

Room and Board Training: For Individuals & Families

4.3.25



When we say...




Provider:

The Life Sharing or
Residential
Habilitation
(Group home)
Provider/Agency

Individual:

Person who is
receiving the
residential service

A blurred background image of a crowd of people. In the foreground, a person's arm is raised, with their hand open and fingers spread. They are wearing a dark green sweater and a ring on their ring finger. A light blue speech bubble is overlaid on the left side of the image.

*Who does
Room and
Board apply
to?*



Who?

Room and Board
Needed for:

- Residential Habilitation (Group Homes)
- Life Sharing

Note: For all ages

Room and Board is
NOT needed for:

- Supported Living



➤ What is Covered Through the Waivers

The Consolidated, Community Living, and Adult Autism Waivers cover the costs for providing the Residential Habilitation and Life Sharing services. This includes:

- Wages and benefits for staff such as: Direct Support Professionals, supervisors, program specialists, behavioral support, nurses, etc.
- Costs for staff training

It is a federal rule that Waivers cannot cover Room and Board costs.

➤ What exactly is Room and Board?



▶ Provider Responsibilities

The Residential Habilitation and Life Sharing providers are responsible for ensuring that individuals' needs are met.

Beyond service delivery, this includes providing a clean, safe, accessible, and furnished home:

- Electricity and running water
- Food and drinks
- First aid kit
- Phone and internet
- Cleaning supplies

What is Room and Board?

There are some things that the waiver can not pay for, and therefore, the provider and individual will need to pay for these things.

Room: When the individual pays the provider for where they live



Board: When the individual pays the provider for buying their groceries and to have food available to eat at their home.



▶ What items are Included in Room and Board?

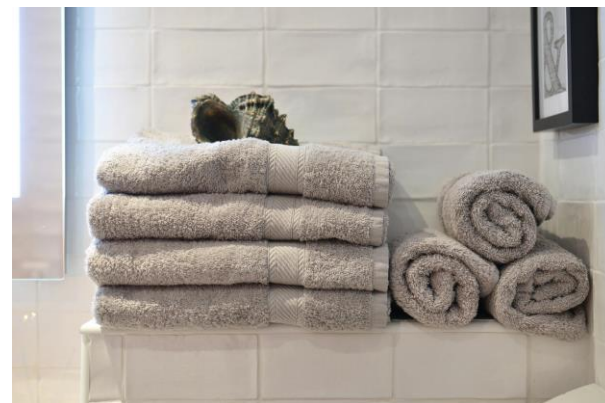


Room and Board Items

Providers must buy standard items that meet the individual's needs. Individuals must have **choice**.

Examples:

- **Toiletries:** Toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, conditioner, hairbrush, sunscreen, feminine products, etc..
- **Towels:** include bath towels, hand towels, and washcloths.
- **Bedding:** includes sheets, pillowcases, pillows, blankets, etc.



Room and Board Items (2)



- **Internet:** Basic internet service must be provided. *Each individual DOES NOT need a separate internet package*
- **Cleaning products:** Bathroom cleaner, dish soap, laundry detergent, etc.
- **Washing and drying:** Provider responsible for all labor tasks involved.



Room and Board Items (3)

- **Lawn care, food preparation, and maintaining the home :**
Provider responsible for all labor tasks involved
- **Household furniture:** Sofas, dining tables and chairs, beds, mattresses, mirrors, etc.
- **Incontinence products:**
Products used for bladder/bowel support

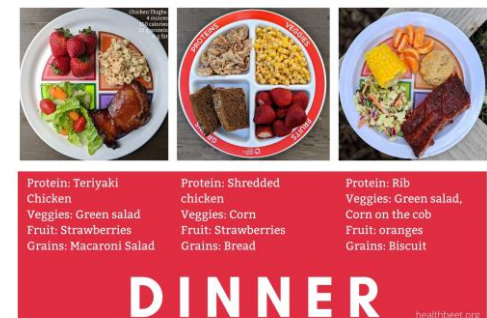


Board / Food

Food: 3 well-balanced meals a day, between-meal snacks, additional food based on individual's needs

Provider will consider the:

- cost of the item.
- nutrition in the food.
- individual's choice.
- individual's diet needs.



