



Off-Campus Living Guide



A Guide To Life Off-Campus

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Life Off-Campus

Rochester welcomes you to a home away from home.

We want you to be part of a neighborhood where you can immerse yourselves in all of Rochester's cultural and social opportunities.

The University of Rochester's Off-Campus Living Program offers tools and support to help you navigate Rochester's rental market, and understand your rights and responsibilities as an off-campus resident. Our mission is to serve off-campus student residents by providing opportunities that foster involvement, engagement, and access that integrate them to the local community and create superior student experiences.

Contact us

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Office hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m - 4:30 p.m. ET



Our Resources



Access to off-campus housing listings for UoR community



Message boards to find roommates, sublets, buy/sell furniture, etc.



Reviews leases and rental applications with students



Educates students about how to be good neighbors and tenants



Assists with student/landlord dispute resolution and communication



Works with neighborhood associations and service centers to maintain open communication and promote strong community ties

Choosing your neighborhood

Types of Rental Units

Apartments: Apartments offer privacy and often come with amenities like laundry facilities, gyms, and on-site parking.

Shared Houses: Houses where students share common areas but have their own bedrooms.

Studios: Single-room living spaces with an open floor plan that combines living, dining, and sleeping areas.

Housing Search Tools

Slack Workspace: UR Off Campus Housing

Off-Campus Listing Service: <https://www.places4students.com>



Popular Rochester Neighborhoods

The University of Rochester is nestled amidst a culturally rich and historically significant neighborhoods. Some popular neighborhoods frequented by the University community are:

Mount Hope: A vibrant neighborhood near the University of Rochester and its Medical Center, featuring a variety of shops, eateries, and other development projects.

19th Ward: Known for its vibrant community spirit, the 19th Ward is home to a mix of historic homes, green spaces, and community organizations.

Plymouth-Exchange (PLEX): A diverse community of college students and families, experiencing redevelopment with new retail, restaurants, and housing.

Park/East/Monroe: Located near the University's River Campus, this neighborhood is brimming with trendy cafes, boutiques, and entertainment venues. It offers a lively atmosphere and diverse dining options.

South Wedge/Highland: The South Wedge and Highland areas are known for its historic and modern housing, featuring various bars, restaurants, boutiques, and the South Wedge Farmers Market. The area provides easy access to key city locations and parks, while community organizations and annual events foster a strong local culture.

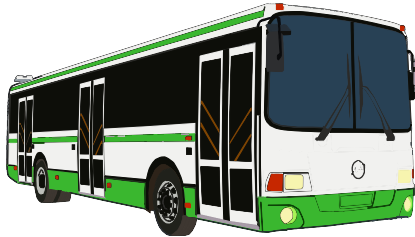
Malls & Shopping areas: <https://www.iso.rochester.edu/living/community/shopping.html>

For more information about these neighborhoods and others in Rochester, visit www.rochestercityliving.com



Transportation

For students at the University of Rochester, convenient transportation options abound to help you navigate campus and explore the vibrant city of Rochester:



University Shuttles: University shuttles are free with University of Rochester IDs and operate within the University area and select areas of Rochester where many students live.

<https://www.rochester.edu/parking/shuttles/>

Regional Transit Service (RTS): RTS is renowned for its reliability and extensive coverage. They also offer an **RTS On Demand** ride sharing facility that allows curb to curb service on demand zones.

<https://www.rochester.edu/parking/rts/>

Amtrak Train Service

<https://www.amtrak.com/home>

Cab services: Uber & Lyft

With these transportation options at your disposal, you can enjoy seamless travel both on campus and throughout the vibrant city of Rochester. Stay connected, explore, and make the most of your University experience!



Key considerations

Criteria	Description
Proximity to Campus	How far are you willing to walk, bike, or take transit to get to campus?
Public Transportation	Availability of bus lines, subway stations, etc.
Nearest Shuttle Stop	Does the University shuttle serve this neighborhood?
Safety	Crime rates, street lighting, general vibe
Convenience	Availability of grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, banks, etc.

