

Kansas Department on Aging Fact Sheet

The Basics of Housing Options

With a variety of housing options available, it is difficult to decide the most appropriate for your situation. Below is a brief summary of the different types that may be available, depending on where you live.

Independent Homes, Duplexes, Condos – individually owned or rented of different sizes and styles. Due to declining health or other circumstances, it may now be necessary to move to a different type of housing more suited to current needs. Maintenance of the home may have become too much for the individual.

Senior Apartment Living . . . is usually an apartment complex that provides each tenant a full apartment, kitchen appliances, laundry facilities, and 24-hour security. Services such as scheduled activities, transportation, and meal service may or may not be included. This type of housing is also referred to as Congregate Housing. Continuing Care Retirement Communities usually include this level of housing in their option pack.

Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) . . . is a campus that offers a range of housing opportunities that may include independent living houses or apartments, assisted living, residential health care, adult day care, home plus, and nursing facility. Services may also vary from no assistance to assistance by a licensed nurse. Residents select the type of housing and level of care that fits their needs and then move to another type and level of care if their situation calls for it.

Adult Care Home . . . means any nursing facility, nursing facility for mental health, intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded, assisted living facility, residential health care facility, home plus, boarding care home and adult day care facility, all of which classifications of adult care homes are required to be licensed by the Secretary of Aging.

Nursing Facility . . . means any place or facility operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, caring for six or more individuals not related within the third degree of relationship to the administrator or owner by blood or marriage and who, due to functional impairments, need skilled nursing care to compensate for activities of daily living limitations

Assisted Living Facilities . . . are licensed and are usually located in apartment-type buildings or complexes that are free standing or attached to a nursing facility. Each apartment in the facility has a kitchen, a bathroom with a shower or tub, and a separate or combined sleeping, living and storage area. The facility also has common areas such as a living room, activity area and dining room. Support services are provided to promote the people's privacy, freedom and independence. Some people may not need any assistance while other people may need assistance with transportation, light housekeeping, meal preparation, medications, bathing, dressing, and health care. Supervised nursing care provided by certified nurse aides is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Skilled nursing care by a licensed nurse may be provided on an intermittent or limited term basis, or on a regular basis if limited

in scope. The facility may employ health care professionals such as nurses, social workers, therapists, dietitians and pharmacists or coordinate the services of these health care professionals with outside agencies. The people living in an assisted living facility cannot employ privately non-certified or licensed individuals to assist them with services and care.

Residential Health Care Facilities . . . are licensed apartment type buildings or complexes that are freestanding, or are attached to a nursing facility. An individual living unit can be similar to that of an assisted living apartment with exception of not having a microwave or stove for cooking. Alternatively, the individual living unit can be only a room with a combined sleeping, living and storage area. The toilet room may or may not have a shower or tub and may be private or shared with another living unit. The facility has common areas such as a living room, bathing rooms and dining room. If the facility is attached to a nursing facility, it may share some common areas with the nursing home. Staffing, assistance and services are the same as in an assisted living facility (see previous page).

Home Plus Facilities . . . are licensed private home residences or facilities for eight people or less. A person may share a bedroom or have their own bedroom. All the people share the common spaces of the home. Meals are provided. Supervised nursing care provided by certified nurse aides is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Skilled nursing care by a licensed nurse may be provided on an intermittent or limited basis, or on a regular basis if limited in scope. Assistance and services are the same as in an ALF (see ALF information on previous page).

Boarding Care Homes . . . are licensed private home residences or facilities for up to ten people. A person may share a bedroom or have his/her own bedroom. All the people share the common spaces of the home. Non-certified or non-licensed staff provide supervision twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The only assistance and services the people may receive are meals, laundry, housekeeping and supervision for self-administration of medication. This type of facility DOES NOT provide personal, medical or skilled nursing care. The resident must be able to walk and manage his or her own affairs.

What are the costs and how can I get more information?

The cost of these different housing options will vary depending on the size of your apartment, amount of services you want or need, the facility's location, and management. Some housing may be able to lower the rent cost based on an individual's income.

Services such as homemaking and attendant care can be funded in many licensed adult care homes by the Home and Community Based Services for the Frail Elderly (HCBS-FE) Medicaid program. The home, the potential resident and the case manager would negotiate the room and board cost and the service plan. The resident would pay the negotiated room and board cost and Medicaid would pay the service cost.

Some facilities will have waiting lists, so it is wise to plan ahead if you are considering moving into one of these housing alternatives. Contact the Area Agency on Aging, Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) office, or the local housing authority in your area for more information and assistance.

Important Questions to Ask Before You Sign a Contract

1. How much will it cost, including add-ons to the rent?
2. What is the cost and policy on telephones/TVs/Cable TV hook-up?
3. Are pets allowed? If so, is there an extra deposit?
4. Are there any restrictions on visitors or overnight guests?
5. How are cleaning standards maintained? Does someone inspect apartments? Are the inspections announced or unannounced?
6. Will the home or facility accept Medicaid payment for service?
7. Can the rent be based on my income?
8. What is the policy on retaining my apartment if I have a change of health or would need to be hospitalized? Is that policy part of the contract?
9. What are the costs for services like transportation, laundry, meals, etc?
10. If you will need parking, is it included or is there an extra fee for parking?
11. What fees am I still responsible for if I am discharged per my own choice or by the facility?

Other Resources:

Many nursing homes, assisted living and independent apartment complexes have their own websites. Search by the facility name.

If the home is a licensed facility, check the last inspection report. It should be available to you within the facility. The 5-Star nursing home rating system is available at www.medicare.gov This system is for nursing homes only, not assisted living or other types.

A list of licensed facilities is available at www.agingkansas.org/CultureChange/FacReports/disclaimer.htm.

The Kansas Department on Aging (KDOA) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against by either KDOA or a KDOA funded program, please contact KDOA to receive additional information on filing a complaint: 1-800-432-3535 (voice); 1-800-766-3777(TTY).