



Find an Assisted Living Facility

Choosing an assisted living facility is an important decision. Other long-term services and supports may fit your needs, like receiving care in your home. However, if you decide that an assisted living facility is the right choice, these resources will help you find one that best meets your needs.

Locate a facility and explore options.

- Check with your family and friends. Ask about their experiences with assisted living facilities.
- Contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in your area and ask for a list of facilities.
 - ▶ To find a program near you, call **800-252-2412**.
 - ▶ Enter your five digit ZIP code to be directed to an ombudsman in your area.
 - ▶ Or use the "*Find an LTC Ombudsman in Your Area*" feature on the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman website at apps.hhs.texas.gov/news_info/ombudsman/.
- Ask an ombudsman about complaints in your assisted living facility top choices.
- Visit the Texas Health and Human Services *Long-Term Care Provider Search* at apps.hhs.texas.gov/LTCSearch.

Visit the assisted living facility.

- Take a tour of the assisted living facility.
- Go back unannounced one or more times, including mealtimes, evenings and weekends.
- Talk to current residents and any family or friends who may be visiting.
- Ask to review the facility's most recent survey reports.
 - ▶ A survey report provides information about a facility's state inspection.
 - ▶ An ombudsman can help you understand a survey report.

- Determine how far the assisted living facility is from your family and friends and how easy it will be for them to visit you.

Explore assisted living facility services and costs.

- Ask for and review the facility's resident contract or resident agreement.
 - ▶ What is included in the rate you will pay? For example, is room and board, cable, assistance with dressing or bathing or help managing medications included?
- Ask for and carefully review the facility's disclosure form.
 - ▶ Under what circumstances can you be asked to leave?
- What is the cost of additional services or personal assistance?
 - ▶ Ask the facility for a list of services provided and their cost.
 - ▶ How are these fees determined?
- Do you need specialized care?
 - ▶ If yes, ask if the facility provides the care you require and the cost.
- How often does the facility offer opportunities to go on outings or take you to medical appointments?
 - ▶ Is there an additional cost for transportation and under what circumstances do fees apply?
- What activities do they offer?
- Is the assisted living Alzheimer certified?
 - ▶ If yes, does the facility have a secure or locked unit?
 - ▶ If the facility does not have a secure or locked unit, does it use a departure warning system like WanderGuard?

Explore options to pay for your care.

- What payer sources does the facility accept?
 - ▶ For example, does the facility accept private pay only (payments using your money)?
 - ▶ Do they accept *Veterans Aid and Attendance* or long-term care insurance benefits?
 - ▶ Note: **Medicare does not pay for assisted living.**
- What happens if your money runs out while living in the assisted living?
 - ▶ Does the facility participate in Medicaid?
 - ▶ If the facility says you can stay and use Medicaid funds for the entire length of your stay, get the answer to you in writing.
- Learn about and apply for benefits like Medicaid.

- ▶ Visit the *Your Texas Benefits* website at yourtexasbenefits.com.
- ▶ If you don't have computer access, call **2-1-1**. Choose Option 1 to find long-term services in your area. Choose Option 2 for help with state benefits like Medicaid.
- Contact an Area Agency on Aging benefits counselor for free advice.
 - ▶ Call **800-252-9240**.
 - ▶ Enter your five digit ZIP code to be directed to your local AAA.
 - ▶ Or find the *AAA Directory* at apps.hhs.texas.gov/contact/aaa.cfm.
 - ▶ A benefits counselor can tell you about eligibility requirements for Medicaid.
- Visit the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman *Paying for Care* apps.hhs.texas.gov/news_info/ombudsman/financing.html.
- Visit the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs *Aid and Attendance* benefits.va.gov/pension/aid_attendance_housebound.asp.
- Contact your long-term care insurance provider, if applicable. Ask if and when your policy pays for assisted living and what you need to do to start using it.

Ask about facility and resident policies.

- What is the facility policy about administering CPR to residents?
- Under what circumstances can you be asked to leave?
- Ask to review the facility's resident handbook or resident policies.
- What if you have a conflict with another resident or a staff member?
- How can you file a complaint, if needed?

Ask about facility staff and training.

- How many residents are assigned to each aide or nurse?
 - ▶ This is also called the staff-to-resident ratio.
 - ▶ How do they determine the number of staff required on each shift?
- Will the same aides be consistently assigned to you on each shift?
 - ▶ This is a best practice in resident care.
- What training and experience do the facility staff have?
- If the facility offers specialized care, what specialized training do staff receive to assist residents requiring this type of care?
- How much experience does the assisted living facility have in providing the services you require?

Ask how your needs, routines and preferences will be met.

- What preferences or routines are important to you?
 - ▶ For example, do you like staying up late at night or eating breakfast late?
 - ▶ Do you like baths instead of showers?
 - ▶ Ask how staff will meet those needs, preferences and routines.
- Can you share a room with the person of your choice as long as that person agrees?

Helpful resources

- AARP, *Assisted Living: Weighing the Options*:
aarp.org/caregiving/basics/info-2017/assisted-living-options.html.
- The National Consumer Voice *Piecing Together Quality Long-Term Care: A Consumer's Guide to Choices and Advocacy*:
[theconsumervoice.org/uploads/files/long-term-care-recipient/piecing-together-quality-long-term-care_\(1\).pdf](http://theconsumervoice.org/uploads/files/long-term-care-recipient/piecing-together-quality-long-term-care_(1).pdf).

Based on "How to Select an Assisted Living Facility" by The Consumer Voice.