



## Campus Area Housing

# Rental Resource Guide

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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## Welcome!

Off-Campus Housing Services, a resource within University Housing, is UW-Madison's official source for available privately-owned housing and consumer rental information. Whether you are an undergraduate student moving off-campus for the first time, a transfer student, an international student, a graduate student, a faculty/staff member new to Madison, or any other member of our campus community, the Off-Campus Housing Services Rental Resource Guide was created with your needs in mind.

### What Is Off-Campus Housing Services?

Off-Campus Housing Services maintains an informative website ([go.wisc.edu/off-campus](https://go.wisc.edu/off-campus)) that aids all campus community members in navigating off-campus living. Our mobile-friendly site provides an easily searchable database of campus area rental vacancies, roommate openings and sublets in apartment buildings, houses, co-operatives, and rooming houses. Users may select their criteria to generate a list of available rentals, complete with rental details and contact information. Criteria may include:

- type of housing
- date needed/rental season
- number of bedrooms
- price range
- location
- pet policy
- and more!

We also offer rental information and resources on our website, by phone, and in person.

Finally, students can post to the sublet and roommate boards for free when logging in with their NetID.

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Program Disclaimer: The University of Wisconsin-Madison does not endorse any of the listed properties and is not responsible for arrangement of rental contracts between individual tenants and landlords.

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**MYTH:**

You have to subscribe or complete a profile to search the Off-Campus Housing Services website.

**FACT:**

Searching general housing listings on the Off-Campus Housing Services website does not require personal information and is free. You may search for and post sublet and roommate listings for free when logging in with your NetID.



# Find Housing Near UW-Madison



- ✓ Mobile Responsive
- ✓ Per-Person/Per Unit Pricing
- ✓ Roommate & Sublease Posting
- ✓ Walk-Times
- ✓ Video Tours
- ✓ College Pads App
- ✓ Renter Education Resources
- ✓ Easily Contact Landlords



[campusareahousing.wisc.edu](https://campusareahousing.wisc.edu)

Powered by:

College Pads





## FEATURED RESOURCE

# University Housing



University Housing offers more than 20 Residence Halls for undergraduate students and three University Apartment communities for graduate students, students with families, postdoctoral researchers, academic staff and faculty.

### Division of University Housing

Slichter Hall  
625 Babcock Drive  
Madison, WI 53706-1213  
[www.housing.wisc.edu](http://www.housing.wisc.edu)

### CONSIDER LIVING ON CAMPUS!

University Residence Halls offer current on-campus residents priority to select the specific room they want to live in, whether it's a lakefront view or a group of rooms with your closest friends. A variety of floor-plan options are available, ranging from single rooms to suite-style units, in a wide variety of locations across campus. For more information, visit the University Housing website at [www.housing.wisc.edu](http://www.housing.wisc.edu).

### MYTH:

Only first-year students live in University Residence Halls.

### FACT:

While it is true that the vast majority of first-year students choose to live on campus, many choose to return to University Housing for their second year. Learn about University Residence Hall options for returning residents at [go.wisc.edu/return](http://go.wisc.edu/return) or by calling 608-262-2522.

# Factors to Consider Before Searching for Off-Campus Housing



## Madison Rental Market

Madison consistently ranks as a top city to live in. The UW–Madison campus is located on an isthmus, between lakes Mendota and Monona, and is surrounded by numerous eclectic neighborhoods. Many rentals are within walking distance to campus and most are on city bus lines.

There is no specific month or date that properties begin to lease in Madison. Units are advertised at various times during the year depending on the property owner or management company. Many near-campus leases start in mid-August and continue for one year.

There are a variety of off-campus housing options in the Madison market. High rise apartment buildings, houses, flats, townhouses, private dorms, and co-ops are all found near campus. The market has something for everyone.

## Lease Term

The majority of the leases in the Madison market run for an entire year. Shorter-term leases for just the academic year or just a semester are much less common.

Important note: Many campus area rentals have a lease gap. These lease gaps can be as short as 24 hours or as long as multiple weeks. Most students stay with friends, family, or at a hotel during that time.

