



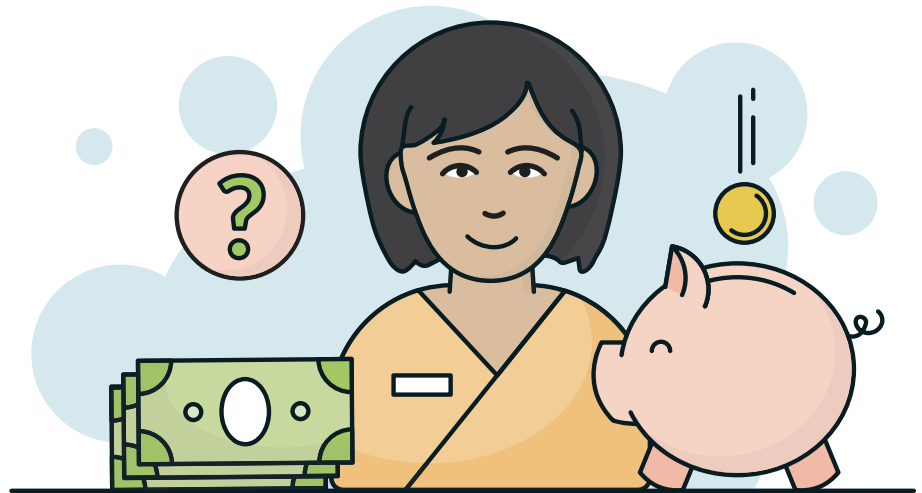
How to Recruit & Retain Caregivers

When You've Already Tried Everything.

22 Tips, Tricks, and Strategies to Use When You're Ready to Give Up

Banging your head against the wall trying to recruit and retain caregivers?

You're not alone.



If you've tried everything you know how to do to recruit more caregivers and you're still seeing limited success, you've come to the right place.

We've turned over rocks all over the country to find you this list. You'll notice that many of these aren't recruiting channels. Some of them are value additions to make you more competitive when you're recruiting, get more word of mouth when caregivers brag about you, and retain caregivers so you don't have to hire as often.

Others are hiring strategies to help you make the most of the applicants you're already getting.

Some *are* recruitment channels—but they're highly effective and chronically underused strategies.

A few of these ideas are so little-used in the industry that it might take a little work to figure out how to best implement them in your agency because so few agencies have tried them before. For agencies who are willing to blaze the trail, these ideas could be game-changers.

Standing out as an employer and attracting the best caregivers boils down to one question: What are you willing to do that others aren't?

1. Offer daily pay to your caregivers rather than paying weekly or bi-weekly.

[Daily Pay](#) is a relatively new company that's shaking up

the compensation world by helping companies handle the logistics of paying their employees daily. [A few early adopters in home care](#) have reported that daily pay has been a crucial part of becoming more competitive in recruitment, improving retention, and even seeing caregivers become more willing to pick up additional hours.

2. Provide onsite child care.

Per the [Home Care Benchmarking Study](#), only .3% of agencies are offering this benefit. And according to the [myCNAjobs Trend Report](#), 22% of caregivers are single parents and 35% of caregivers would be interested in bringing their kids to work. The math is clear: if you're willing to innovate, there's a huge opportunity.

While providing onsite child care presents some obvious challenges, this out-of-the-box strategy has the potential to massively reduce turnover because of the convenience that it presents to single parents who have few or no other options.

3. Invite your marketer/salesperson to evaluate your recruiting pipeline from a sales perspective.

While recruiters and HR managers typically excel at working with candidates, they're sometimes less accustomed to the process of optimizing a pipeline that's second nature to most marketers.

Recruiting is selling—you need to treat your recruitment pipeline with the same care that you would your sales pipeline and sell applicants on why YOUR agency is the place they want to work. Bringing in the perspective of someone more accustomed to working in a sales setting can help to [optimize your recruitment pipeline](#) and make the communication in it more persuasive and the steps more efficient.

4. Put a system in place to regularly contact past caregivers.

In addition to seeing if they're willing to come work for you again, see if they know anybody who would be interested in applying and consider offering them a referral bonus the way you would current employees.

According to the [Home Care Benchmarking Study](#), reactivation of previous employees is not a top source of recruitment to the industry at large but is one of the top sources for agencies making \$5 million or more in annual revenue.

While this channel is probably a steadier source of recruitment for large, established agencies with a large pool of former employees, this still strongly suggests that reactivation of previous is a channel that is not being fully taken advantage of by much of the industry.

5. Launch a caregiver mentoring program.

Aaron Marcum, founder of Home Care Pulse, often describes a [caregiver mentor program](#) as his “secret weapon” during his time as a home care owner. A mentoring programs provides significantly better support to caregivers, especially during their crucial first few months. You can also implement one at relatively low cost.

6. Take a more data-driven approach that lets you use your recruiting dollars more efficiently.

Would the problem of recruitment be easier to solve if you had a 3x larger recruitment budget? Optimizing your spend on the right sources will help you to make your budget go a lot further, creating the same effect as increasing it.

