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10 Tips for Finding Off-Campus Housing

**Finding a place to live doesn't have to be a hassle.
Follow these 10 tips and you'll be moving in
before you know it.**

- 1. Plan Ahead** – Finding a place to live does not happen overnight. Ample time should be set aside for meeting with Property Managers and seeing exactly what each property can offer you. Waiting until the last minute can force you to rush through important information and possibly miss out on a property you did not make time for. It is best to start planning and looking at least 2-3 months before your necessary move-in date.
- 2. Know Your Roommates** – If you are interested in living with roommates, make sure that you fully know every person moving in and know that you can manage sharing a home with them. Leases for properties are usually for a full year, and changes in living arrangements can be a long and expensive process. If you find any slight conflict with a person, you should probably consider not living with them. A roommate should be someone you find dependable as well as someone you can talk to. Before you even think about signing any contracts with a property manager, you should know who your roommates are.
- 3. Make a List** – You should always look at more than one property when considering a place to live. In fact, you should look at a few places to weigh out options and find the best home that suits your needs. To make the process easier, you should write out a list of all the places that you have considered. Print out a map and pre-plan a specific route to save time between properties.
- 4. Get a Tour** – As before any major purchase you make, ask to see the place you are planning to move into. All properties should be willing to give you a tour, and in most cases, you can reserve a date and time with the property manager. Examine every property of your interest and see if it is the one for you and your roommates. Look at every angle of the property and take notes of each place to help you decide.

- 5. Ask about Bills** – When discussing leasing contracts with a property manager, ask about Utilities (Electricity, Sewer, etc.) and what is included in your rent. Each property has a different method of collecting bills and you should be aware of your options. Also ask if you must make arrangements for utilities prior to your move-in date or if the property manages the utilities for you.
- 6. Ask About Move-In Specials** – When visiting properties, ask about move-in specials and deals that can help you out along the way. Some properties can lower rent, deposit fees, and application fees for signing to their properties. Take advantage of special rates and use them to help decide on which property fits your budget.
- 7. Transportation Options** – When you consider a place to live, keep in mind that you must make arrangements to get you from your home to school, work, etc. Ask properties about possible bus routes or other modes of transportation offered in the area. Also, look into parking arrangements with properties.
- 8. Read Your Contract** – Before signing a leasing contract, make sure you know exactly what you are signing. Every person intending to sign the lease should completely read over the contract. Be sure to read fine print and to highlight important dates and information. Ask questions with property managers over terms you do not understand and, if needed, seek legal assistance to verify the authenticity of your contract. Students can visit Student Legal Services (University Union, suite 322) for this legal assistance at no charge.
- 9. Know Your Dates** – When home-searching, organization is the key. Manage dates for home-hunting, meeting with property managers, getting tours, and signing contracts. Once you have agreed to a property, keep track of move-in dates, appointments for utility activation, as well as due dates for your bills. Losing track of appointments can result in late fees as well as missing out on your preferred home.
- 10. Put Everything Into Consideration** – Signing a leasing contract is a big deal and before you sign your name you should put everything into consideration. Find a place that fits your budget, living needs, and is a reasonable distance from school, work, etc. Most contracts are for a full year, so look ahead for possible conflicts. Before you make any commitments to a property, make sure that you can make these commitments and that they can be upheld until the conclusion of your leasing term.