



**Sinneave**  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

# Thinking About Moving Guide



# THINKING ABOUT MOVING GUIDE

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## About the guide

The Sinneave Family Foundation's (Sinneave) vision is that Autistic adults live, learn, work, and thrive in their communities and realize their desired futures.

Of those who contact Sinneave looking for information about housing and supports, just under 20% are looking for an immediate solution and almost 40% are looking for housing in the next 1-2 years. In Canada, the majority of Autistic adults indicate that they need some support to live independently but very few receive funding for supports. Sinneave helps autistic adults find affordable and sustainable housing by facilitating innovative affordable housing solutions with the right amount of support.

Whether you are moving out of your parent's home for the first time, or thinking about a future move, this is a milestone in life. This guide shares some of Sinneave's key learnings about things to think about when planning a move. It is primarily focused on renters of affordable housing who may benefit from light support. However, the concepts and information may be relevant to a wide range of individuals including family members, caregivers and support professionals.

A series of Housing & Supports resources that provide a more detailed look at some housing related topics are developed and available on the [Sinneave housing resources page](#).

**If you would like more information or help with housing, contact a housing specialist at Sinneave. Call 403.210.5000 and ask to speak with a housing specialist or email [housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org](mailto:housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org)**



## Accessibility

The online PDF of the guide is universally accessible. If you do not already have screen reader software, you can access NVDA screen reader software from the [NV Access website](#). Enlarging the text by zooming in or out of the online PDF may also help reading accessibility.

If you do not have access to a printer or internet please contact [housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org](mailto:housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org) to request a printed copy be mailed.

As you are using this guide, if you find a link that does not work or you notice an error, we appreciate you sending us a quick email to [housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org](mailto:housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org) so that we can make the correction.



## Welcome

Whether you need housing right now or you are thinking farther into the future, you have come to the right place!

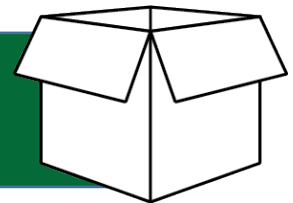
Thinking about moving can be stressful. For many people it is both an exciting and anxious time. Remember you do not need to answer every question or solve every problem today.

People have shared with us some of the challenges that they feel prevent them from moving forward, such as:

- I don't know where to start
- I don't think I have the income to afford a place
- I feel unprepared to live alone
- I feel that it is easier just to live where I am because it is familiar and I feel anxious about making a change
- I am unable to access supports
- My family may not feel ready for me to move

Taking one step at a time can help you from getting overwhelmed.

**This guide breaks down the process of moving  
to help you take one step at a time.**



## Getting started

This guide will help you work through these questions for yourself:

1. Where am I now?
2. Who can help me plan my move?
3. How ready am I?
4. What are the basics to planning a move?
5. What are my next steps?

## Where am I now?

When planning a move, a good place to start is to reflect on where you are currently in your life.

Fill in the following information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

### Education:

Check the box that best describes your current education status.

I am currently in high school	
I have graduated from high school	
I am currently in a post-secondary education or training program	
I am not currently in a post-secondary program but I plan to do so in the future	
I am not in school now or I have finished my education	

If currently in school, when do you expect to graduate? \_\_\_\_\_ (MM/YYYY)



**Work:**

Check the box that best describes your current status

I am currently working part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am currently working full-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not currently work, but I plan to	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am not interested in working at this time	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am not able to work at this time	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Finances:**

Check the boxes that currently describe your finances

I currently receive funding support	<input type="checkbox"/>
At age 18, I will be eligible for funding	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have my own bank account	<input type="checkbox"/>
I manage my money on my own	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Where I Live:**

Check the box that best describes your living status

With parents	<input type="checkbox"/>
On my own	<input type="checkbox"/>
With roommates	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>



The charts and questions on the next page will help you identify the people in your life who might be able to help you as you make your plan.



## Who can help me plan my move?

As you are planning your move, if you want someone else's opinion or you get stuck and need some help, refer to this list and ask for help.

**Family -** If you have family that might be able to help, write down the names and contact information of close family members who know you well. This may include parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins.

Name	Phone Number	Email

**Friends and Others I Know Well –** If you have close friends or others who know you well that might be able to help, write down the names and contact information. This may include people in activities or clubs that you belong to, people you enjoy spending time with, and classmates. It may also include online friends.

Name	Phone Number	Email





**Professionals in My Life**– If you have professionals or others in your support network that might be able to help write down their names and contact information. This includes people like doctors, teachers, therapists, skills coaches and community aides.

