

# SEATTLEU

Off-Campus Housing Workshop  
Seattle University Housing and Residence Life

## For Today

- Realities of Housing at Seattle University
- Opportunities in Living Off-Campus
- Things to Consider In Finding Off-Campus Housing
  - Apartment Hunting 101
  - Understanding Leases
  - Knowing your Rights
- Q&A



## Realities of Housing at Seattle U

- 2 year live-on requirement, housing guaranteed for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students
- Increasing class sizes & fewer 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students looking for exceptions to living on campus
- Limited spaces for upper division students



## Realities of Housing at Seattle U

- Most upper division students have historically desired to live off-campus
- Any student is able to submit an application for SU on-campus housing



# The Douglas Apartments

- On-Campus Apartments, applications NOT through HRL
- Multiple configurations
- SU Staff Presence (RD & RAs)
- Only Seattle U students
- SU Card Access
- Furnished apartments
- Price Range: \$1,140 - \$1,895 per month (utilities included)
- No minimum rental history required, lack of credit history is okay, no employment verification necessary, sources of income can include employment, financial aid, scholarship, savings, and/or parents



# Vi Hilbert Hall

- Brand new on-campus apartments, applications NOT through HRL
- 2 & 4-bedroom units
- SU Staff Presence (RD & RAs)
- Only Seattle U students
- SU Card Access
- Option for unit to be partially furnished or students can furnish
- Price Range: \$1,125 - \$1,305 per month (utilities included)
- If interested, call the Vi Hilbert Leasing Office (206-939-5677) or book a tour online



## Opportunities in Living Off-Campus

- Increased independence
- Life skill development
- No required meal plan
- Preparation for life after college
- More opportunities to explore Seattle



# Important Things to Consider with Finding Housing

- Apartment Hunting 101
  - What are your needs
  - Rent prices
  - Knowledge of the process
  - Timeline/Amount of time required
- Understanding leases
- Knowing your rights





# What are your needs?

- Some of the questions that will guide your off-campus housing search...
  - Types of housing? Floor plan options?
  - Location?
  - Do you need a full kitchen? Do you want your own bathroom?
  - Washer and Dryer in the unit?
  - Walking distance to campus?
  - Parking/Public Transportation? (securing it & costs)
  - Pet friendly?
  - How many roommates (if any) do you want/need?
  - What is your budget?



## What is your Budget?

- What income do you have? (jobs, financial aid, roommates' income, any assistance from family?)
- Does the rent include utilities, internet, or cable?
- Are there additional fees for parking? Will you need to park on campus or get an ORCA card?
- Is the space furnished or will you need to purchase furniture?
- Is there a “pet” deposit?



## Rent

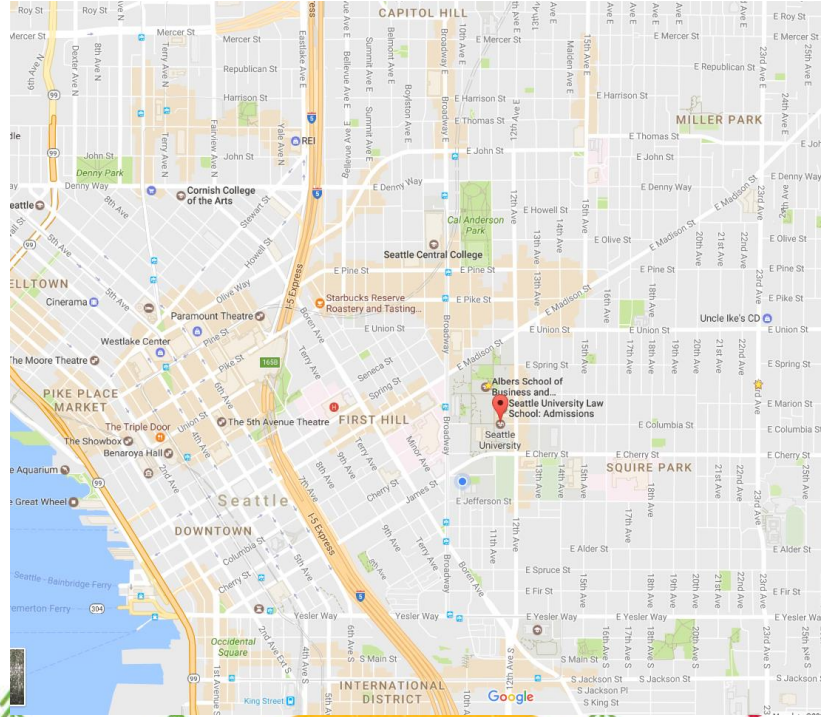
- Seattle Housing Market – competitive and with high demand
- Students are only small portion of those living in Seattle and seeking housing
- As of April 2020, the average rent in Seattle is...
  - All beds: \$2,061
  - 1 bedroom: \$1,931
  - 2 bedrooms: \$2,604