How do you do this? Get scientific and use the right metrics to determine exactly how to get the biggest bang for your buck. Here's what we recommend you track separately for each recruitment source:

- Cost per hire
- Turnover
- Volume of applicants
- Volume of hires



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7. Set up a system to nurture candidates the same way you would leads—even if things don't work out after the first time they apply.

If things don't work out with a good candidate, they shouldn't be dead to you—set up a system to occasionally stay in contact with them and invite them to come back and talk again in the future. This process can be easily automated using a [CRM](#).

8. Reduce the time it takes to progress a caregiver from application to their first shift.

According to the [Home Care Benchmarking Study](#), the #1 reason caregivers take a job is essentially that it's the first place they could work. Additionally, most caregivers continue interviewing with other employers after they interview with you. The sooner you can get the right applicants hired and scheduled, the more likely they are to stay.

This entails speeding up hiring, onboarding, training, and scheduling. Every hiring process is different and you'll need to audit your process carefully to identify where you can speed it up. That said, you can start with these ideas:

- Use a resource like [Checkster](#) to check references online in a matter of minutes
- Incorporate texting into your process to communicate more quickly with candidates and ensure better follow-up
- Consider using an applicant tracking system like [Hireology](#) to automate the process wherever possible

9. Redesign your brand to appeal to caregiver demographic in addition to your client demographic.

Your brand isn't only important for your marketing; it also communicates to your clients what it would be like to work for you.

Most agencies design to appeal to their client demographic with little thought of appealing to the (typically) much younger demographic that comprises the caregiving workforce. It's possible to maintain a brand that appeals strongly to both.

When it's all said and done, many home care agencies

would strongly benefit from giving their brand a face lift to help appeal to both their target client demographic and their target caregiver demographic.

10. Evaluate your job postings for arbitrary hiring criteria that may be screening out qualified applicants.

As a general rule, it's much better to hire based on the personality traits you want and be willing to give people a little training than try to hire based too much on prior qualifications that could be learned relatively quickly.

For instance, some agencies require CPR certifications or other basic training just to apply. These agencies may be inadvertently closing themselves off to 50% or more of their potential applicants by requiring qualifications that they could easily give the caregiver in [a day of training](#). If your hiring criteria includes mandatory qualifications that you could easily teach the caregivers on the job, change your criteria!

11. If you can't afford to offer health insurance but feel like it's necessary to be competitive with other employers in the area, consider offering a health savings account as an alternative.

A health savings accounts (HSA) essentially works like a 401(k), with employers deducting money from each paycheck and depositing it into a tax-deductible fund that the employee can use to cover future health needs. [Expanding the benefits you offer](#) always brings advantages in hiring.

12. Hold quarterly performance reviews.

Caregivers want performance reviews a lot more often than they're getting them in most cases. According to the [myCNAjobs Trend Report](#), 57% of caregivers want performance reviews at least every three months, while only 11% of agencies hold reviews this often.

Let's talk about the elephant in the room: if you're holding performance reviews every three months, do you have to give them raises every three months? Not necessarily.

While a positive performance review should probably entail some kind of compensation, it may take the form of a one-time bonus, PTO, or an increase in other benefits.



You may also consider offering small, incremental raises at these milestones rather than substantial raises that would accompany less frequent performance reviews.

13. Partner with local businesses to provide extra perks as benefits.

Local businesses are often happy to make a deal that provides your caregivers with perks like free haircuts, oil changes, meals at restaurants, transportation, movie tickets, or almost anything else.

While this isn't a substitute for factors like competitive pay, it can have a disproportionate benefit by helping you stand out with unusual perks that nobody else is offering.

Unusual offerings like this are also key to starting conversations that drive word-of-mouth about working for your agency.

14. Hold “coffee talk” sessions to increase the connection and unity between your caregivers.

This tip comes from the caregiver experts at [In The Know caregiver training](#), with whom Home Care Pulse recently merged companies. Think about this: one of the major reasons why home care agencies struggle with retention is because caregivers are usually isolated from other employees and don't get the social aspect that they would working in retail, fast food, or other industries.

It's critical that you do what you can to provide that social aspect. Schedule or encourage regular social gatherings, even if it's just a group of friends meeting over coffee, to give your caregivers a chance to unwind and get to know each other.

15. Create a Facebook group for caregivers to connect with each other, get advice, and support each other.

It's surprising how few agencies seem to be doing this. Not only is this a good channel to help ensure communication, but it's another important way to help caregivers feel more of a connection to each other when they may not get to see other employees very often.

16. Ensure that you're communicating for relationships, not just logistics.

If you're only communicating with your caregivers to send them their schedule or when there's a problem, you shouldn't expect them to stick around very long.

They need to feel connected to management, and to help them do that you should reach out regularly just to check on how they're doing and see if they need anything. We know of a home care agency owner with over 100 caregivers who calls each of them on their birthday.

17. Revamp your training program to go above and beyond your competition, and make it a central feature of your recruitment marketing in order to attract caregivers who are motivated by wanting to expand their skills.

