

# **Seniors Housing**

## **101**

**A Westend Seniors Activity Centre  
Initiative to Empower Seniors**



# WHY WE CREATED THIS GUIDE

In September 2024, the Westend Seniors Activity Centre hosted our first Active Aging Series: Seniors Housing 101. The goal of this event was to bring in experts in seniors housing and **teach older adults about the housing options available, what terms like “supportive living” and “assisted living” meant, what subsidized housing is, how to qualify, and more.**



The event was sold out and it was a huge success. The speakers were fantastic but they provided a lot of information to the attendees. We realized that while the attendees learned a lot that day, there was just too much information for them to remember it all.



## OUR GOAL FOR THIS HANDBOOK

We wanted to design something that would give older adults a simple way to get information from the housing providers, go home and review the information to see which building they visited would be the best fit for them.

We worked with housing providers like Chartwell, Optima Living, and Heartland Housing to develop the questions and then had our volunteers at our centre make sure the handbook was easy to use.

## PICK UP A FREE COPY TODAY!

We hope this handbook helps with your decision making.

Printed copies of this handbook are available for free at our centre. Please feel free to come by our centre to pick up a copy.

Digital versions of this handbook can also be requested by calling our centre at (780) 483-1209 or emailing us at [info@weseniors.ca](mailto:info@weseniors.ca) and we can email you a digital copy.



Scan the QR code to visit our website where you can download a digital version of this handbook.

[weseniors.ca/whats\\_new/seniors-housing-101-handbook](https://www.weseniors.ca/whats_new/seniors-housing-101-handbook)

A stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liang' with Chinese characters above it.

**Dr. Haidong Liang**

Executive Director

Westend Seniors Activity Centre

# INDEPENDENT LIVING

Independent living is a housing option that allows seniors to **live independently without the need for 24-hour care.** This living arrangement offers the freedom to maintain their lifestyle, while also having access to amenities and support services as needed.

Amenities in an Independent Living community may include:

- Access To Nurse Or Health Care Aide (HCA) As Needed
- Bed Linen Service
- Emergency Call Bells
- Housekeeping Services
- Organized Activities & Entertainment
- Prepared Meals
- Transportation Options

# SUPPORTIVE LIVING

To qualify for Funded Supportive Living, an Alberta Health Services Case Manager will assess your needs and authorize the care services. **The care and services are funded by Alberta Health Services, with additional services potentially available for an extra fee.**

Private Supportive Living would be paid by the resident, with no funding from the government and is not based on income.



# ASSISTED LIVING

Assisted living is **a housing option that provides personalized care and support for seniors who need assistance with everyday tasks.** These communities offer a balance of independence and assistance, enabling residents to maintain their quality of life while receiving the support they need.

Amenities and services in an Assisted Living community may include:

- 24/7 Staffing To Provide Assistance With Daily Activities
- Bathing, Toileting, And Dressing Assistance
- Meals & Housekeeping Services
- Medication Management
- Organized Activities & Entertainment
- Wheelchair Transportation



## WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU NEED TO MOVE TO ASSISTED LIVING

As you age, your personal care and support needs may change over time, requiring a higher level of assistance than what independent living can provide.

### CAN THEY TRANSITIONING YOU TO ASSISTED LIVING?

You will want to determine if the seniors residences you are visiting, can transition from independent living to assisted living.

# TYPE B CONTINUING CARE

This is **private, personal living space and personal care for adults and seniors with a wide range of health issues.**

Services may include:

- 24/7 On-site Care Provided By A Health Care Aide and Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)
- Nutritious Meals And Snacks (Changes For Special Needs Can Be Arranged)
- Rehabilitation To Support Healthy Aging
- Social Work
- Weekly Room Cleaning

Registered Nurse care planning and health services are scheduled and provided by Home Care.

## MEMORY CARE

### CONTINUING CARE HOME TYPE B SECURE SPACE

Another funded option retirement residences offer is memory care for seniors living with dementia or cognitive impairment. Compassionate and friendly staff who are trained in dementia support help residents live each day in contentment and comfort.

A variety of services are offered to support residents living with dementia, including:

- Cueing And Assistance With Daily Routines,
- Bathing And Showering Assistance,
- Escort To Meals And Activities,
- and More.

