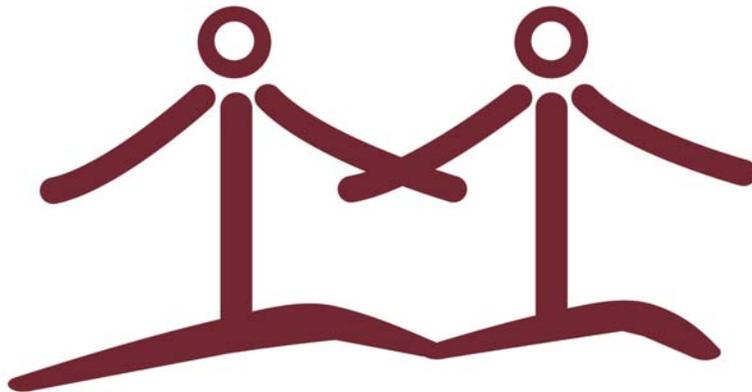


# The IHSS Registry Consumer Handbook



**Bridging Working Relationships**

**Prepared by the:**

**Sonoma County  
In-Home Supportive Services  
Public Authority**



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## **IHSS Consumer Handbook**

Most elderly and disabled In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) recipients (consumers) prefer to stay independent for as long as possible. They want to stay in control of their lives and live in their homes or apartments among familiar surroundings and friends.

Additional help in the home is needed sometimes, in order to achieve this goal. This handbook will give you information about hiring someone to help you in your home. It will acquaint you with the IHSS Public Authority Registry, which can help refer caregivers to you. It also contains information about interviewing, hiring, supervising and dismissing caregivers.

### **Who is the IHSS Caregiver's Employer?**

- The IHSS recipient (consumer) is the employer for the purpose of selecting, hiring, supervising, training and firing an IHSS caregiver. As the employer you must sign the caregiver's time sheet to authorize payment and, must pay your share of cost, if you have one, to the care provider.
- The IHSS Public Authority is the employer for the purpose of collective bargaining with the union that represents IHSS caregivers.
- The State of California is the employer for the purpose of paying for IHSS hours worked and providing Disability, Unemployment and Worker's Compensation Insurance.

### **What to Do First – Define the Job/Tasks**

We recommend that you review the services authorized by your IHSS social worker. These services and allocated hours are included in your "Notice of Action." Authorized services may include such things as: laundry; shopping; bathing; dressing; meal preparation; feeding; assistance with transfers; accompaniment to medical appointments; and, protective supervision. The "Notice of Action" defines the tasks you need done and can serve as a job description for a prospective caregiver.

## Where to Look for Help

You may check with family, friends, and neighbors for referrals. They may even be interested in becoming your caregiver. Most senior centers have bulletin boards where you can advertise for a caregiver or find information about potential caregivers. You may also look or advertise in the classified ads in your local newspapers.

Because you are eligible for IHSS, you may contact the IHSS Public Authority Registry, a free caregiver referral service for IHSS consumers. The Registry is designed to assist IHSS consumers locate a caregiver.

## IHSS Public Authority Registry Referral Service

The Registry is operated by the IHSS Public Authority. It is a referral and support service for the IHSS consumers looking for prescreened qualified caregivers. The Registry:

- Maintains a computerized listing of screened caregivers
- Provides orientation to potential caregivers about the IHSS program and the duties and responsibilities of the IHSS caregiver.
- Screens caregiver applicants to the Registry
- Verifies Social Security Number
- Checks Personal and Work References
- Reviews California Driving Record (DMV report) if they intend to drive
- Verifies Vehicle Insurance (if they intend to drive their own car)
- Performs Sonoma County Superior Court Criminal Background Check
- Performs State of California Department of Justice (fingerprinted) Criminal Background Check
- Interviews applicants and review their skills, abilities and employment history.
- Approves caregivers for the Registry who have gone through orientation and screening.

## How to Work with the Registry

An IHSS Consumer can request a referral for a Registry Caregiver by:

- Calling the Registry at 565-5700 and speaking to a Registry Coordinator.

Be prepared to provide the Registry coordinator with the following:

- A description of the IHSS authorized hours you have
- The type of services authorized
- The schedule you prefer for the caregiver

A Registry Coordinator will refer you to appropriate caregivers that best match your needs. Please remember that the Registry does not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, religion, marital status, age, and/or sexual preference.

Once you receive referrals from the Registry, it is your responsibility, as an IHSS consumer, to interview potential caregivers, check references again if you need to, and, make hiring decisions. The Registry is a referral service. You are the employer and make the final decision to employ someone.

