My Own Home

A Handbook on Independent Housing Options for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities.

My Life, My Community

Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services

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Acknowledgements

This handbook was created by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about independent housing options and resources available to individuals with developmental disabilities in the Settlement Agreement Population.

Disclaimer: This handbook is provided for informational purposes only and does not serve as legal advice. This handbook contains a general description of the fair housing law and should be used only as a guide. This handbook provides links to different resources and websites, however we do not endorse any specific resource.

Credit: Thanks to the Maryland Partnership for Affordable Housing (MPAH), a coalition of Maryland state agencies and public and private stakeholders, for allowing us to model this guidebook after theirs and use portions of their tenant training manual titled "My Own Front Door".

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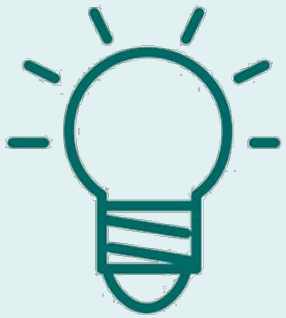

Thinking

Finding your own home with appropriate supports

Can this handbook help me?

What will I learn in this handbook?

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Finding your home with appropriate supports

This handbook was designed to help individuals with developmental disabilities learn about independent housing options and resources. This handbook contains helpful information to search for, obtain and maintain independent housing. Our philosophy is that any person with a developmental disability can live in their own home with appropriate supports.

Making the choice to move into independent housing may seem overwhelming. This handbook is a useful tool to use as you explore the possibility of moving into your own home with appropriate supports. Planning is the key to a successful transition into independent housing.

Can this handbook help me?

This handbook is for people with developmental disabilities in Virginia. Please note that a good number of resources referenced in this handbook are specifically for people in the Settlement Agreement Population.

Continue reading if you would like to know more about how to access your own home in the community with appropriate supports and you are:

- age 18 or older, or a legally emancipated minor; **AND**
- have a developmental disability as defined in the Code of Virginia § 37.2-100.

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What will I learn in this handbook?

This handbook is designed to answer important questions to consider when searching for a new home.

- What supports do I need to be healthy and safe in independent housing?
- How to create a household budget
- How much rent can I afford?
- What rental assistance programs are available?
- What is a lease?
- What is a security deposit?
- How can I find a roommate?
- Where can I find landlords that accept rent assistance?
- What are my responsibilities as a renter?
- What are the landlord's responsibilities?

Planning

What are my housing needs?

How do I create a household budget?

What if I don’t have enough income to afford rent in the area I choose?

Do I need help to live independently?

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What are my housing needs?

When you make the choice to move into independent housing, it is important to create a plan. Prioritize what you need before you consider what you might want. Do you need accessibility features in your home? How many bedrooms will you need? What services must be near your home? Flexibility will afford you more housing options. So, consider what you MUST have: these are "non-negotiable" items - such as no stairs leading to or inside your apartment. Then, think about where you can be flexible - such as the choice of communities, and towns.

Things to consider

- Where do I want to live?
- What can I afford?
- What is the smallest number of bedrooms I need?
- Do I need home modifications (wheelchair accessibility)?
- Do I need special accommodations (change to a policy or rule)?
- Do I need a home with no stairs?
- Do I need nearby medical facilities?
- Do I need access to public transportation?

How much rent can I afford?

One of the most important parts of planning for your own housing is budgeting for rent. To determine how much rent you can afford, you must create a monthly household budget. After creating a budget, you will know how much money is left to pay rent each month. Look at how much units rent for the area you want to live. If you do not have enough left in your budget to pay this amount for rent on your own, you may qualify for a rent subsidy or other type of program assistance?

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How do I create a household budget?

Everyone should have a household budget. It is very easy to create. The next few pages will help you to create a household budget.

Use Chart 1 – My Income (page 11) to list your income, including the money you get on a regular basis, from a job or from benefits such as SSI or SSDI. List money that you get from gifts only if you receive it monthly. Add all money you receive each month to figure out your income. **Do not list one time gifts or gifts from holidays or birthdays.*

Use Chart 2 – My Expenses (page 12) to track your expenses. Some expenses remain the same every month, such as memberships, or car payment. These are called "Fixed Expenses" because they do not change. Other bills may change based on usage such as utilities or medical expenses. Sometimes you have bills you may pay quarterly such as a water bill or car insurance. List these bills as an average monthly expense. Add all of the unique expenses together to come to your total expenses. For bills that you don't know the exact amount, ask someone to help you estimate the amount.

Use Chart 3 – My Money Available for Rent (page 13) to figure out how much money you have available to pay for rent. Once you have developed your monthly budget and determined out how much you have available for rent each month, you can start to look for a place to rent. Rental housing can be found in the newspaper, on Craigslist, or other web-based affordable housing registries. Look in the "Searching" Section on pages 31-33 for suggested sites. When you decide on a location you may have to adjust your budget in order to afford the rent. This may mean increasing your income, reducing your expenses, or getting help to cover certain expenses such as SNAP (food stamps), heating/cooling assistance, or a Lifeline cell phone.

My Income

Chart 1. My Money : Monthly Dollars (money coming in)	
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	$
Income source from interest on money market, stocks	$
Veteran Affairs Benefits	$
Child Support	$
Employment Income(job, overtime, bonus)	$
Regular financial support from friends and family	$
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	$
Other sources – (money market account, etc.)	$
Total Income	$

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My Expenses

Chart 2. My Expenses : Monthly Spending (money going out)	
Clothing	$
Debt, credit card payments, loan payments	$
Gym Membership/Recreation	$
Transportation/Car Payment/Insurance	$
Cable/Internet/Telephone	$
Food	$
Credit Cards	$
Laundry	$
Pet food and supplies	$
Health/Life Insurance payments	$
Medication/Medical supplies, and co-pays	$
Renter's Insurance	$
Savings contributions	$
Utilities (gas, water, electric)	$
Other	$
Total Expenses	$

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My Money Available for Rent

Chart 3. Amount available for my rent every month	
Total Income from Chart 1	$
Total Expenses from Chart 2	$
Total Available = Total income minus total expenses	$

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What if I do not have enough income to afford rent in the area I choose?

Finding affordable rental property can be a challenge. You might need a "Rent Subsidy," to make rent affordable. A rent subsidy is financial assistance available to individuals and families who have low incomes. Generally, individuals/families pay 30% of their income towards rent and utilities. The subsidy covers the balance of rent, which is paid directly to the landlord. The Housing Choice Voucher/Section 8 Program is an example of a rent subsidy program that makes housing more affordable to low-income individuals/families.

There are two types of rent subsidy programs: tenant-based and project-based. Read more about how rent subsidies work in the "Learning" section of this handbook (page 17).

Use the chart below to determine how much rent you might pay using a rent subsidy program.

Chart 4. Estimated tenant contribution toward rent*	
Total Income (from Chart 1)	$
Total income (from above) $_____ X .30 = Estimated Tenant Contribution (enter the result below)	
Estimated Tenant Contribution (=30% of total income)	$
Balance Remaining for utilities and other expenses (Total Income minus Estimated Tenant Contribution)	$

*This amount is only an estimate of the individual's contribution towards rent and is not inclusive of the total rent cost for the unit.

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Do I need help to live independently?

