



# Ventura County HomeShare Program



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## WELCOME!

Thank you for your interest in Ventura County HomeShare. This booklet provides a basic overview of the HomeShare program with the aim of explaining what homesharing is and providing you with information and tools that will help you through the process of finding a housing situation to fulfill your needs.

## HOMESHARE BASICS

### WHAT IS HOMESHARE

Homesharing is an alternative way of meeting housing needs that benefits renters and homeowners alike. Some reasons that people share include: companionship, help with chores and light housekeeping, or financial assistance with taxes, utilities and maintenance. Ventura County HomeShare maintains lists of prescreened participants and identifies potential matches based on rent, desired location, and other criteria.

Home Providers may be living in a house too large due to life changes (empty nest or loss of a spouse), or they may be a one-parent family finding it difficult to cope with maintaining a household alone. Home Seekers may be seniors, college students, newly divorced persons, professionals recently moved to the area or travelling, or anyone in need of lower cost housing who enjoys living with others.

Simply put, HomeSharing is an arrangement where two or more unrelated people share a dwelling, each having her or his private space and sharing certain common areas. Homesharer's may arrange a regular rental payment, or exchange services to offset a portion or all of the rent. No two HomeSharing situations are alike; each is tailored to the needs and desire of the individual people involved.

### DIFFERENT TYPES OF HOMESHARE

In a *rental* arrangement, the home provider will rent out a spare bedroom for extra income.

In a *service exchange* arrangement, the home provider may offer a rent-free room in exchange for services such as transportation, cooking, housekeeping, laundry, running errands, yard work, handyman, companionship, or pet care.

In a *mixed* arrangement, the home provider will offer a reduced rent to be offset by services.

**Ventura County HomeShare is not a Home Care Agency and does not provide a private duty registry of licensed caregivers. HomeShare is not meant to be a home health service, and home seekers are not expected to provide personal care services which include:**

- Bathing/assistance with bathing
- Dressing
- Bathroom assistance
- Turning or lifting
- Service which brings the housemate in contact with bodily fluids
- Injections or administering medications

## THE HOMESHARE PROCESS

### HOMESHARE NON-LIABILITY STATEMENT

The staff of Ventura County HomeShare acts only as a facilitator providing the opportunity for parties involved to come together and work out their own housing arrangements. HomeShare makes no promises, guarantees, warranties or claims regarding seekers or providers of housing. Background checks are limited in nature and only provide information on federal arrests or criminal records within the last five to seven years. HomeShare does not perform credit checks, verify income or ability to pay and does not verify physical and mental health status. It is the responsibility of the participants to determine whether referred individuals are found to be compatible. All final decisions regarding HomeSharing rest with the seekers and providers of housing.

The final decision on any living arrangement made is voluntary and the decision will be made solely by the parties in the living arrangement. Ventura County HomeShare staff or volunteers will not be held legally responsible for the living arrangements, nor will they assume any liability for claims, damages, or other consequences which may arise from a HomeSharing arrangement.

Further, HomeShare recommends that any housing arrangements should be set forth in a written agreement. Samples and templates are available for participant use as models.

While seekers and providers may personally decide whom they wish to share housing with, based on their own preferences, HomeShare will not make any HomeShare decision/referral based on an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, gender identity, marital status, sexual preference or handicap status.

### HOMESHARE PROCESS OUTLINE

1. Program Orientation
  - a. Read this information packet completely
  - b. Review the Program Limitations section
2. Complete and submit application materials
  - a. Application
  - b. Release of liability form
  - c. Background check release form
  - d. Program Exit Guidelines form
3. Upon receipt of a completed application package
  - a. Reference checks are performed
  - b. We will check our list of current situations to see if anyone registered with us meets your needs
  - c. Home visit and inspection (home providers only)
4. Upon identification of a potential match
  - a. Background check
  - b. A HomeShare staff member will contact you with basic information about the potential match. If you wish to proceed, the Home Seeker's contact information will be forwarded to the Home Provider. It is important to remember that who you choose to contact is your decision.

