

San Diego Shared Housing Collaborative Housing Search Toolkit

If you've already found a housemate and are now looking for housing opportunities together, this toolkit will help guide you through the process of searching for shared housing options.

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Determining Your Housing Preferences

Location, Budget, and Lifestyle

1. Discuss and agree upon your preferred location, considering proximity to work, school, and other amenities. Refer to the answers you provided in the portal in the Housing Preferences section.
2. Set a clear budget for rent, utilities, and shared expenses.
3. Consider your shared lifestyle, routines, and any specific requirements or preferences.

Creating a Joint Profile

Presenting Yourself as Housemates

1. Create a joint online profile if applicable on housing search websites or apps.
2. Include both of your names and a photo together.
3. Write a bio that highlights your compatibility as housemates and your housing preferences.

Searching for Shared Housing

Online Platforms and Resources

1. Explore housing search websites and apps.
 - a. [AffordableHousing.com](https://www.affordablehousing.com)
 - b. [ApartmentFinder.com](https://www.apartmentfinder.com)
 - c. [Apartments.com](https://www.apartments.com)
 - d. [Countywide Affordable Housing Directory](https://www.countywideaffordablehousing.com)
 - e. [Craigslist.com](https://www.craigslist.com)
 - f. [HotPads.com](https://www.hotpads.com)
 - g. [Rent.com](https://www.rent.com)
 - h. [San Diego Housing Search](https://www.sandiegohousing.com)
2. Use filters to find listings that match your joint criteria.
3. Contact property managers or listers to express your interest as a pair of housemates.

Applying for Housing

Communicating with Property Owners and Managers

1. Reach out to property owners and managers to inquire about available housing.
2. Clearly state that you are seeking housing as a pair of housemates.
3. Ask about application requirements and deadlines.

Visiting Properties

Questions to Ask During Viewings

1. Inquire about the number of bedrooms and bathrooms.
2. Ask about rent, security deposits, and utility arrangements.
3. Discuss house rules and any specific considerations for housemates.
4. Check for any maintenance or safety concerns.

Finalizing Your Housing Choice

Negotiating a Bifurcated Lease with the Property Owner or Manager

The SDSHC recommends housemates each have their own lease with their own bedroom. To negotiate a bifurcated lease (a lease where each housemate signs a separate lease agreement with the property owner or manager), we recommend following these steps:

1. Initiate the Conversation:
 - a. Contact the property owner or manager and express your interest in negotiating a bifurcated lease. Explain that you and your housemate prefer separate lease agreements.
2. Understand the Property Owner or Manager's Policies:
 - a. Ask the property owner or manager if they have any specific policies regarding bifurcated leases. Some property owners and managers may be open to this arrangement, while others may have restrictions.

3. Clarify Rent Allocation:
 - a. Discuss how the rent will be allocated between the two leases. Determine if it will be split evenly or if there will be a different arrangement based on factors like bedroom sizes or shared spaces.
4. Review Lease Terms:
 - a. Carefully review the terms and conditions of the proposed bifurcated lease agreements. Ensure that they align with your expectations and needs.
5. Negotiate Terms:
 - a. If there are terms that you and your housemate would like to negotiate or modify, communicate your preferences with the property owner or manager. This may include aspects like lease duration, renewal options, or maintenance responsibilities.
6. Document Agreements:
 - a. Once you and the property owner or manager reach an agreement on the bifurcated lease terms, make sure to document these agreements in writing. This can help prevent misunderstandings or disputes in the future.
7. Sign the Leases:
 - a. Each housemate should sign their respective lease agreements with the property owner or manager. Ensure that all terms and conditions are clearly stated in the leases.
8. Keep Copies of Lease Agreements:
 - a. Retain copies of the signed lease agreements for your records. These documents are essential for reference throughout your tenancy.
9. Adhere to Lease Terms:
 - a. Both housemates are responsible for adhering to the terms and obligations outlined in their respective leases. Make sure you understand your responsibilities regarding rent payments, maintenance, and other lease-related matters.

General Lease Agreements and Responsibilities

1. Review the lease agreement thoroughly.
2. Ensure both housemates are comfortable with the terms and responsibilities.
3. Clarify rent-sharing arrangements and utility payment methods.

Moving In

Financial Support

1. If you or your housemate do not qualify for support from San Diego's three landlord engagement programs (i.e., Brilliant Corners, County of San Diego, and San Diego Housing Commission), you may be eligible for limited financial assistance from the SDSHC.
2. While the SDSHC does not offer rental subsidies, shared housing clients can access a Flex Fund for essential needs, directly contributing to housing stability. Examples of eligible expenses include:
 - a. Security Deposits
 - b. Utilities
 - c. Transportation
 - d. Basic Household Items
3. Shared housing clients interested in accessing the Flex Fund must complete an application form, which can be obtained by request via an email to sharedhousing@townspeople.org with the subject line, "Request for Shared Housing Flex Fund Application Form."

4. Once you have completed the application form, it can be submitted via email to sharedhousing@townspeople.org or dropped off in-person during business hours (M-F, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at 2047 El Cajon Blvd., San Diego, CA 92104).

Preparing for a Smooth Transition

1. Coordinate moving dates and logistics with your new landlord or property manager.
2. Plan and execute the move together, distributing responsibilities as agreed upon.
3. Communicate openly and maintain a harmonious living environment.

By following these steps, you can effectively search for housing opportunities as a pair of housemates. Remember to communicate openly, compromise when necessary, and ensure that both of you are comfortable with the housing choice you make.