A PARENT AND FAMILY GUIDE TO

Off-Campus Living

Office of Off-Campus and Commuter Services
Syracuse University
Dear Parents and Family,

Off-Campus and Commuter Services, a department within the division of Student Affairs at Syracuse University, welcomes you and your student to the off-campus neighborhoods. Living off campus can be a fun and exciting experience for your student during his or her time at Syracuse University. This guide was developed to be a resource to familiarize parents and family members with the process of renting an apartment and what your student can expect while living off campus. While some of this information may seem simple or familiar to you, it is important to remember that this is most likely the first time your student has seen a lease, paid rent, or shared household responsibilities. As your student becomes a resident of the Syracuse community, we encourage you to talk with her or him about their rights and responsibilities as a renter and to learn about the numerous resources available to them.

The Office of Off-Campus and Commuter Services (OCCS) is committed to offering information, resources, education, and programs that promote skill development, student independence, and civic engagement to all SU students. In addition, OCCS provides all students living off campus or commuting to campus from home with support, information, and resource referrals throughout their off-campus housing experience.

Students are encouraged to visit OCCS to learn about the network of educational and community services available to them. The office provides students with information on finding suitable housing; exercising their rights and upholding their responsibilities as tenants and as members of the community; and identifying resources that can assist with other off-campus housing questions. OCCS is available for in-person assistance at 754 Ostrom Ave., via phone at 315-443-5489, online at offcampus.syr.edu, and via e-mail at offcampus@syr.edu.

This is only a guide and is not meant to offer legal advice or to replace the services of an attorney.

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Beginning the Search

For students, the appeal of living on their own is enhanced by the opportunities it presents for more privacy and more personal space, as well as a greater sense of freedom. However, it is important for them to identify and understand the responsibilities of living off campus.

When your student starts thinking about finding an apartment off campus, it’s easy to get overwhelmed and feel anxious about the process. We have broken down the search in the following steps to help make the process more manageable and fun.

1. Determining your budget
2. Upfront costs
3. Choosing your roommate
4. Choosing your apartment
5. How safe and accessible will your new apartment be?
6. Signing the lease
7. Setting up utilities and renters insurance
8. What resources are there on campus to help you?
9. What resources off campus are there to help you?

Determining the Budget

In helping your student determine a budget, a good place to start is to look at what it costs to live on campus for the entire school year. Before looking for a new place to live, it will be important for you to sit down with your student and talk about what a realistic budget is and how much you as a family are comfortable paying.

DO THE MATH

Since most leases are based on the calendar year rather than the academic year, figuring out off-campus living expenses is broken down in the following way:

\[
\text{Current room and board} \div 12 = \text{Monthly goal for off-campus living expenses}
\]
Sample monthly budget for your off-campus living expenses

Rent ..................... $500-$750
Utilities .................. $50-$150
Food ...................... $200

Total Cost ............... $750-$1,100

Money Saving Tips and Advice

RENT
When looking for an apartment, be sure to ask what utilities are included—heat, hot water, electricity.

Factors that determine the amount of rent that is paid include the following:
• In general, the closer the unit is to campus, the more expensive it will be.
• In general, the larger the unit, the more expensive it will be.
• In general, furnished units are more expensive than unfurnished apartments.
• In general, the more utilities included in the rent, the more expensive the rent will be.

ANTICIPATED MONTHLY EXPENSES

Splitting Bills
When your student moves to an apartment, he or she will share bills for heat, hot water, electricity, cable and Internet. Each bill will need to be in just one person’s name. If they have roommates, they should split utility bills among all house members. This way, one person is not responsible for all the bills.

Winter Heating
If heat is not included in the rent, ask the landlord for an estimate of expected heating costs, including a summary of the past two years’ heating bills. The landlord must provide this information to prospective tenants upon written request. Also consider signing up for a budget payment plan through National Grid. It will spread the bills out evenly for the entire year so your student isn’t stuck with large bills during the winter months.

Cleaning Supplies
Students should keep in mind that when they move off campus they are responsible for keeping their apartment clean. Toilet paper, paper towels, dish soap, cleaning solutions, mops, brooms, and a vacuum cleaner are essential items they will need for their new apartment.

Food and Groceries
It’s important to budget enough money to maintain healthy eating habits off campus. Often times, this will be the first time your student will have to go grocery shopping for herself or himself. Planning and cooking meals and buying what’s on sale are skills they will have to learn. Another way for them to eat well on a budget is to purchase a 5-Meal a Week Plan so they have the option of eating some meals on campus. For more information, go to http://housingmealplans.syr.edu/mealplans.cfm.

Pets
One of the advantages of living off campus is that your student’s landlord may allow them to have a pet. Some things they should consider are the cost of food, veterinary bills, and care for their pet while they are away on break or a long weekend.

Transportation
Something to consider is if the apartment comes with off-street parking. Off-street parking is not always included in the monthly rent, so think about any additional cost. Students who don’t have a car should go to the Parking
and Transportation web site, http://parking.syr.edu, to find out what shuttles and buses are available to get around campus and the Syracuse community.

**Cable and Internet Service**

WiFi is available through cable providers. With services such as Netflix and Hulu Plus, a lot of students don’t find getting cable is necessary. Doing without cable can save $25 to $50 a month.

**Credit Cards**

Students should resist the urge to use a credit card to pay for living expenses. Credit cards aren’t free money, and typically come with high interest rates. If students apply for a credit card, be sure they fully understand credit terms and conditions.

**ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE (APR)** – The yearly interest charge applicable to outstanding credit

**ANNUAL FEE** – The once-a-year cost of owning a credit card. Some credit cards have no annual fee

**GRACE PERIOD** – The period before interest begins to accrue on new purchases

**MINIMUM PAYMENT** – The minimum dollar amount that must be paid each month, usually 2 or 3 percent of the amount owed
CREATING A MONTHLY BUDGET

It’s important for students to create a budget if they are going to live off campus. Working through a budget will help them identify and estimate the cost of living on their own.

Use the table below to determine total income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Sources</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family contribution</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Determine what the monthly expenses would be living off campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities <em>(heat, hot water, electricity)</em></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable/Internet</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell phone</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation <em>(car payment, gas, insurance, repairs)</em></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal/Miscellaneous <em>(clothing, health, laundry, cleaning)</em></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OTHER EXPENSES

Students also should give some thought to one-time or occasional expenses. It’s a good idea to set some money aside for unexpected expenses.

Web sites such as [http://www.mint.com](http://www.mint.com) and software through your bank can provide students with free online tools to keep their money and their budget on track.

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship Programs provides online tutorials and education about financial literacy.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship Programs
200 Archbold North
315-443-1513
finmail@syr.edu
[http://financialaid.syr.edu](http://financialaid.syr.edu)
UPFRONT COSTS

Another question you might be asking is, How much will my student have to pay to sign the lease on a new apartment? Students can expect to have to pay at least two months’ rent upfront to secure their apartment. Each landlord has different policies, and in some cases it’s possible to pay up to three months’ rent to move into their new apartment.

FIRST MONTH’S RENT – The rent for the first month of tenancy
LAST MONTH’S RENT – The rent for the last month of tenancy
SECURITY DEPOSIT – Money that protects landlords against damage beyond normal wear and tear. It provides a remedy for unpaid rent and pays for cleanup of the rental, if necessary.

CO-SIGNER/GUARANTOR

Students will often times be asked to have a co-signer or guarantor. This is someone who is willing to co-sign on the lease or guarantee that they are able to pay the rent if the student cannot. Typically this is a parent or guardian.

In the event that a student does not have someone to co-sign on his or her lease, it is not uncommon for the landlord to ask for the last month’s rent or an additional month’s rent for the security deposit.

Roommates

It’s important to remember, when living off campus, your student does not have Resident Advisors to mediate conflicts. Moving out of the apartment because they don’t get along with their roommate(s) is not always an option, since they may or may not be able to sublet their space. If they are going to be living with roommates, they should consider the following questions before moving in, to avoid conflict:

- Do you or your potential roommate smoke?
- Do you and your potential roommate have similar sleeping habits?
- How often does each of you go out on the weekends and during the week?
- Can you and your potential roommate handle each other’s lifestyle differences (e.g., use of alcohol, sexual orientation, etc.)?
- Do you or your potential roommate have a significant other? How often will they visit and stay overnight?
- Do either of you have or plan to have pets?

For a sample roommate agreement see the Off-Campus Roommate Guide.

If your student is looking for a roommate, Orange Housing (http://Orangehousing.com) maintains a listing of students who have apartments and are looking for roommates to fill a vacancy. Students can also create a listing if they don’t have a place to live yet, but are looking for roommates.
Living Alone

If your student is thinking of living alone, she or he should consider the following questions.

**How are your finances?** Having roommates can save you money on your living expenses. Living by yourself means that all the monthly utility bills are your responsibility.

**Do you like living alone?** If you are someone who needs time alone to relax and recharge, this is hard to do if you are living with three roommates.

**Do you like to share?** Whether you are best friends with your roommates or barely interact with each other, you will have to share intimate details about your life. You will need to be OK to share financial information and common living space with them.

**How private are you?** You will have to respect and compromise with roommates on issues such as overnight guests, visitors, and sleep habits.

**How do you deal with conflict?** Living alone means that you can avoid conflicts on issues such as bathroom time and sharing your food.

This information was adapted from [http://www.apartmentguide.com/blog/should-you-live-alone-or-with-a-roommate/](http://www.apartmentguide.com/blog/should-you-live-alone-or-with-a-roommate/).

Picking the Right Place to Live

Picking the right place to live can be overwhelming. If students asked their friends why they chose their apartment, they would probably tell them it was in a good location or it fit their budget.

**CHOOSING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD**

When choosing the right neighborhood, students should ask themselves these questions:

- Is there a grocery store nearby?
- What is the neighborhood like during the day? How about at night?
- Can I walk to campus? If not, is the neighborhood in the Centro bus free-fare zone? Is it on the Connective Corridor route?
- What are the on-street parking rules?
- Are there signs of graffiti and vandalism?
- How well lit is the area at night?
- Are there any vacant houses?
- Are there people walking in the neighborhood?
- What are the age levels of people in the neighborhood?

If a neighborhood has no graffiti and is well lit, that usually indicates that the people in the neighborhood take pride in where they live. Living in an area where there are no vacant buildings and a broad mix of people means that people are home at all hours of the day.
When looking at a prospective apartment, it is easy to be distracted by factors like the proximity to campus or the cost of living there. It is important to think about matters like door security, key access, walkway and stair lighting, and building access.