- c. At this stage, it is typical for the Home Provider to phone the HomeSeeker and the parties conduct a phone interview. HomeShare will provide you with packets that include suggested questions to ask during your initial phone call. This should help you structure your interview in a way that provides you with exploratory questions that will help you evaluate your compatibility with one another.
  - d. The Provider and Seeker should follow up with HomeShare with feedback about the phone interview and if you would like to schedule a face-to-face introduction.
5. Face –to-face introduction
  - a. If both parties want to meet one another, a face-to-face introduction is scheduled.
  - b. HomeShare will provide you with a face-to-face interview guide that will assist you in structuring your conversation and assist you in obtaining important information.
  - c. A HomeShare staff member can be present to help you ask questions and get to know one another, unless you decide this is unnecessary.
6. HomeShare Agreement
  - a. Once a HomeShare match is made, we suggest that the participants document their agreement
  - b. HomeShare can provide templates that participants can use for creating an agreement personalized to their situation. Items covered may include: rent, service, meals, phone, quiet hours, parking and any other items both parties want to add.
7. Ongoing Support
  - a. Once you are matched, you are still welcome to call HomeShare, should any problems arise.
  - b. HomeShare staff will call you from time to time to see how things are going.

## ENDING YOUR HOMESHARE ARRANGEMENT

While many HomeShare arrangements last years, others end sooner. Most relationships end because of the changing needs of at least one of the participants. A seeker may find a job elsewhere, or save enough money to buy a home. A provider might decide that the living situation is not meeting their needs and would like to live alone.

A HomeShare agreement can help make the transition easier. If you decide to end the match for any reason, follow the notice period decided upon and outlined in the HomeShare agreement. Keep open communication and try to negotiate an agreeable exit strategy. The ‘notice’ period can be less awkward if you stay away from personal attacks or delicate issues.

To prevent misunderstandings, it is best to also give your notice in writing. On the rare occurrence that a person fails to honor your request to leave, you should seek advice from a lawyer on the legal steps to end your HomeSharing situation.

## IS HOMESHARE THE RIGHT PROGRAM FOR ME?

### PROGRAM LIMITATIONS

- Individuals accepted as seekers need to have an income level sufficient to pay rent or have time and willingness to provide some services, or both. For a no-rent situation, a reasonable service exchange would be a maximum of 10 to 12 hours of work, per week.
- Individuals with current, untreated substance abuse problems cannot be served by HomeShare. Persons in recovery must have two years abstinence that can be substantiated with documentation.

- Successful homesharers must have a degree of emotional stability, which allows them to be interested in and involved in the welfare of others. This program is not appropriate for someone who may have problems that would create additional stress in a home living arrangement.
- Participants should be able to advocate for one's self and assume full responsibility for every step of the HomeShare application process.
- HomeShare does not provide home health care. If an applicant needs a great deal of personal care or cannot be left unattended this program is not appropriate. Homesharers can provide companionship and household help, but it should be expected that seekers will have activities of their own, independent of the home provider.
- HomeShare cannot provide emergency housing. The process of matching is a careful and somewhat time-consuming one and is not a "quick fix".
- It will take time for us to find suitable matches and for applicants to make careful decisions. People in need of short-term housing may apply, but many providers prefer a longer term commitment and referral opportunities may be limited.
- Persons with convictions for felony or misdemeanor crimes involving bodily injury, assault, elder abuse, sexual offense, possession or distribution of an illegal substance, or theft or damage of personal property are not eligible for the program. We can however, assist people in finding community resources.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SEEKERS

