



The City of Bellingham is partnering with Nesterly to bring more rental options to Bellingham with home sharing.

Home Sharing: Frequently Asked Questions for Hosts

Is it safe to share my home through Nesterly?

Nesterly takes many precautions to ensure home share matches are safe and vetted.

- All users must complete an application, provide at least two references, and undergo a full background check. The background check includes a National Criminal Search, Sex Offender Registry, Global Watchlist Search, Address History Search, and Social Security Verification.
- Before entering into a home sharing agreement, potential hosts and renters can meet via a secure video chat to ensure that both parties have a good connection.
- Your private contact details and address will not be shared until a home sharing agreement is in place.

How much should I charge to rent a room in my home?

Rents vary depending on location, amenities offered, utilities, and square feet available. Nesterly will assist you in setting a price that is fair relative to the market rate in your area. Hosts are ultimately able to set the price. To increase your chances of receiving a booking request, price your home share affordably. Hosts in Bellingham who list their rooms for \$600/month or less will receive a Civic Leader Badge on their profile, which is the surest way to get the attention of interested guests.

Can I choose whom to live with?

Yes, you are in control of whom you choose to share a home with. Nesterly will assist with ensuring the compatibility of a match based on preferences such as daily routines, cleanliness, noise levels, pets, etc. Renters are encouraged to have a phone or video call before visiting a host's home. Booking visits needs to be done directly through the Nesterly platform. If something doesn't feel right, it's ok to decline the match. For questions to ask during an interview, please visit Nesterly's website for helpful tips: nesterly.com/nesterly-interview-guide

Can I meet renters before signing into an agreement?

Yes. Before signing a home share agreement, we recommend first having a phone call or video call with the host via the Nesterly platform. Starting the booking process will initiate a background check or identity verification. Remember that a booking needs to be made directly through the Nesterly platform. This helps ensure that you're protected under our Terms of Service, cancellation policies and other safeguards.

Am I required to own my home in order to sign up to be a host?

Yes, you are required to own your home to participate in this home sharing program.

How does the task exchange work?

Task exchange is when a renter provides help with household tasks in place of a portion of their rent. It's a flexible arrangement that can benefit both the renter and host. In exchange for a portion of the rent, a renter agrees to contribute time and effort toward specific household responsibilities. These might include cleaning, grocery shopping, yard work/gardening, pet care, running errands, assisting with transportation or tech help, etc. Personal care tasks are not allowed. Nesterly will help hosts and renters set clear expectations about the task exchange within the home sharing agreement such as what the task(s) are, how often/when, the approximately number of hours, etc.

What if the home sharing arrangement doesn't work out?

Nesterly helps set up successful home sharing relationships through making sure communication about important issues happens up front and are outlined in the home sharing agreement. There are also ongoing monthly check ins throughout the duration of the home share to make sure things are going smoothly. If questions or concerns arise, renters and hosts can reach out to Nesterly support staff to get help navigating any issues related to the home sharing relationship.

Is home sharing subject to Landlord-Tenant Law in Washington State?

Yes, home sharing agreements in Washington State are generally subject to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RCW 59.18). This law governs most residential rental arrangements where a tenant pays rent to a landlord for the right to live in a dwelling, regardless of whether the agreement is written or verbal, or whether the term is fixed or month-to-month.

Will income from a home share affect my eligibility for benefits?

Rental payments are generally considered income. If you receive any public benefits, income from rent may affect those benefits. Please consult with your case manager or the program administrator prior to entering into a home sharing arrangement to check income limits and other criteria. If you are concerned about potential impacts to your benefits, Hosts may consider the option of a task exchange to reduce rent-related monthly income. Learn more:

- www.whatcomcounty.us/3406/Exemptions-Tax-Relief
- cob.org/services/utilities/reduced-rates

Would I need to register my rental with the City?

Not if your rental is a bedroom in your home. If it's an attached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) or duplex, it would need to be registered, but you wouldn't need to pay a registration fee or have the unit inspected. A detached ADU would need to be registered and inspected.

Is home sharing subject to the federal Fair Housing Act?

Nesterly will help guide hosts in creating profiles that adhere to the spirit of Fair Housing laws, as well as state and local antidiscrimination laws. Home sharing agreements can be subject to the Fair Housing Act however, there are some important exceptions and nuances. However, if a homeowner is renting part of a home they live in (like a room), and the home has four or fewer units, federal Fair Housing law does not apply to that specific rental situation. Discriminatory ads are never allowed – the FHA always applies to advertising, even if you're exempt from tenant selection rules.



Learn More & Sign Up

cob.org/bellingham-home-sharing-program

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