



MIRELA

Habitations partagées



Guide

*to homesharing and better
living together*

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What is Homesharing ?

Simply put, homesharing is a living arrangement between two or more adults (18+). Generally unrelated, these people live together in one dwelling.

In general, each person has their own private space and shares common areas such as the kitchen and living room.

Household chores can be shared, or sometimes services can be exchanged for a reduction in housing costs.

It's a win-win situation for everyone involved.



Definitions

Here are the definitions of some of the expressions used in this guide.

Host

The person who wishes to share his or her home, whether a house, condo or apartment.

Homesharer

The person who is looking for safe housing at an affordable cost. This person is willing to help around the house and share time with the host.

Intergenerational homesharing

Exchange adapted to the respective needs of an elderly person and a young adult (18+). This person could be a student or young professional.

For both people, it's an opportunity to share a unique homesharing experience based on trust, goodwill, respect and mutual support.

Mirela's homesharing participants

Both the host and the homesharer are autonomous and independent people who share a home. They agree and commit to mutual support and services in a relationship of interdependence rather than codependence.

Caregiver

Caregivers are ordinary people who provide physical and emotional support to a family member, spouse, friend or neighbor who is ill, seriously injured or dying.

Personal Support Worker (PSW)

Personal support workers are trained to assist clients and patients with their basic personal needs (bathing, toileting, taking medication, helping with household chores, etc.) and are part of a multidisciplinary care team. They keep the patient company, monitor and communicate any changes in the patient's physical, emotional or mental state to a supervisor, case manager or nurse. They work in hospitals, long-term care homes and home care.

Mission, vision and values

Mission

Mirela assists people who want to share a home to help each other, break social isolation and find safe, affordable housing in and around Ottawa.

Vision

Mirela enriches and builds bridges between generations and cultures and contributes to the resilience of Francophone individuals and communities in Ontario amidst a changing society.

Values

Social commitment

Peer support

Inclusion

Sharing of resources

Respect for self and others

Our philosophy

Habitations partagées Mirela is a Franco-Ontarian community non-profit organization that promotes a philosophy of living together in a perspective of sharing and mutual support.

We believe that homesharing is a way of living together that strengthens human bonds, while promoting the well-being and fulfillment of individuals and the whole community.

Our work aims to facilitate aging in place for seniors, while providing a safe and affordable housing option for students and young professionals.

Mirela recognizes that the housing crisis can affect people from all walks of life. Consequently, our service is not limited to seniors and students. We welcome applications from any independent person who shares Mirela's values.

Why intergenerational homesharing?

The concept is simple and aims to meet the complementary needs of two people from different generations.

In this way, an elderly person makes part of his or her home available to a young adult at a moderate cost, or even free of charge. In exchange, the young adult undertakes to perform small services or simply offers a regular presence to the person hosting him or her. This presence can include sharing meals, time for discussion and exchange, walks, etc.



**Intergenerational
homesharing depends
on the needs and
aspirations of the
people involved.**

No two homesharing arrangements are the same.

Intergenerational homesharing scenario

Mrs. Petersen is 87 years old. Despite a heart condition, she is still very active and quick-witted. But her family and friends are worried about her health and think she shouldn't be living alone.

Mrs. Petersen didn't want to go live in a retirement home and decided to share her house with Pierre, a student who needed a quiet place to study and an affordable place to live.

Pierre agrees to do the gardening and walk Mrs. Petersen's dog in exchange for a reduced rent.

Mrs. Petersen says that it is such a delight to have a young person around. She really appreciates the mutual support, but also the lively conversations and renewed energy in her home.

On the other hand, Pierre admits that the opportunity and financial security offered by Mrs. Petersen has enabled him to continue his studies. This would not have been possible due to the rising cost of rent in the Ottawa area.

Why choose to become a host?

Some elderly people living alone are looking for companionship or want to feel more secure in their own home, especially at nighttime. Others, who live alone or as a couple, need help with certain household chores to continue living at home and avoid a move to a retirement home. Some may need additional income. And many are looking for a combination of all three.

What do you need?

Thinking of becoming a host? It's important to identify your needs and the space and conditions you can offer a homesharer.

Rent is generally **between \$0 and \$600 a month**, including utilities (electricity, water, heating, internet). It depends on the tasks or assistance provided by the homesharer. Mirela helps you determine a fair exchange.