1. Why do I want to HomeShare with someone?
2. What kind of neighborhood do I want to live in?
3. Do I need a furnished or unfurnished space?
4. How much rent can I afford?
5. What is essential to me in a housemate?
6. Would I prefer living with a female, male, or a couple?
7. Do I have an age preference?
8. Would I consider living with children?
9. Do I object to smoking or drinking?
10. Would I consider living with pets?
11. What kind of a relationship do I want with my housemates? Do I just want to rent a room in a home, or do I want a friend and companion with whom to share my life?
12. Would I enjoy being a companion to an older adult? How much time am I willing to spend with them?
13. What household responsibilities do I wish to share? (For example: housework, cooking, shopping, driving, gardening, trash removal, handiwork, laundry.) What do I consider an equitable exchange for services?
14. What are my housekeeping standards? For example, how clean should common areas be kept?
15. Am I prepared to adjust to a household change in return for rent savings or companionship?
16. What are my shortcomings that might present difficulties to anyone living with me?
17. What qualities do I have that would contribute to a shared arrangement? Do I listen to and understand other people, especially when there is a difference of opinion?
18. Am I willing and able to constructively communicate my needs, or is it difficult for me to speak up when something is bothering me?
19. What things can I do to make my new HomeSharing arrangement feel like home?
20. What are my expectations when I think about sharing someone else's home?
21. How often do I have guests over? Do I ever have overnight guests?
22. How important is my private time and how much do I need?

## QUESTIONS FOR PROVIDERS

1. Why do I want to HomeShare with someone?
2. Is my home or apartment suitable for sharing? For example, is there a private room for a housemate? Is there an easily accessible bathroom? Is there adequate closet or storage space? Are there structural barriers, such as stairs, that might limit who can live in my home?
3. Is the space I'm making available really ready for another person and their possessions? If not, what must I do to make it ready? Will the space be furnished or unfurnished?
4. If a person needs an unfurnished bedroom, am I willing to store my things?
5. How much rent do I need in order to satisfactorily reduce my housing cost burdens?
6. Would I like some help around the house? If yes, how much assistance do I need?
7. If I expect a service, should I reduce the rent, offer free rent, free room and board or free room and board plus compensation for the services a housemate would provide?
8. Will rental income affect my tax filing status? Please consult a tax professional for advice on this subject.
9. Am I prepared to adjust to some household changes in return for the additional income or help that I am asking?
10. To what degree do I want to share my kitchen, living room, and other common areas?
11. What household responsibilities do I wish to share? For example: housework, cooking, shopping, driving, gardening, trash removal, laundry, etc. – What are my household standards? For example, how clean should common areas be kept?
12. What is essential to me in a housemate?
13. Would I prefer living with a female, male, or a couple?
14. Do I have an age preference?
15. Would I consider living with children?
16. Do I object to smoking or drinking?
17. Would I consider living with pets?
18. What are my shortcomings that might present difficulties to anyone living with me?
19. Am I able to constructively confront problems and find amenable solutions? Do I listen and understand other people, especially when there is a difference of opinion?
20. What qualities do I have that would contribute to a shared arrangement?
21. What can I do to ensure that MY home can become OUR home when shared with another?

## HOMESHARE AGREEMENT

HomeShare recommends that providers and seekers record the details of their match with a HomeShare Agreement. The agreement should include

- Room use
- Rental or service exchange details
- Provider and seeker responsibilities for chores, food, utilities, etc.

HomeShare can provide a selection of templates that providers and seekers can modify to suit their particular situation.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

Plan on anywhere from several weeks to a month or more. You can expedite the process by making sure you provide appropriate references and that they are available and will respond to our inquiries. Also, be sure to give us your current phone numbers (and let us know if they need to be updated) so that we can easily reach you. If we have someone currently on our list who meets your needs, the process will be faster than if we have to wait for the right person to come along.

Some people find a match quickly, sometimes it takes weeks or months, and some never find the right situation for themselves. It all depends on you, your specific needs and preferences, and the availability of other seekers or providers who can offer the qualities you are looking for.

### HOW MUCH IS RENT?

It varies. In some situations where there are many services needed, (including regular meal preparation) the rent may be negotiable. In situations where there are few, if any services required the rent may be \$500 or more. Each HomeShare provider sets her or his own rent. **Most fall in the range of \$500 to \$600, but some providers request more.** We ask providers to remember that a HomeShare is not the same as renting an apartment in terms of the amount of rent. As a rule, the more services needed, the less rent someone will be willing to pay. For a no-rent situation, a reasonable service exchange would be a maximum of 10 to 12 hours or work, per week.

