

Questions To Ask Yourself?

Is the building pet friendly?

Can I afford the monthly rent?

Do I need a roommate?

Does this location have on-site laundry?

How will I travel between work, home, and school?

Are utilities included in rent?

How long will I be renting for?

Do I feel safe at this location?



Off-Campus Housing Guide



Welcome!

Do you want to move out and start living independently in the City of Madison? It can be a tough transition from campus living but luckily, we have some resources to help. Look through this guide for some answers to the most frequently ask questions.

How Do You Find Roommates?

Most commonly people move out with other students that they previously lived with in the dorms. It is good to live with someone who you know already. This makes it easier to mediate any issues you have between yourselves.

If you don't have anyone in mind already, posting to school Facebook groups can be helpful. However you should avoid posting to websites like Craigslist, since this is open to the public and could be awkward living with complete strangers.

You can also reach out to other students on your floor. Many of them will also be looking for roommates, and this allows you a way to get to know them before moving in together.

Tenant Resource Center

As Dane County residents, you have access to the Tenant Resource Center. The TRC is a organization that informs renters of their rights as a renter, and can help provide information on important information like apartment safety, apartment condition, and many more options. If you are facing issues with your landlord you can contact TRC through the following ways:

Tenant Resource Center:

1202 Williamson Street, Suite 101, Madison, WI 53703

Rental Rights Hotline:

Dane County: 608-257-0006

Toll-Free: 877-238-RENT (7368)

Eviction Prevention Services:

By Appointment: (608) 257-0006 ext. 7

For more information about the Tenant Resource Center check out there website at:

<https://www.tenantresourcecenter.org>

Walkthrough Checklist:

- ◇ Take a parent or someone who has rented before. It's always a good idea to have multiple eyes look over an apartment.
- ◇ Tour through the unit you will be renting. Do not rent without seeing where you will actually be living.
- ◇ Is there any damage to the apartment (Water stains, torn up carpet, holes in the wall, or uneven flooring)?
- ◇ Do all the appliances work (toilets, sinks, showers, oven)?
- ◇ Do each of the bedrooms have windows and fans?
- ◇ Check that all bedrooms and the living room have a smoke detector that works.
- ◇ Make sure that all outlets work. The best way to quickly check all the outlets is by using something that easily indicates that power is working (like a phone charger or night-light).
- ◇ Walkthrough the rest of the apartment complex. If there are additional amenities (laundry, gym, etc.) are they in good condition that you can use them?
- ◇ Check where you will be parking to make sure your car will be protected.

Where Do You Look For Apartments?

With so many websites available to find apartments it can be overwhelming to figure out where to start. Try using some of these websites to help start your search.

UW-Madison sponsors a website in collaboration with Madison Property Management to show students properties around the downtown Madison area. This website is specifically tailored to college students. Check out:

- campusareahousing.wisc.edu/listing

Can't find an apartment that you like on the UW website? Check out these other websites to find more options for downtown housing.

- madisoncampusanddowntownapartments.com
- stevebrownapts.com
- madisonapartmentliving.com
- bmcmadison.com

If you can't find any apartments on this website, try broadening some of the filters. You may not be able to find the perfect apartment your first year.

How Much Can You Afford

When living on your own, it's important that you know how to budget your income. Your income will have to be split between rent, groceries, savings, and of course entertainment.

Calculating Gross Monthly Income:

Gross Monthly Income=

*Hours Worked Per Month * Hourly Rate*

How Much Rent Can You Afford:

Income You Should Put Towards Rent=

*Gross Income * .3*

Example:

A student who works a part time job, making \$15 dollars an hour might have a budget that looks like this:

$20 \text{ hours per week} * 4 \text{ weeks} * 15 \text{ dollars and hour} = \1200 per month.

This student should be putting 30% towards rent. So this should will pay 30% of \$1200 which is \$400 a month towards rent.

**Make sure to also calculate how much you expect to spend on groceries. This varies significantly from person to person. Add expected groceries and rent together and make sure you can comfortably afford it.*

Lease- A lease is a legal document that outline what is expected from the landlord (such as maintaining the property) and from the tenant (rent and standards). This document should be review thoroughly before signing.

Security Deposit- An amount of money that the landlord will hold until the end of the lease. If the property is damaged by the tenant during their lease, the landlord may take money from the deposit to pay for repairs. If the property is kept in good condition, the deposit is returned to the tenant.

Sublease- When a current tenant rents out an apartment that they do not own but will not be using. Typically you see a sublease for the summer. When a college student rents an apartment for a year, that student will use the space during the school year and may sublease (or re-rent out) the space to someone new. Be careful if you are looking to sublet an apartment. Make sure the original owner of the building is okay with the agreement, otherwise you could have trouble down the road.

Terms To Know

There can be a lot of terms that you may not be aware of. This list can serve as a quick guide to find the definitions of some of the more important terms.

Tenant– That you! A tenant is someone that lives in a building owned by someone else. A tenant is the person who is paying to rent out a room.

Landlord– This is the person who owns the building that you are renting. In smaller situations (like a landlord who rents out one or two houses) this person also acts as the property manager.

Property Manager– In some larger situations (like 100 unit apartment building) the landlord may have a property manager. This is the person or company that is responsible for maintaining the property that you are renting. Some locations have 24/7 maintenance hotlines or web portals where you can submit a request.

Needs Vs. Wants

Many factors go into finding a place to live. Start by making a list of needs and wants from your future home.

Needs are things that are non-negotiable.

This is different from person to person, and may include things such as how close are you to work and school or if the apartment must allow a pet. Think about any accommodations you may have now, and make sure your apartment fits your accommodations.

Wants are things that can be changed or given up. Wants are luxuries that would improve your quality of life, but can be given-up if needed. This might be if the apartment complex has a public gym, or is the location is close to a friends house. It is suggested that you rank your wants by what is most important to you and which ones you are more willing to give up. It is rare that you will find an apartment that fits your budget and has all your wants. Make sure that you weigh each want and figure out what is most important.

Factors To Consider:

- You may have heard the term **utilities** before. Utilities refers to gas, power, water, and internet hookups to your home. Some landlords pay for utilities completely, partially, or none at all. It is important to ask if you will need to pay for these on top of your monthly rent.
- **Furniture** is another big expense when renting your own apartment. Unlike utilities or rent, furniture is a one-time big purchase. Some apartment come furnished, meaning that renters are given the more important items such as a fridge, couch, and possibly a bed. If you get an unfurnished apartment, the rent may be cheaper, but you will have to buy the furniture that you need.
- The **length of the lease** will also affect which apartment you choose. Most students will only need their apartment for nine month. However, some apartment may require a 12 month contract. Make sure that you are aware of how long your lease is for.

- **Transportation** can cover a variety of options. In Madison that might be using the public bus system, driving yourself, or walking to where you need to go. Each of these options has positives and negatives associated with them. Remember that if you own a car, you will need to get an Edgewood parking pass and your apartment may also require a permit. If you want to use the public bus system, contact Edgewood Security to get a discounted student bus pass.
- The neighborhood that your apartment is in should also be a factor in your housing decisions. You should ask yourself do you feel **safe** and do you feel like you can be apart of the **community**. It is important to find a place that you feel like you can enjoy the area around you. Many students like to live by other students because it helps them feel a sense of community seeing others students like them.
- **Renters Insurance** is like homeowners insurance but usually costs less. This allows your items to be covered if an accident destroys property in your apartment. It is important to get renters insurance because the landlords insurance will not cover your personal possessions.