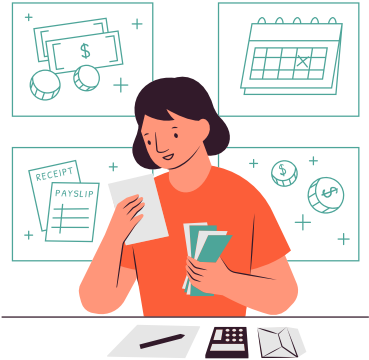


Budget Estimations

Tracking your spending and distinguishing between essential spending (rent, food) and discretionary spending (entertainment, dining out) will help you plan your finances.

This checklist ensures you factor in all the essential costs,from monthly rent and utilities to upfront moving expenses and occasional needs like furniture.

Housing		Household	
Security deposit	\$	Groceries	\$
Rent	\$	Toiletries	\$
Utilities	\$	Laundry	\$
Internet	\$	Furnishings	\$
Transportation			
Moving costs	\$		
Public Transit Pass	\$		
Gas	\$		
Parking	\$		
Car Maintenance	\$		



Lease and legal considerations

Lease agreement is a legally binding contract that outlines the rights and responsibilities of a tenant and their landlord.



Before you commit to renting a unit, it is important to understand the clauses outlined in the lease agreement by:

Meticulous Review: Familiarize yourself with key terms such as rent amount, security deposit, lease duration, termination clauses (including any early termination penalties), and maintenance responsibilities.

Legal Alignment: Review the lease agreement alongside relevant tenant-landlord laws. This ensures the terms in the lease comply with local regulations and establish a fair agreement for both parties.

Addressing Omissions: If you identify any omissions or ambiguities in the lease, promptly request clarification from the landlord regarding their policies on those matters.

Negotiation is an Option: As a tenant, you have the right to propose the inclusion of specific terms in the lease agreement.

Housing glossary

As you are reading through your lease, make sure the following items are verbalized within the document.



Roles: Define the name and address of property owner, property manager, and emergency contact information

Rent

Specify the monthly **rent** agreed upon in the lease, rent **due dates**, **penalty** in the event of late payment, and any conditions under which there would be **changes in rent** during the lease term.

Security Deposit

State the **amount** of the security or damage deposit required, deposit **return conditions** and **timelines**.

Time Definitions

Provide exact dates for the start and end of the **lease term**, requirements for **lease renewal** and **occupancy limitations**.



Additional Costs

- **Utilities:** Clarify which utilities are included in the rent and which are the tenant's responsibility.
- **Snow/Trash Removal:** Clarify responsibilities for trash removal and snow removal on the property and public sidewalks.
- **Pet-related Charges:** Specify any charges or deposits related to pets.
- **Guests Charges:** Outline any restrictions or additional charges for guests.
- **Furnishings:** Clarify whether the rental property is furnished or unfurnished.
- **Cleaning:** Detail the tenant's responsibilities for cleaning the rental property.

Housing glossary

As you are reading through your lease, make sure the following items are verbalized within the document.

Inspection

Specify when and who will be conducting inspections of the rental property.

Facilities

Specify the facilities like laundry, parking that are provided on-site at no additional charge, and clarify whether tenants are allowed to install their own furnishings

Damages

Clarify the tenant's responsibility for damages to the property, detail the process for assessing damages and determining repair costs.

Changes in Agreement

Outline conditions under which the lease agreement can be changed, and detail the process for making changes to the lease agreement.



Restrictions

Specify any restrictions or requirements around smoking on premises, quiet enjoyment policies, storage spaces, pets, and ability for tenants to make alterations to the property.

Certificate of Occupancy

A Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) is a vital document that verifies if a ***property meets minimum safety and health standards for habitation and helps maintain the health and vitality of neighborhoods.***

This inspection is a ***visual property maintenance inspection.*** It includes the interior and exterior of the structure and its premises.

The ***primary focus of the inspection is on health, safety, and blight.*** The inspector will look for such items as paint and trim; fire protection requirements; stairs and handrails; roofs; gutters; accessory buildings; interior mechanical systems such as heat, electric, and plumbing; interior and exterior structural soundness; and space requirements.

Who Needs a C of O?

Landlords of properties typically need to obtain and maintain a valid C of O.

The frequency of renewal for the C of O may vary depending on the type of dwelling (single-family vs. multi-unit) and local regulations.