All household members are expected to do their share of chores to keep common areas clean and safe. The services a seeker may provide in lieu of rent are over and above these expectations.

### WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO CHARGE?

Ventura County HomeShare cannot make that decision for you, but we can tell you what some other people in similar situations have charged. We suggest you talk it over with family or friends. You can look in the newspaper for market value rents. Take time to carefully think through just what services you would like to have provided. Most of the people seeking HomeShare situations are doing so to save money and to cultivate family-like relationships with older people.

### WHAT IF I DON'T LIKE THE PERSON AFTER WE ARE LIVING TOGETHER?

This is the reason for the trial period option. It gives you some real experience together before a definite decision is made. Even after the agreement is signed you can terminate the arrangement. But don't give up too easily. Sometimes all that is needed is some honest communication and clear statement of your needs. HomeShare is available to help smooth out the rough spots in your relationship.

### HOW LONG DO HOMESHARE MATCHES LAST?

Again, it varies. Some last for years, others for months. Sometimes a person moves away, or an older homeowner may become disabled and need to live in a more supportive environment. Family situations change and with that living arrangements are altered.

## WHAT ARE THE USUAL AGES OF HOMESHARE APPLICANTS?

Most of our seekers are in their 60s with significant numbers between 50 and 70 years of age. The balance range from 20-somethings to 80+. Most, but not all, of the providers are senior citizens who want to stay in their own homes, but desire some company or need help with home maintenance. Some senior homeowners do not need services, but do need the additional income provided by rent.

## RESOURCE LIST

### TENANT/LANDLORD LAW FOR STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**[www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/catenant.pdf](http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/catenant.pdf)**

Online copy of government publication titled “California Tenants: a guide to residential tenants” and landlords’ rights and responsibilities.

This publication addresses “single lodger in a private residence”, and all aspects of CA housing laws.

### AREA HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF VENTURA – COMMUNITY RESOURCE LIST

**[http://www.ahacv.org/community\\_resources.shtml](http://www.ahacv.org/community_resources.shtml)**

- other local Housing Authorities
- community housing resources
- rental listings
- and more

### SHELTERS AND EMERGENCY HOUSING

- **Homeless Information and Referral**  
(Count of Ventura, Human Services Agency)  
Phone 888-472-4463  
Website: <http://www.ventura.org/human-services-agency/homelessness-prevention-assistance>
- **Ventura County Homeless and Housing Coalitions**  
(temporary winter shelter locations)  
Website: [www.vchhc.org](http://www.vchhc.org)
- **Ojai Community Assistance Program and Valley Outreach**  
(through HELP of Ojai)  
Phone: 805-640-3320  
Address: 108 Fox Street, Ojai  
Website: [www.helpofojai.org](http://www.helpofojai.org)
- **Coalition For Family Harmony**  
Phone: 805-983-6014  
24-hr Hotline: 800-300-2181  
Website: [www.thecoalition.org](http://www.thecoalition.org)

- **RAIN Project Transitional Living Center**  
 (County of Ventura)  
 Phone: 805-389-3308 (24-hrs)  
 Address: 1732 South Lewis Road, Camarillo  
 Website: [www.raincommunities.org](http://www.raincommunities.org)
- **Community Action of Ventura County**  
 Phone: 805-436-4000  
 Address: 621 Richmond Avenue, Oxnard  
 Website: [www.ca-vc.org](http://www.ca-vc.org)
- **Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program**  
 (county of Ventura, Human Services Agency)  
 Phone: 805-385-8585  
 Website: [www.vchsa.org/hprp](http://www.vchsa.org/hprp)
- **Simi Valley Samaritan Center**  
 Phone: 805-579-9166  
 Address: 280 Royal Avenue, Simi Valley
- **Salvation Army**  
 Phone: 805-483-9235  
 Address: 622 West Wooley Road, Oxnard

Phone: 805-659-3598  
 Address: 650 South Petit Ave, Ventura

**ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES**

Human Services Agency: Adult Protective Services

**<http://www.ventura.org/human-services-agency/adult-protective-services>**

24 Hour Hotline 805-654-3200

**MANDATED REPORTERS**

California Law – Welfare and Institutions Code regarding mandated reporters

**[www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html)**

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-SAFE





## TELEPHONE INTERVIEW GUIDE

It is often the little things that can make or break a home-share relationship. HomeShare suggests that you conduct a telephone interview before meeting your candidate in person. After your call, take some time to reflect on the interview. If you feel like you have a good candidate, you can speak with HomeShare staff about setting up a face-to-face interview.

