

# Caregiver Kit



*Support for those who care for others*

## Hiring a Respite Provider

NorthWest Senior & Disability Services  
Created in partnership with Northwest Regional Council/Area  
Agency on Aging

# Hiring a Respite Provider

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## A Roadmap to Hiring a Respite Provider

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If you were taking a cross-county trip, would you jump into your car without a plan and just start driving, hoping that you end up where you're supposed to be? Or, would you use a roadmap that would point you in the right direction? The same can be said about hiring a respite provider. If you don't have a plan or a direction, you'll drive in circles. What would you really like to do if you could take a break? When would you like to do this? What kind of provider are you looking for? Often, the answer is, "I don't know." It's time to pull out your roadmap.

Creating a roadmap is as simple as taking out a piece of paper and a pen. Divide the paper into four sections and label them as follows:

<b>I would like to:</b>	<b>When I would like to do this:</b>
<b>My loved one needs help with:</b>	<b>My ideal respite provide would be able to:</b>

That was easy. The next step is to replace "I don't Know" with more specific information. Below is an example of how to use your roadmap.

<p>I would like to:</p> <p><i>Go to the coast for the weekend</i></p> <p><i>Go to a support group meeting</i></p>	<p>When I would like to do this:</p> <p><i>The 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of the month (Friday-Sunday)</i></p> <p><i>On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month</i></p>
<p>My loved one needs help with:</p> <p><i>Making meals</i></p> <p><i>Taking medications</i></p> <p><i>Dressing/undressing</i></p> <p><i>Bathing</i></p> <p><i>Housekeeping/laundry</i></p> <p><i>Stand-by when walking to the bathroom</i></p> <p><i>Companionship</i></p>	<p>I want a care provider who:</p> <p><i>Works in the afternoons</i></p> <p><i>Works weekends</i></p> <p><i>Can stay overnight</i></p> <p><i>Provides transportation</i></p> <p><i>Provides personal care</i></p> <p><i>Administers medications</i></p> <p><i>Is available in an emergency</i></p> <p><i>Is talkative &amp; friendly</i></p> <p><i>Has experience working with seniors</i></p>

This exercise will help you organize your thoughts and help you create a “script” that you can use when interviewing respite providers.

**Examples:**

*I received your name off of a private home care worker list through NorthWest Senior & Disability Services. I'm wondering if you are currently able to provide overnight respite. (If the answer is “Yes”, continue on. Otherwise, thank them for their time and go on to the next name on the list).*

*I would like to go to the coast overnight the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend in July. I need you to stay with my husband beginning Friday at 8:00 am until 2:00 pm on Sunday. I also need you to help my husband with getting dressed in the morning and changing into his pajamas in the evening.*

*He usually wakes up around 9:00 am and goes to bed at 10:00 pm. You would need to help him with his shower on Saturday evening before bed. He also needs his medications at breakfast and dinner. In addition to making meals, I would like you to mop the kitchen floor, vacuum the carpets, and clean the bathroom. My husband enjoys watching T.V. and playing cards. What do you charge for overnight respite?*

OR

*I received your name off of a private home care worker list through NorthWest Senior & Disability Services. I'm wondering if you currently have any respite hours available during the afternoon. ( If the answer is "Yes", continue on. Otherwise, thank them for their time and go on to the next name on the list).*

*I would like to go to a support group meeting that meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month. I need to leave home by 2:30 pm, so I need you to stay with my mom from 2:30 pm – 5:00 pm. I will be able to give mom her lunch, but I need you to wash the lunch dishes and prepare dinner. I just need you to visit with mom and watch movies with her until I get home. I don't like to leave her alone. What is your hourly rate?*

This exercise is helpful in developing a job description. It's important to be specific and clearly state your expectations about the duties that need to be performed and the respite provider's responsibilities.

Now that you know what you're looking for, how do you find it? You can either hire a respite provider privately or go through an agency. They both have pro's and con's (*refer to "Using a Home Care Agency or Private Home Care Worker"*). NorthWest Senior & Disability Services offers a private list of home care workers, all of whom have passed both criminal history checks and background checks through Adult

Protective Services. You may also want to contact the Lifespan Respite Care Network in your county regarding listings of private home care workers. Check the yellow pages for agencies that provide home care services.

When looking for a respite provider, don't be afraid to ask around. Talk to your friends, family, neighbors, church members, support group members, family physicians, hospital discharge planners, home health agency staff, and case managers. Word of mouth travels fast.

Another option is placing an ad in newsletters, newspapers, or on bulletin boards.

