



SENIORS HOME SUPPORTS PROGRAM

Hiring a Contractor Tip Sheet:

- Write down what you need and your expectations for the job and timelines. Request written quotes from service providers, especially when you need ongoing services or large projects (e.g., snow and lawn service, landscaping, home renovation, home maintenance, etc.).
- Get at least 3 quotes in writing and review them. Why are they different? How long will it take them to complete the job? The cheapest is not necessarily the best and a job done right the first time will cost less in the end. Remember, quality of work may be more important than price.
- Research each company. One source is customer reviews on the internet. They may also come up on the Better Business Bureau and you can check if they have a good rating.
- Once you have chosen a contractor, agree on a written work plan and get a written contract, which would state when the service is to happen, any conditions and warranty, and the price and payment due information. If you make any changes, get them in writing. Do not permit work to start without a signed, written contract that includes start and completion dates, exact costs, specific work to be done, including protection of your property, clean up and removal of debris.
- When meeting with contractors, have a friend or family member with you – they may think of a question you should ask or help clear up a misunderstanding.
- Be sure to read the fine print carefully. Do not pay large payments up front. The usual up-front payment is 20%. Stagger your payments according to work stages and do not make a final payment until the job is completed to your satisfaction.

- Pay by cheque or with credit card for added protection. Paying by credit card provides some recourse should the job not be completed as stated in the contract.
- Set good boundaries – be clear about what spaces in your home or yard are off limits and communicate regularly with the contractor.
- If things don't go well – speak to the contractor/worker right away. Often it is a misunderstanding, and you may reach a mutually agreeable compromise.
- If things are not resolved – call the staff person who gave you the referrals. They may have further advice for you. In doing so, you may stop others from being taken advantage of.