It is important to consider the type of support services you will need to be safe and healthy in your new home. Use the "My Support Needs Planning Worksheet" to figure out your support needs. Talk about these needs with your family, case manager, or anyone who will be supporting your choice to live independently. Together you and your team will come up with a plan that best addresses your needs.

My Support Needs Planning Worksheet		
What Help do I need?	Response	People & Program
Managing my medication and health care needs	Yes No	
Scheduling and getting to appointments	Yes No	
Physically transferring from my wheelchair	Yes No	
Preparing meals and using household appliances	Yes No	
Bathing & personal hygiene	Yes No	
Paying bills and budgeting	Yes No	
Staying safe during an emergency	Yes No	
Housekeeping and laundry	Yes No	
Shopping or running errands	Yes No	

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Learning

- Types of affordable housing options
- Do I qualify for affordable housing programs?
- Affordable Housing Programs in Virginia
- What about a single room or renting a single room?

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Types of affordable housing options

Affordable housing options in Virginia:

There are two different types of rental subsidies available in Virginia: project-based and tenant-based assistance. Project-based refers to specific apartments that have low, subsidized rents; the subsidy is attached to the apartment. If you move from that apartment you typically can't take the subsidy with you. With a tenant-based subsidy, you receive approval for a subsidy and search for a rental unit you choose, at properties that will accept the rent subsidy. If you move to another apartment, you can generally take a tenant-based subsidy with you to the next apartment.

These housing options are made available with the help of government funding. Typically, households pay 30 percent of their income toward the rent and utilities. The government pays the rest of the rent up to a maximum allowable amount using its funds: this is the rent subsidy. These affordable housing programs use eligibility rules to determine if you are able to participate.

Project-Based Rental Assistance Overview

Project-based rental assistance is a rent subsidy linked to a specific apartment. It is found in housing properties run by public housing authorities or in private buildings owned by private companies or non-profit organizations.

Tenant's Portion of Rent

Generally, the tenant pays 30% of household income, which includes a utility allowance to help cover the cost of utility expenses. Remember, you are responsible for paying utility bills unless utilities are provided as part of your lease.

Applying

Find public housing authorities and private organizations that own these properties here: http://www.hud.gov/apps/section8/step2. cfm?state=va or http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts/states/va

Unique Features

Some of these properties have units set aside for people who are considered elderly or disabled.

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Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Overview

Tenant-based rental assistance allows a low-income household to rent an apartment and pay reduced rent. In Virginia, tenant-based rental assistance is available through local public housing agencies and other local administrators. There is a great need for this type of rental assistance. Often, there are waitlists for participation in this program and those waitlists remain closed for long periods of time.

Tenants Portion of Rent

Generally, the tenant pays 30% of household income, which includes a utility allowance to help cover the cost of utility expenses. Remember, you are responsible for paying utility bills unless utilities are provided as part of your lease.

Applying

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/tenant

Unique Features

Some housing agencies have special programs for people who are leaving long-term care, are elderly, are disabled, are veterans, and/or are reuniting with children. Sometimes, tenant base rental assistance resources are set aside for certain populations. Alternately, these populations can have a “preference” on a waitlist that gives them priority over persons on the waitlist.

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Do I qualify for affordable housing programs?

In order to qualify for most rental assistance programs, your monthly income must fall into the category of "low-income" or "extremely low-income." Low-income simply means your income is 50% of Area Median Income (AMI) or less. Extremely low-income means your income is 30% of AMI or less. These income thresholds are set by the government. The next page has an example of the AMI for Norfolk City, followed by instructions to find out your AMI on page 22.

Area Median Income (AMI), refers to the income in a given area, at which half of the area's populations income falls above and half of the area's populations income falls below.

"The median annual income figures are adjusted for family size and calculated annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for every regional area in the country."

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Example of Area Median Income

Norfolk city								
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA): Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC HUD Metro Fair Market Rent (FMR) Area								
Example of Income Limits for FY16 – Norfolk, VA								
The number of people in a household determines income limit for qualifying								
% Adjusted by family size	One Person	Two Person	Three Person	Four Person	Five Person	Six Person	Seven Person	Eight Person
30% (Extremely low)	$14,850.00	$16,950.00	$20,160.00	$24,300.00	$28,440.00	$32,580.00	$36,730.00	$40,890.00
40% (Very low)	$19,760.00	$22,560.00	$25,400.00	$28,200.00	$30,480.00	$32,720.00	$35,000.00	$37,240.00
50% (Low)	$24,700.00	$28,200.00	$31,750.00	$35,250.00	$38,100.00	$40,900.00	$43,750.00	$46,550.00
60% (Low)	$29,640.00	$33,840.00	$38,100.00	$42,300.00	$45,720.00	$49,080.00	$52,500.00	$55,860.00
80% (Moderate)	$39,500.00	$45,150.00	$50,800.00	$56,400.00	$60,950.00	$65,450.00	$69,950.00	$74,450.00

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Area Median Income is based on family size

How Do I Find My Area Median Income?

http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html

Click on *Current Fiscal Year* Income Limits

Click on *Current Fiscal Year* Income Limits Documentation

Select the appropriate locality

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Affordable Housing Programs in Virginia

Learn about Virginia's affordable housing programs for individuals with developmental disabilities on the next few pages.

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Special Admissions Preference for the Housing Choice Voucher Program helps individuals obtain independent housing in a more timely manner than the traditional Housing Choice Voucher Program. Individuals lease their own rental units and receive rent assistance to make units affordable (they pay 30-40% of adjusted monthly income toward rent with a utility allowance). Services and supports are provided separately from housing through Medicaid Waiver-funded home and community based services, natural supports, privately paid supports, and other community resources. Individuals must be in the Settlement Agreement population to participate in the program (Settlement Agreement population criteria is listed on page 25).

Individuals must be referred by their Support Coordinator or Private Case Manager.

For more information http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/individuals-and-families/developmental-disabilities/community-support-services (click the housing tab and scroll down to Housing Choice Voucher Admissions Preference for the Settlement Agreement Population) or contact a Regional Housing Specialist (see contact information on page 27).

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Affordable Housing Programs in Virginia

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP) helps individuals to obtain housing by making rent more affordable. Individuals pay 30-40% of their income towards rent with a utility allowance. Services and supports are provided separately from housing through Medicaid Waiver-funded home and community based services, natural supports, privately paid supports, and other community resources. This program mirrors the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Individuals must be in the Settlement Agreement Population (Settlement Agreement population criteria is listed on page 25).

SRAP is available through the following Housing Agencies/Authorities:

- Fairfax RHA – Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, and the Towns of Clifton, Herndon and Vienna
- Chesapeake RHA – the City of Chesapeake
- Norfolk RHA – the City of Norfolk
- Virginia Beach Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation – the City of Virginia Beach

Individuals must be referred by their Support Coordinator or Private Case Manager.

For more information http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/professionals-and-service-providers/developmental-disability-services-for-providers/community-support-services (click the housing tab and scroll down to State Rental Assistance Program) or contact a Regional Housing Specialist (see page 27 for contact information).

