



**Community Housing Guide Service
Answers to Frequently Asked Questions
For Individuals, Family Members and Support Coordinators**

Q1. What is the Community Housing Guide (CHG) service?

A1. The Community Housing Guide service assists people with working toward specific integrated, independent housing outcomes OR with activities to reach a specific integrated, independent housing goal. A CHG supports an individual's move to independent housing by assisting with transition and tenancy sustaining activities. This work requires collaboration with the support coordinator, regional housing coordinator, housing providers and others to help the individual achieve and sustain integrated, independent living. CHGs promote people's self-determination by brokering community resources to help individuals connect to and participate in integrated, independent housing.

Q2. How does the role of a CHG differ from support coordinators and service providers?

A2: Community Housing Guides have a unique role that is specific to supporting an individual's move to independent housing, helping with the transition, and assisting with tenancy-related activities to help individuals remain in housing.

Q3. What is integrated, independent housing?

A3: An integrated life can be defined as individuals with disabilities having the opportunity for freedom, equality and to participate fully in public life, based on what is important to them. Integrated, independent housing is a housing model where housing and services are accessed separately. Individuals do not live with parents, grandparents or guardians (although they are welcome to visit). The housing is not licensed or controlled by a service provider. Instead, individuals have their own leases and they choose the services they will receive and who will provide those services in their homes.

Q4. What are some of the activities a Community Housing Guide can do to support my move to independent housing?

A4. Community Housing Guides can perform specific activities related to integrated, independent housing in the Medicaid Waiver program. These activities include:

- conducting a tenant screening that identifies preferences and barriers to successful tenancy
- developing a plan with the individual that covers outcomes and support activities the Community Housing Guide will provide to identify and secure safe, affordable housing
- assisting individuals with performing housing searches and applying for rental units
- helping individuals identify resources to cover expenses such as security deposits, moving costs, furnishings, adaptive aids, environmental modifications and other one-time expenses
- assisting individuals with arranging for and supporting the details of the move

- providing education and training on the roles, rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords during the transition from the family home or a congregate setting
- providing training on being a good tenant and complying with lease terms, and support with activities related to household management as part of the transitional support activities

Q5. Who is eligible for the Community Housing Guide services?

A5. Individuals with developmental disabilities who are 18 years of age or older and enrolled in the Community Living (CL), Family and Individual Supports (FIS) or Building Independence (BI) Waiver are eligible for Community Housing Guide services.

Q6. How long can I receive Community Housing Guide Services?

A6. The Community Housing Guide service is meant to be a short, periodically intermittent, intense service. Individuals can be authorized for up to six consecutive months of CHG services at a time. The cumulative total hours authorized for both Community Housing Guide and General Community Guide services cannot exceed 120 hours in a plan year.

Q7. If I run out of hours for the Community Housing Guide service, can I get more hours approved?

A7. The Community Housing Guide service cannot exceed 120 hours in a plan year. If you run out of hours for the Community Guide service, your Support Coordinator can assist you with identifying other services or resources that may be available to assist you.

Q8. What is the difference between the Community Housing Guide service and the General Community Guide Service?

A8. The General Community Guide service provides direct assistance to promote self-determination through brokering community resources that lead to connections to and independent participation in *community activities* to avoid isolation. The Community Housing Guide service provides direct assistance to promote self-determination through brokering community resources that lead to connections to and independent participation in *integrated, independent housing*.

Q9. How are providers paid for the Community Housing Guide service?

A9. The Community Housing Guide service provider must have a signed provider participation agreement with the Department of Medical Assistance Services, known as DMAS. The provider designated in the Participation Agreement must directly provide the services and bill DMAS for reimbursement/payment.

Q10. What documentation is required as part of the Community Housing Guide service?

A10. Community Housing Guide service providers must develop a plan for supports and maintain person-centered progress notes that are written, signed and dated on the date the described supports were provided. They must also submit quarterly reports to the individual's support coordinator. In addition, CHGs must complete a tenancy screening and a housing road map with each individual.

Q11. Can the Community Housing Guide help me search for available rentals and take me to visit apartments?

A11. The purpose of the Community Housing Guide service provider is to assist individuals with moving into independent housing. Community Housing Guides can help individuals search for available rentals, take them to visit apartments and assist them with the rental application process. Community Housing Guides are not required to provide transportation to visit apartments. If you need assistance with transportation to visit rental properties

or other housing-related resources, be sure to ask CHG providers if they will provide transportation before selecting a particular provider.

Q12. Can a Community Housing Guide help me find a live-in aide or a roommate?

A12. Community Housing Guides may be able to provide resources on how an individual can find a live-in aide or roommate, or assist an individual with tasks such as advertising, interviewing, explaining roles and creating live-in aide or roommate agreements. Please note that the individual and his/her support team are responsible for selecting live-in aides or roommates. The individual is also responsible for supervising and paying any live-in aide.

Q13. How can I find out who provides the Community Housing Guide service in my area?

A13. If you are interested in finding out who provides the Community Housing Guide service in your area, ask your Support Coordinator for a list of providers. You can also contact your Regional Housing Coordinator for information on Community Housing Guide service providers or look for a provider on the My Life My Community website: <http://www.mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/taxonomy/mlmc-menu-zone/looking-provider>

Q14. I already rent an apartment in the community and have lived alone for more than a year. Can a Community Housing Guide help me if I have a problem with my landlord or a neighbor?

A14. If you receive any of the DD Waivers (CL, FIS or BI) and you have not exhausted the 120 hours of Community Housing Guide services in a plan year, a Community Housing Guide can assist you with resolving problems with a landlord or neighbor.

Q15. I just moved into my apartment and I need to learn how to use my appliances and how to take out the trash. Can a Community Housing Guide help me?

A15. If you receive any of the DD Waivers (CL, FIS or BI) and you have not exhausted the 120 hours of Community Housing Guide services in a plan year, a Community Housing Guide can assist you with learning how to use the appliances in your apartment and how to complete household tasks such as taking out the trash.

Q16. I recently moved to my own apartment that is about 45 minutes away from my family. They can no longer help me cook, clean, do laundry and take my medications. It is hard for me to do these things by myself.

A16. The Community Housing Guide service is short, periodically intermittent, intense service. A Community Housing Guide can assist with pre-tenancy and post-tenancy activities such as providing an overview of how to use appliances, taking a tour of the community laundry room, or finding a nearby pharmacy. However, the Support Coordinator arranges the ongoing supports individuals need to learn independent living tasks so they can maintain their health and safety for the duration of their tenancy.