



# A Vermonter's Guide to Homesharing





## Welcome to this Guide

**H**omeShare Vermont has 30 years of experience in helping people find the right match for a housemate. We've learned a lot and put together this guide for those who don't have access to a homesharing organization or who choose to do it on their own. This guide is written for the person wanting to find someone to move in with them, not for people looking for housing.

Homeshare arrangements can include rent, a service component, or a combination of the two. Often, the more specific you are at the beginning of your homeshare, the easier the relationship will be.

*Some of the keys to success will be:*

**Patience** – Wait to find the right person rather than homeshare with the first person to come along.

**Flexibility** – The best homesharers have been folks who don't sweat the small stuff. Also, don't expect to find the mirror image of you. Be open to people who are different from you.

**Reasonable expectations** – Most homesharers lead busy lives so if you are looking for service, understand that there will be limits on their time.

**Don't take it personally** – Your home may be your castle but location, cost, décor, and amenities may not fit with what someone else wants.

**Communication** – It is important to establish regular check-ins with each other to discuss what may or may not be working. Decide what form of communication suits you best.

**Win-win** – You both need to be satisfied with the arrangement for it to be a success. For a homesharing "match" to work, the needs you've both identified must be met.

We hope what follows helps you in your search for a homesharer.

*Happy Sharing!*  
*HomeShare Vermont*

Please note: We would appreciate your feedback about this guide so please feel free to give us a call, visit our Facebook page, or send us an e-mail. We value your input.

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*Thanks to AARP for sponsoring the guide!*



We also want to acknowledge the staff of Project Home who wrote the first guide in 1997.

Special thanks to Shannon Treacy and Amy Jelen for their hard work drafting this guide  
and to Helen Head for her contribution.

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*Design by Futura Design, Shelburne, Vermont*

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# Deciding to Homeshare

## What is Homesharing?

Homesharing is a simple idea where two or more people share a home to their mutual benefit, just like an old fashioned barter. A person offers accommodations in exchange for help around the house, rent, or a combination of the two. A successful homesharing situation will be of mutual benefit to both parties.

## How Does it Work?

All homesharers receive their own bedroom plus shared use of the common areas such as the kitchen, bathroom, and yard. What they offer in exchange varies and is determined in advance by a written agreement. Every homesharing arrangement is unique, depending on the needs, time, and abilities of the people involved. A successful homesharing match takes flexibility and willingness for each person to communicate with the other.

## Why People Homeshare

There are lots of different reasons that people decide to share their home. Some like the idea of having another person around the house to offer companionship and security. Others are looking for a way to supplement their income. In many cases, people need help with household tasks to remain living comfortably in their home. Homesharing is for people of all ages, incomes and abilities. It is about people helping each other.

An exchange of services is an excellent way to save money for both parties involved. The homeowner does not have to hire services from outside the home and the homesharer gets reduced rent in exchange. The type of services will vary depending on the needs of the person providing the home.

NOTE: Unique issues arise when family members decide to live together. (See page 12, *Homesharing with Family*, for suggestions.)

## What to Ask for Rent/Service?

Every homeshare is different depending on what you need. The key is that the arrangement is beneficial to both parties. It is highly unlikely that someone will offer you a high rent, pay half of all utilities, AND provide a lot of service. If what you really need is service, you might want to ask only for a small share of utilities OR a modest rent. If you really need rent, you might not want to ask for any service. What's reasonable for rent in Burlington might not be reasonable in a very rural community.

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 per week.

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

Examples of household services the homesharer might provide in exchange for a reduced or free rent:

- housekeeping
- laundry
- shoveling snow
- driving
- meal preparation
- errands
- feeding and/or walking pets
- shopping
- watering plants
- yard work
- taking out garbage and recycling
- companionship

As you consider what you would like from a homesharing arrangement, think about what you have to offer a possible housemate. Potential homesharers will also be trying to decide whether this is a good fit for them.

NOTE: If you charge rent it is considered income for federal and state tax purposes.

