

# Washington State University

## Off-Campus Living Guide

2020 - 2021



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# What is Cougar Choice Housing?

Dear Students,

This guide was created as a tool to help you understand your rights and legal obligations as a renter. It provides practical information and resources to help you have a safe, positive off-campus living experience and avoid common, and sometimes costly, mistakes. However, nothing within this guide should be taken as legal advice. Read carefully, seek advice, and keep good records.

Cougar Choice Housing is a student run organization affiliated with the Associated Students of Washington State University (ASWSU) dedicated to helping students find safe and affordable off-campus housing. We believe in keeping Cougs at the epicenter of decision making for their future living arrangements through educational programs and community resources, ensuring students rent in safe, reliable spaces for student living.

In addition to this guide Cougar Choice Housing puts on a fall and spring housing fair each year. These events are an excellent opportunity for students to interact with local property managers on-campus and find a place to live. Please check our website [offcampusliving.wsu.edu](http://offcampusliving.wsu.edu) for more details or follow us on social media. Several educational programs are also featured in the fall to help educate students on how to safely and affordably move off-campus.

Cougar Choice Housing has partnered with College Pads to provide students with a university affiliated online platform to search for housing, roommates, and sublets. This platform can be found by searching [offcampusliving.wsu.edu](http://offcampusliving.wsu.edu). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office and we would be happy to help you navigate the off campus living process.

## Contact Information

### **Cougar Choice Housing**

Compton Union Building Room 305-A,  
PO Box 647204  
Pullman, WA 99164-7204

Phone #: (509)-335-5890

Email: [housing.aswsu@wsu.edu](mailto:housing.aswsu@wsu.edu)

Instagram: [cougarchoicehousing](#)

Twitter: [CougarChoice](#)

Facebook: [Cougar Choice Housing](#)

# ASWSU Student Legal Services

Cougar Choice Housing has partnered with ASWSU Student Legal Services (SLS) to provide students to service the legal needs of current students at Washington State University. SLS offers free 30-minute legal consultations with a licensed attorney, Wynn Mossman, to students who have a valid student ID as well as to WSU students on branch or the global campuses.

## Contact Information

### Office Hours:

Monday – Friday  
9:00 am – 5:00 pm  
CUB 305

Phone #: (509) 335-9539

Fax line: (509)-335-2493

Email: [sls@wsu.edu](mailto:sls@wsu.edu)

Facebook: [aswsustudentlegalservices](https://www.facebook.com/aswsustudentlegalservices)



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ASWSU  
**STUDENT LEGAL SERVICES**

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# The 6 R's of Renting

Provided by the Whitman County Landlord Tenant Association

## Roommates

### **Will you move off-campus, stay in the dorms, or move to a Greek house?**

- Must be 18 to sign a lease
- Consider price and convenience
- Apartment – variable cost, cook your own food, more responsibility, more freedom
- Dorms – consistent cost, food on campus, no need to leave campus, less freedom

### **Who will you live with?**

- How will you determine if someone is compatible and will make a good roommate?
- List of questions to ask potential roommate
- Parties, dirty dishes, bathrooms, cleanliness, drug and alcohol use, smoking
- Visit [offcampusliving.wsu.edu](http://offcampusliving.wsu.edu) to find roommates!

### **How many roommates do you want?**

- Sharing costs vs. on your own
- Will you rent a house or apartment?

### **Find out the budget of the group members**

- Other costs besides rent
- Determine your price range

### **What features are required vs. optional for roommates?**

- What features would be nice to have?
- Define your priorities – be realistic

### **Pets?**

- Do roommates feel strongly about having pets?
- Will pets limit your housing options?
- Pet fee(s)/deposits
- Don't sneak pets in! (fines)

### **Suggestions**

- Roommate agreements – payments

## Research

### **Ask around**

- Which companies should you work with or some you should not?

