

# Housing Tip Sheet

*This tip sheet was compiled from the feedback of previous interns. Scroll to the bottom for links that have been helpful to students in the past.*

## Tips:

- 1. Start Early:** Affordable internship housing gets competitive (especially for the summer term), so start as early as possible. Start looking even before you have secured an internship, and put down a deposit as soon as your internship is confirmed. Since rates often increase with time, we encourage you to not rely on or wait for funding decisions from the Rockefeller Center or other Dartmouth funding sources – make a commitment and make a plan-B both for housing and funding.
- 2. Determine your priorities** - Often you're choosing between an expensive apartment close to your internship location or a cheaper apartment farther away, but there are many more variables that you will want to prioritize for yourself: Location; cost; safety; daily commute time and method; distance to work, groceries, and nightlife; roommates; chores/duties; utilities to pay; parking options; etc. Knowing the order of importance can make your decision easier. The three most important priorities for past interns have been (respectively) cost, safety, and distance to work.
- 3. Tap your resources:** The two most successful methods of finding housing among past interns have been by networking/word of mouth (40%) and by searching online (55%). Many universities and colleges offer intern housing over the summer for non-university students. You can also find affordable temporary housing at bed and breakfast websites that will offer month-to-month leases (**Note:** Some of the university housing programs may not mesh with the D-Plan or are not available during the school year). Check for housing Facebook groups in the area like the Georgetown Summer Housing FB group in Washington, DC.
- 4. Using Craigslist:** This can be a great option for cheap housing, but beware of scams (check the [FTC Rental Listing Scams website](#) for red flags to watch out for). Do everything you can to see the place before you commit. If you can't see it yourself, many people have a local friend visit for them or get a tour from the landlord on Skype. If you are considering a basement apartment, check local zoning laws to be sure that the apartment is legal for multiple families before you commit (you would count as a separate family).

The hosts on Airbnb.com are screened, so you typically encounter safer options and fewer scams. This adds to the cost, but for many it is worth it. Local real estate offices typically perform a similar role and can be a great resource for a safe apartment.

## 5. Important questions to ask a potential landlord:

- **What does the rent include?** Off-street parking, heat, furniture, utilities? There is no right or wrong way for a landlord to handle utilities. The important thing is that you are aware if utilities will be something you have to pay in addition to the monthly rent and factor that into your budget.

- **What apartment features are provided?** The value of a rental goes up if it includes extras like laundry facilities (in the unit or in the building), dishwasher, refrigerator, additional storage, roof access etc.
  - **What is the energy source for heating or cooling the apartment?** There can be a big cost difference between oil, wood, gas and electric heat as well as air conditioner or a swamp cooler for cooling.
  - **Where is the closest public transportation and what are the local parking laws** (what side of the street can you park on, does it change during the week, etc.)?
  - **Who will be the contact person once I am a tenant?** Be sure to get their email (communication should be in writing whenever possible) and emergency contact information.
  - **Can I walk through the apartment with the landlord/agent immediately prior to moving in to see the condition of the apartment?** A lot can happen when a previous tenant moves out. . If you can't see the apartment beforehand or have someone else check it out for you, talk to the landlord and ask for contact info of people who rented from him/her before. Also see if they'll let you pay a smaller security deposit upfront and complete the payment when you meet him/her. If they're not willing to negotiate that, it's probably a bad sign.
- 6. Negotiating Rent:** Many past interns encourage negotiating your rent before committing to an apartment. Typically, successful negotiations depend on things like the condition of the place relative to how it was advertised (ads showed it fully furnished, but you later found out that furniture was not included), what you have to offer in trade (lower rent in exchange for a longer lease, rent paid up front, lawn mowing, maintenance, snow removal or marketing help), and the condition of the market (is there a long line of people behind you that would gladly pay the listed price).
- 7. Tourist Tax:** You may be charged a tourist tax (also known as hotel tax or transient accommodation tax) because you will be staying temporarily in a location. For example, Boston charges 14.45% to stay less than 90 days, Washington, DC charges 14.5% to stay for under 90 days, New York City charges 14.75% + \$3.50 per night to stay under 180 days, and San Francisco charges 14% to stay less than 30 days. Your landlord or real estate office (including AirBNB.com) include these taxes in your rent. It may be worth it for you to pay for an additional couple of weeks if it is less than the tax, or get the tax removed completely if you are a resident of the area. This should be discussed up-front with your landlord.
- 8. Security Deposit:** 60% of past interns have been required to pay a security deposit up-front to cover damage to the premises beyond normal wear and tear, and to cushion the financial blow if a tenant skips out early on the lease without paying. Most states have laws to limit the amount a landlord can charge as well as the time that it can take to return it to the tenant after moving out. Washington DC, for example is limited to the equivalent of one month's rent for a security deposit, and they have up to 45 days to return it once the tenant has moved out, but every state varies.

Make sure you don't get blamed for damage you are not responsible for. Take pictures of major damage to walls, doors, windows, carpets, plumbing, etc. before you sign the lease and list it on the rental lease (your copy and the landlord's copy) so that your deposit does not get stung when you leave.

- 9. Your Daily Commute:** Gather insider knowledge on your city neighborhoods if possible. Map the location to see what it's close to (grocery store, metro, bus stop, hospital, etc.) and how far it is from your work. Make sure you are okay with the distances before committing. Be sure to walk/ride/drive/bike the route to work before your first day on the job to make sure you don't arrive late when it counts.

