



# **Being An Employer: Hiring Personal Attendants**

August 11, 2004



# Who Can Be An Employer?

- Recipients of direct/individualized funding through government ministries
- Recipients of direct funding or lump sum payments from third parties or court settlements
- People who have the ability to purchase their supports independently



# What Kind of Support Do You Need?

- Assistance with the activities of daily living
- Guidance
- Coaching in life skills
- Therapeutic interventions

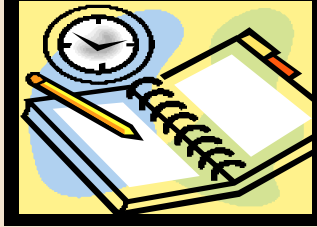




# Developing a Job Description

- **Your needs become tasks for personal attendant**
- **Personal qualities**
- **Skills and qualifications**
- **Deciding how much you can pay**
- **Special considerations**





# Your Needs: Outline the Week

- Outline tasks you need done each day of the week

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Shower & dress	Shower & dress	Shower & dress	Shower & dress	Shower & dress	Shower & dress	Shower & dress
vacuum	go to bank	swimming	Volunteer work	laundry	community centre	





# Your Needs: Organize the Tasks

- Which end of your day is more routine?
- Are you a morning or evening person?
- Can you put the most labour-intensive activities in the part of the day that matches your energy levels?



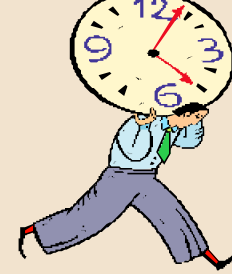
# Consolidating the Tasks



- Can you combine the help you need each day into parcels of time?
- Create a checklist of tasks and the times that they need to be done
- This will allow you to know how to schedule your person assistant's time



# Scheduling:



## How Many Workers Do You Need?

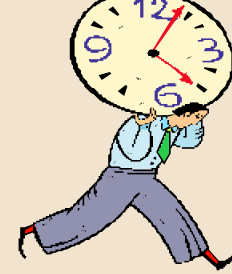
- Total hours of need = routine, predictable needs + 25% allowance for sporadic, unpredictable events
- Consider hiring as many personal attendants as the market will bear – this allows for increased security and flexibility.

Example: 30 hours / week can be divided by 5 workers with 6 hour shifts

- If you need 24 hour live-in support, recruit a minimum of 3 workers



# Scheduling:



## How Many Workers Do You Need?

- If you rely on only 1 worker, ensure that you have back-up family and friends to cover emergencies
- Build up a stock of casual or back-up personal attendants who are willing to fill in on short notice
- Specify the average number of hours / week in your ad or job posting





# What Personal Qualities Are Important?

Here are some that are ranked highly by people with disabilities who are employers:

- Punctual
- Reliable / trustworthy / honest
- Able to follow instructions
- Comfortable with routine
- Good natured and patient
- Flexible





# Skills and Qualifications

- **What skills are essential for you – list them in order of highest priority**
- **Example:**
  - driver's license**
  - sign language**
  - first aid training**
  - suctioning**

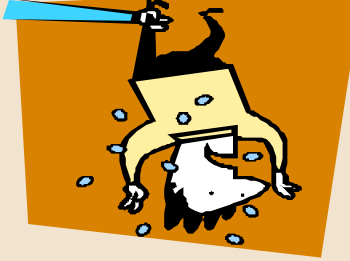




# Skills and Qualifications

- **The highest priority skills can serve as a way of screening candidates prior to interview**
- **Some people prefer attendants with no experience so that they can provide training “from the ground up”**





# Deciding How Much You Can Pay

- In general, about 20% of funding will be needed for employer costs
- In BC, the minimum hourly wage is \$8.00 / hour and the minimum live-in wage is \$80.00 / day (all or part of the day)





# Deciding How Much You Can Pay

- **The higher the level of pay, the greater the chance of finding and keeping the workers you want**
- **Consider other incentives that you can offer in lieu of pay; examples: room and board, access to a vehicle**