### **Drive around**

- Signs may indicate which companies manage which properties
- Get a feel for the areas you would like to live in

### **When should you start looking for a place?**

- Some property managers start leasing as early as January
- Call and ask about leasing dates

### **Where to look**

- [Offcampusliving.wsu.edu](http://Offcampusliving.wsu.edu)
- Whitman County Landlord & Tenant Association
- WSU Housing Fair (Fall & Spring)

### **Track information about interesting places**

- Agency name/manager and contact information
- Property address, features, rent cost
- Deposit amounts
- When is it available
- What is included in rent and what is not – electric, internet, trash, water, etc.

### **What is the application process?**

- Application fees
- Agencies may have different processes
- What determines if you get a rental unit?
- Cosigner(s) required?

### **Gather information before you start**

- Driver's License, Social Security Number, Student ID #, car license, bank account number

# The 6 R's of Renting

Provided by the Whitman County Landlord Tenant Association

## Review

### Review and make viewing appointments

- Managers may need time to make appointments
- Complexes may have showrooms, but try and see the unit you will be renting
- Do not knock on occupied units!

### Review your information

- Does the unit meet your needs?
- Does it fit into your budget?
- Will it be upgraded before the changeover? Ask
- Check the bus schedule and evaluate transportation options
- Ensure all roommates inspect unit and are happy with room choices

## Renting

### Read the entire lease and all attachments before signing!

- For your protection, only sign a written lease
  - If only an electronic lease is available request a printed copy!
- Is the lease a joint & several liability or is each roommate signing their own lease?
  - Don't know? Ask before you sign!
- Do not sign a lease if things seem wrong or suspicious
- Free lease review provided by ASWSU Student Legal Services (sls.wsu.edu)

### Provisions that should be included in every lease

- Beginning and ending dates
- Rent amount and due date(s)
- Late fee(s) if any, and other fees
- Deposit amounts, what is covered, is it refundable?

### Extras

- Leases of more than one year need a notary public to witness the signing and get a copy of the signed lease

## Relocating

### Consider when your current lease ends and new move in date

- Do you require storage? Ask landlords about storage
- Would you prefer to move in early? Ask
- Ask property manager about adjusting unit – paint, windows, doors, etc.

### Move in

- Use a check-in sheet to document condition of unit as you move in. Sign/date it and get a copy
- Take pictures of the condition before you move in
- Get renters insurance for belongings
  - Property managers only insure buildings
- Report needed repairs – Immediately!

\*If property manager is collecting a deposit a copy of the condition of the unit is required to be provided at lease signing!

## Realities of Being a Renter

- Pay your rent on time to avoid late fees
- Respect the property and return it in the same condition as you received it
- Behave like an adult
- Determine responsibilities among renters
- Take out your trash and recycle!
- Take responsibility for your guests
- Park only where permitted
- Don't let your roommates ruin your rental record
- Use available resources for problems.



# Important Contacts

## General Information and Links

- [Landlord Tenant Act of Washington State](#)
- Washington State Attorney General Info Line: 1-800-551-4636
- [The City of Pullman:](#)
  - See a listing of:
    - Information on Rental Housing protections
    - City of Pullman Safe, Healthy Housing Checklist
    - Buildings that do not meet basic standards contact:
      - Building Inspector: (509) 338-3220
      - Fire Chief: (509) 338-3271

## Experiencing any of these? Here's who to contact:

- Blowing garbage, unsightly weeds, gravel on the sidewalk, overhanging vegetation, un-shoveled snow – (509) 338-3300
- Discrimination – NW Fair Housing Alliance: (509) 325-2665
- Noise from your neighbor, cars blocking driveway, animal control: 509-332-2521
- Plumbing or mechanical safety issue – City of Pullman: (509) 334-4555
- Zoning code violations – (509) 338-3213