### **Other Services Provided by the IHSS Public Authority:**

- A quarterly newsletter for IHSS consumers and caregivers
- Free training opportunities to caregivers and consumers
- Manages the caregiver medical and dental benefits

## Preliminary Interview by Phone

It is now time to start the interviewing process to find the best person to work for you. Before you take the time to interview applicants, you may want to screen them by telephone. Your job description or “Notice of Action” (NOA) will describe the job in detail. We suggest you keep it near the telephone.



During the phone interview, how the applicant responds to your questions and comments may determine whether you ask the applicant for a face-to-face interview. By the end of the phone interview, you should have discussed the basics:

- Days and times the caregiver is needed
- Total hours required
- Start date
- Number of hours to be paid for through IHSS
- If you have a share of cost, explain how it works and how much
- Tasks the caregiver will need to perform (review your Notice of Action)
- Length of the job – long term, limited term or temporary
- Describe special needs if appropriate (for example, lifting or transfers)
- Describe authorized paramedical services that the caregiver will need to train to do
- Describe your pets, if you have any
- Describe transportation needs if you expect the caregiver to provide transportation
- Explain your practice to cover the cost of mileage or gas reimbursement
- Let the caregiver know if you smoke or use alcohol or illegal drugs
- Describe special care, equipment, special diet, or cooking, you require
- Do not schedule an interview if the phone interview does not go well. Simply take their phone number and say, “I am doing other interviews and I will get back to you.”
- If an applicant sounds reliable, and it feels good to you, schedule a face to face interview with the applicant.
- Be sure to give the caregiver your name, location of the interview, and phone number.
- Request that the applicant bring photo identification and two or three references with them (unless screened by the Registry).
- Thank applicants for calling, even if you feel the applicant is not qualified for the job.

## Disclosure of Infectious Diseases

Consumers and caregivers are strongly encouraged to disclose to each other whatever health conditions they have that may adversely affect the health of the other. This includes all infectious diseases, including HIV, hepatitis, tuberculosis, MRSA, and others. The Registry advises caregivers to use universal precautions against infectious disease in all cases, whether or not there is disclosure of a medical condition.

## Universal Precautions

Taking universal precautions means to assume that all clients can potentially infect the caregiver regardless of whether an infectious disease has been disclosed. It involves methods of preventing the spread of blood and air-borne germs, viruses, and parasites. We recommend that caregivers follow these universal procedures:

- Wear latex or vinyl gloves when there is a chance of contact with blood or body fluids, including emptying or cleaning a commode, cleaning the bathroom, dealing with dirty laundry, or providing any personal care.
- Wash hands and other skins surfaces immediately after contamination.
- Clean up blood and body fluid spills promptly while wearing gloves.
- Wear gloves when assisting a client with changing adult diapers, pads, handling bed linen, or doing bowel and bladder care.
- Wear gloves if giving a bed bath.
- Wear gloves when there is possible contact with open sores, burns, or hangnails.
- Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before preparing or eating food, before and after treating a cut or wound, after handling garbage, after going to the bathroom, and after sneezing, coughing, or blowing nose.

In general it is the obligation of the IHSS consumer to provide gloves to their caregiver. The IHSS Public Authority will provide your caregiver with a limited supply of disposable gloves, disinfectant wipes, and masks upon request.

## The Face-to-Face Interview

It may help you feel safer and more comfortable to have a family member, trusted friend, or a neighbor with you during the interview. Your family member or friend may think of additional questions to ask and assist you in the review of the applicants. You may feel more relaxed about interviewing if you practice what you are going to say to the prospective caregiver with someone else before you actually hold an interview.

### At the interview, you will make judgments on such things as:

- Attitude
- Appearance
- Listening skills
- Ability to communicate clearly



### Be sure to:

- Ask to see an identification card with a picture of the applicant on it, like a Drivers License, Department of Motor Vehicles I.D. Card, or Passport.
- Become acquainted with your applicants by letting them tell you about themselves. This also shows that you have an interest in them as a person.
- Allow the applicant to read the “Notice of Action.”
- Ask all the questions you want and if you are in doubt about anything, continue to ask questions.
- Cover transportation issues:
  - ⇒ If you need transportation, and you expect the caregiver to drive his or her own car, it is important to discuss how mileage costs will be handled.
  - ⇒ If you do not intend to pay mileage, tell the applicant at this time.
  - ⇒ The Registry recommends that you pay your caregiver for mileage at the IRS rate (in January 2009 the rate was 55 cents per mile) or that you make a different arrangement satisfactory to both you and the applicant.
  - ⇒ Finally, check that the applicant has a valid Driver’s License, DMV printout, and auto insurance (this is typically checked by the Registry).
- If you have concerns or doubts about anything an applicant says, write them down and check them out. If the applicant has been referred to you from the Registry, you can check with the Registry.