## **Where to Begin?**

Before you decide to homeshare, here are some things to consider:

*Do you have a spare room to offer?*

*What is your primary motivation for homesharing—income, service, or both?*

*What services are you most interested in a housemate providing?*

*Are you flexible enough to have someone live with you?*

*Will the room(s) you offer be furnished or unfurnished?*

*Do you need to make any changes to your home to share it comfortably?*

*If you rent instead of own your home, what will your landlord require in order for you to bring a roommate into your home?*

*If you intend to charge rent, how will it affect any public benefits you might receive?*

## **Think it Over**

While homesharing has many benefits, it is not for everyone. Take your time to make this decision. Talk it over with other family or friends whom you trust. They might ask questions that help you better define what you are looking for and will help clarify whether you want to go forward. This step is key to starting your search with a positive and open approach that is so important in finding a successful match.

Also note that Homesharing is a landlord/tenant relationship. Even if you don't charge rent, certain laws apply. (See page 12, *Landlord/Tenant Law*)

## **Finding Someone to Share Your Home**

Once you've made the decision to share your home, there are many ways to find a potential housemate. You may already have a person in mind to be your homesharer. Perhaps this person is someone you know or has been suggested by a friend. If so, you are one step ahead. Whether it is someone you already know or someone you've just met, it is recommended that you follow the suggestions in this section regarding screening and writing up a formal homesharing agreement.

### **Where to Look for a Potential Housemate**

Reach out to your community through various methods such as buying an ad in a local newspaper, posting a flyer, or using online forums like Craigslist or Front Porch Forum.

Flyers or ads should be specific about what you are looking for in a homesharer. Be concise and positive while clearly stating your most important needs. Remember to preserve some anonymity. You can do this by giving only your phone number or e-mail address rather than your physical address.

Many callers responding to your flyer/ad may be drawn to a word such as "free" rather than the cooperative nature of homesharing. It is important to write your ad carefully and ask a few trusted people to read it for feedback before you consider it the final version.

Word of mouth can be a powerful tool in finding just the right homesharer! Use your network of friends, family, and colleagues to circulate your notice. Talk with them and share your ad/flyer. This can be an effective way to spread the word around your community. Contact local churches or places of worship; they can be excellent referral sources.

Here are a few sample advertisements:

**PRIVATE ROOM** available in my cozy, well-kept downtown home in exchange for help (8-12 hours per week) with household chores, meal preparation and some errands. Companionable, non-smoker preferred. Sense of humor a plus! If interested, call: (802) 000-0000.

**HOSPITABLE**, outgoing elder man with a lovable canine companion seeks someone to share his two bedroom condominium. Private bedroom and bath available for \$275 per month rent in exchange for occasional rides to doctor appointments. Smokers welcome! If interested, call: (802) 000-0000.

## **Non-Discrimination**

You have the right to choose who you will live with in your home. However, you cannot advertise in any way which shows a preference for or against any person based on their race, color, religion, national origin, family status, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, or their receipt of public assistance. It is legal, however, to state a gender preference in your ad providing it's a shared living space and not a separate apartment.

Very often more than one person is looking for housing. If you will only consider one person, it is legal to state that in your ad and, by doing so, you will save time and effort both for you and those looking for housing. (See page 11, *Fair Housing*, for more information)

## **Screening Potential Homesharers**

When you receive responses to your notice, talk with prospects to screen out those who won't meet your needs. Keep an open mind about people who might be different than you expected. Often during the initial contact it is difficult to ask all the exploratory questions you planned to ask. Don't worry, that is normal!

*Here are some ideas for things to talk about:*

### **First Conversation Checklist**

#### **Information to Give:**

*General location of the home (do not give your street address at this time)*

*Number of bedrooms available*

*Private or shared bath*

*Amount of rent charged and/or services you need*

*Number of people living in home*

*Available parking*

*Proximity to public transportation*

*Pets in home now*

*If you expect a security deposit (see page 12)*

*Are utilities included or not? If not, what are average utility costs?*

*Are you a smoker/nonsmoker?*

## Questions to Ask:

*First and last name*

*Contact information (telephone numbers, e-mail)*

*Why do they want to homeshare?*

*What is their daily schedule? What do they do during the day?*

*Are they looking for housing for just themselves?*

*Are they a smoker or nonsmoker?*

*Do they have pets?*

*Do they have a car?*

Please note that because of fair housing law, you should not ask questions about race, religion, or where they were born, or if they're married or have children.

