

# Selecting a Provider Agency

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There is a [Guide to Services](#) at  
[www.ddamaryland.org](http://www.ddamaryland.org)

The DHMH Office of Health Care  
Quality can share quality  
information about agencies (410-  
402-8100)

Many provider agencies have had  
Ask Me! surveys completed. As  
any you are considering to share  
the results.

For more information on topics  
discussed in this fact sheet,  
contact

Service Coordination

Phone: 301-663-8044

[www.servicecoordinationinc.org](http://www.servicecoordinationinc.org)



### QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN SELECTING A SERVICE PROVIDER

One of the most difficult decisions is what agency to select to assist you with residential, vocational, educational, and related supports and services. Most important is to pay attention to how you feel when you talk to a provider as well as the information they share. In addition, there are some questions that you might want to think about asking as you make your selection.

Ask to visit the site where services will be provided. Be sure to visit when people are receiving services.

- Are there any contracts the person and/or family is to sign?
- How do you make sure people are treated with respect?
- How do you make sure people are given both the support and freedom they need?
- How do you allow (actively help) people to make choices?
- How do you ensure safety for people you serve?
- What is your access to outside resources for information, medical guidance, dietary guidance, behavioral modifications, etc.?
- What criteria do you use in selecting professional consultants?
- What are some names of people and/or families who are currently receiving services to talk to about the agency?
- How many people with developmental disabilities and family members are on your board?
- Do you have any written material about the agency (brochures, service descriptions, etc.)?
- How could I go about getting the most recent licensure survey?
- Are you accredited by any accrediting bodies?
- What professional organization/s do you belong to?
- How long have you been in business?
- Do you have a parent organization? What is its role?
- How are people's finances handled in your agency?

*These Fact Sheets are designed to provide general information only and are not designed to substitute for the assistance of a Service Coordinator.*

- How do you routinely report to people and their parents/family members, how people's funds are being used?
- What is the screening process for hiring staff?
- How are direct service staff supervised?
- What training do you offer staff?
- On the average, what is the experience and education of your staff?
- What is the mechanism for supervision, evaluation and dismissal of staff?
- What type of 24-hour emergency access do the individual and family have to staff (i.e. direct care staff, managerial staff, administrative staff)?
- What is the staff turnover rate, for both administrative and direct care service staff?
- What emergency back-up systems do you have in place for behavioral and medical issues?
- What is your policy regarding medication and its administration?
- How is staff certified to administer medication to people?
- Which staff is certified?
- How do you individualize services to meet individual needs?
- What is the procedure to discharge people from your program?
- How many people have you discharged in the last year?
- How many of the individuals discharged from your program were because of behavioral/medical issues?
- How many of the individuals discharged from your program moved to less supervised situations?
- How do you respond to life changes (marriage, retirement, etc.)?
- What recreational and social activities are available for people?
- How individualized, available and consistent are recreation and socialization opportunities?
- How often do people participate in these activities?
- What kind of transportation is available during the week? On weekends?
- Do you have good relationships with neighbors and/or neighborhood associations where people live?
- What is the general location of the houses, work, and work training sites for people served?
- Will anyone you support allow a tour of his or her home or work? Go on a tour, if available.