

**DBHDS Independent Housing Curriculum for Community Housing Guides
Module 3 – Supports to Achieve and Sustain Successful Tenancy**

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: Where can I find the Tenant Screening form?

A1: Go to <https://www.virginiamedicaid.dmas.virginia.gov/wps/portal/ProviderFormsSearch>. Enter “Long Term Care-Waivered Services” as the Type. Enter “All Categories” as the Category. Enter “DMAS-P262” as the Number/Name. Click search.

Q2: Where can I obtain a template for an independent living budget and moving budget?

A2: The Tenant Screening form contains an independent living budget and a moving budget.

Q3: Where can I find a furniture and supply inventory to help individuals I support identify what furniture and household supplies they have and what they need?

A3: The Tenant Screening form contains a furniture and supply inventory.

Q4: Where can I find the Housing Road Map form?

A4: Go to <https://www.virginiamedicaid.dmas.virginia.gov/wps/portal/ProviderFormsSearch>. Enter “Long Term Care-Waivered Services” as the Type. Enter “All Categories” as the Category. Enter “DMAS-P263” as the Number/Name. Click search.

Q5: Are there materials designed to help individuals with developmental disabilities explore housing options?

A5: DBHDS has produced a handbook called “My Own Home” that is aimed at individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The handbook is a step by step guide for individuals as they plan for their own housing. See <https://dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/my-own-home-guidebook>.

Q6: How can I find out more information about Live-in Aides in rental assistance programs?

A6: The Technical Assistance Collaborative has a publication, “Live-in Aides and the Housing Choice Voucher Program,” that provides a comprehensive overview of live-in aides as a reasonable accommodation in the Housing Choice Voucher program.

See <https://www.tacinc.org/resource/live-in-aides-the-housing-choice-voucher-program/>. If you have specific questions, contact your DBHDS Regional Housing Coordinator at <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/housing-team>.

Q7: How can I learn about the Fair Labor Standards Act’s (FLSA’s) special rules for compensating Live-in Aides?

A7: The U.S. Department of Labor has a publication called “Paying Minimum Wage and Overtime to Home Care Workers: A Guide for Consumers and their Families to the Fair Labor Standards Act.” This publication explains who needs to follow the FLSA rules and how to follow them. See https://www.dol.gov/whd/homecare/homecare_guide.pdf. The Department of Labor also has helpful fact sheets on this topic at <https://www.dol.gov/whd/fact-sheets-index.htm>. To learn whether the individual or their family is actually employing a live-in aide, scroll down to Fact Sheet 13 – Employment Relationship Under the FLSA. If the individual or their family has an employment relationship, then scroll down to the topic “Home Health Care Industry” for more information on the employer’s responsibilities regarding payment of minimum wage and overtime:

- Fact Sheet 79 – Private Home and Domestic Service Employment Under the FLSA
- Fact Sheet 79A – Companionship Services Under the FLSA
- Fact Sheet 79B - Live-in Domestic Service Workers Under the FLSA
- Fact Sheet 79C – Recordkeeping Requirements for Individuals, Families, or Households Who Employ Domestic Service Workers Under the FLSA
- Fact Sheet 79D – Hours Worked Applicable to Domestic Service Employment Under the FLSA
- Fact Sheet 79F – Paid Family or Household Members in Certain Medicaid-Funded and Certain Other Publicly Funded Programs Offering Home Care Services Under the FLSA
- Fact Sheet 79G - Application of the Fair Labor Standards Act to Shared Living Programs, including Adult Foster Care and Paid Roommate Situations

Q8: The individual I support is having difficulty finding someone to be her Live-in Aide. Are there websites that link people to potential caregivers?

A8: There are several resources that link individuals with potential caregivers. These programs may or may not screen caregivers. DBHDS does not endorse these programs and recommends that you proceed at your own risk.

1. <https://www.care.com/> - this website assists with searching for sitters, nannies, and personal caregivers in the area the individual lives. They offer screening tools and manage household payroll and taxes for people who employ caregivers.
2. <https://mychoice4care.com/> - this website helps individuals who are using self-directed care find caregivers in their community. Individuals must perform their own screening and payroll services.
3. Centers for Independent Living (CILs) may maintain Personal Assistance Services registries, which are lists of individuals who are available to provide personal assistance. Contact your local CIL to see if it has a registry. For a list of CILs in Virginia, see http://www.vacil.org/va_cils_directory.htm

Q9: How can I learn about employment taxes that individuals or their families may have to pay for a Live-in Aide?

