



## **How Much Help Can I Expect to Give or Receive?**

We are pleased that you are interested in becoming a part of the Homesharing program. Having realistic expectations helps a match go more smoothly. Here are some suggestions:

Tenants should not expect to receive free or very low rent in exchange for simply being in the home. Some amount of actual service and/or rent is normally required.

Some homeowners prefer a straight rent arrangement. Others ask for all services and no rent. Still others would like a combination of rent and services.

Sometimes homeowners want someone to live with them who will provide assistance and be home most of the time. However, few, if any, tenants are available to serve as full-time companions in exchange for room and board. Almost all of the people looking for a place to live work or attend school at least part time, if not full time.

While it is sometimes possible to find a tenant who will provide limited assistance in the home, Senior Services' Homesharing Program does not emphasize provision of full-time live-in household help. Homeowners whose health status requires all-day constant or intermittent care are encouraged to investigate agencies which provide this type of assistance. Call Senior Information and Assistance for further details on this type of assistance at 448-3110.

The following guidelines, which have evolved over 20 years of operation, may be of help to you in developing a service exchange:

- Each homeowner is responsible for determining the value of his or her space.
- We value the various services that a tenant might offer (e.g. cleaning, cooking, yard work, errands) at \$10.00 per hour.
- We consider an average of between 12 & 15 hours a week to be a fair exchange for a private bedroom in a Seattle home with a shared bath. A situation with more space may require closer to 15 hours a week.

- Homeowners requiring more than 15 hours a week should also offer the housemate room and board, since their assistance would outweigh the value of the room alone. Hourly compensation should be added for additional time spent in service beyond the 15 hours.

While we have found these guidelines to be helpful, keep in mind that they are only suggestions. Each homesharer is responsible for negotiating his/her own agreement according to the needs of the individual situation.

Clarifying your needs and expectations as much as possible before agreeing to live together is your best strategy for finding a mutually beneficial match. *Whatever arrangements you decide upon should be put in writing.*

Please contact Homesharing staff if you would like assistance in negotiating a service agreement.

*(Note: If a homeowner does pay the homesharer for services above those exchanged, they should be aware of their obligation to comply with social security tax withholding regulations, using a taxpayer identification number which the local Internal Revenue Service can furnish on request.)*



A United Way Agency working with Aging and Disability Services  
2208 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Seattle WA 98121  
206-448-5725  
fax: 206-448-5766  
e-mail: [Homesharing@SeniorServices.org](mailto:Homesharing@SeniorServices.org)