AM and some weekend hours.

Other Requirements

The person selected should be prompt, reliable and able to work independently and have good personal hygiene. The person selected must submit to a criminal background check.

PersonalChoice Participant Manual 1/4/2006

Appendix D

Sample Personal Assistant Face-to-Face Interview Questions

Here is a list of example questions that you could ask a potential Personal Assistant in a face-to-face interview:

- Have you worked as a PA before? Where? How long?
- What is your experience with people with disabilities?
- Why are you interested in being a PA?
- Are you looking for temporary or permanent work?
- What are other jobs that you have had?
- What did you like or dislike about those jobs?
- Why did you leave those jobs?
- *Talk about the job description and the duties they would need to perform. Then ask “ Do any of these tasks make you uncomfortable? Why?*
- Do you prefer a job that is highly structured or one that is more flexible (i.e., regular hours or a changing schedule)?
- Tell me about a mistake you had in a previous job and how you handled it?
- How would you get to work?
- What hours and days are you available?
- Everyone who works as a PA needs to submit to a criminal background check. Is this going to be a problem?

Appendix E- Sample PA Reference Check Questions

It is good to begin any conversation with a reference with an introduction of why you are calling this person and checking with this reference. You also might want to briefly describe the job the person is applying for. Then, you can start asking some of these questions.

Here is a list of questions you would ask an *employer reference*:

- How long did they work for you?
- Was (*insert name*) dependable?
- How was (*insert name*) attendance?
- Do you consider (*insert name*) to be honest?
- How did (*insert name*) take supervision?
- Can (*insert name*) work independently?
- Did (*insert name*) get along with other employees?
- Would you hire (*insert name*) again?

Here is a list of questions you could ask a *personal reference*:

- What is your relationship with (*insert name*)?
- How long have you known (*insert name*)?
- In your opinion, is (*insert name*) trustworthy?
- Would you want (*insert name*) to work for you in my situation?
- Are there any outstanding things, either positive or negative, I should know about (*insert name*) before hiring them?

Appendix F- Sample Personal Assistant Hiring Agreement

Fred agrees to provide Personal Assistant services to Dave on the following terms.

- 1) Wages
 - a) Fred will begin work at \$10.50 an hour
 - b) After 3 months of satisfactory work, Fred will receive a \$1.00 per hour raise.
 - c) Dave and Fred will discuss further wage increases every 6 months.
- 2) Benefits
 - a) Health- Health Insurance is available through the Fiscal Intermediary, if Fred wishes to access it and is willing to pay the full amount.
 - b) Days Off- Fred can have days off if he gives Dave a week's advance notice before taking time off (Fred understands he will not be paid for days off).
- 3) Services- Fred will perform the following Services
 - a) Get Dave up and out of bed
 - b) Give Dave a shower or bath, based on Dave's preference.
 - c) Assist Dave with dressing and grooming
 - d) Prepare Dave's breakfast and lunch for Dave to have later.
 - e) Wash dishes every other visit.
 - f) Perform other light housekeeping tasks as requested by Dave.
 - g) Assist Dave with toileting as necessary.
 - h) Assist Dave with medications as necessary.
 - i) Check Dave's skin condition, as requested by Dave.
- 4) Work Schedule
 - a) Fred will work for Dave Monday through Thursday from 6:00 AM until 8:30 AM beginning on November 4.
 - b) Fred will work Saturday and Sunday mornings, 7:30 to 10:00, every other weekend beginning on November 2.

- c) If Dave needs to make a change in the schedule, he and Fred will discuss the change at least 24 hours in advance.

5) Dependability

- a) Fred will be ready to work at the agreed time.
- b) If Fred needs to be absent for any reason, he will give Dave a minimum of 48 hours notice for Dave to make other arrangements.
- c) Late for Work
 - I) If Fred is more than 15 minutes late, Dave will call to check on Fred
 - II) If Fred is frequently late, Dave may reduce Fred's wages or may dismiss Fred
- d) Failure to show up for work.
 - I) If Fred fails to show up once without notice, any wage increase may be postponed.
 - II) If Fred fails to show up more than twice without notice, Dave will dismiss Fred.

6) Taking Responsibility

- a) Fred will be observant, motivated, self-starting and pay attention to details.
- b) Fred will not leave work unfinished or for someone else to do.

7) Working Independently

- a) Dave will trust Fred to do the work unsupervised after the first month. This means that Dave does not want to have to be with Fred every minute.
- b) Although Dave enjoys visiting, job responsibilities take priority.

8) Health- Sanitation- Hygiene

- a) Dave's good health begins with cleanliness
 - I) Fred will wash his hands with soap:
 - Before handling kitchen items
 - After using the toilet (includes assisting Dave)
 - Fred will inspect utensils and dishes when loading and unloading the dishwasher.

- Fred will not smoke in Dave's home

9) Privacy

- a) What Fred sees and hears while working a shift is considered confidential and Fred will treat it as such.
- b) Fred will be considerate of Dave's personal items and business.
- c) Fred is welcome to fix and eat breakfast with Dave and use Dave's food if Fred chooses to do so.
- d) If Fred takes anything of Dave's without permission, Dave will dismiss Fred.