## Personal Finances

Develop your monthly budget for rent, utilities, food, household expenses, laundry, parking, and transportation costs. When signing a lease, be prepared to pay an application fee, first month's rent, and security deposit. The property may also require you to have a cosigner especially if you have no previous rental history. If you receive financial aid and need guidance on how that works for off-campus housing, reach out to the Office of Student Financial Aid ([financialaid.wisc.edu](http://financialaid.wisc.edu))

## Pets

No matter the type or size of your pet, ask if pets are allowed and whether extra fees or a deposit are required. Asking for all terms and permission in writing is recommended. If a pet is allowed, be a good pet owner by minimizing noise disturbances and damages, and by cleaning up after your pet.

## Roommates

Finding compatible roommates is just as important as choosing where to live.

Discuss living habits: single- or shared-room preferences; how you will divide and pay for rent, utilities, and other charges; guest rules (overnight and social); and how household duties will be shared.

Learn everyone's plans for the year, including study abroad, internships, and summer plans. Discuss how you will handle the sublet process if one or more roommates will be moving out before the end of the lease.

Roommate disagreements are common and can be avoided by having honest discussions and drafting a roommate agreement. For more information and a sample roommate agreement, visit the Tenant Resource Center's website at [www.tenantresourcecenter.org](http://www.tenantresourcecenter.org).

## Food

Most campus area housing rentals do not include a meal plan. However, all UW–Madison students may dine in the University Housing dining facilities using credit/debit cards or their Wiscard. Also, all UW–Madison students can eat at any Wisconsin Union food venue, including satellite union delis and coffee shops in academic buildings, using credit/debit cards or their Wiscard.

For more information about the Wiscard, visit [www.wiscard.wisc.edu](http://www.wiscard.wisc.edu).

There are several grocery shopping options and restaurants within walking distance of campus. In addition, many local grocery stores and large big box chains provide grocery delivery services to most campus area housing.

## COMMON WAYS TO SAVE MONEY ON HOUSING

### *Roommates*

Often a sharing a multiple-bedroom house or apartment with roommates is less expensive per bedroom than a studio or one-bedroom apartment.

### *Sharing a Bedroom*

Sharing a bedroom with a roommate is a simple way to save money. Make sure to ask if there are any additional costs for sharing a room, such as double occupancy fees.

### *Prioritizing Needs vs Wants*

Understand what you need in a living situation and what you may want. For example, do you need an in-unit washer/dryer, or does having laundry on site meet your needs?

### *Looking Further From the Center of Campus*

If you are willing to have a walking, biking, or bus commute of 15, 20 or 30 minutes, you often can find rent prices that are lower than places in the center of campus.

### *Getting a Part-Time Job*

Having a part-time job is a way to earn extra money to put towards living expenses. Many UW campus jobs will work around a student's class schedule and will teach students new skills and real-world experience.



# Factors to Consider During Your Search

## Utilities

The cost of utilities can significantly impact your monthly budget if that cost is not included in your rent. These costs vary greatly and depend on the services you require, the age of the building, and the type and size of the rental unit. We recommend that you check the average utility costs for a specific address with Madison Gas & Electric at [www.mge.com](http://www.mge.com).

Each utility and entity responsible for paying should be listed on the lease agreement. Standard utilities include heat, electricity, water, and sewer. Additional utilities may include phone, cable, and internet service.

## Furnishings and Amenities

Do you need a furnished or unfurnished rental? What appliances are provided? What amenities do you require or prefer: air conditioning, a balcony or patio, fitness room, etc.?

## Renters Insurance

Does the property owner/management company require renters insurance? Do you need to show proof? Renters insurance is highly recommended for all renters even if it is not required. Many students do not realize that renters insurance can cover your possessions outside of your house or apartment as well - such as your laptop, smartphone, or bike. In addition, renters insurance includes possible property damages and can even cover living expenses if you're displaced due to a fire or other mishap. Renters insurance policies can vary, so make sure to thoroughly read and understand what liabilities would be covered in your individual renters insurance policy.

## Parking and Transportation

Do you need parking for your car? Vehicle parking in the campus area is limited and often is not included as part of a lease. Do you need a place to secure your moped or bicycle? Do additional parking charges, special terms/policies, and agreements apply?

