A Home That Fits:
Personal Assessment Tool for Housing
For Floridians with Developmental Disabilities
Developers

Carmy Greenwood, Writer  Alycia Malicz, Designer

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Advisory Committee Members

Miranda Johnson  Karen Prewitt
Government Operations Consultant  Co-Chair, Area 4 Family Care Council
Agency for Persons with Disabilities  Jacksonville, Florida
Tallahassee, Florida

Cassandra Pasley  Ann Smith
Director, Division of Children’s Medical Services, Florida Department of Health  Self Advocacy Leadership Program Manager
Tallahassee, Florida  Florida Developmental Disabilities Council

Focus Group Reviewers/Members of Self Advocates of East Volusia

Doug Allen  Chris Spears
Elizabeth Snyder  Mildretta Williams
Christine Spears  Joseph Young

Micky Beauregard, Adviser, Self Advocates of East Volusia, and Quality Enhancement Specialist, Council on Quality and Leadership (Deltona, Florida)
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**Communications Goal 2:** In partnership with individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, caregivers and stakeholders, the Council will provide information on policies, laws, programs, resources and issues to enable members of the developmental disabilities community to advocate for themselves and others.

**Objective 2.4:** Provide access to 100% of Council products to individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and stakeholders across Florida.
Personal Assessment Tool for Housing

Are you thinking about moving to a new home? Choosing a new home takes time and effort. But finding the right home is very important.

A home can be an apartment, a house, a group home, an assisted living facility, or wherever you live. This book uses the word “housing” when talking about where people live.

Most people want to be as independent as possible in their home. Independence means being able to make your own choices and take care of yourself.

People also want to have the supports they need to be independent. Supports can be any kind of help you get from other people, like someone teaching you how to cook or reminding you when to pay your bills.

Some types of housing will give you more independence. Some types of housing will give you more support.

This book can help you figure out what kind of housing is right for you.
Here are some things that can make housing a good fit:

- Your home needs to be affordable. It cannot cost too much for you.
- Your home needs to be accessible. It needs to be set up so that you can get around in your home and do the things you need to do, like make your meals.
- Your home needs to be in a good location. You need to be able to get to your job, the places you like to go to, and the people you like to spend time with. It may be important to you to have sidewalks or to be near a bus stop.
- You need to have supports that will help you live as independently as possible.

Before you decide where to live, you will need to figure out things like:

- Do you want to live by yourself or with other people?
- Do you want service providers to be around to help you all the time? Or is it OK if service providers just visit sometimes to help?
- How much money can you spend on housing? What kind of housing can you get for that much money?
- Do you want to live near your job, grocery stores, the bus stops, or a city park? Or do you want to live in a quiet area away from the middle of town?
- Do you need housing that is wheelchair accessible or has other special features?

You do not have to answer these questions now. You can use this book to help you figure out your answers.
Part 1 will talk about three different types of housing:

Living in an apartment or house, by yourself or with roommates.

Shared living in a house with other people who have disabilities.

Assisted living facility, where you have a bedroom in a building where many other people with disabilities live.

Part 2 will help you figure out what supports you need for independent living.

Part 3 will help you figure out how much money you have to spend on housing.

Part 4 will help you think about accessibility and other features you need. Accessibility includes whether you can move around in your home, use the sinks and appliances, and reach public transportation if you need it. Part 4 also talks about having a roommate.

Part 5 has tips on what to ask about when you go look at housing units. The lists can help you decide whether a new home is right for you.

Part 6 helps you get started on your housing search.

How to Use This Book

This book cannot tell you where to live. You have to make your own choice.

This book does suggest some things to think about when you are making a choice. There are many lists and questions in this book. You can decide which ones to answer.

Pages 40 and 41 repeat a few of the big important questions to help you decide what type of housing to look for.
Part 1: Types of Housing
**Apartment or House**

Many people rent an apartment or house from a landlord. If you rent an apartment or house, you have a lot of control over what you do and when you do it.

Some rental apartments and houses are accessible and some are not. Some landlords will let you have a pet, but some will not. To have a big yard, you probably need to live in a house.

People who live in an apartment or house can have service providers visit to help them.

When you rent an apartment or house, you pay rent to the landlord every month. You also pay for utilities, cable TV service, and internet service.

You might live by yourself or you might live with a roommate. But when you rent a house or apartment, you usually have your own bedroom.

Living by yourself usually costs more than living with other people. Big apartments cost more than small ones.

Most people rent an apartment or house from someone else. But, some people buy a house and own it themselves.

**Shared Living Home**

Shared living homes usually have two to five people living in them. All the people have disabilities.

You pay rent to the organization that owns the home.

You may have your own bedroom or you may share a room.

The house may be located in a neighborhood where some people have disabilities and some people do not.

There may be service providers in the home all the time, or service providers may visit to provide supports.

The people who live in the house figure out the rules for how noisy they will be, how neat they will be, and other things.

