

THE PATH AHEAD

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 3
WINTER 2020

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 You're the Boss! How to Hire and Manage Your Workers
- 4 In Their Own Words: What Being an Employer Means to Me
- 5 Governor's Task Force on Caregiving
- 6 Resources for Finding Caregivers
- 7 A Note from TMG



tmg[®]

Let's clear the path ahead.

WISCONSIN'S TOP-RATED
IRIS CONSULTANT AGENCY

YOU'RE THE BOSS! HOW TO HIRE AND MANAGE YOUR WORKERS

Self-directing in IRIS means that you have more control of your life and freedom to make choices that best meet your needs. One big way you can do that is by choosing who you hire to provide you with the supports and services you need. This is called employer authority in IRIS.

At first, hiring and being in charge of your workers might sound like a lot of work. However, TMG IRIS Consultant and 2020 Self-Determination Diehard Award winner Erica Andres – who is also enrolled in IRIS and has had many participant-hired workers over the years – finds it worth the extra effort. Being an employer in IRIS means you pick people and agencies you trust to work for you. It also allows you to have your workers do things how you want them done, on your schedule. For Erica, it's one very important way she controls her life.



“When I hire new people, I like to joke I’m the queen of the world. We’re in my world now!” says Erica.

When looking for workers, you have different options in IRIS. You can think about who you already have in your life that you might want to hire; you can hire people you don't yet know; you can use an agency to hire and manage your workers; or any combination of these. If you're comfortable hiring and managing your workers, scheduling their

shifts, signing their timesheets, and talking to them directly and openly about what you need, then being an employer might be the right choice for you.

Think you want to be a boss? Erica says you'll first want to figure out what type of support you need, when and how often you'll need it, and how many workers you'll need to provide that support. Once you know what you need, it's a good idea to write a short job description. Then it's time to find workers. Erica says one way to find people is by posting ads on places like Craigslist. She says the key to writing a good ad is to let your personality shine through and to make sure you mention the reasons people would like to work for you. You can see examples of this at tmgwisconsin.com/examples.



Your community can also be a great place to meet potential workers. Erica says she once hired a person that she first met while out for a night on the town! She's not afraid to strike up a conversation with new people to see if she likes them. And if she does, she gives them her contact information, so they can keep in touch. Since the caregiver shortage can make it tough to find workers, Erica believes it's important to get creative.

“With every single person I meet, I think, ‘Could you be my caregiver?’” says Erica.

When interviewing people, Erica asks questions about how the person would handle possible work situations: Would they make a big deal if her clothes needed adjusting while they were out in public, or would they quietly help her fix the problem? Would they try to speak for her or let her speak for herself? Would they be too tired to work late on weekend evenings? These types of questions can give you a good idea if the person will be a good fit for you or not.



Once you've hired your workers, Erica says that you'll want to build a good working relationship with them.

Erica believes building positive relationships starts with good communication. She makes sure to be kind but direct when telling her workers if she would like them to do a task differently, and she also lets them know when they're doing a great job.

Another way she builds positive relationships is by keeping her workers connected with one another, so they can support her as a team. All of her workers have each other's phone numbers and have access to a Google Calendar with everyone's work schedule on it. They're also in a private Facebook group where they can chat with one another. Not only does this help them easily swap shifts with each other if they need to, but it also lets them feel like they're all on Team Erica.



Finally, Erica always makes sure to do something special for her workers on their birthdays or their work anniversaries to show her appreciation for them. These little things add up and help to keep her workers happy and wanting to work for her.

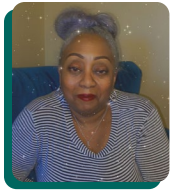
“It's not even about being a good employer. It's about being a good human,” says Erica.

Of course, being a boss isn't always easy. A worker might not be a great fit, you could have trouble finding enough workers, and being a boss can take up lot of time. But for Erica, if she didn't have her workers, she wouldn't be able to do her job and live on her own, and that alone makes being a boss worth it.

Hiring and being in charge of her workers has allowed her to get her needs met in the ways she wants, by people she trusts and who care about her, and she wouldn't have it any other way!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: WHAT BEING AN EMPLOYER MEANS TO ME

Hiring your own workers can be a great way to have more control of your life. Learn how people who choose to partner with TMG find the right workers and how they act as good bosses. Thanks to everyone who shared their stories with us!



Cynthia Young

Cynthia was able to hire someone she already knew and trusted, and who goes out of his way to give her the support she wants and needs. Cynthia is a proud grandmother of two young grandchildren

who live with her. She appreciates that her worker is patient, kind, and flexible with her granddaughters.

Cynthia's Tips for Being an Employer: "I find it very important to be direct with my worker about my health conditions. I have him come with me to my doctor's appointments and physical therapy sessions so that he's able to know exactly what needs to be done. Also, I remember to tell him please and thank you. That goes a long way when someone is caring for you."



Zach Hart

When choosing a caregiver, it was important to Zach to have someone who truly cared about him. Fortunately, he was able to hire his sister, who understands him and has his best interests at heart.

Zach's Tips for Being an Employer: "Hire a person you know well and who you trust! Also, make sure your worker feels appreciated and respected."



Emily Jamar

For Emily, hiring her own workers is how she makes sure she has a team that respects and supports her. Having quality caregivers who accept her for who she is has been extremely important to her. Emily

also makes sure they know that they are appreciated and respected. She does this by being an open and accepting boss and creating a positive place for them to work.

