

BSSM HOUSING HELP SHEET 1

The majority of the information provided below is a summary of what is covered in the “California Tenants Guide” (<http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/catenant.pdf>) and will help assist you as you begin the process of renting an apartment or home in Redding.

Many rental agencies and private owners will not rent an apartment or house without having you see it in person. This is for your protection and theirs. So what can you do if you live in another state or another country?

- Look for a roommate that is already established in Redding. A great place to look is on the my.bssm bulletin board: (https://my.bssm.net/bulletin_board_posts) You must be an accepted student to access this resource.
- Make temporary housing arrangements for 1-4 weeks when you first move to Redding. This allows you time to find permanent housing. There are several websites that you can look at that offer temporary housing options: (www.ibssm.net, www.ivisitredding.org, and www.craigslist.org)
- Join the facebook page for your school year - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1500952776585031/>
- Look for communities that offer multiple student homes such as the Redding Revival Community (<http://www.reddingrevivalcommunity.com/>) and Revival Apartments (<http://www.revivalapartments.com/>) and Simpson University Dorms (<http://simpsonu.edu/Pages/About/Conference/Bethel-Housing.htm>)

Things to Consider When Looking for a Housing Rental

When you are looking for a rental, important considerations include:

- The amount you can afford for monthly rent and utilities
- The amount you can afford for deposits (holding, security, application)
- The location and access to school, shopping, public transportation, etc. Will you have a car or will you be depending on public transportation, walking and/or bike?
- Type of lease agreement (month-to-month, 6-month, 9-month or 1-year).
- Condition of the rental unit (See section on inspecting before you rent).
- How many people do you want to live with? Do you want a private or shared bedroom?
- Do you want to rent from a company or an individual?
- Do you want a furnished or unfurnished rental?
- Are the utilities included, or do you have to pay for them separately? Do you have to set up the utilities yourself or will the landlord bill you monthly?

Questionable Practices

Some legitimate exceptions could exist for the following, but if one of these things exists, it should prompt you to ask more clarifying questions.

1. There are too many people living in a house for the size it is, and there is no stated limit in the written agreement about how many people can live there. City code usually limits how many adults can live in one home to two per bedroom – so a good rule of thumb is not more than 2 people per bedroom.
2. You are offered a garage room that is not properly converted. For a room to be legally considered a bedroom it should have a window, closet, electricity and proper heating/cooling. You should not be renting a freezing garage. There is enough quality, affordable housing in the area to have a real room that is safe and livable.
3. You are supposedly splitting the actual costs of utilities, but never allowed to see the bills.
4. The price of a room is unusually high. Watch out for prices far outside the guidelines we give in our suggested prices in this BSSM Housing Help Sheet or outside what you see from the local rental network websites, newspaper, etc. If prices are higher, there ought to be a good reason for it. (It's a huge or deluxe property, great pool, flexible landlord, etc.)
5. The security deposit is more than two times the monthly rental cost.
6. You are not provided with a written agreement on the terms of your rental or receipts for your payments.
7. Avoid renting from an individual who states in the lease that they have the right to change the terms in the lease.

Types of Rentals Available and Average Costs:

Simpson Dorms

Simpson has partnered with BSSM to offer students a special rate to live in their dorms, which are within walking/riding distance.

- Dorm - approx \$800 - Includes utilities and food service in dining hall (10-21 meals a week).
- Deposits -\$100
- Parking - \$200.

For more information and up to date costs, please see the [Simpson Website Housing Page](#).

Apartment / Townhome / Duplex (can be corporately or privately owned)

1 bedroom - \$550-\$750

2 bedroom - \$800-950

3 bedroom - \$1000-\$1200

Will typically include partial utilities of sewer, trash and water with you paying electric and gas.

Average electric/gas for apartment, per bedroom: \$65

Electric Deposit: \$250 (a good credit check will sometimes substitute for a deposit)

Security Deposit: standard deposit is the equivalent of one month's rent, but can be as much as two.

(Sometimes a deposit will be specified as paying for your first and last month's rent.)

Occupancy limits in most apartments are 2 people per bedroom.

