

ALTERNATIVE HOUSING MODELS FOR LGBTQ+ ELDERS

Mobile homes, RVs, and tiny homes are examples of alternative housing models that can be a more inexpensive housing option due to their smaller footprints as well as offer the potential for intentional community living. These housing models might be a good housing option to consider as an LGBTQ+ older person. Deciding what type of housing fits your current situation depends on your lifestyle preferences, needs, and financial situation. This overview of housing options provides a brief introduction to alternative housing models as you continue on your personal housing journey.



Mobile Homes (Manufactured Homes) are typically more affordable and hassle-free than traditional family homes, offering a cheaper and more accessible housing option. While a great long-term option, this form of housing can also allow homeowners or renters the potential to save. With smaller footprints, mobile homes have the potential to conserve more energy and keep utility bills rather low. Mobile homes often have fewer taxes and fees, which may allow homeowners or renters to afford to live in more expensive areas. The intentional community nature of mobile homes also appeals to many. However, state and local tenant protections differ greatly for manufactured housing communities. Because of this, some tenants have been negatively impacted by the sale of mobile home parks, forcing them to uproot with short notice.



RVs (Recreational Vehicles or Motorized Homes) are designed to be moved from place-to-place, whether they are towed or driven as a motorhome. RVs are usually smaller than mobile homes and often used for temporary stays as opposed to permanent or semi-permanent living as they do not require a permanent foundation. While pricing differs, RVs tend to be less expensive than mobile homes due to their smaller size and their classification as motor vehicles. Depending on the model, regular RVs are not designed for year-round use. The mobile nature of RVs can provide flexible living options and exposure to different communities. There are directories such as [Gay Camping Friends](#) that list LGBTQ+ campgrounds across the country.



Tiny Homes (Tiny Houses) are smaller houses (less than 500sq feet) that can exist on a permanent foundation or on wheels (Tiny House on Wheels = THOW). Tiny homes are usually smaller than mobile homes. THOWs also tend to be more flexible than mobile homes due to their ability to be moved from place-to-place. Tiny homes and THOWs offer similar benefits and opportunities as mobile homes and RVs with the potential to provide intentional community building, lower bills, and the ability to move from place-to-place.

Note: Many states have different zoning restrictions and building codes depending on the type of housing or vehicle.

Reflection: As you begin to explore potential housing models, consider your specific situation. The following questions might help guide you as you begin your research:

1. What is my current financial status or budget?
2. What does home mean to me?
3. What values are most important to me when looking for housing?
4. How much space do I realistically need in a home?
5. What safety or accessibility concerns do I have?
6. What local or state protections do I wish to have in my community?
7. What type of community do I wish to live in?
8. How will I connect with my community?
9. Am I interested in staying in one place or do I prefer mobility?
10. What fees will accompany each housing option?

Resources: Alternative housing models may provide LGBTQ+ older adults with opportunities to pursue intentional community living. The following resources are examples of support you might find helpful as you research housing options in different areas.

Affordability and Housing Help:

- [Habitat for Humanity Apply for Habitat House](#): Habitat is committed to providing [low- and moderate-income households](#) the opportunity for affordable homeownership. A home is considered affordable when you pay no more than 30% of your income toward rent or mortgage.
- The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's 2022 [Data Spotlight: Profiles of older adults living in mobile homes](#) provides insight into the demographics of those aged 60+ who live in mobile homes as well the housing burdens they face.

Community Living and LGBTQ+ Support:

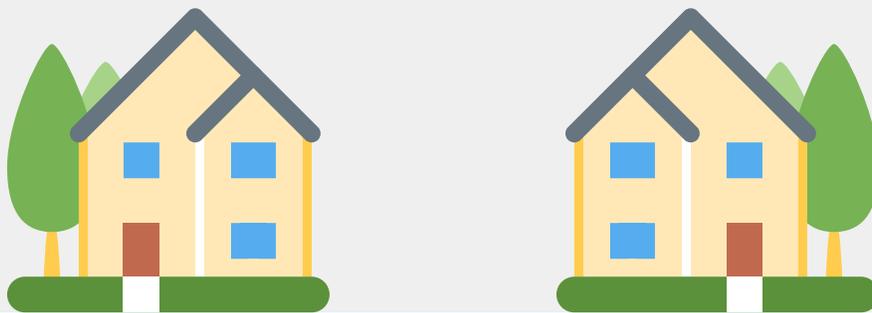
- SAGECollab: SAGE's partnership model is a flexible network of diverse organizations that partner with SAGE to support LGBTQ+ older people in their communities. Find local nonprofit groups and organizations that engage in advocacy or provide services and programs to LGBTQ+ elders through our SAGECollab partners.
- Online affinity spaces can help connect you to community if you are moving from place-to-place. Example groups include:
 - LGBTQ+ Camping and RVing in America | Facebook
 - Rainbow Nomads | Facebook
 - Traveling O.W.Ls (Older Wiser Lesbians) | Facebook
 - Birds-of-a-Feather (BOFs) | Escapees RV Club - Stonewall BOF welcomes all gays, lesbians, bis, trans and their friends.
- A variety of organizations and groups exist to provide spaces to explore alternative housing options and offer intentional community models. The below examples provide community spaces within alternative housing models or while aging in place:
 - Community Cohousing for Seniors: ICmatch works to connect compatible people for long-term residence sharing. Their article explores affordable retirement housing options and provides a list of resources.
 - Golden Girlz NC is a longer term strategy to secure and develop a site for a multigenerational, multi-racial, black feminist intentional community centered on the support of our LGBTQIA+ elders. Soul Sanctuary encompasses the land based work of Golden Girlz.
 - Mobile Homecoming aims to amplify generations of Black LGBTQ brilliance. The mission of Mobile Homecoming Trust Living Library and Archive is to sustain the lives and legacies of Mobile Homecoming elders, legacy bearers and care givers.
 - St. Louis NORC is a non-sectarian neighborhood program that supports the healthy aging of people age 60 and older in their own homes by providing opportunities for meaningful community involvement and increased access to support services. For over 15 years, NORC has supported and offered peace of mind to thousands of people aging in their own homes.
- SAGE's Housing Related Resources:
 - LGBTQ+ Welcoming Housing – Self Advocacy Tip Sheet: NHI and NRC – advocating for yourself – housing info for lgbtq elders_Updates2024.pdf (lgbtagingcenter.org).

Decision-Making:

- Reading about or watching videos of other LGBTQ+ older adults' experiences living in Mobile homes, RVs, or Tiny homes might be helpful as you consider what housing model suits you and your specific needs.
- *Senior Living* explores mobile homes in more detail in their article [Senior Mobile Home Parks: A Guide to Mobile Home Parks for Seniors in 2025](#).
- [Tenant Protections in Manufactured Housing Communities](#): The experiences of older adults in manufactured home communities differ widely due to different state and tenant protections. One trend being seen in the selling of these parks is that owners do not have to notify the tenants of the sale until it is final. Some tenants then receive an eviction notice only after a sale has been finalized.

Volunteering Opportunities:

- [Habitat for Humanity's RV Care-A-Vanner Program](#): This volunteer program invites anyone who travels by recreational vehicle to make Habitat part of their journey, building projects in partnership with local Habitats across North America.



SAGE's National LGBTQ+ Elder Housing Initiative

Since 2015, SAGE'S National LGBTQ+ Elder Housing Initiative (NHI) has provided technical assistance and public education around developing safe, affirming, affordable housing nationally, serving as a model for best practices and a resource for advocates, service providers, developers, and our communities. <https://www.sageusa.org/housing>