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Home Share
COLORADO

Policies and Procedures Manual

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Home Sharing Basics



Vision Statement

Colorado is a place where every older adult thrives.

Mission Statement

Sunshine Home Share Colorado ensures quality of life for older adults and strengthens communities through a safe home-sharing model, supportive economic empowerment, and connections to resources and services.

What is Home Sharing?

Sunshine Home Share Colorado is a nonprofit organization helping you utilize the extra space in your home as a way to generate income, receive assistance with basic household chores, decrease isolation, and help provide housing to someone needing an affordable place to live. Trained staff support a safe and thoughtful process including background and reference checks as well as a thorough interview and screening process, allowing you to make the best match that works for you.

Home Sharing is an arrangement where two or more unrelated people share a dwelling, each having her or his private space and sharing certain common areas. A shared arrangement involves a Home Provider and a Home Seeker, or two or more people renting a house or apartment together. Home Providers arrange a regular rental agreement or exchange services for part or all of the rent. No two Home Sharing situations are alike, each is created to the needs and desires of the people involved.

Deciding if Home Sharing is Right for You



Questions to ask yourself

Home Seekers

1. Why do I want to Home Share 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. Do I prefer Home Sharing with a female, male, couple? Or, do you have no preference?
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. 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 of services for a reduction in the rent?
13. What are my housekeeping standards? For example, how clean should common areas be kept?
14. Am I prepared to adjust to a household change in return for rent savings or companionship?
15. What are my shortcomings that might present difficulties to anyone living with me?

16. 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?



17. What things can I do to make my new Home Sharing arrangement feel like home?

Home Providers

1. Why do I want to Home Share 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(s) 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. Am I prepared to adjust to some household changes in return for the additional income or help that I am asking?
9. To what degree do I want to share my kitchen, living room, and other common areas?
10. 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?
11. What is essential to me in a housemate?



12. Do I prefer a female, male, couple?
13. Do I have an age preference?
14. Would I consider living with children?
15. Do I object to smoking or drinking?
16. Would I consider living with pets?
17. What are my shortcomings that might present difficulties to anyone living with me?
18. Am I able to confront problems and find amenable solutions? Do I listen and understand other people, especially when there is a difference of opinion?
19. What qualities do I have that would contribute to a shared arrangement?
20. What can I do to ensure that MY home can become OUR home when shared with another?



Sunshine Home Share Colorado Program Application Policies

The following are Sunshine Home Share Colorado's ("Sunshine") program application policies applicable to those seeking to share a home with a homeowner (a "Home Seeker") and those seeking to offer housing to a Home Seeker (a "Home Provider") . Please review these policies. By applying to our program, you understand and agree to abide by the following terms:

1. Failure to provide accurate, truthful, and complete information is grounds to disqualify you from consideration for a Home Share.
2. You will make appointments to meet with Sunshine's staff during the application and matching process. Sunshine has a two no-show policy. Home Seekers and Home Providers who need to reschedule appointments are expected to let staff know at least 24 hours in advance. Extenuating circumstances for no shows and day-of cancellations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
3. Home Providers must be over the age of 55 and their home must be their primary residence.
4. All applicants must complete and permit a background check, Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV), and credit check. Poor credit history is not an immediate disqualification but may influence the decision of either party in their decision to enter into a home sharing arrangement.
5. Sunshine cannot serve anyone who at any time has been convicted of or pled guilty to: (a) offenses against the person such as homicide, assault, battery, kidnapping, unlawful sexual behavior, human trafficking and slavery, stalking; (b) offenses involving the family relations such as bigamy and incest, wrongs to children, harboring a minor, contributing the delinquency of a minor and domestic violence, (c) offenses relating to methamphetamine, and (d) any sex offender offenses.
6. Home Providers and Home Seekers must have three verifiable references.
7. Home Providers' utilities, property taxes, and mortgage payments must be in good standing and the home cannot be in jeopardy of foreclosure.
8. Home Seekers must show verifiable proof of income. Home Seekers must have an income level sufficient to pay the Home Provider's rent and living expenses.
9. Sunshine cannot serve individuals with current, untreated substance abuse problems. Persons in recovery must show three years of abstinence, substantiated with documentation.
10. Home Seekers and Home Providers must be emotionally stable and demonstrate an interest in being involved in the welfare of others. Sunshine's program is not appropriate for individuals with

challenges that can create additional stress in a home living arrangement, such as inappropriate and disrespectful behavior towards other clients, staff, or volunteers, which will not be tolerated and may be a reason for program disqualification.



