Questions to Ask Series
When Selecting Active Independent Living & Retirement Communities
www.SeniorsE-Guide.com
Developed and Hosted by www.SeniorsResourceGuide.com
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Introduction

Active independent and retirement communities refers to communities designed for active seniors. These communities usually feature low-maintenance apartments, condominiums, town homes, or ranch-style residences. Communities often are designed around recreational activities such as golf, swimming, boating, or fitness. Amenities vary between communities and may have age restriction covenants. Some active independent communities do not have meal plans, activity directors or continuum of care housing options.

General Advice

Here are some questions to consider when selecting senior housing. It is important to trust your feelings and reactions when interviewing a company. The following questions are just suggestions. Take the time to consider what your personal needs are and have a family member or friend available to help evaluate responses. Researching online and follow up phone interviews are a good start but take the time to tour the facility. Keep mind that some senior housing locations may have wait lists so it is a good idea to do your senior housing research before the need arises.

Starting a Search for Senior Housing or Other Support Services

1. **Start your search by using the Internet and look at websites like**
   http://www.seniorsresourceguide.com/

2. Follow up with a phone call to the companies that interest you.

3. Listen to advice from your doctor, senior professionals and the companies you are interviewing.

4. Schedule a visit to facilities that meet your criteria.

5. For senior housing – If you are helping an older relative then schedule visits to the housing locations that meet your criteria.

6. If the services are for an older relative, try to involve them in the final selection if possible.
General Suggestions - Applicable to most Senior Housing

1. Try not to make a hasty decision.
2. Try to get family or friends to help evaluate the options.
3. Trust your feelings and reactions when interviewing a company.
4. Ask for references.
5. Take the time to review company materials.
6. Ask a lot of questions.
7. Be sure that you understand pricing.
8. Do not sign any contract until you thoroughly understand pricing and have reviewed the contract in detail.
9. For Senior Housing - If possible, talk to residents.
10. For Senior Housing - If possible drop in a second time unannounced.
11. Consider working with a Housing Specialist or Referral & Caregiving Resource Professional. These professionals are listed on SeniorsResourceGuide.com under the category of Care Management & Referral Services.
Questions to Ask When Selecting Active Independent Living & Retirement Communities

1. What size are the apartments or cottages – studio, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom?
   ________________________________________________________________

2. What is the starting price?
   ________________________________________________________________

3. What is included in the price?
   ________________________________________________________________

4. Do you have a wait list?
   ________________________________________________________________

5. Is there a cost for an extra person?
   ________________________________________________________________

6. Is there a buy-in and how does it work?
   ________________________________________________________________

7. Is there age restriction?
   ________________________________________________________________

8. What is the number of units?
   ________________________________________________________________

9. Is the community a continuum of care (CCRC)?
   ________________________________________________________________

10. If the community is a CCRC, what levels of care are onsite?
    ________________________________________________________________

11. When needs change do residents move to other buildings?
    ________________________________________________________________

12. What is the meal plan like?
    ________________________________________________________________

13. How and where are meals served?
    ________________________________________________________________

14. Is there housekeeping service?
    ________________________________________________________________

15. Is there laundry service?
    ________________________________________________________________

16. Is the location handicap accessible?
    ________________________________________________________________

17. Can I have my car on the property?
    ________________________________________________________________

18. Is there covered parking for residents’ cars?
    ________________________________________________________________

19. Is there scheduled transportation?
    ________________________________________________________________

20. Are pets allowed?
    ________________________________________________________________

21. How is the unused portion of the rent handled upon leaving?
    ________________________________________________________________

22. What services are included?
    ________________________________________________________________

23. What services are excluded?
    ________________________________________________________________
24. What are the health reasons for which I would have to move? ________________

25. Is there a call system? ________________________________________________

26. Are there planned activities for residents? ________________________________

27. Are there planned outside activities for residents? _________________________

28. Is there onsite apartment for family to stay the night? _____________________

29. What is the cost for family to stay for dinner? ____________________________

30. Is cable television available? __________________________________________

31. Can I have a tour of the location? __________________________________________

32. Other ________________________________________________________________

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Other Resources

Assisted Living Senior Housing – “It is all in the name.”
Learn more about the terminology used in State Licensing Requirements for Assisted Living Facilities (ALF). Licensing requirements for Assisted Living Facilities - ALF are controlled at the State level. Each State has the control to select the terminology of how to refer to various types of Assisted Living Facilities - ALF’s in their state. Many states have slightly different names and definitions for Assisted Living Facilities – ALF’s in their State compared to other States. However, all of the states are referring to a similar “assisted living lifestyle” for seniors.
Learn more at SeniorsResourceGuide.com

Area Agencies on Aging – AoA
Administration on Aging is the Federal focal point and advocate agency for older persons and their concerns. AoA awards Older Americans Act funds for supportive home and community-based services to the State Units on Aging, located in every state and U.S. territory.
http://www.acl.gov

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services - CMS
CMS administers Medicare and Medicaid health insurance programs. They have a through website and they support a TTY user phone system for the deaf and hard of hearing public.
www.cms.hhs.gov

Find your Local Area Agency on Aging through Eldercare Locator
The Eldercare Locator a service of U.S. Administration on Aging helps can connect you to your local Area Agency on Aging. Call 1-800-677-1116, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Eastern Time.
www.eldercare.gov

HUD - Local Public Housing Agency – PHA
If you need public housing assistance or are looking for information about public housing programs such as housing choice vouchers you need to contact your local Public Housing Agency (PHA). HUD maintains a database for locating these agencies.
www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/index.cfm

Medicare.gov – Official U.S. Government Site for Medicare
Medicare wants to "help you help yourself" by using Medicare's information resources to answer your questions.
www.medicare.gov

National Association of State Units on Aging – NASUA
Association through which state agencies on aging promote social policy in the public and private sectors to meet the current and future needs of older persons, adults with disabilities, and their families and caregivers.
www.nasuad.org

US Department of Housing and Urban Development – HUD
Learn more about renting and HUD rental assistance programs. The HUD website has information for consumers and Public Housing Authorities (PHA). Public Housing Authorities are the local groups a person needs to contact to find out what public housing is available in your area.
www hud gov/apps/section8/