

Tips on Finding a Cleaning Service

Finding affordable cleaning options in Dane County can be challenging. To start, make a list of your cleaning goals and see if potential cleaning companies can meet those expectations and at what cost. You may have to set priorities and update your list based on the feedback you receive. Dealing with limited options and higher costs can be challenging, but exploring these avenues might help alleviate some of the financial burden while still ensuring a clean and safe living environment.

Where to start your search

- Ask friends, family, or neighbors for recommendations. If feasible, involve family members or friends in the cleaning process to share the responsibility and reduce the need for frequent professional services.
- Check with local community centers, senior centers, or religious organizations. They might have information on affordable cleaning assistance or volunteers.
- Decide if you'd prefer independent house cleaners or cleaning companies:
 - **Independent house cleaners** are usually found through "word of mouth." A background check is recommended.
 - **Cleaning Companies** screen their workers beforehand and are often bonded and insured.
- Check online reviews to get an idea of the service's quality and reliability. You can use online search engines to connect to cleaning companies, for example:
 - <https://www.angi.com/>
 - <https://www.thumbtack.com/>
 - <https://www.care.com/>
 - <https://www.yelp.com/>
- There are more informal ways to establish support with cleaning:
 - Check bulletin boards at local businesses to see if anyone is advertising their services there, or create your own flyer outlining your cleaning needs, but keep personal information limited to avoid scams.
 - Dane County Neighbors Helping Neighbors on Facebook could help connect you to independent and local cleaners.
 - Websites/Apps like Nextdoor, which provide a private online network to keep residents informed of the latest news in their neighborhood could connect you to more local community members willing to help.



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Interview Your Agency/Provider

- Arrange for an in-person meeting to discuss services, expectations, and to see if there's a good fit. Meet in a public place/have a friend or family member accompany you. If something feels off or suspicious, trust your instincts and consider looking for an alternative service. **See interview questions attached.**
- Get a clear understanding of pricing, payment methods, and any additional fees upfront. Don't hesitate to negotiate with cleaning services. They might offer discounted rates for regular or bundled services. Set clear terms, services required, schedule, and payment terms before finalizing any agreement.

Addressing Barriers:

- Affordability:
 - Look into non-profit organizations or charities that offer financial assistance specifically for senior citizens in need of essential services like cleaning.
 - Inquire if there's a possibility to pool resources with other seniors in the area to share the cost of cleaning services.
 - Research local volunteer organizations that might offer cleaning assistance for the elderly free of charge or at reduced cost.
- Accessibility:
 - More rural parts of the county may struggle to have service providers willing to travel to them. Try your best to connect with your neighbors and local focal point for more specific options in your area.
- Technology skills:
 - When using the internet to find services, be careful not to share unnecessary personal information, especially payment information.
 - Some of the online websites and informal groups might require membership accounts or membership fees. If you have to create a username and password, be sure to create a unique and private password. Use caution when navigating social media websites and don't share your address until the service provider has been vetted.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

COST			
QUESTION	Agency/Provider #1	Agency/Provider #2	Agency/Provider #3
Do you charge by the hour, square foot, or a flat fee?			
Do you have a required minimum amount of time for services?			
How often do you bill?			
Do we pay before or after services?			
Do you accept credit cards?			

BUSINESS BASICS

QUESTION	Agency/Provider #1	Agency/Provider #2	Agency/Provider #3
Are you insured and bonded?			
Do you do background checks on all employees?			
How many years' experience do you/your staff have housekeeping?			
What guarantees do you offer?			
Can I get this in a written contract?			
Who is our contact person for concerns and questions about billing?			



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SERVICES

QUESTION	Agency/Provider #1	Agency/Provider #2	Agency/Provider #3
What services do you provide, and do you not provide?			
Do you work in houses with pets/smoking? Ask if your pet will need crating.			
What are your expectations of the home when you arrive?			
Do you move furniture/items for vacuuming and dusting?			
Do you keep a daily log of tasks completed in each client's home?			
Are you willing to work when the owner is home?			

Information courtesy of ADRC of Dane County. The ADRC does not endorse or recommend specific agencies.



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STAFF			
QUESTION	Agency/Provider #1	Agency/Provider #2	Agency/Provider #3
Will it be the same cleaning staff every week?			
If my usual cleaning staff cannot come, will you send a replacement?			
How do you select who will clean our home?			
How do you find your staff?			
How do you keep a great team?			
Can you provide references from current or former clients?			
Whom can I call if I have questions or concerns?			

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