A9: Depending on the amount of cash wages paid to the Live-in Aide, the employer (e.g., the individual with a disability, their family or household, or a third party) may have to pay Social Security and

Medicare taxes and federal/state unemployment taxes, report wages earned, and file federal and state income tax returns. For more information, see:

1. IRS Publication 926, Household Employer's Tax Guide at <https://www.irs.gov/publications/p926>
2. Social Security Administration's Employer W-2 Filing Instructions & Information at <https://www.ssa.gov/employer/>
3. Virginia Department of Taxation's Withholding Tax webpage at <https://www.tax.virginia.gov/withholding-tax> (scroll down to "Annual Filing Option for Household Employers [Nanny Tax])
4. Virginia Employment Commission's FAQs on Employer Unemployment Insurance Tax at <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/employers/faqs/Employer-UI-Tax-Questions>

Q10: Where can I get more information about the Shared Living Service option in the Medicaid DD Waivers?

A10: Find a copy of the DBHDS "Shared Living Toolkit" at <https://dbhds.virginia.gov/assets/doc/DS/pd/final-shared-living-toolkit.pdf>.

Q11: Where can I find a template for a one-page person-centered description that lists great things about the individual, what is important to the individual and what others need to know and do to support the individual?

A11: Go to <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/resources-for-support-coordinators-and-case-managers> and scroll down to **Supplemental Resources for Support Coordinators and Community Housing Guides** for a template to create a person-centered description.

Q12: Where can I find a template for a Circle of Support diagram?

A12: Go to <http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/resources-for-support-coordinators-and-case-managers> and scroll down to **Supplemental Resources for Support Coordinators and Community Housing Guides** for a template to create a Circle of Support diagram.

Q13: The individual I support is having difficulty finding someone to be his housemate. Are there websites that link people to potential housemates?

A13: There are several resources that link individuals with potential housemates. These programs may or may not screen housemates. DBHDS does not endorse these programs and recommends that you proceed at your own risk.

1. <http://apartments.oodle.com> has a search function that allows you to select roommate rentals.
2. www.easyroommate.com enables searches by roommate criteria and housing characteristics. Results are displayed in a list which you can sort depending on how old the ads are, the rent cost, date available or zip code.

3. www.roomiematch.com involves completing a 15-20 minute Q&A survey about what you're looking for, where, when and with whom. The service emails you matches based on your information. Users must pay an annual membership fee to contact potential matches.
4. www.RoommateLocator.com is a free, simple online service that allows you to search for roommates by location, price range and certain features in an accommodation (e.g., smoking or pets allowed). Users can send a message to a landlord or member to ask for more details.
5. www.RoommateNation.com permits users to submit a profile including the kind of property they are looking for and their lifestyle choices/preferences. Users can then search for a room or a member who needs a room, the location of a room, price range, and gender and smoking preferences. A one month membership upgrade allows users to view more extensive profiles and to send and receive messages.
6. www.roommates.com allows members to search for roommates or accept matching suggestions. Users complete profiles that focus on location and price range, as well as a description of themselves and the kind of person they would like to live with. Users who pay the membership fee can view complete member profiles and photos, comments and maps. Users also have access to "RoomMail", which gives you a way to send and receive messages with other members without using your private email.
7. www.roomster.com asks users a variety of important questions to help match them with like-minded people (e.g., time they wake up, their profession, the amount of time they spend in the house, their hygiene and cleanliness levels). Use the Chrome browser to access this site. Searches and matches are based primarily on location and rental costs, each of which can be altered at any time to adjust your results. Users can sort by a number of variants. Non-paying members can send messages to other members, but not read their replies. Users can send contact details in that initial email, but this is risky since users don't know other members yet. Upgrading membership opens up options and allows users to read and receive messages, and provides a more detailed look at members' likes, dislikes and habits.
8. www.silvernest.com allows users to list a profile based on location, budget and more and communicate with potential matches via a secure platform. There is a monthly membership fee, and the service includes a background check, a template for lease agreements and home sharing agreements, and automated rent collection.

Q14: The individual I support is ready to interview potential housemates. What questions should he ask?