Services in exchange for affordable accommodation

Depending on the needs of the host and the interests of the homesharer, an agreement is reached regarding tasks and services, as well as the number of hours per week, generally **5 to 7 hours**.

Here are examples of the tasks and services that could be provided.

Offer a reassuring presence.

Help with seasonal chores, such as: clearing snow from front steps, mowing the lawn, washing windows, raking leaves , flower beds, etc.

Cook or prepare meals.

Washing dishes.

Clean the refrigerator or oven.

Basic housekeeping.

Taking out the trash.

Running small errands, picking up the mail and so on.

Walking the dog.

Help with computers and technology.

Are you interested in becoming a host?

Do you want to age in your own home and community for as long as possible? Do you feel lonely? Are you stressed by the tasks and costs involved in maintaining a property? Homesharing is a solution that would enable you to continue enjoying your home.

Questions to ask yourself before making a commitment.

- Am I independent enough to take on such a project?
- Am I ready to share the common areas of my home?
- Am I ready to commit to a relationship of sharing and mutual support with another person?
- Am I open-minded enough to a new way of living with someone who may be different in age and culture?
- Am I sensitive to the needs of others?
- Do I easily accept other people's personalities, moods, and preferences?
- Do I listen to and understand others, especially when there is a difference of opinion?
- Am I capable of communicating well when faced with challenges and finding viable solutions?
- Am I ready to compromise and be flexible?
- Am I ready to take part in an orientation session or in personal development workshops to learn how to better live together?

Are you interested in becoming a homesharer ?

Are you looking for affordable housing in the Ottawa region to start your studies or launch your career? Are you moving to Ottawa from a rural area or another country? Homesharing is a solution that could help you find safe and good housing conditions in the region.

Questions to ask yourself before making a commitment.

- What is my motivation for sharing a living space?
- In which sector of Ottawa would I like to settle?
- Do I need a furnished or unfurnished space?
- How much private space do I need? Bedroom only? Private bathroom? Additional room to study or work?
- How much can I pay a month to live comfortably?
- Am I open-minded enough to a new way of living with someone who may be different in age and culture?
- What is my standard of cleanliness?
- Is it important to be able to have family or friends visit me or sleep over?

Do you know your values and limits?

I could be a good host or homesharer because

What qualities would make you a good host or homesharer?

What is non-negotiable for you?

Do things like noise, smells, smoking, temperature in the house, or security bother you?

I'd like to share common values with the other person, for example I'd like to share common interests with the other person, for example (arts, music, reading)

I'm interested in personal development and would like to take part in an orientation session and workshops to learn how to better live together.



What's needed for a successful homesharing arrangement?

To make a homesharing arrangement successful, it is imperative that:

- the host and the homesharer clarify their expectations and share an intention to live together in a spirit of mutual support.
- The homesharer agrees to provide the services specified in the signed agreement.
- The host agrees to meet his or her personal needs by combining participation in **Habitations partagées Mirela** with other complementary services, such as housekeeping, health care, grocery delivery, home care services, etc.

PLEASE NOTE

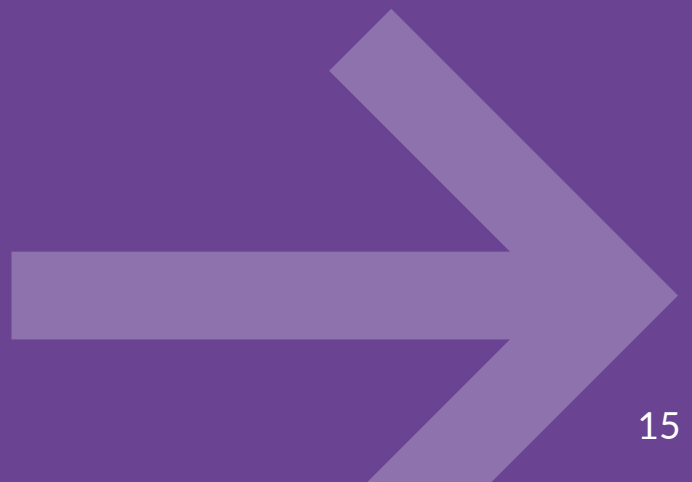
Mirela's participants are not the equivalent of personal support workers (PSW) or caregivers.



Yes, I want to take part!

How do I register?

The registration process is straightforward, and Mirela's representative is with you every step of the way.



1

APPLICATION FORM

Please contact us by phone or e-mail. We'll send you a questionnaire to fill out so we can build your profile and get to know you better.