If you need parking and it is not available with your rental, there are other options to consider:

- Some rental property owners with units in the downtown/campus area offer parking spaces for rent. The Off-Campus Housing Services website maintains a list of these options: [go.wisc.edu/off-campus](http://go.wisc.edu/off-campus).
- The City of Madison offers a Residential Parking Permit (on-street parking) for a small fee. The permit is only valid in specific areas, and allows residents to park for up to 48 hours in the same space. For more information, visit [www.cityofmadison.com/parking-utility/permits/residential-parking-permits](http://www.cityofmadison.com/parking-utility/permits/residential-parking-permits).



Please note that all UW-Madison students who pay segregated fees are eligible to receive a Madison Metro bus pass, which offers convenient travel on campus and throughout Madison.

# When to Search for Fall Housing

Early in the fall semester, students may feel rushed into signing a lease for next fall or there will be “nothing left.” The timeframe with the most housing options listed on [go.wisc.edu/off-campus](http://go.wisc.edu/off-campus) available for the next fall is from October to January. There are many things to consider before starting your search:

- **Understanding the market.**  
Before campus area properties hit the open market, current tenants will typically be offered the right of first refusal on a lease renewal. This means the current tenant(s) in the unit will receive a lease renewal offer. Current tenants will have a set period of time to review the renewal offer, taking into consideration any changes to the rental rate or lease terms. If they choose to renew, the property will not hit the open market. Next, many landlords will allow their current tenants to have a priority period before units hit the open market where they can make requests to move to different units or properties owned by their current landlord. For many campus area properties but certainly not all, these steps occur in September and October. After these

steps occur, landlords will then advertise any remaining properties they have available.

- **Settling next year’s plans.**  
Students should take adequate time to meet with advisors and determine academic plans. Study abroad, internships, and graduation may affect housing needs. If you sign a lease too early and your plans change, you are still responsible for the lease.
- **All options are not yet advertised.**  
The greatest selection of units available for the following fall will be advertised October through January, with some additional vacancies announced in the early spring. If you sign a lease too early in the fall semester, you may not be able to consider other housing options that become available.
- **Roommate conflicts.**  
For first-year students in particular, are meeting new people and friendships are evolving during their first semester on campus. Signing a lease too early with people you don’t know very well could lead to roommate conflicts in the future.

| NEED HOUSING FOR   | BEST TIME TO LOOK      |
|--|------------------------|
| <b>Fall</b><br>(Lease starts August–October)                         | <b>October–January</b> |
| <b>Spring</b><br>(Lease starts November–March)                       | <b>October–January</b> |
| <b>Summer Sublet</b><br>(Lease starts April–July and ends in August) | <b>March–May</b>       |



## FEATURED RESOURCE

# Tenant Resource Center

The Tenant Resource Center (TRC) offers free housing counseling for tenants, property owners and managers interested in learning more about their rental rights and responsibilities under Wisconsin law. The TRC website offers additional information and resources.

Website: [www.tenantresourcecenter.org](http://www.tenantresourcecenter.org)

Email: [asktrc@tenantresourcecenter.org](mailto:asktrc@tenantresourcecenter.org)

### Main Office

1202 Williamson Street,  
Suite 101  
Madison, WI 53703  
608-257-0006  
9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday

### Campus Office

Student Activity Center  
333 East Campus Mall  
3rd floor, room 3156  
608-216-2321

Check the website for office hours.

## TRC'S TOP 3 RENTAL TIPS

### READ YOUR LEASE

There is often a lot of paperwork to fill out when signing a lease, but make sure to read all of it.

### RECORD EVERYTHING IN WRITING

Did your property owner promise something? Did you make an agreement with a roommate? It doesn't mean much if you don't have proof, so put everything you can in writing and save a copy for yourself.

### GET RENTERS INSURANCE

Protect your property with very affordable insurance that may end up saving you a lot.





## LEASE TERMS TO KNOW

### *Cosigner*

A cosigner is a person who signs a lease agreement with the tenant and agrees to fulfill the terms of the lease if the tenant does not. Many property owners and managers require a cosigner for college students. We encourage students to discuss this requirement with parents/guardians and roommates as early as possible in the search process to avoid issues later.

### *Leases are legally binding agreements*

Once a lease is signed, it is legally binding. In the event that plans change, a court will uphold a properly executed lease agreement. A tenant may be able to negotiate breaking a lease or subletting their unit. These options may be expensive and are not guaranteed. Before signing a lease, ask how status as a UW–Madison student may factor into the agreement.

