Off-Campus Housing

Finding housing that meets your needs and requirements in any city can be intimidating. This site has been designed to provide you with resources and information to help you make the best possible decision for your needs. We look forward to welcoming to our city!

Finding Off-Campus Housing

- Off Campus Living: [1] A website for the Yale community to find off-campus housing, including listings of available places to rent [2].
- Elm City Partners: [3] Yale-owned properties available for rent
- Off-Campus Housing List [4]: Handout of Annual Yale Housing Fair (contains detailed information about specific properties on page 2)
- Housing Facebook Page [5] (Open Group within Yale): An unmonitored Facebook page that Yale community members post about housing available for rent and subletting, and furniture for sale. It is an open forum, so please take care when making arrangements. You need a Yale email address to join.

Housing Terms

Co-signer (or Guarantor): Someone who assumes responsibility for a lease with a tenant who otherwise would not meet the landlord’s financial qualifications. If you don’t have rental history or have bad credit, you may be required to have a co-signer or guarantor. This is different than having roommates who also sign the lease on their own behalf.

Credit Check: Landlords will review a potential tenant’s credit history through one of several credit rating agencies before approving a rental application. This provides the landlord with an understanding of your financial history. You need to give written consent which permits the landlord to check your credit and almost all applications will require this.

Full Bath: A bathroom which includes a toilet, sink, and a bathtub or shower. A “Half Bathroom,” on the other hand, has a toilet and sink, but no shower.

Furnished Apartment: An apartment that comes with basic furniture such as a bed, sofa, kitchen table, and chairs, etc.

Landlord: The person or company who owns and/or manages property that is leased or rented to others.

Lease: An agreement between the landlord and tenant that lists all the rules and stipulations of the rental. Most leases are for a one-year duration.

Repairs: A lease should specify whether the tenant or landlord is responsible for repairs on the rental apartment. Without a provision for repairs in the lease, it may be very difficult to persuade a landlord to make needed repairs.
Rent: Amount of money paid every month to landlord or building owner for housing.

Security Deposit: A deposit, usually in the amount of one month’s rent (Connecticut law allows up to 2 months rent for security), that a tenant will pay to the landlord at the time of signing a lease as security to cover the expenses of a possible damage to the apartment during the course of their tenancy. At the end of the lease term, the landlord will take the cost of any damages caused by the tenant out of the security deposit before returning it. The landlord must return tenant's security deposit, either in full or in part (after deducting cost of damages), within 30 days of the end of the lease.

Efficiency/Studio: An apartment which is composed of a single room and a bathroom. The main room functions as the kitchen, living room, and bedroom. Usually appropriate only for one person.

Sublease: An agreement whereby a tenant grants possession and use of all or part of the leased property to another party, who is known as the (sub)'lessee', 'subtenant' or 'undertenant'. Subletting may be prohibited by the original lease or require written permission from the landlord. In a sublease, the original tenant, who is now regarded as the ‘sublessor’ or ‘over-tenant’, remains directly responsible for making the rent payments to the landlord.

Tenant: The person who is leasing the apartment.

Utilities: Services such as heat, water, electricity, and gas. Sometimes these services are included in rent and sometimes they are not. Make sure your landlord indicates in the lease what utilities are included in rent. If they are not included, you will have to arrange and pay for the utility service directly with the utility companies.

Common Abbreviations:

A/C: Air Conditioning

Apt.: Apartment

BR: Bedroom; you will usually see this preceded by the number of bedrooms (i.e., 3BR is an apartment with 3 bedrooms).

BA: Bathroom; you will usually see this preceded by the number of bathrooms, where a “half” bathroom (0.5) is just a sink and toilet with no shower or bathtub. For example, 2.5BA is an apartment with 2 full bathrooms (toilet, sink, and shower or bathtub) and 1 half-bathroom (sink and toilet).

Housing Costs

Below is a list of expenses you can expect when renting an off-campus apartment.

Rent

Rents in the neighborhoods surrounding the University vary from one unit to another, however, expect to pay between at least $800 to $1300 per month for a one-bedroom apartment, and between $700-1000 per month for a room in a shared apartment.

Security Deposit

In addition to the first month’s rent, a security deposit (in the amount of one or two month’s rent) is often required. Your security deposit will be returned after you vacate the apartment, granted you have left it clean and in good condition.

Deposit
A deposit is sometimes requested to hold an apartment until credit checks and/or employment verification can be completed.

**Realtors**

If you rent through a realtor, they may charge an application fee (generally less than $50) or have you pay for the credit check.

**Utilities**

If the apartment rent does not include utilities (electricity, water, gas), before signing the lease you will want to inquire about the average monthly cost of the utilities and the cost of heating the apartment in the winter. This will help you understand the full cost of the rental.

**Unfurnished Apartment**

An unfurnished apartment will usually contain no furniture. You can ask the landlord if there is any furniture available, but if not you will have the additional expense of furnishing your apartment.

**Paying Your Rent**

*Do not pay your rent in cash.* Use personal checks, money orders, or traveler’s checks for deposits or payments. A money order can be purchased at banks or an official U.S. Post Office for a small fee.

**Signing a Lease**

A lease is a legally binding housing contract, normally spanning a 12 month period, or ending at the beginning of the academic year. The [Yale Off Campus Housing website][6] provides detailed information about signing a lease. A few of the most important details are listed below:

- Be cautious of signing a lease on a property you have not seen in person.
- Read everything carefully and understand all of your obligations.
- Make sure that any special stipulations you require, such as permission to have a pet, are stated in the lease.
- Landlords are not bound by law to agree to subletting, and some will not allow it at all.
- Keep a signed copy for your own records. Never rely on verbal agreements alone.
- If you have questions about a lease, [check with OISS][7] before you sign it.
- If you have a disagreement with your landlord, never violate your lease by ceasing payment on your rent.
- Should you have any legal questions or disputes concerning leases or housing issues, please refer to the [Housing Disputes][8] section of our website.

**Beware of Scams**

**Rental Scams**

When using online websites to find an apartment, be alert to the possibility that the ad may be a scam. While it does not happen often it helps to pay attention to the advice below which will help you spot a possible scam. The [Better Business Bureau][9] and the [FBI][10] both advise renters to look out for the following red flags:

- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Scammers will often list a rental for a very low price to lure in victims. Find out how comparable listings are priced, and if the rental comes in suspiciously low, walk away.
- The landlord is located elsewhere and prefers to communicate via email. Scammers might say they have just been relocated out of the country for a job or missionary work - don’t believe it. Speak to the
landlord directly.

- The landlord requires a substantial deposit before handing over the keys or even showing the home. Don’t pay any money before visiting and inspecting the home, inside and out.
- The landlord asks the renter to wire money through wire transfer services such as Western Union or MoneyGram. Money sent via wire transfer service is extremely difficult to retrieve and once the scammers have picked it up; there is little recourse—if any—for getting your money back.
- Don’t pay in cash or money order. Normally it is best to pay rent with a bank check so you have evidence of payment. If the landlord demands payment in cash you should always get a receipt as evidence of each payment.
- Don’t give out personal information like bank account or credit card numbers.

Source URL: https://oiss.yale.edu/life-at-yale/practical-matters/housing-information/off-campus-housing

Links:
2. http://offcampushousing.yale.edu/Login.aspx
7. http://oiss.yale.edu/about/contact-oiss
8. https://oiss.yale.edu/taxes-legal/housing-disputes