A14: A list of sample interview questions to ask housemates is available at

<https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/resources-for-support-coordinators-and-case-managers> under **Supplemental Resources for Support Coordinators and Community Housing Guides**.

Q15: The individual I support has identified a candidate to be her live-in aide. How can she perform a criminal background check?

A15: While screening does not guarantee a live-in aide or housemate is qualified and trustworthy, it can provide a glimpse of a candidate's history and help inform the individual's choice. Here are some background checks that individuals can request:

1. Virginia State Police criminal history record check (limited to arrests and convictions in the Commonwealth of Virginia): http://www.vsp.virginia.gov/CJIS_Criminal_Record_Check.shtm
2. Virginia Sex Offender Registry: <https://sex-offender.vsp.virginia.gov/sor/index.html>

Q16: The individual I support has selected a person to be his housemate. Where can I get a sample roommate agreement and some tools to help them divide up chores?

A16: Several sample roommate agreements and chore charts are available at <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/resources-for-support-coordinators-and-case-managers> under **Supplemental Resources for Support Coordinators and Community Housing Guides.**

Q17: Where can I find a sample supports chart for a live-in aide?

A17: A supports chart outlines the specific tasks a live-in aide does and when these tasks should be done. See the support chart available at <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/resources-for-support-coordinators-and-case-managers> under **Supplemental Resources for Support Coordinators and Community Housing Guides.**

Q18: Where can I find a home safety checklist that I can complete with the individual I support to identify key safety features he or she may need in housing?

A18: See the checklist available at <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/resources-for-support-coordinators-and-case-managers> under **Supplemental Resources for Support Coordinators and Community Housing Guides.**

Q19: How can I get information for the family of an individual I support about how to set up an ABLE Account?

A19: ABLE Accounts are tax-advantaged savings accounts that help individuals with disabilities save money to pay for qualified expenses related to their health, education, housing, transportation, care and support. See <https://www.able-now.com/> for information on how these accounts work and how to open an account.

Q20: Where can I learn more about Special Needs Trusts and how they work?

Q20: The Special Needs Alliance produces a variety of fact sheets about special needs trusts (SNTs), including how to properly create and use SNTs to assist people with disabilities with their housing and independent living expenses. Go to <https://www.specialneedsalliance.org/> and click on "Special Needs 101."

Q21: What kinds of upfront housing expenses and tenancy sustaining expenses can Flexible Funding cover?

A21: See the Flexible Funding webpage at <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/flexible-funding> for a copy of the Flexible Funding Guidelines which explain who is qualified, what the eligible uses of these funds are and how to make a request.

Q22: How can I become more familiar with the array of services available in each of the Medicaid Waivers for people with developmental disabilities?

A22: Check out the DBHDS publication, “Navigating the Developmental Disability Waivers: A Guide for Individuals, Families and Support Partners,” at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cYSDNb58t-kK4CrhBcl3xa4tQUWn6rzU/view>

Q23: I need to assist an individual with finding accessible rental housing in our community. Are there websites that can help with the search?

A23: Finding housing that accepts rental assistance can be difficult, and finding accessible housing can be an even greater challenge. Here are a few websites that have search engines which allow you to identify available housing that accepts rent assistance and housing that has accessibility features:

1. www.virginiahousingsearch.com has a search function that allows users to specify the accessible features the renter needs. This site also allows you to filter by properties that accept rental assistance.
2. www.goSection8.com – Under “Rentals,” select “More” and click on “Accessible Housing.” All properties listed on this site accept rent assistance.

Q24: I am assisting an individual who is missing copies of required documentation to determine her eligibility for rental assistance, such as her birth certificate, Social Security card, and government issued photo identification. Where do I start?

A24: Good news – it is possible to obtain copies of some documents electronically! Here are links that can get you started on obtaining these documents:

1. **Birth certificate:** Go to the website for the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Division of Vital Statistics at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/vital-records/>. Scroll to the bottom of the page for instructions on how to request a birth certificate by mail, at local VDH offices and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). If you need speedy delivery, follow directions to request the document through the VitalChek Network.
2. **Social Security Card:** To replace a Social Security card, go to the Social Security Administration’s (SSA’s) website at <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/replacement-card.html>. The individual must create an electronic account with SSA to make the request.
3. **Government issued ID:** to obtain an ID card from the Commonwealth of Virginia, go to the DMV website at https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/drivers/id/get_id.asp to print out and complete the ID card application. The individual must appear at the DMV in person to submit the application.