## Possible Interview Questions



- What kind of work have you done?
- What kind of training, if any, have you had?
- What type of work do you enjoy?
- What type of work do you NOT enjoy?
- Why are you in this line of work?
- If the applicant has not been referred by the Registry: Have you been convicted of a felony in the past year? What? Where? When?
- Do you mind being around someone who smokes or drinks (if appropriate)?
- Would you be willing to drive me to my doctor's appointments?
- Are you allergic to cats or dogs (if appropriate)?
- If the applicant was not referred by the Registry, ask: Do you have a driver's license and car insurance?
- Will you cook according to my needs and plan menus with me?
- Is there anything on my "Notice of Action" that you cannot or would not be able to do?
- How long do you plan to stay on the job?
- Do you have any problem understanding written or verbal directions?
- Are there any problems with the days or hours I would need you to work?

## Interview Questions for Special Needs

- Have you had any experience in caring for a person with severe memory loss?
- How would you handle a wandering person?
- How would you deal with a person who refuses to eat?
- How would you handle aggressive or abusive behavior?
- What is your training in providing domestic and personal care services?
- How would you handle a medical emergency?
- Have you ever been certified to give first aid or CPR?
- Do you know how to transfer someone?
- Would you be willing to learn how to use the hoist lift?
- Would you be willing to learn to be trained to do authorized, paramedical tasks?
- Can you change a bed with someone in it? Or, provide a bed bath?

## After the Interview

- Thank the applicants for coming to the interview.
- Tell the applicants you have other appointments and will contact them when you have made your decision.
- After the interview, write down your impressions of the applicant, and then discuss them with the person helping you with the interviews. Later, this can help you make the best decision on whom to hire.
- Select the applicant you feel most comfortable with and whom you think can best help you with your needs.
- NEVER hire someone without first checking their references, unless the caregiver was screened by the Registry. (See the next section on Questions to Ask Applicant's References.)
- If the prospective caregiver was referred by the Registry, immediately inform the Registry of your choice.

## Questions to Ask - Applicant's References

If your applicant was not referred by the Registry, you will need to check references. Here are some questions to ask:

- How long have you known this applicant?
- What was the applicant's position with you?
- What were the dates of employment (beginning to end) ?
- What were the job responsibilities?
- What were your impressions of the quality of the work performed?
- Was the applicant reliable? Dependable? Courteous? Trustworthy?
- Can the applicant work without direct supervision?
- Did the applicant follow through on assignments?
- Did you have any problems with this person? What were they?
- Why is this person no longer working for you? (Listen carefully to this answer. An unhappy former employer may be able to tell you things that you really need to know.)
- Would you rehire this individual?
- Would you hire this applicant to work with your elderly or disabled loved one?



## Hiring the Caregiver

Once you decide to hire the person referred by the Registry as your IHSS caregiver, notify the Registry at 565-5700. Your referred caregiver should have a Provider Enrollment Agreement. If not, the Registry will send one to your caregiver. Please fill it out together and mail it to the IHSS Public Authority.

If you hire someone not referred to you by the Registry, call IHSS Payroll at 565-2852 to have a Provider Enrollment Agreement sent to your caregiver.

### Please note that:

- Once you begin using your caregiver, you are responsible for completing the enrollment process and signing the completed time sheet. Even if you dismiss the caregiver later, you are responsible for getting the caregiver paid for hours worked.
- Do not have your caregiver work and then decide not to enroll them. This is an unfair labor practice because the caregiver will not get paid for work they have done.



## Developing a Work Agreement

A clear understanding of job duties and work schedule at the beginning can reduce the likelihood of conflict and misunderstanding later. When you put that understanding in writing, you have a “**Work Agreement**” or “**Contract.**” We have included a sample contract on the next page.