When you are viewing the rental, make sure to check for the following concerns:

1. Check any exterior doors for sturdiness and properly working locks.
2. Ask the landlord who has keys and insist that the locks on the door be changed before you move in.
3. Check that the windows are in good condition with working locks.
4. Make sure there is ample exterior and interior lighting.
5. Check for working smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.
6. Look to see that there are adequate emergency escape routes.
7. Ask who is responsible for snow and trash removal.
8. Make sure that the shower has adequate water pressure.
9. Ask if the apartment comes furnished and what is done to prevent bedbugs.
10. What is the charge for off-street parking?
11. What is the landlord’s policy on subletting? Are students allowed to sublet?
The Department of Public Safety encourages students looking for off-campus housing to consider the following:

**Survey the residence for the following security features:**

- Does the apartment have metal or solid core wooden entry-exit doors? Are these doors equipped with deadbolts? Are the locks mounted securely? Have the door locks been changed since the last tenant moved out?
- Can visitors be observed without opening the apartment door, either through a door peephole or window?
- Does any outside vegetation block doors or windows from public view? Does the vegetation provide places of concealment at entrances at, or along, walkways?
- Is there adequate lighting at the building entrance and along walkways? Are the outer doors kept locked at all times?

**Research the Rental and the Landlord**

Before your student signs a lease, she or he should find out firsthand information about the rental unit and the landlord to make sure their needs will be met and to ensure a successful rental experience.

- Does the rental meet minimum housing and property maintenance code?
- Call the City of Syracuse Division of Code Enforcement at 315-448-8695 to find out if there are any outstanding violations. That office can let you know if the property has a Certificate of Suitability stating it can be rented.
- Talk with current tenants about the location, apartment condition, and their relationship/experience with the landlord.
- Consult with the Landlord Information Sharing Program that is hosted by the Office of Off-Campus and Commuter Services and available for viewing at the OCCS office at 754 Ostrom Ave. The program provides students with a method for communicating with each other from year to year about their rental housing challenges.

**Signing the Lease**

- Once your student decides on a rental that meets their needs, he or she will need to sign a lease and pay a security deposit.
- Before signing the lease, you should look over the lease; you may be required to sign the lease as a co-signer or guarantor.
- Contact Student Legal Services to arrange for an attorney to review the lease free of charge. The office is located at 760 Ostrom Ave.; or call 315-443-4532. The lawyers will answer any questions that you have and will give you information on protecting the security deposit.
- Become familiar with common lease terms and understand all responsibilities outlined in the lease.
- Review our lease checklist, available at [http://offcampus.syr.edu](http://offcampus.syr.edu), to make sure all your questions have been answered.
- Make a copy of the signed lease and security deposit and save it with all other rental information in a rental file.
IMPORTANT THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN A LEASE

Standard clauses in a lease include the following:

• Names and addresses of all parties involved, including the local property manager
• The amount of rent, when it is due, and whether there are late fees
• The beginning and ending dates of the lease, and the amount of the security deposit
• Who is responsible for paying utilities (e.g., heat, hot water, electric, gas, phone, Internet, and cable)
• Whether pets are allowed
• Who is responsible for repairs and maintenance (Sometimes fixing luxury items like dishwashers is not the responsibility of the landlord.)
• Who is responsible for disposing of trash, cutting grass, and shoveling snow
• Limits on number of persons allowed in the rental unit
• What is sublease policy
• Do not overcrowd a unit or occupy an illegal unit just to lower the rent.

COMMON LEASE TERMS

Action: A legal proceeding by which one demands or enforces one’s rights in court
Assignment: The transfer of rights or property from one person to another
Breach: A violation of one or more provisions of a lease or contract
Caveat Emptor: A concept meaning “buyer beware;” summarizes the rule that when renting or buying housing, one must examine and test the condition of the premises for himself or herself
Civil: A noncriminal legal matter; housing disputes are typically handled in civil courts
Damages: Usually a sum of money awarded to a landlord or a tenant as compensation for a financial loss caused by the other party
Default: Failure to fulfill a legal obligation, particularly payment of rent
Eviction: Dispossession by process of law; turning a tenant out of possession
Fixtures: Property that is attached or annexed to a structure, such as sinks and light sockets
Housing Codes: Regulations written by a state, county, or local government that establish certain minimum standards of habitability for residential property
Judgment: A decision or opinion of the court, usually awarding money damages
Landlord: One who owns and leases real estate
Lease: A contract by which one conveys the right to possession of real estate to another for a designated length of time, and usually for a specified monetary rent
Lessee: A tenant under a lease
Lessor: One who grants a lease (landlord or his agent)

Liability: The state of being legally responsible

Notice: An oral or written forewarning of a legal event

Parties: Persons involved in a legal contract; the lessor and a lessee under a lease

Premises: The property conveyed in a lease; a building, a house, an apartment, a dwelling unit, etc.

Property: That to which a person has a legal title; real estate that one has the legal right to possess, use, and enjoy

Quit: To leave or vacate

Retaliatory Eviction: An attempt by a landlord to evict a tenant in retaliation for the tenant’s complaint of a housing code violation to the appropriate enforcement agency

Security Deposit: Money deposited by a tenant with the landlord as security for full and faithful performance by the tenant of the terms of the lease

Sublease: A lease by a tenant to a third party, usually conveying the leased property for a shorter term than the tenant’s term. The original tenant remains completely liable to the landlord for rent

Tenancy: A holding of real property; also, the period of a tenant’s occupancy or possession of premises

Tenant: One who holds or possesses premises under a lease

Term: The period of time for which a lease is granted

Utilities: Usually heat, hot water and cold running water, and electricity supplied to a premise

Renters Insurance

WHY HAVE RENTERS INSURANCE?

Before moving into their new rental home, students should make sure their belongings are protected. Landlords and property owners are typically not responsible for personal property.

There are two main reasons for obtaining rental insurance for their home. The first, and most obvious, is to protect their property against theft or damage. Some policies cover property theft from their home and their place of work. Renters insurance can cover fire and smoke damage, theft, vandalism, damage from windstorms, and other hazards. Specific coverage depends on their particular policy.