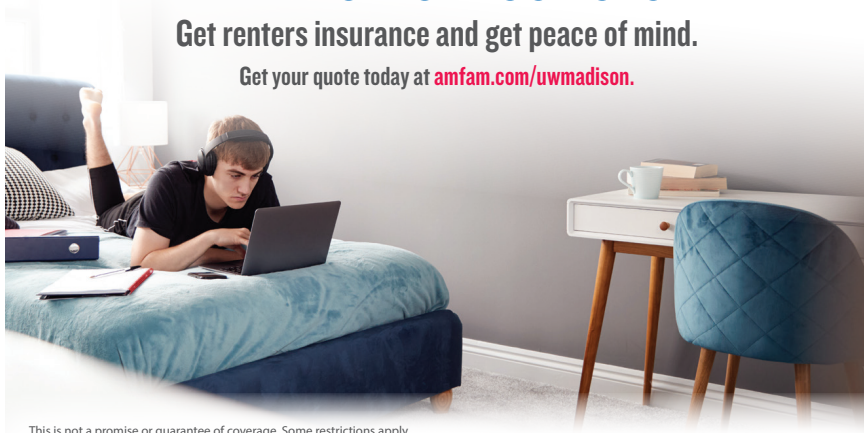
### *Joint and several liability*

A "joint and several liability" clause makes every signer of the rental agreement individually responsible for all of the rent and all damages that may occur. Property owners see everyone on the lease as one entity, which is why choosing your roommate(s) wisely is crucial.

## YOU PURSUE YOUR DREAMS. WE'LL PROTECT YOUR STUFF.

Get renters insurance and get peace of mind.

Get your quote today at [amfam.com/uwmadison](https://amfam.com/uwmadison).



This is not a promise or guarantee of coverage. Some restrictions apply.

American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. & Its Operating Companies,  
American Family Insurance Company, 6000 American Parkway,  
Madison, WI 53783 ©2024 23094 – 8/24



# Rental Touring Checklist

- ☐ Take a friend—never tour a rental unit alone.
- ☐ Make sure you see the actual unit you will be renting, not a model.
- ☐ Are there safety features such as smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors? Do they work?
- ☐ Do all of the door locks and deadbolts work, and do the bolts stick out at least one inch?
- ☐ Do windows open and close properly? Do they lock? Are window coverings provided?
- ☐ Check out the area at night with friends to see if it's well lit and to get a feel for the neighborhood.
- ☐ Check your cell phone reception in the unit—can you send and receive texts and calls? (Test it out!)
- ☐ Does the plumbing work? Check all faucets and showers, and flush all toilets. How is the water temperature and pressure? Is there any sign of water leaks?
- ☐ Do the fans in the bathrooms work? Do you see signs of mold?
- ☐ Do the appliances work? Turn them on to make sure.
- ☐ Check for damages from current tenants, pets, rodents, insects, water, and fire throughout the unit, especially on the floors, walls, and ceilings, and inside cabinets, drawers, and closets.
- ☐ Ask if rental unit comes furnished or unfurnished. If furnished find out what items are included, if unfurnished take measurements to ensure furniture you bring will fit.
- ☐ Does the unit have enough storage space? If you need parking for a bike, moped, or car, is it available?
- ☐ Are there enough electrical outlets throughout the unit? Do they work? (Hint: Bring your phone charger and plug it in to check).
- ☐ Do the lights work in all of the rooms?
- ☐ If there are any items that need to be repaired or replaced, discuss what repairs or improvements will be made with your prospective landlord, and write them into the lease.
- ☐ Find out where the nearest bus stop is located.
- ☐ Where are the nearest grocery stores, pharmacy and other shopping options?
- ☐ If you are seriously considering a rental property:
  - Ask for a copy of the lease and addendums. This will give you a chance to review the documents.
  - Read the lease carefully. Pay special attention to “Non-standard Lease Terms.”
  - Consider asking the current tenants about their experiences with the owner or management. Are they pleasant and professional? Do they respond quickly to maintenance and repair requests?
  - Contact the City of Madison Building Inspection Unit to ask about building-code violations.
  - Contact utility companies to inquire about average costs for heat, electricity, cable, and internet service.
  - Make sure you understand what is needed to execute the lease. Is there an application fee, security deposit, or cosigner needed.