It is always very important to check an applicant's references and conduct a background check. A good rule of thumb is to obtain at least three references, with at least one professional reference. You can also request that the applicant submit to a criminal history background check. Always interview before hiring. Begin with a telephone interview and then, if you feel comfortable with that person, schedule a face-to-face interview.

During the interview, use your senses! What do you see, hear, and smell?

- ◆ What is their body language saying?
- ◆ Are they maintaining eye contact?
- ◆ Are they presenting themselves in a professional manner?
- ◆ Are they well groomed?
- ◆ Are they wearing clean & appropriate clothing?
- ◆ Are they speaking in a courteous and respectful manner?
- ◆ Were they on time?
- ◆ Are they knowledgeable about what they are talking about?
- ◆ How are they interacting with the care receiver (if present during the interview)?

For more road signs to point you in the right direction, refer to other topics included in this kit:

Using a Home Care Agency or a Private Home Care Worker

Possible Interview Questions for Private Home Care Workers

Questions To Ask In-Home Care Agencies

Resources for Hiring In-Home Care Providers



Warning Signs of a Poor In-Home Care Provider

### Other Helpful Resources

- ◆ **AARP** provides information for family caregivers, such as “Hiring a Home Health Care Worker: Self-Help Guide” and “Choosing an Agency for In-Home Care.” Check out AARP’s website at <http://www.aarp.org/families/caregiving>.
- ◆ **Family Caregiver Alliance** offers Fact Sheets for family caregivers, which includes “Hiring In-Home Help.” This can be found at <http://www.caregiver.org>.
- ◆ **MetLife** offers a series of guides entitled *Since You Care* that contain the topics “Hiring an Independent Caregiver” and “Understanding Home Care Agency Options.” <http://metlife.com>
- ◆ **National Association for Home Care & Hospice** offers a comprehensive website for family caregivers, which includes “FAQ’s About How to Choose a Home Care Provider.” <http://www.nahc.org>
- ◆ **Oregon State University Extension Service** publishes “Hiring & Working Successfully with In-Home Care Providers,” which is a guide to find, screen, and hire in-home care workers. The price as of 12/06 is \$2.50. The publication can be ordered by mail, e-mail, fax, or telephone:
  - Publication Orders
  - Extension & Station Communications
  - Oregon State University
  - 422 Kerr Administration
  - Corvallis, OR 97331-2119
  - e-mail: [puborders@oregonstate.edu](mailto:puborders@oregonstate.edu)
  - 1-800-561-6719
  - Fax: 1-541-737-0817

Family Caregiver Support Program  
NorthWest Senior & Disability Services

## Using a Home Care Agency or a Private Home Care Worker

	Home Care Agency	Private Home Care Worker
<p><b>PROS:</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening, hiring/firing, pay and taxes are handled by the agency.</li> <li>• If the worker is ill, a substitute can be sent.</li> <li>• May be able to provide a range of services based on care receiver's need (e.g. skilled nursing care, physical therapy, bath aide, live-in ).</li> <li>• Cost may be partially covered by Medicaid or private insurance.</li> <li>• Workers are insured and bonded in case of theft or damage to your home. Usually covered under liability insurance &amp; worker's compensation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong one-on-one relationship can develop between the worker and the care receiver.</li> <li>• Usually less expensive than going through an outside agency.</li> <li>• You get to choose the person you think will be the best fit to provide care to your loved one.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CONS:</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often several workers are used which can be confusing or distressing for the care receiver.</li> <li>• Less individual choice in workers.</li> <li>• More expensive than privately hiring an individual.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening, hiring/firing, pay and taxes must be handled by you.</li> <li>• If the worker is ill, no substitute is readily available.</li> <li>• Cost may not be covered by insurance or Medicaid.</li> <li>• Usually not insured or bonded.</li> </ul>



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**Possible Interview Questions for Private Home Care Workers**

- ◆ What is your home care experience?
- ◆ What is your experience providing care for a person with \_\_\_\_\_?
- ◆ What classes or training have you had to prepare for this work?
- ◆ What do you like about home care?
- ◆ What do you find to be the most difficult part of working in home care?
- ◆ What would you do in an emergency, such as \_\_\_\_\_?
- ◆ Why did you leave your last job?
- ◆ Do you have commitments, such as another job, that might affect your employment schedule here?
- ◆ Are you available in emergencies/weekends/evenings?
- ◆ What is your hourly rate?
- ◆ Are you able to provide transportation? Do you charge mileage? Do you have a valid driver's license?
- ◆ Are you able to provide pet care?
- ◆ Do you provide yard work?
- ◆ Do you have references from past positions? Can they be contacted?
- ◆ Will you submit to a background check?
- ◆ Are you able to assist with lifting during transfers?