# Sample Contract

We agree that the following expectations and agreed upon terms will be followed mutually:

- The caregiver will arrive on schedule and the consumer will be there.
- If the caregiver is going to be late or cannot work at a regularly scheduled time, s/he will notify the consumer as soon as possible and, if possible, work out a make-up time.
- If the consumer must cancel, s/he will notify the caregiver as soon as possible and, if possible, work out a make-up time.
- The caregiver will work the agreed upon number of hours/days, and the consumer will not request extra unpaid time.
- All jobs on the task list will be done well and efficiently completed by the caregiver.
- The consumer will not ask that unreasonable tasks be done or set unreasonably high standards.
- Both persons will keep confidentiality.
- Required paperwork and timesheets will be completed and submitted promptly by the person(s) responsible.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Consumer Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Consumer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Caregiver Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Caregiver Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Supervising Your Caregiver

Supervision includes praise, accountability, good communication and record keeping. It is important that you do as much as you can for yourself, as your IHSS caregiver is assigned to do things you cannot do.

You may want to post the main list of your needs – the job description – on the refrigerator.

If you want certain things done in a specific way, it is important to write them down and post them in convenient places like the bathroom or kitchen. This makes communication and supervision easier.

Remember that it is not important that all tasks are always done exactly the way in which you would do them. There are many ways to do things. This can be a cooperative effort.



## Supervision and Communication

- Sometimes people find it difficult to be in charge. Remember you are the employer.
- Clearly explain what you want, and what it is that you expect. Open communication avoids a lot of problems.
- Give clear instructions and give training where needed.
- Make a mutually agreed upon work schedule
- Have a calendar available so the caregiver can record the hours worked at the end of each work day.
- Encourage your employee to ask questions if they are not sure of something that might be important to you.
- Your caregiver should know that you will be checking to see if the tasks you agreed upon are accomplished. As a general rule, daily duties should be checked twice a month, and weekly duties checked once a month.
- Although it may be difficult to comment on performance, “be up front” and do this regularly.
- Give praise and correction when it is needed.
- Being respectful of your caregiver encourages them to be respectful of you.
- Avoid confusing the employer-employee relationship with friendship, as this makes supervision much more difficult.
- If your caregiver has to leave your employment, and you have become close, be aware that you might feel a real loss. Know that there are others out there waiting to help you.

The following guidelines will help you in supervising you care provider.

## IHSS Authorized Duties and Responsibilities

### Domestic Tasks

- Vacuuming, dusting, and sweeping
- Damp mopping kitchen and bath
- Cleaning stove top
- Cleaning the counter tops in kitchen and bath areas
- Cleaning the sink, tub, and toilet
- Making and changing beds
- General tidying up
- Washing, folding, and putting away laundry
- Emptying trash
- Wiping/cleaning refrigerator

### Personal Care

- Bathing
- Grooming (shampoo, hair care, shaving, and dental care)
- Dressing
- Feeding and assistance with eating
- Support with toileting
- Skin care
- Help changing positions or walking and moving from place to place
- Bowel and bladder care
- Care and assistance with prosthesis

### Miscellaneous

- Shopping and errands
- Accompany to medical appointments
- Protective supervision
- Paramedical services (only if consumer's doctor sends approval notice to IHSS social worker)

### Meal Preparation & Clean Up

- Grocery shopping
- Meal preparation
- Meal clean-up

### Tasks that are NOT Authorized

- Mowing the lawn or gardening
- Pet care, such as washing or walking
- Cleaning or cooking for other family members
- Moving furniture
- Anything else not on the list of approved tasks on the Notice of Action
- Washing windows

## Giving Praise

When your caregiver is working hard and doing a good job, praise is appreciated.

- Give praise as it is deserved and immediately. Example: “I liked the dinner you prepared today. It tasted really great!”
- It is important that both parties are pleased.
- Simple “Please” and “Thank you” are also appreciated.



## Offering Correction

- Discuss problems as they arise – do not bottle them up. Discuss them firmly and calmly.
- When offering corrections, first try to comment on a task that has been done correctly. Then let the caregiver know, pleasantly but firmly, how you want the task to be done.
- When making corrections, the following is a suggested comment: “I am happy to see the bathroom so clean. But next time, could you please remember to rinse out the tub more thoroughly?”
- Blaming or making your caregiver feel ashamed will not help keep your caregiver working for you. If you find it difficult to correct your caregiver, ask for help from a family member or friend.
- The caregiver may be told several times of unacceptable behavior before being dismissed.

## **Safety**

- Do not leave valuables lying around. Keep your jewelry, cash, checkbook and credit cards put away safely and securely.
- Ask for a receipt every time your caregiver shops for you.
- Do not add your caregiver's name to your savings, checking, charge account, Social Security (SSI) or any other documents.
- Keep an eye on things such as phone usage, medications and food items.
- Do not get overly involved with your caregiver's private life.
- Do not lend your caregiver money, your car, household furnishings or clothing.
- If your caregiver is abusing you – hitting you, screaming at you, endangering your health or making you feel afraid – tell family and friends immediately and call the police or Adult Protective Services at (707) 565-5940.

