

San Diego Shared Housing Collaborative Housemate Search and Engagement Toolkit

Welcome to the San Diego Shared Housing Collaborative. This toolkit will guide you through the process of finding and engaging potential housemates for shared housing opportunities in San Diego.

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Getting Started

Portal Registration

1. Visit the San Diego Shared Housing Collaborative portal. The link will be provided via email.
2. Click on the "Register" button.
3. Fill out the required registration information.

Logging In

1. Go to the portal's login page.
2. Enter your email and password.
3. Click "Login."

Completing Your Profile

1. Click on the “Shared Housing Profile” link.
2. Click on the yellow button to start or continue a shared housing application.
3. Follow the steps to add or edit your personal details, disclosure agreements, housing preferences, housemate preferences, and housemate search.
 - a. Personal Details
 - i. The information collected on this page is not visible to other portal users. Providing this data helps the San Diego Shared Housing Collaborative (SDSHC) tailor its offerings and services to your needs and preferences. This data also enables the SDSHC to analyze trends, make informed operations decisions, and improve the platform based on user demographics.
 - ii. If there are multiple members of your household, please check the appropriate box and ensure the other adult members of your household also register and complete a shared housing profile in the portal.
 - b. Data Sharing Disclosure Agreement
 - i. Please read each disclosure to ensure you are informed about how your personal information will be used, shared, and safeguarded.
 - ii. Once you have finished reading the disclosures, please enter your name exactly as it appears in the space below if you would like to continue in the Shared Housing Profile process.
 - iii. You will not be able to continue in the process without entering your name to acknowledge you have read, understand, and agree to the disclosures.
 - c. Housing Preferences
 - i. The information collected on this page is not visible to other portal users. The SDSHC and collaborating agencies will use it to help facilitate your search for shared housing.
 - ii. Enter the dates you would like to move into shared housing. It is ok if that date is the same day as you are completing your profile.
 - iii. For the “Regional Preferences” section, select preferences for at least three locations in San Diego County you’d like to live and the number of bedrooms you are looking for, which should be based on the number of housemates you are open to. For example, if your top preference is to live in Central San Diego with one housemate, you will select “Central (San Diego City) / 2 bedroom” from the dropdown list.
 - d. Housemate Preferences
 - i. Information entered on this page will be used to identify individuals who may be compatible with you as housemates. Ensure your responses are as accurate as possible. The more accurate your responses are the more aligned your housemate search results will be.
 - ii. Please complete this section even if you already have a housemate identified as your responses will help ensure alignment.
 - iii. To maintain anonymity during the housemate search phase, we recommend entering a unique Screen Name in the space provided.
 - iv. In the comment box, you also can write a short bio about yourself with information you’d like potential housemates to know about you.
 - v. If you do not want your answers to the Housemate Preferences questions to be visible to other portal users, uncheck the box beneath the sentence stating, “Display your information in Housemate Search Results.”
 - e. Housemate Search & Housemate Summary (*please see the Searching for Housemates and Messaging and Communication sections below*)
 - f. Shared Housing Selections Summary

- i. Once you have completed your shared housing profile, you will advance to the Shared Housing Selection Summary, which will show your profile start and completion dates.
- ii. Please note, this page will not show your housemate selections. This information can be found on the “Housemate Search & Housemate Summary” section and in “My Details.”

Searching for Housemates

Suggested Housemates

1. Once you have completed the “Housemate Preferences” step, go to the "Housemate Search & Housemate Summary” section.
2. To see housemates based on compatibility results generated by the portal, click on the “Suggested Housemates” link.
3. Browse through profiles and click on those that interest you. Look for shared interests and compatibility factors.
4. Reach out to potential housemates by sending a message.

Search by Name

1. If you already have a housemate in mind, click on the “Search for Housemate by Name” link.
2. Enter their portal screen name, first name, or last name and click on the “Search” button.
3. If you do not want the system generated results to include individuals who aren’t available to be matched, check the box above the “Search” button.
4. Browse through the returned profiles and click on those that interest you.
5. Reach out to potential housemates by sending a message.