➤ Individuals' Prescribed Diets

If the individual has prescribed diet needs and insurance does not cover it, the provider is responsible for those items.

Examples:

- Anything that is needed to change the food to a prescribed texture.
- Meal replacements instead of solid food
- Foods for individuals with diabetes.

Room and Board Costs: FAQ

Q: “If the individual needs a blender to prepare their food, will the provider pay for this?”


A: Yes, because this is needed for the individual's health and safety as part of their dietary needs.

Q: “If the individual is allergic to an item, is the provider responsible for another item?”

A: Yes, because this is needed for their health and safety.



▶ Why is a Room and Board Agreement Needed?



Why?

➤ Why?

The purpose of the Room and Board Agreement is to ensure all individuals:

- Have protections;
- Have a clean and well-maintained home and other needed items.
- Have spending money that is separate from Room and Board.
- Understand the monthly amount they need to pay to the provider for Room and Board.

▶ Who Participates?



➤ Signing the Agreement

- Residential Habilitation Provider (group home)
- Life Sharing Provider / Life Sharer
- The individual;
- The individual's court-appointed legal guardian, if applicable;
- A designated person if the individual is 18+ or older and has a designated person;
- For youth under 18 years of age, a legally responsible individual.

▶ IMPORTANT

Communication is **IMPORTANT** for Room and Board. Your provider is responsible to ensure you understand what Room and Board means, what the agreement says, and how it impacts you.



When & How Often is a Room and Board Agreement Needed?



➤ When to Complete the Room and Board Agreement?

1. Before moving into the home;
2. When a change is needed in the agreement;
3. Every 12 months (annually)

When: FAQ

“Will the individual receive notice of a change in their Room and Board Agreement?”

Yes, they will get 30 day’s notice before a change is made.



► Change to Room and Board

? ? ?



CHANGE

SAME

R&B Changes

- Examples of when something may change the Room and Board Agreement:
 - Food change would be a **Board** change
 - Unable to eat food
 - Wants to purchase their own food instead of provider doing it for them.
 - Living situation change would be a **Room** change
 - Moving from one house to another
 - Moving from one provider or service to another



Individual's Personal Funds



➤ Personal Funds: Specialty Items

- The provider is responsible for standard room and board items.
 - The individual can not be charged for those items.
 - The individual has a choice to (without pressure / coercion) purchase a specialty item/ brand that may be more expensive.
- If the individual wants to pay for a specialty item that is more expensive, the individual's personal funds would be used to pay the difference.

Personal Funds: Example 1

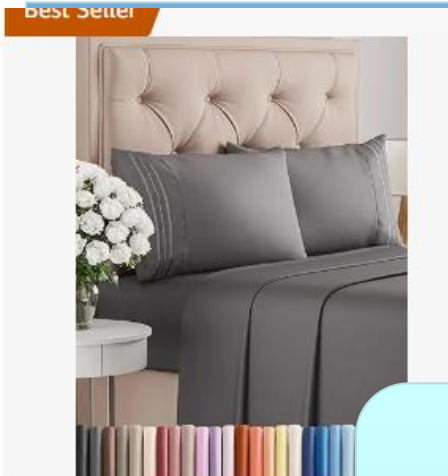


The individual wants Bath and Body Hand soap **INSTEAD** of the standard soap the provider will buy.

- Bath And Body soap: \$7.00
- Standard hand soap cost: \$3.00

The provider would pay \$4.00 towards the soap and the individual would pay the difference.

