**Helpful Resources:**

**Tips and Questions**

As you look for rental housing, please ask the following questions of prospective landlords or property managers. Learn as much as you can about a place before you submit a rental application or sign a lease.

Don't forget to get receipts for money paid. And also, remember keep a copy of all correspondence between you and your landlord/property manager.

**1. Rent**

* How much is monthly rent?
* How many of us may rent and live at this rental address?
* May I rent from you for a twelve-month, nine-month, or lesser time period?
* Where and when must the rent be paid? If rent is paid after that date, do you charge a late fee? How much is it?
* If one month's rent is late, does the lease contain an acceleration clause that causes all remaining rent to become due and payable?
* May each roommate pay his/her portion of the rent with separate checks?
* If my roommate leaves during the lease, who's responsible for paying that share of the rent?

**2. What do I pay for?**

* heat? (electric, gas, or oil)
* water/sewer?
* hot water?
* parking? (What about guest parking?)
* air conditioning?
* garbage collection?
* repairs of any kind? If so, why?
* pets? (Are pets allowed at all?)
* cable TV?

**3. Lease Applications**

* Must prospective tenants submit an application for a lease?
* Is a fee required with my application? If so, what happens to that money?
* Does the act of submitting an application commit me and/or my parents to sign a lease?
* What are my obligations if my application is accepted?
* Can you give me a copy of the lease at this time?

**4. Security Deposits**

* How much is the security deposit? When must it be paid? When is it returned, or may it be used as my last month's rent?
* Do I receive interest on the deposit?
* What must I do to have my security deposit returned in full?
* Which bank will hold my security deposit?

**5. Lease Obligations**

* Who is the landlord and/or the landlord's property manager?
* What are their addresses?
* Will the lease be written or oral?
* What rules and regulations must I follow upon signing the lease?
* How much notice is needed to renew or terminate the lease?

**6. Lease Guarantee**

* Will my rent payments have to be guaranteed? If so, why and by whom?

**7. Escalator Clause**

* Does the lease contain escalator clauses that could cause my rent to increase during the lease period? For example, are energy-cost increases passes on to the tenant?
* In previous years, were such assessments made; and if so, by what amount did they exceed the base rental figure?

**8. Subletting**

* May I sublet or assign my lease?
* May I find someone who is willing to make a new lease and end my responsibility?
* Must you approve my sub lessee or assignee?
* Will you assist me in finding a sub lessee or someone willing to assume a new lease?
* Are fees charged for these options?

**9. Lease Termination**

* Is notice required to terminate or renew the lease, or will it automatically renew for another year? When must notice be given and in what form?
* If the lease automatically terminates, will I have the first right to renew it?
* Is it possible to terminate the lease before the stated date? What fee, if any, is charged for early termination? How much notice is required for early termination? In what form?

**10. Facilities**

* Is the apartment furnished or unfurnished?
* Are a stove and refrigerator provided?
* Are drapes and curtains provided?
* Are there screens on the doors? Windows? Sliding glass door?
* Is there a fire extinguisher in the apartment? Are there smoke alarms? How often are they checked or tested?
* Has the apartment been insulated or weather-stripped for more energy efficiency? What are the average heating/cooling bills?
* Is a laundry available on the premises? If no, where is the closest laundromat?
* Is a storage area outside of the apartment provided? how is access to the area obtained? Is a fee charged?
* Is indoor or outdoor bicycle storage provided? Does a bicycle have to be registered? If so, with whom?

**11. Parking**

* How many parking spaces are provided per apartment? How do I get a parking space? Is a fee charged?
* If I pay for parking, is it assigned? What if someone parks in my space or the lot is full?
* Can my guests park in the lot? Is there a designated guest parking area?

**12. Neighborhood Services**

* Is a super market within walking distance? Is a corner grocery store within walking distance?
* How accessible is public transportation? Do you provide a bus pass for public transportation?
* If public transportation is unavailable, does the apartment supply bus service?
* What are the hours of bus service to and from town/campus/shopping?

**13. Neighbors**

* Who are the other tenants in the building/apartment complex? Will we be compatible?
* Are building quiet hours imposed? How are they enforced?

**14. Repairs (paid by the landlord)**

* How do I notify you of emergency repairs during the work day, on weekends, and after office hours?
* Do you have an on-site maintenance staff to handle normal repair requests?
* How soon after my request will repairs be made?
* If I want something special done, may I request that you do it if I am willing to pay for it (e.g., paint my apartment a color other than standard white)?

**15. Right of Entry**

* How much advance notice will I receive before your staff comes to make repairs or conduct an inspection?
* Do I have to let someone in if doing so is inconvenient?
* If I am not renewing my lease, will I have to allow people in to see my apartment? How about if I am renewing?

**16. Security**

* Do you change the locks at no charge between tenants moving out and moving in of tenants? Is there a charge for keys?
* Do you have a dead-bolt lock or other secure locking device that operates only from inside the apartment on all doors?
* Do you have a mechanical locking device operated only from inside the apartment, other than those manufactured as part of the window        or door, on all windows and sliding glass doors?
* If I wish to install a dead-bolt lock or other locking device, may I do it? Will there be a charge?
* Do you have a peephole or viewer in solid doors that enables the tenant to see who is at the door before opening it?
* If I lose my key and want either another key or the lock changed, is there a charge? If so, how much?

**17. Moving In**

* What is the earliest date I may move in?
* May I move in earlier if the present tenant leaves early? Do I need the tenant's written permission to do so? Is there a fee for moving in early? If so, do I pay you or the tenant?
* If my apartment is not ready, clean, or in good repair, who is responsible? When will the repairs or cleaning be done?

**18. Damage Report**

* Will someone help me complete the damage report when I move in or out?
* How much time is allowed to report damage that was not initially apparent (e.g., a broken refrigerator-shelf support that won't stay up when groceries are put on it)?

**19. Visitors**

* Does the lease contradict a tenant's legal right to have visitors for a "reasonable time"? Does it attempt to define "reasonable time"?

**20. Renter's Insurance**

* Do I need to purchase it or do you provide it?