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February 20, 2020

Bringing Intergenerational Home Sharing to Fairfax County

Definition: Intergenerational living arrangements involve a homeowner who is older than 55+ renting a room or a portion of their home to a younger adult/student (18-30) in exchange for below market rents and assistance with some agreed upon basic chores.

Homeowner benefits	Young Adult/student benefits	Community Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Income• Assistance with household chores• Companionship/Reduced isolation• Ability to age in place longer• Helping a student with college affordability• Home security when away	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affordability of a comfortable home• Quiet place to study• Assistance from homeowner about local area• Convenient housing location• No expense for furnishings• Opportunity to help older adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps universities address on-campus student housing shortage• Lowers cost of providing aging in place services• One option to make housing more affordable for existing homeowners• Can't build enough affordable housing but can better utilize empty bedrooms in Fairfax County• Reduces ageism

Background: Intergenerational Home Sharing (IGHS) is not a new concept. Existing North American programs include:

- Odd Couples Housing in St Louis <https://www.oddcoupleshousing.com/>
- Nesterly in Boston MA and Columbus OH <https://www.nesterly.io/>
- Home Match in San Francisco <https://homematchsf.org/>
- University of Toronto <https://www.torontohomeshare.com/>
- New York University <https://socialwork.nyu.edu/news/2019/02/12/nyu-silver-generations-united-intergenerational-housing-project-named-finalist-in-longevity-design-competition.html>
- New York City (not necessarily intergenerational) <https://www.nyfsc.org/home-sharing/>

Past home sharing initiatives in Fairfax County

- Operation Match was a home sharing, but not intergenerational home sharing, program implemented in the 1982-1996 time frame by the Washington Council of Governments. Fairfax County funded a similar program in 2001-2003 but the program was not successful for a variety of reasons, e.g., the focus was on home seekers, not home providers; an ineffective matching process was used; no background checks were obtained; and no education was done for home providers and seekers.
- The existing 50+ Community Action Plan included a home sharing initiative that only resulted in the online publication of a do-it-yourself guide to home sharing.

Challenges include:

- Ensuring privacy, trust, compatibility
- Developing effective marketing
- Building a high-touch as well as high-tech approach for success

Why now?

- The number of older adults aging in place in Fairfax County is increasing
- Housing affordability is an issue not just for new home buyers and renters but for older adults aging in place
- The development of the One University student housing project off campus shows the need to find affordable housing alternatives for both students and older adults
- Existing IGHS programs in other jurisdictions show that the concept is feasible and can be a model for how to implement a program here
- The sharing economy is becoming more acceptable in other domains

Proposed pilot study

- While IGHS is not new, there has not been a rigorous evaluation of intergenerational home sharing benefits and challenges, best practices, and how to promote and manage a sustainable program.
- A pilot study would provide the data and insights needed to demonstrate the viability and need for a full-scale program that could be adopted in other Virginia jurisdictions

Next steps

1. Identify potential county staff to manage program
2. Identify potential organizations to operate the program
3. Secure funding
4. Develop pilot study request for proposals for competitive bidding
5. Award contract
6. Monitor and evaluate program
7. Prepare final report identifying lessons learned and best practices for running a successful and sustainable program

Special thanks to Mike Perel, Co-Chair, Fairfax County Commission on Aging.