The second reason to get a policy is for the liability coverage, to protect them from a civil suit based on negligence. Some policies also pay medical expenses if people are injured on their premises.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Renters insurance usually ranges from $55 to $235 a year. To determine how much coverage you need, add up the cost of replacing all of your possessions. Every policy is slightly different. Shop around for the policy that meets your needs. Prices vary from company to company, and so does protection.

Syracuse University offers a personal-property-only protection plan to all enrolled students. For more information about this plan, call 1-866-535-0456 or e-mail student@haylor.com. Note that the Haylor, Freyer & Coon, Inc. policy does not include liability coverage.
Will my student be covered under my homeowner’s insurance policy?

Students up to age 25 are typically covered under their parents’ homeowners insurance; therefore, they may be covered. Check with your insurance provider to determine what would be covered in the event of a loss or claim.

Moving In

OBTAINING UTILITIES

Setting up Gas and Electricity

To set up electric and/or natural gas service at their new apartment, tenants should contact National Grid at 1-800-642-4272, or visit National Grid’s web site at http://www.nationalgridus.com. When called to set up service, the National Grid service representative will ask for the following information:

- Student’s complete name, address, and telephone number
- Kind of service requested
- When should the service be connected
- Social Security number, driver’s license number, credit card number, or Student I.D. number
- Student’s previous address (if student had National Grid service in his or her name)

Setting up Cable Service

To set up cable service, contact Time Warner Cable at 315-634-6000. When called to set up service, the Time Warner Cable representative will ask for the following information:

- Student’s complete name, address, and telephone number
- Kind of service requested
- Student’s previous address (if student had National Grid service in her or his name)

Setting up Internet and WiFi Service

Both Time Warner and Verizon offer Internet service. Depending on the provider for cable service, it is possible to save money if a bundle package is bought. Call Verizon at 1-888-251-7802 or Time Warner at 315-634-6000 for information on pricing and bundle packages.

PROTECTING YOUR SECURITY DEPOSIT

When moving in, the best way to protect your security deposit is to complete a detailed checklist of all damages already present in the unit. Note things as small as nail holes in the walls, burns in the carpets, and cracks in the windows. Be sure that your landlord is with you when you do this and signs the checklist. If your landlord is unable to walk through with you, be sure to take pictures of or videotape your apartment to accurately depict its condition, and send a copy to your landlord via certified mail.
RENTAL FILE:
Your rental file should contain the following items:

Rental Log
Use a simple notebook to write all dates and times you contacted, or tried to contact, your landlord (by phone or e-mail); make a note of any discussion. Logs are a useful permanent record of how the landlord did or did not respond to problems.

Apartment Condition Checklist
This is evidence of the condition of the apartment when you move in and out. Keep a copy, and send the original to the landlord by certified mail and return receipt.

Correspondence with your Landlord
Make any complaints or concerns in writing, and keep copies on file. All verbal requests should be followed up in writing, with copies in your file.

Reports
Keep copies of the Certificate of Suitability, building inspection reports, police reports, and any other reports from other agencies.

Receipts
Keep rent and utility receipts to track costs and bills that have been paid. You should also keep copies of all checks for rent and your security deposit.

COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS
In an effort to assist students with their transition to off-campus living in the Syracuse University neighborhood, OCCS is proud to host the Community Ambassador Program. This program matches successful off-campus students with selected blocks in the University neighborhood. Selected students serve as ambassadors and role models to the residents of the streets they are living on. Community Ambassadors (CA) will provide a point of contact for student-residents on their assigned block, provide access to resources, and build community to ease the transition to off-campus living. CAs will go door to door and e-mail invitations to community events and timely information throughout the year.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM, or to find out if there is one on your block, please visit http://offcampus.syr.edu or call the office at 315-443-5489.

Photographs
Photos may be the evidence you need to document a repair or security deposit problem. Photos should be dated and signed by a witness.

GETTING REPAIRS MADE
The most common problem for tenants is getting the landlord to fulfill his or her responsibility to make necessary repairs on the premises. If you are living with several people, identify a spokesperson for the group. When there are problems, have your spokesperson immediately contact the landlord and follow up in writing if necessary. Do not be afraid to keep calling if the problem is not resolved. Offer to do some of the repairs if your landlord will pay for the supplies. For example, if you want to repaint the living room, offer to paint it yourself if your landlord will purchase the painting supplies.
Landlord/Tenant Relations

TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important for your student to know their responsibilities as a tenant. If they are not familiar with their responsibilities, they may find themselves unintentionally breaking their lease agreement.

The Lease

They are responsible for reading the lease and agreeing to its terms. Once they sign the lease, they generally are held to its terms unless the terms are illegal.

Subleasing

Subleasing occurs when a tenant rents the apartment to a third party (subtenant). The subtenant is responsible to the tenant for performing all obligations set forth in the sublease agreement, and the tenant for performing all obligations set forth in the original lease agreement. This means that finding a subtenant does not release your student from obligations under the original lease. For example, if the subtenant does not pay his or her rent, your student remains responsible for the amount due. Before negotiating a sublease agreement, students should check with their landlord to find out what parameters they have before a tenant is allowed to sublease the space in an apartment.

Paying Rent

Your student is responsible for paying the rent on time. Remember that most leases are joint and several: They require that each tenant is responsible for the entire amount of the rent. Therefore, if one of your roommates fails to pay the rent one month, you could be responsible for paying the entire rental amount for that month.

Care of Property

Keep the apartment clean and free of insects and rodents (e.g., dispose of your garbage and recyclable materials properly). Remember that your student is responsible for any damage done to the property by them or their guests.