## **Disaster Preparedness**

- Let your caregiver know about your disaster plan.
- Let your caregiver know where your Emergency Contact Information is located (family, doctors, neighbors, etc.)
- Discuss your expectations with your caregiver in case of an emergency or evacuation

## Record Keeping, Payroll, and Share of Cost

It is your responsibility as the employer of your caregiver to verify that the caregiver fills out time sheets correctly. Be certain that the hours claimed for each day are correct. If not, make corrections after speaking to your caregiver. Once you and your caregiver agree that the time sheet is correct, sign the time sheet, but not before. Before you sign, make certain that there is a correct total on the time sheet. If changes are made on the time sheet, initial the changes. It is the responsibility of the employer to cooperate with the employee to submit the time sheets in a timely manner.

If you have a *share of cost* (check with your social worker), it needs to be paid directly to your caregiver, as this is part of their pay. To do this, wait until your caregiver submits the time sheet. Both you and your caregiver should receive the share of cost payment letter before transacting this payment. It is called the “Explanation of IHSS SOC” letter. It is your responsibility to pay this share of cost when you receive the letter. The amount of the share of cost may change each pay period. The letters will tell you the exact amount of the share of cost that must be paid each pay period.

Here are some more tips about how to be fair and responsible in the time sheet process:

- Keep accurate records of the hours worked.
- Use a calendar to record the caregiver’s daily time.
- If you have several caregivers, it is your responsibility to insure that each worker gets their time sheet authorized for the exact hours worked and agreed upon.
- Do not sign a blank time sheet.
- If you have asked a caregiver to work for more hours than IHSS authorized on your Notice of Action, you are responsible to pay for those extra hours.
- Refusing to pay your share of cost will cause the Registry to deny referral services to you.
- Do not abuse the time sheet process.
- Do not give the caregiver more hours than worked for any reason: this is fraud.
- Do not use the time sheet process as punishment.
- Do not make inappropriate demands on your caregiver.

## **Dismissing a Caregiver**

There are many reasons for letting someone go. It may be that you just do not feel comfortable with the person in your home. There may be conflict. Perhaps the caregiver is not doing what you both agreed upon although you have tried to supervise and correct them. They may bring someone with them without permission. They may arrive late for work regularly or miss days without letting you know. Or, you may both feel it is not working out well. Other reasons for dismissal might include abuse of drugs or alcohol, excessive use of your telephone or items missing in your home. In general, as an employer you should remain professional.

## **Dismiss a Caregiver for Legitimate and Appropriate Reasons**

When you dismiss your caregiver, be sure that the dismissed caregiver gets paid for hours worked. Do not use the time sheet process in a punitive way. Do not withhold pay for legitimate hours worked, even when you dismiss a caregiver. Withholding pay for work done is illegal, as a caregiver has a legal right to be paid for all hours worked.

It is best if you have already mentioned your concerns during supervision and correction. This makes it easier if things are not working out. Although it is not required, you are encouraged to give them a two-week notice that they will be terminated so that they can make alternative plans for work. Also remember that many caregivers are attempting to maintain work hours so that they can qualify or maintain continuity for medical insurance.

Have someone with you when you are dismissing your employee. Ask if there are any of the caregiver's personal belongings in your home. If you have given your caregiver a house key, be sure to get it back at this time. (We do not recommend giving them a key in the first place.)

Promptly call Payroll (565-2852) to report that you are dismissing the caregiver and the last day of employment.

If possible, plan ahead for a replacement. Contact the Registry and inform your Registry coordinator of your need for another referral. Remember also to give an objective and fair report of the shortcomings of your dismissed caregiver.

When the final time sheet arrives, fill it out correctly so that your dismissed worker is paid for work done.

## Reasons for Immediate Dismissal

**Theft** Confront your caregiver and ask for their explanation. If you are certain that something of value is missing, call the police.

**Abuse** If you are afraid that your caregiver will harm you or you are being physically, sexually, or financially abused, in any way, let the police and Adult Protective Services (APS) know IMMEDIATELY. For Adult Protective Services, call: 565-5940. If the mistreatment or abuse of a child is involved, contact Child Protective Services (CPS) at: 565-4304.