Personal Funds: Example 2



[+44 other colors/patterns](#)

Sponsored ⓘ

Queen Size 4 Piece Sheet Set
Comfy Breathable & Cool
Bed Sheets Set - Hotel Quality
Bedding for Women, Men

Options: 7 sizes

★★★★★ 369,368
7K+ bought in past month

\$29⁹⁹ (\$7.50/Count)

Save 30% with coupon

✓prime

FREE delivery Sun, Mar 2 on \$35

**As part
of Room
and
Board
Standard
item: \$30**



[+2 other colors/patterns](#)

Sponsored ⓘ

100% Egyptian Cotton Sheets
Queen Size | 1200 Thread
Count | CEA Gold Seal
Certified | Ultra Soft | Coolin...

Options: 2 sizes

★★★★★ 36

Save 20%

\$167⁸⁸ Typical: \$209.88

Save 5% on 2 select item(s)

**Individual
wants a
specialty
item: \$168.**

**Provider
would pay
\$30 and the
individual
would pay
\$138**

FAQ: Personal Funds, Meals Outside of the House



Q: “Can individuals pay for meals outside of the home?”

A: If you choose to go out to eat/buy take-out without the provider asking you to do so, you can use your personal funds for your own meal outside of your home.
Your provider can not pressure / coerce you.

If your provider/staff chooses to go out to eat/buy take out, and you agree to this, your provider must pay for your meal.

Individual's Information Used in R&B Calculation



Please note: This information must be shared with the provider.

▶ Individual's Information Used in R&B Calculation (cont.)

Most individuals who receive waiver services receive money from the government, such as:

- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI):**
<https://www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/SSI.html>.
- **PA State Supplementary Payment (SSP):**
additional benefit offered to people who receive SSI.
[SSP information](#)

Individuals may also have other money, such as:

- Wages from a job;
- Money inherited from someone; etc.

▶ Individual's Information Used in R&B Calculation (cont. 3)

Some individuals will also have benefits, such as:

- Energy assistance (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)),
- Food and nutrition assistance (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)),
- Rent rebates (Pennsylvania Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program), etc.

Please note: Any rent rebate the individual receives goes to the provider because the room and board that is paid to the provider, does not cover all of the provider's costs to operate the home.

If the individual is not currently receiving:

- SSI; or
- Benefits

the provider is responsible for assisting the individual with applying for SSI.

▶ Other Information the Provider Uses to Calculate R&B



➤ Calculating Room and Board

Providers are trained on how to calculate Room and Boards costs, through:

- Regulations;
- Room and Board Policies (Bulletin); and
- ODP Trainings.

There are guidelines the provider **MUST** follow to ensure that the individual is charged the correct amount.

The Cost of all the Room and Board Items



Protein: Egg Whites
Fruit: Strawberries/bananas
Grains: Toast

Protein: Greek Yogurt
Fruit: Strawberries/peaches
Grains: Pancakes

Protein: Eggs
Veggies: Avocado
Fruit: Berries
Grains: Toast

BREAKFAST



► FYI: Room and Board Costs

AMOUNT



➤ Maximum Amount for Room & Board

In 2025, the highest amount that an individual could be charged for room and board is \$712.15.

- There are times when the individual may be charged less:
 - If the individual is not charged for both “Room” and “Board”
 - If the individual’s income is less than \$967, it would be based on a percentage of their income.

Please note:

1. Every year these numbers may change.
2. This is based off **most** people in Life Sharing and Group homes (some people may be charged differently if they have different situations).

► Delays in Income & Hospitalizations & Leave



► Delay in Individual's Income

If the individual's income is delayed for 1 month or longer, than the provider or Life Sharer may either:

- Not collect Room and Board payment until the income is received, or
 - Negotiate an amount until the delayed income is received.
- The individual & designated person must be informed in writing.

The individual must have at least \$30 to use each month from their income (state and federal rules).