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NorthWest Senior & Disability Services

**Questions To Ask In-Home Care Agencies**

- ◆ What is the cost of care and is there a sliding scale?
- ◆ Are there minimum hours and days of service that must be accepted?
- ◆ Does the agency accept Medicare, Medicaid, or private insurance?
- ◆ How long has the agency been in business?
- ◆ How does the agency hire and train staff?
- ◆ What type of background and reference checks are done?
- ◆ Are employees licensed and bonded?
- ◆ Do agency workers have liability insurance?
- ◆ Does a supervisor make an initial visit to assess needs?
- ◆ How often does the supervisor visit to evaluate the home care provider?
- ◆ What procedures are in place for handling emergencies? Are caregivers available 24 hours a day, seven days a week?
- ◆ Is care provided on holidays/evenings/weekends and is there an additional fee?
- ◆ Will I receive all agreements in writing?
- ◆ Who do I call with questions, problems, or complaints?
- ◆ Is agency staff able to provide transportation?
- ◆ Can I cancel service at any time without penalty?

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## Resources for Hiring In-Home Care Providers

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You have finally decided to take that long awaited break from caregiving. You've realized that taking regular breaks from caregiving would help you reduce your stress. You've decided that you would like to hire a private home care worker. Now what? Hiring someone to care for your loved one can be confusing and overwhelming. Wasn't this supposed to reduce your stress? Having the right information and resources can make hiring an in-home care provider less frightening. The resources below will help you determine what your responsibilities are when you hire someone to care for your loved one.

### **IRS Publications**

*Available on the internet at <http://www.irs.gov> under "Forms & Publications" or by calling 1-800-829-3676. For tax related questions, call 1-800-829-1040.*

- ◆ **Publication 1779: Independent Contractor or Employee...**  
This publication discusses the difference between being an independent contractor or an employee.
  - If you need help in determining whether the person you have hired is an independent contractor or an employee, you can complete **Form SS-8: Determination of Worker Status for Purposes of Federal Employment Taxes & Income Tax Withholding.**

- ◆ **Publication 926: Household Employer's Tax Guide**  
This publication answers:
  - Do You Have a Household Employee? **Page 2**
  - Can Your Employee Legally Work in the U.S.? **Page 2**
  - Do You Need to Pay Employment Taxes? **Page 3**
    - ~ Social Security & Medicare Taxes **Pages 3-5**
    - ~ Federal Unemployment (FUTA) Tax **Pages 5-6**
    - ~ Federal Income Tax **Page 6**
  - What Do You Need to Know About Earned Income Credit? **Pages 6-7**
  - What Forms Must You File? **Pages 8-9**
  - What Records Must You Keep? **Page 9**
  
- ◆ **Form SS-4: Do I need an EIN (Employer Identification Number)**  
This is the number you would use if you are paying employment taxes.  
You can apply for an EIN:  
Online: <http://www.irs.gov> (under on-line tools)  
Phone: 1-800-829-4933  
Mail: Attn: EIN Operation Philadelphia, PA 19255  
Fax: 1-859-669-5760
  
- ◆ **Form 1040- Schedule H: Household Employment Taxes**  
This is the form you would use if you paid a household employee over a specific amount during the year ( **see Instructions for Schedule H under "Forms & Instructions"**). The instructions will also tell you if you need to file:
  - ~ Form W-2 (Wage & Tax Statement)
  - ~ Form W-3 (Transmittal of Wage & Tax Statement)The instructions also offer a definition for a household employee and provides examples.

## State of Oregon Employment Department

*Publications are available on the internet at*

<http://www.oregon.gov/employ/tax> (select *Informational Flyers from the menu*) or by calling 503-947-1488 (option 3). If you have tax related questions or need additional information, you can contact the Employment Department tax representative in your area or by calling 503-947-1488 or by e-mail at [taxinfo@emp.state.or.us](mailto:taxinfo@emp.state.or.us).

- ◆ **Quick Tax Facts 7 : Domestic Employers**  
This publication defines domestic employer, domestic worker, & private home. It explains under which circumstances an employer has to pay state unemployment tax.
- ◆ **Quick Tax Facts 1 : Independent Contractors**  
This publication defines what an independent contractor is and the eight standards that must be met before an individual is considered an independent contractor.
- ◆ **Frequently Asked Questions: Unemployment Insurance Tax**  
Answers questions: “Who is an employee” and “I have a domestic employee working in my home. Do I have to report their wages?” Can be found at <http://egov.oregon.gov/EMPLOY/TAX>. Under Menu, select FAQs Home and then select General Questions.