## Planning an Interview

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

The "Sample Interview Questions" that follow can be an effective guide. Be sure to include any questions that are important to you. Ask the person to bring contact information for at least 3 references. These should be people who have known them for at least 1 year and should include past or present roommates, employers or co-workers, and at least one landlord. Family members, friends, or romantic partners are not adequate references.

It is also a good practice to view a government-issued photo ID. The easiest way around a background check is by giving a false name or alias. Ask them to bring an ID to the interview and make a note of their date of birth so you can perform a background check.

Consider scheduling the interview at a neutral setting such as a coffee shop, library, park or restaurant. Bring a friend or relative along to get their impression of the prospective homesharer. If the person seems like a good candidate, a second meeting can be arranged at your home.

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 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 them 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.

## Background & Reference Checks

Before you make a final decision, you should complete background checks and talk to references. These steps can help you get a better idea of their character and personality.

### Background Checks

Below is information on how to complete certain background checks.

#### Vermont Criminal Information Center

This will search for criminal convictions in Vermont only.

Online, go to

[http://vcic.vermont.gov/record\\_checks/vermont/myself](http://vcic.vermont.gov/record_checks/vermont/myself)

Follow the instructions. The form to download is at the bottom of the web page. You will need to provide the name and birth date of the person whose background you are checking.

You can print the form and send by mail. The charge is \$30. If submitting a request by mail, you will also need to complete the Notary Form.

### **Sex Offender Registry**

National Sex Offender Registry:

Go to “The National Sex Offender Public Website” <http://www.nsopw.gov/en-US>

Type the first and last name in the box on the right side of the home page to use the “Quick Search.”

Click “I agree” to the terms and conditions; type in the code that appears on your screen.

Results appear immediately on screen. There are ways to refine your search if needed.

### **Vermont Sex Offender Registry**

Go to the Vermont Criminal Information Center at: <http://vcic.vermont.gov/home>

Click on “Sex Offender Registry.”

Click on the “Vermont Sex Offender Internet Site” link in the box on the right.

Click on the “Search for Offenders in your Area” tab at the top.

You can search by name, city/town, or county.

### **Vermont Courts Online**

Vermont Online Courts (includes all counties except Chittenden & Franklin): <https://secure.vermont.gov/vtcdas/user>

To submit background checks on VTCourtsOnline, you will have to purchase an account. A VTCourtsOnline account costs \$12.50, which includes access to the court docket system, as well as 5 docket lookups. All subsequent lookups have no additional cost.

Enter case type, name and date of birth.

### **Office of the Inspector General**

This is a national database that includes convictions for Medicare and Medicaid-related fraud and patient abuse.

Go to <http://exclusions.oig.hhs.gov/>

Type in the name of the person you are checking.

### **National Background Checks**

There are many companies that perform national criminal background checks. You can conduct an online search to find them or talk with organizations or programs to see who they use. There is no comprehensive database containing all criminal records, so there is no guarantee that by conducting such a check you will obtain a completely accurate record of their criminal history. Although there is no comprehensive national background check, it is still a helpful screening tool and is advisable.

### **Reference Checks**

Reference checks provide an opportunity to talk to people who know the potential homesharer and can give you an opinion on their ability to be a good homesharer. At the interview, you should ask for appropriate references which may include past landlords, roommates, or employers. Ask for references who have known them for a substantial amount of time but are not family members or romantic partners.

*A sample reference check form is provided on page 15.* Be sure to include additional questions which may be important to you. If the reference hesitates to answer a particular question tell them you depend on their honesty in order to make an accurate decision about living with this person. Even if a homesharer offers to have references call you, always call references yourself. Do not accept calls from references unless you have left contact information for them to return your call.

## Living Together & Settling In

Your interview has gone well and the references were all positive. Now you might want to get together a second time for something more social—like dinner or coffee—to get to know the person better.

