

THE VERMONT AHEC NETWORK

Clinical Rotation Homestay Housing for Health Professions Students and Residents

Overview

The Vermont Area Health Education Centers (VT AHEC) Network coordinates temporary, community-based housing for health professions students and residents during their Vermont-based clinical rotations that are greater than 30 miles from their main training campus. Participation in this program is voluntary.

The overarching goal of VT AHEC is to provide statewide health workforce development programs that support an appropriate, current and future, healthcare workforce so that all Vermonters have access to health care. As a workforce development initiative, the aim for our homestay housing is to eliminate the need for temporary housing as a barrier to clinical rotation experiences outside Chittenden County and throughout Vermont. Exposure to different geographic areas, medical practice sites, and diverse populations around the state is an opportunity for trainees to explore Vermont and cultivate relationships—with an eye on future employment and establishing roots.

Homestay housing located in Caledonia, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, and Orleans Counties is coordinated by Northern VT AHEC (802-748-2506). The Southern VT AHEC (802-885-2126) coordinates housing in Addison, Bennington, Rutland, Windham, and Windsor Counties. AHEC homestay housing is not available in Chittenden and Washington Counties.



Homestay housing relies on the generosity of community member housing hosts. Collaborating with AHEC, hosts offer trainees a place to stay at no-cost for the duration of their clinical rotation. Housing hosts are typically community members seeking a way to actively participate in training and recruiting the next generation of Vermont’s health care workforce. These housing arrangements are intended as an immersion opportunity into the culture of a community. AHEC encourages trainees to take advantage of this brief stay to learn about rural Vermont, the assets (including recreation and entertainment) and needs of the community, and any localized social determinants of health. Housing hosts provide valuable insight contributing to a deeper understanding of the people, place, and health care system of a region. Through the overall clinical rotation experiences, trainees are well-prepared to reflect—*What is it like to live, learn, and work in this community? What is it like to deliver/receive medical care in this community? What are the implications for healthy populations?*

In homestay arrangements, vetted by AHEC, trainees are provided a private space; specific amenities vary. It is important to acknowledge upfront that homestays are not impersonal, like hotel accommodations. In homestays, an individual or family is welcoming a stranger into their home and providing hospitality. This requires consideration of, and attention to, social interactions. An enriching and successful homestay requires a trainee to approach it with an open mind and desire to leverage the opportunity to learn and grow. AHEC provides hosts and trainees with guidelines, sets expectations, and requires a mutually agreed upon commitment prior to any homestay arrangement. Housing host and student profiles, facilitated by AHEC, are provided once arrangements are confirmed.

Requests for AHEC homestay housing are initiated by the clinical placement/clerkship coordinators. AHEC housing is limited and cannot be guaranteed (UVM/UVMCC trainees are priorities for placement). Adequate lead time for coordination and planning is necessary. A request for housing must be made at least one month prior to the start date of a trainee’s rotation. AHEC makes every effort to match trainee requests for housing with accommodations that meet their needs. However, we cannot guarantee that all requests can be met, or that requests will be met to exact specification. A signed confirmation form, stipulating that the trainee agrees to abide by the housing program guidelines, is due to the regional AHEC ten days prior to the housing start date. This confirmation form includes attestation that the trainee commits to the housing arranged for the duration of the rotation.