Notice of Repairs

Tenants are responsible for giving the landlord notice of any needed repairs or maintenance. This is especially important when the problem will cause additional damage unless it is promptly fixed. Your student should also contact your landlord immediately if they notice any insects or rodents in the apartment.

Right to Privacy

As a tenant, your student has the right to privacy within their apartment. However, the landlord may enter their apartment to make necessary repairs or show the apartment to prospective tenants as long as reasonable prior notice is given and it is at a reasonable time. In case of an emergency, the landlord may enter the apartment without the tenant’s consent.
LANDLORD RESPONSIBILITIES

Heat
Landlords must provide adequate and safe heat and hot water. In Syracuse, heat must be supplied from September 15 through June 15 at a temperature of no less than 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Elsewhere in Onondaga County, state law requires that an apartment’s temperature be at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit from October 1 to May 31 whenever the outdoor temperature falls below 55 degrees Fahrenheit between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

Safety
Landlords are required to take reasonable precautions to protect against foreseeable harms. This means that your student, together with his or her landlord, must take personal responsibility for their safety.

Duty of Repair
Landlords must keep common areas such as hallways and laundry facilities clean and safe. Landlords are responsible for maintaining electrical and plumbing systems within the unit. Landlords are responsible for repairing any peeling lead-based paint. Finally, landlords are responsible for maintaining the unit and all supplied equipment, such as refrigerators, stoves, etc.

Living in the Community
Living off campus gives your student the opportunity to belong to an even larger, more diverse community than they would experience through living on campus. Moving off campus means students are responsible for being good neighbors. They must keep in mind they live in a diverse neighborhood of professionals, families with children and elderly people. We encourage them to get know their neighbors and to remember they are responsible for their guests and their guests’ behavior.
City Ordinances to Know

BARBECUES
Use of any open-flame device on porches or overhangs is prohibited. Grills must be placed at least 12 feet from a structure.

FIREWORKS
New York State law prohibits the possession or use of fireworks.

LITTERING AND DUMPING
Littering or dumping on any public property, public right-of-way, or private property is prohibited. The ordinance defines littering as the discarding of a single item of waste onto the ground by a person.

NOISE
Excessive or unnecessary noise that can be heard across property lines is prohibited; this includes noise between apartments in the same building, such as playing a radio, stereo, television, musical instrument, or any other device in such a manner that its sound crosses property lines.

NUISANCE PARTY
A nuisance party is a party in which any of the following behaviors are observed: disorderly conduct; open containers; outdoor urination or defecation; unlawful sale, furnishing, dispensing, or consumption of an alcoholic beverage or controlled substance; littering; illegal parking or loud noise. Upon observation of a nuisance party, the Syracuse Police Department may approach the premises and disband the party, in which case all nonresidents must leave the premises.

OCCUPANCY
In the City of Syracuse, no more than five unrelated people can occupy a rental unit.

OPEN CONTAINERS
Open containers of alcoholic beverages on city streets and sidewalks are prohibited. All alcohol must be in the manufacturer’s sealed container.

OUTDOOR FIRES
Outdoor fires must be at least 25 feet from a structure and must be constantly attended until the fire is extinguished. Fires emitting offensive smoke or odor are prohibited. All fires must be contained within a fire-safe device; fire pits are not permitted. Be sure to check your lease before having an outdoor fire. Many leases prohibit fires.

PARKING
Parking on front lawns and parking across sidewalks is illegal and a safety threat to pedestrians who are forced to walk off the sidewalks. Odd-even parking starts at 6 p.m. on odd dates on the odd-number address side, and 6 p.m. on even dates on the even-number address side of the street.

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT
It is important to realize that in addition to abiding by community standards and local and state laws, off-campus students are expected to adhere to the University’s Code Of Student Conduct. Off-campus students may receive judicial sanctions from the University for behavior that violates the Code of Student Conduct.

For a complete copy of the Code of Student Conduct, look in the Student Handbook or visit http://supolicies.syr.edu/studs/std_code_conduct.htm.
PETS
The leash law requires your pet to be on a leash at all times unless fenced on your property. You must also clean up after your pet.

SNOW REMOVAL
Sidewalk snow removal is the responsibility of each property owner. In most cases, if the owner doesn’t live at the property, the tenant is responsible for keeping the sidewalk clear. Clarify with your landlord whose responsibility it is to remove snow. Clearing snow and ice from sidewalks is to be done by 6 p.m. following snow accumulation. Residents are asked to assist the Syracuse Fire Department with keeping hydrants clear of snow whenever possible.

STREET SIGNS
The possession of a stolen street sign can result in a ticket for criminal possession of stolen property in the fifth degree, a class A misdemeanor. A person is guilty of criminal possession of stolen property in the fifth degree when he knowingly possesses stolen property, with intent to benefit himself or a person other than an owner thereof.

TRASH
Garbage containers should not be put out prior to 8 p.m. the night before collection and should be removed by 7 p.m. on collection day. Signs on your street indicate the day of collection. All garbage should be placed in cans provided by your landlord. Recyclables are collected on the same day as the scheduled trash pickup. If you need a blue recycling bin, call 315-448-CITY for delivery.

UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE
Couches and other upholstered furniture for indoor use are not permitted outside or on porches or in yards.

Getting to Campus

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
Syracuse University provides free bus service to all students, employees, and guests, linking South Campus with Main Campus. Additionally, there is a limited service to the neighborhoods adjacent to the University. The University contracts with Centro to operate 13 shuttle routes, including three “free-fare” zones in area neighborhoods. Buses run weekdays from 7 a.m. to 2:50 a.m. and weekends from 8 a.m. to 2:50 a.m.