The following questions can serve as a guide for your conversation:

1. Are you looking for company/companionship?
2. What time do you generally wake up in the morning?
3. What time do you generally go to bed at night?
4. How often do you drink? Never Rarely Socially Weekends Nightly Daily
5. How often do you have visitors? Days only Often Overnight Seldom
6. How often do you have children visit? Always Sometimes Never
7. How often do you watch television? Never Rarely Sometimes Daily Evenings
8. How strict are your housekeeping standards? Neatness only Some clutter  
Does not matter
9. What is your definition of "clean"?
10. How often do you use the kitchen? Heavily Moderately Seldom Never
11. Do you have any important food needs or allergies?
12. What type of food do you usually eat?
13. Would you be interested in sharing any food items or cooking together occasionally?
14. What types of activities do you prefer? Indoor Outdoor
15. How would you describe your activity level? At home most of the time On the go Some of each
16. How much stuff do you have?
17. How much space do you need?
18. Do you have your own television, stereo, music player? Do you ever play loud music?
19. What is your tolerance for noise?
20. Are you generally sociable and friendly?
21. How long do you expect to need/want to live in the home?
22. Are you willing to share: Laundry machines Kitchen and utensils Telephone  
Other living space Internet/computer
23. Do you have any health issues or considerations I should know about?



## FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PROVIDERS

After the initial telephone contact with a potential homesharer, take some time to reflect on the conversation. How do you feel the conversation went? Were you able to clearly express your most important need? Often during the initial contact it is difficult to ask all the exploratory questions you planned to ask. Don't worry, that is normal!

If you feel that you have a good candidate, you will want to set up a face-to-face interview. This is a great way to get to know and understand each other's personality, habits and lifestyles.

Consider scheduling the interview at a neutral setting such as a coffee shop, library, park or restaurant. A small conference room is available at the VCAAA for use in 30 minute time-blocks. If your face-to-face meeting will take place at the VCAAA offices, you can choose to have a HomeShare staff member present during the interview.

Reviewing the Topics for Discussion can be an effective guide through the interview. These questions will assist you in structuring your conversation and assist you in obtaining important information.

Don't be shy about stating what you want and asking questions. Remember, if you spend time clarifying each of your expectations at the beginning of the relationship, the more apt you will be to have a successful homesharing arrangement!

No decisions are made at the interview. We suggest both people reflect on it for a couple of days. You may think of other questions afterwards or decide you'd like to meet again or talk on the phone. Please let your potential homesharer know how and when you will follow up with them. Often it will take meeting several people before you find the right one. It's not unusual to consider more than one candidate.

## INTERVIEW TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What expectations do each of you have about homesharing?
2. What are your methods of working out problems or difficulties?
3. How do you feel about visitors? How often? Overnight guests? Romantic overnight guests?

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## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO A HOME SEEKER

1. Have you shared housing before (other than with your immediate family)?
2. What is your current living situation?
3. Why are you looking to change it?
4. When would you need/want to move in?
5. How long do you expect to need/want to homeshare?
6. What are your long-term plans?
7. How long have you lived in the area?
8. Where have you lived before?
9. What is your work and education experience?
10. What is your daily routine? (work schedule, meal times, exercise?)
11. Do you function better early in the morning or late at night?
12. What do you like to do in your spare time and on weekends? (TV, musical tastes, visit friends)
13. Do you want to have guests? (daytime/overnight/evening/romantic overnights)
14. Will you be spending time away (vacations, weekends away)?