11. Sunshine and Home Seekers do not provide home health care. If a Home Provider needs substantial personal care assistance, skilled care assistance, or cannot be left unattended, this program is not appropriate. Home Seekers can provide companionship and household help, but the Home Provider should expect the Home Seeker will have activities of their own, independent of the Home Share, and coordination of multiple services for the Home Provider may be needed.
12. You must abide by Sunshine's anti discrimination policy, a copy of which you have been given.
13. Sunshine cannot provide emergency housing. The process of matching is a careful and somewhat time-consuming one and is not a "quick fix." Housing is never a guarantee and it is never guaranteed that an applicant will be matched.
14. Sunshine's goal is to promote suitable, long-lasting Home Share arrangements. Our experience is that hurried matches do not last. It will take time for us to vet applicants, find suitable matches, and for applicants to make careful decisions. People in need of short-term housing may apply, but many Home Providers prefer a longer-term commitment and referral opportunities may be limited.
15. Sunshine asks Home Seekers and Home Providers to make at least a 6-month commitment to their Home Sharing arrangement. If circumstances make this difficult, a match will be less likely, but Sunshine can still try to find a match for you.
16. Sunshine abides by fair housing laws. All decisions regarding the final move-in rests with the Home Seekers and Home Providers to choose each other.
17. All matches must participate in quarterly check-ins for the first year of their match. In the check-ins, a Sunshine staff member will discuss with both parties the strengths and challenges of the match thus far and conduct any conflict resolution that may be needed.

Home Sharing Procedures

Program Process

Step 1: Social Service Intake (2 Hours)- Staff will conduct an intake with every participant asking questions about personality, mental health, hobbies, home logistics, service needs, etc. to screen and better match you with a potential Home Provider or Home Seeker.

Step 2: References Checked (1 hour) Every applicant must have three verifiable references. Staff will contact all references.

Step 3: Background and Credit Check (0.15 Hours)- Background, DMV, and Credit Checks are pulled and reviewed by Sunshine staff for safety, following all fair housing laws.

Step 4: Optional Financial Coaching Session (2 Hours)- Home sharing is an opportunity to develop financial stability and create financial goals. We have a trained staff member who can meet in a one-on-one session with each applicant to support a path to better financial health.

Step 5: Coordination of Match Meetings (1 Hour)- Sunshine staff will contact both the Home Provider and Home Seeker to set up the first match meeting. Coordinating schedules can take time.

Step 6: Match Meetings (1-2 Hours Each)- Sunshine staff are present for the first match meeting. This is to ensure safety and to help facilitate the conversation. Home Providers and Home Seekers may conduct multiple match meetings before finding a potential housemate. If the first match meeting is successful you are encouraged to meet 2-3 more times on your own. Ensuring you know each other fairly well before moving on.

Step 7: Trial Match Contract (1 Hour)- Sunshine strongly encourages a 2-week trial match. This is recommended so each party experiences living together before the final move-in. Staff meet at the home to discuss the Trial Match and set length of stay. Participants sign a document stating this is only a trial match for a specified time. During the Trial Match staff check in formally and are available for support.

Step 8: Living Together Contract Completed (2 Hours) - If the Trial Match is successful, the Home Provider and Home Seeker work with staff and discuss all the details of living together including service exchange expectations, communication plans, rent, space, limitations, cleanliness, etc. Setting these parameters before move-in defines the expectations for a successful home sharing relationship.

Step 9: Phone Check In (0.5 Hours)- Sunshine staff check in one to three weeks into the match making sure no additional support is needed. Our staff are available for support as needed throughout the match.



