

## Guide to Co-housing or Apartment Sharing with HomeBASE Household Assistance

Many homeless or at-risk of homelessness families are now or will be exploring co-housing or sharing an apartment with another person or family member because they don't have enough money to afford an apartment themselves and/or because living with another person can be helpful (i.e. sharing child care and/or household chores, etc.). Outlined below is a guide to help you explore this option.

1. Do I Need to Co-house?
  - Find out the average rent in the city you want to live in for the apartment size you need.
  - Review the \$4,000/yr HomeBASE Household Assistance information
  - Complete the attached budget with your total income, estimated rent, and household expenses to see if you can afford an apartment yourself or whether you need to co-house.
2. What should I look for when considering someone to Co-house with?
  - Do they have the income to pay their fair share of the rent and household expenses on time?
  - Can I get along with them, and do they respect me and my family?
  - Do they have any habits (i.e. alcohol/drug use, pets, smoking, lifestyle, etc.) that aren't good for me or my family? See the attached Co-housing Planning and Agreement Forms.
3. Types of Co-housing
  - Moving back home to live with my parents or a sister or a brother or a relative who has room in their apartment/house, and the landlord will agree to this.
  - Moving in with a friend or other person who already has an apartment or house and can add you to their lease.
  - Locating a new apartment to rent with a family member, friend, or other homeless family.
4. Exploring Co-housing Options (see the attached step-by-step "Co-housing Planning Sheet")
  - Make a list in writing of potential family members or friends that you think may consider co-housing with you.
  - Prioritize this list so you know who is the most likely to agree to co-house with you.
  - Next to their name list the concerns you have about living with them (i.e. income, habits, communication, etc.).
5. Talking to a Possible Co-housing Person – (Your case manager can help you if you request this.)
  - Pick the person you think would be best for you and most likely consider living with you, and set-up a meeting.
  - Prepare for the meeting by both listing your questions and concerns, as well as being prepared for the concerns or questions you think that person will have for you.
  - If it doesn't work out with this person, pick the next person on your list and to talk to him or her.
6. Negotiating a Co-housing Agreement - your case manager can help you if you request this.
  - Use the attached Co-housing Agreement Form to try to come to an agreement with another person about important issues (i.e. % of rent and utility payment, sharing space and household tasks, etc.).
  - Complete or revise your monthly budget based on the agreement you have come to.
  - Locate an apartment and try to obtain the agreement of the landlord for your co-housing arrangement.
  - Share this budget and Agreement with your assigned case manager, and complete the necessary tasks to receive HomeBase Household Assistance.