### Trial Match

When you're ready to ask them to move in, we strongly encourage a trial match which is a period of time to try living together and get acquainted. Typically the homesharer stays with you as a guest for one to two weeks with the understanding that a final decision has not yet been made by either party. The trial period gives each of you a chance to get to know the other better and to help decide if you are compatible.

During the trial match, we suggest that the homesharer maintains their original housing situation so that either party can change their minds during this time. If you don't continue your match, the homesharer simply returns to their previous living situation, and you can resume your search to find someone who is the right fit.

We suggest that no rent or utilities are paid during the trial period so you can more easily ask them to leave if it doesn't work out. Homesharers should not add new services such as internet or cable until after the trial period.

The homesharer should not move all their belongings; they should bring no more than a suitcase. If the prospective homesharer has a pet, it should come along for the trial period so you can experience life with the new animal.

### Homesharing Agreement

When you begin your trial match, you should draft a Homesharing Agreement which outlines

the expectations of both parties. A sample agreement can be found on page 17. The sample is just a starting point. You may add or remove items as you see fit. Wait to sign it until after the trial period as you may wish to make changes or decide to end the homesharing arrangement.

An important part of the agreement is the amount of notice either of you would provide if deciding to end your homesharing match. What notice would you want if your partnership ended unexpectedly? Very often, people will consider a 30 or 60 day notice period.

Consider involving a family member or friend in completing a homesharing agreement if you need help.

### Formalizing the Homeshare Agreement

If you decide to continue your homesharing arrangement following the trial match, you and your homesharer should review your agreement and make changes if needed before signing. At this time, the homesharer should begin to pay rent or provide any services that are part of your agreement. The homesharer gives up their other housing and moves into your home.

NOTE: Depending on what the homesharer has and whether or not the home is already fully furnished, you might want to consider having them put some of their belongings into storage. There are many storage companies around the state where people can rent a space to keep furniture and other items that you may not want moved into your house.

You, as the person offering the housing, have the right to set the house rules. Make sure you both agree on things such as:

*Where they will store their food? (Typically a separate cabinet and a shelf in the refrigerator are provided)*

*Will they receive their mail at the house?*

*Will you allow smoking?*

*May they have visitors? Daytime?  
Overnight?*

*If they will be away overnight, do you expect them to tell you or give advance notice?*

These are just a few of the topics that you may want to define in the agreement.

## **Safety**

An in-depth interview, references, and background checks are conducted as a way to find a reliable and trustworthy homesharer. Having said that, there are basic precautions that anyone should take when inviting someone new to share their home.

- Keep jewelry and money in a safe place.
- Store prescription drugs in your own bedroom not in commonly used areas of the house.
- Do not ask your homesharer to help with your finances.
- Do not share your credit card or social security number.

Beware...someone who sounds too good to be true, probably is. Be skeptical of anyone offering to provide full-time service plus pay rent and utilities. They are either desperate and will agree to anything, or they could be looking to take advantage of you.

## **Tips for Living Together Well**

Living with someone else will always have its ups and downs, and it may take a while to adjust to someone new especially if you're accustomed to living alone or only with family. There are things you can do to ensure a smooth and successful homesharing arrangement.

- Be flexible and open-minded.
- Maintain good communication. Your roommate is not a mind-reader and may not realize that they are doing something that is bothering you.
- Check in regularly with your homesharer. To do this, you might eat a meal together once a week or plan a weekly activity. Weekly check-ins are a good way for both of you to make sure things are going well and also to bring up any issues.
- Review your Homesharing Agreement periodically to see if anything has changed.

As in all relationships, disagreements and problems may arise from time to time. Below are some suggestions about how to deal successfully with a problem. Remember, it is much easier to deal with a small problem than waiting until it becomes a big one.

- Talk with your homesharer if an issue arises. Have someone help you, if needed.
- Discuss one issue at a time.
- Clearly express the problem as you see it without blaming, accusing, or being defensive.
- Listen carefully to what the other person is saying.
- Clarify what you think the other person is saying by paraphrasing (It sounds like you are saying, thinking, feeling...).
- Brainstorm solutions to the problem. List the different solutions and the steps towards implementing the solution. Respect every idea.
- Choose a solution that you both feel will work the best.

