

Housing Checklist

A GUIDE TO FINDING, SECURING, PREPARING, AND SETTLING INTO A NEW HOME

This guide provides case managers, sponsors, and newcomers with a clear, step-by-step approach to successfully navigating the housing process. From finding suitable housing to settling into a new home, this checklist covers key actions in each stage, ensuring a smooth transition. Whether you're searching for housing, understanding lease terms, furnishing your home, or adjusting to your new living environment, this resource offers practical tips and essential reminders to help newcomers settle into their new community with confidence.

Finding Housing Checklist

Preparation and Planning

- Assess housing needs (size, type, location)
- Consider housing proximity to essential services (transportation, schools, etc.)
- Set a monthly budget, including rent, utilities, and other living expenses
- Identify neighborhoods that fit needs, budgets, and preferences
- Collect rental documents, like proof of income, identification, etc.
- Arrange for temporary accommodations while searching for permanent housing

Housing Search

- Research local housing availability within budget
- Use online platforms, community bulletin boards, and local networks to find available rental properties
- Contact landlords or property managers to arrange unit tours
 - Be ready to explain your newcomer's status and address potential concerns
- Prepare questions about rent, lease terms, utilities, and maintenance responsibilities
- Submit applications with all required information and documents
 - Be prepared to pay application fee or deposits

Finding Housing Resources:

- [Step-by-Step Guide to Securing Housing](#)
- [Strategies for Community Sponsors Assisting with Newcomer Housing](#)
- [How to Recruit and Retain Housing Providers](#)
- [Landlord Conversation Guides](#)
- [Rental Application Essentials: How Newcomers Can Use Alternative Documents](#)
- [Sample Housing Walkthrough Checklist](#)

Securing Housing Checklist

Lease Signing and Initial Costs

Carefully review and understand all terms before signing the lease

- Provide translation support if needed

Ensure both the tenant and landlord sign the lease agreement

Provide the required security deposit as outlined in the lease

Submit the first month's rent payment as required

Prepay additional months of rent if needed to secure the lease

Obtain a copy of the signed lease

Document any other costs, such as pet fees or utility setup fees

Evaluate and decide whether to get renter's insurance

Confirm Move-in Arrangements

Verify the move-in date with the landlord

Confirm the time and location for key pick-up or access to the property

Ensure necessary repairs and maintenance are completed before move-in

Confirm any move-in fees or requirements, such as building access codes

Have a communication plan, in case of emergencies, with the landlord

Plan for transition from temporary to long-term housing, as relevant

Finding Housing Resources:

- [How to Understand a Lease](#)
- [Understanding Your Lease Agreement](#)

Preparing the Housing Checklist

Prepare the Accommodation

- Arrange for utilities (electricity, water, gas, internet) to be active before move-in
- Schedule a final walkthrough with the landlord to inspect the property
- Ensure the property is clean and in good condition for move-in
- Conduct a safety and functionality walkthrough (ensure working heating systems, appliances, etc.)
- Ensure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and electrical outlets, work
- Check security features (locks, windows, alarms)

Furnish and Equip the Home

- Provide essential furnishings: bed, dresser (if needed), sofa/chairs, dining table/chairs.
- Equip the kitchen with dishes, utensils, cookware, and storage containers.
- Supply bed linens and hygiene products (toothbrush, soap, etc.).
- Offer appliance instructions in the newcomer's first language, if needed.
- Provide basic cleaning supplies (broom, mop, vacuum, cleaners).
- Ensure sufficient lighting (lamps for bedrooms and living areas).
- Provide a basic toolkit (hammer, screwdriver, pliers).

Finding Housing Resources:

- [Home Set-up Guide](#)

Move-In Checklist

Move-In Support

- Organize basic supplies: food, toiletries, and essentials for arrival
- Plan transportation to the new home
- Schedule a home orientation meeting to discuss the home's features
- Review U.S. housing norms and safety practices, including tenant rights and responsibilities
- Provide basic home safety guidelines
- Schedule follow-up meetings to support adjustment
- Address issues promptly and offer ongoing guidance

Create a Welcome Packet

- Home orientation guide, including instructions for operating appliances (stovetop, oven, microwave, etc.), heating/cooling systems, and property maintenance guidelines
- Transportation options (bus routes, train stations, etc.)
- Healthcare facilities (hospitals, pharmacies, etc.)
- Local grocery stores, banks, and other essential services
- Nearby community centers, places of worship, and ethnic community groups
- Landlord's contact information
- Maintenance or emergency repair contact information
- Local emergency services (fire, police, medical) and non-emergency numbers
- Trash and recycling rules pickup schedules
- Parking and building access rules (e.g., permits, guest parking)
- Overview of tenant rights according to local, state, and national laws

Move-In Resources:

- [Welcome to Your New Home – An Illustrated Guide \(translated\)](#)
- [Please Repair – An Illustrated Guide \(translated\)](#)
- [Home Safety](#)
- [Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange: Housing](#)
- [Know Your Rights: State-by-State Housing Guide](#)