

Choosing A Placement & Referral Agency – 5 Questions to Ask

Senior Placement & Referral Agencies can help you find senior housing and care services quickly and easily. They relieve you of the time-consuming, stressful job of searching for the right home or service because they've done the research for you.

However, the Senior Placement & Referral industry is unregulated, having no required licensing or oversight by a governing board. Every month a new Agency starts up. How do you choose a reputable and reliable agency to help you through a difficult time?

The Oregon Senior Referral Agency Association (OSRA) recommends you ask the following questions of Placement & Referral Agencies prior to working with them.

What is the company's size (number of people on the team) and business structure?

It takes sufficient staff to manage the information you rely on for your decision making. The size and business structure of an agency indicates its ability to provide scope and depth of service.

What policies, procedures and systems does the agency use to insure the following criteria?

- Preview & Pre-qualify Care Facilities, check Public Discloser Files, maintain constant database updates;
- Maintain full range of contracts with ALL care communities (offering ample choices to client);
- Provide personalized assessments and tours;
- Accommodate quick discharges and to coordinate additional support resources in the community;
- Follow-up and survey clients for quality assurance;
- Maintain a current business license with the State of Oregon and carry adequate liability insurance;
- Regulate themselves and their staff;
- Are not affiliated with a similar type business insuring no conflict of interest.

What are the Owners and Employee's background and experience?

Advisors with health care, social services or long term care background:

- Are knowledgeable about age related issues and understands the importance of reducing transition trauma;
- Understands diagnoses, illnesses and related care and procedures and can better match community services to social and care needs;
- Understands family dynamics;
- Are able to appropriately educate, communicate and inform families about care choices – able to help clarify differences in a community's ability to meet care and psycho/social needs.

How long has the agency been in business?

Agency's having been in business for at least 5 years:

- Have a proven track record with professional and client references (including surveys available for review, comments on SeniorList.com, etc.);
- Have a history of tracking facilities.

What associations and networks is the agency affiliated with?

Membership & active participation in affiliations, networks and associations demonstrates a commitment to:

- Ongoing education and training;
- Giving back to the community;
- Accountability to ethical and legal guidelines (members of OSRA follow these guidelines).

Save time and stress by using the services of a Senior Placement & Referral Agency plus gain peace of mind knowing they've done the research for you. Using a reputable agency using best practices in their business will guarantee you can trust their referrals.