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Settlement Agreement Population Criteria

In order to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program with Special Admissions Preference or the State Rental Assistance Program, individuals must meet the following criteria:

- Be age 18 or older, the head of household for lease purposes, and have a developmental disability as defined by the Code of Virginia § 37.2-100; AND
- Meet one of the following criteria:
  - Currently reside in a state training center, ICF-IDD, or nursing facility and meet the LOS for a DD waiver; OR
  - Currently receiving Building Independence (BI), Family and Individual Support (FIS) or Community Living (CL) waiver services; OR
  - Determined eligible for and currently on a waiting list to receive a BI, FIS, or CL Waiver slot.
- Under this program, individuals are not allowed to live with a parent, grandparent or guardian.
- Individuals must be referred by their Support Coordinator or Private Case Manager.

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When should I be referred for rental assistance?

You should be referred when you:

1) Have made an informed decision to live in your own rental housing;

2) Are ready or can be ready to move within 60 days of being referred for rental assistance; and

3) Have or will have adequate waiver, non-waiver and natural supports in place to attain and maintain housing in the community at the time of lease-up.

Who can refer me for rental assistance?

Referral for rental assistance are only accepted by:

1) The individual's Support Coordinators or Private Case Managers

If you have questions please contact a DBHDS Regional Housing Specialist. Please see map on the following page……

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Regional Housing Specialist Map

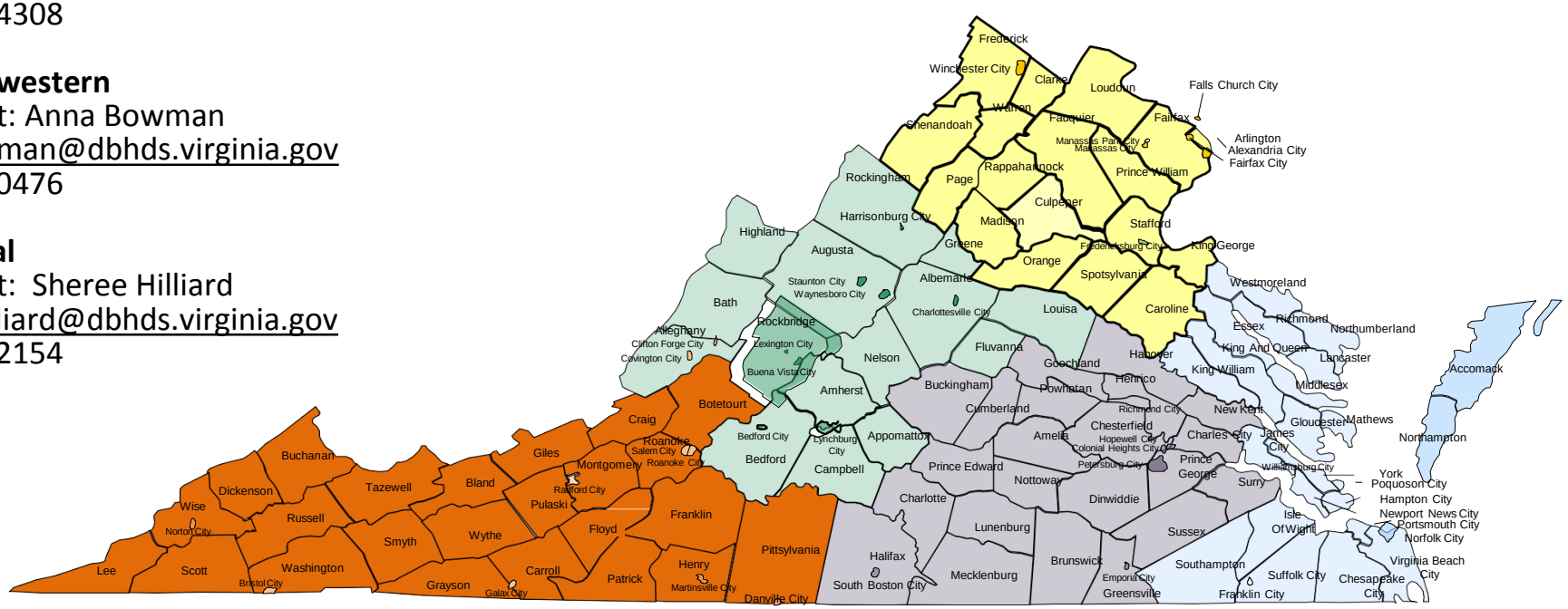
Region 1 – Western
Housing Specialist: Marie Fraticelli
Email: marie.fraticelli@dbhds.virginia.gov
Phone: 434-953-7146

Region 2 – Northern
Housing Specialist: Jeannie Cummins-Eisenhour
Email: j.cummins@dbhds.virginia.gov
Phone: 804-836-4308

Region 3 – Southwestern
Housing Specialist: Anna Bowman
Email: anna.bowman@dbhds.virginia.gov
Phone: 804-839-0476

Region 4 – Central
Housing Specialist: Sheree Hilliard
Email: sheree.hilliard@dbhds.virginia.gov
Phone: 804-371-2154

Region 5 – Eastern
Housing Specialist: Kim Rodgers
Email: kimberly.rodgers@dbhds.virginia.gov
Phone: 804-629-1674



If you have questions, please contact a DBHDS Regional Housing Specialist.

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Additional Affordable Housing Programs in Virginia

Virginia has several other affordable housing programs. Information below will help you to learn more about these programs.

Bridging Affordability (BA) program is a rental assistance program funded by Fairfax County and administered by Northern Virginia Family Service. The program provides up to 24 months of rental subsidies. For more information, please visit: http://www.nvfs.org/ba or 571-748-2548 or email baprogram@nvfs.org.

Rental Affordable Dwelling Unit (RADU) Programs in Virginia are administered by several local jurisdictions in Virginia. RADU programs often have preferences for households that live and/or work in the jurisdiction where the property is located (people who have a disability and live in the jurisdiction generally receive this preference). Rents are often higher than what persons on fixed incomes like SSI or SSDI can afford, however, some RADU rental properties accept housing choice vouchers. For more information, please visit:
Fairfax County: http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rha/adu/rentalhousing.htm
Falls Church City: http://www.fallschurchva.gov/692/Rental-Assistance
Loudoun County: https://www.loudoun.gov/adu

Arlington County Housing Grant Program provides rental assistance to low-income Arlington residents. These grants cover a portion of monthly rent, depending on household income, household size and rent amount. Applicants must meet income requirements. For more information, please visit: https://housing.arlingtonva.us/get-help/rental-services/local-housing-grants/

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What about a roommate?

A roommate is a person that shares housing costs to make rent more affordable and can be a companion in your home. A successful roommate relationship starts with an agreement on important aspects of sharing the apartment. How will the utility bills be jointly paid? Will you share food? Who will clean the apartment? Can you have visitors? These questions all need clear answers up front. There are many potential roommates:

Friend: Consider someone who is looking to move and is willing to share a home with you.

Recommended Acquaintance: Ask family and friends for names of people who would make a good roommate.

Live-in Caregiver/Companion: Explore if your support services allow for a live-in caregiver help with daily living activities.

Assistant/Companion: Consider a plan to have an assistant or companion live with you who would pay reduced rent in exchange for doing chores or providing you some supports.

What about a single room?

Renting a single room in a large home is also an affordable choice. Usually, this arrangement provides for a bedroom with a shared bathroom. Sometimes, a shared kitchen and laundry room are included. Other people will occupy the remainder of the house. For an independent person, a single room such as this may be the perfect, low rent home. Please understand that not all tenant-based rental assistance will approve this type of arrangement, so check with the program to see if it is an option.