## Ending Your Homesharing Arrangement

While many homesharing relationships last years, others end sooner. In our experience most homesharing relationships end because of the changing needs of at least one of the homesharers. Your roommate may have found a job elsewhere or may have saved enough money to buy a house. You might decide that the living situation is just not meeting your needs and you'd like to ask them to leave.

Every homeshare does end eventually and, while change can be hard, the homeshare agreement can help to make it an easier transition. If you decide to end the arrangement for any reason, follow the notice period outlined in the homeshare agreement.

If you are finding it difficult to tell the truth about why you want someone to leave, there are ways you can make the transition more comfortable for all involved.

Some reasons that homeshare matches have ended in the past:

**Your daily schedules are just not compatible.**

**You need more privacy and are ready to live alone again.**

**Your family member needs a place to stay and will be moving in.**

Keep open communication and try to negotiate an agreeable exit strategy. The 30 or 60 day notice period can be less awkward if you stay away from personal attacks or delicate issues.

To prevent misunderstandings, it's 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 relationship.

## Other Considerations

### Fair Housing

When advertising to find a roommate, you must comply with Federal and Vermont Fair Housing laws. They generally prohibit stating a discriminatory preference based on any of the following protected categories: race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, family status, receipt of public assistance, or marital status.

There are two components to fair housing laws for roommates and shared housing: advertising and decision-making.

**Advertising:** Fair Housing laws prohibit discriminatory advertising in all housing, including roommate situations. However, advertising which expresses a preference based upon gender is allowed in shared living situations where tenants will share a bathroom, kitchen, or other common area.

**Decision-making:** Although the prohibition on discriminatory advertising applies to roommate and shared housing situations, federal Fair Housing laws do not apply to how you make your decision of who to live with. You can choose to live with whomever you want—it is your home. However, it is illegal for you to advertise or otherwise make a statement expressing a discriminatory preference.

For more information about Fair Housing in Vermont, please refer to the "Guide to Fair Housing for Families in Vermont" by CVOEO's Fair Housing Project. This publication can be found online at [www.cvoeo.org](http://www.cvoeo.org).

Click on the housing tab at the top of the page.

Click on the "Fair Housing Project" link.

Click on "CVOEO Fair Housing Handbook" on the left sidebar.

## Landlord/Tenant Law

Homesharing is a landlord/tenant relationship, and even if you do not charge rent certain laws do apply. Please refer to the “Renting in Vermont” Information Handbook by Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) for more about these laws. This publication addresses a variety of important topics including non-discrimination, eviction, and security deposits (if applicable).

For further reference, CVOEO’s “Renting in Vermont” handbook can be found online at [www.cvoeo.org](http://www.cvoeo.org).

Click on the housing tab at the top of the page.

Click on the “Vermont Tenants” link.

Click on the “Renting in VT Handbook” on the left sidebar.

## Public Benefits and Property Taxes

If you receive any public benefits such as 3SquaresVT or Fuel Assistance, income from rent may affect those benefits. Please consult with your case manager prior to entering into a homesharing arrangement.

If you have someone living with you and you receive assistance in paying your property taxes, the gross income of your homesharer must be reported to the state of Vermont as part of your household income. Please consult with your tax preparer prior to entering into a homesharing arrangement.

## Security Deposits

Security deposits are unusual in homesharing arrangements, but if you decide to ask for a security deposit, there are legal requirements to consider such as how soon the deposit must be returned after the tenant moves out and the definition of “normal wear and tear.” A security deposit can be retained by a landlord for repairing

damages beyond normal wear and tear, unpaid rent or utility bills owed by the tenant, or to cover expenses for removing belongings left behind after a tenant has moved out. Some city ordinances require that security deposits be held in interest-bearing accounts and landlords are required to give the earned interest to the tenant when they move out. You can check your local city or town laws to see if your municipality requires landlords to take any additional steps. CVOEO’s “Renting in Vermont” handbook offers more information about security deposit laws.