## A NOTE ABOUT SAFETY

It's important to ask yourself...

*Will you feel safe in the rental?*

*Will you feel safe while walking to and from classes during the day and at night?*

Personally check out every rental. Trust your instincts.

Find more safety tips and resources at [uwpd.wisc.edu](http://uwpd.wisc.edu).



Grand Central



# LIVE EXCEPTIONALLY IN THE HEART OF CAMPUS.

Includes all utilities, cable, 1GB Internet in all units,  
and residents-only Brooks Street Gym.

[grandcentralmadison.com](http://grandcentralmadison.com)

[XO1oncampus.com](http://XO1oncampus.com)





## Subletting Information

Subletting is an arrangement between a current tenant (sublessor), a “substitute” tenant (sublessee), and the property owner or management company. A sublessee takes the sublessor’s place and resides in the unit, paying either part of or all of the rent. Below are some things to keep in mind when subletting:

- Not all property owners and management companies permit subletting. Be sure to ask! For those who do allow subletting, ask about and follow their subletting process.
- If you have roommates, be sure you have their support. Your roommates should feel comfortable with the new sublessee and may have to sign the sublet agreement showing their approval.

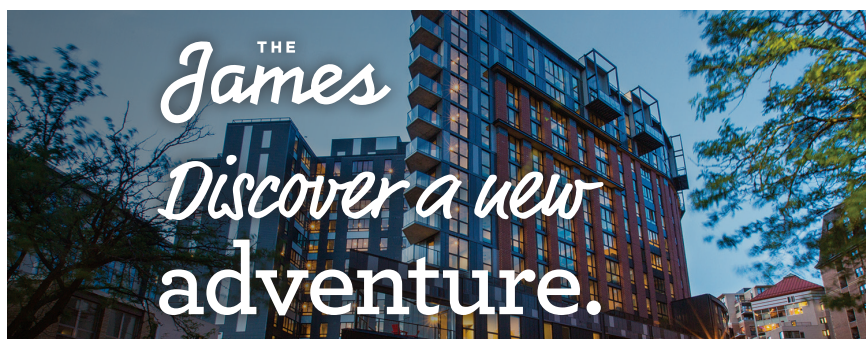
### ADVERTISING A SUBLET

- Members of the UW Community may log-in with their NetID and advertise their sublet for free under the Campus Area Housing website “Subleases” tab at [go.wisc.edu/off-campus](http://go.wisc.edu/off-campus).
- Share information with friends, classmates, co-workers, acquaintances, and your roommates’ network.
- Spread the word via social media, other advertising websites, and campus newspapers.
- Post flyers on or near campus (be sure to ask for approval when using bulletin boards in campus buildings).

- Advertise your rental early and often, making sure it is competitively priced. Remember that taking a small "loss" each month may be better than paying 100% of your rent when you're gone.
- If you find a sublessee, you and any cosigners on the original lease may still be responsible for timely rent payments and damages until the end of the lease term. Damages incurred by a sublessee can be taken from your original security deposit.
- Complete a written sublet agreement with your sublessee and consider asking for a deposit. If your property owner does not provide a form, an example can be found on the Tenant Resource Center's website at [www.tenantresourcecenter.org](http://www.tenantresourcecenter.org).

## Be Alert for Sublet Scams

- The City of Madison and the campus area continue to be targets for rental scams, with college students who advertise sublets frequently being targeted. Often these inquiries will make vague references to your rental, the grammar and spelling will be poor, and your email address will not appear in the "To:" address line. The emails typically originate outside of the United States and are sent to many addresses at one time.



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Fully furnished apartments

Designer interior finishes

State-of-the-art fitness center

Academic Success Center with iMacs and free printing

Rooftop pool with hot tub, sun deck and lounge seating

Individual liability leases and roommate matching available

Apply online at **LiveTheJames.com**

Amenities are subject to change. Limited time only. See office for details.







**Ready to find your new home?**

**We are ready to assist you!**

**OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING SERVICES**

University of Wisconsin–Madison

Slichter Hall

625 Babcock Drive

Madison, WI 53706

Website: [go.wisc.edu/off-campus](https://go.wisc.edu/off-campus)

Email: [off-campus@housing.wisc.edu](mailto:off-campus@housing.wisc.edu)



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