



# Frequently Asked Questions About Becoming A Shared Living Home Provider:

## 1. What Is a SLA?

A Shared Living Arrangement (SLA) is a residential option for people with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) who reside in Rhode Island who are in need of 24 hour care.

It is a much more personalized and less restrictive residence as compared to a group home. SLA's offer 24 hour care in a nurturing home environment with an independent contractor. Independent contractors are rigorously screened, have background checks and must be CPR/First Aid certified. They must also complete a state mandated pre-service skill development and demonstrate proficiency in health care/medication management.

## 2. Where do you find your home providers?

There are wonderful, nurturing people throughout Rhode Island who have worked in group homes, day programs or nursing homes and who understand the joy of supporting a person with I/DD. Living Innovations looks for people with "room in their heart & room in their home".

Living Innovations currently has over 100 SLA's in Rhode Island. This is the only residential service this agency provides. This network of home providers has been a vital part of our recruitment efforts. Most home provider applicants are friends and family of current home providers. When they observe the dynamics of a SLA and the rewards it offers, they are often quick to sign up!

## 3. What are the qualifications of a home provider?

A SLA home provider is an Independent Contractor who has passed an in-depth screening and approval process. Home providers must;

- Pass a Rhode Island Background Criminal Check (BCI) and a National Criminal Investigation (NCI)
- Own or rent a home in Rhode Island with an extra bedroom
- Have home owners or renters insurance and car Insurance
- Have a good driving record
- Be CPR/First Aid Certified
- Have good references (professional and personal)
- Be available to leave work if the person in their care becomes ill & be available 24/7
- Willing to participate in any personal skill development customized to the person in their care.
- Able to accurately document medication administration and follow any behavioral guidelines
- Be able to submit receipts for expenditures on a person's' behalf
- Commit to supporting the person's Individual Support Plan (ISP) to help them achieve their goals
- Keep people connected to their friends and family



#### 4. How are people matched?

Matching is a critically important aspect of SLA. When a person is referred to Living Innovations for a SLA the matching begins! Living Innovations prefers to meet people as soon as possible and will request a packet of all current information about the person from the professional doing the referral. All relevant historical information is also requested. It is usually requested that any family member or guardian be involved as early in the process as possible. They provide a valuable perspective on their loved one.

The next step in the matching process occurs when Living Innovations' team of professionals review all the information provided and compare with all of the current open homes. The team will then reach out to the parties involved to set up an introduction if appropriate. Visits are arranged and people get to know each other over time. The home provider and the participant must choose each other!

#### 5. How does shared living differ from foster care?

There are several significant differences between foster care and shared living. In foster care a child is taken from a home and can be placed in the home of a relative or foster care provider. The child has no choice about where he/she lives. A child falls under court or DCYF jurisdiction.

Shared living is an informed choice by (at minimum) two adults to live together. There is an individualized "getting to know you" period of time where people get to know each other in a variety of settings. Family can be involved in introductions, transitions and decision making. It is only when all parties agree to proceed that each person contracts to live together.

#### 6. What if it doesn't work?

Sometimes, despite everyone's best efforts the SLA may not work for one or both people. No one is ever forced or coerced to stay together if it does not feel right. Living Innovations will work closely with any participant who requests to move. As an agency committed to SLA, there are always open homes from which to find another match.

The Living Innovations Coordinator will work closely with each SLA to help them work through any difficulties. Just like in any other relationship sometimes it is time to move on. Living Innovations will work hard with the person to identify a new match and introduce possible matches to each other.

Moving to a new home, though a rarity, does happen and is never considered to be a "failure". It is a growth opportunity. Living Innovation's history has proven that sometimes change is a good thing. It is an opportunity to learn new things from a new family. People outgrow each other and family dynamics or health changes. By always having open homes, Living Innovations is able to offer new opportunities to any person or home provider requesting a change.

**Thanks for considering becoming a home provider and making a difference in the life of another!**



Living Innovations®

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