Group homes are one kind of shared living home.

**Assisted Living Facility**

Assisted living facilities have many people living in them. All the people living in the facility have disabilities.

You will probably have a roommate.

There will be some service providers there all the time. They may be able to provide all the supports you need. Other service providers may visit the assisted living facility if needed.

Assisted living facilities have rules and schedules you must follow.

Adult family care homes are like assisted living, but they are smaller.
Part 2:
My Independence and Support
### Independence and Support: Daily Activities

Think about how much independence you want and how much help you want. Here is a list of activities that people need to be able to do by themselves or get help with. Mark each line to show how much help you need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>I Do This By Myself</th>
<th>I Do This With Help</th>
<th>I Need Someone Else to Do This</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shower and brush my teeth without being reminded</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get dressed</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take my medicine on time without being reminded</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refill my medicine on time without being reminded</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use my medical equipment</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make healthy meals</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wash, dry, and fold my clothes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean my bathroom</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean my room</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mow the lawn and rake the leaves</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change my light bulbs</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy my groceries</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay my bills</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep track of my checking account and not overdraw my account</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get to places by bus, taxi, ride-booking service or friends</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive a car</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use an alarm clock</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get to places on time</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a schedule or calendar</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make plans with friends and family</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make medical appointments</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve my problems</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for help when I need it</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross busy streets, stay safe on paths or near roads</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk or move around using wheelchair or other equipment</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Look over the answers you marked on page 7.

If you can do lots of these activities by yourself, you may only want service providers to come help you once a week or a few times a week.

If you need a lot of help, you may want service providers to come help you several times a day. You may want to live where service providers are always around. Or you may want to have an aide that lives with you all the time.

Even if you need a lot of help, you can live in an apartment or shared living home if you build a circle of support to help you.

Keep this in mind when you are deciding where to live.

Your Circle of Support

You probably want to make your own choice about where you want to live. But it is also important to get the support you need so you can stay in the home you choose and be active in the community. Without support, you may not be able to live independently. You need a circle of support. Your circle of support can help meet your daily needs.

Your circle of support may include family and friends. It may also include case managers and service providers.

Family and Friends: Family and friends can help you do things that you cannot do for yourself, so that you can live more independently.

They may also be able to help you afford to live independently. For example, they may be able to help you fix things around your home and take care of the lawn. That means you will not have to pay someone to do those things. They may help you get to the places you need to go to, like your job or your activities.

Support Coordinator, Case Manager, or Guardian: If you receive services through the Medicaid Waiver Program, you can choose a support coordinator who can help you find supports to help manage your daily life.

In-Home Support: The people who are paid to provide supports are part of your circle of support. They may visit you in your home. They may live in the home with you if you need more help. If you choose shared living or assisted living, you may get most of your support from the staff who work in that facility.

List the people who provide supports to you.

_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

Help Paying for Independent Living Services

Many people who live independently get financial help from the government to pay for service providers who offer regular in-home support.

Here are some examples of support services that can help people live independently:

- Cooking classes
- Housekeeping classes
- Someone to help you communicate with the bank, doctors, and other people
- Someone to help with cooking and cleaning
- Employment training
- Someone to help with banking and bill paying
- Home health aides
- Someone to help make meals
- Emergency response buttons and cords
- Transportation

Ask someone in your circle of support if you can get help in paying for independent living services.
Circle of Support in an Apartment or House

Renting an Apartment or House: Because your landlord is responsible for taking care of the place and fixing things that break, you and your support network do not have to do those jobs. That means you will not have to pay for those things yourself.

Many people who rent an apartment or house get help from service providers who visit every day, every week, or a few times a week. If you rent a home, you can still have a live-in aide. But you will need an extra bedroom for the aide. A home with an extra bedroom may cost more money.

Buying an Apartment or House: If you own a home, you need enough money to pay for the mortgage, home repairs, and other bills. However, once you have finished paying for your house, it belongs to you.

Even if you have a live-in aide, you may be able to buy a home. You will need to buy a home that has an extra bedroom for the aide. A home with an extra bedroom may cost more money.

Circle of Support in a Shared Living Home

People in shared living homes may have service providers who come in every day or every few days to help.

Some shared living homes have a support provider there all the time to help with some activities. But you may still need service providers from the community to come help with other activities.

Some people in a shared living home have an aide who stays overnight to help. If you have an aide, you will need a home with an extra bedroom for the aide.

And of course, your family and friends are still important members of your circle of support in shared living.

Circle of Support in Assisted Living

In assisted living, there will be staff people there all the time. They may be able to give you all the in-home help you need.

However, you may have other service providers come in to the assisted living facility to help you with some activities.

And of course, your family and friends are still important members of your circle of support in assisted living.

Do you want to live with a roommate? Having roommates can make your housing cost you less money. Maybe your roommate can provide some of the supports you need.
Part 3:
How Much Money I Can Spend on Housing
You need to know how much money you can spend every month on your housing.