Step 10: Quarterly Care Management Home Visits (2 Hours)- Staff assist throughout but conduct quarterly check in's (4x/year). This is a discussion of challenges and successes where home seekers and home providers receive support from staff to continue in a healthy match.

Step 11: Mediation (2 Hours)- If needed, Sunshine staff or an outside mediator will conduct a home visit to facilitate a conversation about the challenges that have arisen to help come to amicable solutions.

Step 12: Exit Plan (2 Hours)- If and when a match ends, Sunshine staff conduct a home visit discussing the exit plan. This may include final rent payment, date of move out, cleanliness of space, etc.

Step 13: Debrief (1-2 Hours)- Sunshine staff members will meet with the Home Provider and Home Seeker separately to process the end of the match. This will include talking about the positive aspects of home sharing that were experienced, the biggest challenges faced, new insights on home sharing, and potential future home sharing opportunities.

Additional Service:

Online Database Support (Silvernest, Craigslist, Senior Home Shares) (1 Hour)- Some Home Providers choose to also use online room sharing websites, as a way to increase traffic to their home and find a roommate. If a Home Seeker or Home Provider in our program finds a potential candidate, we can have that person go through our vetting process (social service intake, references, background check), as well as support the match through the home sharing process (Trial Match, Living Together Contract, Quarterly Meetings, Mediation, Exit Plan).



Liability Waiver and Release

I acknowledge and agree that:

- (1) While Sunshine Home Share Colorado ("Sunshine") helps facilitate the process of identifying and matching appropriate home share match candidates, all decisions on the selection, acceptance, and/or rejection of a home sharing arrangement and/or candidate are made solely by me, based on my own preferences and criteria;
- (2) I may be introduced to other potential candidates, but neither Sunshine nor any of its officers, directors, agents, or employees make any representations or warranties to me about any home sharing match candidate, or the candidate's ability to perform his/her obligations under a home sharing arrangement; and
- (3) Participation in Sunshine's home sharing program is completely voluntary.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, I, for myself, my minor children (if any), and our heirs, executors, and administrators, hereby irrevocably and unconditionally release and forever discharge Sunshine Home Share Colorado, its officers, directors, employees, and agents from any and all claims, liabilities, losses, damages, expenses, or causes of action, whether known or unknown and whether at law or in equity, arising from, out of, or in connection with the any home sharing arrangement and any other services or support provided to me during my participation in the home sharing program ("Claims"). I agree to refrain from directly or indirectly asserting any claim or demand, or commencing, instituting or causing to be commenced, any proceeding of any kind or nature against any person or entity released by this agreement that may arise from or may be based upon any matter purported to be released by this agreement. I further agree that Sunshine is not now and shall not in the future be obligated to supply financial support for the Home Owner or Home Seeker, which financial support is and shall remain the exclusive responsibility of the Home Owner and the Home Seeker, respectively.

By signing my name and the date, I confirm that I understand and agree to the terms of this Liability Waiver and Release agreement.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____



COVID Client Safety Protocol Response

Sunshine Home Share Colorado takes the safety of our clients and program participants very seriously and adheres to the CDC guidelines. Clients will be required to wear PPE including masks when meetings with Sunshine home share personnel during the current health crisis. Clients who refuse to adhere to agency safety protocol will not be served. Our organization is using robust health screening, cleaning/disinfecting protocols. However, following these guidelines and protocols does not guarantee 100% safety with respect to the corona virus. If you chose to receive client services with Sunshine home share personnel, you are assuming the risk of potentially being exposed to corona virus.

By signing my name and the date, I confirm that I understand and agree to the terms of this agreement.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Non-Discrimination Agreement

Sunshine Home Share Colorado does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, the presence of minor children, receipt of public assistance or gender identity in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, clients, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients. Everyone who participates in our program and services must agree to abide by this policy of non-discrimination. For this reason, while it is your decision regarding who you want to live with, we require you to be willing to meet match candidates who are different from you as part of the home share match process.

