

From: Madeline Russell <MadelineR@howardcenter.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2022 11:58 AM
To: LCOM Office of the Dean
Subject: Connecting with Howard Center SLP program

Hello!

My name is Maddie Russell, and I am the Shared Living Provider (SLP) manager over at the Howard Center. I currently oversee our SLP program which involves individuals signing up to either live in a home with, or share their home with one of our developmental services clients for a generous tax-free stipend. While it is not required, some of our best shared living providers are individuals who come from a health care background. Due to this, I am writing because I'd love to forge some connections with staff at the College of Medicine who may be interested in disseminating some of our opportunities to the students! We have some opportunities that can provide housing or mostly passive income for care providers which may be perfect for individuals who are still in school. I've attached some information about our program and am also happy to talk on the phone to discuss it further!

I'd also love to connect with anyone else you may know of who sends employment opportunities to students.

Hope to hear from you soon!

[Maddie Russell \(She/her\)](#)

Shared Living Provider Manager

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SHARED LIVING PROGRAM

The Shared Living Program is a residential program that allows adults with intellectual disabilities to live with a person or people in a roommate situation to ensure that their needs are being met. Shared living provides a flexible model of support that can meet a variety of people's needs while honoring individual choice, relationships, and community. The need for residential support is determined by the individual's needs assessment and documented in the **Individual Support Agreement (ISA)**. An ISA is an agreement between the individual receiving services, the individual's guardian, and the Howard Center. The ISA describes the Medicaid supports expected based on the needs that the individual and his or her team have prioritized, including home support. No more than two unrelated individuals who receive shared living home support may live in the same home unless the home is licensed as a Residential Care Home by the Vermont Division of Licensing and Protection.

WHAT IS A SHARED LIVING PROVIDER?

Shared living providers are contracted to support one or two adults in their homes. Shared living providers are responsible for the individuals who live with them, though individuals may receive additional support during the course of a day (e.g., community support, employment support, respite, and schooling). Shared living providers operate under contract with the Howard Center and **are not considered Howard Center staff or employees**. As independent contractors, shared living providers are not subject to wage and hour laws, workers compensation or unemployment insurance.

WHO CAN BE A SHARED LIVING PROVIDER?

A person or household with the desire to share their home and family life may become a Howard Center contracted shared living provider under the following conditions:

- Reside in Chittenden County
- Meet with the Howard Center's shared living recruiter to initiate steps for program eligibility
- Submit a Shared Living Program Application
- Submit to a background check as required by the Vermont Department of Aging and Independent Living (includes the following registries and databases: Child Abuse Registry, Adult Abuse Registry, Vermont Criminal Database, Federal Exclusions Databases, and Department of Motor Vehicles Database).
- All 18+ household members who live full- or part-time in the home must also submit to the above mentioned background check.
- Participation in the trainings listed below as required by the Vermont Division of Developmental Services

Once these requirements are met, the applicant is contacted by the Howard Center's shared living recruiter. If the application does not meet selection criteria, the applicant will be notified by mail. If the application is approved, the applicant becomes eligible for shared living opportunities and a preliminary housing safety inspection is initiated prior to the matching process.

TRAININGS REQUIRED FOR SHARED LIVING PROVIDERS

Pre-Service Orientation <u>Required prior to providing supports</u>	This training provides an overview of the history of Developmental Services in Vermont and explains how the Howard Center came to be. The training also covers key information on abuse reporting, values, best practices, medication administration, universal precautions and blood borne pathogens, and policies and procedures within the service system.
Basic First Aid/ CPR <u>Required within the first 3 months of providing supports</u>	Participants will learn basic first aid skills and receive training in the following: wounds and burns, splints and slings, emergency response, sudden illness, and stopping bleeding. Upon completion participants will receive a certification in Basic First Aid. This training does not give participants an American Red Cross certification unless combined with CPR certification.

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<p>SLP Training <u>Required within the first 3 months of being a contracted SLP</u></p>	<p>This training covers the shared living contract, as it relates to person-centered care respect, confidentiality, HIPPA, incident reporting, support strategies, ISO/payroll issues, recruiting and training respite workers and more.</p>
<p>In-Service Training <u>Required within the first 3 months of providing supports</u></p>	<p>This training engages participants in efforts to improve the quality of services. Participants are encouraged to share and discuss their strategies to facilitate inclusion, support communication needs, self-advocacy, and self-determination as members of an individual's support team. This training connects the system of care funding and service structure material to the historical context covered in the Pre-Service training.</p>

SHARED LIVING OPPORTUNITIES AND MATCHING

Shared living opportunities are based on clients' needs, preferences, and goals, as identified in their **Individual Support Agreements** (ISA). Each Howard Center client is assigned a program manager who works as part of a larger team to further the goals outlined in a client's ISA.

During the matching process the client's team-- including the client, legal guardian (if applicable) and program manager -- considers which applicants are best suited to support the client's needs, preferences, and goals. During the matching process, a program manager sets up times for eligible applicants to meet with clients and guardians to provide care on a trial basis. Prospective shared living providers must demonstrate appropriate housing conditions and a willingness to abide by the terms of a Shared Living Contract. If a team, client, guardian, and applicant determine a match to be mutually compatible, a trial period commences and a housing safety and accessibility compliance inspection is initiated.

HOUSING SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

Housing safety and accessibility inspections are required by the **Vermont Department of Disability and Aging Services** (DDAS) when a client is placed in a private dwelling. It is the responsibility of the program manager as services coordinator to request an initial housing safety and accessibility inspection to be completed by a DDAS Housing Safety and Accessibility Consultant once a match has been made.