I understand and agree to work as a Personal Assistant on the above terms.

Personal Assistant Name _____ Date _____

I agree to employ this person as a Personal Assistant on the above terms.

Participant Name _____ Date _____

Appendix G- PersonalChoice PCA and Representative Disqualifying Criminal Convictions

All Personal Care Assistants and Participant Representatives that have direct contact with PersonalChoice program participants must submit to a RI Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI) screening prior to being allowed to provide assistance to a program participant.

For the purposes of the PersonalChoice program, if the following **convictions** appear on the individuals BCI screen, they shall not be allowed to provide care or assistance to the consumer:

- Murder
- Voluntary Manslaughter
- Involuntary Manslaughter
- First, Second, or Third Degree Sexual Assault
- Assault on Persons sixty (60) years of age or older
- Assault with intent to commit specified felonies (murder, robbery rape, burglary or the abominable and detestable crime against nature)
- Felony Assault
- Patient abuse
- Neglect or mistreatment of patients
- Burglary
- First Degree arson
- Robbery
- Felony Drug Offenses
- Larceny
- Felony banking law violations

In addition **recent** convictions for the following crimes will result in the individual being disqualified from providing care or assistance:

- Prostitution
- Driving While Impaired (DWI), (if PCA is providing transportation to participant)
- Theft
- Drug Offenses

Appendix H- Agency Checklist

If you decide to hire a personal assistant (PA) through an agency, or utilize an agency as part of your emergency back-up plan you will want to talk with agencies to learn what services they provide and what they charge. You will want to be sure the agency understands consumer direction, whether or not they can meet your needs, and if you will be able to work with them. Here are some questions that will help you to make your decision.

- What geographic area do you serve? Do you provide personal assistants in my area?
- What types of services do you provide?
- Do you have an emergency out-of-hours service and how do I contact it?
- How will you determine what services I need? Who does the assessment? How will I be involved in the process?
- Do you have literature explaining your services, my rights, eligibility requirements, fees, etc.?
- Do you develop a written plan of care? How will I be involved in developing this plan and how often is it updated?
- Do you educate clients/families on the type of care being provided?
- What are the minimum/maximum hours of service in a day or week? Are there service limitations in terms of tasks performed?
- Are there service limitations in terms of times of the day/hours of the day? Are workers available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week?
- How much choice do I have over my hours of service?
- Can I meet a personal assistant before they start working for me?
- How soon can a worker begin? Do you have a waiting list?
- How do you select or screen your workers prior to employment? Do you have references for all of your personal assistants?
- What kind of general training do they receive? What kinds of specialized training do they receive?

- Do you provide benefits and liability and malpractice insurance for your workers? Will I be expected to have insurance coverage?
- Who pays the worker (agency or client)?
- Who supervises the worker? How often do they visit?
- Whom do I call if the worker does not show up? How do you handle getting me a replacement worker? What happens if my regular personal assistant is sick doesn't show up or is away on a holiday?
- Whom do I call if I have a problem with my worker? Do you have a complaint procedure?
- Do you have a confidentiality policy?
- What are your fees? Do services cost more on weekends and holidays? What do fees cover? Will I have to pay any extras such as travel expenses?
- Do you have a sliding fee scale or subsidized services?
- Do you provide clients with a written statement of costs and payment option plans?
- How and when do I pay the agency? Is the agency willing to bill my Fiscal Intermediary for services provided?
- May I see in advance a copy of any contract that I may be required to sign?

Remember that it will cost you more to go through an agency to get the same amount of care you would receive by employing your own personal assistants directly. However, utilizing an agency as an emergency back up is not a bad idea. You just need to make sure that the agency is willing and able to provide someone to you on an on call basis.

Notes

**Appendix I- Sample PersonalChoice Individual Service and Spending Plan
ISSP**

Participant Name: _____ Curley Howard _____

(A) Monthly Budget Amount: \$ _2,512.70_

Representative Name: _____ Moe Howard _____

Medicaid #: _____ _111-11-1111_

Type of Plan: (check one) Initial ☒ X Revision _____ Reassessment _____

Start Date: _____ _4/1/2006_

I. Direct Hire Services

Service Type/Description	Goal #	Hours per Week	Hourly Wage	Total Taxes per Hour	Sum of Hourly Wages & Taxes	# of Hours per Month	Total Monthly Cost
Personal Care PCA #1	1	20	\$12.00	\$1.32	\$13.32	86.6	\$ 1,153.51
Personal Care PCA #2	1	10	\$14.00	\$1.53	\$15.53	43.3	\$ 672.45
Housekeeping	1	5	\$9.00	\$ 0.99	\$ 9.99	21.7	\$ 216.78

(B) Total Monthly Direct Hire Costs \$ _2,042.74_

Ia. Emergency Back-Up Plan for Personal Care

Back-up Provider	Paid (Y/N)	Additional Cost per Month (if any)	If Unused, Funds to be Saved For:	Total Monthly Cost
#1 PCA #1 or #2	Y	\$50.00	Wheelchair Van Repairs	\$50.00
#2 Cousin Larry Fine	N	0	N/A	0

