

Options for Hiring Household Help

You contacted our office seeking help in finding a qualified worker to provide household, live-in, companion and/or personal care services. Hiring in-home help is often a new experience for many people. We want to give you some valuable information to help you make the best decision for yourself or your family member.

Many people feel more comfortable hiring helpers through an agency, which can save you a lot of paperwork, provide supervision, check references, and generally provide reliable people with less risk for you.

Others may prefer to hire helpers themselves, which can save money and increase flexibility. Remember: whichever way you choose to proceed, **the decision is yours**.

The overview below outlines what you can expect of the options that are available.

Home Health Care / Home Care Agencies	House Cleaning Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Home Health Care: Focus on health-related needs which might include assistance with light housework.● Home Care: Provide light housework, personal care, live-in/companion help, transportation.● Costs vary depending on the type of service provided. Housecleaning is generally no less than \$10 per hour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Perform basic cleaning, including washing windows, dusting, laundry, vacuuming, oven cleaning and ironing.● No personal care or health-related services provided.● Costs may be quoted as an hourly rate or as a fee per unit cleaned.
<p style="text-align: center;">Hiring Private Individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● May provide both housekeeping and personal care tasks.● May be more flexible in scheduling work hours.● Cost is negotiable.	

Senior Information & Assistance **does not** recommend, endorse or suggest that you should use any of the service providers named in this packet of material. **We offer this information only as a resource** to help you get started in meeting your in-home assistance needs.



Senior Services

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Hiring House Cleaning Services

Look in the Yellow Pages under "House Cleaning Services" to locate firms in your area. Call several agencies and request brochures, or ask questions about their service to see if the company is appropriate for your needs.

Please feel free to make copies of this page to use as a checklist when you call.

Questions to ask House Cleaning Services

1. Is the company licensed bonded?
2. How do they charge? by the hour by the visit?
3. Who does the cleaning? one person a team?
If a team, is there an hourly fee per person? A discount for Senior Citizens?
4. What level of cleaning does the company provide: light heavy?
Do they do: walls windows yard work?
How often? weekly monthly one time?
5. Can I be home while the house cleaner is present?
6. If I cannot be home, how do we make arrangements for the key?
7. Must I provide cleaning supplies vacuum cleaner mops/brooms?
8. How is payment handled? check cash credit card?

TIPS for a Successful House Cleaning

1. Be present for the first visit and show each room to the house cleaner.
2. Clarify payment arrangements at the start.
3. Make a list of priorities (these may vary from one visit to the next).
Example: **Kitchen:** Sweep & mop floor Put dishes in dishwasher
Bathroom: Clean toilet Put out clean towels
Bedroom: Change sheets Make bed
Living Room: Dust furniture Vacuum carpet
4. Make arrangements for the key.
5. Have all needed supplies available.
6. Have necessary appliances in good working order (vacuum cleaner, etc.).
7. Contact the company if you feel uncomfortable about the service you received.

Considerations regarding Hiring In-Home Helpers

- 1) A pamphlet entitled "How to Hire Helpers" is available for \$4.50 through the Church Council of Greater Seattle (206-525-1213).
- 2) Many people feel comfortable hiring helpers through an agency, which can save you a lot of paperwork, provide supervision, check references, and generally provide reliable people with less risk for you. Others may prefer to hire the helpers themselves, which can save money and give more flexibility. Remember, whichever way you wish to proceed, the ultimate decision is yours. We strongly suggest that you take the time to check references.
- 3) Before hiring, know your emergency procedures and *have them in writing!*
- 4) A good place to start is to outline the senior's care needs by addressing the following points:

<p>Age: Sex: Weight:</p> <p>Mental Capacity Alert? Forgetful? Other?</p> <p>Physical Capacity/Problems Mobility: Lifting full weight? Lifting with patient help? Bedridden? Wheelchair? Walker? Ambulatory?</p> <p>Feeding: Self? Needs assistance? Total feeding? Feeding tube? Other?</p> <p>Bathing/Showering: Lifting/bathing? Needs steadying?</p> <p>Personal Hygiene: Needs assistance to bathroom? Needs transfer? Colostomy? Other?</p>	<p>Exercise needs:</p> <p>Activity needs:</p> <p>Medications Self? Needs reminding? Given? What form?</p> <p>Other Information: Is having a car necessary? Is a driver's license required? Is the job on a bus line?</p> <p>If live-in: House or apartment? Separate bedroom? Separate bathroom? Who buys groceries?</p> <p>Days and hours of job? Days and hours off?</p> <p>Method of payment: State? Private? Deductions? Cash/Check? Other? Paid how often? Payday is when?</p> <p>Sleep patterns: Up at night? How often? Day naps? Other?</p>
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- 5) **Liability.** Check insurance coverage. You may want to consider bonding.