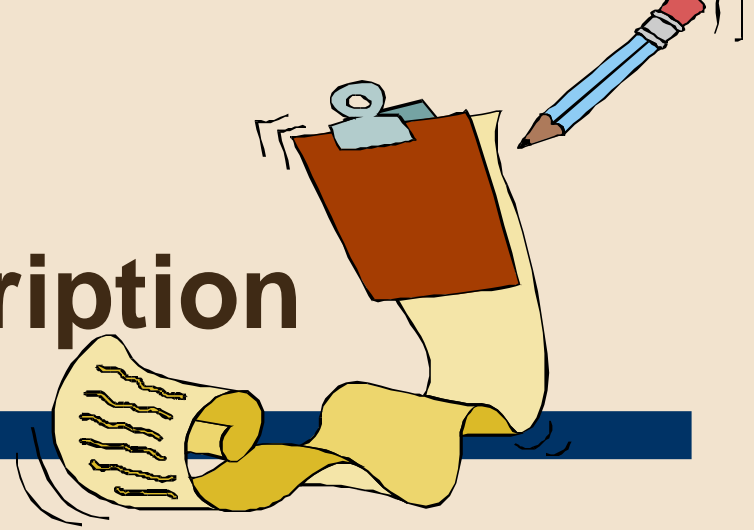


# Special Considerations

- Preferences for male or female attendants
- Desire for privacy
- Space available in your home
- Shared interests
- Smoking / alcohol use



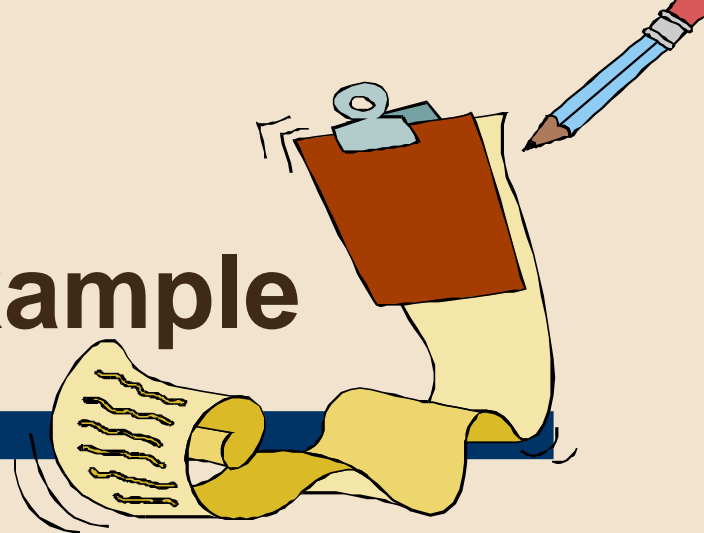
# Job Description



- Once you have compiled this information you have all of the pieces for a job description
- Headings: Purpose  
Key Tasks  
Experience  
Skills  
Special Requirements



# Job Description: Example



## Personal attendant to E.J.

- E.J. is a 24 year old man with a spinal cord injury who lives in his own apartment
- He needs 12 hours per day of support with all of the activities of daily living and his work as a consultant in computer programming



# Job Description: Purpose



**To assist E.J. at his direction to manage his daily life as easily and smoothly as possible**



# Job Description: Key Tasks



- All aspects of personal care hygiene such as showering or sponge bathing, hair care, skin care, dressing, etc.
- All aspects of personal care involving bowel and bladder regimes
- Preparation of drinks, refreshments and cooking of meals
- Assistance with eating and cleaning up after meals
- All aspects of mobility – assisting wheelchairs, cleaning w/c, charging batteries, driving client's vehicle
- Exercise regimes
- Assistance with correspondence, banking, personal papers, medical and other appointments
- Transfers



