

Tips for Finding and Retaining Individual Paid Caregivers

This tip sheet includes advice from families who have found skilled, personable, and reliable caregivers without necessarily going through an agency. People who choose to hire individual caregivers have legal responsibilities as employers, such as payroll taxes and overtime pay. Please refer to the resources listed at the end of this document to learn more about becoming a household employer. This handout is not intended to offer legal or financial advice.

Recruiting

1. Word of mouth—Let the people in your network of family and friends know what you are looking for. Once you find a good caregiver—ask them to help you find other people like them!
2. Local students—Students are often willing to pick-up hours, especially if they can do homework during part of their shift and have flexible scheduling to accommodate their academic schedule.
3. Local churches, care facilities, support groups, or other local community organizations—Senior centers sometimes keep a list of caregivers, you might post the job listing on a newsletter or through a school career center or list serve.
4. Sign-up to use online tools to post positions on websites like [Care.com](https://www.care.com), [mysupport.com](https://www.mysupport.com), or <https://nextdoor.com/>
5. Try to select people who are naturally compassionate and caring. These qualities are difficult to teach.

Retaining

1. Provide transportation—Ride share applications like Uber or Lyft allow you to pay directly for rides to and from your home. These services often have deals where you can pay in advance for bulk rides. This is especially helpful for caregivers who would otherwise have to rely on public transportation.
2. Pay at the time of service instead of monthly or every two weeks. Many paid caregivers are living paycheck-to-paycheck and getting paid more frequently might make their day-to-day life a little easier.
3. Set clear and reasonable expectations and check-in regularly with the caregiver to see how it's going for them and for you.
4. Demonstrate that you are willing to do the work that you expect them to do
5. If the work is very physical or demanding, be willing to assist or arrange for assistance with back-up caregiver (for example, overlap caregivers' shifts to allow for two-person transfers or bathing)
6. Communicate respectfully and show a genuine interest in the caregiver's wellbeing. They are more likely to invest in your loved one's care if they feel they are getting something meaningful in return. For example, encourage them to pursue their own hobbies or education. Support them to take time off for special events and their own doctor's visits.
7. Consider giving a thoughtful holiday gift or bonus.

For more information:

- California Dept. of Industrial Relations—Domestic Worker Bill of Rights: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/DomesticWorkerBillOfRights-FAQ.html>
- California Employment Development Dept.—Household Employer: http://www.edd.ca.gov/Payroll_Taxes/Household_Employer.htm
- Hand-in-Hand: The Domestic Employers Network: <http://domesticemployers.org/qa/>
- Family Caregiver Alliance Webinar on [Domestic Employer Training: Best Practices for Employing a Home Attendant/Paid Caregiver](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8eGGqlcpVE&feature=youtu.be) or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8eGGqlcpVE&feature=youtu.be>