6) How to decide what needs to be done and how often you need someone to do the task:

A. Put these headings at the top of a page:

Task to be done	How often?	Can this task be done by the person needing help?	Is the family willing to do this task? (if yes, who?)	What the hired person's duties would be

B. Under the "TASK" heading, write down the tasks to be done (Be specific!).

Examples of specific tasks to be performed:

Escort/transport to medical services	Essential shopping/errands	Casual shopping/errands
Bed transfer (lifting/turning)	Assist with Exercise/Therapy/Dressings	Medications
Bathing /Personal Hygiene/ Appearance (bathroom, hair care, teeth, dentures, shaving, nails, etc.)	Dressing/undressing	
Laundry	wash, dry, fold, mend, iron, put away clothes	
Cooking	meal planning, special diet?, breakfast/ lunch/ dinner/ supper/ snack?	
Kitchen	sweep, mop, defrost, wash windows/walls, clean oven/stove/ appliances, wash dishes, wipe counter/tables/drainboards, empty garbage, etc.	
Bedroom	make bed, change sheets, put clothes away/into hamper, tidy up room, empty wastebasket, dust furniture/window sills, vacuum drapes/carpet, wash mattress cover, etc.	
Living Room	tidy up, empty ashtrays/garbage, vacuum, shake rugs, etc.	
Bathroom	scrub toilet, wash mirror, scrub floor/tub/shower, etc.	

C. Under "HOW OFTEN," be specific. (daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, as needed, each morning, before/after meals)

D. Under the other headings, check off who can do this task.

E. The more specific you can be, the better understanding you will have with your worker. This also sets up the content for a contract.

7) **SAMPLE CONTRACT:** (taken from HOW TO HIRE HELPERS, A Guide for Elders and Their Families, Task Force on Aging, Church Council of Greater Seattle).

The next page is a **SAMPLE** contract that has been filled in as an example of how to address the specifics of an agreement. On its reverse is a **BLANK** contract you may photocopy and use for your own needs. Contact the Internal Revenue Service about income tax withholding and social security taxes at (206) 220-5300 or (800) 829-1040.

Sample Contract for Household Help

Employment Contract between:

Employer Pat Brown and Employee Lee Jones

Salary: \$ 12.00 per hour Fringe Benefits Bus fare, lunch provided

Terms of Payment: When Every Friday How Check

Hours of Work: From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Monday., Wed., Fridays

Changes in scheduled hours are negotiable but must be approved in advance.

Worker's Social Security Number: 111-11-1111

*Social Security Tax (check here if applicable): Employee warrants that he/she is a self-employed independent contractor and is responsible for his/her own social security tax and other taxes due to any governmental agency arising from this employment, as well as all insurance as required by law.

DUTIES TO BE PERFORMED (Be specific):

A. Household Tasks:

Dust and vacuum once a week
Mop kitchen floor once a week
Change sheets once a week
Do laundry once a week
Do food shopping once a week
Cook lunch on days present
Wash dishes after each meal

B. Personal Care Tasks for Pat Brown:

Assist with bath and shampoo once a week
Assist with physical exercises
Transport monthly to doctor's appointment
Provide some socializing, conversation

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR:

Smoking while at work
Using foul language

Evidence of intoxication
Arriving late or leaving early without authorization

CONDITIONS FOR TERMINATION:

- Either party will give two weeks' notice before terminating this contract.
- Reasons for termination without notice: theft, failure to carry out duties, evidence of unacceptable behavior, endangering homeowner's or others' health or safety.
- For unsatisfactory work, the employee will be given two warnings. If work continues to be unsatisfactory, a termination date will be set.

Signed

EMPLOYER

EMPLOYEE

DATE

DATE

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

PHONE

PHONE

PHONE

PHONE

MESSAGE PHONE

MESSAGE PHONE

Contract for Household Help

Employment Contract between:

Employer _____ and Employee _____

Salary: \$ _____ per hour Fringe Benefits _____

Terms of Payment: When _____ How _____

Hours of Work: From _____ to _____ on _____

Changes in scheduled hours are negotiable but must be approved in advance.

Employee's Social Security Number: _____

* Social Security Tax (check here if applicable): Employee warrants that he/she is a self-employed independent contractor and is responsible for his/her own social security or other taxes due to any governmental agency arising from this employment, as well as all insurance as required by law.

DUTIES TO BE PERFORMED (Be specific):

A. Household Tasks:

B. Personal Care Tasks for _____:

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR:

Smoking while at work

Evidence of intoxication

Using foul language

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- For unsatisfactory work, the employee will be given two warnings. If work continues to be unsatisfactory, a termination date will be set.

Signed _____

EMPLOYER

EMPLOYEE

DATE

DATE

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

PHONE

PHONE

MESSAGE PHONE