**DO NOT REMAIN IN AN ABUSIVE SITUATION!**

Call the Registry to report theft or abuse by a Registry referred caregiver. This will help the Registry prevent it from happening to another person.

## Treat Your Caregiver Fairly

As the caregiver's employer, you are responsible for treating your caregiver fairly. This includes not discriminating against the caregiver due to their race, gender, age, marital or non-marital status, and religion. A respectful employer will:

- Sign the Provider Enrollment form as soon as possible
- Stick to an agreed upon work schedule as consistently as possible
- Provide advance notice when you need to change your schedule
- Track the hours worked accurately
- Sign time sheets and check that the hours are recorded accurately
- Insure that each caregiver is properly tracked and paid for their work, if you have multiple care providers
- Pay your share of cost

## Maintaining a Professional Relationship

Here are some hints to maintain a professional employer relationship to your caregiver:

- Do not make discourteous or rude remarks. Unkind remarks can make it difficult for you to retain a caregiver
- Avoid sexual remarks or sexual harassment
- A caregiver who has a sexual relationship with you is unprofessional and this also reflects poorly on you as an employer
- Be punctual and consistent with your agreed upon schedule
- Avoid making false allegations, such as stealing, ruining items, breaking items, etc, unless you are certain of the facts
- Do not demand that the caregiver work for hours beyond their authorized hours
- Do not ask the caregiver to do tasks not authorized by IHSS
- Do not ask your caregiver to commit fraudulent activities in regard to the time sheets
- Do not invade the privacy of your caregiver in any way
- Remember this is a business relationship- do not expect the caregiver to be your friend
- Remember a caregiver has a right to quit a job
- A working relationship can be terminated based on mutual respect
- Do not harass a caregiver after their termination of employment

Registry staff can provide you with advice on how to become a good or better employer. Employers that mistreat their Registry referred caregivers may be subject to removal of services by the IHSS Public Authority Registry. Please read the Registry policy included at the end of this handbook.

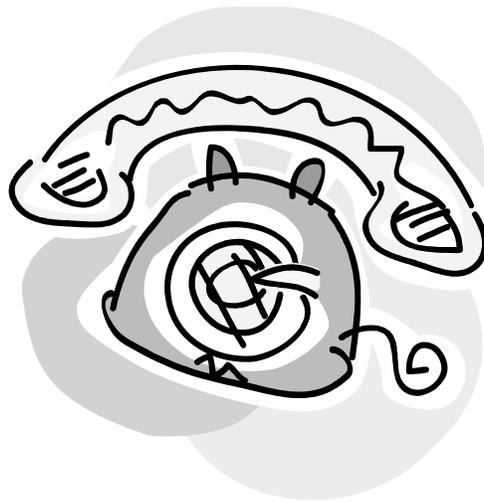
## Important Information Regarding the IHSS Program

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) are provided to help a person remain SAFELY in his or her own home and to prevent that person from being placed in an institution. Authorized services are to be performed ONLY for you and not for your family members or your guests. If you are away from your home due to hospitalization, no payment will be made for work done during your absence from your home. Some points to remember:

- Any activity not specifically authorized by the Notice of Action will not be covered under Worker's Compensation. If the caregiver is injured while performing a task not allowed in the agreement, you can be held liable.
- If your caregiver is injured on the job, s/he should call Payroll at 565-2852 and report the injury. The caregiver is eligible for Worker's Compensation.
- ALL accidents that occur while a caregiver is performing an authorized task must be reported immediately to IHSS Payroll by calling 565-2852.
- If you have received an "Explanation of IHSS SOC" letter, concerning your share of cost, and you refuse to meet your share of cost obligation, you will not be eligible for referrals from the Registry.
- Any changes in your employment situation such as the hiring or firing of your caregiver must be reported immediately to IHSS Payroll (565-2852).
- You MUST report any changes in your living arrangements – number of persons in the home, change of address, change in physical or mental condition, change in income, resources, or marital status or entry into a care facility - to the IHSS social worker (565-5900).
- Work permits for caregivers under the age of 18, must be obtained from a school before they perform any work. The permit should be retained by you, the employer.
- Any private arrangement made between you and the caregiver to pay more than the rate authorized by this agreement or to perform tasks not authorized is strictly between you and the caregiver and is not the responsibility of the IHSS Program or the IHSS Public Authority Registry.
- It is unlawful and **fraud** if you and/or your caregiver sign time sheets for more than the hours actually worked or for days and times not worked by the caregiver.

