

CSUDH offers on-campus housing for those students who apply. To find out more about on-campus housing options, please visit the University Housing website. Spaces are limited, please apply as soon as possible. <https://www.csudh.edu/housing/new-students/apply/>

To search for off-campus housing options, you may visit the following links (please note that CSUDH does not endorse any of these websites):

- [Zillow](#)
- [Trulia](#)
- [Los Angeles Times](#)
- [For Rent](#)
- [Westside Rentals](#)
- [Live Lovely](#)

What should I know before choosing a place to live off campus?

Leases: The basic agreement between you and the owner of a rental property is a lease. A lease is a binding legal agreement that is enforceable through the legal system. If you move before the end of the lease term and the landlord has performed properly, you may be legally responsible to pay for the remainder of the lease.

Deposits (Security or Damage): Most owners require you to deposit a sum of money when you rent a unit. Deposits generally range in an amount from one half to a full month's rent. This is designed to reimburse the owner for any damage to the unit or failure to pay rent. At the end of the tenancy, the owner must return the deposit plus interest or submit an explanation why the deposit or any part of it has been withheld. You should find out the exact purpose for which the deposit will be used and the circumstances affecting its refund. This should be clearly stated in the written lease in which you signed.

Renter's Insurance: Renter's insurance is an item you should purchase. Landlord's property insurance does not cover your personal property. If you cannot afford to replace your belongings if they are damaged, lost, or stolen, then you should look into buying a policy. If you are still on your parent/guardian's insurance, the least expensive policies can be added to theirs. If these alternatives are not available to you, you can purchase personal property insurance from many insurance agencies.

What should I ask before renting off-campus housing?

- **Rent:** How much is the rent? When is it due? What is the starting date?
- **Deposit:** How much is the deposit? How will it be used? How and when is it refunded?
- **Damages:** Who pays for damages over and above normal wear and tear- individuals or all occupants?
- **Subletting:** Is subletting permitted? What is the procedure?
- **Roommates:** Should all roommates sign the lease? Are roommates responsible for only a portion of the rent? If someone moves out, must the remaining roommates make up the difference?

- **Alterations:** May the unit be altered, such as painting? Can you hang pictures on the wall (and how)?
- **Laundry Facilities:** Are there laundry facilities available and are there any restrictions?
- **Noise Restrictions:** Are there noise restrictions for musical instruments, stereo, TV, or social events?
- **Inspection by Landlord:** When may the landlord enter the unit? How much notice must be given?
- **Parking:** Is parking available? Is parking included in the rent or is it an added charge?
- **Pets:** Are pets allowed? Is there an added charge for having a pet?
- **Utilities:** What utilities are included in the rent? How much is the installation fee for those not included? What are the billing and payment procedures?

What should I know before I sign a lease?

- *If the landlord makes any promises or representation about the apartment, have them put it in writing!*
Make sure the lease reflects the fact that you will have new furniture, parking is guaranteed, etc. Verbal contracts can be impossible to enforce.
- *Don't sign a lease until you are certain you want the place.*
It can be difficult and/or expensive to cancel a lease once it is signed.
- *Don't commit yourself to a place if you can't afford to pay rent.*
In the past, there have been students who rented a multi-bedroom place and had been unable to get enough housemates to make the payments. Anyone who has signed the lease remains legally liable for the full rent.
- *Be sure to get a copy of the signed lease.*
Get this from your landlord and keep it in a safe place. The landlord is required by law to give you a copy. You may need it for future reference if any problems occur during the term of the lease.
- *Before signing the lease or paying any money, you should inspect the property with the landlord and a witness.*
You should be allowed to inspect the utilities – the appliances, the electrical system, the plumbing, heating and lights – as well as locks and windows before signing a lease. Write down all existing damages. Both you and the landlord should sign and date the list. You may also want to videotape or take photographs to document your descriptions. This list will prevent the landlord from trying to charge you for these damages when you move out. Landlords can refuse to cooperate (these are not “rights” legally enforceable in court), but cooperation is advised. It is in the best interest of both landlord and tenant to have a list, since it protects all parties if there is a disagreement about who is responsible for any repairs.
- *The lease should state who is responsible for paying which utility bills.*
In some cases, the landlord pays for heat, electricity, and water. Sometimes the tenant is responsible for these bills. If this issue is not addressed in the lease, the tenant and landlord should work out their own understanding. It is good to put this agreement in writing and have it signed by both parties.