

Self-Directed Services in Oklahoma

Lesson 3: Hiring Staff



This course was developed by Developmental Disabilities Services of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services and the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD.

HIRING STAFF

The requirements for hiring SDS staff is very important. It is critical that you hire good, reliable employees. As the EOR, you are required to follow DDS policy when hiring SDS staff.

SDS staff must :

- **Be at least 18 years of age**
- **Pass a background check before beginning work**
- **Have a social security number and be a United States citizen or a legal alien with permission to work in the United States (I-551 Visa/Green Card)**
- **Agree to follow waiver/Medicaid rules**
- **Sign an agreement with DHS-DDS and the employer (you)**
- **Be physically able and mentally alert to carry out the duties of the job**
- **Not work more than 40 hours in any week**
- **Not implement restrictive or intrusive procedures (limiting the individual's rights, using physical management techniques, etc.)**

 **Remember, in SDS, parents or guardians cannot be paid employees for individuals under the age of 18.**



EMPLOYMENT LAWS



When hiring staff, there are some basic employment laws that you must follow.

As an employer, you cannot discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran. You must pay employees at least the federal minimum wage.

You may have some additional requirements based on the needs of the individual receiving supports. For example, staff working with an active child need to be physically able to keep up with the child. Staff working with an adult who requires some lifting and transferring must be physically able to perform the duties of the job.



THE BENEFITS OF A JOB DESCRIPTION

There are benefits to having a job description for the SDS staff. A well written job description can help you concentrate on the type of employee the individual needs. It can also help narrow the search for the right person. If you develop a job description, include things like:

- The individual's likes, dislikes and needs
- What tasks the employee will be expected to perform for the individual
- Where the employee will work
- The days of the week and/or hours the employee will work
- How the employee will be expected to do the job



FINDING GOOD EMPLOYEES



There are many places to find SDS staff.

Word of mouth is a great way to advertise. You might talk to your family, friends and neighbors. You may want to advertise or post an announcement on your local college campus. Here are some ideas for finding good staff:

- Ask special education teachers and teacher aides if they know someone
- Advertise in church bulletins
- Advertise on university and college campuses. Put notices on bulletin boards in the speech and hearing department, social work department, education and early childhood education departments, in the library, in the student union, etc.

 **Note:** You cannot include advertising costs in your budget.



INTERVIEWING AND SELECTING STAFF

Each potential employee should complete a job application. This gives you a record of basic information about the individual and helps identify the best applicants. The application should request information about past or current employers and references.

[\(A sample job application can be found in the forms lesson.\)](#)

After reviewing the applications and selecting the best candidates, schedule interviews. The interview will give you time to talk with the applicants and learn more about them. It also gives the applicants time to see if they are truly interested in the position, if they want to work the hours for the salary offered and so on.

You should always contact the references and employers listed on the application before making your final decision. Once you have made a decision about who you want to hire and the person has accepted the position, as a courtesy, you should contact the applicants who were not hired.



STAFF TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Each SD Staff you hire is required to complete the following training courses:

Before beginning to work:

- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid
- Medication administration training, if the SD Staff will be administering medications

No later than 30 days following the date of hire:

- Foundation Training course
- Effective Teaching course (ETL I)

Within 90 days of the date of hire:

- Health course

Within six (6) months of the date of hire:

- Communication Course
- Skill Building course

In addition, each SD-job coach is also required to complete the following:

- General Employment Training (GET)
- Job Coach Training/Employment Specialist Orientation (ETSO I)



STAFF TRAINING REQUIREMENTS - CONTINUED

There may be individual-specific training needs outlined in the Individual Plan with specific timeframes for completion. This training is based on the unique needs of the individual receiving services. Examples of individual-specific training include:

- Training on a mealtime assistance program
- Training to assist the individual with an electronic communication device
- Training on a dressing program
- Training on a behavior support plan

Certificate of Competency – In Home Supports Waiver SD-HTS Only

If you are receiving services through the In Home Supports Waiver and hire an SD-HTS who has already demonstrated competence in caring for the individual receiving supports, such as a friend, neighbor, secondary family member, etc., policy allows you to waive some of the training requirements.

To waive training requirements for an SD-HTS, ask your case manager for a *Certificate of Competency* form. If a Certificate of Competency is completed, a copy must be given to the fiscal agent and your case manager.

This does not apply to SD-job coaching staff or individuals receiving services through the Community Waiver.

More information about the Certificate of Competency can be found on the following page.



STAFF TRAINING REQUIREMENTS – CONTINUED

The following trainings are required if you do not chose to sign a Certificate of Competency form.

No later than 30 days following the date of hire:

- Foundation Training course
- Effective Teaching course (ETL I)


Within 90 days of the date of hire:

- Health course

Within six (6) months of the date of hire:

- Communication Course
- Skill Building course



 **Note:** It is important for you to know that when you complete and sign a *Certificate of Competency* form, you are certifying that the SD-HTS has already demonstrated competence in caring for the individual before becoming your paid employee.

(The form mentioned above and step-by-step instructions about how to complete it can be found in the forms training guide.)


Reminder: This does not apply to SD-job coaching staff or individuals receiving services through the Community Waiver.



STAFF TRAINING REQUIREMENTS - CONTINUED

Verification of completed CPR/First Aid training must be given to the fiscal agent. The fiscal agent will not pay your employee unless it can verify that the employee training has been completed and is current.

DDS has an online version of several of the classes available through the College of Direct Support. To find out more about the online training classes for your employees you can reach out to your DDS Case Manager and request a copy of the quarterly training schedule.

 **Note:** CPR, First Aid and Medication Administration Training all require periodic recertification. Acumen tracks the CPR and First Aid training and will send notification to the EOR when recertification is due. The EOR is responsible for tracking any recertification needed for Medication Administration Training.

Click here to access the policy concerning SDS staff training requirements [OAC 340: 100-3-38-5 Training requirements for staff](#)



SUPERVISING EMPLOYEES

You will set the work schedule for your SDS staff based on your needs and what has been approved in your budget. You will also outline and go over the job duties and requirements with the staff, making sure they follow the DDS and OHCA policies.

Your SDS staff must keep daily progress notes. The notes should briefly describe the activities that occur during the staff work hours, any problems noted, high points, etc.

It is a good idea to verify that your staff has a valid driver's license and auto insurance, if expected to drive the individual to appointments, etc.

If staff are doing a good job, make sure you tell them. If they are not doing as well as you had expected, take the time to discuss areas where improvement is needed. Give the employee time to make improvement. In some cases, it will not work out and you may have to terminate the staff.



CONGRATULATIONS!

You have completed Lesson 3, an overview on hiring, training and supervising employees.

In Lesson 4, you will learn about reporting, and developing and maintaining required records.

When all of the lessons are completed, you will hopefully have a better understanding of the Self-Directed Services option and whether it is right for you.