## Homesharing with Family

*Your daughter just graduated from college. A part-time, low-wage job is all she has found so far. She simply cannot afford to live independently. She has returned home.*

*Your son’s marriage is coming to an unexpected end after 20 years. He has no place to go and can’t afford a market rate apartment. He needs to move back in with you.*

In our culture, there is an expectation that children will grow up, leave their parents’ home, and make a home elsewhere. We thrive on the notion of independence. But circumstances often get in the way. Unemployment or underemployment, health concerns, changes in relationships, and other hardships can make independent living difficult. And there may be any number of other reasons why adult offspring choose to live with their parents, siblings, or other family members.

A Pew Research Center study, published in March 2012 by Kim Parker, examines the growing trend in the number of adult children living with their parents, or other family members. The study reported that 29% of young adults, ages 25–34, are living with their parents or other family members today.

Analysis of Census Bureau data shows that the proportion of Americans living in multi-generational households is the highest that it has been

since the 1950s, with a significant increase in recent years. Approximately 25% of participants in the Pew study reported that living with their parents and other family members had a negative impact on their relationship. Full article available at: <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/03/15/the-boomerang-generation/>

We strongly recommend that people who live together, including family members, create a home-sharing agreement. Entering into an agreement helps all parties express expectations of how they will live together. It establishes the basis for shared living: what each person will give and receive from the other.

Failure to have an agreement can result in misunderstanding. This is especially important when one family member is fragile or in a challenging period of transition. We may be reluctant to place any requirements on that person. But everyone needs to give something of themselves dependent on their abilities. The agreement can always be revised at a later date to reflect changing realities.

We encourage you to write your agreement before you live together. Some of the most important areas for an agreement include rent, household chores and services, and lifestyle expectations.

## **Resources**

**Vermont 211:** Dial 2-1-1 on your telephone to find out about community resources like senior services, disability services, counselling, health-care, and much more.

**Senior Helpline:** The Senior HelpLine is a toll-free information, referral and assistance resource for people age 60 and older and their families, staffed by professionals at Vermont's Area Agencies on Aging who are able to help with just about anything.

Ph. 1(800) 642-5119

### **Support And Services at Home (SASH):**

Statewide organization that provides coordinated support designed to keep you in your home. SASH offers a range of services from exercise classes to coordinating care after a hospital visit.

<http://cathedralsquare.org/future-sash.php>

**Cathedral Square Corporation:** CSC is a non-profit organization that owns and manages properties for seniors and individuals with special needs throughout Vermont. They offer subsidized, tax credit, and market-rate rentals.

Ph. (802) 863-2224

Email: [info@cathedralsquare.org](mailto:info@cathedralsquare.org)

[www.CathedralSquare.org](http://www.CathedralSquare.org)

**Home Share Now:** Homesharing program serving LaMoille, Orange and Washington Counties in Vermont.

Ph: (802) 479-8544

Email: [info@homesharenow.org](mailto:info@homesharenow.org)

[www.HomeShareNow.org](http://www.HomeShareNow.org)

**HomeShare Vermont:** Homesharing program serving Chittenden, Addison and Grand Isle counties in Vermont.

Ph: (802) 863-5625

Email: [home@sover.net](mailto:home@sover.net)

[www.HomeShareVermont.org](http://www.HomeShareVermont.org)

### **National Shared Housing Resource Center:**

Information about homesharing programs and shared residences throughout the United States.

[www.NationalSharedHousing.org](http://www.NationalSharedHousing.org)

## Sample Interview Questions

Here are some things you might want to discuss during an interview:

Start off by telling them what you need in terms of rent and services as well as what space and amenities you are offering in your home.

*Have you shared housing before (other than with your immediate family)?*

*What is your current living situation?*

*How long have you lived in the area?*

*Where have you lived before?*

*What is your work and education experience?*

*What is your daily routine? (work schedule, meal times, exercise)*

*What do you like to do in your spare time and on weekends? (TV, musical tastes, visit friends)*

*Do you want to have guests?*

Daytime	Evening
Overnight	Romantic overnights

*Will you be spending time away (vacations, weekends away)?*

*Are you willing to let me know when you are leaving and when you expect to be back? (I will do the same for you.)*

### GENERAL SERVICES

If there is going to be a work exchange as part of the homesharing arrangement, ask the candidate about his or her ability and interest in providing the service you are looking for.