4. Are you willing to let me know when you are leaving and when you expect to be back?
5. What is your tolerance for noise?
6. Do you have your own television and/or stereo? Do you ever play loud music?
7. Do you spend a lot of time on the telephone? Would you share a telephone? Or prefer a separate line?
8. What do you like to eat? Do you enjoy cooking? Would you like to eat with the person you are living with?  
Do you prefer to shop, cook, and eat together or alone?
9. Are you active outside the home? Or do you prefer to stay in?
10. Are you a talkative person? Are you shy?
11. Do you enjoy conversations and company?
12. Do you need alone time? How much? Is it easy for you to tell someone when you need company (or private time) or do you usually expect them to ask you?
13. Do you have pets? Do they have a certain schedule?

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IF THERE IS GOING TO BE A SERVICE EXCHANGE AS PART OF THE HOMESHARING AGREEMENT:

1. If you are asking for help with cooking: What kind of cooking do you do? (specify your food preferences)
2. If you are asking your housemate to drive you as part of the service exchange, ask to see their license and current insurance card.
3. Are there any other expectations of companionship or services?

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ABOUT YOUR HOME

1. Laundry facilities
2. Storage space (including space for food storage)
3. Internet service or cable service
4. Phone
5. Food expenses (shared or bought separately)
6. Sharing of kitchen and kitchen utensils?
7. How do you propose to share, if applicable, some or all of the following:
  - a. Housekeeping
  - b. Cooking
  - c. Meal planning
  - d. Errands/shopping
  - e. Lawn work
  - f. Laundry
  - g. Other
8. Thermostat settings; what is comfortable for you? Heater in winter/AC in summer?

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HEALTH

- Allergies?
- Special accommodations?

## POST INTERVIEW

After the face-to-face interview, take time to reflect on the meeting. The questions below can help you to sort through your feelings and impressions following the interview. It may be helpful to refer to your notes from the interview and write your impressions of the meeting on paper, because it is easy to forget important questions.

The section below can help you to determine if this is a compatible homesharer for you and to ensure that all of your important questions have been asked and sufficiently answered. If you have additional questions or concerns about your prospective homesharer, write them down and then call or schedule another meeting.

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### CHECKLIST FOR HOME PROVIDERS

1. Did I discuss what I feel is important in a homesharing arrangement?
2. Have I asked questions about lifestyle preferences which are important to me?
  - Chores in exchange for rent
  - Television habits and schedules
  - Indoor temperature preferences during summer and winter months
  - Work, sleep and wake-up schedules
  - Entertaining at home/guests
  - Guests
  - Music preferences and volume
  - Privacy needs
  - Other areas of concern:
3. Have I clearly stated the extent to which I am willing to share common rooms, kitchen and outdoor space?
4. Have we agreed on food purchasing, meal preparation, eating schedule and sharing meals? Does this need to be structured, semi-structured, or do our expectations/need allow for some meal sharing to evolve over time?
5. Have we agreed about who will be responsible for what household chores and schedules?
6. Have we agreed on the financial arrangements (rent, utilities, groceries, etc.)?
7. What do I like most about this prospective homesharer?
8. Does this potential homesharer have a similar lifestyle, values, and needs?
9. Do I have any reservations about this prospective homesharer? What are the reservations?
10. Do I think our differences can be worked out?
11. Are there any other issues or needs?
12. Have we agreed to a trial period of living together before allowing the home seeker to move in permanently (if possible?)
13. Have we discussed using a written agreement to specify obligations and expectations?

### AGREEING TO MATCH

Your interview has gone well and you both want to live together. Congratulations!

Before you move in together, consider establishing a trial period. A typical trial period is two weeks; however you might consider up to a month-long trial period. A trial period gives each of you an opportunity to try out your new relationship before renewing your commitment for a longer period of time. If at all possible, the home seeker should consider maintaining his or her present housing during the trial period. The trial period is spelled out in a



written agreement that includes other important understandings of what you will give to and receive from each other.

A few things to keep in mind...