## Other Contacts:

- Power company – [Avista](#) : 1-877-576-9282
- Garbage Collection – [Pullman Disposal](#) : (509) 334-1914
- Internet/Cable TV – [Spectrum](#) : (866) 874-2389
- Internet/Cable TV – [Frontier](#) : 1-844-275-309
- Hardware supplies – [Pullman Building Supply](#) : (509) 332-2627
- Public Transportation – [Pullman Transit](#) : (509) 332-6535

## WSU Campus Resources:

- [Cougar Health Services](#) – (509) 335-3575 or 24 hr. line: (509) 335-6223
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) – (509) 335-4511 Crisis Line: (509) 335-2159
- [WSU Office of the Dean of Students](#) – (509) 335-5757
- [Academic Success and Career Center](#) – (509) 335-6000
- [Associated Students of Washington State University \(ASWSU\)](#) – (509) 335-9591

# Average Off-Campus Living Costs

## Average Pullman Rent (per bedroom):

- 1 Bedroom- \$600+
- 2 Bedroom- \$585
- 3 Bedroom- \$425
- 4 Bedroom- \$335

## WSU Parking Pass Rates Annually:

Closest to center of campus- \$685.00

Near center of campus- \$525.00

Distant from center of campus- \$325.00

Far from center of campus- \$200.00

## Average Deposit for Rental Unit:

- Approximately equal to ½ of one month's rent
- \$500-\$600 – Varies with each property

## Avista Rates (by bedroom)

- 1 Bedroom- \$70
- 2 Bedroom- \$85
- 3 Bedroom- \$100
- 4 Bedroom- \$130

\*Keep in mind cold winters and hot summers can impact these numbers greatly!

## Utilities

- Internet- \$50 per month
- Cable- \$50 per month



\*all prices are estimates and subject to change at any time



# ASWSU Cougar Choice Housing

## Lease Signing Checklist

Before signing a lease, it is important to remember that a lease is a legally binding agreement. You should read and review all the conditions of the lease and discuss any changes with your property manager before signing your lease. ASWSU Student Legal Services offers free consultations to review your lease. Visit their website [sls.wsu.edu](http://sls.wsu.edu) to learn more.



### Rent

- Amount
- Due Date
- Late Fees
- Changes in rent

### Damages/Repairs

- Responsibility for Damages
- Assessment of Damages
- Who makes repairs
- Who submits work orders

### Security Deposit

- Amount
- Conditions for return
- Date for return

### Restrictions

- Smoking
- Noise
- Storage on property
- Pets (w/ additional fee?)
- Alterations (painting, picture hanging)

### Termination/Subletting

- Ability to sublet
- Conditions for sublet
- Conditions for terminating lease

### Additional Costs

- Utilities (i.e. gas, electric)
- Water/Sewer/Garbage
- Overnight/Weekend Guests
- Guest Parking
- Furnishing
- Yard/Lawn Care
- Snow Removal
- Laundry
- Cleaning

### Parking

- Fees
- Permits
- Location: On/Off Street
- Covered Parking

### Occupancy

- Dates
- Requirements for Renewal
- Number of occupancy

# Moving In

Upon receiving the keys to your unit it is important to conduct a move in inspection and document all current damage to ensure you are not held responsible for any damage not caused by you upon move out. It is recommended that you take pictures of any and all damage and ensure your landlord has a copy of these.

1. Conduct a move in walkthrough.
  - a. Step 1: turn on all faucets and showerheads to make sure the hot and cold water works
  - b. Step 2: make sure there is a smoke detector on each floor and one near the sleeping area
  - c. Step 3: Make sure that all exterior windows and doors lock and are properly sealed
  - d. Step 4: Check the thermostat to ensure heating and air-conditioning work properly
  - e. Step 5: Check to make sure all appliances are in working condition
  - f. Step 6: Make sure there is enough outdoor lighting for your safety
2. While Cougar Choice Properties are inspected for safety we always recommend inspecting the unit yourself. The same criteria we use to inspect properties can be found on our website under Resources.

It is important to make sure that all appliances including AC/Heat work so that when winter comes everything is in working order.