Name	Phone Number	Email

**You can also contact Sinneave for assistance.  
Call 403.210.5000 or email [info@sinneavefoundation.org](mailto:info@sinneavefoundation.org)**



**More than one in three Canadians age 20 to 34 live with at least one parent.** Many young adults move home after living away for a while. Your first move away from the family home may be the start of a number of moving experiences in your life.



## How ready am I?

If you are just starting to think about moving and wondering if you are “ready,” this section shares some thoughts about understanding readiness.

**If a housing opportunity was available tomorrow, would you be ready to move? If you said no, you are not alone. There are many things to think about before you make a move.**



**Emotional Readiness:** One barrier to taking the next step may be related to emotional readiness. This can be especially true of your first move away from the family home. You and your parents may have different perspectives on things like readiness, cleanliness, social interests and roommates. Talk to each other, be honest and open-minded. It may help to talk about differences in living expectations. Good communication is key.

**Skills Readiness:** There are hundreds of “skills checklists” to help people assess if they are “ready” to move out. If you don’t already have a skills checklist, you will find one in the next section. You do not need to have all or even most of the skills on the checklist in order to start your planning. You can set goals for yourself to learn these skills over time.

**Your Ideal Vision vs Reality:** You may have a vision of your perfect living situation, but many people find that some compromise is needed. Cost is a factor in determining where and how you live. You may want to live in a certain neighbourhood, but if you can’t afford it, you may need to compromise on the location. Ask yourself; what is essential for me in my home (e.g. budget, low noise, parking, or pets) and what could I compromise on (e.g. roommates, location, size)? You may not find the ideal situation if this is your first move, but you will learn more about yourself and what is most important to you.



## What are the basics of planning a move?

Consider these basics when planning a move.

1. Skills and Supports
2. Roommates
3. Money
4. Location and Amenities
5. Types of Housing
6. Availability

### 1. Skills and Supports

Across Canada, it is reported that 74% of Autistic adults need some level of support to live independently.

At Sinneave we are often asked, “What skills do I need to have to be ready to live independently?” This is a difficult question because the answer is different for everyone. Focus on finding a balance of skills and supports so that you can safely live as independently as possible. If you have a good idea of what skills you already have, then you will know better what **type** and **amount** of support you will need to put in place for when you decide to move.

Some skills are essential before you move, others you can develop over time. Many rental applications ask if you can independently evacuate from a building during an emergency. If you are not confident that you can recognize an emergency situation and safely exit a building on your own, you may need a living situation that provides a higher level of support.

If you can not safely or comfortably be alone for extended periods of time including overnight, consider living situations with higher levels of support built in, like supportive roommates or agency support.



If you are comfortable and safe by yourself for extended periods of time then consider what sort of light supports might work well for you. The skills checklist below will help you to start thinking about what skills you have and where support would be helpful when you move.

**Complete the following skills checklist for yourself:**

<b>I CAN:</b>	<b>By myself</b>	<b>With pictures or written steps</b>	<b>With a little support</b>	<b>With a lot of support</b>
Recognize an emergency and exit building				
Obey laws				
Call 911				
Lock doors and windows				
Call my family and friends				
Ask for help				
Plan my day				
Take my medication				
Get ready in the morning				
Make and get to appointments				
Manage money and a bank account				
Pay bills				
Walk to the nearest convenience store				
Use public transportation				
Drive				
Grocery shop				
Cook meals				
Clean my house				
Perform basic home maintenance (unclog a toilet, change a light bulb)				



Once you've completed the chart above, look at the skills that you already have and those that you are not yet independent with. Pick two skills that stand out to you as important to develop before you move. Consider asking one of the people that you listed who can help you plan a move to brainstorm how to either learn a skill or find support with a skill.

Skill 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Skill 2 \_\_\_\_\_

There are different strategies that you can use to address skill gaps. Be creative.

- **Learn a New Skill:** You could start doing your own laundry at home or task yourself with checking that the doors and windows are locked before going to bed every night.
- **Use Technology to Support You:** Spend some time learning about what technology or apps might help you organize some of the tasks that go along with living independently. Is time management an issue? Get a scheduling App like Timo or Todolist. There are Apps to help you remember medications like Medisafe or Pill Reminder. Are you worried about paying bills on time? Have someone help you set up automatic bill payments through online banking.
- **Explore Existing Supports in the Community:** There may be free or low-cost community services that can provide support so you can thrive in your new home. If you don't want to take groceries on the bus, you can order online and have your groceries delivered or use a meal delivery service.
- **Adapt for Skills You Do Not Yet Have:** You will learn new skills over time but you can also find ways to adapt while you grow. For example, some people love to cook and others may rely on prepared meals while they build their meal planning and cooking skills.



- **Adapt for Skills You Will Not Have:** If you have tried to learn a skill and are not able to master it; you may need to find support. When none of the suggestions above work, call your local autism agency to talk about other supports available.