Definition

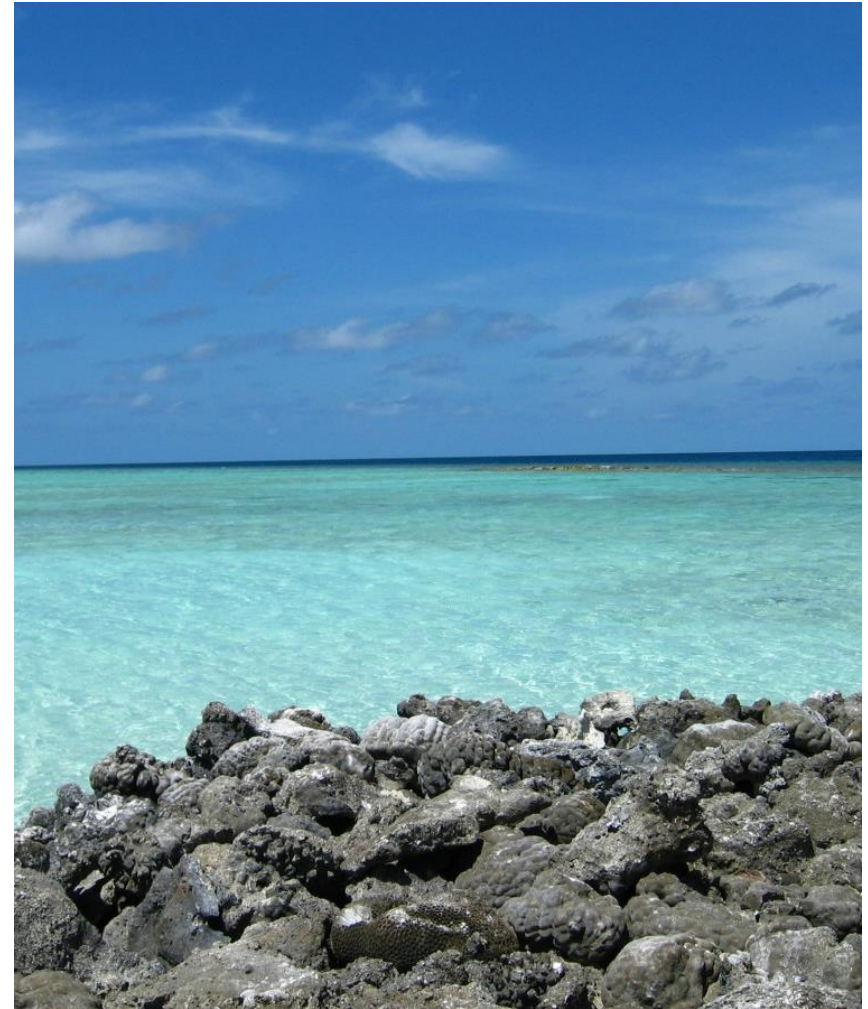
Therapeutic Leave:

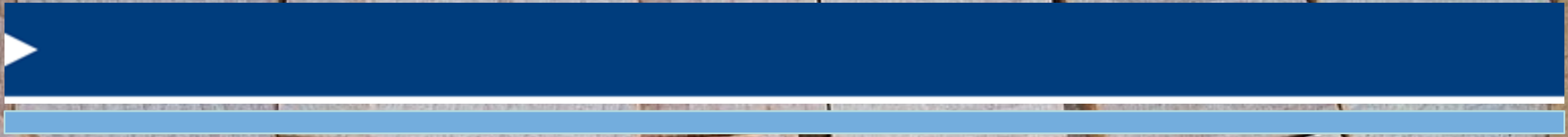
When the individual is away from their home to visit with a relative or friend, such as when on a vacation and not receiving their waiver service.



➤ Therapeutic Leave & Hospitalizations.

- For Therapeutic leave & Hospitalizations: The individual may not be charged for **Board** when away for more than 7 days (beginning on the 8th day).
- For Hospitalizations: The individual may not be charged **Room** when they are in the hospital more than 30 days in a row (beginning on the 31st day)





Resources

- Regulations for Room and Board: [55 Pa. Code § 6100.681-694](#)
- [Bulletin 00-25-01](#) Room and Board for Individuals Enrolled with ODP
- DP 1077 Residency Agreement ([forms list](#))
- [Room and Board Training for Providers](#)
- For questions, please contact your residential provider.
 - If you still have questions you can contact your appropriate [ODP Regional Office](#).