TELEPHONE : 613-406-2939

E-MAIL : habitationsmirela@gmail.com

2

FIRST MEETING WITH MIRELA'S REPRESENTATIVE

For the host, the first meeting usually takes place in your home, and can last from one to two hours. This interview will enable us to determine your eligibility, get to know you better, discover your interests and lifestyle, and take a tour of the premises.

We'll discuss your needs, the private space you have available and the services you'd like to receive.

For the homesharer, the first meeting can be in person, by telephone or by teleconference.

This is your chance to ask any questions you may have.



3

REFERENCE AND CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

We'll ask you to provide the names of two personal references who know you well and can attest to your character. We will contact these people to get to know you better:

- Someone you know (friend, family member, etc.)
- A neutral person (colleague, employer, landlord, etc.)

Since our process is focused on the safety of our participants, we also ask you to provide us with a copy of a recent criminal record check.

4

SEARCHING FOR THE RIGHT PERSON

After reference and criminal background checks, we'll begin our search to find a match for your lifestyle, personal preferences and needs.

Once this person has been identified, we'll contact you to discuss the matter. If you agree, we'll schedule a first meeting.

It is important to note that this step may or may not be quick, depending on your criteria, your openness and the number of people registered with the organization.

5

CONNECTING PEOPLE TOGETHER

The first meeting is usually by telephone or in a public place. You can ask questions and express any concerns you may have about privacy, safety, compatibility and so on. This is the time to see for yourself whether this person is right for you. More than one meeting may be needed before making a final decision.

6

SIGNING OF THE HOMESHARING AGREEMENT

If both parties agree to live together, we'll help you draw up an agreement that clarifies the services to be provided and the ground rules for the living arrangement.

The agreement includes details such as rent, services, visitor rights, inventory and notice of termination.

It's important not to let financial misunderstandings damage your relationship. Be sure to give a receipt for every rent payment. Both people should avoid expensive gifts, loans and financial arrangements other than rent.

7

DISCOVERY PERIOD

The first month after the homesharer moves in is a month of discovery for both parties. It's a time of adaptation, when both host and homesharer get to know each other better and make the necessary adjustments on both sides, as in any new shared living situation.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION: INSURANCE AND TAXES

It's important to contact your insurance company to verify your coverage and options under a homesharing arrangement.

A homesharing arrangement can have repercussions on your tax return. You can consult your accountant or a tax specialist for information specific to your financial situation.

Why choose Mirela?

Mirela offers personalized services that take your safety, interests and needs into account.

Mirela offers guidance and individual support throughout the twinning and homesharing process.

Mirela offers resources and workshops that promote communication, personal development, and better living together.

PLEASE NOTE

Habitations partagées Mirela does not recommend exchanges of services that include the exchange of money or access to bank accounts, credit card numbers, etc.

As the accommodation takes place in the home of the Host Person, the relationship between the Host and the Homesharer is not a landlord-tenant relationship subject to the Residential Tenancies Act 2006. In other words, this agreement is not a lease, and the Homesharer is not protected by this law as he or she would be if renting a complete apartment, for example.

Even if the agreement is not a lease, it is nevertheless a contract that creates legal rights and obligations.



“Habitations partagées Mirela is the solution I had been waiting for, to allow me to age well at home! I have been homesharing with a mature young woman for over three years with success.”

- CLAIRE, HOST, ORLÉANS

“Every human group draws its richness from communication, mutual aid and solidarity aimed at a common goal: the fulfillment of each individual while respecting differences.”

- FRANÇOISE, DOLTO

“Thanks to Mirela my mother was able to keep her home and her autonomy. I’m convinced about the positive benefits this model has to offer, on both the mental and social health of an aging person!”

- CAROLE, DAUGHTER OF CLAIRE, HOST PERSON

To learn more about homesharing or to get in touch with people who can offer a testimony about their experience, please contact:

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613-406-2939

THANKS

We would like to thank **ACFO Ottawa** for the financial support made possible for the translation of this introductory guide in English.

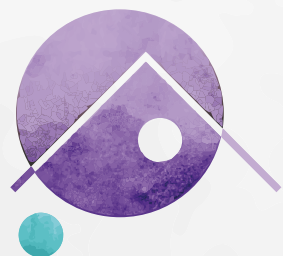
The experience, knowledge, and documentation of other homesharing organizations have inspired the writing of this guide.



FIND US HERE:

www.hpmirela.ca





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