What to Do as a Tenant

While the landlord is responsible for obtaining and maintaining the CO, it's always a good idea to inquire about the CO status of a property before signing a lease agreement.

A valid CO signifies the property has been inspected and meets essential safety standards.



Renter's Insurance

The Off Campus Living Program strongly recommends that all student renters purchase some form of renter's insurance.



Your landlord's home owner's policy does not cover any of your belongings. Purchase **renter's insurance to cover losses of your possessions** (laptop, clothing, furniture, cell phone) due to theft or destruction.

Basic renter's insurance often **includes protection for you in case someone is hurt in your house**. Be sure to check this coverage with the insurance company, as policies differ.

Students are typically covered under their parents' policy when living in campus housing but not covered when renting off campus in privately owned property. Check with your parents to find out whether you can be covered under their insurance policy or whether a rider plan can be added.

Renter's insurance is relatively inexpensive. Most insurance providers offer free quotes online.

National Student Services, Inc. (www.nssi.com)

Fire Safety

New York State law requires smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in all types of housing. It is the responsibility of the property owner, including landlords, to ensure these devices are in place.



Safety checklist

Change the batteries in your smoke detector every six months –remember, “Change Your Clocks, Change Your Batteries!”

Install smoke detectors in every room in your house except the kitchen.

Install carbon monoxide detectors on every level of a home that has a sleeping area and the level that contains a carbon monoxide/heating source.

Take all carbon monoxide alarms and alerts very seriously. Carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas. Call 911 immediately!

Know your escape plan before a fire happens and practice the plan at least twice a year.



Common precautions

- Do not overload electrical outlets.
- Never smoke in bed. If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Do not leave a stove unattended when cooking.
- Avoid using lighted candles.
- Do not use grills on porches or balconies or within 10 feet of the house or garage.



Roommates and Living Arrangements



Living off-campus often involves sharing your space with roommates. This makes it important to find compatible roommates, and establish clear expectations, to make your off-campus experience a positive one:



- Look for roommates with similar lifestyles, schedules, and cleanliness habits. Consider creating a roommate profile outlining your preferences and dealbreakers.
- While not mandatory, some students also choose to conduct background checks for peace of mind. Discuss financial stability openly to avoid future issues.
- Draft a roommate agreement outlining shared expenses (rent, utilities, internet), chore schedules, guest policies, house rules, and termination notice. This promotes clear communication and reduces potential conflicts.

Sample Roommate Agreement: <https://www.rochester.edu/reslife/non/resources.html>

These considerations will help you establish a harmonious living environment and enjoy a positive off-campus experience with your roommates.

Tenant Rights & Responsibilities

Living off campus comes with many new and exciting responsibilities. As a tenant, you are responsible for understanding the terms of your lease and keeping up with local laws, codes, and ordinances.

- **NYS Tenant's Rights Guide:** <https://tinyurl.com/NYSGuide>
- **Housing Council Guide:** <https://tinyurl.com/HousingGuidebook>
- **Tenant Services:** <https://tinyurl.com/HousingCouncilResources>



Home Safety Tips

- Lock all doors in your house at all times. Landlords are required to provide effective locks for residences, so contact your landlord if you have concerns about any security devices in your house.
- Lock your windows at all times to prevent burglary and insects from entering your home.
- Leave an outside/porch light on at night.
- Keep your valuables out of sight at all times.
- Install smoke alarms on every level and inside bedrooms; test them monthly.



Move-in & Move-out

Moving into and out of an apartment can be a daunting task, but having a detailed checklist can significantly ease the process. A well-organized checklist ensures that you settle into your new place smoothly, and also helps you leave your old residence in good condition, maximizing the chance of getting your security deposit back and ensuring a hassle-free transition. Here's a checklist that you could use: <https://www.rochester.edu/reslife/non/resources.html>.



Living in Rochester

Living off-campus in Rochester offers an exciting opportunity to experience greater independence and engage with the local community. As you settle into your new neighborhood, It is important to familiarize yourself with your responsibilities as a citizen and neighbor, with the University's expectations of you as an off-campus student and with various local laws and resources that will assist you in living off campus.