The 13 bus lines—Winding Ridge, Slocum Heights, South Campus, Manley, North Campus, Sadler/Brewster-Boland, East Campus, Vincent/Nob Hill, Drumlins, Euclid-Westcott, Quad Shuttle, Connective Corridor, and Destiny Express—operate on a set of schedules, which are available at the following locations: Bird Library, Schine Student Center, Office of Off-Campus and Commuter Services, Department of Public Safety, Goldstein Student Center, Parking and Transit Services office, and at http://centro.org.

The Nob Hill Express route is operated by Caz Limo and operates Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 2:50 a.m. and on weekends from 5 p.m. to 2:50 a.m. during the academic year.

Buses are in full operation during the fall and spring semesters. When classes are not in session, bus frequency is reduced.

If you are unsure whether or not you are on a snow route, call Centro information (315-442-3400) for specific snow route information. For additional information about public transportation, contact Centro at 315-442-3400 or go to http://centro.org.
GETTING INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY

Students will feel enriched by integrating themselves fully into their off-campus community. There are several neighborhood associations in areas adjacent to the University. Students are encouraged to attend neighborhood association meetings to learn more about the area’s resources and activities. For further information about these associations, contact the Office of Government and Community Relations at 315-443-3919. In addition, the Westcott Community Center offers concerts, plays, and lectures. For further information about programs at the Westcott Community Center, call 315-478-8634 or visit http://westcottcc.org.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Outer Comstock Neighborhood Association (OCNA) .............. http://sites.maxwell.syr.edu/ocna/ocna.htm
South East University Neighborhood Association (SEUNA) ......................... http://www.seuna.org
University Neighborhood Preservation Association (UNPA) ......................... http://www.unpa.net
Westcott Neighborhood Association (WNA) ........................................ http://www.wenanation.org

For further information about activities within Onondaga County, go to http://offcampus.syr.edu

Safety Off Campus

In this section, you will find tips we share with students about taking responsibility for their personal safety in their neighborhood and in their own home. We also outline the various programs sponsored by the Department of Public Safety and the Syracuse Police Department that promote safety off campus.

PROMOTING PERSONAL SAFETY

Burglars can strike in any neighborhood. They are opportunistic and always on the lookout for open and unlocked doors. They are attracted to dwellings that are poorly maintained, obscured by landscaping or fencing, and out of sight or earshot of neighbors. The best way to minimize your chance of becoming a victim is to take sensible precautions.

The following tips are offered by the City of Syracuse Police Department and the Syracuse University Department of Public Safety. They are designed to help your students reduce their chances of becoming a crime victim. You may already be aware of some strategies, but your student may not. Use common sense.
IN YOUR APARTMENT

• Doors should be kept locked at all times. This is especially important when a student is alone or sleeping, or the apartment is unoccupied (even if only for a few moments).

• Determine who is on the other side of the door before opening it. Have repair or service personnel show official identification and confirm their presence with the person requesting the service. Delivery persons should remain outside to await the person receiving the delivery.

• When returning home, if something looks questionable (e.g., a slit screen, broken window, or open door), do not go inside. Call the Syracuse Police Department from a safe location.

• Keep an updated inventory of valuables by writing down the serial number and description of each item.

• Photographs should be taken of all valuables. Keep this information in a safe place.

• Be sure all outdoor lighting fixtures are in working condition. Ask the landlord to make immediate repairs.

• Place items of value out of sight and in locked areas. Do not leave valuables unattended in common areas, such as laundry rooms and lounges.

• Ask the landlord to maintain and trim shrubbery.

BEFORE LEAVING FOR LONG BREAKS

• Make sure all windows are secure and have curtains on them.

• Lock sliding doors, and place a wooden or metal bar in the track of the doors.

• Unplug all electrical items. Refrigerator and lights with timers can remain plugged in.

• Do not hide spare keys outside.

• Take valuables with you if possible. Do not leave any valuable items near windows.

• Make sure beds, couches, and other flammable objects are at least two feet away from heat sources.

• If you have a security alarm, make sure you turn it on when leaving.

• Arrange for a trusted neighbor to watch over the house or to store valuables while away.

• Remove all air conditioner units from windows.

• Keep your thermostat set to a temperature no lower than 55° F. Keep your apartment heated all winter so the pipes will not freeze—even while nobody is living in the house. Frozen pipes cause extensive and expensive damage to a home’s plumbing and heating systems. If your student turns off the heat, they could be responsible for repairs.

• Ask the post office to hold the mail until they return from break. Forms are available at http://www.usps.com. Complete the form and put it in their mailbox.
ON THE STREET

• Avoid walking alone. As an alternative, utilize the Department of Public Safety’s Shuttle U Home program when returning to your off-campus residence.

• Walk facing traffic.

• Use well-lit and well-traveled routes, avoiding alleys, entryways, and bushes. Avoid parks, vacant lots, and other deserted places.

• Walk purposefully and confidently—and keep moving.

• Be aware of your surroundings.

• If you think someone is following you, change directions several times and head toward bright lights and people. Go to a public place or a police station. Do not go home.

• Always let someone know where you are going and when you will return.

• Carry only necessary credit cards and cash.

• Avoid using cell phones and headphones so you can be aware of your surroundings.

• If you have to use an ATM during evening hours, use one that is well lit or in an attended gas station or grocery store.

• Stay sober and coherent. Persons under the influence are more likely to be victims of serious crimes or accidents.

IN YOUR MOTOR VEHICLE

• Turn the ignition off and take your car keys with you.

• Be sure to lock your doors and close your windows when exiting your car.

• Avoid parking in isolated areas. Park in well-lit areas and near other cars.

• Have your keys ready when you approach your car.

