



# Respite Tip Sheet #002

## Hiring Your Own Respite Provider

In services like NextStep's MyCare respite voucher program you may need to hire the person who is going to provide care for your family member while you get a break. You are going to want to hire someone you can trust. You may know someone—a friend, neighbor, niece, co-worker, or friend of a friend you can hire. In MyCare you can hire a relative but they cannot normally be paid through this program if they live in your home. What if you don't have any idea who you could hire? What if you don't know how to start to hire someone and how to be comfortable leaving them with your family member? Hopefully this tip sheet will help.

1. Think about the traits you want in someone. Write it down. What qualities do you want in someone who is going to be taking care of your loved one? Do you prefer a male who can better assist your male family member with personal care or who can more easily do any required lifting? Do you prefer a woman? Do you want a grandma type? A young energetic type? Do they need to have experience or can you train them?
2. Where are you going to find this person? Who can help you find someone? Ask around. You never know who might be willing to help you out by providing some care or to help you find someone. And you'll never know unless you ask, so ASK! Use caution but consider placing an ad in the newspaper or posting on social media if you keep striking out. Care.com is a website where you can register and get help in locating qualified and screened candidates to consider hiring. There is a cost to register but it could be money well spent. NextStep has a MyCare Registry but like many families has not been successful in getting very many potential providers to register. As you conduct your search write down your contacts and keep track of what and who is helpful or not.



3. When you have a potential lead on someone to hire, you will need to give that person an idea of what is expected of them. They will need to be able to do whatever you would normally do during the timeframe you have them scheduled. This could mean bathing, diapering, dressing, feeding, positioning, lifting/transferring, monitoring TV/Internet use, playing games, taking walk, etc. Get off to a good start and make sure the person who is a potential respite provider has some idea of what they will be doing before you interview, screen, and hire them.

### **So what's next after you have someone in mind to hire?**

You are going to be hiring and paying someone to care for your family member. Approach this in a professional manner. Think about job interviews and a hiring process you may have experienced. You need to be prepared to take some time and use patience throughout the process. Prepare yourself with each step by researching and writing down things so you do not forget.

Let's say you are going to first have a telephone contact. During this conversation you need to share that basic information about your family member and what you expect (#3 above). Make a list of what you want to remember to tell the person. Be prepared with a few questions you plan to ask and write notes during the call. Ask the person to tell you about their experience and any special training they may have. Ask why they would like to do respite for you. Trust your instincts. If you didn't have a good feeling about this person you do not have to follow up. Thank them and end the call. Keep looking until you find someone you think may be a good fit for your family.

You may want to actually create a written application. This will give you a lot of information to compare on different candidates if you are lucky enough to have

more than one. It will also tell you if the person has the ability to complete a simple form.



### The Interview

You must meet the person before you hire them. Arrange a meeting in a location that makes the most sense and gives you the greatest comfort. This might be your home, the provider's home (if this is where the care will take place), or a neutral location. If/when you invite them to your home it will give you the opportunity to see them interact with your loved one. It may also be easier and more convenient. In some cases you might want to meet in a neutral location in the community like a fast food restaurant, busy park, or coffee shop. This is especially true if you will be considering someone who is a stranger to you who is not known to anyone you know who can vouch for them. This is more secure and could also be less disruptive if your household would have too many distractions.



During your meeting you want to have a comfortable conversation but you want to make sure you find out what you need. You will also need to answer any questions the potential provider might have. Be cautious of someone who doesn't want to know anything about your loved one. It could just mean they are shy or it could mean they don't really care enough. Be prepared to outline all that you expect from a provider. Be specific.

- Let them know the schedule they must keep; any details you want them to keep notes on; any activities they will be involved in.
- Be clear that you expect them to give their full attention to your family member during respite care.
- Give them an overview of what a typical day is like for your family member.
- Let them know about any medical needs, diet, likes, dislikes, and "house rules." You can't expect this person to follow your house rules unless you tell them what they are.
- Let the person know how you hope to use respite to see if they are available when you are likely to want to use them.
- If there are other children they will be caring for

they need to know this. [NOTE: In MyCare you will only get assistance with the cost for the enrolled child.]