First, write down the money that you get each month.

- Money from my job each month: $ _________________
- Money from odd jobs each month: $ _________________
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) each month: $ _________________
- Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) each month: $ _________________
- Section 8 housing voucher each month: $ _________________
- Food Stamps each month: $ _________________
- Other income each month: $ _________________

Add up how much money you get each month: $ _________________

Now, write down how much money you spend on food, medicine, transportation, personal items, and other purchases each month: $ _________________

Subtract the number in pink from the number in blue. This is your housing budget. $ _________________

The number in green is how much money you will have left to spend on housing each month.

Do you have other money you can spend on housing? For example, maybe your family will pay the security deposit on your apartment. Or maybe you already have some money saved up in the bank. Or maybe you have money in an individual development account.

Write down the other money you can use on housing: $ _________________

Rent Assistance Money

If your income is low, you can apply for rent assistance money from the government.

If you do not know if you qualify for rent assistance money, ask someone in your circle of support.

There is more information about rent assistance in section 2 of Housing in Florida. To see that book, go to www.fddc.org. Choose the Council Resources tab, then scroll down and choose Community Living. Then look for the title Housing in Florida.
Subsidized Rental Units

If your income is low, you may be able to get a subsidized rental unit. That means that the government pays some of the rent and you pay the rest.

If you do not know if you qualify for subsidized housing, ask someone in your circle of support.

- If you have access to the internet, you can search for rental housing for people with low incomes on www.floridahousingsearch.org. The website also includes lists of assisted living and other types of housing in Florida. It does not include all rentals, but it may be a good place to start your search.
- Or you can call (877) 428-8844 toll-free to receive help in English or Spanish from the staff of the housing locator service.
- Section 4 of the online book Housing in Florida lists services in each Florida county that help with renting or buying housing and with home repairs. To see that book, go to www.fddc.org. Choose the Council Resources tab, then scroll down and choose Community Living. Then look for the title Housing in Florida.

Subsidized Shared Living Homes

There are some government programs that help to pay for organizations to buy or fix up shared living homes. This can make the rent cost a lot less.

If you do not know how to find shared living homes, ask someone in your circle of support.
**Tips about the Cost of Housing**

You have a certain amount of money to pay for housing. This is your housing budget.

Housing costs more in some towns and neighborhoods than it does in other towns and neighborhoods.

You will have to find out how much housing costs in your area.

Here are some tips:

- Bigger apartments and houses cost more than smaller ones.
- Housing in some neighborhoods costs more than in other neighborhoods.
- Sometimes living alone costs more than living with a roommate.
- The rent for assisted living usually costs more than the rent for an apartment or shared living home. That is because assisted living facilities usually provide things like food, electricity, and some support services.
- In rental homes and shared living homes, you will have to pay for food, electricity, and other things.

**Buying a Home**

Buying a home can be great, but it is complicated. There is information about buying a home in sections 1 and 2 of *Housing in Florida*. To see the book, go to [www.fddc.org](http://www.fddc.org). Choose the Council Resources tab, then scroll down and choose Community Living. Then look for the title *Housing in Florida*.

If you do not know much about buying a home, ask someone in your circle of support about it.
Part 4: Accessibility, Location, and Other Features
Not all housing will have everything you like.

You need to decide what is most important for you. For many people, the most important features are the features that will help them to live in the community.

That might mean support people like family, friends, and service providers.

It might mean being close to a job, school, activities, and friends.

Accessibility is also very important. Accessibility features may include things like ramps and wide doorways for a wheelchair.

**Accessibility:** If you use a wheelchair or other equipment, then housing features that give you accessibility are Very Important.

**Location:** The location of your housing may be Very Important. For example, if you have a good support network in your city or neighborhood, you may want to stay there. Or, if you do not drive a car or have someone who will drive you, then you may need to get housing that is very close to a bus stop or other public transportation.

**Supports:** If you need supports to live as independently as possible, then the supports are very important. If you do not have the supports, independent living might not be successful.

After you figure out which things will help you stay in your home and have the life you want, then you can look for housing that has those most important things.
**How Important Is Each Housing Feature To Me?**

You can look at the list in the box and mark each item to show if it is *Very Important* to you, *Sort of Important* to you, or *Not Important* to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Sort of Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility:</strong> An accessible bathroom and kitchen—a bathroom and kitchen that will work for you if you use a wheelchair, crutches, or a white cane</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility:</strong> Ramps and wide entrances</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility:</strong> Living on the ground floor</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility:</strong> No carpeting that can make it harder to move around</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility:</strong> Paved driveway</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility:</strong> Extra bedroom for live-in aide</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong> Being close to public transportation, like a bus stop</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong> Being less than 30 minutes away from the places you go to, like the grocery store, your job, school, family, shopping, and the doctor’s office</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supports:</strong> Living close to friends, family, and service providers</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supports:</strong> Having a live-in aide</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong> Central air conditioning</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong> Living alone</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong> Your own bedroom</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong> Large closets</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong> Garage</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong> More than one bathroom</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong> A big yard</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong> A big kitchen</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong> A washer and dryer hookup</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong> A security system</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong> Ability to have a pet in your home</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other: _______________________________________________________________________

