

Room and Board Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
Version 2
Updated 1/30/26

Question		Answer
		Agreements
1.	Do children need a Room and Board Agreement?	<p>Yes. Every individual receiving residential services must have a Room and Board Agreement regardless of age or income.</p> <p>When an individual must pay for room and board, the Agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States the monthly amount to be paid to the provider. • Ensures the individual keeps part of their income for personal spending. <p>Even if the individual does not pay (such as a child or someone without income), the Agreement is still required, because it ensures that each person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lives in a clean and well-maintained home. • Receives basic living essentials like food, clothing, and furniture. • Is given at least 45 days' written notice if the provider plans to end the agreement, in accordance with 55 Pa. Code §§ 6100.301–6100.307 (transition to a new provider). <p>These protections are required by both federal and state regulations.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>2. § 6100.687(a) says “the provider shall ensure that a room and board residency agreement, on a form specified by the Department, is completed and signed by the individual annually.” Does this mean that Room and Board Agreements must be completed and signed on the anniversary date of the initial Agreement? For example, if someone signed an agreement on 1/5/25, would a new agreement need to be signed on 1/6/26?</p>	<p>No, a new Agreement does not need to be signed on the exact anniversary date. However, there are specific rules about timing, effective dates, and how to handle changes in the amount owed.</p> <p>According to Bulletin 00-25-01, “annual” means within 12 months of the effective date of the previous Room and Board Agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>If the Room and Board amount stays the same:</p> <p>The new Agreement may have an effective date that is exactly one year later than the current one, as long as it is signed by the end of that calendar month. For example, if the last Agreement was effective on January 5, 2025, the new Agreement may be effective on January 6, 2026, as long as it is signed no later than January 31, 2026.</p> <p>If the Room and Board amount decreases:</p> <p>The reduced amount must be applied immediately on the date the decrease takes effect. A new Agreement must be completed to reflect the new amount, and its effective date must match the date the decrease began. While there is no fixed deadline to obtain signatures on the new Agreement, the provider is expected to complete and sign the new Agreement within the same calendar month as the effective date of the decrease, unless there is a documented reason for delay.</p>

Question		Answer
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the Room and Board amount increases: The provider may not charge the higher amount until all parties have signed the new Agreement. The effective date must be the same as or later than the final signature date—backdating is not permitted. If the increase is part of the annual renewal, the provider must still obtain all required signatures by the end of the same calendar month in which the current Agreement expires to avoid a lapse.
3.	Are electronic signatures on the Room and Board Agreement acceptable?	<p>Yes, electronic signatures are acceptable.</p> <p>In accordance with §6100.52, providers are responsible for ensuring that electronic signatures conform to all applicable statutes and regulations relating to electronic signatures.</p>
4.	NEW: Can providers make their own version of Form DP 1077 or is it required to use the form exactly as published by ODP?	<p>As stated in the Room and Board Bulletin, the ODP Room and Board Agreement must be completed without alterations; "The Department's approved Room and Board Agreement is Form DP 1077. Form DP 1077 must be used for all Room and Board Agreements. Alternative agreements or addendums to Form DP 1077 are prohibited".</p>

5.	<p>When someone moves out of the home, does a new Room and Board Agreement need to be done for each individual still in the home and again if someone new moves in?</p>	<p>A new Room and Board Agreement is only required for an individual if the amount that person pays for Room and Board will change.</p> <p>When someone moves out of or into the home, the provider must recalculate actual Room and Board costs to determine whether the change affects the amount charged to others in the household.</p> <p>If the amount stays the same, new Agreements are not required.</p> <p>If the amount changes, a new Agreement is required for each individual whose Room and Board amount will change. This ensures that the Agreement reflects the accurate amount owed and that all parties are aware of the change.</p>
6.	<p>NEW: Is it a requirement for the Representative Payee to sign the Room and Board Agreement? Is it a requirement for a witness to sign the Room and Board Agreement?</p>	<p>A Representative Payee may sign the Room and Board Agreement in addition to the individual. A Representative Payee may refuse to sign the agreement, unless they are also the individual's guardian. Refusal to sign the agreement does not negate the individual's or Representative Payee's responsibility to pay Room and Board in accordance with the agreement.</p> <p>ODP recommends that a witness sign the Room and Board Agreement as it is intended to verify the individual understands their responsibility in paying for Room and Board. It is also recommended that the witness be an impartial third party (outside of the provider's organization).</p>

