

Housing Issues for Seniors



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Important Notice!

The legal information in this guide is up to date to December 20, 2019. It applies only in Quebec and is not meant as legal advice. If you need advice on a specific situation, consult a legal professional.

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Housing for Seniors

If you are a senior and want to live in a place that provides special services or care, you have several options depending on your needs and ability to pay:

- private seniors' residences



- supervised apartments, group homes and family-type housing



- long-term care centres (CHSLDs)



Private Seniors' Residences

This housing is for independent and semi-independent seniors. You rent your own apartment or room and have access to personal care and assistance services the residence offers, such as these:

- meals
- help with getting around, dressing, meals and bathing
- help with medication
- nursing care
- transportation
- activities

These residences are privately owned and operated and must meet government standards of quality and safety.



How to Apply

You find and choose your own residence, and neither your local community services centre (CLSC) nor the government is involved. The government website has a [register of private seniors' residences](#) that you can search by region or by services offered (French only).

The residence may want to evaluate you to see what your needs are. It can refuse you if, for example, you need services that it doesn't offer.

Once you've chosen and been accepted by a residence, you sign a lease. A lease is the legal agreement you have with the residence that says what you and the residence must do. You become a tenant and the residence is your landlord.



Cost

You pay rent each month. It includes these things:

- basic rent for your unit
- general services the residence offers with your unit, such as heating, cable TV or telephone services
- personal care and assistance services you have chosen to have on a regular basis, such as meals, help with medication or activities

If you want any personal services that are not included in your rent, you pay for them separately when you use them. For example, you decide not to include meals in your total rent, but occasionally, you want the residence's meals. So, you pay for the meals each time you have them.

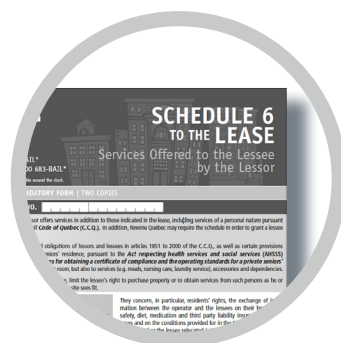
The residence decides the basic rent and cost of services. In most cases, increases in rent and cost of services included in your rent are subject to rent control rules. But services that are not included in your rent are not subject to rent control rules.

What the Lease Says

The residence must use the standard lease form created by the Régie du logement (rental board).

The residence must attach a document called Schedule 6 to the lease. It is also created by the Régie du logement and includes these things:

- services included in your basic rent
- personal care and assistance services
- your total monthly cost including basic rent and personal services



Rent Increases and Other Changes

When it's time to renew your lease, the residence might want to make changes, for example, increase your rent or the cost of services included in your rent.

Before making any changes, the residence must send you a notice. You can refuse the change in writing within 30 days of getting the notice. If you refuse, the residence must usually ask the Régie du logement (rental board) to decide the rent.

There are special rules about when the residence must send the notice and apply to the Régie.

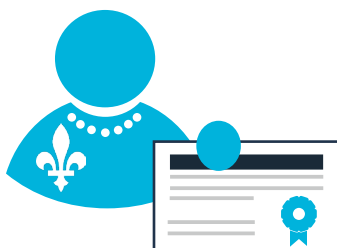
Quality and Safety Standards

To be certified by the government, the residence must meet quality and safety standards. Here are examples of some standards:

- a minimum number of staff on duty
- staff qualifications
- fire safety plans
- call-for-help systems installed in rental units

The government can inspect the residence at any time.

You can get information about the residence and check whether it is certified. See the Useful Resources section at the end of this guide.



Death of a Tenant

The lease can be cancelled when the person renting (the tenant) dies.

If the tenant lived alone, the person settling the tenant's affairs can cancel the lease by sending a written notice to the residence no later than six months after the death. The lease ends two months after the notice is sent. But if the residence agrees, or rents the unit to someone else, the lease can end earlier.

If the tenant lived with someone, the other person can become the new tenant by sending a written notice to the residence within two months of the death.

Supervised Apartments Group Homes Family-Type Housing

These kinds of housing are for people who can't live on their own but don't need continuous care or supervision. They offer support and assistance services, depending on the needs of the residents.

They are mostly privately operated but are connected to the public health and social services system through agreements.



How to Apply

Contact your local community services centres (CLSC). They will evaluate you to see if you should be admitted into this type of housing and will find a place for you.

Cost

The government decides how much you pay depending on your financial situation. The amount covers your room or apartment and some services.

The website of the Quebec department of health and social services has a calculation tool you can use. See the Useful Resources section at the end of this guide.