(C) Total Monthly Cost for Emergency Back-Up \$ _50.00_

Participant Name: Curley Howard

Medicaid #: 111-11-1111

Representative Name: Moe Howard

II. Other Purchased Services

Service Type/Description	Goal #	Provider Name	Frequency	Unit Cost	# of Units per month	Total Monthly Cost
Fluff and Fold (Laundry)	1	Suds R' Us	1 x week	\$ 2.00/ pound	43.3	\$ 86.60
Yard Work (mowing, raking, shoveling)	1	Joe's Landscaping	1 x month	\$ 15.00	1	\$ 15.00

(C) Total Monthly Services Costs \$ 101.60

III. Purchase of Items/Goods

Description of Item/Good	Goal #	One Time Purchase (Y/N)	Vendor Purchased From	Proposed Date of Purchase	Estimated Cost	Estimated Months needed to save	Total cost or amount of monthly savings
Pies for Pie Fight	5	N	Pablo's Pies	4/2006	\$10.00	N/A	\$10.00
Air Conditioner for MS	2	Y	Art's Appliances	7/2006	\$400.00	10	\$40.00
Safety Goggles	4	Y	The Goggle Store	4/2006	\$ 8.36	N/A	\$ 8.36

(E) Total Monthly Purchase/Savings Costs \$ 58.36

(F) Fiscal Intermediary Monthly Fee \$ 110.00

(G) Advisement Agency Monthly Fee \$ 125.00

(H) Pre-Paid Fees \$ 25.00

Participant Name: Curley Howard

Medicaid #: 111-11-1111

Representative Name: Moe Howard

Reconciliation of ISSP

A. Total Monthly Budget Amount		\$ 2,512.70
B. LESS Cost of Direct Hire Services	(section I)	\$ 2,042.74
C. LESS Cost of Emergency Back-Up Plan	(section Ia)	\$ 50.00
D. LESS Cost of Other Purchased Services	(section II)	\$ 101.60
E. LESS Cost of Purchased Items/Goods	(section III)	\$ 58.36
F. LESS Fiscal Intermediary Monthly Fee		\$ 110.00
G. LESS Advisement Agency Monthly Fee		\$ 125.00
H. LESS Pre-Paid Fees (i.e. Worker's Compensation Insurance Premiums)		\$ 25.00
(A minus the sum of B, C, D, E, F, G and H)	MONTHLY BALANCE	0

ISSP Developed By:

Consumer Signature: Curley Howard

Date: 11/3/05

Representative Signature: Moe Howard

Date: 11/3/05

Advisor Review: Larry Fine **Advisor**

(Signature and Title)

Date: 11/4/05

 Acme Advisors 555-1212

(Agency Name and Telephone#)

DHS Approval: Joe Bureaucrat

(Signature)

Date: 11/6/05

Appendix J- Sample PersonalChoice Participant Goals Summary

Participant Goal	Date Set	Date Achieved	Person(s) Responsible	Budget Funds Utilized (Y/N)
1. <i>I need someone to help me with my personal care and housekeeping</i>	1/5/06		Curley	Y
2. <i>I want to purchase an Air Conditioner to make my MS symptoms better when it's hot</i>	1/5/06		Curley	Y
3. <i>I need to protect my eyes from Moe's eye gouges</i>	1/5/06		Curley	Y
4. <i>Having a pie fight once a month will improve my mental health (per my psychiatrist)</i>	1/5/06		Curley	Y
5. <i>A ceiling mounted track lift will make me more independent</i>	1/5/06		Curley	N

Participant/Representative Signature

Date

Advisor Signature

Date

Rev. Date	Part. Init.	Adv. Init

Appendix K- PersonalChoice Program Complaint Form

Participant/Representative Name: (Please Print)		
Address:		
City:	Zip:	Telephone ()
Best Time to contact: _____		
Name of Agency (or person) Complaint is directed at:		
Please use this space to describe the problem you are having with the Agency listed above, use the back of the page if needed.		
Date Filed: _____		
Does the Complaint impact the Participant's Health or Safety? Yes _____ No _____		
For PersonalChoice Program Use:		
Date received: _____		
Action Taken:		
PersonalChoice Staff: _____ Date: _____		

Mail This Form To:
PersonalChoice Program
RI Department of Human Services, Center for Adult Health
600 New London Ave.
Cranston, RI 02920

Acknowledgements

This quickstart guide was developed utilizing materials and structural guidelines from the following sources:

CDAS Training Reference Manual. Colorado Department of Health Care Financing and Policy

CDC+ Consumer Directed Care Plus, Consumer Notebook. Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Working Together, Personal Assistance Training and You. CPAS, Center for Personal Assistance Services. University of California, San Francisco

**Mail This Form To:
PersonalChoice Program
RI Department of Human Services, Center for Adult Health
600 New London Ave.
Cranston, RI 02920**