**Shared Housing**

Shared housing represents a potential permanent housing solution for many of our participants. For information about shared housing and why it might be a good option for the person you are working with, see the LA Family Housing info sheet [here](../../../Housing/Shared%20Housing/Shared%20Housing%20Info%20Sheet.pdf).

Shared housing is not the same for everyone. It may consist of anything from renting out a spare bedroom from a homeowner, to moving unrelated individuals into the different bedrooms in a house or apartment, or sharing an apartment among two or more small families.

No matter the arrangement, the following steps should be taken to increase the likelihood of success in shared housing. For additional articles about shared housing, tips for success and the predominance of shared housing as a housing option see the following: [15 Tips To Win At Life In A Shared Living Space](../../../Housing/Shared%20Housing/15%20Tips%20To%20Win%20At%20Life%20In%20A%20Shared%20Living%20Space.docx), [The Percentage Of Adult Americans Living With Roommates Has Been Surging](../../../Housing/Shared%20Housing/The%20Percentage%20Of%20Adult%20Americans%20Living%20With%20Roommates%20Has%20Been%20Surging.docx), [More Americans Taking Roommates](../../../Housing/Shared%20Housing/More%20Americans%20Taking%20Roommates.docx).

While Shared Housing is potentially a great option for some participants, it is something that must be discussed and, in the end, it is the participant’s choice whether shared housing is a good solution for them. If potential income would otherwise suggest that shared housing is the only option and a participant is not open to the idea of shared housing, explore all ways to increase income in order to make living on one’s own possible and also discuss all the different kinds of shared housing that are possible.

**Process/Policy**

* Once a unit is identified, the following steps must be taken:
  + **Unit Identification:** Case managers share the housing opportunity with those participants who are eligible for the unit and have expressed an interest in shared housing as part of their housing plan. *Again,* *shared housing is a choice and can not be forced upon the participant. The Housing Navigator must present the reasons why shared housing may be the best option, but it must be the intent of the participant and not that of the case manager.*
    - Generally, units should house no more than 4 participants. This number may increase given certain criteria. For example, the presence of an on-site house manager and unit composition (i.e. private entrance, separate bathroom and kitchenette for each participant) may justify increasing the number of residents in a shared housing situation.
    - All participants interested in the unit should visit the unit and be educated about the neighborhood. Generally, shared housing units are shown at “Open House” events by the location team.
  + **Case Conferencing:** A list of the interested participants is gathered. Case managers get together to discuss potential barriers for these participants i.e. a participant has failed in shared housing in the past, has a hoarding issue, has gang affiliation that could impact resident safety, has children who need to visit, is a registered sex offender and can’t have other residents’ kids visit, etc.
  + **Participant Meet Up:** Participants who have been cleared through case conferencing are given the opportunity to spend time together to discuss the issues that may arise when living together. A list of questions that can be used to help mediate this conversation can be found [here](file:///S:\Housing\Shared%20Housing\Roommate%20Questionnaire.docx). This conversation should be had without particular intervention by case managers, but a mediator should be present to help push conversation forward.
  + **Roommate Agreement:** Anyone participating in Shared Housing should utilize a [Shared Housing Rental Agreement](../../../Housing/Shared%20Housing/Shared%20Housing%20Rental%20Agreement.pdf) in order to codify the different decisions that roommates have made. This should be filled out with a case manager to help mediate any disagreements.
* The Rental Assistance Tool/Calculator will be used for each household within a Shared Housing unit. This means that different households may be paying different amounts each month toward their housing. Housing Navigators should discuss this with participants beforehand.
* It is a best practice that utilities are covered by the landlord as dividing the cost of utilities among shared housing participants is difficult given the unequal use of the utilities in the house.