

# **Securing Housing Off-Campus** *OISS Collaboration*

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Northwestern | OFF-CAMPUS LIFE

# The Off-Campus Life Office

We serve as the first point of contact for students moving and living off-campus.



When to Start Searching & Where to Live

# **OVERVIEW OF HOUSING IN THE U.S.**

# When to Start Searching

- As soon as you need a place, start looking!
- Most graduate students start looking for housing in April through July
- Most leases are signed in July through September
- After submitting an application, ask the landlord when you can expect to receive a decision

# Where to Live

- Most graduate students live in Evanston, Far North Chicago, and North Chicago
  - Learn more about Chicago neighborhoods with this [interactive map](#)
- Very few students who take classes in Evanston live in downtown Chicago
- Popular Evanston neighborhoods for NU students are west and south of campus
  - North of campus is good if you are in an engineering program

# Limited On-Campus Housing

- [On-campus graduate student housing options](#) fill up very quickly.
- [Graduate housing application](#) is only available for full-time enrolled graduate students & post-doctoral candidates.
- For more information regarding the application process, you can contact (847) 467-4663 or [housing@northwestern.edu](mailto:housing@northwestern.edu).

# Location & Transportation

- It is important to think about location before committing to a lease
  - Things to consider: distance to classes, nearby public transportation, proximity to grocery stores/laundromat, & neighborhood safety
- Transportation Options
  - Bicycles, Walking, [University Shuttles](#), [CTA trains and buses](#), [Metra trains](#), & Cars (may require [on-campus parking pass](#))

Authentic Information & Reliable Housing Options

# **FINDING HOUSING & ROOMMATES**



# Places4Students

- Northwestern University is partnered with a free service called [Places4Students.com](https://www.places4students.com)
  - Rental Property listings
  - Student Sublets
  - Roommate Finder

# Finding Reliable Housing

(Even If You Aren't Currently in the U.S.)

- It is always recommended to view housing options in-person
  - Plan ahead to make appointments to visit potential properties as soon as you arrive!
  - If this is not possible, arrange a video call tour of the property (e.g., Skype)
- Contact landlords by phone/email with any questions about properties you're considering

Lease Options, Amenities & Utilities, & Fees

# **HOUSING & LEASE DETAILS**

# Length of Lease

- Leases typically run 12 months or an academic year.
- You may be able to find a more short-term option (such as quarter-long sublet or a month-to-month lease).
  - Check “Sublet” and “Short-Term Rental” tabs on [Places4Students.com](https://www.places4students.com)

# Amenities & Utilities

- Amenities & utilities will vary with each lease contract, depending on the landlord/apartment building.
- Amenities that may be included: in-unit or in-building laundry, kitchen appliances, parking, Internet, cable TV, etc.
- Utilities that may be included: water, electricity, heat, garbage pick-up, gas

# Application & Lease Fees

- Many landlords require tenants to pay application and move-in fees, in addition to the first month's rent, before signing the lease agreement.
- If you have to pay non-refundable fees, those are typically charged in place of a refundable security deposit.

Credit History, SSN, & Co-Signers

# **COMMON ISSUES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

# Lack of U.S. Credit History

- Try to get a letter of sponsorship, or show other proof of income (e.g., bank statements) to demonstrate your ability to pay rent on time.
- If you have an on-campus internship or assistantship, try to get a letter from your academic department that explains the terms of your job and how much you will be paid.



# Social Security Number (SSN)

- Your application may be turned down without a SSN – you should not depend on a SSN to get housing!
- You will be able to obtain a SSN eventually if you have an on-campus job.
- Prepare for the possibility that you may need a co-signer for your lease.

# Questions?

