

# **Wearing Two Hats: When You are an IHSS Provider for a Family Member or a Close Friend**

It can be tricky to be the paid IHSS care provider to a family member or close friend. As the provider, you are an employee of that person, working in a program that has a lot of rules. Understanding your responsibilities as a provider to someone you already know is vital to success when you are “wearing two hats.”

- Family providers are responsible for all standard provider requirements addressed in the IHSS Provider Orientation materials and video.
- Make sure you understand what tasks are authorized for your family member or friend, including how much time is authorized for each. This information is provided on a Notice of Action (NOA) letter.
- You can only be paid for the authorized tasks. It is against the program rules to claim time for non-IHSS services that you provide even if your family member or friend requests this.
- You can only be paid for work that is provided for the family member or friend who has hired you. For example, you cannot be paid for time that you spend preparing and cleaning up meals for other family members or for cleaning areas of the house that are not shared by the IHSS consumer. Such tasks may be “pro-rated” by the social worker if there are other persons in the household.
- You cannot claim pay for authorized tasks that are performed by someone else when you are not available.
- Even though you are a family member or close friend, you are also an employee in the IHSS program and expected to follow the program rules including those related to completing, signing, and filing timesheets. It is a good idea to use a calendar for tracking the days and hours that you work.

- Sometimes it can be very hard to be a caregiver for someone you live with. If this is the case and you need a break, explain this to the consumer and discuss re-assigning some of the authorized hours with another provider. Another relative, friend, or a provider through your local IHSS Public Authority Registry can be hired.
- You cannot be paid for providing services to your family member or friend when that person is in an out-of-home care setting such as hospital or nursing home. Even though assistance may be needed with tasks like grooming or feeding while hospitalized, IHSS can only pay for such services when the consumer is at home. If you claim hours when a consumer is in out-of-home care, you will have to repay the wages.
- Some IHSS consumers are responsible to pay a portion of your wages directly to you. This is called a “Share of Cost.” If your family member has a share of cost, the IHSS paycheck will only be for wages above the Share of Cost amount.
- Some family members, especially spouses and parents of consumers, are not eligible to have Social Security (FICA) funds withheld from paychecks. This is a federal provision which the county cannot change. Talk with your tax preparer or a financial advisor if you have questions.

Contact your county IHSS Public Authority or your IHSS social worker if you have questions.