- Clearly state what you want
- Clarify that both the home provider and the home seeker have the same expectations
- If the agreement includes a service exchange, clearly identify the homesharers' responsibilities with a written list of services and work out a schedule of when services should be done
- HomeShare staff can provide you with several different HomeShare agreement templates, for a trial period and a formal match.



## FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SEEKERS

After the initial telephone contact with a potential homesharer, take some time to reflect on the conversation. How do you feel the conversation went? Were you able to clearly express your most important need? Often during the initial contact it is difficult to ask all the exploratory questions you planned to ask. Don't worry, that is normal!

If you feel that you have a good candidate, you will want to set up a face-to-face interview. This is a great way to get to know and understand each other's personality, habits and lifestyles.

Consider scheduling the interview at a neutral setting such as a coffee shop, library, park or restaurant. A small conference room is available at the VCAAA for use in 30 minute time-blocks. If your face-to-face meeting will take place at the VCAAA offices, you can choose to have a HomeShare staff member present during the interview.

Reviewing the Topics for Discussion can be an effective guide through the interview. These questions will assist you in structuring your conversation and assist you in obtaining important information.

Don't be shy about stating what you want and asking questions. Remember, if you spend time clarifying each of your expectations at the beginning of the relationship, the more apt you will be to have a successful homesharing arrangement!

No decisions are made at the interview. We suggest both people reflect on it for a couple of days. You may think of other questions afterwards or decide you'd like to meet again or talk on the phone. Please let your potential homesharer know how and when you will follow up with them. Often it will take meeting several people before you find the right one. It's not unusual to consider more than one candidate.

## INTERVIEW TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What expectations do each of you have about homesharing?
2. What are your methods of working out problems or difficulties?
3. How do you feel about visitors? How often? Overnight guests? Romantic overnight guests?

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## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO ASK A HOME PROVIDER

1. Have you shared housing before (other than with your immediate family)?
2. What is your current living situation?
3. Why are you looking to change it?
4. When would the room be available?
5. How long do you expect to need/want to homeshare?
6. What are your long-term plans?
7. How long have you lived in the area?
8. Where have you lived before?
9. What is your work and education experience?
10. What is your daily routine? (work schedule, meal times, exercise?)
11. Do you function better early in the morning or late at night?
12. What do you like to do in your spare time and on weekends? (TV, musical tastes, visit friends)
13. Do you want to have guests? (daytime/overnight/evening/romantic overnights)
14. Will you allow me to have guests? (daytime/overnight/evening/romantic overnights)

15. Will you be spending time away (vacations, weekends away)?
16. Are you willing to let me know when you are leaving and when you expect to be back?
17. What is your tolerance for noise?
18. Do you ever play loud music?
19. Do you spend a lot of time on the telephone? Would you share a telephone? Or prefer a housemate to have a separate line?
20. What do you like to eat? Do you enjoy cooking? Would you like to eat with the person you are living with? Do you prefer to shop, cook, and eat together or alone?
21. Are you active outside the home? Or do you prefer to stay in?
22. Are you a talkative person? Are you shy?
23. Do you enjoy conversations and company?
24. Do you need alone time? How much? Is it easy for you to tell someone when you need company (or private time) or do you usually expect them to ask you?
25. Do you have pets? Do they have a certain schedule?

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IF THERE IS GOING TO BE A SERVICE EXCHANGE AS PART OF THE HOMESHARING AGREEMENT:

1. If the provider is asking for help with cooking: What kind of cooking do they do? What are their food preferences?
2. Are there any other expectations of companionship or services?

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ABOUT THE HOME

1. Laundry facilities
2. Storage space (including space for food storage)
3. Internet service or cable service
4. Phone
5. Food expenses (shared or bought separately)
6. Sharing of kitchen and kitchen utensils?
7. How do you propose to share, if applicable, some or all of the following:
  - a. Housekeeping
  - b. Cooking
  - c. Meal planning
  - d. Errands/shopping
  - e. Lawn work
  - f. Laundry
  - g. Other
8. Thermostat settings; what is comfortable for you? Heater in winter/AC in summer?

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HEALTH

- Allergies?
- Special accommodations?