In Alberta, you can call 2-1-1, which is a service that helps Albertans find the right resources for their needs. Or, you can visit the website to see how they can help <https://ab.211.ca/who-we-are/about/>.

It's important to remember that support needs may change over time. Many of the Autistic adults that Sinneave has helped into affordable housing say that they are much better at cooking and cleaning after some time living alone. Some have also had experiences where due to a worsening health situation they have temporarily benefitted from increased support, for example a sibling moving with them for a short while.

Sinneave has created a series of resources that provide focused information on specific areas of housing and supports. You can review the information on Support Levels and Types of Support in detail [here](#).



## 2. Roommates

Do I **want** a roommate? Do I **need** a roommate?

*Supportive roommates* is a term used in the disability community for paid, live-in support.

This section covers informal, unpaid roommates.

Some factors to consider when thinking about a roommate:

Potential benefits to having a roommate	Potential drawbacks to having a roommate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be good company</li> <li>• Sharing costs can increase affordability</li> <li>• Share chores</li> <li>• May provide informal support. For example, they may have a car and you can ride share to get groceries</li> <li>• Moving from living with others to living on your own can be a big adjustment and having a roommate might make the transition easier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less control over the space and you will need to consider someone else in relation to noise, sleep etc.</li> <li>• You may find specific behaviours annoying or uncomfortable</li> <li>• Occasional disagreements or potential conflict over aspects of your living situation</li> <li>• Roommate may leave and you must find another</li> </ul>



### 3. Money

How much money you have to spend on housing is a factor that will help to narrow down the type of housing, location and amenities that you can afford. Affordability is often what drives the need to compromise.

A budget is basically a record of money going into and out of your bank account month to month.

Sources of income are either regular (employment income or government assistance) or occasional (birthday money). It is best to plan a budget using only regular income.

**If you live in Alberta, you may qualify for AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped). You can visit the AISH website to see if you qualify.**

**<https://www.alberta.ca/aish-how-to-apply.aspx>**

For the purposes of budgeting, a general guide is to keep housing costs (rent, electricity, heat and water) near 30% of your before-tax regular income. If you are on AISH, 30% of your income may not be realistic or available. This is a general guideline.

Other expenses you need to think about are food and household items, phone, internet, clothes, medical/health care, transportation, entertainment, insurance, recreation, pets and debts. It is also a good idea to set aside some money every month for bigger items (computers, phones) and emergencies.

There may be one-time added expenses when you first move, like furniture, repairs, paint, damage deposit.





The following table is not a detailed budget template, but you can use it to help you determine some guidelines for what you can afford.

## Budget Guide

Step 1: Determine a Monthly Housing Costs Guideline	Amount of Money	Example	My Information
Your regular monthly income <b>before tax</b>	Amount A	\$2000	\$
Calculation	Multiply Amount A by .3	X .3	X .3
Your housing Cost Affordability Guideline (rent, electricity, heat and water)	Amount B	\$600	\$
Step 2: Test for Affordability			
Your regular monthly income <b>after tax</b>	Amount C	\$1600	\$
Estimate your other monthly expenses (i.e., food and household items, phone, internet, clothes, medical/health care, transportation, insurance, entertainment, pets, recreation, debts, small emergency fund, etc.)	Amount D	\$1100	\$
Calculation	Subtract Amounts B and D from Amount C	\$100	\$
<b>Savings (+) or Shortfall (-)</b>		<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$/ \$</b>



### 3: Next Steps

*Do you have money to save?* If you are not paying rent now, you can prepare to move out by saving your target housing amount for 3 months in a row. This money can be used as a security deposit. If you are already paying rent and the target housing amount is more, try saving the difference to make sure you can afford the increase in rent.

*Do you have a shortfall?* If your current after-tax income does not cover your anticipated expenses, you may decide to focus first on earning more income before you consider moving, or you may need to share costs with a roommate.

Sinneave has a number of employment focused programs that you may be interested in. Contact [info@sinneavefoundation.org](mailto:info@sinneavefoundation.org) for more information.

*Looking for information on affordable housing in Calgary?* Individuals with low incomes may qualify for near-market, affordable housing or rent subsidies. The City of Calgary has quite a bit of information about affordable housing on their [website](#). Information about Sinneave's collaborations with affordable housing providers in Calgary can be found on Sinneave's [website](#).

**Do you need help with budgeting, saving or filing your taxes?  
Momentum is a great Calgary organization that offers assistance with  
budgeting, saving, and filing taxes.**



#### 4. Location and Amenities

Thinking about location and amenities will also help you focus on where to look, but remember to consider what is essential and what you could compromise on. People's needs are unique.

Questions that will help you narrow down what is important to you are listed below.

