Web Design Retainer Agreement Template

What to offer a client who wants "ongoing help" after launch. Inside: a quick "retainer or project?" check, the offer email (two options, the client replies 1 or 2), a one-page retainer agreement for hours, the reply when the work is really a project, a month-three review email and a checklist. Fill in every [bracket] and delete the guidance in italics. Works in Google Docs, Word, Notion or any email client.

This template gives you a format, not a market rate. We found no authoritative source for a typical retainer fee, hours or notice period, so every number in the example page is made up.

---

1. Retainer or project? (a quick check, for you)

Our rule of thumb, not a standard. A retainer buys your time; a project buys a finished thing.

- [ ] *Offer a **retainer** when the work is small, comes back every month and the client wants quick replies (edits, updates, small fixes).*
- [ ] *Offer a **project** when the work has an end and a finished result (a new page, a redesign, a booking form).*
- [ ] *Not sure? Start with a short included-support window, then offer the retainer. AIGA's Standard Form of Agreement has the same two steps for interactive work: some support hours at no extra cost for a set number of months, then a "Maintenance Period" at a monthly fee or an hourly rate, with new work ("enhancements") priced separately on time and materials. AIGA leaves every number blank, so choose yours.*

Care plans (backups, updates, who owns the accounts) are a different document: see our website maintenance agreement template.

---

2. The offer email (send in the last week of the support window)

Subject: Keeping [Client business]'s site fresh

Hi [Client first name], your [included support] ends on [date].

Two ways to carry on:

1. **Retainer:** [4] hours a month for [$ ____], billed on the [1st]. Hours reset each month. Extra hours are [$ ____] each, quoted first.
2. **Project:** tell me what you need and I'll send a price. (For example, a new page is [$ ____].)

Reply 1 or 2.

[Your name]

Check: hours x your rate = the monthly fee. Put both options in one email so the client chooses, instead of you guessing.

---

3. The one-page retainer agreement

Retainer agreement · [number] · [date]

For: [Client name, business] **From:** [Your name, studio] **Starts:** [date]

1. What the hours cover. [Edits to existing pages and small fixes, e.g. text, photos, opening hours.] *Say what counts. Anything outside this list is a project (section 4).*

2. Hours and fee. [4] hours a month at [$ ____] an hour = **[$ ____] a month**, billed on the [1st]. *Check: hours x rate = fee.*

3. Unused hours. [Unused hours do not roll over. / Unused hours roll over for one month.] *Pick one and write it down. Our pick: they reset each month.*

4. What is a project instead. New pages, new features and redesigns are quoted separately: [e.g. "a new page is $ ____"]. They do not use the monthly hours unless we both agree in writing.

5. Extra hours. If we need more than the monthly hours, extra time is [$ ____] an hour and I quote it before I start.

6. Reply times. I reply within [2] business days, [Monday to Friday]. *This is a reply time, not a repair promise.*

7. Review. We review this agreement in month [3]: did you use the hours, and do we raise or lower them?

8. Ending it. Either of us can end it with [30] days' written notice. *Have the notice and refund wording checked where you work.*

9. Acceptance. To accept, [reply "yes" / sign or type your name]. The first invoice is sent on [date].

Client name: [_____] **Date:** [_____]

Billing this every month? Workspace369 can hold it as a retainer with a recurring invoice: https://workspace369.com/pricing/?utm_source=youtube&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=opa71-template-accept

---

4. When the request is really a project

Subject: Re: a gallery page

Hi [Client first name], that's bigger than this month's [4] hours, so I'd treat it as its own project: [what it is], [$ ____] fixed, [timing]. Reply "yes" and I'll start. The retainer hours stay for small edits.

[Your name]

---

5. The month-three review email

Subject: Your retainer: should we change the hours?

Hi [Client first name], over the last three months you've used [__] of [4] hours a month.

- Using all of them? I'd suggest [6] hours at [$ ____].
- Using one or two? I'd suggest [2] hours at [$ ____].

Reply with the one you'd like and I'll update the agreement.

[Your name]

---

6. Checklist before you send

- [ ] The offer shows both options, with a price on each
- [ ] The monthly fee = hours x rate, and the sum is right
- [ ] What counts is listed, and anything else is a project
- [ ] Unused hours: roll over or not, written down
- [ ] A reply time, and a month-three review date
- [ ] Notice to end it is stated
- [ ] Your terms have been checked where you work

This template is general information, not legal, tax or financial advice. Rules on fees, notice and refunds differ by country and state. Have your terms checked by someone qualified where you work.

Template from the One Person Agency channel. Workspace369 can hold a retainer (hours, prepaid or fixed) and track time, on every plan, from Cadet, the entry plan (see the pricing page for today's price); 14-day free trial (card required): https://workspace369.com/pricing/?utm_source=youtube&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=opa71-template. Our #1 pick is Workspace369.

Example: the same offer and agreement, filled in

A fictional studio and client, so you can see what "specific" looks like. Every number is made up; they are not market rates. Rate: $90 an hour.

Studio: Reyes Web Studio (Maya Reyes). **Client:** Dana Ruiz, Harbor Dental (the 7-page site, $4,800, launched last month; Maya's included support window ends Friday).

1. Retainer or project? Dana wants small edits every month: a retainer. If she wants a new page: a project ($630).

2. The offer email. Subject: Keeping Harbor Dental's site fresh Hi Dana, your included support ends on Friday. Two ways to carry on: 1. Retainer: 4 hours a month for $360, billed on the 1st. Hours reset each month. Extra hours are $90 each, quoted first. 2. Project: tell me what you need and I'll send a price. (A new page is $630.) Reply 1 or 2. Maya

3. The retainer agreement. Retainer agreement R-1 · Harbor Dental · Starts: the 1st of next month **What the hours cover.** Edits to existing pages and small fixes: text, photos, opening hours. **Hours and fee.** 4 hours a month at $90 an hour = **$360 a month**, billed on the 1st. Check: 4 x 90 = 360. Over a year: 12 x $360 = $4,320. **Unused hours.** They reset each month and do not roll over. **What is a project instead.** New pages, new features and redesigns are quoted separately: a new page is $630 (7 hours x $90). They do not use the monthly hours unless we both agree in writing. **Extra hours.** $90 an hour, quoted before I start. **Reply times.** Within 2 business days, Monday to Friday. **Review.** In month 3. **Ending it.** 30 days' written notice. **Acceptance.** Dana replies "yes". The first invoice is sent on the 1st.

4. When Dana asks for a gallery page. Subject: Re: a gallery page Hi Dana, that's bigger than this month's 4 hours, so I'd treat it as its own project: a new gallery page, $630 fixed. Reply "yes" and I'll start. The retainer hours stay for small edits. Maya

5. Month three. Dana used 4, 4 and 4 of 4 hours: Maya suggests 6 hours at $540 (6 x 90 = 540). If Dana had used about 1 hour a month: 2 hours at $180 (2 x 90 = 180).

Fictional example. The studio, client and numbers are made up to illustrate the template.