



The Hiring Help Checklist

From first idea to first day

General information about hiring household help in the US. Not legal or tax advice.
Rules vary by state and city. See IRS Publication 926 and your state labor department.
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The job on one page

Fill this in before you post anything. It becomes your job post, your interview guide and the start of your work agreement.

Role (cleaner, sitter, nanny, pet care, handyperson)

Main tasks, most important first

Days and hours

Start date and how long

Must-haves (experience, CPR, driving, pets)

Nice-to-haves

Pay range (after checking local rates)

House rules that matter

Through a company, or hiring directly?

Before you post: check what similar jobs pay locally, and read whether the role is likely employee or contractor at househelpcrew.com/employee-or-contractor.

The hiring steps

Plan the job	Done
☐ Write down the tasks, schedule and must-haves	
☐ Decide: a company, an agency or hiring directly	
☐ Check local pay rates and set a fair range	
☐ Work out whether the role is likely employee or contractor	
☐ List the house rules that matter to you	
Find and vet candidates	Done
☐ Write a clear job post with pay and hours	
☐ Share it in two or three places that fit the role	
☐ Do a short phone screen first	
☐ Interview with the same core questions for everyone	
☐ Call at least two references yourself	
☐ If you run a background check, get written consent first	
☐ Book a paid trial shift	
Get the paperwork right	Done
☐ Write a simple work agreement and both sign it	
☐ Check whether household employer tax rules apply to you	
☐ Ask your insurer about someone working in your home	
☐ Set up a simple record of hours and payments	
Start well	Done
☐ Give a home tour: supplies, shutoffs, no-go areas	
☐ Decide how they get in, and use a code you can change	
☐ Share emergency contacts and what to do if something breaks	
☐ Schedule a check-in at the end of week one	
☐ Put a review date in your calendar	

Questions to ask

Ask every candidate the same core questions, then add the role-specific ones. Write notes as you go.

Phone screen (10 minutes)

1. Are the days, hours and pay range right for you?
2. What similar work have you done recently?
3. How would you get here?
4. When could you start?
5. Can you give me two recent references?

Interview: core questions

1. Tell me about your favorite past job like this. Why?
2. What do you need from a family to do your best work?
3. Tell me about a time a client wanted something you didn't agree with.
4. How do you handle running late or being sick?
5. What would you do if you broke something?
6. What questions do you have for me?

For sitters and nannies

- What would you do if a child had a fall or allergic reaction?
- How do you handle tantrums and bedtime?
- Are you trained in CPR and first aid?
- How do you feel about our screen and phone rules?

For cleaners, pet care, handy people

- What's included in a standard visit, and what costs extra?
- What would you do if my pet seemed unwell or got out?
- Is any part of this job one for a licensed trade?
- Do you carry liability insurance?

Avoid questions about age, religion, health, pregnancy, family plans, national origin or marital status. Stick to the job.

Reference call script

Call at a number you found or confirmed yourself. Say who you are and that the candidate gave their name, then ask:

The questions

1. How do you know them, and for how long did they work for you?
2. What did they do for you, and how often?
3. What were they especially good at?
4. Was there anything you'd have liked them to do differently?
5. How did they handle a problem or a mistake?
6. Why did the arrangement end?
7. If your situation were the same, would you hire them again?

Reference 1

Name, relationship, dates

What stood out

Would hire again?

Reference 2

Name, relationship, dates

What stood out

Would hire again?

Compare candidates

Score 1 to 5 on the same points for everyone. It keeps the decision fair, and clear in your own head.

	Candidate A	Candidate B	Candidate C	Candidate D
Relevant experience				
Interview answers				
Reference 1				
Reference 2				
Availability fits				
Paid trial went well				
Gut feeling				
Total				

First-day plan

Day one	Done
☐ Home tour: supplies, no-go areas, where things live	
☐ Show the water shutoff, breaker panel and first aid kit	
☐ Agree how they get in; set a code you can change later	
☐ Share emergency contacts and what to do if something breaks	
☐ Go over the written agreement together, and both keep a copy	
☐ Book the end-of-week-one check-in	

Published by Rip & Ride LLC, 30 N Gould St Ste R, Sheridan, WY 82801. Guides at househelpcrew.com.