

Home Care Research Checklist: Your Guide to Finding the Right Care

Initial Assessment & Planning

Determine Your Needs:

- Identify specific care needs (personal care, medication management, mobility assistance) **Notes:**

- Assess household needs (cooking, cleaning, laundry, transportation) **Notes:**

- Determine preferred schedule (hours per day/week, specific days) **Preferred Schedule:**

- Evaluate safety concerns in the home environment **Safety Concerns:**

Financial Planning:

- Review health insurance coverage for home care services
- Check long-term care insurance benefits
- Investigate veterans' benefits (if applicable)
- Set a realistic budget for care services

Monthly Budget:

\$ _____

- Compare costs of home care vs. assisted living facilities
- Understand payment options (private pay, insurance, sliding scale) **Payment Method:**

Researching Home Care Agencies

Agency Credentials & Licensing:

- Verify state licensing and certification
- Check Medicare certification (if using Medicare benefits)
- Confirm bonding and liability insurance coverage
- Review Better Business Bureau ratings
- Check online reviews and testimonials
- Ask for references from current clients

Services Offered:

- Personal care (bathing, dressing, grooming)
- Medication reminders and management
- Meal planning and preparation
- Light housekeeping and laundry
- Transportation to appointments
- Companionship and social activities
- Specialized care (dementia, post-surgical, chronic conditions)
- Respite care for family caregivers
- 24/7 availability and emergency response

Specific Services Needed:

Services Not Available:

Caregiver Qualifications:

- Background check procedures and policies

- Training requirements and ongoing education

- Language capabilities if needed:

- What is your policy for care plan changes?

- How do you handle family concerns or complaints?

- Do you offer care coordination services?

- What technology do you use for scheduling and communication?

Evaluating Potential Agencies

Initial Consultation Questions:

- ★ Do you provide free in-home assessments?
- ★ How do you match caregivers with clients?
- ★ What is your process if we're not satisfied with a caregiver?
- ★ How do you handle caregiver absences or emergencies?
- ★ What are your minimum hour requirements?
- ★ Can care plans be adjusted as needs change?
- ★ Do you provide care plan updates to family members?

Contracts & Policies:

- Review contract terms and cancellation policies
- Understand billing procedures and payment terms
- Check policies for rate increases
- Review confidentiality and privacy protections
- Understand caregiver replacement policies
Check holiday and weekend availability and rates
- Review emergency procedures and protocols

Communication & Coordination:

- How do you communicate with family members?

- What documentation/reports do you provide?

- How do you coordinate with healthcare providers?

Home Safety Preparation:

- Complete home safety assessment
- Install safety equipment, if needed (grab bars, ramps, etc.)
- Secure valuables and important documents
- Provide emergency contact information
- Ensure smoke detectors and security systems work
- Create emergency evacuation plans

Red Flags to Watch For

Agency Warning Signs:

- Unlicensed or uninsured agencies
- Reluctance to provide references or credentials
- High-pressure sales tactics or immediate contracts
- Significantly lower prices than competitors
- Poor communication or unreturned calls
- No written care plans or documentation
- Unwillingness to meet clients before service begins
- Requests for money or gifts from clients
- Failure to follow care plans or instructions

Getting Started:

- Schedule the initial assessment

Assessment Date:

- Complete all necessary paperwork
- Prepare the home for care services
- Introduce caregiver to relevant family members
- Establish communication routines
- Set up payment arrangements
- Plan the first week of services carefully