Important! Be careful if you want to give your house to your children or sell it for less than it's worth before moving to housing in the public system. When deciding how much you pay, the government can look at any property you gave away or sold in the two years before applying for this housing.

Quality and Safety Standards

These types of housing must meet quality and safety standards set by the government. The CISSSs (integrated health and social services centres) and CIUSSSs (integrated university health and social services centres) must keep registers of these facilities and evaluate them regularly.

The government can also visit them to check on quality. You can see the reports of these visits on the website of the Quebec department of health and social services. See the Useful Resources section at the end of this guide.

Long-Term Care Centres (CHSLDs)

This type of housing is for people who can't live on their own and need specialized care. CHSLDs offer medical and other services.

Some CHSLDs are part of the public health and social services system and others are private.



How to Apply

To apply for a place in a public CHSLD, contact your local community services centre (CLSC). They will evaluate you and find a place that offers the care you need.

For private CHSLDs, contact the CHSLD directly.

Cost

For public CHSLDs, the government decides how much you pay depending on your financial situation. The amount covers your room, food, medical and nursing care, laundry, and some personal hygiene products.

The government website has a calculation tool you can use. See the Useful Resources section at the end of this guide.

The owners of private CHSLDs decide how much you pay.

Important! Be careful if you want to give your house to your children or sell it for less than it's worth before moving to housing in the public system. When deciding how much you pay, the government can look at any property you gave away or sold in the two years before applying for this housing.

Quality and Safety Standards

All CHSLDs must be certified by a standards organization that is independent of the government. The certification must be renewed every five years.

Government representatives visit these facilities from time to time to check on the quality of the services. Reports of these visits are available on the government website.

Problems?

Various resources can help if you have a problem with your facility. The Useful Resources Section at the end of this guide will tell you how to contact these resources.

Rental Board

For problems with your lease in a private seniors' residence, such as rent increases, contact the Régie du logement (rental board).

Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner

For problems about the quality of services in all types of seniors' housing, contact the service quality and complaints commissioner for your area. The commissioner can help you make a formal complaint.

Users' Committee

CHSLDs as well as supervised apartments, group homes and family type housing must have access to a users' committee. This committee represents the interests of the residents and can help you resolve a problem you have with the facility. It can also help you file a formal complaint. The complaints commissioner or staff at your facility can give you the committee's contact information.

In-Patients' Committee

Most CHSLDs also have an in-patients' committee. This committee can also help you with problems you have with your facility. Ask staff at your CHSLD for contact information.

Residents' Committee

Many private seniors' residences have their own residents' committee. Although they don't have official status under the law, they can help find solutions to problems you have with the residence. Staff at your residence can tell you how to contact the committee.

Complaint Assistance and Support Centres (CAAPs)

The complaints assistance and support centre (CAAP) in your area can also help you. Not all regions have services in English.

Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ)

For problems about fees in public CHSLDs, contact the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec or RAMQ (Quebec's health insurance board). The RAMQ also deals with problems with fees in supervised apartments, group homes and family-type housing.

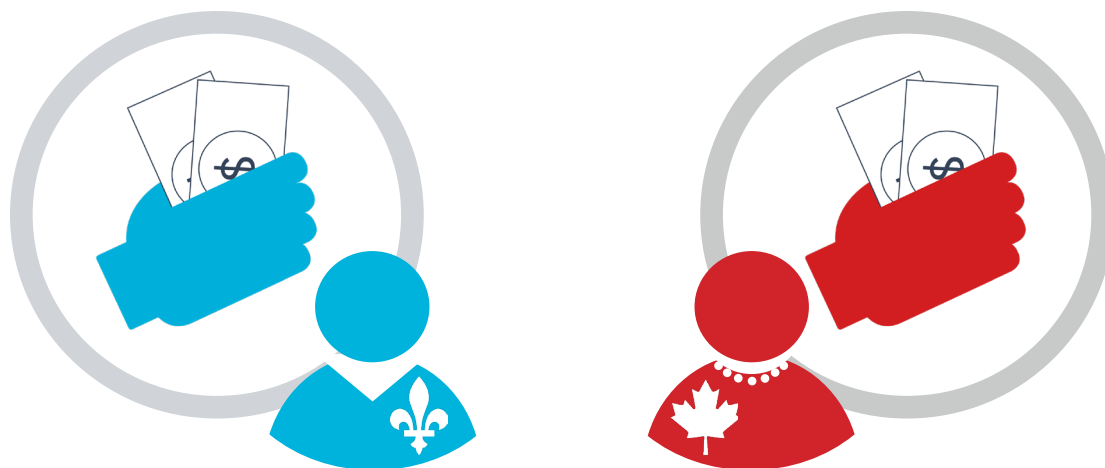
Help to Pay for Housing

The government has a program to help with the cost of adapting a home for people with special needs. This includes installing ramps outside the home, redoing a bathroom or making doorways bigger.