Searching

- Who can help me with my housing search?
- Where do I start to look for a place to live?
- Where do I start to look for a roommate?
- How do I prepare for a visit to a vacant apartment?
- Rental Unit Visit Worksheets

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Who can help me with my search?

This is a really big decision so, speak with someone who you trust and who has your best interest in mind. Consider someone who locates housing for a living or someone who has recently searched for rental housing. But definitely talk to someone!

- A family member
- Your Support Coordinator/Case Manager
- Someone from your church
- DBHDS Regional Housing Specialist (Please see page 27)

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Where do I start to look for a place to live?

Virginia has many resources available to help you locate available apartments and homes. These include websites that you can visit on your own or with a support coordinator or family member.

Virginia Housing Search is an online listing of affordable, rental housing. It lists properties and has information about their accessibility and neighborhood resources. Search by county or town within a county.
http://www.virginiahousingsearch.com

HUD Housing Search is an online searchable site that provides contacts for private developments with apartments that have project-based subsidies from the federal government.
http://www.hud.gov/apps/section8/

PHA Listing will provide you with contacts for all of the Housing Authorities in Virginia and has information on whether they have Public Housing, Housing Choice Vouchers or both programs.
http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts/va

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Where do I start to look for a place to live?

U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development 515 Multifamily Properties in Virginia is a housing registry that lists units with flat rents and project based rent. Search by City/County. http://rdmfhrentals.sc.egov.usda.gov/RDMFHRentals/mfhcounties?st_cd=VA&fips=51&name=Virginia

Low Income Housing Tax Credit Properties in Virginia is a list of tax credit properties. These properties typically accept Housing Choice Vouchers and some have units with project based assistance. http://www.vhda.com/BusinessPartners/MFDevelopers/LIHTCProgram/LowIncome%20Housing%20Tax%20Credit%20Program/Existing%20TC%20Property%20List%20010816.xls

Go Section 8 is a housing registry that lists all of the properties known to accept a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher. Search by Virginia or by your city. *www.gosection8.com*

Craigslist is an online platform where many private property owners list vacant units. *www.craigslist.com*

Realtor.com a way to search on-line for apartment units that are for rent by private owners and to get email updates on units that become available on the market in locations you prefer. www.realtor.com

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Where do I start to look for a place to live?

Oodle offers the ability to search for rental housing in apartment properties or privately owned condominium units. http://apartments.oodle.com

Hotpads allows you to search for units that are for rent in apartment properties or for rent by private owners. You can get alerts about new and updated listings in locations you prefer. www.hotpads.com

Classified sections are part of your local newspapers which often lists available rental units.

More generic affordable housing search information?

There are many places that you can go for help. Listed below are several agencies that offer assistance with finding a place to live. Below is a list of websites that may be helpful:

https://www.apartmentlist.com/va

https://www.rent.com/virginia1-10

www.lowincomehousing.us/VA.html

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Where do I start to look for a roommate?

If you choose to find a roommate on the internet, be careful when conduct your search. Do not provide personal information such as your last name, phone number, full address or private email in your initial post or listing on a roommate search website. Instead, create an email just for your roommate search (example: Gmail or another email service) and provide it in your listing. Use this new email address to communicate with potential roommates. In addition, when meeting a potential roommate for the first time, meet the individual in a public place such as a coffee shop, recreation center or mall where there are other people. When you visit his/her home for the first time, bring a friend, family member or support person with you.

- http://apartments.oodle.com allows you to select roommate rentals.
- www.easyroommate.com enables searches by roommate criteria and housing characteristics.
- www.roomiematch.com has an annual membership fee to contact potential matches.
- www.RoommateLocator.com has free, simple online service that allows you to search for roommates.
- www.RoommateNation.com permits users to submit a profile to aid in roommate matching.
- www.roommates.com allows members to search for roommates or accept matching suggestions.
- www.Roommates4You.com is a free service which allows individuals to post an advertisement about themselves or a room they have to rent.
- www.roomster.com asks users a variety of important questions to help match them with like-minded people

DISCLAIMER. DBHDS has provided a list of sites; however, we do not endorse any site. The list of websites above are provided for general information purposes only. Your use of any of these sites is at your own risk.

How do I prepare for a visit to a vacant apartment?

Once you have identified available rental units, you will need to contact the landlord to ask basic questions about the unit and to set up a visit. Here are examples of questions you may want to ask a landlord:

- Do you accept rental assistance?
- How much is the monthly rent?
- What utilities does the tenant pay? What is the average cost of utilities each month?
- Is there an application fee? If so, how much is it?
- How much is the security deposit?
- When will the unit be available?
- Can I set up a time to see the unit?

If you are interested in the available rental unit and have scheduled a time to visit, plan ahead for the visit:

- Dress in clean, neat attire.
- Be on time for your appointment.
- Bring pen and paper to take notes on the unit, needs for accommodations/modifications and/or damages you see.
- Plan to fill out the Rental Unit Visit Worksheets (pages 37-39). Use of these worksheets will help you pay attention to the details of each vacant unit you visit and choose the unit that will be the best choice for your new home.

Rental Unit Visit Worksheet – Page 1		
Is it right for me?		
Complex/Property Name and Address:		
Is the unit the correct size for me?	Yes	No
Do I like the unit?	Yes	No
Is there enough space to meet my needs?	Yes	No
Is the unit in good condition?	Yes	No
Is this priced for my budget?	Yes	No
Does the unit fit my lifestyle?	Yes	No
Am I planning on living alone?	Yes	No
Does the property allow pets?	Yes	No
Is smoking allowed inside the unit?		
Can I afford the monthly rent and utility costs (i.e., I pay no more than 30% to 40% of my monthly income toward these expenses)?	Yes	No
Are the rent and utility costs within the rent assistance program limits (i.e., at or below the maximum subsidy amount the PHA will allow)?	Yes	No

Rental Unit Visit Worksheet – Page 2

Is the unit accessible to me?

Does the kitchen have appliances that I can safely use?	Yes	No
Is there room for a kitchen table?	Yes	No
Can I move around comfortably in the kitchen?	Yes	No
Are the cabinets large enough to hold pots and pans?	Yes	No
If I use a wheelchair can I lean on the counters and sink?	Yes	No
If I use a wheelchair can I use the toilet easily ?	Yes	No
If I use a wheelchair can I use the shower or bath tub?	Yes	No
Can I see the mirror?	Yes	No
Can I reach the light switches?	Yes	No
Can I control unit temperature?	Yes	No
Is there a washer and dryer in the unit or the building?	Yes	No
Is there enough storage for my needs?	Yes	No
Does the unit have working smoking detectors?	Yes	No

Rental Unit Visit Worksheet – Page 3		
Is the neighborhood and area safe?		
Has there been a lot of crime in the neighborhood?	Yes	No
Are the neighbors friendly?	Yes	No
Does the unit look clean on the outside of the building?	Yes	No
Is there security in the building?	Yes	No
Is there security around the grounds?	Yes	No
Do I feel safe in the evening?	Yes	No
Is this a good location for me?		
Does the neighborhood offer medical support services?	Yes	No
Is the unit close to stores?	Yes	No
Is the unit close to my work place?	Yes	No
Can I visit my family and friends easily?	Yes	No
Can I catch public transportation easily?	Yes	No
Does the community offer opportunities for entertainment?	Yes	No

Applying

- What should I know about housing applications?
- What is housing discrimination?
- What questions can/can't a landlord ask?
- What is a reasonable accommodation or modification in housing?
- Can I get help paying for a reasonable accommodation or modification?
- How do I request a reasonable accommodation or modification?

