



cal rentals

2610 Channing Way
Berkeley, CA 94720-2272

HOURS:
Monday–Friday,
10 a.m. – 4 p.m., excluding
official University holidays

WEB SITE:
calrentals.berkeley.edu

E-MAIL:
calrentals@berkeley.edu

PHONE:
(510) 642-3644

seeking with friends

FORMING A GROUP HOUSEHOLD

Many students who transition from University residence halls, new transfer students and graduate students like the idea of living with a group of similar-minded students in a big place. This can save in costs and/or get you into a nicer home or neighborhood than you can afford on your own. Plus, it sounds like fun! If you don't have friends to join you in a housing search, you can always "Search Roommates" and create an account on Cal Rentals site to see if any compatible students would like to join you.

CHALLENGES TO SEARCHING WITH A GROUP

First, there is not a lot of local rental housing that is larger than two bedrooms, and the larger places are vigorously competed for and hard to get. Berkeley and the surrounding communities are full of two-bedroom and smaller apartments. Be aware that if you are seeking housing with a group, you might need to break the group up into two smaller households if your search for a large rental is unsuccessful.

Second, not everyone stays in Berkeley during the summer. Can one person look during the summer while all the other housemates are away? Possibly, but landlords generally want to meet the entire group so you qualify for the rent collectively. If you want to try looking with only part of the group in town, be sure you have everyone's Tenant Resume, which is a document showing how much rent an individual can afford and gives a fiscal profile for landlords to examine. The Tenant Resume also authorizes landlords to run credit reports to help determine fiscal worthiness. (A sample Tenant Resume may be found at calrentals.housing.berkeley.edu).

OTHER THINGS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER

If one tenant has bad credit or parents who refuse to cosign the rental agreement, this can hinder the housing search for everyone else. Be sure everyone in your group has good credit and parents who are willing to cosign (particularly true for undergraduates, less so for graduate students and older academics). In addition, be sure you have a backup plan if one of the housemates doesn't come up with his or her share of the rent. YOU could get evicted if the entire rent isn't paid on time. Have a plan in case of an emergency if someone can't pay.

SHARED UTILITY BILLS

You will also need to discuss how you will pay the utility bills. Whose name goes on the cable, internet, gas and electric, and water bills? Who is responsible for paying them? The gas and electric company is not going to accept three separate checks for one bill. So, figure out who will write the checks every month (or pay online), and appoint a second person who will gather the money from the others. It is usually too much of a burden for the same person who pays the bills to also be the one who has to collect the money. You will be glad you had these discussions ahead of time.

CLEANLINESS

Aside from money issues, there is the matter of cleanliness. If you lived in University housing where meals were provided and custodians cleaned the common areas, it can be something of a shock to see the dishes piling up and floor needing vacuuming and mopping. Talking with your housemates about division of household chores ahead of time can help you avoid much aggravation later.