**To qualify, an Alberta Health Services Case Manager completes an assessment and then authorizes and schedules care at the retirement residence.** Additional care and services (scheduled or unscheduled) may be available and provided at an additional fee.

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT OPTION

It is important to carefully consider your current and future needs, financial situation, and personal preferences.

Assessing your level of independence, healthcare requirements, and desired lifestyle can help you make a decision that aligns with your long-term goals. When exploring different options it is important to make an informed decision, so **be sure to ask as many questions as you can to assist in the decision making process.**

One of the most important questions to ask is *"what happens if I need more care down the road?"* **Our partners suggest that you sign up for Home Care with Alberta Health Services prior to moving in,** so should additional care be needed in the future, it is ready to go.

Home Care can assist with things like medication management, bath assistance and more while still allowing residents to live independently.



# Building #1

Location/Building Name		Date
Address		
Contact Person		
Phone Number	Email Address	

## 12 MUST-ASK QUESTIONS

1. What Are The Different Types Of Care Available?

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2. How Do I Decide Which Care Type Is Best For Me?

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3. Will I Maintain My Independence Even When I Require Care?

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4. If I Need More Care, Can I Move Directly To Higher Care Suites?

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5. How Does The Cost Compare To Living At Home?

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**12 MUST-ASK QUESTIONS CONTINUED**

6. How Often Are Rent Increases?

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7. Can I Choose My Meal Plan?

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8. Are There Activities Every Day?

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9. Can Friends And Family Join In Community Events And Meals?

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10. Do I Have To Pay Extra For Activities?

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11. Are There Specific Visiting Hours Or Times When Guests Are Allowed?

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12. Are Guests Allowed To Stay Overnight, And If So, What Are The Arrangements?

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# Building #1

Rental Costs			
Bachelor Cost	1 Bedroom Cost	2 Bedroom Cost	Other Cost
Size	Size	Size	Size

Available Options		
Government-funded Suites	Yes	No
Subsidized Suites	Yes	No
Assisted Living Suites	Yes	No
Independent Living Suites	Yes	No
Private Supportive Living	Yes	No

## SUITE FEATURES

- ☐ 24/7 Assistance
  - ☐ Air Conditioning In Suite
  - ☐ Accessible Bathroom
  - ☐ Cable Television
  - ☐ Grab Bar In The Bathroom
  - ☐ Individual Thermostat
  - ☐ In-Suite Meal Delivery
  - ☐ Kitchenette Or Full Kitchen
  - ☐ Laundry Facilities
  - ☐ Mail Delivery
  - ☐ Patio/Balcony
- ☐ Personal Emergency Response System
  - ☐ Pet Restrictions
  - ☐ Pets Allowed
  - ☐ Shower Or Tub
  - ☐ Satellite TV
  - ☐ Security Alarms & Surveillance
  - ☐ Scooter Parking
  - ☐ Wheelchair Accessibility
  - ☐ Wi-Fi

## **BUILDING AMENITIES**

### **INDOORS**

- ☐ Beauty/Barber Shop/Spa
- ☐ Bistro Or Cafe When Snacks Are Available
- ☐ Fitness Room
- ☐ Guest Suite For Out-Of-Town Guests
- ☐ Library
- ☐ Movie Theatre Or TV Room
- ☐ Piano
- ☐ Place Of Worship
- ☐ Pool
- ☐ Private Dining Room To Entertain Friends And Family
- ☐ Resident Computer
- ☐ Spacious Common Areas



### **OUTDOORS**

- ☐ Covered Parking With Plug-In
- ☐ Outdoor Gardens With Courtyards, Pathways And Gazebo
- ☐ Underground Parking Costs

**PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES**

Do you have a full time program coordinator?                      Yes    /    No

Do you offer the following:

- ☐ Billiards And Shuffleboard
- ☐ Book club
- ☐ Crafts
- ☐ Events And Entertainment In-House
- ☐ Fitness Classes
- ☐ Games
- ☐ Lifelong Learning Classes
- ☐ Social Programs In-House

What are your most popular regular programs?

