

Live-In Caregiver FAQs

Live in caregivers can be a way for many adults with developmental disabilities to live in the home of their choice with support up to 24 hours a day. This handout is a quick guide to understanding how that may work, and includes resources to learn more about the idea.

The Work of Live-In Caregivers

Live-in caregivers are also called live-in aides, and they can help with a range of tasks in the home and community of an adult with a disability. Their fulltime residence will be the same home as the person with a disability. Live-in caregiver agreements typically arrange for the live-in aide to be home at designated times each day or night (e.g., 10 PM-6 AM), even if they're sleeping, in order to be "on call" to handle any emergencies or unusual issues, and provide general safety or supervision supports.

Agreements may also provide help with peer support and socialization, community access, or activities of daily living, depending on the needs of the individual they're helping to support. This is a great set up for people who want to maximize independence, but need help managing unexpected issues overnight or need a daily check in.

How Live-In Caregivers are Paid

Typically, live-in caregivers live rent free (including free utilities) in exchange for a certain number of hours of support. One way to get a sense of how this may work is to take half the cost of renting an apartment and divide it by an hourly rate (e.g., \$20/hour) to see how many monthly hours of care that would fund.

The live-in caregiver can often get free rent if the renter with a disability has a housing voucher or subsidy if the person with a disability notes that they need a "reasonable accommodation" to their rental support when they apply. That modification would state that the person needs a live-in caregiver in order to successfully live more interdependently, thus the voucher often covers the cost of the second bedroom.

Live-in caregivers can also be paid to work additional hours with programs like the Medicaid Waiver, or private pay. Be sure to look into labor laws to ensure you're offering at least the minimum required contribution depending upon your situation. More details on this are in our full [Live-In Care Attendant Guide](#), linked in the More Information section.

Live-In Caregivers Plus Other Supports

Since live-in caregivers cannot work 24 hours a day, if someone needs more care than a live-in caregiver alone can provide, they can couple this service with other support options. This will look different based upon the needs and interests of the resident with a disability, but keep in mind that individuals with DD Medicaid Waivers (and the CCC Plus Waiver, to a limited extent), can use their Waiver funding to bring other services to the table. These can include things like (continued on next page):

www.TheArcofNoVA.org and ask questions at www.thearcofnova.org/answers

3060 Williams Dr., Suite 300, Fairfax, VA 22031

- 1:1 caregiver at hours when the live-in aide is not working
- Nursing supports
- Employment and/or day supports
- Therapies
- Skill building assistance

Things to Know and Consider

Selecting a live-in caregiver is a big job, and can take a lot of work to recruit. It can be difficult to align times for a move, a housing voucher, and Waiver funding to all start working together. Ensure you are prepared for the time this may take, and are talking with your team to line up back up options in case there are any gaps in your plan. It is a great idea to talk to other people using this option to get a sense of how it may work initially, and over time.

One of the great benefits of having a live-in aide is that they're living in the home full-time even when they aren't working, so they can provide natural peer mentorship, socialization, and some insight into how other services (e.g., another drop-in attendant) are working out.

Personality matches often matter just as much, or even more than, skill sets. Personalities tend to change relatively little overtime while skills can be learned. In looking for caregivers, give a lot of weight to their lifestyle and disposition and imagine how that would compliment the personality of the resident with a disability.

Live-in caregivers typically do not have the same tenancy rights as lease holders, but keep in mind you'll need to ensure they move out on an agreed upon timeline if their employment is terminated, and they understand that link.

Live-in caregivers will need time off, so plan for who will provide that care if they are sick or take planned vacation time.

It is a good idea to have a clear, written, and signed agreement with the live-in caregiver to outline their job description and duties, schedule, method of time tracking and payment, and other terms of employment. Remember to give them training to do their job well and tools to make that work (e.g., timesheet templates, checklists, regular performance reviews). Examples of documents like this are in the full [Live-In Care Attendant Guide](#), linked in the More Information section.

More Information

- For our full Live In Care Attendant Guide (for individuals and families) and our Live In Care Attendant Guide (for attendants), visit <https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#l-i-c>
- To see our full housing options and resources guide, visit <https://thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/finding-home-adults-disabilities/>
- To see videos on a variety of housing options for people with developmental disabilities, check out our YouTube library at <https://www.youtube.com/@VideosatTheArcofNoVA/videos>