# Seattle Neighborhoods

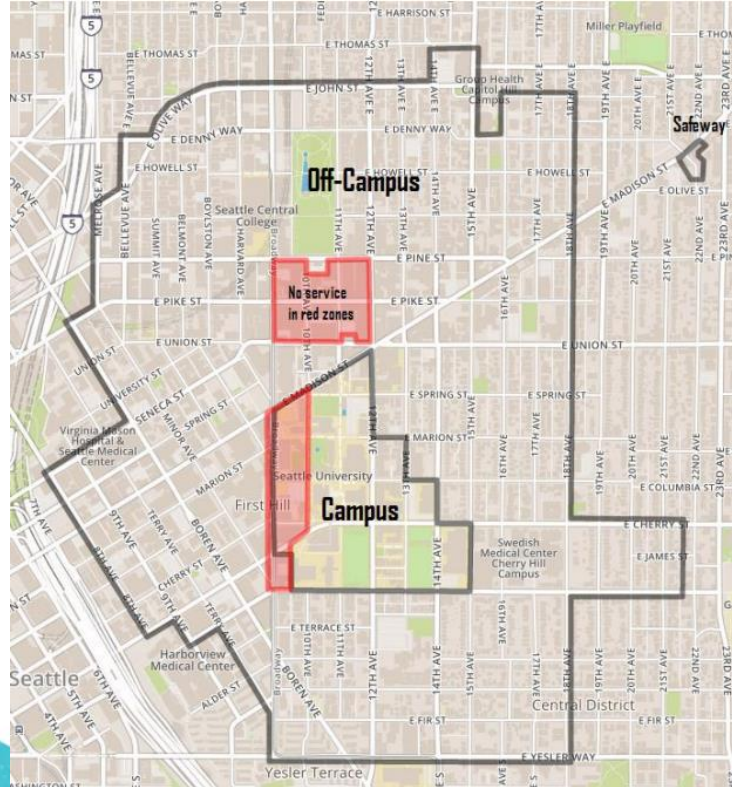
Average Rent Prices around Seattle U:

- Belltown: \$2,303
- Downtown: \$2,584
- Capitol Hill: \$2,035
- First Hill: \$1,957
- International District: \$1,920
- Central District: \$1,956
- Beacon Hill: \$1,483



# Commuting/Proximity to Campus

Most students live within or right outside of the area serviced by Night Hawk Safety Escort (managed by our Department of Public Safety)



## Commuting/Proximity to Campus

- More affordable housing around the Seattle U campus is a little extra challenging to find given how desirable the Capitol Hill/First Hill area is for the city of Seattle
- Parking
  - City parking is mostly street parking, some zoned (SU subsidizes Zone 7)
  - Campus parking for commuter students: \$255/quarter
  - Carpool parking permit: \$145/quarter





# Commuting/Proximity to Campus

- ORCA Pass
  - SU partners with King County Metro to subsidize (half) the cost of public transportation passes for students – students pay \$81/quarter
- Biking
  - Campus bike racks, bike share programs, bike registration



## Additional Budgeting Resources

- Utility Discount Program
  - Offers a discount of about 60% on Seattle City Light bill and 50% discount on Seattle Public Utilities bill
  - <http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/services-and-programs/utility-discount-program>
- 2-1-1 Community Resources Online
  - Online Directory of Health and Human Service Programs
    - Food Banks, Emergency Shelters, Transportation, Rent or utilities assistance, legal help, etc.
    - <http://www.resourcehouse.com/win211/>
- Washington Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
  - Provide funds to help low-income Washington state households maintain affordable, dependable utility services
  - <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/low-income-home-energy-assistance/>





## Timeline

- There is not a clear time of when to apply for housing to guarantee it for the academic year
- Many spaces will become available after the academic year is over so students might be searching from afar if they are not in Seattle over the summer
- Leases vary in when they start
  - They can really be starting in any month
  - Many are June – June or September – September



## Timeline (cont.)

- Apartments are often listed as available around the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month (to give 20 days notice to be out the following month)
  - Looking around the 8<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> of the month is helpful
- New apartment developments will be able to take applications earlier
- Existing apartments/houses are a little harder to anticipate vacancies



## Give Yourself Plenty of Time

- Application timeline & lease dates can vary
- Different requirements for credit & rental history, income verification, co-signers
- Each apartment/house might have slightly different nuances with requirements and what they offer, so it takes time to go through that information
- For each potential location, it takes time to submit an application, do a tour/interview with a landlord, review contracts...
- Spaces go quickly so it is encouraged to act ASAP



