

Make a Difference

Become a Shared Living Provider!

The Shared Living Program is a residential program that supports individuals with developmental disabilities to live with a person or family in their home. Shared living provides a flexible model of support that can meet a variety of needs while honoring individual choice, relationships, and community. Shared living providers are contracted to support one or two individuals in their homes. Shared living providers are responsible for the individuals who live with them, though individuals may receive additional support during the course of a day (e.g., community, employment, education, or respite supports). Shared living providers operate under contract with Howard Center and are not considered Howard Center staff or employees. As independent contractors, shared living providers are not subject to wage and hour laws, workers compensation or unemployment insurance.



WHO CAN BE A SHARED LIVING PROVIDER?

A person or household with the desire to share their home and family life may become a Howard Center contracted shared living provider under the following conditions. They must:

- Reside in Chittenden County.
- Meet with Howard Center's shared living recruiter to initiate steps for program eligibility.
- Submit a Shared Living Program application.
- Consent to all background checks as required by the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living and Howard Center.
- All household members age 18 or older who live full- or part-time in the home must also consent to the above-mentioned background checks.
- Participate in all required trainings.
- Consent to housing safety and accessibility inspections required by the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living.

Once these requirements are met, the applicant is contacted by Howard Center's shared living recruiter. If the application does not meet selection criteria, the applicant will be notified by mail. If the application is approved, the applicant becomes eligible for shared living opportunities and a preliminary housing safety inspection is initiated prior to the matching process.

SHARED LIVING OPPORTUNITIES AND MATCHING

Shared living opportunities are based on clients' needs, preferences, and goals, as identified in their Individual Support Agreements (ISA) and the specific interests and capabilities of the prospective shared living provider.

During the matching process the client's team, including the client, legal guardian (if applicable) and program manager, considers which applicants are best suited to support the client's needs, preferences, and goals. During the matching process, a program manager will set up times for eligible applicants to meet with clients and guardians. Prospective shared living providers must demonstrate a willingness to abide by the terms of a Shared Living Contract. If the team, client, guardian,

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and applicant determine a match to be potentially mutually compatible, a trial period commences and a housing safety and accessibility compliance inspection is initiated. For more information please see housing standards set forth by the State of Vermont: Housing Safety and Accessibility Checklist (<https://ddsd.vermont.gov/housing-safety-and-accessibility-forms>).

SHARED LIVING CONTRACTS

Shared living providers are self-employed and provide home supports as independent contractors. Shared living providers enter into contracts for the provision of home support with Howard Center once a match between an individual and a Shared Living Provider has been determined to be an appropriate living option following the trial period.

The most important aspect of the Howard Center's responsibilities is to ensure that the placement is a positive experience for both the client and provider. To meet this expectation, the Howard Center offers the provider compensation, training, access to the client's care team, and respite services. In addition, Howard Center maintains regular contact with both the provider and client should issues or problems develop so that they can be addressed in a timely and proactive manner.



PROGRAM MANAGERS

Program managers are responsible for monitoring the shared living provider's compliance with the contract. Shared living providers are expected to maintain regular and effective communication with the individual's program manager, work cooperatively, and support relationships with the individual's guardian and/or natural family, if any and as appropriate.

COMPENSATION

Tax-exempt Stipend: Shared Living Providers have annual contracts and are paid a monthly stipend for providing supervision, training, social supports, transportation and community integration. Compensation for the services provided by shared living providers is exempt from federal and Vermont state income tax. The stipend offered to a shared living provider is based upon a number of factors; most prominently the needs of the individual and specialized skills and experience that may be required of the shared living provider.

Room and Board: In addition to the tax-exempt monthly stipend the shared living provider receives a monthly room and board payment for the individual's housing and food expenses. Room and board is paid from the individual's Supplemental Security Income (SSI), other Social Security benefits, wages or other income. The Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living establishes the amount of monthly room and board; this is the same amount for all individuals in shared living, regardless of the individual's income.

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