After the initial housing safety and accessibility inspection, the shared living provider is given a copy of the findings of the initial Housing Safety and Accessibility Checklist which details the property's deficiencies, if any, and the standard for the correction. The identifying data and date of review are entered into the Division of Disability and Aging Services' database (DDAS). DDAS requires all corrections noted on the Housing Safety and Accessibility Checklist to be completed within thirty (30) days from the date of the initial inspection. Physical safety is the responsibility of the shared living provider, and safety-related equipment such as smoke detectors are to be provided at the expense of the shared living provider or in some cases the landlord. If the home does not have the necessary accessibility accommodations, loans or funding may be available. If the accommodations add to the value of the home, such as a new bathroom or bedroom, the home provider is expected to pay toward the accommodations.

Once all deficiencies outlined in the initial housing safety and accessibility report have been corrected by the shared living provider within thirty (30) days of inspection, the Howard Center schedules a follow-up housing safety and accessibility inspection. If the property is in compliance the shared living provider, DDAS representative and Howard Center program manager sign the final inspection document and agree to maintain all the items on the checklist. The final checklist is then returned to the Division of Disability and Aging Services.

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For more information please see housing standards set forth by the State of Vermont:

[Housing Safety and Accessibility Checklist](#)

SHARED LIVING CONTRACTS

Shared living providers are self-employed and provide home supports as independent contractors. Shared living providers enter into contracts for the provision of home support with the Howard Center once a match between an individual and a Shared Living Provider has been determined to be an appropriate living option following the trial period.

Shared living providers maintain their qualified status by adhering to the shared living contract, DAIL-DDAS policy, and other pertinent State laws and regulations. The shared living contract describes in detail all terms and conditions, including the responsibilities of the Howard Center and the shared living provider. The Shared Living Program Contract clearly states what is expected of the provider and what is expected of the Howard Center. The provider's most important responsibility is to provide an environment for the client which is safe and secure, and where the client can thrive emotionally, physically, and socially.

Additional areas of responsibility include helping the client learn new skills and keeping a record of the progress, transporting the client to and from day program sites and/or community activities, attending a minimum number of trainings sponsored by Howard Center, and participating in Individual Support Agreement (ISA) meetings. Shared living providers are also expected to document activities, incidents, and other pertinent information.

In addition, shared living providers are required to maintain homeowner's or renter's insurance on the premises where the client is residing with liability coverage covering the shared living provider against claims for bodily injury, death, and property damage to others of not less than **\$300,000**. The shared living provider must also maintain automobile liability insurance with minimum limits of **\$300,000** for any vehicle used to transport clients.

PROGRAM MANAGERS:

Program managers are responsible for monitoring the shared living provider's compliance with the contract. Shared living providers are expected to maintain regular and effective communication with the program managers of the individual, who lives with them, and work cooperatively and facilitate relationships with the individual's guardian and/or natural family, if any and as appropriate.

The most important aspect of the Howard Center's responsibilities is to ensure that the placement is a positive experience for both the client and provider. To meet this expectation, the Howard Center offers the provider adequate compensation, training, and respite services. In addition, the Howard Center maintains regular contact with both the provider and client so that issues or problems can be addressed in a timely and proactive manner.

COMPENSATION:

Tax-exempt Stipend: Shared Living Providers have annual contracts and are paid a monthly stipend for providing supervision, training, social supports, transportation and community integration. Compensation for the services provided by shared living providers is exempt from federal and Vermont state income tax. The stipend offered to a shared living provider is based upon a number of factors; most prominently the needs of the individual and specialized skills and experience required of the shared living provider.

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SHARED LIVING PROVIDER QUALIFICATIONS		COMPENSATION
Level 1 Basic Model	Shared Living Provider shares home or apartment with client and provides basic health and safety oversight to clients who are not physically challenged, are out of the home during the day, have stable health, are able to manage self-care, and are able to spend a portion of time unsupervised.	Stipend: \$25,000 - \$30,000
		Room and board: \$760.69/mo
		Respite funds
Level 2 Higher Needs Model	Shared Living Provider shares home or apartment with client and provides some level of supervision and support. Is available 24 hours a day and who have needs in one or more of the following areas: Health care, self-care, behavioral supports, physical challenges, incontinence, or skill development.	Stipend: \$30,000 - \$35,000
		Room and board: \$760.69/mo
		Respite funds
Level 3 Specialized Capacity Model	Shared Living Provider shares home or apartment with client and provides substantial health or behavioral supports to clients that pose either public safety concerns self or others OR provides 24 hour support to client with specific needs in two or more of the following areas: significant personal/self-care, communication supports, (i.e. sign language, AAC), sleeping or overnight support, incontinence, significant mental health issues, wandering.	Stipend: \$35,000 - \$40,000
		Room and board: \$760.69/mo
		Respite funds

Room and Board: In addition to the tax-exempt monthly stipend the shared living provider receives a monthly room and board payment for the individual's housing and food expenses. Room and board is paid from the individual's Supplemental Security Income (SSI), other Social Security benefits, wages or other income. The Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living establishes the amount of monthly room and board; this is the same amount for all individuals in shared living, regardless of the individual's income. The current rate is **\$760.69/ mo.**

Homestead Exemption: Vermont property taxes for a home are based upon the assessed value of the property but they are adjusted for each homeowner based upon household income. Household income includes room and board paid to the homeowner in his or her role as a the shared living provider, but stipend payments made to the homeowner as a home provider are excluded from the calculation of total household income.

ARIS/ Respite and Community Supports: Respite funds and community support resources are available to shared living providers [based upon client needs as identified in their ISA.](#)