



## **AFFORDABLE LIVING FOR THE AGING HOME SHARE PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is Affordable Living for the Aging?**

Affordable Living for the Aging is a nonprofit that has been in business for 40 years. ALA's mission is to enrich the Los Angeles community by providing seniors with affordable housing, services and linkages to supportive services.

ALA aspires to provide the highest level of quality programs that are relevant and responsive to seniors' evolving needs. These programs include: housemate matching, shared living, permanent supportive housing, and independent living. ALA pursues its vision using a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable framework.

### **What is home sharing?**

A living arrangement where two unrelated people share a home. Each individual has a private bedroom and joint use of the common areas. The home share program of Affordable Living for the Aging strives to keep seniors in their homes and offer an affordable housing alternative for senior housing seekers.

### **Who are housing providers?**

Housing Providers are homeowners or renters who want to share their homes and have at least one available bedroom. You do not have to be a senior to be a housing provider. Housing Providers join the program to share their homes with compatible, pre-screened Housing Seekers who can pay a monthly rent for the available room, offer assistance with household chores, or both. Housing Providers must be mentally, emotionally, physically and financially self-sufficient. Currently, the average age of our housing providers is 75.

### **Who are housing seekers?**

Housing Seekers are adults of all ages who may not wish to live alone or cannot afford to do so. They may be retired, employed, or students. They must be mentally, emotionally, physically and financially self-sufficient. Currently, the average age of our Housing Seekers is 65.

### **Who can participate in the home share program?**

Adults 18 and over can participate in the program.



### **Housing Providers – How long does it take to find a housing match?**

Housing providers can interview as many housing seekers as they wish, until they find the individual with whom they think they may be compatible. Typically, a match is made within approximately 2-3 months.

### **Housing Seekers – How long does it take to find a housing match?**

The entire process will take 3-4 months, at minimum.

### **What about security?**

Affordable Living for the Aging performs a background check on both housing seekers and housing providers. In addition to a background check, character references are required.

### **What are the benefits of home sharing?**

Roommate matching for the baby boomer generation and beyond has grown in popularity as it offers financial benefits, shared resources, and companionship. In Los Angeles, where there is a shortage of affordable housing, roommate matching offers an array of benefits for both the housing provider and the seeker.

1. Supplemental income (Not just for seniors but for anyone who has an extra room in their home).
2. Help around the house
3. Companionship
4. Security

### **What types of home share matches are provided by Affordable Living for the Aging?**

Affordable Living for the Aging offers two types of home share matches:

1. **Room Rental:** A housing seeker pays the housing provider rent in exchange for a private bedroom. If a private bathroom is not available, a shared bathroom is acceptable.
2. **Service exchange:** Service exchange matches senior housing providers with roommates who can provide up to 14 hours per week of assistance with chores, errands, etc. In addition, the housing provider receives reduced rent in exchange for the services they receive.



Housing providers are offered reduced rent in exchange for assistance with:

Cooking, grocery shopping, light housekeeping, laundry, companionship and transportation.

The service exchange program allows seniors to remain in their homes. ALA staff meet one-on-one to review individuals' ability to provide the assistance needed, life style preferences and compatibility.

Both types of home share programs are illustrated in the Affordable Living for the Aging program video:

<http://www.alaseniorliving.org/look-roommate-matching>

You can also obtain further information by visiting our website at [www.alaseniorliving.org](http://www.alaseniorliving.org).

### **Housing Seekers - How much will I pay in rent?**

You and ALA staff will determine the amount of rent you can afford based on your income and other expenses. Once the referral process begins, you'll be referred only to those who are charging an amount in your price range. If you are not interested in providing services or are unable to due to your schedule, then you can expect to pay a higher amount in rent ranging from \$600-800.

### **Housing Providers - How much rent should I charge?**

Here are some things to consider: The majority of housing seekers can afford to pay at least \$600.00 per month. It's unreasonable to charge more than half of the total rent or mortgage to a renter. If you are asking your housemate to provide services, those services should reduce the amount of rent you request according to the type of assistance and hours needed.

### **What if the living arrangement doesn't work out?**

Individuals are encouraged to work with an ALA housing counselor to resolve issues with their home sharer. If every attempt has been made to salvage the relationship and the living situation is still not working, we encourage giving your housemate 30 days to find a new place. This is a common courtesy which allows each party time to make other arrangements. Both parties are welcome to return to ALA for more referrals.



### **What is a trial period?**

ALA strongly recommends individuals enter a temporary trial period before making a match permanent. The trial period can range from 2 weeks to one month. No rent is exchanged and individuals use the time to determine if they want to live together.

### **What makes someone a good candidate for shared housing?**

A person well-suited for the program will act professionally during the matching process by following through with referrals in a timely manner. Typically, individuals who are renting a room in their home are looking for someone who is very independent and involved in activities outside of the home.

### **What support does Affordable Living for the Aging offer for the home share match?**

Affordable Living for the Aging provides living together agreements and is involved for the lifetime of the housing match. Therefore, we are always available to assist should any issues arise.