

Alternative Living Options Guide



Many seniors and people with disabilities want to stay in their home for as long as possible but need some physical changes to make it safer, more comfortable, and more livable. Others prefer living

in a group setting, where companionship and planned activities are available or where support services may be easier to obtain. Some housing options just provide a place to live while other arrangements provide a partial or full range of services that can be used as an individual's needs and ability to function independently change.

Congregate Housing

Congregate Housing is a program that provides housing, some meals, and housekeeping services. Personal care services such as assistance with bathing, dressing, eating, and getting around may also be provided, or a resident may also contract with an outside agent to provide personal care. Most congregate housing consists of one bedroom or studio units in federally assisted housing. Participants pay a fee based on a sliding scale. Some financial assistance may be available to those meeting eligibility criteria. There are congregate housing sites located in six Maryland Counties and Baltimore City.

You can learn more about congregate housing by going to the Department of Aging [website](#).

Project Home

Project Home is a program based on an Adult Foster Family Model of Care. It provides a family-like living arrangement in the community for adults with developmental or physical disabilities, mental illness, and elderly individuals that need assistance. The program provides housing to individuals who are unable to live safely in the community on their own, and offers a home-like and less costly alternative to nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals, and facilities.

There are two primary features in this program:

1. Providers of Project Home services complete a certification process to ensure the suitability of the provider and the quality of the home in terms of health and safety, and,
2. Case management services are provided to each project home resident by the local Department of Social Services to ensure that the resident receives needed supportive services.

For more information about Project Home, contact your local Department of Social Services and ask for the Project Home Program or visit the [website](#).

Nursing Homes

Individuals or families typically seek nursing home care when it is no longer possible to care for a person at home safely. Nursing homes provide care for individuals of all ages needing 24 hour nursing care or assistance. While many residents remain in the nursing home for a long period of time, an increasing number of residents are short stay, receiving nursing care and rehabilitation after a hospital stay or illness before returning to their homes.

You will find extensive information about Maryland's nursing homes including facility characteristics such as bed size and services available, quality measures obtained from the federal CMS Nursing Home Compare, results of family satisfaction surveys, and results of on-site inspections performed by the Office of Health Care Quality by using the Nursing Home Search feature on this website.

Continuing Care Communities

Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC), also known as Life Care Communities or Independent Living Communities, offer a secure and protected environment for seniors, with access to medical and nursing services, should the need arise. A CCRC is often a large campus that includes separate housing for those who live independently, assisted living facilities that offer more support, and nursing home care for those who need more complex care and assistance. Residents can move from one housing choice to another as their needs change.

Information about the nursing home component of each CCRC offer can be found in the Nursing Home Search Feature.

Cost. Cost for living in a CCRC can be high; owners typically pay a monthly fee and often a large entrance fee. There are a range of contract agreements, terms, entrance fees, and monthly service fees which are set by the individual CCRC and regulated by the Maryland Department of Aging. Currently, there are 38 Continuing Care Retirement Communities operating in Maryland.

Resources. The Maryland Department of Aging provides a comprehensive consumer information packet for persons interested in learning more about these communities, the law and the regulations. For more information about CCRCs, visit the Maryland Department of Aging [website](#).

Assisted Living

Assisted living residences provide a home and support services to meet the needs of residents who are unable to perform, or who need help in performing, activities of daily living. Assisted living residences may provide assistance with meal preparation, household chores, managing medications, and dressing or bathing. People who live in assisted living residences generally have less complicated health and assistance needs than people in nursing homes. This housing option enables seniors to remain in a home-like setting in their communities and promotes their independence and dignity.

Not all assisted living residences are the same, and different residents will have different needs. Facilities may range from a small home with one resident to larger facilities with 100 or more living units.

Requirements. Each Assisted Living residence is required to complete a Uniform Disclosure form describing its services and policies. Fee structures for assisted living vary, with some facilities charging a single fee based on the resident level of care while others provide an “a la carte” menu of services. It is important to understand what is included in the base monthly rate, what services require an additional charge, and circumstances under which fees may increase. The Uniform Disclosure Form includes fee information and is required to be filed with the Office of Health Care Quality as part of an application for licensure. The Uniform Disclosure Form must be given to the resident/responsible payment person upon admission.

Size. If you prefer an assisted living residence that is smaller than 10 beds, the Office of Health Care Quality maintains a directory, organized by county, with all assisted living residences in Maryland. To view or download this [list](#), click [here](#).

Cost. The cost of assisted living residence is usually paid for out of private funds; however, there is a Maryland program called the Senior Assisted Group Home Subsidy Program which provides State funds for eligible residents who are unable to afford the cost of assisted living and might otherwise be in nursing homes. The subsidy supports the cost of services provided in assisted living residences. In order to use this program you must have low or moderate income and meet other eligibility requirements. Contact the Maryland Department of Aging office in your area to learn more about this program or click [here](#). Click here for a list of area offices is available [here](#).