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**OFF-SITE PROGRAMMING**

Do you have a full time bus available?                      Yes    /    No

Do you provide transportation for appointments, social visits, etc.?  
Yes    /    No

We heard buses have limited use due to costs and difficulty finding drivers. How often does the Program Coordinator have activities off site where we go on the bus?

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## EVENT CALENDAR



**REMEMBER!** Ask the sales person to provide you with a copy of their event calendar or program guide and staple it to this page.

Don't forget to ask if they offer any programs, events, celebrations, etc. not currently listed in the program guide or event calendar.

For example:

- Annual Holiday Celebrations
- Annual Events Specific To Their Location
- Card/Game Tournaments, Visits To Seniors Recreation Centres, Etc.
- Travel Trips



**If they have a brochure or paperwork showcasing extra amenities offered, ask them to staple on this page!**

HOUSEKEEPING OPTIONS

OFFERED SERVICES	FEE
<input type="checkbox"/> Daily bed making	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Daily trash pick up	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly suite vacuum and dusting	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly bed and linen changing	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly laundry service	\$ _____

CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

CARE & SUPPORT OPTIONS	FEE
<input type="checkbox"/> 24hr nursing services	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with activities of daily living	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy - on-site or delivery	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Oxygen services	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Podiatrist	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Blood pressure clinic	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Medication supervision and administration	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring of vitals	\$ _____



Ask the Sales Person to provide you with a copy of their paperwork that covers the services they offer and have them staple it to this page.

## MEALS & DIETARY NEEDS

MEAL TYPES & DIETARY ACCOMMODATIONS	FEE
<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Snacks	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Gluten Free	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Lactose Free	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Allergen Free	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Low Sodium/Sugar	\$ _____

## FINAL THOUGHTS / NOTES

What I like about this building

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What I don't like about this building

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Notes

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# Building #2

Location/Building Name		Date
Address		
Contact Person		
Phone Number	Email Address	

## 12 MUST-ASK QUESTIONS

1. What Are The Different Types Of Care Available?

2. How Do I Decide Which Care Type Is Best For Me?

3. Will I Maintain My Independence Even When I Require Care?

4. If I Need More Care, Can I Move Directly To Higher Care Suites?

5. How Does The Cost Compare To Living At Home?

**12 MUST-ASK QUESTIONS CONTINUED**

6. How Often Are Rent Increases?

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7. Can I Choose My Meal Plan?

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8. Are There Activities Every Day?

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9. Can Friends And Family Join In Community Events And Meals?

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10. Do I Have To Pay Extra For Activities?

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11. Are There Specific Visiting Hours Or Times When Guests Are Allowed?

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12. Are Guests Allowed To Stay Overnight, And If So, What Are The Arrangements?

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# Building #2

Rental Costs			
Bachelor Cost	1 Bedroom Cost	2 Bedroom Cost	Other Cost
Size	Size	Size	Size

Available Options		
Government-funded Suites	Yes	No
Subsidized Suites	Yes	No
Assisted Living Suites	Yes	No
Independent Living Suites	Yes	No
Private Supportive Living	Yes	No

## SUITE FEATURES

- ☐ 24/7 Assistance
  - ☐ Air Conditioning In Suite
  - ☐ Accessible Bathroom
  - ☐ Cable Television
  - ☐ Grab Bar In The Bathroom
  - ☐ Individual Thermostat
  - ☐ In-Suite Meal Delivery
  - ☐ Kitchenette Or Full Kitchen
  - ☐ Laundry Facilities
  - ☐ Mail Delivery
  - ☐ Patio/Balcony
- ☐ Personal Emergency Response System
  - ☐ Pet Restrictions
  - ☐ Pets Allowed
  - ☐ Shower Or Tub
  - ☐ Satellite TV
  - ☐ Security Alarms & Surveillance
  - ☐ Scooter Parking
  - ☐ Wheelchair Accessibility
  - ☐ Wi-Fi

