

Off-Campus Rental Guide for Parents

Why Choose ForRentUniversity.com?

When apartment hunting, many college students are mainly focused on finding a place that is near campus and close to their friends, while parents such as you tend to want to dig a little deeper before putting their stamp of approval on your son or daughter's new home away from home.

ForRentUniversity.com knows you are just as excited as your college student in finding that perfect apartment home. As you relive your college memories in your own scrapbook of life, ForRentUniversity.com is taking all the necessary steps to provide you with a trustworthy and reliable source.

Finding Your Child's New Home

It makes sense that while college-aged students navigate this exciting period of their lives, many of you, parents, are serving as their GPS (Global Parenting System). You often take care of the demanding details for your college-aged students, like finding them a decent place to live. Here at ForRentUniversity.com, both you and your college-aged student alike can find university apartments, off-campus housing, and student housing.

ForRentUniversity.com makes it easy for parents and students to research neighborhoods, amenities, rental rates, lease options, and lifestyles at various communities. Once that perfect apartment is found, both parents and students can share their findings with each other by email, Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube. ForRentUniversity.com can be accessed and used on smartphones and tablets, which is often necessary for both you and your college-aged student, who are always on the go.

For students and parents, day-to-day life doesn't start at 9 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. You want to be connected 24/7, and ForRentUniversity.com is available to everyone, everywhere at any time.

An FAQ for Parents - Know Before They Go

Should parents be concerned about safety at off-campus housing?

Yes, safety is always an important issue when choosing a new apartment home. Before renting an apartment, students should: Make sure the apartment or house is well lit and check to see where they can park. Is the lighting adequate? Is the parking area open and visible?

- Get to know their neighbors
- Check to see that their unit has smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and that they are in working order.

- Be aware of their surroundings and keep emergency phone numbers handy at all times.

What are some safety tips that parents can share with students while they are at class and living off-campus?

- Protect your personal information. Do not share PIN numbers, social security numbers, passwords, or other pertinent information or leave such available for anyone to see.
- Protect yourself online, with cell phones, instant and text messaging. Do not provide detailed personal information on Facebook or Twitter. Do not leave detailed information on away messages. Do not give out personal information to people that you have met online.
- Study the campus and neighborhood with respect to routes between your residence and class/activities schedule. Know where emergency phones are located.
- Share your class/activities schedule with parents and a network of close friends, effectively creating a type of "buddy" system. Give network telephone numbers to your parents, advisors, and friends.
- Always travel in groups and never walk alone at night. Avoid "shortcuts." Utilize the shuttle service and University Police Escort system when necessary.
- Do not be alone with someone you just met.
- Always carry your ID with you. Do not lend it to anyone.
- Never get in a car with someone under the influence and do not operate a vehicle yourself after consuming alcohol and/or other drugs.
- Do not tamper with safety and security systems (blue lights, emergency telephones, fire alarm systems, and fire extinguishers). False alarms create an apathy that reduces effectiveness when there is a real emergency. Report any incident of tampering with fire and safety equipment.
- Know where emergency exits are located and always pay attention to fire alarms.
- Check your University email and website for important communication and emergency messages. If you use an alternate email address, forwarding the campus email account is quick, and directions are available at the Information Technology office.

What calendar dates do parents and students need to be aware of?

- Financial Aid Priority Deadline
- Enrollment Deposit

- Orientation
- Course Registration
- Summer Opportunities
- Tuition Deadline
- Lease Renewal Dates
- Lease Expiration Dates

If parents want to be involved in their son/daughter's college years, but don't want to be overbearing, what are some options?

Many colleges and universities understand that parents want to be more involved in their college-aged student's education, so they provide information and offer services especially for them. Depending on the college, the availability of specialized parent services consequently encourages even more parents to get involved. Examples of specialized parent services include:

- Separate orientation sessions for parents
- Offices devoted to serving parent needs
- 1-800 numbers for parents
- Parental notification for violations of alcohol and substance abuse
- Websites directed to parent needs/questions
- Family weekends

What are some items that parents can put in care packages to send to their children at school?

- Food—Students appreciate anything, but will especially appreciate home-baked goods, snack items or personal favorites such as a favorite type of candy bar or favorite tea or cocoa mix.
- Personal items such as toothpaste, deodorant, lotions, etc. (Yes, students could buy these things, but it is convenient not to have to go out to get them—or to spend the money for them.)
- School or study items—paperclips, staples, pens, pencils, highlighters, etc.
- Things to decorate their living space—especially holiday decorations.
- Things to share with friends—this is especially appreciated if you send food.
- Personal items from home—local newspapers, magazines

A couple of final thoughts: Be careful with perishables. It is best to let students know that a package is coming. They may not be in the habit of checking for packages every day. Check to be sure that you have the correct address and that it is written clearly. Consider sending smaller packages often. Finding frequent treasures in the mailbox is fun.

Should students moving into off-campus housing get renter's insurance?

Getting renters insurance is always a good idea and is reasonably inexpensive. The unexpected can always happen. Depending on what a lease agreement says, students can be held responsible for any number of situations. At minimum, most communities may require liability insurance. Renters insurance generally covers loss of belongings in case of fire, flood or theft but not the rental unit itself. Contact your current home owner's insurance or renter's insurance provider as you may already have the option to include this in your policy. Parents can also contact the property management company as it may have more information and a discounted rate through another insurance provider. It is important to know that more often than not the landlord or property management company will not be liable for damage to any of your student's personal items, from bedding to computers, or their furniture, televisions and sound systems.

What are some tips parents can give students who are considering entering into a lease?

- Thoroughly inspect the apartment before signing a lease.
- Review the lease carefully before signing it.
- Find responsible roommates.
- Furnish the place for free.
- Basic home maintenance.
- Setting up the kitchen.
- Be a good neighbor and live happily.

What money management tips should parents share with their college students?

- The need to earn money.
- Evaluate needs vs. wants.
- Build good credit.
- Choose debit over credit.
- Understand all possible fees.
- Check your bank statements regularly.
- Beware of identity theft.

- Begin saving today.
- Start an emergency fund.

What are my responsibilities and liabilities as a guarantor or co-signer?

Should the original applicant default or miss a payment on the lease, the guarantor typically assumes complete financial responsibility, often for the entire lease term account. In the case of a missed payment, this means making that payment and all further payments until the original applicant is able to do so. In the event of the original applicant defaulting on the lease completely, the guarantor assumes all liability for paying off the loan. As a guarantor, it's important to emphasize to the original applicant to keep you apprised of any late payments or inability to pay the rent to make payments on the loan. This way, as the guarantor, you are prepared to take over and prevent any late fees or poor credit marks as a result. And, as a guarantor, you will also be responsible for paying for any damage to the property beyond reasonable wear and tear if the original applicant does not pay. Every lease is different. Read the fine print carefully and address questions directly to the property management company.