Q25: Where can I learn more about how to interpret credit reports?

A25: The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has materials that assist consumers with accessing, reading and interpreting their credit reports. See the CFPB website at: <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/credit-reports-and-scores/>

Q26: How do I help an individual look up his or her credit record to see if there are debts owed or in collections?

A26: Individuals can receive up to three free credit reports per year, one from each major credit bureau (Equifax, Experian and TransUnion) by going to www.annualcreditreport.com. This site is operated by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, so individuals are not at risk of getting solicited by credit companies.

Q27: Where can I get a list of federally-approved credit counseling agencies?

A27: The U.S. Department of Justice has a list of credit counseling agencies approved pursuant to 11 U.S.C. §111 by the United States Trustee (the federal official charged with enforcing civil bankruptcy laws in the United States). This list is available at <https://www.justice.gov/ust/list-credit-counseling-agencies-approved-pursuant-11-usc-111>

Q28: Where can I find a list of Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties in Virginia?

A28: Go to www.virginiahousing.com, look in the Business Resources section and click on “LIHTC Program.” Then, scroll down to the “More Information” Heading. Click on the “Tax Credit Property Listing” link to download the most current list of LIHTC properties.

Q29: What are some resources in the community that could assist with upfront housing costs?

A29: Certain communities may have congregations that assist individuals with application fees, security deposits, utility connection fees and first month’s rent. Also try your local Community Action Agency: see <https://www.vacap.org/agencies/> for a list of agencies throughout Virginia. HUD-certified Housing Counseling Agencies are another possible source of assistance: see <https://apps.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm?webListAction=search&searchstate=VA>. Lastly, there are civic and fraternal organizations that may be willing to assist. Here are links to local chapters of several civic organizations. Contact them and ask if they would be willing to financially support a security deposit or utility deposit fund.

1. Civitans (this organization has a focus on service projects for people with DD): <https://civitan.org/civitan/>
2. Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks: <https://www.elks.org/lodges/>
3. Kiwanis Clubs: <https://www.kiwanis.org/clubs>
4. Knights of Columbus: <https://www.kofc.org/en/index.html> (on the right side of the page, click “Find A Council or Assembly”)
5. Lions Clubs: <https://lionsclubs.org/en/start-our-approach/club-locator>
6. Optimist International: <https://www.optimist.org/member/clubdirectory/city.cfm?country=US&state=VA>
7. Soroptimists: <https://www.soroptimist.org/take-action/find-a-club.html>

Q30: What resources are available to financially assist individuals with the cost of making accessibility modifications to rental housing?

A30: Here are three resources to financially assist individuals with accessibility modifications in rental housing:

1. Waiver Environmental Modifications are available in all three waivers and fund physical adaptations to the individual's primary home, primary vehicle, or work site that are necessary to ensure the health and welfare of the individual, or that enable the individual to function with greater independence. Examples include installing ramps and grab-bars, widening doorways, modifying bathroom facilities, etc. The Medicaid Waiver will cover a maximum of \$5,000 per plan year for environmental modifications. See <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cYSDNb58t-kk4CrhBcl3xa4tQUWn6rzU/view>
2. Flexible Funding provides up to \$5,000 to assist individuals who are transitioning from their family's home, an institution or licensed setting to a residence where the person leases the unit. Flexible Funding covers the cost of initial transition expenses, including environmental modifications not covered by the Waiver or another funding source. Individual must receive BI/FIS/CL waiver services or be on the DD waiver waitlist. See <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/flexible-funding>
3. Virginia Housing Development Authority's Rental Unit Accessibility Modification program provides grants of up to \$6,000 per rental unit for tenants with disabilities who earn less than 80% of the area median income. See <https://www.vhda.com/renters/pages/accessiblentalhousing.aspx>

Q31: The individual I support has moved into his own home! Where can I find an Independent Housing Monitoring Tool so I can document what I see and hear when I visit him/her, in case additional services are needed?

A31: A monitoring tool is available at <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/resources-for-support-coordinators-and-case-managers> under **Supplemental Resources for Support Coordinators and Community Housing Guides**.