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Seniors E-Guide

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Questions to Ask Series

When Selecting Active Independent Living & Retirement Communities

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Introduction

Active independent and retirement communities refer 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 from the community.

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. Look at the organization's website
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.
7. Consider engaging a Senior Housing Placement professional. Their services are generally paid by the senior housing location.

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 some of their residents.
10. For Senior Housing - If possible, drop in a second time unannounced.
11. For Senior Housing - If possible, attend one of their events.
12. For Senior Housing – see if you can spend the night or weekend at the property and have a meal with other residents, if the property offers a meal program.
13. Consider working with a *Housing Specialist* or *Referral & Caregiving Resource Professional*.

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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Have Questions?

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