



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

Please visit the Housing Web site at www.housing.umich.edu for more information

When should I start looking for housing?

We recommend that undergraduate students wait until after the Housing Fair, sponsored by University Housing in early January, to start their search for housing for the following Fall. Many graduate students begin looking for housing and signing leases in March or April, but the housing market runs through the summer. There are some units available toward the end of summer, but options are greatly reduced. Students entering the University of Michigan in January should begin looking for housing in November.

What is the Early Leasing Ordinance

You may hear about the City of Ann Arbor Early Leasing Ordinance and wonder how it affects your housing search. The city passed an ordinance stating that generally landlords may not show prospective tenants property until 70 days after the start of the current lease. Each year, students feel pressure to begin their housing search in the early fall and many problems arise. This is designed to prevent students from making hasty decisions regarding housing since leases are binding contracts and usually cannot be cancelled. If you are interested in a certain unit but the ordinance prevents the landlord from showing it to you, leave your name and number and see if you can be contacted once seventy days have passed. Please note that the ordinance does not apply to properties with a lease less than nine months.

How much will housing cost?

The average costs of off-campus housing per month in June 2008 were as follows:

Rooms	\$562/month
Efficiencies	\$689/month
One-bedroom apartment/house	\$790/month
Two-bedroom apartment/house	\$1,149/month
Three-bedroom apartment/house	\$1,633/month

Also, see the *Off-Campus Housing Vacancy Rate Survey* for the 2006 academic year. Additionally, the average rental rates are calculated and adjusted as each registered landlord makes changes to his or her rental rates on the Housing Web site located at www.housing.umich.edu under *Tenant Basics*.

Where should I look for housing?

The City of Ann Arbor has a myriad of neighborhoods to choose from. University Housing's Off-Campus Housing Program maintains an on-line map that highlights neighborhoods around North, Central, Medical and South Campuses. Each listed neighborhood is accompanied by a brief description and a few pictures designed to give the viewer a taste of the area in question. In addition, there is an option to search for available housing within a specified neighborhood.

Generally, rent is higher in neighborhoods closer to campus. For students that live further away, the University offers limited parking in commuter lots around Ann Arbor and bus service from these lots to the Campuses. In addition, the City of Ann Arbor offers a multitude of bus routes allowing access to campus from many areas, which are also free to U-M students, staff, and faculty with a valid M-Card. For more information detailing U of

M commuter parking and bus routes, visit the transportation services website at www.pts.umich.edu. Information about Ann Arbor City bus routes can be found on the AATA Web site at www.theride.org.

How long will it take me to find housing?

If you are searching in January for housing for the next academic year, it will probably take you from one to two weeks to find a place. If you are searching during the summer for housing for the upcoming fall, you can probably find a place in less than a week. However, options are reduced as the year approaches.

Can U of M help me find an apartment according to my criteria?

The Off-Campus Housing Program in the Housing Information Office is not a realty agent or apartment locator. We provide a forum for private landlords and students to advertise available housing; the rest is up to you. Our Web site, www.housing.umich.edu, contains a search feature in which you can enter your housing criteria and obtain a corresponding list of advertisements from landlords registered with our program. The Web site also allows students who are looking for a place to live, or who have a place to live and are searching for a roommate or subtenant, to place and view roommate/sublet advertisements for free.

The Web site features valuable tips for all aspects of off-campus living. Additionally, most materials are available in the Housing Information Office, where the Off-Campus Housing Advisor or staff member will be happy to answer your questions.

What options are open to graduate students?

The Northwood Community Apartments provide all graduate students (single, with partners, and/or families) the opportunity to join a community of peers from their own and other academic disciplines. The diversity and intellectual quality of graduate students at UM ensures that residents of Northwood have a fulfilling experience outside of the classroom and laboratory as well.

The Northwood Community Apartments consist over 1000 apartments and townhouses, ranging from efficiencies to three-bedroom units. Utilities - heat, water, electricity, local phone and high-speed DSL connectivity are included in the monthly rent, and cable TV is available at a reduced rate.

For additional information, please visit www.housing.umich.edu/northwood, where you will find floor plans, virtual tours, current-year rental rates, and a calendar of community programming and events.

What quality of housing should I expect?

Because the quality of housing in Ann Arbor varies greatly, *you should never sign a lease for a place that you haven't seen*. The Off-Campus Housing Program does not inspect or endorse any of the housing listings on our Web site. However, most of the landlords registered with us are required to have a Certificate of Occupancy from the City of Ann Arbor, certifying that their rental units have been properly maintained. When viewing a prospective rental unit, be sure to ask the landlord and the current tenants if there are plumbing, insect or any other problems with the unit. If the landlord is cleaning or repairing any part of the house, the cleaning or repairs should be completed before your lease begins. The landlord is required to provide you with two inventory checklists upon move-in. You should be sure to complete this list thoroughly, and record any damages or missing items so you will not be held financially responsible for these items when your lease ends. If problems with your rental unit occur, notify the landlord in writing, and keep a copy of all correspondence for your records. If the landlord does not respond within a reasonable amount of time, contact Student Legal Services or the Housing Information Office.

Can I see what other students think about a landlord?