By signing my name and the date, I confirm that I understand and agree to abide by the nondiscrimination policy of Sunshine Home Share Colorado.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Program Recommendations

Although not required, Sunshine strongly encourages are matches to do the following:

Trial Match

A 2-3 week Trial Match period is HIGHLY recommended prior to the Home Seeker fully moving in or giving up their current housing situation. It is recommended the Home Provider make the Trial Match period FREE of rent as the Home Seeker may also be paying rent at their current housing location while beginning the Trial Match. It is encouraged that the service exchange provided should not be calculated during this time as well, as both parties are “trying out” this home sharing relationship. The Home Seeker should not move in any personal belongings during the Trial Match, as the Trial Match is not the full move in. The Home Seeker should move in with a “suitcase” full of belongings during the Trial Match.

Colorado Standard Home Share Lease Agreement

Sunshine does NOT provide a lease but can support the Home Seeker and Home Provider utilizing a lease agreement in conjunction with the Living Together Contract provided by Sunshine Home Share Colorado. A template can be found at the Housing Connects website which we are happy to provide you if you do not have access to a computer/the internet.

Collecting a Deposit

Not all home seekers will financially be in a situation to pay first month rent and a deposit. We encourage flexibility in Home Provider’s decision and how much to collect as a deposit, but this decision is yours as the home provider.

Locked Doors for Personal Spaces

We recommend you allow the home seeker to have a lock on their door. They may or may not chose to use it, but it is their personal space.

Home Owner Insurance/ Renter Insurance

It is recommended you talk to your insurance agent to discuss liability coverage and make sure your home insurance coverage is sufficient for covering a home sharing situation.

Your Benefits

Please be aware that charging rent for space in your home is considered income. If you are receiving any kind of public benefits (SNAP, Medicare Savings, Medicaid) an increase in income may impact your benefits. This is something to consider when thinking about home sharing.



Tenant/Landlord Rights

Be familiar with your rights as a tenant and a landlord. See information provided by the Department of Local Affairs to get more information on this topic

Have a File for Life on the Refrigerator

It is recommended that you place a copy of all your medical conditions and medications in a labeled envelope, in a highly visible location on the refrigerator so it is easily accessible in the case of an emergency. Sunshine Home Share has this form for you.

Emergency Information

It is recommended that you exchange emergency contact information with your home seeker / home provider so they can contact your loved one in an emergency situation.

Personal Finances

Please keep all of your financial information private. For your safety use caution with sharing any information that may be related to your private finances and identity. If you are in need of bill paying assistance, please let us know and we can connect you with nonprofit agencies that work with these programs.

Questions to Ask a Potential Home Share Candidate

- What is your definition of clean?
- Why are you considering home sharing and are you looking for company/companionship?
- What are your biggest home sharing pet peeves?
- Tell me about a past home sharing experience?
- How do you feel about sharing food, chores, car?
- What does a typical day look like?
- What's your communication style?
- What do/did you do for a living?
- Do you expect to have any overnight guests?
- How would you like to handle food and meals?
- Are you generally sociable and friendly?
- Do you have potential health considerations and challenges, including mental health?

Sample Trial Match Document



This agreement recognizes Home Provider _____ Home Seeker _____ are entering into a trial match on (date) _____ at _____ (location) and will last (number of days) _____. At this time, the Home Seeker agrees to only bring enough items for a short stay with the goal of evaluating the potential for a future long term home sharing relationship.

Should the Home Provider and Home Seeker decide to become housemates at the end of the trial match, Sunshine Home Share Colorado will help establish a Living Together Contract. This agreement will specify the expectations and agreement of the home sharing relationship.

At the trial match it is expected that the Home Seeker will be respectful and leave the home in the same condition as found and agree to leave at the end of the trial match.

Release of Liability

The parties acknowledge that they have been introduced to one another by the Sunshine Home Share Colorado staff but neither Sunshine or any of its officers, directors, or agents, or employees have made any representations of warranties about any party hereto to the other, or any parties ability to perform his/her obligation hereunder to the other. The parties acknowledge that the Home Sharing Program is a voluntary arrangement entered into between them for the mutual benefit and will require augment and cooperation between them to be successful.