## Where do you start your search?

- Online searches
- Advertisements on A-frames while outside walking around neighborhood
- Talk to your networks; graduating students – landlords like referrals



# Online Searches

- Housing Facebook group within Seattle U Network
- Places4Students – link from SU Off-Campus Housing website, in the process of making it more robust – listings & roommate matching
- PadMapper - This is a map/location based search site
- Craigslist - Lots of individual search options and sublet options
- RadPad – Location based search
- Seattle Rentals – search engine focused on the Seattle area
- Apartment Finder – large and traditional apartment search engine
- Apartments.com – large and traditional search engine
- Housing Search NW – good listing for more affordable housing
- Google Maps – can use to search for apartments
- Zillow
- A number of roommate search options online & apps



## Viewing Apartments

- Call the landlords or buildings to schedule a viewing time.
- Check the unit thoroughly inside and outside.  
*\*if viewing the available unit\**
- Remember to compare the apartments carefully. Weigh the pros and cons of each apartment in order to make the best decision.  
*\*But don't wait too long- apartments move FAST in Seattle!\**
- Do not go apartment hunting alone. It is always good to have a second set of eyes that you trust to give input on your future apartments.
- Look at a variety of apartments. The first apartment that you view may be best, but you should always compare.
- Bring your checkbook in case you are ready to apply and submit a deposit.



# Viewing Apartments

- When you are viewing a space, it is like you are interviewing with the landlord/property manager – treat it as such
  - Dress up a bit, put your best foot forward
  - Consider having a “housing resume”
  - Prepare questions to ask
- Be strategic when visiting a space with your group:
  - Consider “roles” for your group
  - Consider taking pictures
  - Think about who is charismatic



# Questions to ask Landlord/Property Manager

- Rent: How much; when it is due; move in date?
- Deposit: How much; how will it be used; how and when is it refunded?
- Damages: Who pays for breakage or other damages over and above normal wear and tear – individuals or all occupants?
- Subletting: Is it permitted; what is the procedure?
- Roommates: Should all roommates sign the lease; are roommates responsible for only a portion of the rent; If someone moves out must the remaining roommates make up the difference?
- Alterations: May the unit be altered, such as painted; can you hang pictures on the wall (and how)?





# The Lease

- Your lease is a legal document outlining your agreement with a landlord. Make sure to read it carefully!
- Money
  - Security Deposit
  - Fees
  - Rent



## Language of the Lease

**Rent:** When your monthly payment is due and how much that monthly payment is.

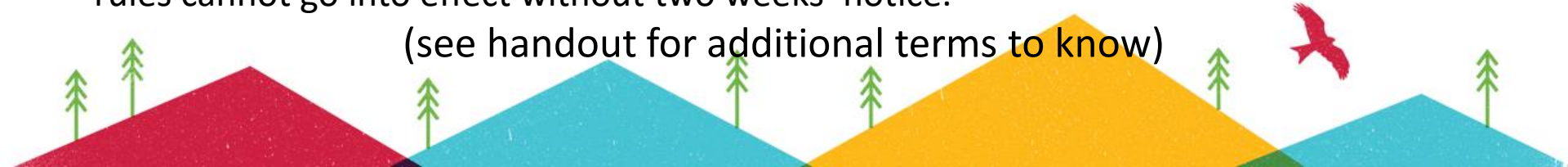
**Form of Payment:** Who the rent check/money order should be made out to as well as where the check/money order should be delivered.

**Security Deposit:** A deposit that is required for security of the faithful performance of a tenant. This may or may not be refundable. You'll need a check for this.

**Number of Occupants:** This defines the total number of residents permitted to live in the apartment without written approval from the landlord.

**Rules and Regulations:** This explains any additional rules and regulations specific to the building shall be signed by the tenant. Landlords may adopt other rules at a later time with purpose as long as they do not impede on the tenant's rights. Also, the new rules cannot go into effect without two weeks' notice.

(see handout for additional terms to know)



# Landlord-Tenant Laws

- Fair Housing Act
- Obligations of a Landlord
- Obligations of Tenants
- Just Cause Eviction Ordinance
- Ending the Agreement



## Fair Housing Act

- In Seattle it is illegal to discriminate in the rental of housing because of race, color, sex, disability, creed, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, use of service animal, military status, etc.
- Property managers demonstrate fair housing by:
  - Gladly receiving inquiries from all.
  - Applying fair and equitable criteria when evaluating applicants.
  - Enforcing rules equally and without discrimination.
  - Setting rents, deposits and fees without discrimination.
  - Responding to repair requests and other tenant concerns equally.
  - Providing reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.
- If you feel you have been discriminated against, you can contact the Seattle Office for Civil Rights



# Obligations of Landlords

- Keeping the premises fit for human habitation and keeping common areas reasonably clean and safe.
- Controlling insects, rodents, and other pests. (*e.g., bed bugs*)
- Maintaining roof, walls, and foundation and keeping the unit weathertight.
- Providing containers for garbage and arranging for garbage pickup.
- When responsible for providing heat in rental units, from September through June maintaining daytime (7am – 10:30pm) temperatures at 65 degrees (F) or above and nighttime temperatures at not less than 58 degrees (F).
- Installing smoke detectors and instructing tenants in their maintenance and operation.