		Room and Board Payments
7.	Do children need to pay for Room and Board?	<p>Room and Board (including all of the items listed at § 6100.684(d)) must be provided to every individual in residential services, including children.</p> <p>If a child has no income, the Room and Board Agreement must reflect that the amount owed is \$0.</p> <p>If a child does have income—such as SSI benefits—they may be required to contribute toward Room and Board costs. The provider must follow established rules to calculate the correct amount, ensuring the child retains a portion for personal spending.</p>
8.	If the individual receives a reduction in Supplemental Security Income (SSI) due to overpayment, would the Room and Board be adjusted?	<p>Any time an individual's income changes for any reason (including a reduction due to an SSI overpayment), the provider must recalculate the Room and Board amount to determine whether the amount charged to the individual should change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the amount stays the same, a new Agreement is not required. • If the amount changes, a new Room and Board Agreement must be completed to reflect the updated amount.
9.	NEW: How should providers calculate Room and Board when someone receives Domiciliary Care?	<p>There is no difference in how Room and Board is calculated. Individuals residing in Domiciliary Care will receive a different state supplemental payment amount. Please use Attachment 1 of the Room and Board Bulletin to calculate Room and Board.</p>

		Benefits
10.	NEW: What should providers do if the Representative Payee or legal guardian does not agree with applying for benefits for the individual?	<p><i>Application for benefits is required as a condition of receiving Residential Habilitation or Life Sharing services.</i> Residential Habilitation and Life Sharing providers are responsible for having a conversation with the individual and anyone designated by the individual to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how the provider will use the benefits to meet the individual's needs, • Understand any concerns the individual or designated person might have about applying for and receiving benefits, and • Provide information to alleviate concerns that are raised if possible. <p>Life Sharing providers can consider exceptions if application for benefits will have a negative impact on the individual or life sharing host family.</p> <p>If an individual or the legal guardian does not want to apply for benefits, a team meeting should be held to discuss other service options as an alternative to Residential Habilitation or Life Sharing.</p>
11.	NEW: Does the provider have to apply as a Group Living Arrangement (GLA) for an individual to apply for SNAP benefits?	<p>According to the Office of Income Maintenance (OIM), the first step is to determine whether the home meets GLA requirements. To meet this requirement, the provider must apply by completing the PA 1869 form (see Attachment 3 of the Room and Board Bulletin). The individual does not need to sign a consent form for the provider to apply for the home as a GLA.</p>

12.	If the individual has an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card for their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), can they use it for any items they want?	<p>Yes, individuals can choose how to use their EBT card, as long as the items are allowed under SNAP rules.</p> <p>The regulations at Chapter 6100.182(e), 6400.32(e), and 6500.32(e) protect the individual's right to make choices and accept risks. As such, providers have an obligation to protect an individual's right to self-direction, choice, and control <i>and</i> to protect individuals' health and safety.</p> <p>If there are concerns about an individual's health or safety related to SNAP purchases, providers are encouraged to apply the Risk Mitigation practices described in the 6400 Regulatory Compliance Guide, or RCG. Although the RCG is targeted towards Community Home providers, the Risk Mitigation techniques described in the guide can be applied in any residential setting.</p>
13.	How are SNAP benefits factored in the room and board calculation?	SNAP is a benefit and cannot be counted as part of the individual's income. The value of benefits received by an individual must be deducted from the Provider's Actual Monthly Cost Per Individual.
14.	Does the provider need to assist the individual in applying for a benefit even if the individual may not be eligible?	Yes, providers must assist individuals in applying for benefits, unless the provider has clear documentation that the individual is not eligible and there have been no relevant changes within the past year.

		<p>If the provider does not know whether the individual is eligible, the provider is responsible for helping the individual apply.</p> <p>If the provider has documentation showing the individual is not eligible, the provider does not need to assist with a new application as long as there have been no changes in the individual's situation that could affect eligibility within the past year.</p> <p>Remember that eligibility can change from year to year due to changes in income, living arrangement, or other factors. Providers must review current circumstances before deciding not to assist.</p>
15.	How are Rent Rebates handled?	<p>If an individual receives a Rent Rebate through Pennsylvania's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, the individual must pay that rebate amount to the provider.</p> <p>As specified in the Department's <i>Room and Board Residency Agreement</i> (DP 1077), "In addition to the room and board amount listed in this agreement, the individual also agrees to pay the provider agency any money received through Pennsylvania's Rent Rebate Program. The provider agency will deduct the value of the rent rebate from the actual documented room and board costs of individual's residence."</p>

