



**SENIOR SERVICES**  
Helping Our Elderly Live With Dignity

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WILLIAMS ADULT  
DAY CENTER

MEALS-ON-WHEELS

**HELP LINE**

HOME CARE

LIVING-AT-HOME

SENIOR LUNCH

ELDER CARE CHOICES

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## PRIVATE SITTER LIST

Once the need for assistance in the home is identified, the first decision to make is whether to hire a caregiver independently or through an agency. Going through an agency will save time and paperwork and may provide trustworthy and satisfactory assistance. The disadvantage is that it will be more costly. Hiring someone yourself may reduce costs considerably, but will take time and effort. Since you will become an employer, you will be responsible for all record keeping. For example, if you pay a helper \$50 or more a quarter, you are required by law to withhold social security benefits, and make quarterly payments to the Internal Revenue Service. However, if the person you hire is already self-employed, he/she should be paying his/her own social security taxes.

### Hiring Privately

- Interview the person face to face. Ask to see some type of identification, such as a driver's license. Record the person's name, address, phone number, date of birth, and social security number.
- Determine any special training the person may have received, such as certification as a nurse assistant, classes on Alzheimer's disease, or CPR.
- Ask specific questions: Where have you worked before? Have you ever been a caregiver for an elderly person? Why are you choosing this kind of work?
- Ask for employment and personal references, including names, addresses, and phone numbers. Check out how long the reference source has known the individual and in what capacity. Ask those referenced if he/she was trustworthy and dependable.
- Ask the person to provide a current criminal background report from the Clerk of Court's office from the county he/she currently resides or from the county he/she has moved from or you may choose to do this yourself. You may obtain a certified report on the criminal background of your candidate of choice at the Clerk of Superior Court, Hall of Justice, Room 216, Winston-Salem or the Clerk of Court in the county in which they currently live and/or have previously lived. To obtain a report, bring: full name, birth date and other last name(s) of candidate and \$25.00 for processing fees. The number to call for further information is 336-761-2366.
- Be clear about your responsibilities and the responsibilities of the position. Discuss issues such as whether or not the person hired will provide transportation for the older adult, or if there are significant physical health or family issues that may affect his/her work schedule. Discuss smoking and alcohol use.
- Make a list of tasks and questions that meet your particular needs. Your list may include questions on:
  1. Personal hygiene assistance
  2. Housekeeping tasks
  3. Meals - how many/ what type
  4. Grocery shopping, errands
  5. Transportation
  6. Assistance with medications
  7. Companionship; reading, etc.
  8. Laundry, ironing

## Getting Started

When your caregiver starts to work, consider the following guidelines:

- A formal written agreement is recommended and should include information about the job responsibilities, wages and payment terms, and schedules. Include, if any, issues such as compensation for sick/vacation days. Determine a procedure for the caregiver to notify you of sickness or vacation. Be sure to include guidelines regarding termination of employment. Indicate how much advanced notice you require from the caregiver or how much notice you will give if the arrangement is terminated.
- It is suggested that the first few visits be short in duration. You may wish to stay with the caregiver for the first few visits to help establish the routine.
- Provide written information regarding the older adult's health condition, including the primary physician's name and telephone number as well as what to do and who to contact in case of certain emergencies. Be sure the caregiver knows how to reach you, another family member or your loved one's physician when necessary.
- A notebook that is easily accessible to the caregiver and to you can increase communication effectively. Leave specific questions or instructions for the caregiver in the notebook and ask the caregiver to provide you with a brief summary of that day's events.
- Be prepared for a period of adjustment. Make a commitment to give the new arrangement a fair trial.
- Give praise to the caregiver for a job well done. If you must give criticism, make it brief and offer a suggestion that would improve the situation the next time.
- Above all, be flexible and keep your sense of humor. If the first caregiver is not a match for you or your loved one, try again. The best arrangements may take some time to set up.

## Live-In Care

In addition to the above guidelines, you may consider additional written instructions when you hire a live-in caregiver:

- Specify areas in the home designated for the live-in person's use.
- Identify an area in the kitchen or other part of the home for the caregiver to keep and prepare his/her own food. Perhaps it would be better to eat with the older adult as a way of encouraging good nutrition and socialization.
- Determine whether the live-in will be allowed to smoke, consume alcohol, or have a pet?
- Specify guest privileges.
- Designate "quiet hours" if television or music could pose a noise problem.