## **BUILDING AMENITIES**

### **INDOORS**

- ☐ Beauty/Barber Shop/Spa
- ☐ Bistro Or Cafe When Snacks Are Available
- ☐ Fitness Room
- ☐ Guest Suite For Out-Of-Town Guests
- ☐ Library
- ☐ Movie Theatre Or TV Room
- ☐ Piano
- ☐ Place Of Worship
- ☐ Pool
- ☐ Private Dining Room To Entertain Friends And Family
- ☐ Resident Computer
- ☐ Spacious Common Areas



### **OUTDOORS**

- ☐ Covered Parking With Plug-In
- ☐ Outdoor Gardens With Courtyards, Pathways And Gazebo
- ☐ Underground Parking Costs

# Building #2

## PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

Do you have a full time program coordinator?      Yes    /    No

Do you offer the following:

- ☐ Billiards And Shuffleboard
- ☐ Book club
- ☐ Crafts
- ☐ Events And Entertainment In-House
- ☐ Fitness Classes
- ☐ Games
- ☐ Lifelong Learning Classes
- ☐ Social Programs In-House

What are your most popular regular programs?

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## OFF-SITE PROGRAMMING

Do you have a full time bus available?      Yes    /    No

Do you provide transportation for appointments, social visits, etc.?

Yes    /    No

We heard buses have limited use due to costs and difficulty finding drivers. How often does the Program Coordinator have activities off site where we go on the bus?

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## EVENT CALENDAR



**REMEMBER!** Ask the sales person to provide you with a copy of their event calendar or program guide and staple it to this page.

Don't forget to ask if they offer any programs, events, celebrations, etc. not currently listed in the program guide or event calendar.

For example:

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- Card/Game Tournaments, Visits To Seniors Recreation Centres, Etc.
- Travel Trips



**If they have a brochure or paperwork showcasing extra amenities offered, ask them to staple on this page!**

HOUSEKEEPING OPTIONS

OFFERED SERVICES	FEE
<input type="checkbox"/> Daily bed making	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Daily trash pick up	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly suite vacuum and dusting	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly bed and linen changing	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly laundry service	\$ _____

CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

CARE & SUPPORT OPTIONS	FEE
<input type="checkbox"/> 24hr nursing services	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with activities of daily living	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy - on-site or delivery	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Oxygen services	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Podiatrist	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Blood pressure clinic	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Medication supervision and administration	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring of vitals	\$ _____



Ask the Sales Person to provide you with a copy of their paperwork that covers the services they offer and have them staple it to this page.

## MEALS & DIETARY NEEDS

MEAL TYPES & DIETARY ACCOMMODATIONS	FEE
<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Snacks	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Gluten Free	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Lactose Free	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Allergen Free	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Low Sodium/Sugar	\$ _____

## FINAL THOUGHTS / NOTES

What I like about this building

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What I don't like about this building

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Notes

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# Building #3

Location/Building Name		Date
Address		
Contact Person		
Phone Number	Email Address	

## 12 MUST-ASK QUESTIONS

1. What Are The Different Types Of Care Available?

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2. How Do I Decide Which Care Type Is Best For Me?

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3. Will I Maintain My Independence Even When I Require Care?

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**12 MUST-ASK QUESTIONS CONTINUED**

6. How Often Are Rent Increases?

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7. Can I Choose My Meal Plan?

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# Building #3

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Available Options		
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## SUITE FEATURES

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## **BUILDING AMENITIES**

### **INDOORS**

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### **OUTDOORS**

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**PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES**

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CARE & SUPPORT OPTIONS	FEE
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<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Gluten Free	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Lactose Free	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Allergen Free	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Low Sodium/Sugar	\$ _____

## FINAL THOUGHTS / NOTES

What I like about this building

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What I don't like about this building

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Notes

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The Seniors Housing 101 initiative would not have been possible without the help of our Friends of WSAC partners.

**CHARTWELL RETIREMENT RESIDENCES**

[www.chartwell.com](http://www.chartwell.com)

**HEARTLAND HOUSING FOUNDATION**

[www.heartlandhousing.ca](http://www.heartlandhousing.ca)

**OPTIMA LIVING**

[www.optimaliving.ca](http://www.optimaliving.ca)

**THE WATERFORD OF SUMMERLEA**

[www.thewaterford.ca](http://www.thewaterford.ca)

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**WESTEND SENIORS ACTIVITY CENTRE**

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