

# Berkeley International Study Program | Housing Options

## Contents

- Berkeley Global
- Berkeley Neighborhoods
- Rental Glossary
- Typical Bay Area Rent
- Legal Assistance for Renters
- Housing Search Tools
- Facebook Groups
- Temporary Housing
- Dormitory Style Living
- Fully Furnished Apartments & Rooms
- Apartment Style Living
- Property Management Companies
- Homestays
- Tips

## Disclaimers

These resources are provided by BISP as a courtesy. **The following housing options are not endorsed by the Berkeley International Study Program.** BISP has not checked out these options and does not endorse any particular housing provider.

This document serves as a **starting point** for locating housing, and it is up to each individual to check and verify the details. The agreement for housing is between the student and the housing provider, and not between the party and the University of California, Sociology Department or UC Extension. Your housing selection depends on your interests, preferences, and budget. Choose from the bustling atmosphere of a dormitory, the independence of a private or shared apartment, or the personal attention of a homestay.

## Scams & Fraud

Many international students will search for apartments online and might be tempted to send a deposit without actually seeing the place firsthand, especially if it seems to be an amazing deal. The latest scam is for people who claim to be landlords solicit money from students via WeChat and QQ. **Never send a deposit without actually seeing the place.**

The best way to avoid scams is also the easiest: never send a deposit for a home or apartment sight unseen. It is better to budget your funds to stay at a hotel for a week or so upon arrival, and spend that time searching for housing in person. For international students, some landlords might reserve a place for you if you can provide your I-20 and financial statement to prove that you have sufficient funds to pay.

## Berkeley Global

In addition to processing your online application and I-20 document, our colleagues at Berkeley Global have comprehensive housing resources and an overview of Bay Area housing.

<https://extension.berkeley.edu/international/berkeley-life/housing/>

## Berkeley Neighborhoods

Most BISP students live within 1 mile of campus. To see an overview of our neighborhoods:

<https://www.visitberkeley.com/maps-neighborhoods/>

## Rental Glossary

You will likely encounter terms like **lease and sublease, tenant and subtenant, security deposit, furnished, utilities**, etc. Get familiar with [50 Key Terms To Help With Your Apartment Search](#).

## Typical Bay Area Rent

To get an idea of the difference in rent for different neighborhoods in Berkeley:

<https://www.rentcafe.com/average-rent-market-trends/us/ca/berkeley/>

2021 TYPICAL RENT AVERAGES				
UNIT TYPE	BERKELEY	OAKLAND	ALBANY	EL CERRITO
APARTMENTS				
STUDIO	\$1,925	\$1,634	\$1,730	\$2,500
1 BEDROOM	\$2,166	\$1,987	\$1,972	\$2,141
2 BEDROOM	\$2,921	\$2,572	\$2,726	\$3,284
3 BEDROOM	\$4,026	\$3,115	\$3,718	\$3,861
4+ BEDROOM	\$5,876	\$4,036	NO DATA	\$4,295
ROOM RENTAL	\$1,364	\$1,575	\$1,286	\$1,300
HOUSE				
2 BEDROOM	\$3,252	\$3,680	\$3,025	NO DATA
3 BEDROOM	\$4,671	\$4,154	\$3,977	\$3,500
4+ BEDROOM	\$5,958	\$5,764	NO DATA	\$5,500

Source: [och.berkeley.edu/resource](https://och.berkeley.edu/resource), *Typical Rent Averages*

## Legal Assistance for Renters

Make sure you fully understand the terms of your lease or rental agreement. Upon signature, you enter a legally binding agreement. In particular, pay attention to the length of the lease term, often 6 months or 1 year.

Breaking a lease (leaving early) is a serious legal matter and should not be taken lightly. BISP cannot give legal advice or help in this matter but will refer you to Renter's Assistance on campus for help. **ASUC Renters' Legal Assistance** offers many resources for navigating and resolving housing disputes:

<https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~asucrla/>

# Housing Search Tools

## Long-term Housing

- CalRentals (CalNet login required): <https://och.berkeley.edu>
- Craigslist (We highly recommend using Craigslist **only** if you are already in the area so you can see the place in person): <https://sfbay.craigslist.org/eby/>
- Housing Anywhere: <https://housinganywhere.com/>
- Sublet: <https://www.sublet.com/>
- Trulia: <https://www.trulia.com/>
- Zillow: <https://www.zillow.com/>

## Temporary Housing – Less Expensive

- Airbnb: <https://www.airbnb.com/>
- Couchsurfing: <https://www.couchsurfing.com/>
- The YMCA Hostel: <https://downtown-berkeley-ymca-hotel-and-residence.booked.net/>