My Life, My Community

What should I know about housing applications?

After you identify a unit that meets your needs, you will complete a "housing application". Landlords use housing applications to determine eligibility and to decide if they will rent a unit to you. Certain documents (listed below) must be submitted with your housing application. Landlords may charge an application fee. As part of the housing application process, the Landlord may request your credit and criminal histories.

What supporting documents may be needed for housing?

- **Income Verification**
  - SSI/SSDI – use this link to access your benefits information www.ssa.gov
  - Proof of Pension/VA benefit
  - Last 2 months of paystubs (if employed)
  - Recent checking/savings account statements
- **Proof of Identification**
  - Drivers License or State issued ID
  - Social Security Card
- **Proof of Citizenship/Age**
  - Birth certificate – official copy – use this link for information on how to request a copy of your birth certificate http://www.vdh.state.va.us/vital_records/
  - Passport
- **Name, address, and phone of employer(s)**
- **References**

My Life, My Community

What if my application is denied?

If a Public Housing Agency or landlord with project-based and/or tenant-based subsidies denies your housing application, an explanation is required. If you have concerns about the explanation, you can contact the public housing authority and ask for Landlord Tenant Affairs resources or contact a Fair Housing Office (see page 43). According to the law landlords cannot refuse to rent to you because you have never lived in an apartment before. However, you must show the property owner that you can pay the rent and that you will be a good tenant.

- Note: *A landlord cannot refuse to rent to you because of your disability, or because you require support services to live independently. Generally, a landlord cannot ask you if you have a disability unless you are requesting reasonable accommodations, or if having a disability is required in order to get the unit because of a special program. A landlord also may not ask you if you are capable of living independently, how severe your disability is, or to see your medical records. A landlord cannot require you to take medication or participate in support services as a condition of renting to you. A landlord CAN require you to meet all the conditions of tenancy that everyone else meets, such as paying your rent on time, not disturbing the neighbors, and keeping your apartment clean and in good repair.*

What is housing discrimination?

Housing discrimination is when an individual or family is treated unequally when trying to rent or lease a home based on certain characteristics, such as disability, race, class, sex, religion, national origin and family status. A landlord may be discriminating against you if, when you call, you are told an apartment is vacant but when you visit the property the same day, you are told it is rented. If you were told an apartment was not available, and it was later rented to someone else; this could be an act of discrimination. If you suspect unfairness, you should contact any of the agencies listed below.

If you think you've been discriminated against, contact:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Hub Office,
The Wanamaker Building
100 Penn Square East
Philadelphia, PA 19107-9344
1-888-799-2085 TTY: 215-656-3450
The Office of Fair Housing
Filing your housing discrimination compliant

VA Fair Housing Office Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation
9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 400
Richmond, VA 23233
Phone: 804-367-8530 Toll Free: 888-551-3247 TDD: Call Virginia Relay 711
Fax: 866-480-8333
FairHousing@dpor.virginia.gov

HUD Richmond Field Office
600 East Broad Street, 3rd Floor
Richmond, VA 23219-4920
Phone: (800) 842-2610
Fax: (804) 822-4984
TTY: (800) 877-8339

My Life, My Community

What questions can a landlord ask?

A landlord can ask questions about your rental history, including lease violations, damage you caused, and your rent payment record. A landlord can also ask about your ability to pay the rent for the unit for which you are applying (e.g., such as whether you work part or full time, how much money you earn and what debts you owe).

- What is your income?
- Have you ever been evicted?
- What experience do you have as a tenant?
- Will you follow the rules and uphold the lease?
- Do you have a criminal history?

What questions can't a landlord ask?

Generally, fair housing laws don't allow landlords to ask if an applicant or tenant has a disability, about the nature or severity of a disability or any question that would require the individual to disclose a medical condition or medical history.

- Do you have any disabilities?
- Do you take medication?
- Do you see a psychiatrist?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- Are you on welfare?
- Where do you go to church?
- How old are you?
- What is your race?

My Life, My Community

What is a reasonable accommodation or modification in housing?

By law, people with disabilities have a right to request a reasonable accommodation or modification from housing providers and from programs providing rent assistance. A reasonable accommodation is a change in certain rules, policies and/or procedures that enables a person with a disability to use housing or a housing program. A reasonable modification is a change to the physical characteristics of a unit or structure. You may ask for such a change only if it is linked to your disability. Landlords must grant such a request if it is reasonable and is not a burden for the landlord. If the request is too expensive or requires an unreasonable amount of time or trouble, the landlord does not have to agree. If a request is denied, landlords must provide a reason for denial and may offer alternatives that might meet the individual's needs, and give instructions on how to appeal.

Examples of Reasonable Accommodations

- Reconsider your application with additional information.
- Return your name to the waiting list if a deadline was missed.
- Allow you access to a reserved parking space.
- Consider new ways to verify your ability to pay rent.
- Set up an automatic rent debit program for you.
- A "no pets" policy may be changed for companion/service animals related to disability
- A request to send any future notices in large print – at least 16 point font.

Examples of Reasonable Modifications

- Remove carpeting for you.
- Provide alternative trash disposal solutions or move a dumpster so it is accessible to you.
- Permit you to install a temporary ramp.
- Install ramp or automatic doors.
- Install shower grab bars or lowered counters.

My Life, My Community

Can I get help paying for reasonable accommodations or modifications?

There are several sources of funding that can assist individuals with covering the costs of reasonable modifications to their units. These include:

DD Waiver Environmental Modifications Program is available to individuals receiving DD Waiver Services. Through this service, physical adaptations can be made to an individual's primary residence to ensure the individual's health, safety and welfare or that enables the individual to function with greater independence. For more information please visit: http://www.easyaccess.virginia.gov/waiver-ifdds.shtml# or www.dmas.virginia.gov

VHDA Rental Unit Accessibility Modification (RUAM) Program is a grant that helps to improve accessibility of rental housing for renters with disabilities. The Fair Housing laws requires property owners/landlords to permit modifications to a unit to make it barrier-free. In most cases the cost of the modifications fall on the tenants shoulders. RUAM can help cover the cost. For more information on how to apply click on: http://www.vhda.com/Renters/Pages/AccessibleRentalHousing.aspx#.WA-0soWcE2y.
Look for the Rental Unit Accessibility Modification (RUAM) application at the bottom of the page.

DBHDS Flexible Funding is available to help individuals with a developmental disabilities transition to or maintain their own home in the community. Individuals in the Settlement Agreement Population (example: age 18 and older, have a developmental disability receiving DD Waiver Services or on the waitlist to receive DD Waiver Services) have access to up to $5,000 to assist with costs to transition to a home they lease, including environmental modifications not covered by DD Waiver Services. Environmental modifications can include equipment or modifications of remedial or medical benefit to the individual's primary home, as well as specialized medical equipment, durable/non-durable medical equipment, adaptive devices, appliances with controls which enable greater independence and equipment and devices which enable communication. To find out more information click here:
http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/individuals-and-families/developmental-disabilities/community-support-services:
Click the housing tab and scroll down towards the bottom of the page and you will see a header for Flexible Funding.