Further, the parties acknowledge that all decisions in this selection, acceptance, and / or rejection of the home sharing arrangement and/or candidate(s) were made solely by the parties based on their own preferences and criteria and Sunshine has no part in such decisions. The parties are requested to consult with the Home Sharing staff of Sunshine Home Share Colorado regarding their satisfaction with the program, and to report any difficulties in the living arrangement to the Home Sharing staff.

The parties and each of them, for themselves, their heirs, executors and administrators, forever release Sunshine Home Share Colorado, it's officers, directors, employees, and agents from any and all actions, causes of actions, claims, damages, losses, or expenses arising from, out of, or in connection with the living arrangements, and otter series provided for herein, or their participation in the Home Sharing Program and each of them agrees Sunshine is not obligated to supply financial support for the Home Provider or Home Seeker, which support remains the exclusive responsibility for the Home Provider and Home Seeker.



The Match

Sample Home Sharing Agreement

The Home Sharing Agreement has important legal consequences. Please read fully and carefully. This document outlines the Home Sharing Agreement between _____ (Home Provider) and _____ (Home Seeker) for _____ (location) on _____ (date).

Factual Background

Home Seeker has a need for and desires to obtain and arrange for private living accommodations and other services in a private residence. Home Provider desires and is willing to provide living accommodations and other services in his/her home. Home Seekers and Home Providers have been introduced to each other through Sunshine Home Share Colorado.

Home Seeker and Home Provider have fully and truthfully disclosed to the other every condition, circumstance and fact that might affect the arrangement they are about to enter with each other. Each understands that the relationship that they will voluntarily enter into by signing the Agreement is based on cooperation, trust, and patience.

Agreement

Now, therefore in consideration of the premises and the mutual covenants and agreements here in contained, the sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the Home Provider agrees to provide the Home Seeker and the Home Seeker agrees to accept, the private living accommodations and other service in the Home Providers home for the term and on the conditions hereinafter provided.

Restrictions

Space

The following areas of the residence or items of personal property owned by the Home Provider are not to be shared or are to be shared only as specified.

The following items of personal property owned by the Home Seeker are not to be shared or are to be shared only as specified.

Storage

What items is the home seeker able to bring into the home?

Where will they be stored?

Behaviors

The following restrictions apply to the use of the home and includes agreements concerning:

Pets (allowed/not allowed/help with pets in the home/cleaning up after the pet, changing litter box)

Smoking (allowed/not allowed/ if so, where)

Alcohol Consumption (allowed/not allowed) Define moderation or comfort level.

Marijuana (allowed/not allowed/ if so where)

Guests (whom, length of stay, where in home able to stay, overnight guests vs. visitors)

Noise/Television (quiet time) The Home Provider and Home Seeker each agree to refrain from excessive noise or other activities that disturb the peace and quiet of the other.

Kitchen Cleanliness (when need to wash dishes, clean out fridge and food items, wipe down counters, sweep floors, what items can Home Seeker leave on the counter)

Kitchen Usage Times

Purchasing of Food

Trash



House Phone Usage (long distance, late night calls, local calls)

Internet Usage (downloading/streaming/if home does not have WIFI, if home seeker can purchase)

Utilities (water, gas, and electricity) - shall be paid by the Home Provider unless otherwise discussed (including additional costs accrued for air conditioning, water use etc.)

Laundry (usage/ number of loads/week)

Bathroom (if shared – purchasing of bathroom products/cleaning)

The Home Provider can change the rules and restrictions affecting the Home Seeker's occupancy of the home if the changed rule does not conflict with any other terms in this Agreement and the change must be discussed with the Home Seeker prior to the change.

Service Exchange

Please discuss how the following services (be specific and include frequency) will be provided. The parties can agree to modify the terms of this paragraph in writing; this change shall be effective as of the first day of the month

Meal preparation: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Housework

Gardening

Driving

Errands

Laundry

Grocery shopping

Snow shoveling

Companionship

House maintenance

Other

Rental Exchange Guidelines

Rent Price

Date to be Paid

Delivery Method

The Home Seeker shall cooperate with the Home Provider to keep the home clean and sanitary condition. The Home Seeker shall be liable to any damage to the Home Provider, his/ her family, home or property caused by and shall pay for any repairs made necessary by, the willful or negligent actions or omissions of the Home Seeker and his/her visitors. The Home Seeker shall not

make any alternations, additions, or improvements to the home without the prior written consent of the Home Provider, which such consent may be withheld for any reason.