# Tips to Work with Landlords

- Get to know your landlord
- Practice proactive communication
- Get things in writing
- Read your lease
- If you have roommates, have a point person to communicate with landlord



# Obligations of Tenants

- Properly disposing of garbage
- Exercising care in use of electrical and plumbing fixtures
- Promptly repairing any damage caused by them or their guests
- Granting reasonable access for inspection, maintenance, repair and pest control.
- Maintaining smoke detectors in good working order
- Refraining from storing dangerous materials on the premises



## Just Cause Eviction Ordinance

- *Unless otherwise noted, an owner must give a termination notice at least 20 days before the start of the next rental period.*
- Good causes include:
  - The tenant fails to pay rent within 3 days of a notice to pay rent or vacate.
  - The owner has notified the tenant in writing of over-due rent at least 4 times in a 12 month period.
  - The owner has notified a tenant in writing at least 3 times in a 12-month period to comply within 10 days with a material term of the lease or rental agreement. .
  - The tenant seriously damages the rental unit, causes a nuisance (including drug related activity), or maintains an unlawful business and does not vacate the premises within 3 days of notice to do so.
  - The tenant engages in criminal activity in the building or on the premises, or in an area immediately adjacent to the building or premises.





# Ending the Agreement

- Proper Notice to Leave for Leases
  - Written Notice (consult language in lease agreement)
- Responsibilities
  - The tenant is responsible for paying the rent for the rest of the lease.
  - However, the landlord must make an effort to re-rent the unit at a reasonable price.
    - *If this is not done, the tenant may not be liable for rent beyond a reasonable period of time.*



# General Reminders/Tips

- As a Seattle University student, you will still be held to the Code of Conduct
- Be a good neighbor; consider your impact to the larger community
- Consider setting up apartment expectations
- Document the condition of your space when you move-in
- If you receive financial aid, always mention it as part of your income
- Before submitting an application, call to pre-screen so you can avoid the application fee if you won't qualify
- Never send money without verifying legitimacy of the apartment/house/space
- Renters Insurance is a good idea



# Resource Over the Summer

- Conference and Event Services offers short-term housing for students who want to come to campus in the summer to search for housing
- Portal should be open soon



## What You Should Do Next

- Join the Seattle U Housing Facebook Group
- Determine your budget
  - Organize your financial information (if you need a co-signer/guarantor, determine that now)
- Assess your needs, priorities, and flexibility
  - Narrow down your housing options
- Start looking at listings and getting on waitlists if you know of apartments you're interested in



# Additional Resources

- Seattle Office of Housing
  - <http://www.seattle.gov/housing/renters/find-housing>
  - Provides resources and information for Renters
    - Finding Housing
    - Know the Law
    - Rental Assistance
- Seattle Housing Authority
  - <https://www.seattlehousing.org/>
  - Resources on Low Income Public Housing
  - Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8)



# Additional Resources

- Housing Search NW
  - Landlord/Tenant Resources (Information about Leases, Move-In/Out Inspection Checklist, Basics of Landlord-Tenant Law in multiple languages)
  - Fair Housing (City of Seattle Office for Civil Rights)
- Seattle Department of Planning and Development: Information for Tenants
  - [http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cs/groups/pan/@pan/documents/web\\_informational/dpd\\_d016420.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cs/groups/pan/@pan/documents/web_informational/dpd_d016420.pdf)
- Solid Ground Tenant Resources
  - <https://www.solid-ground.org/get-help/housing/for-tenants/>



# Additional Resources

- Tenants Union of Washington State
  - Organization to create housing justice through empowerment-based education, outreach, organizing, and advocacy
  - Tenants Rights Counseling – free phone and walk-in tenant counseling services to assist people with questions about landlord-tenant laws (206-723-0500)
  - <http://www.tenantsunion.org/>
- Free & For Sale & Buy Nothing Facebook Pages
  - Good ways to find furniture



You WILL find housing!  
You can do it and you're not  
alone!





# Electronic Resources

- Make sure to sign in to get electronic resources:
  - Off-Campus Housing Newsletter
  - Sample leases
  - Links to resources
  - Slides



# Questions?

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