How do I request a reasonable accommodations or modification?

If you need a reasonable accommodation or modification, you must ask for it. Put your request in writing to the landlord and keep a copy for your records. Your request must share the fact that you have a disability and describe the changes you need. You must also explain why you need to have the changes. You do not need to share details about your disability. In most cases, a landlord has the right to ask for proof that you need the reasonable accommodation. Your medical provider or case manager can write a letter on your behalf. It is also important to ask for a response for your request within a specified time period (usually 10 days).

Use the Sample Letter for requesting a reasonable accommodation/modification on the next page to prepare your letter. Keep a copy of your letter, and be sure it has the date.

Sample Letter to Request Reasonable Accommodations and/or Modifications

[DATE]

[NAME OF LANDLORD]

[ADDRESS]

Re: Reasonable Accommodation/Modification Request

Dear [LANDLORD]:

I am writing this letter to request a reasonable accommodation/modification related to my disability and housing. I need the following accommodations:

[LIST ACCOMMODATION(S)/MODIFICATION(S)].

EXAMPLES: I need transfer bars to safely use the toilet

I need a live-in aid to assist me with activities of daily living

I need a service animal to alert me before I have a seizure

I have enclosed a letter from my health care provider supporting my need for the requested accommodation(s)/modification(s). Please respond to this request in writing within the next ten days. I look forward to talking with you further about this request. I can be reached at [email address] or by phone at [phone number]. Sincerely,

Signature

Resident Name

What if they ignore my request?

Contact the US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and other organizations- If your request for an accommodation or modification goes unanswered or is denied, you may file a complaint with HUD. HUD has an online system that enables individuals to file housing discrimination complaints based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability. Complaints will be reviewed by a fair housing specialist to determine if it alleges acts that might violate the Fair Housing Act. The specialist will contact you for any additional information needed to complete this review. If your complaint involves a possible violation of the Fair Housing Act, the specialist will assist you in filing an official housing discrimination complaint.

Virginia Fair Housing Office
9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 400
Richmond, VA 23233
Phone: 804-367-8530 TOLL FREE: 888-551-3247
TDD: Call Virginia Relay 711

The Equal Rights Center
11 Dupont Circle N.W., Suite 450
Washington, D.C. 20036
Phone: 202-234-3062 Toll Free: 866-719-4372
TTY: 202- 234-7590
Fax: 202-234-3106

Housing Opportunities Made Equal of VA, Inc.
626 E. Broad St., Suite 400,
Richmond, VA 23219
Phone: 804-354-0641 VA Relay: 711
Fax: 804-354-0690

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20410
Phone: 202-708-1112

My Life, My Community

Leasing

- What is a lease and what should it say?
- What is a security deposit and how do I get it back?
- Can I get help with paying a security deposit?
- How do I pay my monthly rent?

My Life, My Community

What is a lease?

A lease is a signed contract between a landlord and tenant. It gives the tenant the right to live in a property for a certain period of time, in return for scheduled payments called "rent". The lease outlines certain rules the landlord and tenant must follow related to the property. Make sure you understand the lease before signing it. If needed, sit down with family or a case manager to read it together. Do not rely on any verbal promises from a landlord. Instead, insist on a written lease with all agreements in writing. Keep a copy of the lease for your own records. Before moving in, take pictures of the condition of the apartment, including areas in the apartment that are in poor condition. Copy those pictures for your landlord, date them, and add them to your lease packet.

What should my lease say?

Make sure your lease has the following items:

- Name, address, phone of landlord
- Name and new address of the tenant
- Length of the lease and conditions for renewal
- Amount of the rent and deposits
- Persons who may occupy the apartment
- Dates that rent is due
- Where rent payment is to be made
- Amount of late fee if rent is not paid on time
- Responsibilities of the landlord and tenant
- Contact information for emergency maintenance
- Conditions for termination of the lease
- Deposits and conditions for their return
- Landlord and tenant utility responsibilities

What is a security deposit?

A security deposit is a payment required by a landlord from a tenant to cover expenses for unpaid rent or any repairs of damages to a unit greater than normal "wear and tear." The security deposit must be returned to the tenant shortly after the tenant moves out of the unit, less the cost of repairing any unusual damage. By law, property owners may collect a security deposit, however this deposit must be placed in a separate interest-bearing bank account until the end of your tenancy. In private housing, the security deposit may be up to two times the rent; in subsidized housing, it will be less. Typically, a security deposit and first month's rent are collected together. That can be a lot of money to pay at one time, so plan ahead to save this money or get assistance with the security deposit from another source. Your case manager can assist you in finding resources to assist with paying for the security deposit. After paying the security deposit, be sure to get a receipt.

How do I get my security deposit back?

Your lease will outline your specific rights to:

- Have the apartment inspected by the landlord in your presence when you move in.
- Be present when the landlord inspects the apartment when you move out to determine if you damaged the unit while you lived there.
- Have the landlord notify you in writing of the inspection date.
- Receive a written list of the damages and how much they cost to repair.
- Have the landlord provide in writing the amount of the security deposit he/she is keeping.
- Have the landlord return any unused portion of the security deposit to you in a timely manner.

My Life, My Community

Can I get help with paying a security deposit?

The upfront costs to rent a place of your own such as a security deposit, utility deposits, furniture or modifications can be a financial hardship for many people. There may be financial assistance to help with these upfront costs. If you are in the Medicaid DD Waiver program or on the DD Waiver waitlist, your case manager can link you to programs that help pay security deposits, including the following resources. These resources may vary by location.

DBHDS Flex Fund: "Flexible Funds" are available to help people with a developmental disability transition to or maintain their own home in the community of their choice. Individuals in the Settlement Agreement population (age 18 and older, have a developmental disability as defined in the Code of Virginia, receiving DD Waiver Services or on the waitlist to receive DD Waiver Services) have access to up to $5,000 to assist with transition expenses, including security deposits. To find out more information click here: http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/individuals-and-families/developmental-disabilities/community-support-services: Click the housing tab and scroll down towards the bottom of the page and you will see a header for Flexible Funding.

Waiver-Transition Services: The DD Waiver provides home and community-based services for individuals six (6) years of age and older who need significant support due to a developmental disability (such as autism, cerebral palsy, or spina bifida) but who do not have a diagnosis of intellectual disability. The services are for individuals transitioning from institutions or licensed or certified provider-operated living arrangements to private residences where person pays own living expenses. Funds cover an array of expenses up to $5,000 per individual, including security deposits. Go to http://www.easyaccess.virginia.gov/waiver-ifdds.shtml# for more information on how to apply.

My Life, My Community

Can I get help with paying a security deposit?

Region 1 Western

Monticello Area Community Action Agency Rural Outreach - Provides financial assistance for housing and utility deposits as well as other emergency situations. www.macaa.org/
Providing Services in: Albemarle County, Fluvanna County, Louisa County, Nelson County and City of Charlottesville.