Search by Preference

1. If there are certain preferences that are more important to you than others, click on the “Search for Housemates by Living Preferences” link.
2. Select and input your answers for up to three preferences that are most important to you in a housemate and click on the “Search” button.
3. If you do not want the system generated results to include individuals who aren’t available to be matched, check the box above the “Search” button.
4. Review the search results and contact potential matches.

Search Result Reminder

1. Don't be discouraged if the search results don't show a potential housemate. The search for a housemate requires patience and persistence. The portal will continue evolving, and new opportunities may arise.
2. Please continue to check the portal for potential matches and your Messages for incoming conversations and Housemate Requests.

Contacting Potential Housemates

Sending Personalized Messages

1. Use the portal's messaging feature to initially communicate with potential housemates, as it provides a layer of privacy and moderation, protecting your personal contact details.
2. Click on a user's profile and select the "Message" option.

3. Craft personalized messages when reaching out.
4. Mention common interests and why you think you'd be a good fit.
5. Be respectful and polite in your communication.
6. Don't share personal information like your address or social security number.

Managing Conversations

1. In the blue navigation bar, click on the three horizontal bars and select the "Messages" button. From here, you can access your inbox to view and manage your messages.
2. Keep track of your conversations with potential housemates.
3. Respond promptly and politely, maintaining open communication.

Scheduling Meetings

1. Arrange meetings or video calls to get to know each other better.
2. Prepare questions to ask and topics to discuss during the meeting. Feel free to use the Housemate Pairing Cards provided by your case manager or the SDSHC.
3. Assess compatibility and comfort levels.
4. If you need help coordinating an in-person meet-up or want to learn about scheduled group meet-ups, contact your case manager or the SDSHC at sharedhousing@townspeople.org.

Meeting in Person

Choosing a Safe Location

1. When meeting potential housemates in person, opt for well-lit public places like coffee shops.
2. Let someone you trust know where you're going and who you're meeting or consider bringing a friend to the initial meeting for an added layer of security.
3. Trust your instincts and always prioritize safety. If anything feels uncomfortable during your interactions, consider ending the conversation. Also, if you encounter suspicious or inappropriate behavior on the portal, report it to sharedhousing@townspeople.org for investigation and action.

Key Questions to Ask

1. What are your daily routines and schedules?
2. How do you handle shared expenses and household chores?
3. Have you lived with housemates before? What was your experience like?
4. More questions can be found in the Housemate Pairing Cards.

Finalizing Your Housemate Selection

Sending Housemate Requests

1. Once you identify a housemate, you can send them a Housemate Request by clicking the "Send Housemate Request" button in the portal. Remember to follow the SDSHC's "Recommendations for Engaging with Potential Housemates" and meet in-person before sending a Housemate Request.
2. Individuals you have sent Housemate Requests will appear at the bottom of the "Housemate Search & Housemate Summary" page under "Outgoing Requests" in the portal.
3. If your requested housemate accepts the request, they will appear beneath your profile in the portal.

4. Because you initiated the housemate request, your portal profile will appear as the “Group Leader”. If you prefer the other member of your housemate group to be the lead, you can click the “Make Group Leader” button.
5. If you later decide you do not want to be housemates with this person, you can remove them as a housemate by clicking on the “Cancel Housemate” button.

Housemate Agreement and Responsibilities

1. Using the Housemate Agreement template, draft a clear housemate agreement outlining expectations, responsibilities, rent and utility-sharing details, house rules, and communication methods between housemates.
2. Ensure all parties are comfortable with the terms before moving forward.
3. Always maintain open and respectful communication with your housemates.

By following these steps, you can effectively find and engage with potential housemates for a successful shared housing experience. Remember to prioritize safety, communication, and compatibility when making your decision.