

# What do I need from my home?

Before you begin your housing search, it will be helpful to think about the things you want and need from your new home. Below are some things to think about.

## Location

**You can start by making a list of the cities and towns you would want to live in.** Begin with the places you most want to live, and then list the places that you find less desirable but still okay. You'll use this list throughout your housing search! [You can use the worksheet in our Finding Home guide to keep track of the cities and towns you would want to live in.](#)

**After you make your list, look up the maximum fair market rent for each city and town and write it on the line next to the city or town name.** You will use this amount later on, to help figure out your housing costs.

**Next think about other aspects of the location that may be important to you.** For example, you may want to live near family or friends, or near public transit. You may also prefer to live in a big city or in a small town. [You can use the worksheet in our Finding Home guide to keep track of other location aspects that are important to you.](#) Check off how important each thing is for you. You may also add your own things to the list.

**Once you finish with this, go back to your list of cities and towns and move down or remove any that do not have the aspects you're looking for.** If you're not sure about a city or town, you can use Google to find out more about it.

## Other Preferences

Next think about the other preferences you have. This could include having a yard or off-street parking, or wanting to live in a house instead of an apartment building. [You can use the worksheet in our Finding Home guide to keep track of your other housing-related preferences.](#) You may also add your own things to the list.

## Skills and Supports

It takes a lot of different skills to live successfully on your own. Take some time to think about what skills you currently have, what skills you can build, and what skills you'll need help with. If you need help in a lot of areas, you may want to consider a supportive housing option. Supportive housing is housing with services that help you stay in your home and live as independently as possible. You can read more about supportive housing further on in this guide.

[You can use the worksheet in our Finding Home guide as a starting place. For any skills you will need help with, think about who can help you with it.](#) This could include a person you know, like a family member or friend. It could also be a program or service.



## Cost

It's important to know how much you can afford to pay for your new home each month. This information will help you decide what type of housing you should apply for, if living with roommates would be a good option, or if you can afford to live on your own. [You can use the table in our Finding Home guide to estimate how much you can spend on housing each month.](#)

Once you have figured out the amount left for housing, compare that to your city and towns list and the fair market rent that you looked up for each location on the list. Ask yourself...

**Is the amount you have left for housing more than the fair market rent for your preferred locations?** If yes, you're a step closer to finding your new home!

**Is the amount you have left for housing a little less than the fair market rent for your preferred locations?** Think about ways you can cut back on other expenses or look for some neighboring cities and towns where the fair market rent is lower.

**Is the amount you have left for housing a lot less than the fair market rent for your preferred locations?** You'll need to start thinking about less expensive housing options - like moving in with roommates, getting a single room occupancy, or applying for public housing or a housing subsidy.

## Roommates

Having a roommate can be a great way to save on housing costs, split cleaning duties, and have built-in company. Before you decide to move in with someone, it's smart to learn more about your potential roommate and the housing situation you'll be moving into. [You can use the worksheet in our Finding Home guide to get you started!](#)

