

Affordable Housing Summit Tucson AZ  
January 25 - 28, 2021 and February 5, 2021

## TUCSON HOME SHARING

From the Pew Charitable Trust video 2019

“After rising steadily for nearly a century, the share of women 65+ who live alone has fallen since 1990”

### **Issue/Topic**

To provide affordable housing in Tucson by establishing a home sharing program. Home sharing is a lifestyle choice/agreement that allows two or more people to share housing for their mutual benefit. A person offers a private bedroom and shared common area in exchange for rent, help around the house or a combination of the two. Every home sharing arrangement is unique. It's about people helping people, and creating a culture of sharing.

### **Background**

Tucson Home Sharing, Inc was established in February 2019, although initial outreach began in 2016 when Deborah Knox & Sharon Kha began sharing a home in mid-town Tucson. National media picked up on their story with articles in the on-line version of AARP, and later, in their print version of the AARP Bulletin. Even the Wall St. Journal included them in an online publication, along with other successful stories of home sharing. The Pew Charitable Trust contacted Sharon & Deb in September 2019 and sent a crew from Washington DC to create the 5 minute video titled Boomates

as they too were discovering the value of home sharing to address the nationwide topic of affordable housing. <https://www.facebook.com/livingfacts/videos/560616111153629/>

Between 2017 - and 2019 Sharon and Deb presented to more than 10 organizations serving the older population in Tucson. These presentations were for outreach purpose to individuals as well as professional staff of organizations that serve elders. They include: PCOA, JFCS (Jewish Friends and Children's Service) LGBTQ, TMC Seniors, Neighbor Care Alliance, SNAP (Sunrise Neighborhood Assistance Program) Ft. Lowell Live at Home Program, and many others within the Elder Alliance Program.

### **Best Practices and Benefits**

Model programs include the following components: they provide clear instructions and information (for home owners and home seekers); easily accessible intake forms; an online matching program administered by professional staff and trained volunteers; background checks that ensure security; training in communication and conflict resolution to ensure long term relationships can be established and maintained.

National Shared Housing Resource Center <https://nationalshared-housing.org> offers a program directory to over 50 established programs, and encourages sharing information and resources to help new programs get started. It's exciting that this growing industry has such a well coordinated national support system to further promote the value and shared benefits of home sharing.

## **Obstacles/Challenges**

There is a need to educate this older population to the benefits of home sharing as we seek to overcome feelings of isolation, loneliness and independence, and the pressures of maintaining an affordable living at home program. Developing a data base of home owners willing to share their homes is another important step in creating a successful program here in Tucson.

Financing for these programs nationally is diverse, and most are non profit organizations, or part of one. The fees for users need to be affordable and other funding made available. A feasibility study has been conducted by PCOA to determine what kind of a home sharing program could best serve Tucson. The results should be part of a larger community initiative to address affordable housing in Tucson.

## **Joint benefits for Home Owners and Home Seekers**

- Lowered living costs
- Companionship/new connections/shared interests
- Security of not living alone
- Prevention of loneliness or isolation

## **Financial and Emotional benefits for Home Owners**

- Additional income
- Peace of mind for family and friends
- Ability to age-in-place in own home/community
- Opportunity for intergenerational experience or care assistance

## **Financial and Emotional benefits for Home Seekers**

- Affordable housing solution with flexible terms
- Chore-sharing in exchange for eased financial burden
- Lasting interpersonal relationship

What distinguishes home sharing from renting is the formal, short term rental agreement. Home sharing seeks to build mutually beneficial, long-term relationships.

## **Conclusions**

Aging in the “Right” Place needs to ensure diversity and equity in matches. The optimal outcome is to provide programs and services that promote a quality of life for those aging in place. Creating a culture of sharing is paramount to the success of all home sharing programs. Shared Housing does not address the needs of the chronically homeless, or even people with dual diagnosis, although Deb’s sharing with Sharon required care in terms of providing an evening meal and being present in case “she falls.” Individual relationship agreements need to be addressed in the professional matching process.

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<https://www.facebook.com/livingfacts/videos/560616111153629/>

Google website  
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