## Temporary Housing – More Expensive

- Booking.com: <https://www.booking.com/>
- Expedia: <https://www.expedia.com/>
- Google Hotel Finder: <http://google.com/travel/hotels>
- VRBO: <https://www.vrbo.com/>
- HotelGuides: <http://hotelguides.com/>
- Hotels: <https://www.hotels.com/>
- Kayak: <https://www.kayak.com/>
- Orbitz: <https://www.orbitz.com/>

## Facebook Groups

Facebook is used by many Berkeley students specifically for housing. Those in search of housing can easily connect to those with housing to offer. BISP students who need to find a subletter often post to these groups.

### Cal Students & Visitors

Maintained and moderated by BISP.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BISPHousing/>

### Cal Housing Group

Maintained and moderated by our colleagues at Berkeley Global.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BEIHF/>

### UC Berkeley Off-Campus Housing

Public group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ucberkeleyoffcampushousing/>

### Berkeley Housing Group

Public group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/953139261371416/>

## Dormitory Style Living

BISP students are not eligible to live in the dorms owned and operated by UC Berkeley. However, several private companies offer dorm-style housing near campus. Dorms are great if you want a structured atmosphere and on-site community as there are opportunities to meet new people through planned activities, and you may have a roommate who is not a BISP student. Some dorms have cafeterias, ideal for communal dining.

**International House (I-House):** 2299 Piedmont Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94720-2320

I-House is popular among BISP students and spaces can fill up quickly. I-House is just across the street from campus and next to the football stadium. I-House prioritizes applicants for the academic year (both Fall and Spring semesters), but one-semester students are also welcome to apply.

<https://ihouse.berkeley.edu/resident-life/apply-live-here>

The online application opens depending on when you want to live there:

- Academic Year (Fall & Spring semesters) | **early March**
- Spring semester only | **mid-October**
- Summer Sessions | **early March**

### Features:

- Located next to the south side of campus
- Meal plans are available, approximately 12 meals per week
- Kitchen available for individual use
- Central hall bathrooms
- Unique community of student residents from more than 60 countries, including the United States
- Multicultural and international activities, high-speed Internet access, indoor and outdoor dining, café, easy access to the UC Berkeley campus, and common facilities and services
- Single and double rooms available

**Telegraph Commons:** 2490 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94704

Telegraph Commons is a private dormitory that provides a safe, clean, and fun college experience to students attending the University of California, Berkeley and its affiliates. The residents are students who wish to experience life in a diverse and exciting dorm setting at a more affordable price with comparable amenities to university housing. TC gives students the opportunity to focus on their schoolwork and meet new people instead of worrying about bills and other hassles of apartment life. <http://www.telegraphcommons.com/>

### Features:

- 3-minute walk to campus
- Hi-speed internet/Wi-Fi in every room
- Cable TV Rooms / Study Lounges
- Modern urban furnishings and refrigerators in every room
- Full kitchen with state-of-the-art appliances on each floor
- Card-operated laundry on each floor

**The Berk:** 2315 College Ave, Berkeley, CA 94704

The Berk has two buildings. The Berk on College is located on the south side of campus at 2315 College Ave. The Berk on Arch is located on the north side of campus at 2311 Le Conte Ave. **Recent BISP students report that the south side location is much newer and nicer.** <http://www.theberkoncollege.com/>

**Features:**

- 5-minute walk to campus
- Community Wide Wi-Fi
- On-Site Library
- Private Parking Available
- Secure Bike Storage
- Basketball Court

**Wesley House:** 2398 Bancroft Way, Suite 100, Berkeley, CA 94720

Wesley House has everything a University of California, Berkeley student needs - amazing location, rooftop terrace with bay views, a game room, and more social activities than you can fit in your smart phone. Since it turns out you'll be doing some studying too, you'll be happy to know we have a 24-hour quiet study and meeting areas to study with friends. Check out the total package that will make Wesley House your home away from home. <http://www.wesleyhouseberkeley.com/>

**Features:**

- Community Kitchen, Controlled Building Access
- Enclosed Bike Storage
- Full Kitchen, Library, Multimedia Room
- On-Site Laundry, On-Site Management
- Outside Courtyards, Rooftop Terrace
- Wireless Internet

**Casa Cedar:** 2135 Cedar St, Berkeley, CA 94709

Casa Cedar hosts students from all over the world. Our #1 priority is for everyone to have a great experience while living here! <https://www.casacedar.com/>

**Features:**

- All Rooms Feature hardwood floors, lots of natural sunlight, two or more huge windows, views of nature, and lovely architecture
- Furniture provided for all residents
- Provides sheets, blankets, pillows, and bath towels if you need them
- Shared Rooms are usually arranged by gender

**Bowles Hall:** 1928 Stadium Rim Way, Berkeley CA 94720

Bowles Hall is residential college community that hosts over 190 students in single or double room. Facilities include its own dining hall that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner year long. The building has multiple rooms for studying, hanging out and doing homework. When applying online, select **Continuing Students**.

