

Shared Living: FAQ Guide for Families

What is Shared Living?

Shared Living is a service model of residential support where a person with an intellectual and developmental disability lives with and receives support from a person without a disability. The person without a disability is known as the Shared Living Provider (SL Provider). SL Providers are caring, compassionate people who open their hearts and homes to support others.

What Are A Few Of The Benefits To Supporting People In A Shared Living Arrangement?

Shared Living arrangements provide a typical living situation – there are no paid staff other than the SL Provider and select respite staff. Shared Living provides increases in clinical consistency and medical oversight because the SL Provider is the primary person providing supports, resulting in a higher quality of life for the individual. Shared Living permits typical, everyday life experiences with family and friends, which can be difficult to achieve in a traditional congregate setting or group home. Shared Living also provides a warm, supportive home life; one that promotes continued growth and development for the individual supported.

Do Other Providers and Agencies Use This Model of Service?

Absolutely! Shared Living is a highly-utilized support service across the country. Some agencies have moved to providing shared living services exclusively.

What Types Of SL Providers Do We Recruit?

It all depends on what the person with a disability is looking for, their support needs, and the needs of the SL Provider. People's ideal living situations vary – ranging from traditional families with children to single housemate arrangements. It's all in the match!



How Are Potential Providers Screened?

Potential Providers go through a rigorous screening process. Criminal background checks are conducted, professional and personal references are checked, work history is analyzed, and a thorough set of interviews and assessments are conducted to ensure we select only the very best candidates.

Will I, As a Family Member, Have Input into the SL Provider Selection Process?

Absolutely! Families fully participate in the process and are involved in the final selection.

How Long of a Commitment Does Vinfen Require?

Vinfen expects a minimum of one year's commitment. However, most arrangements last much longer.

How Are Providers Supervised?

Providers receive thorough supervision and support after the initial move-in and later monthly supervision and home visits by the coordinator. Periodically, the SL Coordinator will make unannounced visits to the home to check on the individual and provider. When needed, the frequency of visits and support increases until the home is stable.

Will My Family Member Have to Change Day Programs and How Will He/She Get To Work?

Individuals usually do not change their day programs. Providers are recruited from the geographic area near a day program or work site. If existing transportation arrangements change as a result of the move, then the SL Provider will be responsible for transporting the individual to and from work.

Where Would My Family Member Live?

Because of IRS regulations, the person receiving support must live in the home of the SL Provider. This cannot happen the other way around. In other words, the individual receiving supports cannot live in a home that he/she rents or owns.

What Happens to My Family Member if the Provider Wants to Take A Vacation?

Usually, the person receiving support goes on vacation with the SL Provider. However, the person may go on a separate vacation at the same time. If the individual has work and can't go on vacation, respite support is available while the SL Provider is away.



What Are Some of the Responsibilities of the SL Provider?

Responsibilities are all inclusive in most cases with support from the agency as delineated in the written contract. Examples include serving meals, ensuring a safe and comfortable home environment, administering medication, implementing and documenting Individual Support Plan goals, providing transportation to medical appointments, and arranging for respite care.

What If My Family Member's Needs Change?

We recognize that people's needs change including the SL Provider's. If this happens, and levels of support change or the expectations for the SL Provider change, we will meet to renegotiate the terms of the contract.

What Type Of Training Would The Provider Receive by or Through Vinfen?

Training will include but will not be limited to: Medication Administration, CPR, First Aid, Emergency Response, and Seizure Management.

How Do I Learn More and/or Become a SL Provider?

Please contact Vinfen's Director of Community Living Meg Gaydos at 617-516-5758 or sharedliving@vinfen.org.

You can also call us at Vinfen's Main Office Phone Number at 877-284-6336 or 617-441-1800.

Established in 1977, Vinfen is a nonprofit, health and human services organization and a leading provider of community-based services to individuals with disabilities. Each year, Vinfen provides a comprehensive array of services to adolescents and adults with psychiatric conditions, intellectual and developmental disabilities, brain injuries, and behavioral health challenges. Vinfen's 2,700 dedicated employees are experienced, highly-trained professionals who provide a full range of supportive living, health, educational, and clinical services in more than 200 programs throughout eastern Massachusetts and Connecticut.

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