



Finding and retaining capable, efficient, and loyal professionals to staff your private home, estate, or ranch can be challenging. Over the years, Heartland Estate Staffing has compiled the following guidelines for our clients. We hope these suggestions help you retain long-term private-service employees in your home.

1. Communication If possible, spend time with new employees to communicate your specific needs, preferences, and routines before they assume their duties. If your home or estate does not have a manual of operation and procedures, consider allowing your new employees a reasonable amount of time to create one for you. (We suggest six to eight months.) A household guide can be an invaluable tool for employees to provide high-quality service to you and your family and care for your residence.

2. Hours Employees also leave private service due to excessive overtime on a continual basis. These are salaried positions, and it can be easy to load on the hours during busy times without extra pay or compensatory time off. These professionals are flexible and willing to work extra hours at times, but a good balance is crucial. It may help to have an accurate account of the time it takes to accomplish required tasks. Also, be sincerely appreciative of the extra work your staff members perform. They truly desire to please you and strive to improve their service.

3. Housing Be sure the staff housing is clean and in good repair prior to new employees' arrival. If you are employing a couple team, be sure to provide adequate accommodations with plenty of room. While we screen our couples for a high level of compatibility and the ability to work well together, all couples need adequate space and privacy to work at their best. Addressing staff members' contentment will improve long-term retention. And remember, the fact that they're living onsite is to your advantage, not theirs. Do not add the value of the accommodations provided to their compensation package; this is not an asset they can take with them. For example, if the caretaker's cottage is very nice, this is a perk to your employees, while giving you access to 24/7 emergency services.

4. Managing your staff Overzealous micro-management by an employer is the number-one reason household staff members cite for leaving their positions. You must be satisfied with your

employees' work, but there can be a fine line between checking on them and chiding them. These professionals have expertise in private service, so be sure to allow them some autonomy. Trust your judgment as a manager; your goal is to be fair and reasonable while expecting and encouraging a high level of performance.

5. Flexibility While private service professionals pride themselves on their adaptability, flexibility, and service-oriented attitude, it's important to notify your staff of changes in schedules, routines, or special needs. Your staff members will appreciate this courtesy, plus it ensures the changes will be incorporated smoothly while maintaining a high level of seamless service.

6. Tools & Support Ensure the proper equipment is in place for your employees to efficiently complete the work you require. Listen to your staff's advice and recommendations when investing in equipment. This can make the difference in results and efficiency. Remember, some tasks are better outsourced, such as reaching high windows with ladders or scaffolding for cleaning or repair.

7. Staff Meetings Maintain a productive working relationship with your staff through regularly scheduled staff meetings. While you may think you are communicating sufficiently via day-to-day instructions and feedback, remember they also need a time to share their ideas, suggestions, and concerns with you. Holding regular staff meetings is a time investment that can pay big dividends through increased efficiency, loyalty, and retention.

8. Compensation Package Remember, private service is a professional career. Please respect your private service staff members as professionals. Paying a staff member "under the table" is a thing of the past. Providing full benefits and incentives is as important in this profession as any other. Household employees are committed to helping you maintain a comfortable and gracious lifestyle. If personal loyalty, a willingness to go the extra mile, and long-term commitment are qualities you seek in your domestic staff, it makes sense to provide a competitive benefits package. An end-of-year bonus, 401(k) plan, and insurance coverage can encourage a lasting employee/employer relationship. Plus, it's important to offer yearly paid vacations (at an agreed upon time convenient to employee and employer) to give your staff time to rest and rejuvenate.

9. Promoting Longevity No one is exempt from the occasional bad day. A good working relationship between household staff and employer, like any professional relationship, requires occasional tact on everyone's part. A little sensitivity on those days can help maintain a harmonious, productive, long-term relationship. In addition, ask yourself if the workload is realistic or changes in your residence, family, or lifestyle have pushed the limits of your current staffing level. If so, it may be time to consider hiring additional employees.

10. Respect Remember, your household staff members have chosen to be of service to others. This is their profession – what they choose to do. Open communication and treating your staff with respect sets the foundation for mutually beneficial relationships that last for years.