## Reporting to the Registry about Your Referred Caregiver

The Registry is interested in how well caregivers are doing. Please report any problems you have with your Registry referred caregiver to the Registry. A Registry Coordinator will note your complaint and follow up with the caregiver as necessary. Although you are the employer, responsible for taking corrective action with your employee, the Registry is interested in knowing about a poorly performing caregiver. The Registry can remove a poorly performing caregiver from the Registry based on IHSS consumer/recipient complaints.



## When Your Caregiver Is Unexpectedly Absent from Work

When your caregiver is unexpectedly absent from work due to sickness or an emergency, you may be able to wait until the caregiver returns to work. You may be particularly fragile or disabled and unable to wait for the caregiver to return. You may need important services that you cannot do for yourself. In these circumstances, you may need to turn to relatives, friends, or neighbors for help.

When no one else is able to help you in this situation, you can call the Urgent Substitute Provider Program (USPP) for a substitute short term caregiver. To determine whether you are eligible and can access a substitute caregiver, please call: 707-565-5719, or toll free: 800-601-4222.

A full description of the Urgent Substitute Program (USPP) is included on the next page.

**Sonoma County IHSS Public Authority**  
**Urgent Substitute Provider Program (USPP)**  
**Phone: (707) 565-5719 or (800) 601-4222**

**Regular Service**

Call: Phone number above. If you get voice mail, leave your name and number and a Registry Coordinator will return you call within the hour.
<b>IHSS Public Authority Staff Hours:</b> Week days: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Evening and weekend service can also be scheduled during these hours.

**After Hours Service**

Call: Phone number above. A voice mail message will give you the phone number of a Home Care Agency to call.
<b>Home Care Agency Hours:</b> Week day evenings: 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. Holidays, Saturdays & Sundays: 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

**Who is eligible for Urgent Substitute Provider Program (USPP)?**

- Residents of Sonoma County, and Currently enrolled In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Consumers/Recipients, and Individuals with an urgent need for critical services due to the unexpected and temporary absence of a regular provider.

**What USPP Services are available?**

- Nutritional services
- Provisioning of fuel for heating or cooking
- Personal care
- Pick-up and delivery of critical medications

**Do I have to pay for USPP services?**

- No, the service is free.

**How does the USPP work?**

- When and IHSS consumer calls USPP, an in-take person will interview the consumer over the phone to determine eligibility for assistance.
- If the consumer is eligible, a caregiver from a home care agency will be dispatched to the consumer's home
- The caregiver will assist the consumer with the defined urgent care needs.

**Are there limits to the USPP service?**

- USPP is intended to provide temporary, but not long-term urgent assistance.

**What are my obligations?**

- To provide a safe and courteous working environment for the home care provider.
- To require providers to do only the agreed upon services.

**How can I help to improve USPP services?**

Please fill out and return the evaluation questionnaire you will receive in the mail after you have used this service.

# Sonoma County IHSS Public Authority Consumer Removal Policy

## General Policy

The IHSS Public Authority reserves the right to remove a consumer from using Registry services after either two (2) validated minor offenses within a one-year period or one (1) validated major offense.

**Minor Offenses** include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Discourteous, rude, demeaning, or inappropriate behavior toward the caregiver or Registry staff, including any remarks of a racial or sexual nature or denigrating toward a religious preference, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation and single/marital status
- Demanding that the Registry refer a caregiver of a certain race, gender, age, religion, marital or non-marital status.
- Repeated pattern of not following through with Registry processes, including canceling interviews without notifying scheduled providers or Registry staff, not being available for scheduled interviews, not contacting Registry when a match has been made, etc.
- Repeated pattern of not following through with employer obligations in general, including not signing enrollment forms and time sheets, and not being available when provider arrives for scheduled interviews, scheduled work hours, and/or appointments
- Repeated pattern of inappropriate calling of the caregiver by telephone that compromises the caregiver's right to privacy.
- Repeated pattern of making fictitious and unsubstantiated allegations against caregivers for stealing, breaking items, ruining items, etc.
- Insisting that a provider perform tasks not authorized by IHSS, such as performing services for anyone other than the authorized consumer, such as a family member
- Demanding to be driven to unauthorized locations or at a frequency or duration unauthorized by the IHSS program
- Demanding that the caregiver work unauthorized hours and at a greater frequency or duration than authorized by IHSS
- Insisting on the caring for pets (besides service animals) or doing yard work unless authorized by IHSS