*Ask your internship organization if they offer a transportation subsidy or reimbursement – most government and many non-profit organizations do, but you typically have to ask for it. Past interns have received Metrocards or transportation stipends from: The US Department of State, The White House, and the Public Religion Research Institute among others. Sometimes government interns have been allowed to use public transportation for free while wearing their ID badge.*

*Find ways to reduce transportation costs. Sharing a taxi, using Uber, or ridesharing will split the cost. [Capitol bikeshare](#) is a cheap option in Washington, DC – there may be something similar in other cities.*

- 10. Roommates:** Sharing your living space can significantly reduce the expenses, but you should know some things first. Before you decide on having roommates, confirm that it is legal. For example, the City of Boston's Zoning Code prohibits five or more undergraduate students from living together in the same dwelling ([Massachusetts Law Library](#)).

Next, choose your roommates wisely by preparing questions and topics to discuss before jumping into a co-habitation (even with good friends). Some great questions can be found at the [HelpMeLaw.org](#). Be sure to tackle things like who will bring what furniture, how to use shared spaces, who will pay shared utility bills and how and when will they be distributed and collected, and how will you split up chores.

- 11. International:** Past international interns have expressed that different places have different standards of comfort and necessity. For example, Rome is a very old city and it is common to find that the plumbing and heating are not up to US standards; in Europe, you will find that apartments are much smaller than in the US; and in many less-developed countries, students have expressed shock at local sanitary practices (be sure to research things like squatters, bidets, and toilet paper disposal methods before you arrive).
- 12. Dealing with landlord problems:** If problems arise between your landlord and you, know that you have help. The role of the landlord is to provide a safe housing (determined by basic habitability laws, such as providing adequate weatherproofing, available heat, water, electricity, and sanitation). Before you sign a lease, look into your rights as a tenant and the local building codes to be sure that the apartment is compliant. You can ask for inspection reports if the place looks shady, or at least

the date of the most recent inspection. If you run into a problem, such as water or gas leak, rodent infestation, or nonoperational utilities, and the landlord is unwilling to make the necessary repairs, call your state or local building inspector, fire inspector, or health safety officer and explain your situation. Their job is to make sure that your landlord is compliant, and there are laws to protect tenants from rent increases or eviction as a result of needed repairs or noncompliance. See the [NOLO website](#) for more information. Be sure that all of your communications are over email whenever possible so that you can refer back to them for evidence if needed.

## Housing Search Resources:

### Boston:

1. [Dartmouth Club of Greater Boston](#)
2. [Dartmouth Club of Greater Boston Facebook Page](#) (post what you are looking for on the wall)
3. [Boston University Summer Intern Housing](#)
4. [Suffolk University Summer Intern Housing](#)
5. [Northeastern Summer Intern Housing](#)
6. [Emerson College Trusted Local Realtors](#)
7. [bostonapartments.com](#)
8. [Rental Beast Off Campus Housing](#)
9. [Boston Bed and Breakfast](#)
10. [Boston Crime Statistics Map](#) (check here before you rent)

### New York City:

1. [Dartmouth Club of New York](#)
2. [Columbia University Summer Intern Housing](#)
3. [NYU Summer Intern Housing](#)
4. [NYU Law Summer Intern Housing](#)
5. [NYU Off Campus Housing Site](#)
6. [Educational Housing Services](#)
7. [nycintern.org](#)
8. [nyhabitat.com](#)
9. [urbanedgeny.com](#)
10. [brickunderground.com](#)
11. [NYC Crime Statistics Map](#) (check here before you rent)

### San Francisco:

1. [Dartmouth Club of Greater San Francisco](#)
2. [Bay Area Rental Guide](#)
3. [USA Student Residencies](#)
4. [San Francisco State University Off Campus Housing Site](#)
5. [University of San Francisco Off Campus Housing Site](#)
6. [San Francisco Housing Services – Student Housing](#)
7. [University of California San Francisco Off Campus Housing Site](#)

8. [San Francisco Crime Statistics Map](#) (check here before you rent)

#### Washington, D.C.:

1. [Dartmouth Club of Washington, DC](#)
2. [Dartmouth Club of Washington, DC Facebook Page](#) (post what you are looking for on the wall)
3. [American University Summer Intern Housing](#)
4. [Catholic University Summer Intern Housing](#)
5. [George Washington Summer Intern and Conference Housing](#)
6. [Georgetown Summer Intern Housing](#)
7. [Georgetown Off-Campus Student Housing](#)
8. [Georgetown Law Summer Intern Housing](#)
9. [Georgetown Off-Campus Housing](#)
10. [Washington Intern Student Housing Program \(WISH\)](#)
11. [riverplacesouth.com](#)
12. [Washington DC Crime Statistics Map](#) (check here before you rent)

#### Hanover, NH

1. [Dartmouth Leave Term Housing](#)
2. [Dartmouth Interim Housing](#)
3. [Dartmouth Real Estate Office – Upper Valley Rentals](#)

#### Nationwide

1. [Dartmouth Alumni Clubs](#)
2. [apartmentguide.com](#)
3. [Craigslist.org](#)
4. [Airbnb.com](#)
5. [livelovely.com](#)
6. [zumper.com](#)
7. [myapartmentmap.com](#)
8. [Suite America](#)
9. [Homes.com](#) (Search “Off Campus Housing”)
10. [Zillow.com](#)

*All information regarding off-campus housing should be assessed carefully before making any legal commitments. Any references made from this page do not constitute any type of legal obligation by Dartmouth College or the Rockefeller Center, including faculty, staff and students. The Rockefeller Center does not constitute legal authority nor does it provide any type of legal advice. All off-campus housing information posted or shared from the Rockefeller Center is done so for informational purposes only and the Center takes no responsibility for any legal contracts or agreements made and does not*

*officially endorse any of the above mentioned sites. All legal issues resulting or pertaining within student housing are the sole responsibility of the tenant(s) and the landlord.*