## POST INTERVIEW

After the face-to-face interview, take time to reflect on the meeting. The questions below can help you to sort through your feelings and impressions following the interview. It may be helpful to refer to your notes from the interview and write your impressions of the meeting on paper, because it is easy to forget important questions.

The section below can help you to determine if this is a compatible homesharer for you and to ensure that all of your important questions have been asked and sufficiently answered. If you have additional questions or concerns about your prospective homesharer, write them down and then call or schedule another meeting.

1. How do I feel about the location and neighborhood? Would I be happy living there?
2. Is this location close to my job, school, family and friends?
3. Is this location close to stores, transportation and services?
4. Is this affordable housing for me?
5. Are my preferences similar to my potential home provider's?
6. What do I like most about this potential home provider and his/her home?
7. Do I have any reservations about the home provider or her/his home?
8. Could any of these things be changed, negotiated, or overcome to better suit me?
9. Have I asked questions about lifestyle preferences which are important to me? For example, have we discussed:
  - Chores in exchange for rent
  - Television habits and schedules
  - Indoor temperature preferences during summer and winter months
  - Work, sleep and wake-up schedules
  - Entertaining at home/guests
  - Guests
  - Music preferences and volume
  - Privacy needs
  - Meal preparation, eating schedule and sharing meals together?
  - Other areas of concern:
10. To what extent will the common areas, kitchen, and outdoor space be shared?
11. What, if any, daily activities will be shared?
12. Do I feel satisfied that there are no important unspoken needs that may arise in the future?
13. Have we agreed on the financial arrangements (rent, utilities, groceries)?
14. Have we agreed to a trial period of living together before I move in permanently?
15. Have we discussed using a written agreement to specify obligations and expectations?

## AGREEING TO MATCH

Your interview has gone well and you both want to live together. Congratulations!

Before you move in together, consider establishing a trial period. A typical trial period is two weeks; however you might consider up to a month-long trial period. A trial period gives each of you an opportunity to try out your new relationship before renewing your commitment for a longer period of time. If at all possible, the home seeker should consider maintaining his or her present housing during the trial period. The trial period is spelled out in a live-in agreement that includes other important understandings of what you will give to and receive from each other.

A few things to keep in mind...

- Clearly state what you want
- Clarify that both the home provider and the home seeker have the same expectations
- If the agreement includes a service exchange, clearly identify the homesharer's responsibilities with a written list of services and work out a schedule of when services should be done
- HomeShare staff can provide you with several different HomeShare agreement templates, for a trial period and a formal match.

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

These questions are important topics of discussion for those who are homesharing with children. Include any additional questions that you find valuable. The following questions can help to clearly state expectations and may prevent later misunderstandings.

1. What is your daily routine? Your weekly routine?
2. Will you be exchanging child care (if both home seeker and home provider have children)? How many hours per week?
3. Will you be exchanging child care services for a reduction in rent? Clearly state what services, about how many hours per week are expected, and what the reduction in rent will be.
4. Are you willing to carpool?
5. Describe the types of support you have available, - family, friends, childcare, etc.
6. Would you like to view our household as a family unit? How much are you willing to share?
7. Are you willing to plan procedures in case of an emergency? What type of emergencies?
8. Describe the style of discipline you exercise with your child. What are your thoughts about disciplining other children if it becomes necessary? Other adults disciplining your children?
9. What "stages" are you children in?
10. Do you have a set of household rules for your children Please describe them
11. Do you have rules in place about viewing television? What are you rules?
12. Do you have rules set up about your child's play? What types of toys do you allow?
13. What is your children's bedtime? Do you children wake up at night? How often? Why?
14. How do your children interact with other children? Other adults
15. How clean and tidy should the house be kept? Do children leave toys around? Do you clean regularly or when things seem to need it?
16. Are you willing to assign household chores according to age?
17. Will friends or relatives visit frequently, occasionally, stay overnight, share food costs, etc.? Should arrangements be made in advance?
18. How many housemates have you had in the past year? What do you feel worked and what did not work for you and your children?
19. How do you think your children will feel about sharing a home with another person or family?