

Finding Roommates

Beginner's Guide to Off Campus Housing

- Georgetown University

To begin with, make sure you are looking with the right people. Best friends are not always best roommates. Your group should sit down and discuss your potential living situation even before you begin looking.

✓ Discuss the basics first:

Size of accommodation

Location of accommodation

Total rent that can be handled both individually and by the group

Question of a furnished or unfurnished accommodation.

It is particularly important that prospective roommates have a frank and open discussion of what they feel is important in a living situation and make plans to insure that certain problems are avoided. Once you find that apartment create a written roommate agreement.

✓ Questions that should normally be discussed include:

- Will food be purchased and/or cooked collectively or singly?
- How will general housekeeping responsibilities be shared or assigned including the cleaning of the kitchen and cleaning of its appliances, the bathroom, removing garbage, etc?
- What about the buying, use, and eventual dispersing of any household items or furniture?
- What about the payment of rent and utilities?
- What about the sharing or assigning for property damage?
- What about the individual privacy needs and respect for the belongings of others within the group?
- What about guest and entertaining policies, particularly large parties and overnight visitors?
- Discuss smokers versus non-smokers.
- If, as is most common, you are all signing a joint lease (2 or more tenants sharing the same tenancy), be aware that one, all or any number of the tenants named can be held jointly or individually responsible to the owner for rent, damage beyond normal wear and tear, and other violations of the lease.