It's just as important to differentiate yourself to potential caregivers as it is to potential clients. Imagine the strength it would be to your agency if any caregiver in the area knew your agency as the place to go if they really want to develop their skills.

We recommend using a [blended solution for training](#)—an increasingly popular strategy that combines regular in-person trainings with self-driven online training from a vendor like [In The Know](#). This provides a strong mix of hands-on experience that most caregivers value very highly with a more thorough training regimen that caregivers can complete at their own pace.



18. Partner with a CNA school to provide internships and school credit.

You may also provide tuition reimbursement to caregivers who stay with your agency for a certain amount of time after they obtain their degree or certification.

This strategy not only provides you with a pipeline of new caregivers but also ensures that the applicants you get are invested in caregiving and likely to stay with your agency for longer than applicants from other sources would.

19. Audit your communication process during hiring to ensure that it keeps candidates and new hires engaged.

Too many agencies are letting applicants slip through the cracks, not only by taking too long but by failing to communicate expectations and sell the applicant on working for them.

We recommend keeping the following tips in mind, which were originally suggest by hiring experts at [Hireology](#):

- If you aren't using texting in your hiring process, start using it. Use texts to augment phone calls and emails as a way to keep tight and frequent communication.
- Respond to all applicants with 48 hours (or 72 hours if it's a weekend)
- Send a pre-screening survey if possible to save time on later steps (you can use a tool like [Survey Gizmo](#) for this)
- Outline each step of the process for them so they know what to expect and how long it will take

- Update them if anything is taking longer than it should
- Make sure your interviews are held at convenient times for candidates
- Close the loop with all candidates who don't make it. Be courteous, grateful, and (in most cases) encourage them to apply again in the future.

20. Go beyond job fairs and hold recruitment parties.

This is a model rarely used in home care but frequently used by some other recruitment-heavy, high-turnover businesses, such as summer sales companies.

What separates a recruitment party from a [traditional recruiting event](#)?

First, consider holding it somewhere fun where the venue itself is a draw. This may be a restaurant, bowling alley, or park. Offer (and advertise) free food at the event.

Second, give your caregivers an incentive to come and to bring friends. This can be an extension of an [existing employee referral program](#)—you might give your caregivers a \$10 gift card for every friend they bring to the event, and pay them a bonus for everyone they refer who is hired from the event.

Third, make the event fun. In addition to discussing the benefits of working for your agency, consider holding a raffle and playing games. Use the event as an opportunity to [demonstrate your organization's culture](#), let potential applicants mingle with your caregivers, and use conversations as informal interviews.

21. Move to a 'guaranteed pay' model.

This can take various forms, but the essence is that caregivers are paid on a salary basis rather than hourly, provided they work at least a certain number of hours each week. Some home care agencies are using this model for their office staff by paying the staff for 40 hours, scheduling them for 32 hours, and setting the expectation that they pick up a caregiving shift (or several small shifts) during the week.

The primary benefit of this model is that alleviates a [top concern for most caregivers](#), which is not getting enough hours. This way, caregivers can rest assured that even if

they get a few less hours one week, they'll still get their pay.

Obviously, this raises some questions about cash flow and profit margins. As with daily pay and onsite child care, a few bold early adopters have tried this model and reported success. You'll need to adapt it to the needs and circumstances of your agency—but we've spoken to agencies who have established proof of concept.

22. Seek caregivers' perspective on their hiring experience and employment experience with your agency to find blind spots and pinpoint where you can improve.

[Survey your caregivers](#) about their experiences working for your agency, and survey applicants and new hires about their experience in the hiring process.

Even the best-run agencies [have blind spots](#)—and it's important to [find them and correct them](#) before they result in unnecessary turnover.

As one of our customers recently put it, "You just don't know what you don't know." Sometimes, your perspective might not give you the tools to help you find the solution you need. You need to get out of your own head and see things from the caregivers' perspectives.

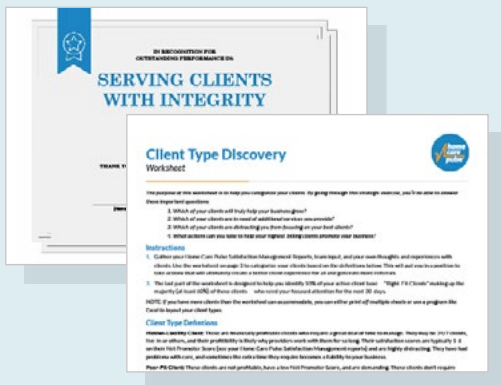
Implement and Innovate

When it's all said and done, recruiting caregivers may never be easy. On top of the fact that it's a job seeker's market right now, the gap between the demand for caregivers and the number of available caregivers get wider every year.

We encourage you to take these ideas and see what you can add to them. Innovate past them and find new strategies that aren't being used yet. See what employers in other industries are doing to recruit and find the ideas that can be transplanted to home care.

It's a challenging and rewarding to be in home care. For agencies willing to adapt, learn, and experiment, there's a lot of potential for growth.

Here's to your success!



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