Other: _______________________________________________________________________

Other: _______________________________________________________________________

Other: _______________________________________________________________________
Looking at Your List

Some of the items on page 16 are **Very Important** to you. Maybe they are accessibility features like:

- Accessible bathrooms
- A large bedroom
- Support services
- Transportation

These features can cost more, or be harder to find, but if you need them to make your housing situation successful, they are **Very Important**. Remember, you may be able to get some financial help to pay for support services.

You probably decided that some of the items on the list are nice but not **Very Important**. For example, maybe living alone or having a big kitchen is not **Very Important** to you. These things can cost extra, so you may choose a place that does not have these features. Finding a place that is affordable is **Very Important** for most people.

When you are looking at places to live, you can look for the features that are **Very Important** to you. If a place does not have the things that are **Very Important** to you, it is probably not a good choice.

---

**Picking a Location for an Apartment or House**

What town do you want to live in?

_________________________________________

What neighborhood do you want to live in?

_________________________________________

What kind of independent housing do you like most?
- A house
- An apartment with an upstairs and downstairs
- An apartment in a small building
- An apartment that is all on one level
- An apartment in a big building
- I don’t care

Do you want to rent or own your home?
- Rent
- Own

How many bedrooms do you need?
Extra bedrooms cost more, so figure out the smallest number of bedrooms that will work for you.

_________________________________________ Bedrooms

Do you need to get to work or school every day? Write down the places you need to be able to get to from your new home.

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

Being part of the community and making friends is important too.

Write down activities you would like to go to or groups you would like to join.

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________
Part 5: Checking Out Available Housing
Apartment or House Visits

When you visit an apartment or house, you may want to fill out the checklists below so you can look at them later. You can make copies of the lists before you go, so you will have one to fill out for each place.

You can take photos to help you remember what you have seen.

**Apartment or House Checklist**

Name of place ________________________________________________

Date you visited ____________________________

Address _____________________________________________________

Number of Bedrooms __________________________________________

Number of Bathrooms _________________________________________

Monthly rent _________________________________________________

Monthly cost of utilities _______________________________________

Monthly cost of food __________________________________________

Monthly cost of transportation _________________________________

Monthly cost of cable _________________________________________

Monthly cost of internet access _________________________________

Other monthly costs __________________________________________
## List 1: Basic Features

### Basic Inside
- Good lighting in all rooms
- Fire extinguisher in kitchen
- At least one working window in each room
- Good air circulation in all rooms
- Toilet flushes well
- Hot and cold water faucets work well
- Bathroom has at least one window that opens or has an exhaust fan
- Stove works right
- Refrigerator works right
- Heating/air conditioning work right
- Floors in good condition
- Enough storage space
- Free of bugs or other pests
- Safe electrical outlets

### Basic Outside
- Yard or outdoor space
- Outdoor space big enough for a shed
- Large outdoor area
- Small outdoor area
- Grass or landscaping in good condition

### Extras
- Driveway
- Dishwasher
- Microwave
- Ceiling fans
- Recreational areas
- Swimming pool
- Residential programs
- Community or social space
- Covered parking outside the unit
- Storage unit or shed

### Things That Are Broken and Need to Be Fixed

1. List anything that is cracked or broken:
   - __________________________________________
   - __________________________________________
   - __________________________________________

2. List anything that does not work right:
   - __________________________________________
   - __________________________________________
   - __________________________________________

3. List anything that seems almost broken:
   - __________________________________________
   - __________________________________________
   - __________________________________________
List 2: Accessibility If You Use a Wheelchair or Other Device to Move Around

Entry and Doors
- Accessible parking close to unit
- Covered parking area
- No-step entry or ramped entry
- Doors that are wide enough for wheelchair
- Lever style door handles
- Accessible elevators or unit is on the first floor
- Thermostat, light switches, and electrical outlets you can reach

Kitchen
- I can reach counters
- I can reach and open freezer
- I can get my wheelchair under kitchen counter
- I can use the controls on the oven and cooktop, the microwave, and other appliances
- I can open drawers and at least some cabinets

Bathroom
- Roll-in shower
- Bathrooms are big enough for me to use my wheelchair
- I can get my wheelchair under bathroom vanities
- There are grab bars or grab bars can be added
- I can open drawers and at least some cabinets
List 3: Safety

- At least one working fire alarm in a central location
- Carbon monoxide detector provided
- No danger of tripping in stairways, halls, or walkways
- Alternate ways to escape are available in case of fire
- Elevator in safe, operating condition (if applicable)
- Ask the police department for a report on the number of crimes and traffic accidents in the neighborhood