16.	If an individual receives other health plan cards (such as an UPMC health plan card or Highmark Wholecare My Healthy Flex Card that covers some over the counter products and healthy foods), does this count towards monthly benefits?	These are considered benefits and would be deducted from the Provider's Monthly Actual Cost Per Individual.
		Items Covered Through Room and Board
17.	<p>Are the following items covered through Room and Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meal Replacements (i.e. Ensure or protein shakes); • Blenders; or • Specific items due to an allergy? 	<p>Providers must cover these items through Room and Board if an individual has a dietary or medical need (such as an allergy) that requires these items.</p> <p>Providers should check with the individual's insurance or other third party payer to see if these items are covered.</p>

18.	NEW: Are haircuts, manicures, pedicures, alcohol, cosmetics, etc. covered under Room and Board?	These are items not covered by Room and Board. The individual can choose to pay for these items with their personal funds.
19.	Does the individual have choice when the provider purchases standard items for their home?	<p>Yes. Individuals have the right to make choices about standard household items, such as the flavor of toothpaste, the scent of soap, or the color of bedding.</p> <p>This right is supported by multiple Chapter 6100 regulations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • § 6100.182(e): Individuals have the right to make choices and accept risks. • § 6100.183(f): Individuals have the right to furnish and decorate their bedrooms and shared living areas. • § 6100.184(b): Providers must assist individuals in negotiating choices when preferences differ within a shared home. <p>These rights apply even when the provider is purchasing items on the individual's behalf. Providers must offer options and support the individual in making selections that reflect their personal preferences.</p>

20.	In 6100.684, the process of doing the individual's laundry is part of the room and board items. Does this mean the individual is not allowed to do their own laundry?	<p>No. Individuals have the right to participate in activities of daily living, including doing their own laundry, if they choose to do so.</p> <p>Under § 6100.182(g), individuals have the right to control their own schedules and activities. This includes tasks like washing and folding their clothes. The fact that laundry is included in the provider's responsibilities under § 6100.684 does not prevent the individual from doing it themselves.</p> <p>However, the provider is still responsible for ensuring that the individual has clean laundry, even if the individual chooses not to (or is unable to) do it themselves. Providers must support individuals who want to be involved in their own care, while ensuring that health and hygiene standards are met.</p>
21.	Who owns the items that are purchased to furnish the home?	<p>Household furnishings are an exception to the guidance in the bulletin that requires the individual to use their personal funds to pay the difference between the cost of the standard item and the more expensive item rounded to the nearest dollar.</p> <p>Furnishings that are required as part of Room and Board or licensing, such as standard household furniture, are the provider's property. These items are purchased and owned by the provider, and they do not move with the individual.</p> <p>If an individual wants to purchase additional furniture or higher-cost versions of standard items, they may do so with their own funds. In these cases:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual must choose to make the purchase voluntarily, without persuasion or coercion. • These items belong to the individual and move with them if they leave the home. <p>Providers must document the individual's choice to purchase nonstandard furnishings in accordance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55 Pa. Code § 6400.22(e)(3) (Community Homes), and • 55 Pa. Code § 6500.24(e)(3) (Life Sharing).
22.	If insurance covers a Room and Board item but the individual wants a brand that isn't covered, who pays for that product (i.e. incontinence products)?	If the individual chooses a different product other than what is covered through insurance, the individual must purchase this item with their personal funds.
23.	NEW: Who is responsible for determining what qualifies as a "standard item," and how should this determination be documented?	<p>In the regulations, "standard" is used to describe "standard toiletries", which is defined in the bulletin. These items are what the provider purchases if the individual does not express a desire for another similar item or an item at a higher-cost. The cost of a standard item should be reasonable based on the cost of available and affordable items that meet the needs of individuals and provides consideration of the individual's choices and preferences.</p> <p>The provider is responsible for determining what qualifies as a "standard item" in accordance with the agency's procedures and in consultation with the individual about preferred products (e.g., the preferred brand among similarly-priced items). This</p>