Emily's Tips for Being an Employer: "I like that I've been able to find people that respect my existence. I also make sure to lay my wants and needs on the table so that my workers know to respect my independence, privacy, sexuality, and every other aspect of my life."



Julie Galaszewski

Julie has some straightforward advice for finding the right caregivers. Before she hires them, she does

her best to make sure that they can handle the job and that they are a good fit for her. She does this by telling them about herself, her disability, and what she expects of them. Once they're hired, Julie focuses on building a good relationship with her workers, which includes doing something nice for them on their birthdays and other special days. Taking time to hire the right person and being a good boss has served Julie well. Her workers are not only a good fit for her, but many have also become her good friends.

Julie's Tips for Being an Employer:

"I treat my workers like my friends, because they are my friends. They are in my corner."



GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON CAREGIVING

Last year, Governor Evers created the Governor's Task Force on Caregiving to understand the issues that people with long-term care needs and Wisconsin caregivers are currently facing. The Governor chose 29 people to be on this Task Force, including people using IRIS, and asked them to come up with ways that support and strengthen the direct care workforce, increase access to care, and improve the quality of caregiving in Wisconsin.

The Task Force heard from people receiving long-term care, their families, direct care workers, and other providers to find out what the greatest needs were. This past September, they released their recommendations for 16 policy proposals that the Governor will consider when developing the 2021-23 state budget that he will submit to the Legislature early next year. These recommendations focus on improving how people give and receive care in Wisconsin, and include ideas for investing in caregiver assessments, supports and training, developing a caregiver registry, providing funding to keep good caregivers, and more. You can read the report at gtfc.wisconsin.gov/gtfcfiles/docs/gtfc-report.pdf.

We want to thank the Task Force for their hard work and dedication to help the people of Wisconsin get the care they need and deserve!



RESOURCES FOR FINDING CAREGIVERS

The ongoing caregiver shortage and pandemic can make finding the right support workers especially challenging. Thankfully, there are several online resources to help you in your search. So, if you're on the lookout for workers, check out these sites to find the help you need.

- **Respite Care Association of Wisconsin (RCAW)'s Respite Care Registry:** This registry connects people with caregivers and agencies that provide a variety of supports. When you sign up for the registry, you can search for caregivers in your area and view their profiles to find a good match. Caregiver profiles include details of who they are, their strengths, and the trainings they've completed. Visit respitecarewi.org/registry.
- **CareLinx:** This free site lets you search for caregivers in your area. Simply type in your zip code to find a list of local caregivers. You can view the caregivers' profiles and message them on the site if you're interested in learning more about them. Visit carelinx.com.

- **Care.com:** This site can help you post caregiving jobs. You'll need to set up a member account to use this site. There are two types of membership levels. The basic membership is free, and allows you to post a job, search and view profiles of local caregivers, and receive applications from local caregivers. The premium membership, which you have to pay for, includes all the features of a basic membership, plus it allows you to contact caregivers to schedule interviews, request background checks, and reply to job applications and other messages from caregivers. Visit care.com.

- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Provider Search:** If you're interested in finding out which personal care agencies are near you, you can use the provider search tool on the DHS website. There you'll find a list of local agencies along with their contact information. Visit dhs.wisconsin.gov/guide/provider-search.htm.



A NOTE FROM TMG



To Our Partners in IRIS:

2020 has been quite a year! The pandemic has impacted us all in ways big and small. As we reflect on the many changes this past year has brought, I am very grateful for your continued trust in TMG as your partner in self-direction.

There are a few changes at TMG that I'd like to share with you. TMG is being purchased by Molina Healthcare, and Molina will be TMG's new parent company. Rest assured, our work in IRIS remains the same, and we will continue to operate as TMG. Most importantly, your IRIS services and budget will not be impacted by Molina's purchase of TMG. Your relationship with your TMG IRIS Consultant will also not change, and there is no action that you need to take. If you would like to find out more about TMG and Molina, please talk to your IRIS Consultant or visit the TMG website at tmgwisconsin.com/molina_faq/.

I am also happy to share that TMG continues to be a high-quality IRIS Consultant Agency (ICA) in Wisconsin, serving all 72 counties across the state. Through our partnership with you and the more than 16,500 people enrolled in the TMG ICA, we have achieved 33 out of 35 stars on quality and consumer satisfaction on the state's most recent ICA Consumer Scorecard that will come out early next year. More information will be shared on the IRIS Participant Information page of the DHS website here: dhs.wisconsin.gov/iris/participants.htm.

While we are proud of our efforts to provide quality ICA services, we know there is always room to get better. I welcome your thoughts and ideas to help us improve as your ICA. If you'd like to offer suggestions, please send them to info@tmgwisconsin.com. Together, we can make 2021 a fantastic year!

Thank you for your continued partnership, and best wishes for a healthy and safe holiday season!



Gwendolyn Dunkin

Sr. Director of IRIS Consultation Services at TMG



one south pinckney street, suite 320
madison, wisconsin 53703
(844) 864-8987
info@tmgwisconsin.com
tmgwisconsin.com

PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
MADISON WI
PERMIT #2783

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

At the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency (ICA), we value the fact that our employees live and work in communities all around Wisconsin. Our Area Associate Directors provide local leadership for our TMG IRIS Consultant Teams throughout the state. If you have questions about TMG and the services we provide, please contact us at info@tmgwisconsin.com.



For information about the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency, visit: tmgwisconsin.com or [facebook.com/TMGWisconsin](https://www.facebook.com/TMGWisconsin). Or call our toll-free number: **(844) 864-8987**.