List 4: Neighborhood

Mark any hazards in the area:

- Dangerous steps
- Poor drainage
- Sewage hazards
- Air pollution
- Lots of trash around
- Rodent infestation
- Fire hazards
- Disturbing noises

Location

- Access to public transportation
- Access to para-transit van or bus service for people with disabilities
- Close to grocery stores
- Close to work
- Close to family or friends
Landlords and You

Housing Discrimination Is Illegal

Landlords are not allowed to discriminate against people who have disabilities. If you think you have been discriminated against, you may be able to get free or low-cost legal assistance. A directory of these offices is available by calling: (850) 385-7900 or visiting www.floridalegal.org

Landlords Want to Know About You

Landlords and other housing providers will want to get to know you. They want to know:

- Will you pay the rent on time each month?
- Will you keep the place clean and in good condition?

To get the answers to those questions, landlords will:

- Ask for a reference from your past landlord to make sure you were a good tenant.
- Check your credit report, which has information about payments you have made to others in the past, like for your credit card or other bills. If you have never paid bills yourself, or if you have a poor credit history, it may be harder to rent a place. If your credit history is a problem, you may want to ask a family member to co-sign your rental lease.

If you need help from a credit counselor, contact the Florida Housing Coalition at: (850) 878-4219 or info@flhousing.org

Landlords will also want to know if you have a criminal record and if you abuse drugs or alcohol.

People with a criminal record are not allowed to live in some types of public rental housing.

If you abuse drugs or alcohol, the Americans with Disabilities Act does not protect you against discrimination. Landlords are allowed to refuse to rent to you.

However, if you have recovered from alcohol or substance abuse, landlords may not discriminate against you.

24-Hour Neighborhood Review

You may want to find out what the neighborhood is like at different times of the day.

- **Check in the early morning:** Are there loud noises disrupting the neighborhood?
  
  [Response]
  
  [Response]

- **Check during the day:** Are there many people around or are neighbors away from home?
  
  [Response]
  
  [Response]

- **Check at night:** Are people loitering on the street? Are there loud noises when people are trying to sleep?
  
  [Response]
  
  [Response]

- **Check right after it rains:** Are there puddles in the yard?
  
  [Response]
  
  [Response]
Shared Living Home Visits

When you visit a shared living home, you may want to fill out the checklists below so you can look at them later.

You can make copies of the lists before you go so you will have one to fill out for each place.

You can take photos to help you remember what you have seen.

### Shared Living Home Checklist

Name of shared living home ________________________________

Date you visited ________________________________

Address ____________________________________________

Number of Bedrooms ________________________________

Number of Bathrooms ________________________________

Monthly rent ________________________________

Monthly cost of utilities ________________________________

Number of people who will live in the house ________________________________

Will you have your own bedroom or share? ________________________________

If you will share a bedroom, who will you share with? ________________________________

Monthly cost of food ________________________________

Monthly cost of transportation ________________________________

Monthly cost of cable ________________________________

Monthly cost of internet access ________________________________

Other monthly costs ________________________________
List 1: Basic Features

Basic Inside
- Good lighting in all rooms
- Fire extinguisher in kitchen
- At least one working window in each room
- Good air circulation in all rooms
- Toilet flushes well
- Hot and cold water faucets work well
- Bathroom has at least one window that opens or has an exhaust fan
- Stove works right
- Refrigerator works right
- Heating/air conditioning work right

Basic Outside
- Yard or outdoor space
- Outdoor space big enough for a shed
- Large outdoor area
- Small outdoor area
- Grass or landscaping in good condition

Extras
- Driveway
- Dishwasher
- Microwave
- Ceiling fans
- Recreational areas
- Swimming pool
- Residential programs
- Community or social space
- Covered parking outside the unit
- Storage unit or shed

Things That Are Broken and Need to Be Fixed

1. List anything that is cracked or broken:
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

2. List anything that does not work right:
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

3. List anything that seems almost broken:
   __________________________________________
List 2: Accessibility If You Use a Wheelchair or Other Device to Move Around

Entry and Doors
- Accessible parking close to unit
- Covered parking area
- No-step entry or ramped entry
- Doors that are wide enough for wheelchair
- Lever style door handles
- Accessible elevators or unit is on the first floor
- Thermostat, light switches, and electrical outlets you can reach

Kitchen
- I can reach counters
- I can reach and open freezer
- I can get my wheelchair under kitchen counter
- I can use the controls on the oven and cooktop, the microwave, and other appliances
- I can open drawers and at least some cabinets

Bathroom
- Roll-in shower
- Bathrooms are big enough for me to use my wheelchair
- I can get my wheelchair under bathroom vanities
- There are grab bars or grab bars can be added
- I can open drawers and at least some cabinets

List 3: Safety
- At least one working fire alarm in a central location
- Carbon monoxide detector provided
- No danger of tripping in stairways, halls, or walkways
- Alternate ways to escape are available in case of fire
- Elevator in safe, operating condition (if applicable)
- Ask the police department for a report on the number of crimes and traffic accidents in the neighborhood
List 4: Neighborhood

Mark any hazards in the area:

- Dangerous steps
- Poor drainage
- Sewage hazards
- Air pollution
- Lots of trash
- Rodent infestation
- Fire hazards
- Disturbing noises

Location

- Access to public transportation
- Access to para-transit van or bus service for people with disabilities
- Close to grocery stores

24-Hour Neighborhood Review

You may want to find out what the neighborhood is like at different times of the day.