**Major Offenses** include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Theft, forgery, dishonesty or misrepresentation related to being the employer of a provider
- On the job discrimination of a protected job class including race, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and political affiliation
- Fraudulent activities involving the use of the IHSS program
- Inappropriate contact with the provider's family
- Sexual harassment or sexual abuse
- Physically abusing or assaulting a provider or knowingly putting the provider in jeopardy of physical danger
- Displaying a firearm or other dangerous weapon in a threatening manner
- Possession, use and/or offering illegal substances
- Refusing to pay share of cost after employing the caregiver
- Refusing to sign legitimate time sheets
- Refusing to provide or submit required IHSS paperwork needed to initiate provider payroll process, after utilizing the caregiver for work
- Harassing of a caregiver after termination of employment through the telephone or other means

## Procedures

1. Complaints concerning a consumer may be made verbally or in writing. The Public Authority staff will document all complaints and the outcome.
2. Prior to taking any action, the Public Authority staff will attempt to resolve the issue, by consulting with others as needed. The consumer will be given notice of the complaint and an opportunity to respond.
3. If the Public Authority staff determines a first minor offense to be valid, the consumer will be issued a verbal or written warning.
4. If the Public Authority staff determines either a second minor offense within a one-year period or a first major offense to be valid, the consumer will be removed from receiving Registry services.
5. The consumer will receive written notification of his/her removal from the Registry, the reason(s) for removal, and information about the appeal process.
6. A copy of the letter will be sent to the consumer's IHSS Social Worker, Social Worker Supervisor, and IHSS Program Manager.

## Appeal Process

1. The consumer may appeal the Public Authority's action to the Public Authority Manager within twenty days of the mailing of the Registry removal notification letter. The Public Authority Manager has the discretion to extend the twenty day timeframe if he/she deems it appropriate and reasonable. The appeal may be verbal or in writing and shall state why the consumer believes the Public Authority's action was incorrect.
2. Appeals shall include a review of the documentary evidence and, if requested, an informal hearing. An informal hearing may include testimony by the consumer, testimony by witnesses, and presentation of any new documentary evidence.
3. Within twenty days of receipt of consumer's appeal, the Public Authority Manager will make the final decision regarding the appeal and will send written notification to the consumer. This decision will be final.
4. A copy of the letter will be sent to the consumer's IHSS Social Worker, Social Worker Supervisor, and IHSS Program Manager.

## Request to Return to Services

1. The IHSS consumer – or his/her advocate, or family member – who has been removed from services can make a written request to return to Registry services on an annual basis.
2. The request shall be submitted to the Public Authority Manager and must state why the IHSS consumer thinks he/she should be allowed to return to service, including information regarding significant changes of circumstance or behavior.
3. Within twenty (20) days of receipt of the request, the Public Authority Manager will send written notification to the consumer of the decision to either approve or deny the request. This decision will be final.
4. A copy of the letter will be sent to the consumer's IHSS Social Worker, Social Worker Supervisor, and IHSS Program Manager.

# Important Phone Numbers

## **IHSS – Public Authority**

### **(Registry Coordinators, Caregiver Benefits)**

Main Registry .....	(707) 565-5700
Toll Free .....	(800) 938-9501
Registry - Spanish Speakers .....	(707) 565-5707
Urgent Substitute Provider Program .....	(707) 565-5719
Urgent Substitute Provider Program Toll Free .....	(800) 601-4222
Health and Dental Benefits for Caregivers .....	(707) 565-5703

## **IHSS – Program**

### **(Social Workers and IHSS Eligibility)**

Main .....	(707) 565-5900
Toll Free .....	(800) 938-9501

## **IHSS Payroll**

New Caregiver Enrollment or Timesheet .....	(707) 565-2852
Workers Compensation .....	(707) 565-2852

## **Adult Protective Service (APS)**

Report Abuse .....	(707) 565-5940
Toll Free .....	(800) 667-0404

## **Child Protective Services (CPS)**

Report Abuse .....	(707) 565-4304
Toll Free .....	(800) 870-7064

**Community Services .....** 2-1-1

**Directory Assistance .....** 4-1-1

**Traffic and Transit.....** 5-1-1

**AT&T Repair Service .....** 6-1-1

**California Relay for Hearing Impaired .....** 7-1-1

**In Case of a Life-Threatening Emergency .....** 9-1-1



Sonoma County  
**In-Home Supportive Services  
Public Authority**

Adult and Aging Services Division

3725 Westwind Blvd., Suite 101  
P.O. Box 1949  
Santa Rosa, CA 95402-1949

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Visit our website:  
[www.sonomacounty-ihsspa.org](http://www.sonomacounty-ihsspa.org)

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