House (typically privately owned but may be managed by a leasing agent/company)

2 bedroom 1 bath: \$800-\$1000 + Utilities

3 bedroom 2 bath: \$1100-\$1600 + Utilities

Average utilities for a 3 bedroom (including sewer, water, garbage, electric and gas): \$200-\$300 (depending on how much electricity, heat and water you all use).

Electric Deposit: \$250 (a good credit check will sometimes substitute for a deposit)

Security Deposit: standard deposit is the equivalent of one month's rent, but can be as much as two.

(Sometimes a deposit will be specified as paying for your first and last month's rent.)

Furnished Housing

Furnished housing can vary greatly depending on how furnished it is and the quality of furnishings. It is recommended that ask for updated photo's of the home before agreeing to rent.

Private Bedroom - \$450 (more if utilities are included)

Shared Bedroom - \$275 - \$375 (more if utilities are included)

Lodger in Private Residence

Private room: \$350-\$500 (Utilities may be included or divided up with other house members.)

Shared room: \$250-\$350 (Utilities may be included or divided up with other house members.)

Security Deposit varies and can be nothing or up to the equivalent of two month's rent.

Mobile Home and RV Parks

Park Space - \$350 + Utilities (you provide your own mobile or RV)

Where to Look for Rentals

Please note that we do NOT screen these offers. These are NOT landlords that we have pre-approved. They are merely allowed to post for your convenience.

- my.bssm.net: Go to the my.bssm Bulletin Board.
- ivisitredding.com: Created by former BSSM students, mostly short-term and student housing.
- [Craigslist](http://craigslist.com): Public classifieds website. Please be VERY CAREFUL in using this service. There are a number of housing scams that are run on Craigslist and we have had students who have been caught in them and taken advantage of.
- Privately run student housing: Redding Revival Community (<http://www.reddingrevivalcommunity.com/>) and Revival Apartments (<http://www.revivalapartments.com/>)
- Local Property Management Companies: [Shasta Properties](#), [Sun Country](#), [Swift Properties](#), [Alliance Property](#), [Country Properties](#), [Real Property Management](#), [Pine Property Management](#), [Hubbub Properties](#), [Renter's HQ](#), [Northern CA Properties](#).

Questions to ask when considering renting an apartment/house

- How long is the commute from this housing to Bethel?
- If you are without a vehicle, how far is the apartment from grocery stores and public transportation?
- Who is responsible for paying for utilities (water, trash, waste treatment, gas, electric, phone, cable, internet)? What is the average cost of utilities per month?
- What kind of amenities does the apartment community offer (swimming pool, exercise equipment, clubhouse)?
- Where will you park your car?
- How are general noise levels in the area you are considering? Is the unit located close to the street or a common space? Is the unit an upstairs or downstairs unit?
- What is the neighborhood like? Is it safe? Have there been any security issues with the home, property or vehicles?
- How is maintenance handled in the apartment community? Is assistance available for after-hours needs at night or on the weekend?
- What changes are you allowed to make to the apartment/house? (For example, can you repaint the walls or hang pictures?)

Additional questions to ask when renting a privately owned home:

In addition to the questions above, privately owned homes have special considerations that you should ask about.

- Does the owner have intentions to sell the home while you are leasing it?
- Who is responsible for repairs on the home? Appliances? How do they determine the difference between repairs that are due to normal usage and should be covered by the owner and those that are legitimate damage caused and therefore covered by the tenant?
- Who is responsible for caring for the yard? Will the landlord supply necessary equipment such as lawn mower, or is that your responsibility?
- Does the home come with all appliances?

Questions to ask when renting a room or choosing a roommate:

- How many maximum renters will live in the home?
- Will you be living with a family, with children? If with singles, will the house remain non-coed?
- Are there any pets, or do they plan to allow pets in the future?
- What is their view on drug and alcohol use? Does anyone use medical marijuana? What about smoking?
- What kind of relationship are they expecting? To live as family, to be the house mom, to mentor you or to just rent you a room?
- Do they expect to live "in community" with shared meals, chores and recreation, or to share the space and cost only?
- What access do you have to common areas, such as the kitchen, laundry, living room, etc?
- Is someone "in-charge" of the space and you are his/her guest, or are you both/all equally responsible?