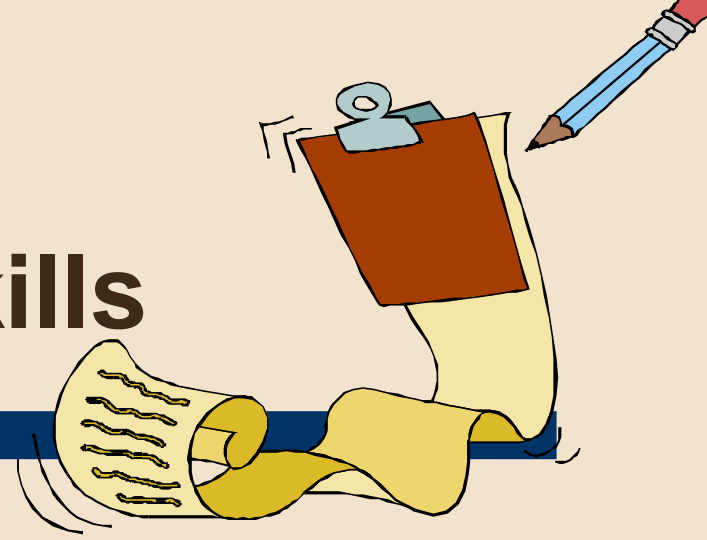
# Job Description: Experience



**Experience working with people with disabilities is preferred but not required**



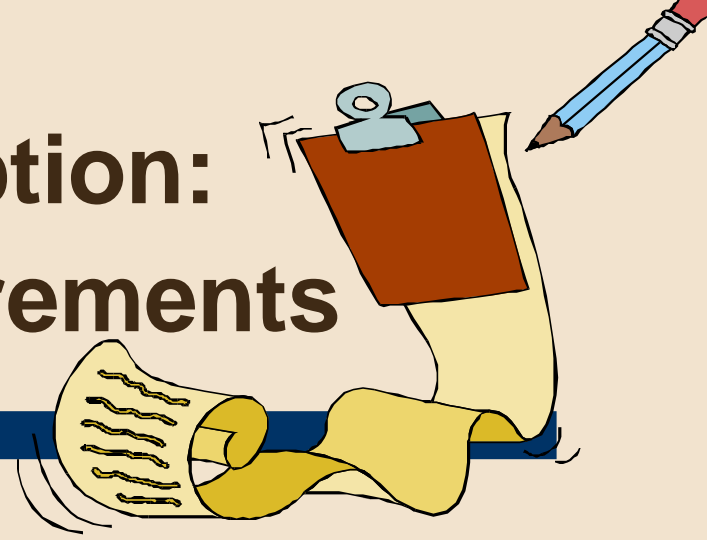
# Job Description: Skills



- **Driver's license**
- **Excellent communication**
- **Computer skills**

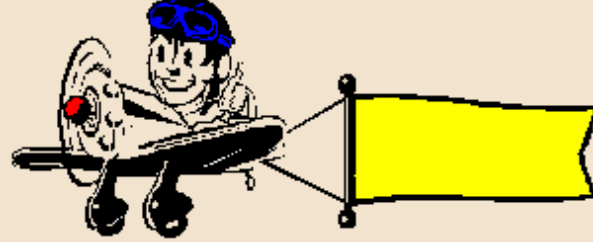


# Job Description: Special Requirements



- **Non-smoking**
- **Able to travel**





# Advertising for a Personal Attendant

- **Paid:** newspapers (local papers may be best)  
On-line job sites (Workopolis, Monster)
- **Free:** community centres  
Libraries  
Schools / community colleges / universities  
Network of friends, family, other direct funding users
- If possible, work together with other direct funding users to advertise and screen potential employees

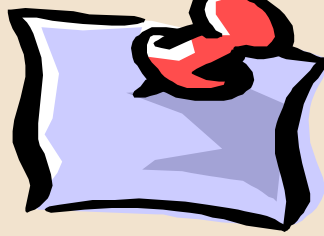




# Example of a Newspaper Ad

**Personal care attendant needed (10 hours per week) for a young individual with physical disabilities. If you are flexible, physically fit, energetic and fun please call 000-0007.**





# Example of a Job Posting

This job is an excellent opportunity for students.

Individual with physical disabilities is looking for Care Attendants to perform a variety of tasks, e.g., personal care, some housekeeping, shopping, accompanying to school, social events, etc.

There are a variety of shifts available: day shifts, night shifts, hourly shift, split shifts, etc. Shifts could range from weekends (1 or 2 days), or 1 or 2 days during the week, depending on the student's schedule.

**NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!**

This is a great opportunity to earn some extra money and gain valuable experience while going to school.

Please call 123-4567. Leave your name, telephone number and a brief description of yourself and we will call you right back!





