The Who, What, Where of Off-Campus Housing...

Who: Our resources are available to anyone who attends or works for the University.

What: We offer apartment listings from private landlords and information from commercial properties. You can get all of your relocation questions answered from our offices. We have information on everything from furniture and storage options to Maryland tenancy laws to how to get your electricity turned on. Everything you need to start looking for and to set up a new place is available in the Off-Campus Housing office. We even have telephones and computers you can use.

Where: You can find us in Room 102 in Wolman, across the hall from the On-Campus Housing office. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. Questions can be directed to offcampus@hd.jhu.edu or 410-516-7961.

When: Start working out if you will have roommates around winter break and discuss what kind of place you want to live in. You can start early but know that it will be mostly general information. The Annual Off-Campus housing fair occurs around Spring Break and is usually the best time to start getting on wait lists and going on building tours. Most students sign leases in April-August.

How: Start with our website at www.jhu.edu/hds, or visit our office. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

FAQ

When should I start looking for a place?
If you want to live in one of the commercial buildings, you should start contacting property managers around February. Some properties still use wait lists but be aware that a waiting list will not guarantee you a space; you should continue to call the property manager to find out what is available and so he or she can keep you in mind.

If you want to rent from a private landlord, you will need to search the classified ads and our online property listings. Landlords generally list properties 14 to 60 days before they are available to a new tenant. New listings come in daily, so check our site frequently.

What is a co-signer? Do I need one?
A co-signer is an adult that is ultimately responsible for the rental property. He or she will guarantee that the landlord will receive rent on time, and he or she will be responsible if the property is damaged. Unless you can prove to the landlord that you meet their income requirements on your own, you will need a co-signer. Be aware that not all landlords will accept a co-signer, so ask first.

What if I do not like my apartment?
Once you have signed the lease you have entered into a binding contract. If the reason you don’t like the apartment is the noise loud neighbors make or because the landlord won’t fix a dripping faucet, try to work it out. Most problems tenants have are communication problems.

If you are having serious landlord issues, contact a rental advocacy group such as Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc. If you just hate the apartment, stick it out and be sure to give proper notice of vacancy when the lease is finished. If you plan to break the lease, you will be held responsible for any rent the landlord loses before he or she finds new tenants.

Find Your New Home
Information is a mouse click away!

Where to start
Begin your search with our website. We have lots of information about property listings and relocating to Baltimore. Many of our landlords only list with us, so be sure to utilize this resource and check back often for daily updates. Our listings are not limited to the Homewood area so you can find a place to live almost anywhere!

www.jhu.edu/hds This will take you to the Housing website
Where else can I find listings?

Be sure to utilize all resources when searching for housing. Check local papers, walk around the neighborhood to jot down numbers, and check our website!

The City Paper is published every Wednesday. Visit their website (www.citypaper.com) and under the classifieds section you will find all the rentals listed for the week.

The Baltimore Sun will also be very helpful. The Sunday paper lists dozens of available apartments and houses for rent. You can find these listings online at (www.sunspot.net).

Craig’s List (baltimore.craigslist.org) is a great place to check for listings. They also have a great marketplace if you need to find furniture.

The Daily Jolt has a student-run forum that has a good housing board where you can find or advertise for roommates or just look for that perfect room. (jhu.dailyjolt.com/housing)

There are also several realty companies that manage properties for private owners. These companies will usually have lists of what is available in the area. You will need to go to their office, leave a key deposit, and visit the property on your own. The properties they manage are not limited to apartments; they often have several houses in their inventory as well. Here are a few of these companies:

Frederick Realty 410-583-5830
Metro Property Management 443-796-7400
E. G. Rock 410-685-2088
Star Management 410-235-7764

What are the areas like?

If you are not familiar with the different neighborhoods in Baltimore, there are a few websites that can help you make a decision about where to live. On our website, under the planning section, you can find a great deal of information about the various neighborhoods. The Graduate Representative Organization also has a great site that reviews several of the areas near both Homewood and JHMI. (www.jhu.edu/gro/grounide)

For general information about Baltimore, head to www.baltimore.org and request a free visitor’s packet that is jam packed with information. It even provides a detailed map of downtown Baltimore.

I have my place, but where should I get furniture?

Many people prefer to rent furniture if they will only be in Baltimore for a short time. What’s great about renting everything is that all you have to do is show up with your clothes! The rental company will drop off your stuff, and when you are ready to move out, they will pick it up. Be sure to ask about the apartment specials for students that provide everything – even the silverware! Two places our students have used are:

www.rentfurniture.com
www.aaronrents.com/furniture

If you want to purchase new or used items, look in the classifieds section of the online papers listed above, notice boards, or www.jhu.edu/~gazette. The Gazette has some rental listings, plus lots of stuff people are trying to sell. Also, IKEA is a great place to find new, inexpensive furniture.

There are also tons of yard sales to be found in the warmer months, so keep your eyes peeled for signs and show up early to get the best deals!

What do I need to know before I sign the lease?

The first thing you should do is check out www.bni-maryland.org or www.marypirg.org/renter. These sites are non-profit advocacy groups that work for both the tenant and the landlord. The Maryland State’s Attorney General’s office has published a fantastic and free booklet outlining your rights as a tenant under Maryland law. It is strongly recommended to contact them for a free copy at www.oag.state.md.us/consumer/edunit.htm

Always make sure that you read the lease before you sign it. You are also entitled, by law, to keep a copy of the paperwork. Be sure to keep it in a safe place. You should also have your prospective landlord put any promises that he or she makes in writing. If the landlord refuses, the promise is not likely to be kept.

Finally, try to take photographs of the condition of the apartment once you agree to rent the space. Most deposits are kept for repairing damage. If you did not damage the walls, for instance, you will need to produce that to your landlord. Keep these photos with all of your important documents in case you need them later. A good tip is to mail a set to yourself and do not open the envelope. Should you find yourself needing to prove that the damage was preexisting, the date on the postmark will prove to the judge that the damage was there before you moved in.

The best thing you can do is prepare a list of pre-existing damage with your landlord. You can find a very comprehensive Move-In Checklist at our office.