- How much living space and storage do I need?
- What do I need to live close to? Think about the location of work or school, family, friends, hobbies, and appointments (gym, library, doctor).
- Do I ride transit, drive or rely on others for rides? Do I need a parking space?
- What location makes getting around easy for me?
- Would I like to be close to grocery stores or is that less important?
- Would I like to be close to a library or recreation facility or is that less important?
- Do I need parking?
- Do I have pets?
- How would I feel about sharing laundry facilities?
- What are important sensory considerations for me?
- How well does this home support my sensory needs?
- How can I manage noise from traffic or neighbours?
- Would I feel safe in this neighbourhood? Would I feel safe in this building?

Affordable housing may not always be in your target neighbourhood. In these cases, access to parking, public transit and neighbourhood amenities may be important considerations.



## 5. Types of Housing

Think about where you live now. What do you like about it? What do you not like about it?

There is a wide range of housing types, however, **not all options are available in every city**. Budget is a factor that will help you to narrow in on your options. Affordable housing rental units are most often in low or high-rise buildings. Another consideration that may influence the type of housing or unit location that you look for are your sensory needs. Don't rule out apartment living if you prefer a low sensory environment. You may find that strategies like noise-cancelling headphones to lessen noise, and air purifiers to reduce cooking smells work well.

Read the resource that reviews [Types of Housing Structures](#)



## 6. Availability

If you qualify for affordable housing, it can take a while before an affordable housing unit is available. If you think you might be ready to move in the next year, contact [housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org](mailto:housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org) to learn more about what affordable housing opportunities may be available in your timeframe.

**Many housing programs and providers require proof of your annual income which can be found on your T4 tax receipts. It is important to file an annual tax return which provides an official document verifying your annual income.**

If you think you would like to move and do not need affordable housing you can start looking anytime. You can search online (Kijiji, Rentfaster, etc.) or go through a property management company. Ask your friends and family if they know someone that has a place for rent or may be looking for a roommate. Once you have found some potential places to move into there are other things to think about like setting up a viewing, damage deposits, applications, choosing between month to month rent or a longer-term lease, and tenant insurance.

**RentSmart offers a free online or in-person course to help you have successful tenancy. You can access that course here: <https://rentsmarteducation.org/tenants/>**



## What are my next steps?

A great next step when thinking about moving is to gather documents you will likely need.

Do you have the following documentation?

	Yes	No	Not applicable
Photo ID			
Social Insurance Number			
Bank Account and ATM card (in your name)			
Health Care Card			
Proof of Income (tax return, pay stub, etc.)			
Drivers Licence or Transit Pass			

If you already have the documentation above or are working on it, you might be ready to take the next steps toward moving.

Go back over what you have read so far and try to identify 3 specific things to work on that will move you forward.

The first action I will take to get ready to move is:
A second action I will take to get ready to move is:
A third action I will take to get ready to move is:



## When would I like to move?

When you reflect on the information in this guide do you feel like you will be ready to move fairly soon or not for a while? Your target timeline will help you set a pace for taking next steps. Put a check-mark next to your target timeline.

1-3 months

3-12 months

1-2 years

2+ years

Not yet ready to commit to a timeline

Revisit your target timeline and the actions you are taking every 3 months. Are you making progress? If you are making progress, celebrate. If you are not making progress, that's okay.

Kick-start your progress by looking at the steps you identified in the section above (What are my next steps?). Pick ONE of the steps you identified and ask one of the people that you identified early in the guide to help you make a plan.



## Final thoughts

**“Perfection is the enemy of progress.” - Winston Churchill**



There is a lot to consider when thinking about moving. Every action brings you one step closer. As you complete an action (no matter how small) celebrate this step and add another action. This will keep you moving forward toward your goal.

After a move, what we sometimes hear from individuals is “I love living by myself. I have learned a lot and made some mistakes but I have figured so much out.” What we often hear from parents is, “I was so worried and while it did not go perfectly the move has been great for our family.”

This guide shares some of Sinneave’s key learnings about things to think about when planning your first move away from the family home or thinking about future moves. It is primarily focused on renters of affordable housing who may benefit from light support.

**Another resource written by a self-advocate that you might be interested in is [Housing: An Alberta Self Advocate Virtual Resource Guide](#) by Christopher Whelan (available on [AIDE Canada](#)). It includes information about finding rentals, living with roommates, sensory challenges and working with landlords.**





If you would like more information or help with housing contact a housing specialist at Sinneave. call **403.210.5000** and ask to speak with a housing specialist or email [housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org](mailto:housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org)

Please take a few minutes to answer 4 quick questions on this guide.

Click on the button below to provide your feedback.

[Feedback Survey](#)

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**Sinneave**  
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