# Screening

- Ads in major newspapers may lead to 200+ enquiries
- Can ask for resumes by email or fax
- Try not to use your home phone number (can get a temporary voice message box from Telus)
- If using home phone number, use answering machine and have a question on the machine;

**Example:**

**“You have reached 333-4444. If you are applying for the personal attendant position, please leave your name, phone number and a brief message telling about your past experience.”**





# Information to Gather on Application Forms

➤ Can help to narrow the pool of candidates. Types of information:

Personal	Name, address, citizenship
Availability	Days, times, night shift, overnight, 1-3 day stretches
Education	Most recent, languages spoken
Skills	e.g., transfers, condom drainage, tube feeding
Employment history	Employer information, reason for leaving
Health status	Problems, allergies
Other	Hobbies, leisure activities, references





# Group Application Sessions

- **Arrange to get a room at a community centre, library or mall and invite people to come and fill in application forms**
- **Work with other direct funding users to compile and screen the application forms**





# Ranking The Candidates

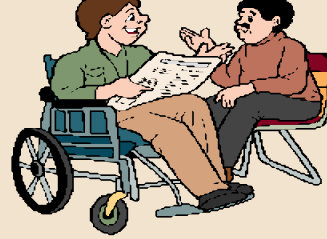
- If you receive many applications you need to decide who to interview
- Some suggestions for ranking (narrowing the field of interviewees):

**Critical skills test**

**Availability test**

**Personal characteristics test**

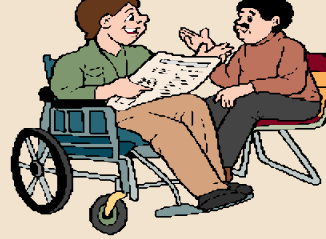




# Conducting An Interview

- **Setting**
- **Guidelines for a good interview**
- **Sample interview questions**
- **Rating schemes**



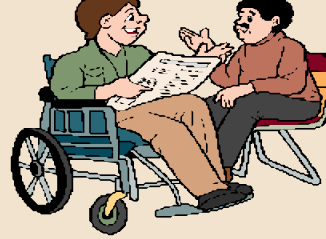


# Conducting Interviews

## Setting

- Consider a location other than your own home
- Have a friend or a former personal assistant sit in on the interview
- Allow for privacy





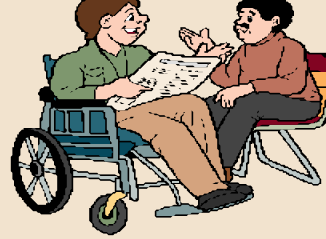
# Conducting Interviews

## Guidelines for a Good Interview

### Objectives:

- To obtain specific information
- To establish a positive relationship with the applicant
- To promote a favourable view of the position being offered



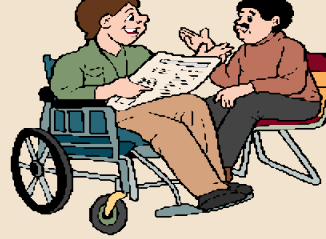


# Conducting Interviews

## Guidelines for a Good Interview

- Use the same set of questions for each applicant
- Use a quick scoring system so you will not have to spend time writing
- Open the interview with a non-threatening subject (examples: the weather, last night's hockey game)
- Encourage the applicant to ask questions
- Do not ask questions that target race, religion, sexual preferences, age or marital status



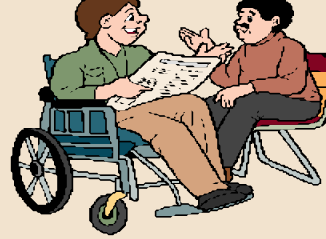


# Conducting Interviews

## Sample Interview Questions:

- What is your understanding of the position that you are applying for?
- How does your personality, training and experience fit with this position?
- Why do you want this job?
- What are your overall career goals?
- How do you view confidentiality?
- How do you feel about the person you are supporting being your employer?





# Conducting Interviews

- **Scoring the candidates:** develop a quick scoring system for each question that you ask

**Examples:**

**Scale:** 0 1 2 3 4 5

where 0 = unacceptable and 5 = excellent

**Checklist:** make a list of the most important attributes and skills and check them off if a candidate displays them

- Ability to drive
- Ability to lift/ transfer
- Honest

*Hiring Personal Attendants*





# Checking References

- **Essential to making a decision**
- **Questions to ask:**
  - **Length of previous employment**
  - **Type of tasks performed**
  - **Response to supervision**
  - **Ability to learn new tasks**
  - **Reliability, promptness**
  - **Would you hire this person again?**
- **Criminal Record Check**





# Making a Decision

- **Trust your instincts. If you do not feel completely comfortable with the applicant don't make a job offer**
- **Consider whether the applicant's personality fits with yours**
- **Qualifications are important but personal characteristics are more important**

