

SS-8 Determination—Determination for Public Inspection

Occupation

OFF - Office Workers

Determination:

☒ Employee☐ Contractor

UILC

Third Party Communication:

☒ None☐ Yes

I have read Notice 441 and am requesting:

- ☐ Additional redactions based on categories listed in section entitled "Deletions We May Have Made to Your Original Determination Letter"
- ☐ Delay based on an on-going transaction
- ☐ 90 day delay

For IRS Use Only:**Facts of Case**

The worker submitted a request for determination in connection with services performed for the firm in 2025 as a receptionist. Services performed included answering calls, making appointments, organizing schedules and occasionally assisting patients into their rooms. The worker filed Form SS-8 as they believe they received Form 1099-NEC in error. The worker believes they were an employee as they received directives from the firm.

The firm's response states its business provides care to clients with autism spectrum disorders. The worker was engaged as a front desk assistant. Services performed included answering phones, greeting visitors, scheduling, administrative support, and general front desk coverage. The worker was classified as an independent contractor as the worker performed services for a short-term arrangement. The worker was treated as an independent contractor according to the written agreement between the parties. The worker did not receive any employee benefits.

The firm states they provided the worker with limited front desk training. They did not provide the worker with any extensive formal training. The firm provided work assignments and determined the methods by which those assignments were performed. If problems or complaints arise, the firm is contacted as well as responsible for resolution. The firm did not require the worker to complete any reports or attend any meetings. Services were performed on the firm's premises on a regularly scheduled basis. The firm required the worker to personally perform services. The firm was responsible for the hiring and paying of substitutes or helpers. The worker stated they received training from another employee of the firm. The worker was required to attend staff meetings.

The firm stated they provided the worker with office supplies, and a phone. The worker did not lease space, equipment, or a facility. The worker did not incur any job-related expenses in the performance of the services for the firm. Clients paid the firm. The worker was paid an hourly rate of pay. The worker could not request advance pay. The worker did not take a financial risk and could not suffer a financial loss performing services. The firm set the rate of pay for the services provided. The firm did not carry workers' compensation insurance on the worker.

The firm stated there were no benefits made available to the worker. Either party could end the work relationship without penalty. The worker did not perform similar services for others. The worker did not advertise their services. There were no agreement prohibiting competition. Services were performed under the firm's business name. The worker ended the work relationship.

Analysis

Generally, the relationship of employer and employee exists when the person for whom the services are performed has the right to control and direct the individual who performs the services, not only as to what is to be done, but also how it is to be done. It is not necessary that the employer actually direct or control the individual, it is sufficient if he or she has the right to do so.

Section 31.3121(d)-1(a)(3) of the regulations provides that if the relationship of an employer and employee exists, the designation or description of the parties as anything other than that of employer and employee is immaterial. Thus, if an employer-employee relationship exists, any contractual designation of the employee as a partner, coadventurer, agent, or independent contractor must be disregarded.

Therefore, a statement that a worker is an independent contractor pursuant to a written or verbal agreement is without merit. For federal employment tax purposes, it is the actual working relationship that is controlling and not the terms of the contract (oral or written) between the parties. Furthermore, whether there is an employment relationship is a question of fact and not subject to negotiation between the parties.

If the services must be rendered personally, presumably the person or persons for whom the services are performed are interested in the methods used to accomplish the work as well as in the results. In the case the firm required the worker to personally perform services. The firm provided work assignments, determined the methods by which assignments were performed, and ultimately assumed responsibility for problem resolution. These facts evidence the firm retained the right to direct and control the worker to the extent necessary to ensure satisfactory job performance in a manner acceptable to the firm. Based on the worker's education, past work experience, and work ethic the firm may not have needed to frequently exercise its right to direct and control the worker; however, the facts evidence the firm retained the right to do so if needed.

Regardless if the worker worked on a full-time basis or part-time basis, for Federal income tax withholding and Social Security, Medicare, and Federal unemployment (FUTA) tax purposes, there are no differences among full-time workers, part-time workers, and workers hired for short periods. Income tax withholding may be figured the same way as for full-time workers.

The fact that a worker performed services on a part-time basis is a neutral fact. A temporary relationship is also a neutral fact. Under common-law rules, anyone who performs services for you is your employee if you can control what will be done and how it will be done. This is so even when you give the employee freedom of action. What matters is that you have the right to control the details of how the services are performed.

Payment by the hour, week, or month generally points to an employer-employee relationship, provided that this method of payment is not just a convenient way of paying a lump sum agreed upon as the cost of a job. In such instances, the firm assumes the hazard that the services of the worker will be proportionate to the regular payments. This action warrants the assumption that, to protect its investment, the firm has the right to direct and control the performance of the workers. Also, workers are assumed to be employees if they are guaranteed a minimum salary or are given a drawing account of a specified amount that need not be repaid when it exceeds earnings. In this case, the worker did not invest capital or assume business risks. The term "significant investment" does not include tools, instruments, and clothing commonly provided by employees in their trade; nor does it include education, experience, or training. As acknowledged by the firm, the worker did not take a financial risk and could not suffer a financial loss by performing services. Based on the hourly rate of pay arrangement the worker could not realize a profit or incur a loss.

Factors that illustrate how the parties perceive their relationship include the intent of the parties as expressed in written contracts; the provision of, or lack of employee benefits; the right of the parties to terminate the relationship; the permanency of the relationship; and whether the services performed are part of the service recipient's regular business activities. In this case, the worker was not engaged in an independent enterprise. Both parties retained the right to terminate the work relationship at any time without penalty. There is no evidence to suggest the worker performed similar services for others as an independent contractor or advertised business services to the public during the term of this work relationship. The classification of a worker as an independent contractor should not be based primarily on the fact that a worker's services may be used on a temporary, part-time, or as-needed basis. As noted above, common law factors are considered when examining the worker classification issue.

Based on the above analysis, we conclude that the firm had the right to exercise direction and control over the worker to the degree necessary to establish that the worker was a common law employee, and not an independent contractor operating a trade or business.

The firm can obtain additional information related to worker classification online at www.irs.gov; Publication 4341.