- **Check in the early morning:** Are there loud noises disrupting the neighborhood?
- **Check during the day:** Are there many people around or are neighbors away from home?
- **Check at night:** Are people loitering on the street? Are there loud noises when people are trying to sleep?
- **Check right after it rains:** Are there puddles in the yard?
List 5. Privacy, Freedom, and Support

1. Is a room available now? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Will I have my own room? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. If I share a room, will I still have privacy? ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Will I get to pick my roommate? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Will I be able to lock my bedroom door? ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Will my room have a private bathroom with a shower or tub? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Will I get to furnish and decorate my room? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Are pets allowed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Are there house rules? (If the answer is yes, ask for a copy of the house rules.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Who will provide supports?
_______________________________________________________

11. Will any support providers live here? If so, who are they and what kinds of help do they provide?
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________

12. May I have a tour of the facility and see the room I would be renting? ☐ Yes ☐ No

13. May I talk to a resident privately to ask what living here is like? ☐ Yes ☐ No

14. Can I live here if I need to use a walker or wheelchair (now or in the future)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Assisted Living Visits

When you visit an assisted living facility, you may want to fill out the checklists below so you can look at them later. You can make copies of the lists before you go so you will have one to fill out for each place. You can take photos to help you remember what you have seen.

Assisted Living Checklist

Name of facility _______________________________________________
Address _____________________________________________________
Date you visited ______________________________________________
Monthly cost __________________________________________________
**List 1. Community Living and Activities**

*Tip: Here are some questions you can ask the manager.*

1. Will this facility help me find a job or keep my job?  ○ Yes  ○ No
   
   How will you help? __________________________________________

2. Will this facility help me do things in the community, like join a club or go places where I can have fun and meet other people?  ○ Yes  ○ No
   
   How will you help? __________________________________________

3. What activities are offered in the building? *(Ask for an activities calendar.)*
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   How often? ___________________________________________________________________

   What activities are offered out of the building? __________
   How often? ___________________________________________________________________

   What type of exercise is offered? ______________
   How often? ___________________________________________________________________

4. Do people from the community offer activities here?  ○ Yes  ○ No
   
   What activities? __________________________________________
   How often? __________________________________________
List 2: Privacy, Freedom, and Rules

*Tip: Ask for a copy of the house rules.*

1. Will I have my own room?  □ Yes  □ No
2. If I share a room, will I still have privacy?  □ Yes  □ No
3. Will I get to pick my own roommate?  □ Yes  □ No
4. Will I be able to lock my bedroom door?  □ Yes  □ No
5. Will my room have a private bathroom with a shower or tub?  □ Yes  □ No
6. How much freedom will I have in this facility?  □ Yes  □ No
7. Will I get to furnish and decorate my unit?  □ Yes  □ No
8. When will I be able to have visitors?  □ Yes  □ No
9. Will I be able to choose what activities I want to do?  □ Yes  □ No
10. Will I be able to say “no” to activities I do not want to do?  □ Yes  □ No
11. Will I be able to eat whenever I want to?  □ Yes  □ No
12. What do the staff do if a resident is acting upset or angry?  □ Yes  □ No
13. Do the staff ever restrain residents? *If the answer is yes, ask the staff to tell you all about restraining residents.*  □ Yes  □ No
14. May I decide when to wake up and go to sleep?  □ Yes  □ No
15. Are pets allowed?  □ Yes  □ No
**List 3: Questions about Meals**

*Tip: Ask for a menu.*

1. Will I have choices at each meal?  
   - Yes  
   - No
2. Will I have to eat at a set time?  
   - Yes  
   - No
3. May I sit where I want?  
   - Yes  
   - No
4. May I eat in my own room?  
   - Yes  
   - No
5. Will my room have a kitchen?  
   - Yes  
   - No
6. Will my room have a refrigerator?  
   - Yes  
   - No
7. May visitors eat here?  
   - Yes  
   - No

**List 4: Accessibility**

1. Do bathrooms have grab bars in showers and raised toilets?  
   - Yes  
   - No
2. Is a roll-in shower available?  
   - Yes  
   - No