Being a Good Neighbor

Living in close proximity to others requires respect and consideration. A good neighbor shows respect for his or her property, for the neighbor- hood, and for those living nearby. Working together as neighbors will improve the quality of life for all. Here's how to be a stellar neighbor:



Being a Good Neighbor

Working together as neighbors will improve the quality of life for all.

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Noise Control:

- Noise should not be audible beyond your property/rental line between 10 p.m. and 8 a.m., in accordance with the City's Noise Ordinance.

Property Maintenance:

- Clean up around your property regularly.
- Know your trash pick-up days.
- Garbage bins should not be out earlier than the evening before pick-up day and must be returned within 24 hours after pick-up.

Neighbor Relations:

- Familiarize yourself with the names and phone numbers of your immediate neighbors.
- Get involved in at least one neighborhood activity to foster community ties. Don't hesitate to socialize and invite neighbors to your events.
- Learn from and value the diversity in your community. Every member contributes to the neighborhood's well-being.
- Resolve disputes with neighbors through civilized conversation before considering calling the police.



Community Standards:

- Do not tolerate or participate in drug sales, sales of stolen merchandise, or any criminal activity.
- Park only on the street or driveway, not on the lawn. When parking along a curb, ensure there is at least a five-foot space for residents to access their driveways.
- Keep pets quiet and dispose of animal feces from sidewalks, yards, parks, and lawns responsibly.

Hosting Responsible Parties

Hosting a great party is fun, but it's essential to keep your neighbors happy and avoid unwanted attention from law enforcement. Here's how to throw a memorable party while being considerate of your community:

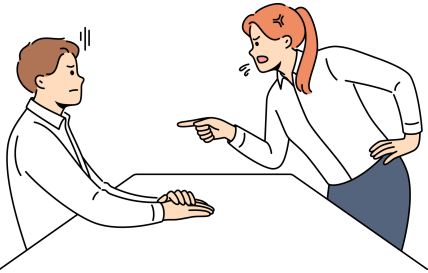


- **Notify Neighbors:** Inform neighbors about your party plans and provide a contact number for issues.
- **Control Party Size:** Limit party size to avoid overcrowding, especially in residential areas.
- **Know Your Guests:** Invite only trusted individuals to ensure safety.
- **Choose Party Times Wisely:** Avoid weeknight parties, particularly Thursdays and Sundays.
- **Respect Noise Limits:** Comply with local noise ordinances (10 p.m. - 8 a.m. quiet hours).
- **Keep the Party Indoors:** Contain noise by keeping the party inside with windows and doors closed.
- **Responsible Alcohol Service:** Avoid serving underage guests and provide non-alcoholic options.
- **Discourage Drinking Games:** Prevent excessive noise and dangerous behavior.
- **Ensure Safe Transportation:** Arrange designated drivers and ensure guests have safe transport options.
- **Cooperate with Authorities:** Respectfully cooperate with law enforcement if they investigate complaints.



Consequences of Common Violations

When living off-campus, one must also understand the potential legal implications of misconduct, especially during parties and gatherings. Here are the consequences for some common violations:



- **Public Urination:** Considered as "exposure of a person," this violation can lead to up to 15 days in jail, particularly for multiple offenses.
- **Public Intoxication:** Typically falls under "disorderly conduct" and may result in arrest or evaluation under the Mental Hygiene Law if necessary.
- **Disorderly Conduct:** Punishable similarly to public urination, potentially resulting in jail time.
- **Driving While Intoxicated (DWI):** Classified as a misdemeanor for the first offense, with potential consequences including jail time, loss of license, probation, and fines. Subsequent offenses escalate to felony charges, especially if injuries are involved.
- **Serving Alcohol to Minors:** A misdemeanor offense, punishable by up to one year in jail, for serving alcohol to individuals aged 16 to 20, as the legal drinking age in New York is 21.
- **Possession of Marijuana:** Initially considered a violation, but penalties can escalate, including up to 15 days in jail depending on the amount possessed.
- **Violation of Noise Ordinance:** Initial penalty starts with a \$200 fine, doubling for each subsequent instance of violation.

Understanding and adhering to local laws and ordinances is essential for maintaining a safe and respectful living environment in the community. Be mindful of your actions and their potential consequences to avoid legal issues and ensure a positive living experience off-campus.

