



# External Staffing Quick Tip

This Quick Tip outlines practical approaches for working with external staffing agencies and/or other resources during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## HOW TO IDENTIFY STAFFING AGENCIES

- If current staffing agency is unable to fulfill staffing needs, contact them for recommendations of additional local or national agencies. ◆
- Call peer nursing home providers to obtain a list of staffing agencies working in the geographical area. ◆
- Contact your provider association for a list of staffing agencies. ◆
- Reach out to your state [Health Care Coalition](#) or professional association(s) for recommendations for staffing agencies and resources. ◆

## STAFFING AGENCIES – TIPS TO CONSIDER

- Along with your administrator, review contracts with the external agencies for fee adjustment opportunities, indemnification that aligns with current liability insurance updates, potential changes in roles/responsibilities based on agency use, and challenges identified during the pandemic. Some staffing agencies have recently changed policies due to increased demand during the pandemic. ◆
- Verify that background checks, credential processes, competencies, and screening processes are completed per current guidance. ◆
- Understand roles and expectations for both organizations related to on-demand staffing vs. traditional staffing platform for a smooth staffing process. ◆
- Implement routine communication with external agencies to review opportunities, concerns, challenges, and educational needs. Collaborate to optimize staff availability and quality outcomes. ▲
- Investigate block-booking (6-12 weeks or longer) options that benefit both organizations. Block-booking allows for longer-term contracts with select employees, resulting in consistency, less time in orientation, and enhanced quality outcomes. ▲

- Work with internal team members to embrace agency staff as an additional resource for residents and the team. ▲
  - The director of nursing or designee devotes time to point-of-care staff education and communication on the importance of positive work environment with agency staff. ▲
  - Create a buddy system, pairing an agency team member with an organization staff member. ▲
- Review external agency orientation process. Talk with current agency and employed staff on their interpretation of the orientation process – positives, barriers, and opportunities. ▲
  - Use feedback for programmatic improvement. ▲
  - If you use a learning management system, consider including some of those modules in the orientation process if applicable. ■
- Implement processes for agency staff COVID-19 testing, screening, education, risk management, and reporting. ■
- Seek potential cost savings. If using longer-term travel staff, consider renting apartments, long-stay hotel suites, campus apartments, or homes to save on hotel and food costs. ■

#### KEY

◆ = easy or relatively short amount of time to implement

■ = moderate time to implement

▲ = easy / moderate amount of time to implement

● = longer amount of time to implement