People with low incomes might qualify for a shelter allowance or rent supplement.

The government also offers low-rent housing. The rent is equal to about 25% of your income. Contact the Office municipal d'habitation (municipal housing office) in your region to apply. See the Useful Resources section at the end of this guide.

Seniors with special needs are entitled to some tax benefits.



The Useful Resources section at the end of this guide has more information about help to pay for housing.

Cancelling a Lease

When You Can Cancel

If you are a senior and rent the place you live, the law lets you cancel your lease if you are moving to

- a long-term care centre (CHSLD)
- a supervised apartment, group home or family-type housing or
- a private seniors' or other housing that offers care or services you need because of your health.

You can also cancel your lease in these situations:

- You are moving to low-rent housing.
- You have a disability that means you can't stay in your apartment.
- A court has decided that you need to move because of your special needs.



How to Cancel

1. Send a written notice to your landlord saying that you want to leave, your reason for leaving and the date you want to leave.
2. You must send the notice within these time limits:
 - at least two months before you want to leave if your lease is for one year or more,
or
 - at least one month before you want to leave if your lease is for less than one year or if there is no time period in your lease.
3. Include these documents with your notice:
 - a document from the place you're moving to saying you've been accepted to live there, and
 - a certificate from a doctor, nurse or social worker saying you need the services or care offered by the place you're moving to.

You must pay your rent until the end of your notice period, that is:

- two months if your lease is for one year or more,
or
- one month if your lease is for less than one year or if there is no time period in your lease.

If your rent includes personal services, you only pay for the services you received before you leave.

You can also try to reach an agreement with your landlord to cancel the lease.

Éducaloi

www.educaloi.qc.ca
www.educaloi.qc.ca/seniors

Private Seniors' Residences

Check certification

www.msss.qc.gouv.ca (French only)

Click on Réseau, then click on Registre des résidences privées pour aînés, then on Recherche and fill in the search form.

To Apply to a CHSLD, Supervised Apartment, Group Home or Family-Type Housing

Go to your local community services centre (CLSC).

Find your local CLSC at www.quebec.ca

Switch to English, then go to Health, then Finding a Resource. Scroll down to Resource search, then CLSC.

To Apply for Low-Rent Housing

www.habitation.gouv.qc.ca (French only)

Select Répertoire des organismes at the top of the page. Search by type of housing and postal code or region.

Check Reports on Quality Standards

Government inspection reports on CHSLDs, supervised apartments, group homes and family-type housing

www.msss.gouv.qc.ca (French only)

Click on Réseau, then Visites d'évaluation de la qualité des milieu de vie at the bottom of the page and choose your region.

Calculation Tool - How Much You Pay

For CHSLDs

www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca

Switch to English, then go to Citizens, then Aid programs, then Accommodation in a public facility.

For supervised apartments and group homes

www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca

Switch to English, then go to Citizens, then Aid programs, then Accommodation in an intermediate resource.

Complaints

La ligne aide abus aînés (senior abuse help line)

1-888-489-2287

Régie du logement (rental board)

www.rdl.gouv.qc.ca

- Montreal, Laval, Longueuil: 514-873-2245
- Other regions: 1-800-683-2245

Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner

Call 1-877-644-4545 or ask staff at your facility or local CLSC for contact information.

Complaint Assistance and Support Centres (CAAPs)

www.fcaap.ca (French only)

Go to Nous Joindre.

1-877-767-2227

Not all regions have services in English.

Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec or RAMQ (Quebec's health insurance board)

www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca

- Montreal: 514-864-3411
- Quebec: 418-646-4636
- Other regions: 1-800-561-9749

Help to Pay for Housing

Quebec government programs

www.quebec.ca

Switch to English, then go Family and support for individuals, then Programs and Services for Seniors, then Housing.

Quebec tax benefits for seniors

www.quebec.ca

Switch to English, then go Family and support for individuals, then Programs and Services for Seniors, then Tax Credits and Pensions.

Federal tax benefits for seniors

www.canada.ca

Click on Benefits, then Public pensions.

Éducaloi explains the law to Quebecers in everyday language.



Read about these and other topics at www.educaloi.qc.ca:

- Housing
- The health and social services network
- Wills and estates
- Loss of autonomy and protection of vulnerable people

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