The Michigan Student Assembly launched a "housing ratings" Web site in the fall of 2004, allowing students to voice comments about their rental housing, and landlords to respond. This site is not affiliated with the Off-

Campus Housing Program, but you may find it useful when organizing your search. It can be found at www.msa.umich.edu.

Where can I look to find roommates?

The Housing Information Offices' Off-Campus Web page allows you to post an ad for a roommate, and view the ads of students who are looking for housing and/or roommates. Visit our Web site at www.offcampus.housing.umich.edu or contact our office at (734) 763-3205 for more information.

What is cooperative (co-op) living?

There are a number of ICC co-op houses located on or near Central and North Campuses, which are owned by the students that live in them. Because all students share in the work to maintain the houses, rent is usually reduced. The size of co-ops varies, as do other details (whether meals are prepared, etc.). Leases typically run eight months, during the school year. You can get more information about co-op living from the Inter-Cooperative Council either by calling them at (734) 662-4414 or by visiting www.icc.coop.

What should I do if I've been discriminated against in my search for housing?

It is illegal to deny someone housing because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, familial status, age, marital status, sexual orientation, student/non-student status or source of income. Discrimination is often subtle and covert, so if you feel you have been discriminated against, contact the Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan (www.fhcsoutheast.org) at (734) 994-3426.

How can I find short-term housing?

Our Web site features a Roommate Finder and Sublet Service where a current or prospective University of Michigan student can view and/or post ads to find a roommate, a vacancy, or a roommate with a vacancy. Sublets are posted in the Sublet section. These sublets are generally available for 1-4 months, and many are offered at a reduced rent. Please note that sublet listings for Northwood Community Apartments are located on their Web site at www.housing.umich.edu during May through August.

If you are a faculty or staff member looking for short-term housing, www.housing.umich.edu also contains listings from current faculty and staff members who, while on sabbatical or vacation wish to sublet their homes to other faculty and staff members.

Temporary Housing for August, 2008 begins on Tuesday, July 29th and ends at noon on Thursday, August 21st. It is located at Betsey Barbour Residence Hall and is sponsored by the Housing Information Office.

What does it mean when I sign the lease?

The lease is a binding legal contract between you and a landlord. Breaking the terms of the lease, even unintentionally, may be grounds for eviction and a money judgment, so be sure to read it over carefully. Contact Student Legal Services and/or the Housing Information Office if there is anything you don't understand. Most leases include a 'joint and several' clause which holds every tenant individually responsible for all of the rent/damages. This means you can be held responsible if your roommate doesn't pay his/her portion of the rent and/or causes damages, so be sure that you know and trust the people you are planning to live with. It is important that you receive a copy of the lease after signing it, so that you may refer to it if disputes with your landlord occur.

When do most leases begin in Ann Arbor?

Leases near campus typically run from September 1 through the following August. Some summer subleases include the option of continuing the lease into the Fall. However, please remember that the sublease rate will probably be much lower than the regular rate you will be charged if you take over the lease.

What fees will I have to pay when signing a lease?

Some landlords require an application fee when you apply for a lease, usually to cover the cost of credit checks. Once you have been offered a lease, most landlords will require a security deposit of one-and-a-half month's rent at the time of lease signing. The landlord may use the security deposit to cover any damages you cause to the house, as well as unpaid rent or utility bills. The security deposit may be fully or partially refunded at the end of the lease period. It generally can not be applied towards the last month's rent. Some landlords also request a one-time cleaning fee, usually not exceeding \$150. Fees for cleaning due to regular wear and tear may not be taken out of your security deposit.

Are there resources or legal support for students signing leases?

Students have found publications like the City of Ann Arbor's "Rights and Duties of Tenants," the State Legislature's "Tenants and Landlords: A Practical Guide," and the Off-Campus Housing Booklet helpful. Also, Ann Arbor has several services for U of M students. Additionally, the Housing Information Office offers conflict resolution services and mediation to landlords registered with the program and student-tenants. For information about landlord-tenant laws, contact Student Legal Services (SLS) at (734) 763-9920 or at www.studentlegalservices.dsa.umich.edu and/or the Housing Information Office (HIO) at (734) 763-4105 or at www.housing.umich.edu. Student Legal Services also offers services and legal advice to students in conflict with their landlords. An alternative to SLS, if you are not currently enrolled in classes, is the Michigan Tenant Counseling Program (MTCP) at (734) 761-8599 or at www.michigantenants.org.

How do I sublet?

The primary subletting period in Ann Arbor runs from May through August, although there are always some students subletting in the Fall and Winter due to study abroad programs or early graduation. During the spring and summer months, there is a much higher volume of empty apartments than there are people looking for a summer sublet. Due to this "buyer's market," most people trying to sublet their apartments find that they have to lower the asking rent by 25-50% in order to attract someone to sublet, and make up the price difference themselves.

If you are vacating your apartment in the spring and summer months, you should begin advertising your sublet in the late winter or early spring. The Off-Campus Housing Web site at: www.offcampus.housing.umich.edu allows students to post free sublet advertisements to be viewed by other students year round. The Web site features a printable Sublease Agreement, an Inventory Check-list and the informational sheet "Guidelines for Subletting." These forms may also be picked up at the Housing Information Office.

What if I have more questions?

You can stop by the Housing Information Office at 1011 Student Activities Building, call (734) 763-3205, or visit our Web site. We're happy to help!