• Always drive with your car doors locked.

• Make sure you have enough gas to get where you are going and back.

• Always inspect your car before entering.

WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR VEHICLE FROM BREAK-INS

• Remove all items of value from inside your vehicle and place them in the trunk.

• Remove all spare change from your vehicle.

• Park in an area or lot where your vehicle can be easily observed and call 911 if you witness any suspicious behavior.

Information adapted from http://publicsafety.syr.edu.
WHAT IS SUSPICIOUS?
Suspicious activity is anything “slightly out of the ordinary” for the area or time of day in which it occurs. According to the Syracuse Police Department, the most obvious things to want for and report are the following:

- Strangers entering your neighbor’s apartment/house
- Strangers trying doors to see if they are locked
- Sounds of breaking glass or other loud noises
- Persons carrying bolt cutters and tools—especially near bicycles

FIRE SAFETY
Required Fire Protection Devices
The New York State Fire Code and City of Syracuse Property Code require that smoke detectors (certified by a nationally recognized fire testing laboratory) be installed in all common areas, including basements, in combination with other required alarm systems. They must also be installed both inside and outside each sleeping area. It is the landlord’s responsibility to install these devices, but the tenant must make sure the devices are in place and tested monthly. Make sure you know how to replace the batteries in your smoke detectors. A smoke detector’s early warning can provide you with the extra time essential for a successful escape.

New York State Law and the City of Syracuse Property Code also require each property to have at least one functioning carbon monoxide detector on the lowest level of the house with a bedroom.

WHAT IS ORANGE WATCH?
Orange Watch is a DPS program that provides an expanded DPS presence in key areas on the North and South campuses and in neighborhoods north and east of campus.

Orange Watch officers are on patrol throughout the year, with increased presence between the hours of 7 p.m. and 5 a.m. and on weekends.

SUSPICIOUS? THE NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY PATROL
The Neighborhood Safety Patrol is a partnership among residents of the University neighborhood, the Syracuse Police Department, and Syracuse University. The patrol is part of an effort to deter criminal activity, promote resident safety, and improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. The area covered runs west to east from University Avenue to Allen Street, and north to south from East Genesee Street to Broad Street.

If you have any questions, please contact the Syracuse University Department of Public Safety at 315-443-2224.

SHUTTLE U HOME
Syracuse University’s Shuttle U Home provides free transportation from the campus for students, faculty, and staff who reside off campus within a designated geographic area. The service operates daily from 8:15 p.m. to 3:30 a.m.

To use the shuttle, riders must go to the Students for Community Safety (SCS) program, located in 019 Watson Hall, and sign up. Riders are also required to show their SU or ESF I.D. The shuttle service van is capable of transporting as many as six passengers.

For more information, visit http://tinyurl.com/shuttleuhome.
**ORANGE ALERT: CAMPUS CRISIS ALERT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM**

Directed by Syracuse University’s Department of Public Safety, ORANGE ALERT is designed to provide rapid notification and instruction to SU students, faculty, and staff, and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry students in the event of a crisis in progress—an instance in which there is immediate threat of physical harm to members of the campus community.

When activated, ORANGE ALERT uses various communications mechanisms—including e-mail, text messaging, and cell/landline phone calls—to send a brief notice about the situation and instructions of what to do. A typical message might read: “There is a (type of crisis) on campus at (a specific location); evacuate the area immediately and remain away until further instructed.” ORANGE ALERT contact information for students, faculty, and staff is drawn from the MySlice online information system. Want to review and/or modify your contact information? Go to MySlice, log in using your NetID and Password, click on the ORANGE ALERT link, and then review/modify and save your information.

Questions? Contact OrangeAlert@syr.edu.

**ORANGE ALERT SIREN SYSTEM**

The Orange Alert Siren System is an enhancement of the Orange Alert notification system that will also alert community members and visitors who may not be enrolled or have immediate access to electronic media needed for notification. Sirens that sound similar to a fire station siren or a weather siren are activated in case of emergency when individuals need to seek immediate indoor shelter.
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY AMBULANCE

Non-Emergency Medical Transport Service (MTS): 315-443-4566

Students who are temporarily disabled, and those with a permanent disability whose transportation has been temporarily interrupted, can receive short-term transportation in the greater campus area to and from the health center, campus, and area medical facilities by calling the Medical Transport Service. Reservations for transport are preferred.

*** Services provided by SUA and MTS are covered by the student health fee.

In an emergency, please call 911.

Moving Out

CLEANING

You should thoroughly clean all aspects of your apartment (refrigerator, oven, bathroom, floors, etc.) when moving out. You should properly dispose of all trash and unwanted furniture; do not leave it behind unless instructed by your landlord to do so. Leaving your apartment clean is the best way to ensure getting your full security deposit back.

GETTING YOUR SECURITY DEPOSIT RETURNED

When you move out, you should complete a detailed checklist of any damages in the unit and compare that against the checklist you created when you moved in. You should take photos and/or video of the unit to note its cleanliness and any issues present. According to Syracuse city ordinance, security deposits must be returned within 21 days of the end of the lease. If the full security deposit is not returned, an itemized listing of costs should be sent to you with the remaining deposit.

Share Your Rental Experience

LANDLORD INFORMATION SHARING PROGRAM

This program is designed to provide students with a method for communicating with one another from year to year about their rental housing challenges and successes. The goals of the Landlord Information Sharing Program are:

to provide students with a constructive format to raise concerns about the quality of their off-campus housing in a manner that will lead to issue resolution;

to provide a neutral context in which landlords can respond to and address students’ concerns;

to provide a record of concerns raised and the manner in which concerns were addressed; and

to reduce the number of student concerns that ultimately go unknown or unresolved or that escalate beyond the point that an amicable resolution is possible.

