Housing Initiative Partnership, Inc.

35+YEARS of Housing Security | Financial Stability | Community Success

Montgomery County Home Sharing Program

Frequently Asked Questions

www.HIPhomes.org/Home-Sharing



Q: What is Home Sharing?

A: When the owner of a home rents a room to another person who is not related. The room can be a bedroom, basement area, or a separate structure in or on the property (Accessory Dwelling Unit or ADU).

Q: How is that different from a group house?

A: Group houses are generally rented by a group of people and the owner doesn't live there. In HIP's Home Sharing Program, the owner is required to live in the house full-time, and he/she decides to rent a spare room to someone longer term. For at least 6-12 months or more.

Q: Why do homeowners decide to share their home with a renter?

A: There are a variety of reasons and benefits to home sharing. Some older homeowners are empty nesters or retired and have a spare bedroom or empty basement apt to rent, so it helps them stretch their finances. Others would like to have another person in the house for companionship, or security in case of an emergency. Still, other homeowners would simply like be of help to someone else who needs an affordable place to stay long term, in exchange for a mutually comfortable home sharing arrangement.

Q: What is the purpose of the Montgomery County Home Sharing Program?

A: To help seniors age in place and relieve some of the financial strain on their housing budgets. This pilot initiative is supported by the county and operated by Housing Initiative Partnership, a private, nonprofit developer and HUD-approved counseling agency.

HIP's focus is to identify new affordable, healthy, and safe housing options for renters in an expensive housing market by matching them with compatible homeowners. Homeowners can benefit by generating additional income from renting an otherwise unused space.

Q: What is HIP's role? How do they help?

A: Free matching and vetting. HIP's outreach coordinator and certified housing counselors assist both homeowners and home seekers with identifying a compatible housemate. During their conversations and intake sessions, our staff reviews and discusses each clients' preferences, needs, rights & responsibilities before creating their matching profiles.

Q: Who is eligible to participate in the Montgomery County Home Sharing program?

A: Montgomery County residents who own a home with a spare bedroom or another space are eligible if they occupy the house full-time. Renters who are looking for an affordable option with a long-term lease in Montgomery County, and have sufficient income to sustain the lease period, are welcome. This includes home seekers who live in Montgomery County, neighboring jurisdictions, or out of state. Background check, credit check and a review of rental history are mandatory for the home seeker.

Q: Does the County provide a rent rebate to people who rent through this program?

A: No. The County is not offering any rental subsidies as part of this program.
However, some older homeowners have found that household chores such as dog walking, laundry, vacuuming, yard cutting or grocery shopping, etc. have become more difficult, and may be willing to negotiate a lower the rent in return for help with these previously agreed upon chores.

Q: How can I participate in the Home Sharing program?

A: To inquire if the program is right for you or a relative, call **301-85-Share** (301-85-4273) or go to www.HIPhomes/home-sharing and complete the "Registration - Interest Form."

HIP's outreach coordinator will call and explain the program and answer all questions. She will schedule an appointment with a certified housing counselor who will work with the home seeker and homeowner to create their profiles and establish their preferences for a compatible housemate. Participants are notified when there are potential matches. The counselor can also set up and facilitate a virtual meeting and in-person home visit.

Q: How do I know if the person I might share a house with is trustworthy?

A: All home seekers will be required to agree to a confidential credit check and criminal background check as part of their registration with HIP for the home sharing program. HIP's counselors will provide additional guidance. Homeowners need to certify that their homes are in good standing, and will undergo a criminal background check. There is no charge.

Q: What if problems arise?

A: HIP's counselors will call and check in with each match after 1 month to see how things are going, and then again after 6 months.

If there are some rough spots, the counselor will work with the two parties to resolve the issues. If it seems more serious, the counselor will refer the parties to local mediation resources.

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