Questions to ask before you sign a lease:

The following questions should be asked before signing a lease and these same items should be clearly stated in the rental agreement that you sign.

- Rent amount. When it is due and to whom and where is it to be paid?
- Amount and purpose of security deposit. When and how will you get it back?
- What is the earliest date you can move in?
- How much notice do you have to give before moving out at the end of the lease?
- After the lease is up, can you go month-to-month or will you need to sign a new lease?
- What is the penalty for breaking the lease early?
- Amount charged for late payment.
- The number of people allowed to live in the rental unit.
- Who is responsible for paying utilities?
- Who is responsible for taking care of the yard?
- Who is responsible for repairs?

Application Cost and Security Deposit

Application Fee: The landlord may charge up to \$45 for an application/screening fee. This may, and typically will, include a credit check.

Holding Deposit: A deposit to hold the rental unit for a stated period of time until the tenant pays the first month's rent and security deposit. This deposit is commonly applied to your first month's rent.

Security Deposit: Most rentals require a security deposit, which the landlord can use to compensate for what is owed if you move out with unpaid rent, do damage to the rental beyond normal wear and tear, or leave the rental less clean than when you moved in. It is not legal for a security deposit to be nonrefundable. This means that the landlord must return to you any deposit, unless the landlord properly uses the deposit for the things described previously. Security deposits (including last month's rent, pet deposit, key fee or cleaning fee or any combination) cannot be more than the amount of two months' rent.

Pet Deposit - Most rentals require an additional deposit for approved pets. Please be aware that if you decided to bring a pet with you, it will make finding a place to live much more difficult. Many homes and apartments do not allow pets, and it takes special roommates to live with a pet owner.

Lease and Rental Agreements

Don't rent housing without a lease, rental or housing agreement. The advantages of having a lease are that the landlord cannot raise your rent while the lease is in effect, unless it expressly allows rent increases, and you cannot be evicted, except for legitimate reasons such as damage or failure to pay rent. A written rental agreement also will give you all the terms of the agreement between you and the landlord such as rental cost, payment dates, late fees, repair agreements, amount of notice and any other obligations

Inspecting before you rent

Before you decide to rent, carefully inspect the rental unit with the landlord or agent.

- Cracks or holes in floor, walls, ceiling
- Signs of leaking water or water damage
- Mold
- Inadequate heating or air conditioning
- Damaged flooring
- Signs of insects or rodents
- Appliances working and in good condition
- Overall cleanliness of unit
- Smell (does it have pet, smoke or mold smell?)
- Working locks on all exterior doors
- Windows that open, have screen and glass that are not broken
- Functional smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

The quality of rental units can vary greatly. You should understand the unit's good points and shortcomings, and consider them all when deciding whether to rent and whether the rent is reasonable.

Deciding to Rent

Once you have decided to rent a particular unit, walk through the rental unit with the landlord and note the condition of the items included in the checklist in the “condition upon arrival” section.

- Both of you should date and sign the checklist.
- Take pictures of the rental, especially any problem areas.
- Consider getting renters’ insurance
- Get and keep receipts for your security deposit payment and all rent payments.
- Get a signed copy of your lease, and make sure it covers all the suggested areas above.

Information on Utilities

Below is a list of the utility companies that you will do business with if you move to Redding.

Electricity: [Redding Electric Utility](#) provides electricity to the area. You may apply for new service through their website, and a representative will contact you. Your options are to pay a \$250 deposit or pay a minimal fee for a credit check to start the service. If you are an international there is now a special arrangement with REU for students to be able to waive the deposit.

Natural Gas: [PG&E](#) is the company that provides gas for heating of homes, stoves, and hot water heaters, etc.

Water, Sewer & Waste Management: These areas are covered by the [Redding Municipal Utilities](#). If you are in an apartment, these fees are often included in the rent.

Internet: Most people choose either [AT&T](#) DSL service or [Charter Communications Cable](#) for their Internet. For the cheapest plan, expect to pay approximately \$39.99 or higher per month for both companies.