



# HOMESHARE

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is Neighbor to Neighbor?

Neighbor to Neighbor grew out of a grassroots movement in 1970. In a neighborhood in northeast Fort Collins, a family was about to lose their home. Neighbors joined together and raised enough money to keep the family from becoming homeless. This spirit of giving and compassion led to the founding of Neighbor to Neighbor. Since then, programs have expanded to meet the growing need for affordable housing and self-sufficiency programs in Larimer County. Neighbor to Neighbor is now offering a homesharing program. **Neighbor to Neighbor's HomeShare Program is not a short-term vacation rental type program and it is not a Home Care Agency.**

### 2. What is Homesharing?

Homesharing is a living arrangement where two or more unrelated people share a home to their mutual benefit. The arrangement involves a HomeProvider (55 and over) and a HomeSeeker (18 and over). A HomeProvider is a person who wants to share his or her home with another, unrelated individual. A HomeSeeker is a person who is looking to move into the home of another. No two homesharing arrangements are alike; each is tailored to the needs and desires of the individual people involved.

### 3. How does it work?

In a homesharing arrangement, each person usually has his or her own bedroom, but shares the common areas of the home, such as the kitchen or living room. **HomeProviders must live in Larimer County. Persons seeking housing must either live, work or attend school in Larimer County or have a housing voucher for Larimer County.**

### 4. What is the rent rate?

Rental rates are established by the HomeProvider. Some rents include utilities and others pay a portion. Reduced Rent Exchanges involve non-medical/non-personal care such as helping with meals, shopping, cleaning, companionship and doing errands. The key is that the arrangement is beneficial to both parties. A deposit may be required at the Provider's discretion; however, every situation is different.

## **5. Are there any fees?**

Neighbor to Neighbor does not charge a fee for homesharing services.

## **6. What type of participant applies to the homesharing program?**

Neighbor to Neighbor interviews applicants of all walks of life including those who are working, seniors, single parents, persons with disabilities, persons exiting from a shelter, students and others who receive benefits such as unemployment, TANF, retirement or disability income.

## **7. What are the benefits of Homesharing?**

Whether a HomeProvider or HomeSeeker, one of the reasons persons decide to homeshare is because they find it difficult to afford housing costs on their own. For those hoping to find an affordable or low-income housing unit, they may encounter long or closed waiting lists. That's why homesharing can be a unique housing option. Some participants homeshare until they can find subsidized or low-income housing while others choose homesharing to keep their housing costs affordable on a long-term basis.

For HomeProviders, with someone else living in the home they can continue living in their own home and neighborhood. Additional benefits of homesharing allow HomeProviders to save money, put the extra income toward other personal or housing expenses, experience a sense of security, enjoy companionship and maintain independence. With market rents unattainable for many, homesharing gives HomeSeekers an affordable room in a home atmosphere. Many homesharers receive mutual benefits of companionship and security, the opportunity to help the HomeProvider and being able to save money, reduce debt and keep housing & utility costs affordable.

## **8. What are the limitations?**

- As in any shared living arrangement, homesharers may have to give up some privacy or personal space.
- Also, a HomeSeeker may have to give up some personal belongings or a pet if there is limited space at the Provider's home.
- Seekers need to have income sufficient to pay rent or have time and willingness to provide some services, or both.
- This program is not appropriate for someone who may have problems that would create additional stress in a home living arrangement.
- Participants should be able to self-advocate and assume full responsibility for every step of the HomeShare application process.
- HomeShare is not an emergency housing solution. The matching process is a careful and can be a time-consuming endeavor.

## **9. What if the Home Provider needs regularly schedule care or personal care?**

Homesharing is an informal relationship rather than an employer/employee relationship.

**HomeShare is not meant to be a home health service and HomeSeekers are not expected to provide personal care services.** HomeProviders may be receiving personal care giving, but it is not the responsibility of the HomeSeeker to serve in this capacity.

## **10. What information do we need from the person applying for homesharing?**

We do ask for a lot of information for both the home provider and home seeker, but we're trying to help you find the best possible match. The more we know about you, the better we can make a match.

Applicants are asked to complete an Intake Packet. **Neighbor to Neighbor will conduct a criminal background check and a National Sex Offender database check. Information obtained may disqualify someone from the program and require disclosure on the application and to potential housemates.**

## **11. How are matches made?**

Think about what matters to you in living with someone and what isn't as important. Do you need lots of privacy or would you like company in the evenings? Are you very sensitive to noise or smells? How do you feel about children or pets? How much space do you need?"

After applicants are interviewed by Neighbor to Neighbor and approved, they are given referrals to contact potential housemates on their own using a guide provided by the agency. Neighbor to Neighbor will help participants complete a Living Agreement and provide follow-up support.

## **12. How long does it take to place someone in homesharing?**

Participants are encouraged to keep in regular contact with their housing counselor to receive referrals of potential housemates to contact. The number of referrals given to participants of potential housemates depends on many factors: family size seeking housing, amount of rent charged/able to pay, location, pets, smoking and other personal preferences. Neighbor to Neighbor's staff will work with participants for the duration of the time they are searching for a housemate whether the participant finds a placement through our agency or something on their own. Neighbor to Neighbor cannot guarantee a housemate placement.

## **13. Do you match people of different ages, interests and genders?**

Yes. Applicants are asked to complete a questionnaire giving them the opportunity to share with us their ideal homeshare arrangement, personal characteristics and other factors regarding living with another person. Applicants interview potential housemates, check the references of potential housemates and make the decision on selection of a housemate.

#### **14. How do you complete a match?**

The two parties in a homesharing match are offered the opportunity to put their understandings in writing by completing a Living Agreement with the assistance of a Neighbor to Neighbor Housing Counselor. Each participant is encouraged to review the agreement periodically to make any adjustments or changes. Neighbor to Neighbor is available to support housemates as they work through any issues or concerns once the housing arrangement begins. If the match needs to end, each participant is expected to give the other party a written notice as agreed upon in the Living Agreement.

#### **15. How do I apply to the HomeShare Program?**

Persons can call our staff at 970-491-3233 to discuss homesharing as a possibility for them. Contact Neighbor to Neighbor to obtain an Intake Packet. Once the Intake Packet and supporting information is completed and returned you will be contacted by a housing counselor to schedule an interview.

#### **16. Where are the offices located?**

The Neighbor to Neighbor main office is at 1550 Blue Spruce Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80524. Persons can call the main office at (970) 484-7498. If a potential applicant is home bound, a packet can be mailed.