**List 5: Staff Help**

1. Will you have the help you need here? Mark the help you need and ask if the staff will give you that kind of help:
   - Daily meal preparation
   - Weekly housekeeping
   - Making bed daily
   - Washing linens and personal laundry
   - Transportation to medical appointments
   - Transportation to shopping
   - Help with medications
   - Bathing assistance
   - Help with dressing/grooming
   - Help with incontinence
   - Help with eating

2. Here are some kinds of staff. Ask if these staff members work at the facility or if the staff will help you arrange for these services for an extra cost.
   - Registered nurse?  
     - Works here  
     - Will Arrange
   - Activities director?  
     - Works here  
     - Will Arrange
   - Social worker or someone who finds services?  
     - Works here  
     - Will Arrange
   - Beautician/barber?  
     - Works here  
     - Will Arrange
   - Home health?  
     - Works here  
     - Will Arrange
List 6: Admission

**Tip:** Ask for an admission packet.

1. Is a room available now?  
   - Yes  
   - No

2. Is it a private room?  
   - Yes  
   - No

3. Can I choose my room?  
   - Yes  
   - No

4. May I have a tour of the facility and see the room I would be renting?  
   - Yes  
   - No

5. May I talk to a resident privately to ask what living here is like?  
   - Yes  
   - No

6. Can I live here if I need to use a walker or wheelchair (now or in the future)?  
   - Yes  
   - No

7. How much help with personal care (such as bathing, dressing, or getting in and out of a chair) can you provide for me?
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

8. If I become incontinent, will I have to move out?  
   - Yes  
   - No

9. If I get dementia, will I have to move out?  
   - Yes  
   - No

10. If I start to need injections at home, will I have to move out?  
    - Yes  
    - No

11. If I start needing someone to give me my medication, will I have to move out?  
    - Yes  
    - No

12. If I start needing more help, will I have to move out?  
    - Yes  
    - No
List 7: Costs

Tip: Ask for an admission packet.

1. Will I have a lease or will I rent month to month?

2. If I will have a lease, how long will it be for?

3. What is the basic cost for a room each month?

4. What other costs will I have to pay?

5. Do you accept government assistance to cover room, board, and personal care?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No

6. Does the basic monthly cost include the following or is there an extra cost?

   Three meals and snacks every day?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Weekly housekeeping?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Making bed daily?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Washing sheets & towels?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Doing my personal laundry?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Parking space for my car?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Transportation to medical appointments?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Transportation to shopping?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Telephone jack for my landline phone?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Cable TV hookup?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Help with medications?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Help with shower?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Help with dressing and grooming?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Help with incontinence?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
   Help with eating?  ○ Yes  ○ Extra Cost  ○ No
### My View

1. Will I be able to get around OK in this facility?  
   - Yes  
   - No
2. Will I be able to use my adaptive equipment in this facility?  
   - Yes  
   - No
3. Is the common area comfortable?  
   - Yes  
   - No
4. Are the activities planned outside the facility fun and affordable?  
   - Yes  
   - No
5. Did I meet people who I would enjoy getting to know later?  
   - Yes  
   - No
6. Does the facility feel safe and secure?  
   - Yes  
   - No
7. Do I feel comfortable in the neighborhood?  
   - Yes  
   - No
8. Are the staff people pleasant?  
   - Yes  
   - No
9. Did there appear to be enough staff?  
   - Yes  
   - No
10. Did today’s meal look and taste good?  
    - Yes  
    - No
11. Will my room be big enough?  
    - Yes  
    - No
12. Will my room have enough storage space?  
    - Yes  
    - No
13. Does the place feel homey?  
    - Yes  
    - No
Think about Assisted Living

Assisted living facilities have rules that residents must follow.
How do you feel about rules and schedules?
- I like them a lot
- I like them a little bit
- I do not like them

You will probably have a roommate in assisted living.
How do you feel about having a roommate?
- I like it a lot
- I like it a little bit
- I do not like it

Facilities have their own service providers.
How do you feel about switching from the service providers you have now to the service providers in the assisted living facility?
- I like it a lot
- I like it a little bit
- I do not like it

How much do I like this type of housing?
- I like it a lot
- I like it a little bit
- I do not like it

Think about This:

Could you live in a place that does not have in-home aides, if you got daily or regular visits from support providers?
- Yes
- No
Part 6:
What Do You Think?
This book cannot tell you where to live. You have to make your own choice. This book just suggests some things to think about when you are making a choice.

You may want to talk to people in your circle of support about your housing search. Let them know what kind of housing you like. Let them know what features are important to you.

Here are some things you may want to ask for help with:

- Figuring out how much money you have to spend on housing
- Figuring out how to get the supports you need no matter where you live
- Searching for housing units that you may want to go look at
If you want to, you can answer these questions.

