

# Housing

**This form will help you consider how you can live harmoniously in Christian community.**

*“How inexhaustible are the riches that open up for those who by God’s will are privileged to live in the daily fellowship of life with other Christians!”*

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together*

## Finding a Group

Start with your Core Group! If you’re a first year, there’s a good chance that most of your Core Group is also looking for a place to live next year. Your time spent with them each week should give you a great idea as to your personalities, and by the time you move in together, you’ll already have a year of life together under your belts! Christian community is a beautiful thing, and “doing life together” can be one of the most rewarding and fun parts of your years as a student!

It helps to share a common vision, purpose, and set of goals for your house. You will already have many of these things in common if you decide to live with people who are also pursuing the Lord through XA! Business person and motivational speaker Jim Rohn once observed that people begin to look very much like the average of the 5 people they spend the most time with. This means that when considering future housing, we need to ask: “Who do I want my faith, my habits, and my desires to resemble?”

## Finding Housing at UVA

Gather your group in September and October, consider your location, and begin to finalize plans. If you intend to live off-Grounds, it is wise to have a lease signed by mid-October or November. If you intend to live on-Grounds, you have until December.

- **On-Grounds Housing:** On-Grounds housing is fully furnished, and includes basic utilities and maintenance. Many On-Grounds options are convenient for getting to class, and will also involve a 9-month lease. Consider Lambeth or Bice for proximity to class.
- **Off-Grounds Housing:** Off-Grounds housing may require setting up utilities, but will allow for more independence. Renting a house with multiple people may be less expensive than living On-Grounds, but will often involve a 12-month lease.

If your group decides to search Off-Grounds, begin by talking with your Core Group Leader. They may know of houses that are looking to pass down their lease. You can also search using real-estate apps like Realtor.com and Zillow, or just walk around areas you’d like to live and look for rental signs!

## Discussion Topics

So now you’ve got your crew, you’ve got a place picked out, and are ready to sign the lease/contract! The following list contains topics you should consider discussing before everyone signs the lease.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul says we must adhere to the “brother/sister with the weakest conscience.” In other words, we love by making decisions considering the person who has the greatest struggle. When thinking through and discussing these questions, consider how each person would feel safest in their personal space and strengthened their walk with God. How can you best honor your brother or sister?

### 1. Finances

- a. Who will be responsible for paying rent, utilities, electricity, internet/cable?
- b. How will the house share costs?
- c. Consider making a separate house account, using Splitwise, or having one

person collect money for rent.

2. **Community Space**
  - a. Will the house be a place that hosts parties and large groups?
  - b. How will the house be made aware of guests?
  - c. How far in advance should the house be asked about overnight guests?
  - d. Will we lock the doors? When will we lock the doors? (Just at night? All day?)
3. **Shared items**
  - a. What will be shared among the house? (Think through food, laundry, kitchen tools/appliances, etc.)
  - b. What will not be shared?
  - c. What will be shared with permission?
  - d. If food is shared, will there be a designated shelf or area?
4. **Rooms**
  - a. Who will share any doubles or triples?
  - b. Will rent be different for doubles or triples?
  - c. How will you pick rooms? (seniority, choosing straws, etc.)
5. **Alcohol**
  - a. Will our house be "dry" indefinitely?
  - b. What will we do when some are over 21 and others are underage?
  - c. If there is alcohol in the house, where will it be stored?
6. **Opposite Gender**
  - a. Will there be specific hours when people of the opposite gender can be over?
  - b. Are there certain spaces where people of the opposite gender will not be allowed to hang out?
  - c. What house will people of the opposite gender stay in if they come to visit?
7. **Cleaning**
  - a. What will the cleaning include? (Laundry, dishes, trash, vacuuming/sweeping, etc.)
  - b. How often will chores be done?
  - c. How will we determine who/how we do these chores? (Chore chart, etc.)
  - d. How will everyone be held accountable for doing their chores?
8. **Vision for Community**
  - a. Will we host Core Groups in our house?
  - b. Will we establish a weekly time to connect as a house - house prayer or dinner?
  - c. How will these times be structured?
  - d. When will these times be?
9. **Settling disagreements**
  - a. Do we want to draw up an agreement or contract?
  - b. In case of disagreement, how will the house handle it?
  - c. In case one of these expectations are violated, how will the house handle it?

### A parting thought...

As with all things in college, you will get out of Christian Community precisely how much you put into it. The house or apartment you live in can be exactly that: a place that you sleep and store your stuff, that other people also happen to live in. However, if you have a house full of brothers or sisters in Christ who are committed to each other, the common values of the Christian faith, and the vision for all that the community can be, you are likely to walk away with lifelong friends and incredible memories at the end of your time together.