

Maybe you or a family member is thinking about moving into an assisted living facility - a licensed housing option that offers services for older adults. Before you choose, you'll want to compare locations. You can look up information on the facilities you're considering on the state of Minnesota's Assisted Living Report Card - <https://alreportcard.dhs.mn.gov/>. You can also review a location's required Uniform Disclosure of Assisted Living Services and Amenities (UDALSA) by searching <https://www.minnesotahelp.info/>.

When visiting facilities in-person, here are some things to consider and questions to ask.

Rent

- How much is rent? What does it include?
- When is rent due? How often has rent gone up in the past? By how much?
- Is a deposit required? How much is it? When will it be refunded or returned?
- Are there other fees? If so, how much? Are they refundable?
- Do I have to buy other services to rent here?

Supportive and health-related/home care service

- What services are offered? What services are included in the monthly base rate? Do I have to purchase a minimum amount of these services?
- Does the location have its own home care license, or does it contract with another home care agency for the health-related/home care services? If so, what agency?
- If I need other services, how are they arranged? What is the cost for additional services?
- Would Medicare pay for the health-related home care services?
- Who decides when to call 911? Are there written policies about this? What kind of emergencies are the staff expected to handle and how are they trained?
- Can I keep my medications in my own apartment or unit?
- Are services, such as a meal escort, offered? What is the cost?
- Can I see an example of an invoice for services?

Public pay for services* or rent

- If I use up my own resources, will this location accept public pay for my rent and/or services?
- Does this facility accept funding from programs like Elderly Waiver or community alternatives for disabled individuals to help pay for services for eligible people?
- Does it limit the number of residents for whom it will accept public assistance payments? Are there different limits for rent compared to limits for services?
- Will I be able to stay in my apartment and have one of these programs pay for my services?
- What will my rent be if one of these programs pays for my services?
- Does the provider accept rent subsidies like Housing Support or Section 8 voucher?

- If I am not eligible for public rent assistance and/or the setting doesn't accept public payments, are there any private rent subsidies that might help me?

*Please note that if the site does not accept public pay, they may deliver a termination notice if you can no longer pay and enroll in public programs to help the cost. This notice typically allows 30 days to move from the beginning of the month—if the lease is month to month.

Housing and home care contracts

- What reasons would cause the facility to end my housing contract?
- How much notice will I get for a termination of my lease?
- How much notice will I have to give if I want to change my home care provider?
- When I move in, who would I call if I have a problem with the site or the services?
- Can I sign a month-to-month lease/contract? Or does it have to be yearly?
- What if I go to a nursing home or hospital for a short-term stay? Will I have to pay for services even if I am not there, but I continue paying my rent?
- Will I have to pay for services for days I am gone (such as on a family vacation)?
- Is there a waiting list to move in? If so, is there a fee to be on the list?

Individual tenant unit/space

- Are staff allowed to enter my unit without my consent? If so, under what conditions?
- Do I have my own locked entrance? Who else will have access to my space?
- Do I have to share my unit with anyone?
- Do I have my own bathroom?

Congregate meals

- Can I decide how many meals to purchase? What is the cost per/meal, per/meal plan and for guests? Are special diets offered?
- Are menus posted? Will I be asked for meal ideas? Are the meal plans reviewed by a registered dietitian to assure that they are nutritious?
- Are snacks available at any time? What is served for snacks?
- Will I always have access to a kitchen? If I don't like the meal, can I ask for something else? Can I make food for visitors?

Staffing

- Is the housing site staffed 24 hours/day, 7 days/week? Is there a licensed nurse on-site at all times? What tasks are the on-call staff allowed to do?
- What type of training have the staff received?
- Do staff speak the language that I speak? Can the staff accommodate my special needs (e.g., hearing impaired or diabetes care)?

- How long are the staff shifts? How many staff are available during the daytime to help with my needs? How many staff are available at night to help with my needs?
- Who develops the recreational or social activities and what is their background?

Housing site

- Is there a system (such as a pull cord or response device) for contacting staff when I need immediate help? When can I use it? Is there a charge?
- Can people with memory loss live here?
- What are the building security features? What are the parking options?
- Is there a guest room for visitors? What is the cost?
- What is the pet policy?
- What is the tenant and staff smoking policy?
- Is there extra storage space?
- Are there areas available outdoors to visit with family and friends?

Key questions to ask yourself after a tour

About the setting:

- Is the site clean and inviting?
- Were my questions fully answered?
- Did I get a complete fee schedule that breaks out rent and services?
- Are the charges for services easy to understand?
- Do employees appear friendly, respectful and courteous?
- Did the setting encourage the tenants to socializing?
- Did the tenants and staff appear happy and comfortable?
- Did I get a copy of the housing contract, and did it include clear information about the full cost of living there?

About me and my needs:

- How long can I afford to live here?
- Is the location right for me? Is it convenient to where I want to live?
- Will my visitors enjoy the visit and setting?
- If I cannot drive, is there a way to get to the places I want to go?
- If there is no transportation, is it close to a bus line or can I get a taxi/ride share?
- Did I get a sample invoice/bill for services, and did it have enough detail?
- Did I want the home health care agency that the provider contracts with, or do I want to choose a different one?
- Am I comfortable with the length and terms of the lease?
- Did I like the setting—would I be comfortable there?