- Be prepared to answer questions they may have also. In fact, encourage them to ask.

Here are a few sample questions you might want to use:

- ⇒ *Tell me about yourself.*
- ⇒ *Why do you want to be a respite provider?*
- ⇒ *Tell me about your experience working with adults or children with disabilities.*
- ⇒ *When are you available to do respite for me?*
- ⇒ *How much do you expect to be paid?* [NOTE: Be sure to discuss pay—how much, when]

If you are going to take your family member to their home, you will have other kinds of questions. You will want to ask about typical menus, sleeping arrangements, backup support, and who else will be in the home while your loved one is staying. You should definitely visit their home before leaving your loved one there.

Think about typical issues you experience with your family member and give the interviewee an example of what to expect. Ask them how they think they would handle it. This might be something like "Jon throws food on the floor" or "Sally might hit you while you are helping her dress." or "Chris sometimes screams" or "Everett will sometimes go out the back door when my back is turned." Be sure to also share how you would like them to handle any common behavior problems they are likely to experience while caring for your family member.



Make notes and compare if you have more than one person you are considering. If you are planning to use respite care overnight or for a few days at a time, schedule a pre-visit. Arrange for your family member to spend some time with their new care provider for a few hours so they can get to know each other.

### Check References

You will want to check references on anyone you plan to hire. If this person is known to you, you already know if they can be trusted. If they are known to someone you know, that person may be able to give you a good reference. If this person is unknown to you or someone you trust, you will want to get at least three references to contact.

Contact the references by phone. You will want to ask a few basic questions and be sure to write down the answers. Here are some examples of questions:

- *How long have you known this person?*
- *How do you know this person?*
- *Do you consider this person reliable and dependable?*
- *What do you know about this person's experience or ability to care for someone with a disability?*
- *Would you recommend this person to take care of someone with special needs?*
- *(If a former employer) Would you rehire this person? Why or why not?*

### Screening the Person

Missouri created a Family Care Safety Registry (FCSR) in 2001. When you hire a respite provider you can use this registry to screen the person. The registry will check multiple state databases including the Mo Highway Patrol to determine if a person has any documented negative history with any of them. Families using MyCare funding are required to screen their providers on this registry.

The FCSR makes sure that anyone providing care for children, seniors, or individuals with disabilities can be screened for employment purposes. The law requires individuals providing this kind of paid employment to be registered so anyone hiring them can perform a screening. If a person is registered, families or other employers can contract the Registry to get a background screening at no cost. There is a cost for a person to register for the first time. If you hire someone who needs to register for the first time, you can assist them by paying or reimbursing them for this one time only expense. In 2021 the cost is \$14.00 and if registering online there is an additional \$1.25 fee for processing a charge payment. A Worker Registration Form can also be printed from the website and mailed along with a check for \$14.

Families and providers can obtain all the detailed information they need to obtain a screening on the FCSR by visiting their website or contacting the Registry by phone. NextStep also has information that can be shared to help families navigate this required screening.

The FCSR was designed to give families peace of mind however just because there is nothing that shows up on this screening does not mean that you do not need to monitor them closely and check their references. The screening will not show anything the person may have done in another state. While not perfect the FCSR is one way to get a background screening on someone you plan to hire.

**Family Care Safety Registry  
Missouri Department of  
Health and Senior Services  
PO Box 570**

**Jefferson City, MO 65102-0570**

**Toll-Free Access Line: (866) 422-6872  
(8:00 am - 3:00 pm CST Monday-Friday)**

**Fax: (573) 522-6981**

**Email: [fcsr@health.mo.gov](mailto:fcsr@health.mo.gov)**

**Web: <https://health.mo.gov/safety/fcsr/>**



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