<https://www.bowleshall.org/>

**Features:**

- 5-minute walk to campus
- 42 single and 73 double rooms (no triples or quads), each with attached bathroom
- On-site food service for all meals, including evening study break
- On-site historic library, plus 7 study rooms with white boards and supplies to support individual or small group work
- Large, comfortable lounge with grand piano and 150" theater with surround sound
- High-speed Wifi and cable TV
- Large game room with billiards, ping-pong, and other games
- New washers, dryers, and printers spread throughout the building
- Noise-reducing walls and floor coverings
- Seismic retrofitting and extensive security exceeding current standards
- ADA compliance

## Fully Furnished Apartments & Rooms

A furnished room or apartment typically means it comes with furniture, lamps, kitchen supplies, and sheets and towels. A housing provider should specify what furnishings are, in fact, included; ask them to specify if you are unsure. Furnished places may have higher rent than unfurnished ones in exchange for the convenience of not having to buy or rent your own furnishings. They may also have higher security deposits as there is more property to potentially damage than in an unfurnished place.

### **Academic Housing Rentals:** Multiple Berkeley locations

Academic Housing Rentals offer fully furnished rooms, apartments, and studios at multiple locations with semester-long, academic year, and summer leases in the Berkeley area. You will need a copy of your passport, I-20, and proof of income/ funding to apply. If approved, you will need to provide a deposit, and first and last month's rent to secure your spot. Space fills up quickly as this is a popular option.

<http://www.academichousingrentals.com/>

### **The Panoramic Berkeley:** 2539 Telegraph Ave Berkeley, CA 94704

The Panoramic Berkeley is one of the newest housing complexes on the South side, offering fully furnished studios, 3-bedroom, and 4-bedroom apartments with leases that are six months or one year. For students with international guarantors, the security deposit is equal to two months' rent. It is 5 blocks away from campus and close to affordable dining options and entertainment at the heart of the Telegraph district. Apply online.

<https://www.panoramicberkeley.com/>

### **The Berkeley Group:** 13 locations in Berkeley

This company owns and operates several properties close to campus. Choose from co-living spaces or traditional apartments, all furnished. Past BISP students have recommended The Berkeley Housing Group.

<https://tbgpm.com/>

### **Communities:**

- Co-Living (Warring, Piedmont, MLK Jr Way, La Loma, Hearst, Channing, Prospect\*2)
- Traditional Townhouses & Apartments (Regent, Ellsworth, Dwight, College\*2)

## Apartment Style Living

Apartments are recommended if you want to be more independent or prefer a quieter atmosphere for studying. Apartments can be less costly than some dormitory options. Unless otherwise indicated, most apartments are **not furnished**—meaning that you need to buy or rent furniture when you arrive in Berkeley.

### **The Berkeley Group:** 13 locations in Berkeley

This company owns and operates several properties close to campus. Choose from co-living spaces or traditional apartments, all furnished. Past BISP students have recommended The Berkeley Housing Group.

<https://tbgpm.com/>

### **Communities:**

- Co-Living (Warring, Piedmont, MLK Jr Way, La Loma, Hearst, Channing, Prospect\*2)
- Traditional Townhouses & Apartments (Regent, Ellsworth, Dwight, College\*2)

### **Sterling Berkeley Collection (formerly Equity Apartments):** 6 locations in Berkeley

Sterling apartments in Berkeley are located within walking distance to UC Berkeley, BART, cafes and restaurants. Specific building features vary and may include rooftop gardens and terraces, modern seismic reinforcement, on-site laundry, controlled entry, on-site restaurant, pet-friendly, full kitchens, and spacious closets. Secure garage parking is available.

<http://www.equityapartments.com/san-francisco-bay/berkeley-apartments>

### **Communities:**

- Addison
- Allston
- Haste
- Jefferson
- Oxford
- University Ave

### **K Street Flats:** 2020 Kittredge Street, Suite D, Berkeley, CA 94704

The building has 1- and 2-bedroom unfurnished apartments, all pet-friendly. Furniture can be rented at special pricing from CORT Furniture Rentals. K Street Flats is located one block from the campus, steps from the Berkeley Central Library, and a block from BART, AC Transit, shopping, restaurants and entertainment. K Street Flats has a referral program worth \$250 when your referrals sign a lease.