Region 2 Northern Virginia

Catholics for Housing Security deposit assistance is available to individuals that currently have an income of 50% or less of the area median income and pay more than 50% of their income towards rent. Types of assistance available: Security deposit assistance; Senior rental assistance in Fairfax County only; Rental homes in Vienna, Arlington, Fairfax and Fredericksburg only. http://cfhva.org/

Quin Rivers, Inc. Homeless Intervention - Rent and security deposit assistance through grants. Providing Services in: Caroline County, King George County, Spotsylvania County, Stafford County and City of Fredericksburg. www.quinrivers.org/

Region 3 South Western Virginia

Appalachian Community Action & Development Agency, Inc. Homeless Prevention Program – Provides limited financial assistance for rent and security deposits. Provides Services in: Lee County, Scott County, Wise County and City of Norton. www.appcaa.org/

New River Community Action Housing & Homeless Prevention – Financial assistance if available to those households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Financial assistance can pay for deposits, rent and utilities. Provides Services in: Floyd County, Giles County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County and City of Radford. www.swva.net/nrca/

My Life, My Community

Can I get help with paying a security deposit?

Region 4 Central Virginia

Capital Area Partnership Uplifting People Emergency Services – Aids low income citizens with rent assistance, utility assistance and other services to prevent homelessness. Providing Services in: Dinwiddie County, Prince George County, City of Hopewell, City of Petersburg and City of Richmond. www.capup.org/

Quin Rivers, Inc. Homeless Intervention - Rent and security deposit assistance through grants. Providing Services in: Charles City County, Hanover County and New Kent County. www.quinrivers.org/

Region 5 Eastern Virginia

Stop Inc. Homeless Prevention Program – On a limited basis, aids families in crisis situations by providing short-term financial assistance (first month's rent, rent payment and utility payment). Provides Services in: Isle of Wright County, Southampton County, City of Chesapeake, City of Franklin, City of Norfolk, City of Portsmouth, City of Suffolk and City of Virginia Beach. www.stopinc.org/

Quin Rivers, Inc. Homeless Intervention - Rent and security deposit assistance through grants. Providing Services in: King William County and King and Queen County. www.quinrivers.org/

My Life, My Community

How do I pay my monthly rent?

Follow these steps for paying the rent every month

1. Pay the full amount you owe for rent on time every month.
2. Keep a copy of the canceled check or money order receipt.
3. Keep electronic receipts from your bank.
4. Obtain a rent receipt from the landlord if you pay by cash, check or money order.

What if I miss paying the rent?

If you do not pay the full amount you owe for rent or you pay your rent after the due date, the landlord may charge a late fee. This fee is listed in your lease and the landlord cannot charge more than the fee listed in the lease. If you do not pay your rent, the landlord may take legal steps to collect the rent or to evict you for non-payment. Eviction means you would no longer be allowed to live in the apartment. So, always pay your rent on time. If you anticipate having difficulty paying the rent, contact your family and support team early. It's also a good idea to let the landlord know if you will have difficulty paying your rent, especially if this is temporary. Sometimes they are willing to work with you to avoid you being evicted.

Moving

How do I prepare for my move?

Should I get renters insurance?

How much will moving cost?

My Life,
My Community

How do I prepare for my move?

After the lease is signed, it is time to prepare for your move. Follow these steps before the big day:

1. Contact phone, cable, and utilities to arrange service.
2. Fill out a change of address at the post office.
3. Send new address to bank, employment office, health insurance etc.
4. Inform friends and family of new address.
5. Plan for parking spaces and elevator needs on move day.
6. Tell employer or public benefits where to mail income check.
7. Learn transportation routes.
8. Transfer prescriptions to a nearby pharmacy.
9. Copy new house keys and give an extra set to family or other designated person.

My Life, My Community

Should I get renters insurance?

Landlords are not responsible if your personal property is damaged or stolen. Sometimes renters buy renters' insurance to provide that protection. A typical policy costs $75 to $150 per year. Before you buy, compare prices offered by more than one company. Also check to see if any special equipment you will have in your home is covered. In all cases, take pictures and keep receipts of your valuables. You can get more information about renters' insurance at:

http://www.rentersinsurance.net/virginia.html

DISCLAIMER. DBHDS has provided a list of sites; however, we do not endorse any site. The list of websites above are provided for general information purposes only. Your use of any of these sites is at your own risk.

How much will moving cost?

If you have only a few belongings, you can make a move without much cost. Friends and family may be able to help. For those who can afford it, a moving company can be the right choice. Some moving companies will also pack belongings for an extra fee. Use the Moving Expenses Worksheet to add up your costs.

MOVING EXPENSE WORKSHEET			
Common Expenses		Extra Expenses	
Security Deposit	$	Moving Company or Van Rental Fees	$
First Month's Rent	$	Purchase Of Household Items	$
Utility Deposits	$	Purchase Of Furniture	$
Connection fees for Cable, Telephone	$	Other:	$
Boxes, Packing Materials	$	Other:	$
Subtotal:	$	Subtotal:	$
Total			$

Upon move in, be prepared to complete an inspection of the unit and write down anything that is broken or not working properly. It is a good idea to take pictures before you move your belongings in to refer back to when you move out. Keep the pictures and a copy of the inspection in a safe place along with a copy of your lease.

Maintaining

What is the landlord responsible for?

What am I responsible for as a tenant?

How do I stay safe in my home?

What emergency supplies do I need?

Who will help me in emergency situations?

What is the landlord responsible for?

The Landlord is responsible for providing you the following:

- Drinkable water in kitchen and bathroom
- Hot water
- Working Heating System
- Working Sewer System
- Bathroom with working sink, tub or shower, and toilet
- Safe working electrical system
- Locking exterior door(s)
- Living space free of pests (bugs or rodents)
- Clean and safe building and grounds
- Working smoke alarms
- Providing advance notice if they need to access the unit for repairs and maintenance
- Information on how to protect yourself from lead if the building was built before 1978

What am I responsible for as a tenant?

As the tenant, you are responsible for:

- Paying rent on time and in full
- Keeping the unit clean by sweeping/mopping floors, washing dishes and performing light maintenance such as changing light bulbs and taking out the trash
- Keeping the unit in good condition and using the appliances properly
- Requesting repairs in writing as soon as possible
- Following the rules as outlined in your lease (example, keep a noise level that allows neighbors the right to quiet enjoyment of their units; no illegal activities; rules for visitors; approval for additional occupants etc.)
- Keeping a copy of all written correspondence between you and the landlord

My Life, My Community

How do I stay safe in my home?

It is important to create a safe home environment and avoid conditions that could cause you harm. This can be done with a little planning. Talk with your family, friends and support team about how to prevent emergencies and what should be done in emergency situations. Here are a few tips to consider:

Safety Steps To Prepare For An Emergency
Write Down "DIAL 911 For Emergency"
Write Down "DIAL 1-800-222-1222 For Poison Control"
Write Down a list of important contacts (example: Leasing Office, Property Maintenance, Support Coordinator/Case Manager, Family etc.). Keep this information in a safe place.
Learn how to use a fire extinguisher and where it is kept
Test smoke alarms often-replace batteries once a year
Inform Landlord of non-working smoke alarms
Keep all medical and allergy information in a safe place

My Life, My Community

What emergency supplies do I need?

In case you need to leave your home in an emergency you should have an emergency kit. Here are some examples of the supplies you should keep in your emergency kit:

- Flashlight and batteries
- First aid kit
- 3 day supply of medication
- Extra pair of eye glasses
- Map of the area
- 3 gallons of water per person
- 3 day supply of ready to eat food (canned or packaged)
- Manual can opener
- Paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrush, sanitizer, etc.)
- Credit card or cash
- Portable radio and batteries
- Cell phone and phone charger
- Important telephone numbers
- Extra clothing, weather gear, sturdy shoes

My Life, My Community

Who will help me in an emergency situation?