In any case, the Home Seeker and Home Provider understand that even with the installation of any improvements or alterations to the residence, all of which shall be made at the Home Seeker cost, that the term of the Agreement shall not be altered and shall remain a month to month term. Upon the termination or expiration of this agreement, the Home Seeker shall deliver possession of the private bedroom in the same condition as the commencement date, normal wear and tear excepted.

The Home Provider shall maintain the home in decent and safe condition, and with the cooperation of the Home seeker, shall keep the home in clean and sanitary condition. The Home Provider shall be liable for any damage to the Home Seeker or his/her property caused by and shall make or pay for any repairs made necessary by, the willful or negligent acts of omission of the Home Provider and his/her visitors. If the Home seeker remains in the home, the Home provider agree to provide the services set forth above, subject to modification as provided in that paragraph.

The Home Sharing Agreement may not be terminated, unless and until best efforts have been made to resolve any problems that arise between the Home Seeker and Home Provider.

(Home Provider)

Date

(Home Seeker)

Date

Home Seeker / Home Provider Match Donation

As a non-profit organization that relies heavily on contributions, we request that our Home Seekers and Home Providers who benefit from our services help contribute back toward them. If we are successful in finding you a match, we ask for a sliding scale donation based on your yearly income.

All donations are non-refundable. If your match should end unexpectedly within the first three months, your paid match donation will be credited in full toward your next match.

No one is denied services because they cannot afford to pay a donation.

If your Income is:	Your Recommended Donation will be:
Less than \$15,000	\$10
\$15,000-\$25,000	\$50
\$26,000-\$40,000	\$200
\$41,000-\$55,000	\$400
\$56,000-\$75,000	\$600
\$75,000+	\$800

Communication and Conflict Resolution

Open communication and the ability to resolve conflict is crucial to a successful home sharing relationship. Here are some suggestions for good communication in a home sharing match:

Be clear from the beginning.

It's unrealistic to expect your housemate to read your mind, communicating what you need is one of the best ways to prevent conflict. Clearly express the challenge as you see it, without blaming, accusing, or being defensive.

Approach is important.

Approaching a tough conversation in a calm, understanding, and open manner can have an impact on the response you get from your roommate. Emotions will and can run high in a home sharing match, but the tone that you set when approaching a tough conversation can have a huge effect on the way your roommate approaches your concerns/challenges.

Address things when they're small.

Addressing things that bug you while they're still small can help your roommate be aware of something they may not otherwise know. Addressing little things is much easier than addressing them after they've become big issues.

Be open to new things.

Your housemate may be from some place you've never heard of before or may have a completely different religion, cultural background, or lifestyle from your own. Be open to new ideas and experiences.

Be open to change.

Be comfortable addressing things that unexpectedly come up. Be open to setting new rules and flexible with your changing environment.

Address things when they're big.

If something becomes a big problem, address it quickly so it doesn't become worse. Try on some new shoes. Before making assumptions, try to step back and think about what your housemate's perspective may be in a situation. Then ask your housemate and LISTEN. You may not agree but it will help to open your mind to different opinions and experiences.

Listen.

Listening carefully to what our housemate is saying is crucial to being able to see their perspective. To clarify what the other person is telling you, try paraphrasing. Paraphrasing helps you clarify what the other person is saying, “It sounds like you are saying/ thinking/feeling this _____.”

They will either confirm that’s what they are saying or correct you. It’s a good way to make sure your interpretation of what they are saying is actually what they mean.

Assume your housemate is doing their best.

Finding the good and humanity in your housemate is important, as they should do with you. People don’t always communicate or act in ways that align with who they are, remembering that they are trying their best and learning to live in a new situation is important to find the good in each other.

Compromise.

If it seems that you and your housemate have different ideas on the best solution to a challenge, try offering a compromise that meets both your needs.