<https://www.elevatetosequoia.com/apartments/ca/berkeley/k-street-flats/>

### **Features:**

- Close to UC Berkeley campus, BART, AC transit
- 24-hour laundry facilities on each floor
- 24-hour emergency maintenance
- Steps to shopping, cafes, restaurants, bookstores, movie theaters, and nightlife
- Private courtyards and terraces

### **Hudson McDonald Apartments:** 6 locations in Berkeley

Hudson McDonald acquires, builds and manages apartments and other properties in Berkeley. Housing types include dorms, studios and apartments, some furnished and some pet-friendly.

<http://www.hudsonmcdonald.com/>

#### **Properties**

- PSR Housing
- Bratcher & Gray Apartments
- New Californian
- The Metropolitan
- The Delaware
- Bancroft House

### **University Park Apartments:** 1709 Shattuck Ave Berkeley, CA 94709

Located in North Berkeley, choose between furnished or unfurnished apartment units. Each comes with a refrigerator, dishwasher, and hardwood floors. The community is pet-friendly. Many tenants are graduate students at UC Berkeley in fields such as Engineering, Business, and Law. This is NOT a party building— tenants are professional-minded and quiet.

<https://www.universityparkberkeley.com/>

#### **Features:**

- Roof deck with 200 degree views of the surrounding area
- Swimming pool (unheated)
- Secure bike storage room
- Package acceptance
- Outgoing mail
- 24-hour urgent issue on-call response
- Laundry room

### **Unique Housing:** Two locations on Hillegass Ave and College Ave

Berkeley and the neighborhood of Elmwood have been the home of the owners' family since the 1960s. They take care of their apartments and studios with lots of love and warmth. They have provided housing for students and visitors for three generations, and have had the honor to welcome many happy tenants from all over the world. Furnished and unfurnished units are available.

<https://www.uniquehousingberkeley.com/>

## Property Management Companies

These property management companies run multiple apartment buildings in Berkeley and nearby. They often don't have furnished apartments, and leases could be a minimum of 6 months. Nevertheless, many of our students still rent from them. These apartments can be especially suitable for students who are staying for at least one year.

- K&S Company: <http://www.kands.com/>
- The Lapham Company: <https://www.laphamcompany.com/>
- North Berkeley Properties: <http://www.northberkeleyproperties.com/>
- Raj Properties: <http://www.rajproperties.com/>

## Homestays

Homestays are a good way to meet local people as you get to share meals with your host family, improve your language skills, learn local cultures and customs, and have a real “home away from home.” However, many of the homestays are located farther from campus and may involve a longer commute by bike or public transit.

### HomestayMatch

HomestayMatch is for students who would like to choose their own homestay. You can see room pictures, prices and host details before applying.

<https://homestaymatch.com/>

### Universal Student Housing (USH)

USH is a US-based homestay provider. Since the COVID pandemic they have reduced their presence in Berkeley and the East Bay and have more placements in San Francisco. However, commuting from a homestay in San Francisco to UC Berkeley is not advised.

<https://www.ushstudent.com/>

### StudentRoomStay

StudentRoomStay is another US-based homestay provider. They vet host families, have a variety of meal options. Submit their online form for a customized quote for Berkeley and length of stay.

<https://studentroomstay.com/homestay-usa>

## Tips

### Identify Your Needs

Knowing what you want—and don't want—is the crucial first step in any housing search. Calculate your budget and identify your needs: quiet or party-oriented; distance from campus and transit options; level of privacy; furnished or unfurnished; preference for home cooking or cafeteria; overall level of independence. Knowing your own living needs will help you narrow down your housing options.

### Subleasing

Most BISP students will only stay in Berkeley for one semester. If a landlord requires you to sign a lease that is longer than your duration of stay, you should **ALWAYS** ask whether it is possible to sublet the premises to someone else.

Do not expect your landlords to find subletters for you. You should **ALWAYS** be proactive in finding your own subletters.

There is a constant flow of people in and out of Berkeley. There will **ALWAYS** be students looking to move to or from Berkeley. An abundance of potential subletters, however, is distinct from your landlord allowing subletters.

## Further Support

You may contact the Berkeley Global housing advisor at [extension-intl@berkeley.edu](mailto:extension-intl@berkeley.edu). You may also make an individual appointment with their housing specialist at <https://go.oncehub.com/ucbx-iss>.

If you are still having trouble finding a place to live, contact BISP staff and we will try our best to help you.