If you are asking your homesharer to drive you as part of the service exchange, ask to see their license and current insurance card.

*What kind of cooking do you do? (If you are asking for help with cooking, specify your food preferences.)*

### ABOUT YOUR HOME

List what options are being offered for the physical space of your home:

**Number of bedrooms**

**Furnished or unfurnished room**

**Private or shared bath**

**Parking**

**Accessibility**

**Laundry facilities**

**Storage space (including space for food storage)**

**Internet service or cable service (if not provided can it be added at homesharer's expense?)**

Home related questions for the candidate:

*Will you bring furniture with you, and if so, what?*

*Do you own guns or other weapons? If yes, where would you keep them if homesharing?*

*Do you have your own phone?*

*Do you want internet service and/or cable?*

*Discuss how you would like to handle food expenses (i.e. whether food would be shared or bought separately).*

### HEALTH/LEGAL INFORMATION

*Do you drink alcohol? If so, how much?*

*Are you a smoker?*

*Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If so, please explain.*

*Do you have allergies?*

## Sample Reference Check Questions

*Hello, my name is*

Your name was given to me by \_\_\_\_\_ as a reference.

I am considering renting him/her a room in my home.

Do you have a few minutes to answer some questions?

How do you know \_\_\_\_\_?

How long have you known him/her? Are you still in touch?

If an employer reference: Would you hire \_\_\_\_\_ again?

How would you describe him/her?

How does \_\_\_\_\_ handle disagreements?

Do you know of any alcohol or substance abuse that has been a problem?

Does \_\_\_\_\_ have any mental health problems that might impact a homesharing arrangement?

Would you recommend \_\_\_\_\_ for homesharing?

Would you have any reservations about \_\_\_\_\_ as a roommate?

Hypothetically speaking, how would you feel about this person sharing a home with a loved one, such as your mother or grandmother?

Does he/she work well with others and share responsibility well?

Does he/she show initiative?

Is he/she dependable and responsible?

How are his/her communication skills?

Is there anything else you'd like to add that might help me decide if they would make a good roommate?

*Thank you for your time!*

## Sample Homesharing Agreement

We \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
*Person offering the home* *Person moving in*

agree to participate in the following arrangements to begin on \_\_\_\_\_.  
*Date*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to provide the following:  
*Person offering the home*

Yes/ No

- Bedroom (Can it be decorated/painted?) \_\_\_\_\_
- Parking \_\_\_\_\_
- Laundry Facilities \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to provide the following:  
*Person moving in*

Yes/ No

- Rent in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ due on \_\_\_\_\_
- Share of utilities (heat/electric/internet/cable/phone)?
- Exchange of services for \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week, to include:
- Housekeeping \_\_\_\_\_
- Meal preparation/eating together \_\_\_\_\_
- Grocery shopping/errands \_\_\_\_\_
- Transportation \_\_\_\_\_
- Companionship \_\_\_\_\_
- Yard Work \_\_\_\_\_
- Shoveling Snow \_\_\_\_\_
- Laundry \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Clarify the following items:

- Use of dishes, pots, etc. \_\_\_\_\_
- Food storage \_\_\_\_\_
- Use of common areas \_\_\_\_\_
- Mail \_\_\_\_\_
- Visitors:  Daytime  Nighttime  Notice required? \_\_\_\_\_
- Pets \_\_\_\_\_
- Guns or weapons in the home? \_\_\_\_\_
- Schedule:  Away, notice required? \_\_\_\_\_
- Emergency contacts exchanged? \_\_\_\_\_

### We also agree to the following:

Loans or gifts of money or substantial property are not part of this agreement and are strongly discouraged. Participants may amend their homesharing agreement by mutual agreement.

Each participant agrees to give a written notice of \_\_\_\_\_ days in the event she or he desires to end the homesharing match.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of person offering the home*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of person moving in*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*