

SHARED HOUSING: *A Path to Stability*

Getting out of homelessness often requires not one big leap but several steps. For example, someone might move from the streets, or a car, to a temporary stay with a family member. From there, the person or family might move into crisis or bridge housing like an emergency shelter or a motel room.

Ideally, the next step would be permanent housing in an apartment or house, but low income, credit history, or a criminal background might prove to be a major barrier.

Shared housing is a potential solution to this problem. Typically shared housing means two or more families or single adults living in an apartment or house, sharing the kitchen, utility costs, rent, and developing a schedule that respects each other's need for privacy. It could mean moving into a room for rent or host home. Some shared housing includes shared bedrooms and may include utilities and require no background check. For many people, shared housing represents the difference between having a place to live and remaining homeless.

The question is: Is shared housing a good idea for you?

Our goal is to increase the chances of success in shared housing. After filling out the online questionnaire, you will be connected to potential roommates who share some of the same interests and values... people that seem to be compatible with you! We will help to set up opportunities for you to meet prospective individuals or families to live with, but the choice for a shared housing partner is yours. Once a decision has been made, you will work together to form an agreement establishing some basic ground rules for living under the same roof. These rules will include such items as:

- Storage of items, including food
- Use of common areas, such as the living room, kitchen and dining room
- Sharing and paying for common expenses, such as utilities
- Quiet hours and guest policies
- Cleaning common areas and sharing costs of cleaning supplies
- Mediation of conflicts
- Anything else you find relevant to your happiness and peace at home

Remember that shared housing doesn't need to be forever—*it can be a stepping stone to sustained, stable housing.*