



## What is Life Sharing?

Life Sharing is a residential choice for people who prefer living in a private home with a primary person to support their everyday life. Life Sharing homes provide skill building, structure, and health and safety assurances. Similar to residential homes, Life Sharing homes are supported by qualified provider agencies. The philosophy of Life Sharing is having a home, becoming a member of a caring household and building long term relationships while living an everyday life. This includes pursuing chosen goals and life experiences while increasing independence.

## Why choose Life Sharing?

- Life Sharing participants can count on consistency. There are no daily shift changes or staff turnover in the home.
- Life Sharing participants choose their Life Sharer (person that primarily supports the Life Sharing participant). They can choose someone with common interests, values and lifestyle. In a residential home, staff are hired by the agency, usually without input from the individuals living in the home.
- A family member may choose to be a Life Sharer.
- The Life Sharing participant has the opportunity to include their birth family and others close to them in decision making.
- Families can assist with recruiting a Life Sharer, or choosing a home from the available vacancy list.
- Those wishing to live with peers can choose to share a home with a Life Sharer of the same age or a household with another compatible Life Sharing participant.
- Life Sharing participants broaden natural supports to include social connections of the Life Sharing household members and their extended family, friends, and neighbors.
- Life Sharing participants are supported to be active in the community.
- Relationships developed through Life Sharing do not replace current relationships. Life Sharers can support individuals in maintaining current healthy relationships.
- Life Sharing participants live in a setting that fits their preferences. For instance, in a home
  - with a single person, a couple or a family with children
  - with or without pets
  - in a rural, urban or suburban area
  - that is multiple stories or without steps
  - in a specific neighborhood
  - a family members' or their own home
  - or the private home of the Life Sharer.

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## **Who might decide to become a Life Sharer?**

Family members, friends, community members or professionals in the human services field. Training and support will be provided, professional experience is not a requirement.

## **What is the role of the Life Sharing agency?**

The agency is responsible for the individual receiving Life Sharing. They will support the Life Sharing household. Potential supports include medical support, licensing inspection, behavioral support, substitute care and respite.

Agencies vet interested applicants, complete a home study or profile of household that includes interest preferences, lifestyle, and the physical features of the home. A home study will be used in the matching process. Agencies assist with matching potential Life Sharing participants with available Life Sharers. Once a match is made, the agency will sign a contract with potential Life Sharers, who will receive a stipend. Agencies will provide 24-hour support in case of an emergency.

## **How can the Support Coordinator (SC) assist?**

- Talk to the individual and family members about Life Sharing:
  - if completing the Charting the LifeCourse Life Trajectory Worksheet
  - when the need for residential placement is identified
  - at annual ISP Meetings
- Complete the Charting the LifeCourse Integrated Supports Star Worksheet for help matching interests and life choices of the Life Sharer and individual.
- Determine whether waiver funding is available to support Life Sharing.
- Include touring Life Sharing homes when residential options are being explored.
- Assist with matching individuals with potential Life Sharing providers by facilitating visits between an individual and potential Life Sharers so they can become acquainted.
- Assist the individual with recruiting a Life Sharer from amongst the people they already know.
- Life Sharing can be for everyone. Refer to the ISP manual for variances that are available to support the Life Sharing household.

## **How is the Life Sharing funded?**

Life Sharing is typically funded through an Intellectual Disability/Autism Consolidated or a Community Living Waiver. Learn more about the waivers on the PA Department of Human Services website.

## **Where can I find more information on Life Sharing?**

- Ask your Supports Coordinator (SC)
- Contact ODS at 412-253-1399 and ask for the Life Sharing Lead
- Refer to the ODS website at [alleghenycounty.us/dhs/ODS](http://alleghenycounty.us/dhs/ODS)
- Visit the Pennsylvania Life Sharing Coalition website at [www.palifesharing.com/](http://www.palifesharing.com/)



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For more information regarding ODS, including additional Fact Sheets visit [alleghenycounty.us/dhs/ODS](http://alleghenycounty.us/dhs/ODS)