

Once a Caregiver Advisor applicant passes the application screening, they should be contacted to schedule an interview. This interview could be conducted in-person, by phone, or through virtual platforms such as Zoom. If the applicant has been chosen from a list of available Caregiver Advisors, the applicant should be sent a brief description of the available position to determine if the applicant is interested in the position, prior to the interview.

We recommend that a small panel from the council/committee (e.g., the Chair, Co-Chair, and Staff Liaison) conduct the interview. After briefly introducing themselves and their roles on the council/committee, the spokesperson should give a very short overview about the group's history and objectives. It is also recommended that the interview panel:

- Clearly explain what the role of Caregiver Advisor entails.
- Explain the difference between an advisor, a peer supporter, and a lobbyist.
- Ask how the candidate's personal experience would help them in the role.
- Explain expense reimbursement policies.
- Outline potential training opportunities, if applicable.
- Outline the selection process and when, and how, the panel's decision will be announced.
- Allow the candidate time to ask questions.
- Outline special privileges (e.g., organization email, library access, etc.).

### **The Difference between an Advisor, a Peer Supporter, and a Lobbyist**

An **advisor** works as a collaborative partner with the organization to inform a process by sharing their insights and perspectives, which may include some advisory work.

A **peer supporter** collaborates with clients and/or families to help guide them through systems navigation, prepare for family meetings, connect to resources, and share personal stories.

A **lobbyist** seeks changes in the system that guarantees a specific outcome they believe is necessary. This can become problematic if they are focused on a specific problem as a personal agenda and can sometimes be identified if they express dissatisfaction with a resolution to a specific past experience.

The goal of the interview is to determine if the caregiver's skills, readiness, interests, and personal expertise align with the Caregiver Advisor position that is available. We have attached a sample set of interview questions (Appendix A) that can help determine fit and interest of the applicant.

Following the interview, a successful applicant should be informed within three days of the type of advisory role that would be offered at that time.

- For more information, check our "**Type of Caregiver Roles Chart**" in Readiness.

If the interview revealed that an applicant's primary interest in the role of Caregiver Advisor is to deal with situation-specific, unresolved issues of a personal nature, it's recommended their application be politely declined. It's further recommended they be connected with someone in your organization who may be able to help with their concerns, such as a person associated with the formal complaint process. A polite rejection e-mail has also been included, should the caregiver not match the current opportunity (Appendix B).



# Appendix A: Sample Interview Questions

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Opening Statements:

Before beginning, introduce the members of the Interview Panel and clearly explain the role of Caregiver Advisor and its related responsibilities.

## General Questions:

1. From your application, we notice that you have experience with the [*sample department at the sample organization*]. Can you tell us about that experience?

- What impressed you about your experience?
- What would have improved your experience?

2. Your application also indicated that you're interested in becoming a Caregiver Advisor because of [*reason mentioned on application*]. Can you tell us more?

3. Have you volunteered for any other organizations, committees or groups? (*This could include at work or in the community.*)

- Please tell us about your contribution, what you learned from your experience, how long you were there, and why you stayed/moved on.

4. In your own words, how would you describe the role of an advisor?

- If they do not know, define an advisor at your organization:

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5. For this position, you will be advising for the [*sample council/project*]. This project/council aims to.. [*explain the goal of the project/council*]. How could your lived expertise help the [*sample council/project*] reach its goal?



### Availability Questions:

1. You will need to attend meetings [ *meeting timeframe*]. In addition, we ask that you contribute [x] hours per week to the project/council for[ *additional requirements such as reviewing meeting materials*]. Would this amount of time work with your availability?
2. For this position, the commitment is expected to last [*years, months*]. Will you be able to act as an advisor for this length of time?
3. During your involvement, there may be additional costs [*explain additional costs of involvement and available reimbursement*]. Are those costs acceptable to you?
4. Would you be willing to attend additional training sessions beyond an orientation?
5. What is the best way to reach you?
  - If a phone number is given: Can we leave a voicemail at that number?

### Scenarios:

The following questions ask about a situation that could happen while you are an advisor for the [*sample organization*]. Please explain how you would approach each situation.

1. Your loved one's treatment was unexpectedly delayed a week by this care organization and you're worried about what problems the delay may cause. The following day, you attend as a Caregiver Advisor for a project that is creating a new intake form for the organization. How best can you address the situation?
  - This question determines if they understand the separation between their advisory work and the personal difficulties that they experienced the day before.
  - **Best Answer:** "To address the unexpected delay, I would talk with my provider about my concerns privately. For my advisory work, I would give my perspectives on the intake form without mentioning the unrelated complication I have with the organization."
2. One of the council members is acting particularly confrontational during a meeting. You recognize them from a peer support group you attended a week ago when they shared that their son had relapsed. How do you address the situation?
  - This question asks about their understanding of privacy and separation from other engagements they may be involved in.
  - **Best Answer:** "I would wait for the Chair to address the situation and avoid mentioning any personal knowledge I have of the other council members to respect their privacy. If the chair does not address the situation, I may talk with the Chair after the meeting about how to address



future situations.” Optional: “I may reach out after the meeting privately to ask them if they need support.”

3. You disagree with a statement made by one of the council/project members. How would you address the disagreement?

- This question asks about their ability to approach conflict/tension in a professional setting. Dialogue verses debate.
- **Best Answer:** “I would politely voice my differing opinion in a constructive manner by outlining some of the concerns I have about their statement. I would be willing and openly listen to understand their perspective and possibly come to a compromise.”

#### Ending Questions:

1. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about yourself?
2. Any questions/concerns?
3. After our questions today, are you still interested in this position?

#### Closing Statements

Thank them for attending today and explain how and when they will be contacted if they have been accepted or rejected for the available position.



## Appendix B: Rejection Letter

Date

Name

Address

Dear (insert name),

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Caregiver Advisor with (insert organization's name).

We appreciate the expertise and skills you have offered in your interview. However, at the current time, we are recruiting for skills and expertise that better match the specific needs of our (committee / council name).

Your perspective is valuable to us. We will keep your information on file and contact you should something more suitable for your skills and experience become available. We receive a number of requests for Caregiver Advisors and there will be additional opportunities.

For more information or questions about this opportunity, please contact (insert name) at (insert email address or phone number). (Insert she, he, or they) can provide additional feedback about your application or offer alternative opportunities to become involved.

Thank you once again for your time and interest in (insert organization's name).

Best Wishes,