Crime Prevention & Personal Safety

Living in any neighborhood, urban or suburban, may pose occasional risks. And, it is important to take responsibility for personal safety through awareness and smart practices. By staying aware and following the listed safety measures, you can help protect yourself and your community from potential risks.

Be vigilant of your surroundings and people nearby. Avoid distractions like talking or texting while walking, or using loud music in earphones.

Project confidence by standing tall and walking purposefully. Criminals often target those who seem vulnerable or distracted. Make eye contact with others to signal awareness.

If something feels wrong, it probably is. **Pay attention to suspicious behavior** or individuals in your neighborhood and promptly report any concerns to 911.

Walk with a friend or in a group whenever possible. Criminals are less likely to approach groups.

Stick to **well-lit paths and sidewalks**, avoiding shortcuts in poorly lit areas.

Keep car doors and windows locked while driving. Be cautious of anyone approaching your vehicle, and leave space in traffic to drive away from potentially dangerous situations. **Lock items in the trunk** or out of sight in your car to prevent theft. Never leave valuables visible in your vehicle.

Use steering wheel locks or other anti-theft devices to reduce the risk of vehicle theft.



Discover Rochester

25 must-do activities while you are in the Rochester neighborhood



- **Attend Local Festivals:** Enjoy the Rochester International Jazz Festival in late June and explore other festivals like Park Ave., Corn Hill, Fringe, and Lilac.
- **Visit Memorial Art Gallery:** Use your student I.D. for free entry (extra for visiting exhibits).
- **Explore Eastman School of Music:** Attend free concerts at the renowned Eastman School of Music.
- **Tour the Finger Lakes:** Taste wines, explore small towns, and admire the natural beauty.
- **Erie Canal Locks Tour:** Cruise from Schoen Place and dine at Aladdin's Natural Eatery, then enjoy ice cream at Pittsford Farms Dairy.
- **Kayak Irondequoit Creek:** Paddle downstream from Ellison Park to Irondequoit Bay.
- **Visit Lighthouses:** Explore historic lighthouses along the Great Lakes Seaway Trail.
- **Visit Letchworth State Park:** Discover the "Grand Canyon of the East."
- **Adirondacks Camping:** Spend a weekend camping in the Adirondacks.
- **Corning Museum of Glass:** Visit the museum and, if you're a sports fan, add the Baseball Hall of Fame to your trip.
- **Sports Events:** Support local teams like the Rhinos (soccer), Red Wings (baseball), Amerks (hockey), Knighthawks (lacrosse), and the Buffalo Bills (football).
- **Hamlin Beach State Park:** Spend a day at the beach or reserve a pavilion for a cookout.
- **Food Truck Rodeos:** Indulge in diverse food options at summer Food Truck Rodeos.

Discover Rochester

25 must-do activities while you are in the Rochester neighborhood

- **Highland Park Stroll: Smell the lilacs during the Lilac Festival.**
- **Performing Arts Subscriptions:** Enjoy a season of shows at venues like the Auditorium Theatre, Kodak Hall, and Geva Theatre Center.
- **Cobbs Hill Park:** Watch a sunset or sunrise from the reservoir.
- **Historic Movie Theatres:** Watch films at The Little Theatre, Cinema Theater, or the Dryden Theatre.
- **Seneca Park Zoo:** Explore the zoo's 20 acres and over 90 species.
- **Dancing Wings Butterfly Garden:** Visit the National Museum of Play and its impressive collections.
- **Laser Shows:** Experience a laser show at the Strasenburgh Planetarium.
- **Niagara-on-the-Lake:** Enjoy a weekend in this picturesque town, distinct from Niagara Falls.
- **Sonnenberg Gardens:** Stroll through the Victorian estate and its nine formal gardens.
- **Outdoor Ice Skating:** Skate at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park, Highland Park, or Genesee Valley Park.
- **Bristol Mountain Skiing:** Ski on 35 slopes and trails, many lit at night, with state-of-the-art snowmaking.





Wishing you a safe, enjoyable, and productive off-campus living experience

Remember that being proactive, staying informed, and maintaining open communication with your roommates, neighbors, and landlords are essential components of a successful off-campus living experience.

Embrace the opportunities that come with off-campus living and make the most of your time in Rochester.