In our experience, conflicts between students and their landlords often occur due to a breakdown in communication. We hope this program can promote more effective, constructive communication between students and their landlords.
Process
Any Syracuse University or ESF student can fill out a comment form, found online at http://offcampus.syr.edu or in our office at 754 Ostrom Ave. You must clearly explain your concerns or issues on the form provided or by attaching a separate typed letter. You must use facts to describe the situation that is the basis for your documentation; you cannot simply provide an opinion of your landlord with no supporting factual basis.

OCCS staff would also like to hear about positive interactions you have had with your landlord. If you have positive experiences you would like us or other students to know about, you should send us a letter clearly explaining the interaction, using facts to describe the situation; you should not simply provide an opinion of your landlord with no supporting factual basis.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A COMMENT FORM IS FILED?
OCCS staff reviews all completed comment forms. If any form includes unprofessional language or is not appropriate to share with other students, it will be returned to you with a letter explaining why.

OCCS staff forwards a copy of the submitted comment form to your landlord. The landlord may respond to the concerns or issues directly or may respond by sending a letter to OCCS. If OCCS receives a response, a copy will be mailed to you.

OCCS staff retains a copy of all comment forms and landlord responses in the office at 754 Ostrom Ave. All names, contact information, and any other identifying information will be redacted from the comment forms and responses. Sometimes your landlord may not respond to your concerns or issues, or may respond unfavorably. OCCS staff will work with you throughout the process to seek a resolution to your problem.

When appropriate, OCCS staff will refer you to agencies that are better able to assist you, such as the Syracuse Police Department, City of Syracuse Division of Code Enforcement, Student Legal Services, etc.

Your comment form will be saved in a file under your landlord’s name. Other SU or ESF students will be able to view your comment form and your landlord’s response when they search for off-campus housing.

We encourage students viewing the landlord files to consider not only the number and type of concerns or issues raised, but also the landlords’ responses to them.

Please note that the views expressed in these materials are solely those of students and local property owners and not those of Syracuse University.
Helpful Web Sites

APARTMENT LISTINGS:

Orange Housing
http://orangehousing.com - Orange Housing is a local company that is not affiliated with Syracuse University or SUNY ESF. It maintains a web site of apartment offerings in the neighborhoods adjacent to campus.

Apartment Finder
http://apartmentfinder.com - This site is helpful if you are interested in living in an apartment complex.

The Daily Orange
http://dailyorange.com - This is the daily newspaper for Syracuse University. You can find apartment listings in the classified section.

SAFETY:

Syracuse University Department of Public Safety
http://publicsafety.syr.edu - The Syracuse University Department of Public Safety web site contains detailed information on services such as Orange Watch, UACT, Orange Alert, the Neighborhood Safety Patrol, as well as the Shuttle U Home program. It also has safety tips for living off campus.

Syracuse Police Department
http://syracusepolice.org - This is the City of Syracuse Police Department website. Go here to find out the crime statistics for the city and the neighborhood you are thinking of moving to.

TRANSPORTATION

Syracuse University Parking and Transit Office
http://parking.syr.edu - The Parking and Transit Office manages parking on campus as well as the buses that bring students around campus. On this site you will find information about obtaining an on campus parking permit, as well as bus schedules for the Centro bus free-fare zone.

Centro Syracuse
http://centro.org - Visit this site to learn more about how to get around the City of Syracuse and the surrounding areas.

The Connective Corridor
http://connectivecorridor.syr.edu - Visit this site to find the bus schedule for the Connective Corridor. The Connective Corridor bus will bring you to downtown Syracuse and the Warehouse. There is also other helpful information about the Syracuse community.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The City of Syracuse
http://www.syracuse.ny.us/home.aspx - This is the official City of Syracuse web site. Here you can learn more about the City of Syracuse and what city services are offered to you.
Walkscore

http://walkscore.com - When you enter the address in of a prospective apartment; this site will give you a score from 1 to 100 of how walkable its location would be. Walkscore will tell you where grocery stores, public transportation and restaurants, libraries and parks are within walking distance from the address you entered. This is a great site to use because you may be trying to choose between two places and, instead of picking a place based on which one has a bigger bedroom, you can choose the place that is closer to public transit and has a grocery store within walking distance.

Important Phone Numbers

SUNY ESF SERVICES
Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Educational Services
204 Bray Hall .................................... 315-470-4771
Student Life Office
110 Bray Hall ................................... 315-470-6658

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY SERVICES
Counseling Center
200 Walnut Place .................................. 315-443-4715
Department of Public Safety
005 Sims Hall ..................................... 315-443-2224
Government and Community Relations
2-212 Center for Science and Technology .................................. 315-443-3919
Health Center 111 Waverly Ave.......................... 315-443-2666
Housing, Meal Plan, and I.D. Card Services
206 Steele Hall .................................... 315-443-2721
Office of Judicial Affairs
310 Steele Hall ..................................... 315-443-3728
Office of Off-Campus and Commuter Services
754 Ostrom Ave. .................................... 315-443-5489
Office of Student Assistance
306 Steele Hall ..................................... 315-443-4357
Parking and Transit Services
621 Skytop Road .................................... 315-443-4652
Slutzker Center for International Services
310 Walnut Place .................................... 315-443-2457
Student Legal Services
760 Ostrom Ave..................................... 315-443-4532

UTILITY COMPANIES
National Grid ...................................... 1-800-642-4272
Time Warner Cable .................................. 315-634-6000
Verizon ........................................... 315-890-7100