**Housing Budget:** *Find the answer from the box on page 11 and put it here:*

The total money that I can spend on housing every month is $ __________

**Independence and Support:** *Look back at pages 16 and 17.*

If I live in a rental apartment or house, can I get the supports I need?  ○ Yes  ○ No

If I live in a rental apartment or house, will I have the independence I want?  ○ Yes  ○ No

If I live in a shared living home, can I get the supports I need?  ○ Yes  ○ No

If I live in a shared living home, will I have the independence I want?  ○ Yes  ○ No

If I live in assisted living, can I get the supports I need?  ○ Yes  ○ No

If I live in assisted living, will I have the independence I want?  ○ Yes  ○ No

**Accessibility:** *Look back at pages 16 and 17.*

If I need my home to be accessible for a wheelchair or other mobility device, I need these accessibility features:

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

**Roommates**

Here is what I think about sharing an apartment or house:

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

Here is what I think about sharing a bedroom:

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________
**Location:** Look back at page 16 and 17.

Here are some neighborhoods I would like to live in:

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

**Personal Preferences**

My #1 choice for a type of housing is: ________________________________

My #2 choice for a type of housing is: ________________________________

**My Next Steps**

If you want to, you can list some things you are going to do to find housing that is right for you:

Step 1. _________________________________________________________

Step 2. _________________________________________________________

Step 3. _________________________________________________________

Step 4. _________________________________________________________

Step 5. _________________________________________________________

**Two More Tools for You**

*Rental Housing Search:* If you want to, you can fill out the list on the next page. It has places for you to put the names of housing units you want to go look at.

*Roommate Search:* If you think you are going to have a roommate, you can use the ideas on pages 43 to 45 to help you figure out who will make a good roommate for you.
My Rental Housing Search

Below, write down some apartments or houses you would like to look at.

1. Name of Rental __________________________________________________
   Address ________________________________________________________
   Monthly Rent $________________________________________________
   Number of Bedrooms ____________________________________________
   Number of Bathrooms ____________________________________________
   Rental Office Phone Number_____________________________________

2. Name of Rental __________________________________________________
   Address ________________________________________________________
   Monthly Rent $________________________________________________
   Number of Bedrooms ____________________________________________
   Number of Bathrooms ____________________________________________
   Rental Office Phone Number_____________________________________

3. Name of Rental __________________________________________________
   Address ________________________________________________________
   Monthly Rent $________________________________________________
   Number of Bedrooms ____________________________________________
   Number of Bathrooms ____________________________________________
   Rental Office Phone Number_____________________________________

4. Name of Rental __________________________________________________
   Address ________________________________________________________
   Monthly Rent $________________________________________________
   Number of Bedrooms ____________________________________________
   Number of Bathrooms ____________________________________________
   Rental Office Phone Number_____________________________________
My Roommate Search

Do you know someone who would make a good roommate? Maybe it is someone who provides your supports.

Do you know someone who has a disability and also wants to live independently in the community?

List some people you know who may want to be your roommate:

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

You can also ask the Agency for Persons with Disabilities local office for a Roommate Matching List. Write down some names from that list here if you want to.

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
Talking with a Possible Roommate

Before you pick a roommate, talk with the person to see if you will be good roommates. For example, if you do not smoke, you may not want a roommate who does smoke. If you like to stay up late at night, you may not be the right roommate for someone who likes to go to bed early.

Here are some things to talk about with someone who might become your roommate.

Talk about Your Life

1. What do you like to do for fun?
2. How often are you away from home during a regular day and evening?
3. If you have a job, what hours do you work?
4. If you go to classes or training, what hours do you go?
5. What time do you go to bed?
6. What time do you get up?
7. If you take naps, when do you take naps?
8. What kind of transportation do you use most often?
9. Do you want your home to be Very Neat, Sort of Neat, or Messy?
10. Do you want your home to be Very Quiet, Sort of Quiet, or Noisy?

Talk about Chores

Check the chores that you are willing to do at your new home—with or without help. Then discuss chores with the person who may become your roommate.

- Use the dishwasher
- Wash pots and pans
- Set the table
- Clear the kitchen table
- Put leftover food away
- Clean the kitchen floor
- Cook for self
- Cook for others
- Vacuum
- Dust the furniture
- Do your laundry
- Clean your bedroom
- Put your things away in common areas
- Clean the bathroom
- Take out the trash and recycling
- Mow the lawn
- Water plants
- Pull up weeds
- Plant a garden
- Rake leaves
- Sweep outside
- Clean windows
- ____________________
- ____________________
- ____________________
- ____________________
- ____________________
Talk about Allergies, Pets, and Smoking

Do you have allergies?

If you have allergies, what are you allergic to?

Do you need certain foods, air filters or no pets?

Do you have a pet that may live in this home?

Do you need to live in a home with no pets?

Do you smoke in the home?

Are you willing to live with someone who smokes in the home?

Talk about Visitors

How often will you have your family and friends visiting?

How often will your support people visit you each week?
A Home That Fits:
Personal Assessment Tool for Housing
For Floridians with Developmental Disabilities | 2016