Communicating with “I” Statements

An “I” message or “I” statement is a style of communication that focuses on the feelings or beliefs of the speaker rather than thoughts and characteristics that the speaker attributes to the listener. “I” statements enable speakers to be assertive without making accusations, which can often make listeners feel defensive. An “I” statement can help a person become aware of problematic behavior and generally forces the speaker to take responsibility for his or her own thoughts and feelings rather than attributing them—sometimes falsely or unfairly—to someone else.

I feel _____ when you _____. Would you be willing to _____.

Examples:

I feel **worried** when you **go out without telling me what time you will be home**. Would you be willing to **leave me a note or let me know if you’ll be home that night?**

I feel **frustrated** when you **leave the laundry in the washing machine after it’s finished washing**. Would you be willing to **take it out and dry it the same day you put it in?**

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. These are things you can do to ensure a smooth and successful home sharing arrangement.

- Check in regularly with your home sharer. 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 challenges.
- Review your Home Sharing Agreement periodically to see if anything has changed. As in all relationships, disagreements and problems may arise from time to time.
- Be friendly without expecting to be best friends. Successful home sharing relationships are not dependent on friendship. While a great friendship may or may not develop, be careful not to expect that you are going to be best friends. Expecting or depending on it sets both of you up for misunderstanding or disappointment. You should be friendly with your housemate but also make sure you have your own social circles.
- Be aware of who you invite into your room or the home, and how often. You may love having guests, but your housemate may not. Be mindful of how often or when you bring people over. Good communication between the Home Seeker and Home Provider regarding guests is important.
- Lock the door and windows. This may seem like it has nothing to do with housemate relationships, but locking the doors and windows is a critical part of staying safe.
- Respect your housemate's belongings. Talk through what is okay to share or borrow, and what is off limits. Also talk about how often it's okay to use something - borrowing something once in awhile is different than every day.
- Use a communal calendar. We recommend you use a communal calendar that hangs in a shared location. Let the other person know when you will be gone and when you will be back so they don't worry.
- Schedule weekly check-in meetings. A weekly check-in scheduled on the community calendar is a great way to talk about what is going well, what needs changed and is an opportunity to discuss any issues that have come up over the course of the week.

Personal Boundaries

Personal boundaries are guidelines, rules or limits that a person creates to identify reasonable, safe and permissible ways for other people to behave towards them and how they will respond when someone passes those limits. They are built out of a mix of conclusions, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, past experiences and social learning.

When someone feels their boundaries have been crossed, this can lead to feelings of anger or frustration. It is important to recognize your own boundaries and have open communication when addressing boundary issues.

Steps for Conflict Resolution

All home sharing requires a degree of compromise. When agreeing to home share, you are agreeing to take steps to work through conflict and create positive solutions. Entering into a home sharing arrangement is a mutual decision by both parties. Sunshine Home Share is available to help with conflict, but only as a last resort.

We ask that you follow these steps if needed:

1. Try to work it out together. You need to talk to each other to address any conflict.
2. Review your Home Share Agreement together. If changes need to be made, see if you can come to an agreement. Make any changes in writing and send an updated Home Share Agreement or addendum to Sunshine Home Share.
3. Call Sunshine and we will talk it through with you or come to your home. We will not come to the home, if you haven't completed steps 1 & 2.
4. The agency can offer one mediation session, if both sides agree to mediation.
5. Create a move out plan and/or give 30-day notice. Staff is available to assist with this step if needed.

On-Going Support

Sunshine Home Share staff will provide ongoing support for the first year of the match and can provide additional support when necessary, including mediation and negotiation.

Filing a Complaint

If for any reason you feel the services provided to you by Sunshine Home Share Colorado have been unsatisfactory, you may file a complaint with the Executive Director at alison@sunshinehomeshare.org or call 303 915 8264. If you feel this matter needs to escalate further, you will be connected with the Chairman of the Board of Directors.



If you have any questions or would like more information, please call us at

(303) 915-8264

email us at

alison@sunshinehomeshare.org

or visit our website

sunshinehomeshare.org