You should write down the name and contact information for each one of these individuals.

- Who can help me with heath problems _____
- Who can I call if I have issues with my home_____
- Who can I call if I have security issues_____
- Who can help in a personal emergency_____

Keep your emergency kit and emergency contact information in an easily accessible place in case an emergency arrives and you need to access them quickly.

My Life, My Community

Leaving

How do I renew my lease?

How do I end my tenancy?

How do I get my security deposit back?

Final inspection

My Life, My Community

How do I renew my lease?

The process to renew your lease should be written in the original lease you signed when you moved in. The lease renewal should have the new dates of tenancy and any changes to the lease, such as a new rent amount or changes in late payment fees. It is important to understand the lease renewal before signing it. If needed, sit down with family or a case manager and read it together before signing it. Do not rely on any verbal promises from the landlord and insist that everything is written on the lease renewal before you sign it. Lease renewal can be a great time to renegotiate the terms of your lease. Make sure to get a copy of your lease renewal for your records.

How do I end my tenancy?

When you have decided to move out, be prepared to follow the required steps listed on your lease. Your lease should outline how much advance notice you must give the landlord to move out at the end of your lease (example: 30 days advance notice/60 days advance notice). Keep in mind that it is not necessary to give a reason for ending a tenancy, if you give proper notice. However, you may lose your security deposit or pay an additional penalty if you do not provide the minimum advance notice required in the lease. So, plan for the possibility of extra expenses if the lease for your next apartment begins before your current one ends.

Likewise, if the landlord chooses not to renew your lease, they must provide advance notice in writing to you, so you will have time to find other housing arrangements. Landlords also do not need to give a reason for ending a lease, as long as they give tenants a proper notice.

How do I get my security deposit back?

Security Deposits are returned after move out if the unit does not show damages beyond normal wear and tear. If you damage the property, or do not pay rent, the landlord can keep the money to cover the cost of damage, unpaid rent or late fees. Follow the steps below to get your deposit back:

- Review the lease to see what you have to do to get your deposit back
- Completely remove all personal items from the property
- Clean closets, refrigerator, stove
- Clean the space thoroughly and make sure to sweep, mop and vacuum
- Make minor repairs to the space; patch up wall holes
- Take pictures for your records showing the condition of the unit upon move out
- Perform a walk thru with the landlord
- Return all keys

Final inspection

- Make sure that you are present when the landlord performs the inspection when you move out to verify the condition of the property.
- If there are issues identified in the inspection make sure to get those issues in writing.
- If the landlord is taking a portion of or all of your deposit ask for that in writing.

Key Resources

- Affordable Housing Search Resources
- Virginia Housing Resources
- Virginia Rental Laws
- Housing Discrimination Offices
- Advocacy Organizations
- Help Paying Expenses to Obtain Housing
- Renters Insurance Information
- Moving Resources

My Life, My Community

Affordable Housing Search Resources

Virginia Housing Search - www.virginiahousingsearch.com
HUD Housing Search - www.hud.gov/apps/section8
U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development 515 Multifamily Properties - https://rdmfhrentals.sc.egov.usda.gov/RDMFHRentals/mfhcounties?st_cd=VA&fips=51&name=Virginia
Low Income Housing Tax Credit Properties - www.vhda.com/BusinessPartners/MFDevelopers/LIHTCProgram/LowIncome%20Housing%20Tax%20Credit%20Program/Existing%20TC%20Property%20List%20010816.xls
Go Section 8- www.gosection8.com
Craigslist- www.craigslist.com
Local Realtors Online- www.realtor.com/rentals

My Life, My Community

DISCLAIMER: DBHDS has provided a list of sites; however, we do not endorse any site. The list of websites above are provided for general information purposes only. Your use of any of these sites is at your own risk.

Virginia Housing Resources

Directory of Rural Housing and Service Providers - www.housingvirginia.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Rural-Directory-Draft-reduced-size.pdf
VHDA-How to be a Successful Renter - www.vhda.com/Renters/Documents/RenterHandbook.pdf
Access VA - www.accessva.org/index.html
Northern Virginia Regional Commission - www.novaregion.org/index.aspx?NID=168
Arlington Affordable Housing - https://housing.arlingtonva.us/affordable-housing/
Better Housing Coalition - www.betterhousingcoalition.org

Virginia Rental Laws

Virginia Landlord Tenant Act - http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/images/Housing/Landload-Tenant-Handbook.pdf
Local Tenant Rights, Laws and Protections: Virginia – https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/virginia/renting/tenantrights

My Life, My Community

DISCLAIMER: DBHDS has provided a list of sites; however, we do not endorse any site. The list of websites above are provided for general information purposes only. Your use of any of these sites is at your own risk.

Housing Discrimination Offices

Virginia Fair Housing Office - www.dpor.virginia.gov/fairhousing
The Equal Rights Center - https://equalrightscenter.org/our-programs/fair-housing/
Arlington, VA Human Rights Committee - https://commissions.arlingtonva.us/human-rights-commission-hrc/
Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia - http://homeofva.org/get-help/housing-discrimination#.WGLQif6QyUk
US Department of Housing and Urban Development - https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/housing_discrimination

Advocacy Organizations

Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia - http://homeofva.org/get-help/housing-discrimination#.WGLQif6QyUk
Resources for Independent Living - www.ril-va.org
Centers for Independent Living - www.vadrs.org/cbs/cilslisting.htm
The disAbility Resource Center - http://www.cildrc.org/services-for-people-with-disabilities/ (Fredericksburg Area)

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Help Paying Expenses to Obtain Housing

DBHDS Flexible Funding - (click the housing tab and scroll to Flex Funds) www.dbhds.virginia.gov/individuals-and-families/developmental-disabilities/community-support-services
Waiver-Transition Services - http://www.easyaccess.virginia.gov/waiver-ifdds.shtml#

Region 1 – Western Virginia (financial assistance for security deposits, first months rent and/or utility deposits)
Monticello Area Community Action Agency - www.macaa.org/
Region 2 – Northern Virginia (financial assistance for security deposits, first months rent and/or utility deposits)
Catholics for Housing - http://cfhva.org/
Quin Rivers, Inc. - www.quinrivers.org/
Region 3 – South Western Virginia (financial assistance for security deposits, first months rent and/or utility deposits)
Appalachian Community Action & Development Agency, Inc. - www.appcaa.org/
New River Community Action - www.swva.net/nrca/

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Help Paying Expenses to Obtain Housing

Region 4 – Central Virginia (financial assistance for security deposits, first months rent and/or utility deposits)
Capital Area Partnership Uplifting www.capup.org/
Quin Rivers, Inc. - www.quinrivers.org/
Region 5 – Eastern Virginia (financial assistance for security deposits, first months rent and/or utility deposits)
Stop Inc. - www.stopinc.org/
Quin Rivers, Inc. - www.quinrivers.org/

Renters Insurance Information

www.rentersinsurance.net/virginia.html

Moving Resources

Uhaul - https://www.uhaul.com/Locations/
Google movers in your area – www.google.com

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