		determination should be made prior to move-in and revisited as needed, requested by the individual, and especially if the individual's preferences or needs change.
Personal Funds and Individual's Income		
24.	If the individual wants to purchase (standard or more expensive than standard) items frequently, how frequently do providers need to pay the difference for those items?	<p>The provider is responsible for covering the cost of one standard item in each category listed in § 6100.684, based on the individual's preferences. If that item wears out or runs out, the provider must pay for a replacement of the standard version.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the individual wants an extra item (e.g., an additional hygiene product), the individual is responsible for paying the full cost of the extra item. • If the individual wants a more expensive version of the standard item, the individual must pay the difference in cost between the standard item and the preferred item. As stated in Bulletin 00-25-01, this difference may be rounded to the nearest dollar. <p>Providers must document that the individual agreed to purchase the extra or higher-cost item without persuasion or coercion, in accordance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55 Pa. Code § 6400.22(e)(3) (Community Homes), and • 55 Pa. Code § 6500.24(e)(3) (Life Sharing).
25.	NEW: If the individual chooses to buy a meal outside of what is offered through the home, does the individual pay for their own meal?	The individual's personal funds are used when the individual <i>chooses (without coercion)</i> to eat at a restaurant or to buy take-out food instead of eating the food available at their home. The provider is not responsible for reimbursing the individual the standard cost for the meal that was available at the home.

26.	If the individual and provider split the cost of an item (such as an item that is considered “ standard toiletries, bedding, and towels ” but costs more than the standard price, as described in the bulletin under “Room and Board Costs”), who owns those items?	<p>When an individual uses personal funds to pay for part of an item, ownership of that item belongs to the individual, even if the provider paid the standard portion.</p> <p>This includes cases where the individual contributes the cost difference for a more expensive version of a standard item.</p>
27.	Are PA ABLE accounts considered as part of the individual’s income?	No. Funds held in a PA ABLE account are considered assets, not income, and are not included when calculating Room and Board. However, income received by an individual would be counted. This includes income received by the individual that is deposited into a PA ABLE account.

		Life Sharing
28.	Is the Life Sharing Host / Life Sharer required to share their home expenses with the provider agency? In other words, does the provider agency have to obtain documentation of actual monthly costs from the Life Sharing Host / Life Sharer?	<p>Yes. The provider agency is responsible for ensuring that Room and Board is calculated accurately, and this includes obtaining documentation of the actual monthly costs incurred by the Life Sharer. Acceptable documentation may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility bills • Rent or mortgage statements • Grocery receipts • Other relevant expenses that fall under § 6100.684 (Room and Board items) <p>The Life Sharer may also complete a written attestation that outlines the cost of Room and Board-related items or use generally accepted tools such as fair market rent calculator (FY 2025 Fair Market Rents Documentation System — Select Geography) specific to the county where the home is located. While a signed attestation is acceptable, ODP recommends that the provider agency obtain receipts or other supporting documentation to verify the amounts listed.</p>
29.	How often should the provider agency request receipts related to room and board costs - should it be on a monthly or annual basis?	<p>Room and Board expenses must be calculated at least annually to support the completion of the required annual Room and Board Agreement. Therefore, the provider agency must obtain documentation (such as receipts or a Life Sharer's cost attestation) at least once per year, prior to completing the new agreement.</p> <p>The provider and Life Sharer may choose to review or collect receipts more frequently (e.g., monthly or quarterly) if that works better for their recordkeeping, internal review process,</p>

		or audit readiness. This is a provider-specific decision, as long as the documentation used to calculate Room and Board is current and accurate at the time of the agreement.
30.	If the individual is a relative to the Life Sharer, do they still need a Room and Board Agreement & do they still need to be charged for Room and Board?	<p>Yes. A Room and Board Agreement is required for every individual receiving Life Sharing services, regardless of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual's age (child or adult) • The individual's income • Whether the home is licensed or unlicensed • Whether the Life Sharer is a relative of the individual <p><i>The only exception is when the individual owns, rents, or leases the home, a situation sometimes referred to as reverse Life Sharing. In that case, a Room and Board Agreement is not required.</i></p>
31.	What Room and Board Agreement should we choose to use, the DP 1077 or the DP 1077LS?	The Life Sharing provider agency is responsible for choosing which Room and Board Agreement they want to use (DP 1077 or DP 1077LS).
32.	When calculating the Provider's Actual Monthly Cost per individual, what individuals do they consider in this calculation?	<p>In Life Sharing, the provider must divide the total monthly household cost by the total number of household members (which include all permanent residents), not just those receiving Life Sharing services.</p> <p>This means the calculation should include:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual(s) receiving Life Sharing • The Life Sharing Host and their family members • Any other household members <p>This approach ensures that Room and Board costs are distributed proportionally and fairly.</p>
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