

How to find an apartment in Portland



A step-by-step guide to help you understand how to rent an apartment

Search for apartments online

Below are the most commonly-used websites for PELA students to find apartments in Portland.

- **College Housing Northwest (CHNW):**
<http://www.chnw.org/>
CHNW provides inexpensive apartments for students in 4 different properties in downtown Portland.
- **University Pointe Student Housing:**
<http://univpointe.com/>
It has furnished and unfurnished apartments. It has private and shared apartments.
- **Hassalo on Eighth Apartments**
<http://hassalooneighth.com/>
It has furnished and unfurnished apartments.
- **Craigslist Portland:**
<http://portland.craigslist.org/apa/>
- **Apartments.com:**
<http://portland.apartments.com/>

Filling Out the Rental Application

When you find a place you like, you will want to fill out a Rental Application as soon as possible. Many apartments are taken very quickly!

On the Rental Application, you will be asked information about yourself. They usually ask:

- **Where you have lived in the past**
- **Who is planning on moving in**
- **Proof that you can afford to pay** for the apartment (example: a bank statement)
- **Your employment history**
- **Proof that you are a student in the U.S.** Contact the PELA office for information on how to get a "Letter of Enrollment".
- **Emergency Contacts** (someone the apartment manager can contact in case of emergency)
- **Names of References** (people who can say you are good person, such as friends, teachers, or family)

There is usually an **Application Fee** of about \$25.

The Rental Application lets the apartment manager run a "**background check**" and "**credit check**" on you. This will take about 4 days to do.

Sending in a Rental Application does not guarantee you will get an apartment. If the manager approves your application, they will contact you. Then you will need to sign an Apartment Lease/Rental Agreement.

Signing a Lease/Rental Agreement

The Lease/Rental Agreement gives information about the monthly cost of the apartment, rules about what is allowed/not allowed in the apartment, and other policies for the apartment.

You will also need to pay a "**Security Deposit**" and/or "**first month's rent**".

The **Security Deposit** is money the apartment manager keeps in case you damage the apartment and it needs to be repaired. If there are no repairs, then you will get most of the Security Deposit back after you move out.

Lease Agreement or Rental Agreement?

A Lease Agreement is an agreement to rent an apartment for 12-month period. With Lease Agreements, your rent will stay the same all year.

A Rental Agreement is an agreement to rent an apartment month-by-month. With Rental Agreements, your rent could increase any month.

Rental Agreements usually make you pay more for the same apartment per month. Sometimes you pay an extra \$300 per month for signing a Rental Agreement, compared to the cost of the same apartment with a Lease Agreement.

Sections in a Lease & Rental Agreement

- **Amount of monthly rent.**
- **Security Deposits and fees.**
- **Utilities you have to pay.** Renters usually pay for services, such as internet and electricity. In some apartments, you pay no extra utility fees.
- **Condition of the apartment.** This will list any problems or damage when you move in.
- **Who is responsible for repairs.**
- **Rules about when the apartment manager can enter your apartment.**
- **Limits on your behavior.** Some apartments may limit where you can smoke or have other rules.
- **Limits on the number of people who can live in the apartment.**
- **Rules on use of the property.** This might be rules such as "no bikes in hallway".
- **Rules on pets.**
- **How the Rental/Lease Agreement can be canceled.** Most agreements have a statement saying that any violation of the agreement by you or a guest can cause your agreement to be canceled.

How to pay your monthly rent

Ask the apartment manager about how you can pay your rent. Most apartments let you pay by **credit card, check, or automatic withdrawal** from a bank. Most apartments have **late fees** if you pay rent after it is due.

Buy “renter’s insurance”!

Just like medical insurance, renter’s insurance can save you a lot of money if there is damage to the apartment and you are required to fix it. **It usually costs about \$15-\$25 per month.**

Having roommates in your apartment

If you want a roommate to move in with you, **you need to get permission from the apartment manager.** Usually, the apartment manager will need to do a background check and even a credit check on the roommate.

Moving out of your apartment

If you are planning on moving out of your apartment, **tell the apartment manager** as soon as possible. Most apartments ask that you tell them 30 or 60 days before you leave.

If you paid a **Security Deposit** when you first moved into the apartment, the apartment manager has 14 to 30 days after you move out to return your security deposit. They may deduct cleaning or repair fees from the Security Deposit.

If you leave before your Lease ends

Before you sign a Lease Agreement, find out the policy and penalties for leaving before the end of your lease. Most apartments ask that you tell them 30 or 60 days before you leave. Some apartments also have fees for ending a lease early. **Read your Lease Agreement!**

If you are planning to leave before your Lease is finished, we recommend you:

- **Tell the apartment manager as early as possible that you are leaving**, so that they can begin to find a new renter. The apartment manager is required by law to try to find a new renter as fast as possible. If you give them time to do this, you may decrease the fees you have to pay for moving out.
- **Find another student who can rent the apartment.** If you can find another student to rent the apartment, you may decrease the fees you have to pay. The new student will

have to fill out the Rental Application, pay the Application Fee and be approved by the apartment manager. **Tell the PELA office if you are moving, because they may know a student who wants an apartment.**

- **Ask the apartment manager about “changing the name on the lease”.** Changing the name on the lease lets another person take the Lease Agreement from you—they are now the renter and will have the apartment till the end of your lease. To do this, **you, the apartment manager, and the new student** will need to **sign a letter** with that says you are no longer responsible for the Lease.

How to search for apartments

When looking for apartments, start by searching for apartments with the zip codes on these maps. The shaded areas are neighborhoods near MAX lines or near bus lines that go directly to Lloyd Center.

After you have found some apartments, use the addresses to find nearby buses and MAX lines.

Use Tri-met.org to plan your commute

Go to <http://trimet.org/> and enter the apartment address and PELA’s address. You can then see how long it will take to get to PELA.

PELA’s address (until September 30, 2015):

425 SW Washington Street
Portland, OR 97204

PELA’s address (after September 30, 2015):

2201 Lloyd Center, Suite 2000
Portland, OR 97232

Set the “**Arrive by**” and “**Depart after**” to the times you will be at school. Some buses only run during part of the day, or only on weekdays.

PELA morning session: 9:00 AM – 12:50 PM
PELA afternoon session: 1:00 PM – 4:50 PM

