



Exploring Home-Sharing Opportunities for Seniors

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Introduction to The County Foundation

Who are we, and why are we exploring senior home-sharing?

About The County Foundation...

- One of 201 Community Foundations of Canada
- Our vision: Working together to build a place where everyone belongs and all can thrive
- 3 core activities:
 - ◆ Creating funds for charitable purposes and helping distribute grants
 - ◆ Working with community partners to support positive, community-led action in PEC
 - ◆ Producing Vital Signs reports to inform decision-making related to community well-being.



Why are we exploring home-sharing?

- Vital Signs is currently involved in the Housing and Poverty Reduction Action Team of the Community Safety and Well-being Plan
- House-sharing is an alternative form of housing that is successful in many other communities with large senior populations
- This webinar is an opportunity to share what we've learned, and to gather feedback



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Introduction to Home-Sharing

What is home-sharing, and why might it interest seniors in particular?

What housing concerns are seniors commonly facing?

- Lack of sufficient income after retirement
- Lack of money and energy to maintain a house
 - Overhousing – having a house that is far larger and harder to maintain than needed
- Social isolation due to living alone
- Overall lack of affordable housing
- Giving up independence due to selling a house or entering a care home



What is home-sharing?

- From HomeShare International, “homesharing is an arrangement by which two or more unrelated people share a dwelling within which each retains a private space.”
- Each person has their own space – a bedroom, sometimes a private bathroom
- Communal spaces – kitchen, living room – are shared with housemate(s)



How can home-sharing benefit seniors?

- Decreases cost of housing
- Opportunity for companionship
- Splitting chores makes housework and maintenance easier
 - Allows people to keep their house instead of being forced to sell due to unsustainable maintenance needs
- Opportunity to give back to the community and help someone in need of housing



Has home-sharing been successful for other areas?

- Canada HomeShare – matches post-secondary students with older adults with space to rent, operating in many areas including Kingston and Belleville
- Golden Girls – provides support and advice for seniors (women or men) interested in co-housing with other seniors
- Abbeyfield homes – the home is managed by a board of directors and seniors may apply; each person has a personal suite and shares some common areas with housemates





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Home-Sharing in PEC

So, how would a home-sharing program work in the County?

How could home-sharing benefit the population of PEC?

- In 2021, a third of PEC's population was 65 or older – that's 8,605 people¹
- 27% of households – 3,005 households– were occupied by one person; 1,750 are widowed²
- PEC has a critical workforce shortage, intensified by lack of attainable housing:
 - Median house prices increased 79% from 2020-2021⁴
 - Rental availability is among the lowest in Ontario
 - Lack of attainable housing makes it difficult to attract physicians, health care professionals, child care workers, tradespeople and workers in general



What could a home-sharing program look like in the County?

- Specific to PEC and focused on addressing PEC's unique needs
- There are two options we're currently exploring:
 - Seniors with space to rent in their home living with workers in need of housing
 - Seniors could also live with other seniors
- We are hoping to create a database which would connect interested home-seekers and home-providers



Would there be screening for safety and compatibility?

- We hope to include a pre-screening process to help participants connect with compatible housemates
- This could require a Vulnerable Sector Check and letters of reference
- There could be compatibility questions, including:
 - Lifestyle – e.g. cleanliness
 - Pet ownership
 - Smoking
 - Space to park a car



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Next Steps

What's next for a potential home-sharing program in PEC?

What are the next steps for The County Foundation?

- Working with PEC Affordable Housing Corp.
- Proposed collaboration with York University to:
 - Gauge interest from potential home providers and home seekers
 - Seek legal advice in the preparation of support documents
 - Prepare a pre-screening application form
- Keeping Community Care for Seniors updated on developments





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Questions?
Comments?

Frequently asked questions

- Will compatibility of lifestyle between senior homeowners and potential tenants be considered?
- What safety measures are in place to protect seniors participating in home-share programs?
- Are there any financial arrangements involved?
- Can seniors choose who they share their home with?
- Are there any legal considerations or agreements involved?
- What support services are provided to seniors?
- How can seniors get involved or apply for a home-share program in their area?

Resources

- [More about The County Foundation](#)
- [Vital Signs data and past reports](#)
- [Canada HomeShare program](#) and [HomeShare Loyalist](#)
- [Cohousing Options Canada](#)
- [Examples of seniors co-housing](#) from the National Institute on Ageing (NIA)

Thank you

Our thanks to PEC Community Care for Seniors for this opportunity and to you for your time and questions.

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The County Foundation
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