## Oregon Department of Revenue

You can access general tax information by calling 1-800-356-4222 or at <http://www.oregon.gov/DOR>.

- ◆ **Withholding Taxes: Household Employees**  
Defines a household employee and household work and whether it is required to withhold Oregon income tax. Can be found at:  
<http://egov.oregon.gov/DOR/BUS/IC-206-627.shtml>.

## **Bureau of Labor & Industries (BOLI)**

The Technical Assistance for Employers Unit through BOLI offers employer seminars, handbooks, and other materials. For additional information, you can visit their website at <http://www.oregon.gov/boli/ta>. To reach by phone, call 1-971-673-0824.

### ◆ **Pre-Employment Inquiries**

Offers answers to frequently asked questions regarding what questions can and cannot be asked during employee interviews. Information can be found at <http://www.boli.state.or.us>. Under Menu, select Technical Assistance. Go to FAQs & Fact Sheets and then select Pre-Employment Questions.

### ◆ **Domestic Service: Questions & Answers**

A definition for “domestic service” is given, as well as answers related to wage and hour laws that affect domestic employment. Information can be found at <http://www.boli.state.or.us>. Under Menu, select Technical Assistance. Go to FAQ’s & Fact Sheets and then select Domestic Workers.

## **Department of Homeland Security**

Information about Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) can be found at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website: <http://www.uscis.gov>. At the top of the page, select FAQ’s. Scroll down to Employment Eligibility Verification.

### ◆ **About Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification**

*Also refer to Publication 926: Household Employer’s Tax Guide (page 2).* This includes information regarding which employees do not need to complete the form.

## **Oregon State Police – Public Records**

Before hiring a homecare worker, you can request a criminal history check. This can be done through the Oregon State Police website: <http://www.oregon.gov/OSP>. Under Oregon State Police, go to Popular OSR Sites and select ID Services. Under this menu, select Public Records Unit. You can then download the Open Records Request Form. To contact OSP, you can call 503-376-3720. You can also request a criminal history check by mail:

Oregon State Police, Unit 11  
P.O. Box 4395  
Portland, OR 97208

## **Oregon Department of Justice**

If you hire an employee and withhold taxes, you may have to file a “New Hire Form” with the Oregon Attorney General’s Support Enforcement Division.

- ◆ **State of Oregon Employer New Hire Reporting Program**  
Information about the New Hire Reporting Law can be found at: <http://www.dcs.state.or.us>. Select Employers and scroll down to Employer New Hire Reporting. You can call the Employer New Hire Reporting Program at 1-877-877-7416 with questions or to request a hard copy of the Oregon New Hire Reporting Form.

## **Warning Signs of a Poor In-Home Care Provider**

(from *In-Home Care: Tips on Finding A Bit of Extra Help* by Robert F. Bornstein, Ph.D & Mary A. Languirand, Ph.D)

- Unanswered phone calls or a constant busy signal
- TV or radio remaining on throughout the day
- Late arrivals, early departures, last minute cancellations
- Significant decline in the cleanliness of the home
- Evidence of illegal drugs in the home (e.g., smell of marijuana)
- Signs that the caregiver has been drinking alcohol while on the job or before arriving for work (smell of alcohol on the caregiver's breath)
- Presence of other people in the home (unexplained visitors, home care worker's children)
- Frequent complaints on the part of the care receiver
- A troubling change in the care receiver's behavior (e.g., increased depression, agitation, or confusion)
- Reports from neighbors that something is awry
- Any sign- no matter how "minor" that abuse, neglect, or exploitation has taken place
- Bruises, fractures, burns, or "impossible" injuries (e.g., dislocated elbow in a bedfast patient)
- Evidence of dehydration or malnutrition
- Exposure injuries (e.g. hypothermia)
- Signs of improper medication
- Hypervigilance on the part of the care receiver
- Undue concern with what the caregiver wants
- Development of new phobias and fears
- Persistent signs of upset prior to the caregiver's arrival (e.g., pleading with you not to leave)
- Unexplained withdrawals from checking or saving accounts
- Appearance or disappearance of valuable items
- Evidence that unnecessary services have been ordered
- Changes in the care receiver's legal or financial status
- Unusual contributions to charities

**Report any of the above to Adult Protective Services**

**1-800-846-9165**

**All reports are confidential**