

Temporary Housing Guide

Finding short-term housing in a new city can be challenging. It may take resourcefulness and perseverance to find a place to live. The first step in your housing search is to make a list of all the people you know who have connections in the city where you'd like to live. Include long-lost relatives, friends of friends, even parents of your Oberlin friends who are from that city. Contact everyone on your list to see if they can put you up for awhile, or if they have ideas about where you could look for housing.

In addition to contacting everyone on your housing list, you may wish to use some online sources to widen your search. Check the temporary housing links on the internship section of the Career Services webpage. You may also wish to look into housing options at universities in the city where you will be living. Some universities rent out dorm rooms on a temporary basis, and some have housing offices that list sublet advertisements. You should also check the Oberlin online classifieds to see if any alumni have posted sublets in the city where you'll be.

Occasionally, Oberlin alumni will be willing to provide temporary housing for students. You can search for alumni who are willing to house students in the Obieweb database. Meet with a career advisor for more instructions about how to do this. The number of alumni who have housing available is typically quite low, so don't plan on this option as your only strategy.

Please note that the Office of Career Services serves only as a mere clearinghouse for temporary housing opportunities, so we make no effort to screen a particular student for a particular housing experience or to screen any alumni or other individuals who are willing to provide housing for Oberlin students. As a result, Oberlin College cannot vouch for the safety or quality of any housing experience, and you should understand that you assume all risks involved with any housing experience.

How to Look for Housing with Oberlin Alumni & Parents

Important Note: Most temporary housing experiences turn out to be enjoyable ones for students and their hosts. You will probably find that you have much in common with your host. However, it is essential that you talk with your potential host before committing to stay in his or her home. **Your decision to seek housing from a potential host is completely voluntary and you have the sole discretion to decline an offer of housing if you don't think the host would be a good fit for you.** If this happens, please make sure you advise the potential host that you decided to take another housing opportunity. **It is your responsibility to make sure the housing situation is appropriate for your needs.**

We do care about the quality of the housing opportunities offered to our students, so although we cannot control or monitor that quality, we may be able to assist you if you become concerned about your housing situation after you arrive for any reason. In that event, please contact Career Services as soon as possible.

Using OBIEweb (the alumni directory) to find housing:

1. Meet with a member of the Career Services staff or a Peer Career Advisor. After your meeting, you will receive access to OBIEweb and the online housing form.
2. Log on to OBIEweb at <http://www.oberlin.edu/alumni>
3. Under the "Find Alumni" option on the left side of the page, choose "Advanced Search."

4. In the “State/Province” drop-down box, select the state in which you need housing. You may enter the city also, but in major metropolitan areas, it is generally best to start with the state, as one city may contain multiple town names (for example, housing in Cambridge, Somerville, Dorchester, and Jamaica Plain would all work well if you need to be in Boston).
5. Scroll down to the *Alumni and Volunteer Activities* section of the Advanced Search page. Find the drop-down box for “Willing to House Winter Term Students,” and select “Yes.” If you are seeking summer housing, there is a separate drop-down box for summer housing.
6. The last drop-down box on the Advanced Search is “Sort results by.” Select “City” in this category so that you will be able to see locations at a glance.
7. Click on the “Search” button at the bottom of the Advanced Search page.
8. You should now see a list of alumni names organized by the city in which they are located. Click on a name to see the person’s profile, which should include a full address. If the person’s address is in a location that would work for your needs, contact the person using the “Contact this person via email” link located in his or her profile.
9. A pop-up box will appear. You will be able to add your own subject line and message. You will not be able to see the person’s email address. If she or he replies, the email will come to your Oberlin email address, and you will then be able to see the return email address.
10. When writing your message, mention that you noticed the recipient is willing to offer Winter Term housing, and that you are seeking housing in this location. Be sure to explain when and why you need housing (you are from California, but will be completing an internship in Boston that runs from January 6 – February 1, etc.).
11. Use your best professional writing skills (as you would with a cover letter), and ask if the alumnus/a would be willing to discuss providing temporary housing for you during Winter Term. Don’t just ask “will you give me housing?” Make sure that you will have a chance to talk with the person before making a final decision, so that both you and the alumnus/a will have a chance to decide if you will be comfortable living with one another for a month.
12. Be sure to send multiple emails, as not everyone will respond, and it will increase your options if one situation is not a good fit. If you don’t receive a response from someone, send a polite reminder email about a week later, restating your question. If you don’t receive a response after multiple attempts to contact someone, move on to a different contact.
13. Review the guidelines later in this guide before you talk with the alumnus/a. They should give you some ideas for topics to discuss before finalizing a temporary housing arrangement.

Using the Online Housing Form (Parents of students, and Oberlin alumni):

1. Meet with a member of the Career Services staff or a Peer Career Advisor. After your meeting, you will receive access to OBIweb and the online housing form.
2. Log on to the housing form using the link you receive after your meeting
3. Review the list of names and locations in the form to see if there are temporary housing opportunities in your location.
4. Contact individuals in the form using their preferred contact method (email or phone).
5. Use the steps in numbers 9 through 12 above to guide you as you contact individuals from the form.

Other Housing Resources:

If you would prefer to rent a room, or are seeking additional housing options, the following resources may be helpful.

- <http://www.lofstel.com/>
 - <http://www.wfu.edu/~sullivpc/>
 - <https://career.berkeley.edu/Internships/IntHousing.stm>
 - During Winter Term, Oberlin students are able to rent dorm rooms in Manhattan through an agreement with the New York Arts Program. Contact Career Services for more details.
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Temporary Housing with Alumni/Parents: Guidelines for Students Seeking Housing

Students are ambassadors for the college. It is important for you to be responsible and make a good impression, so that this opportunity will continue to be available to future students. These guidelines will help to ensure that the housing experience is a positive one for both you and your host.

Please remember that students who participate in an internship program during Winter Term must continue to comply with all Oberlin College policies and regulations, including those embodied in Oberlin College's Student Regulations, Policies, and Procedures, and any violation of these policies, regulations, or procedures may result in sanctions.

Establish clear expectations. For most students and their hosts, a temporary housing situation is a positive experience. If there are problems, it is often due to a lack of communication during the initial conversations. Because you will be solely responsible for making sure that the housing arrangement meets your needs, it is important to find out about the expectations BEFORE you commit to staying with alumni or parents.

Your host may already have a list of expectations to share with you. If he or she has not prepared expectations in advance, be sure to ask lots of questions to find out about the expectations. Some questions you should ask the host include:

1. Are you charging rent or reimbursement for any costs (utilities, etc.)? Payable when?
2. Am I expected to pitch in with household chores in exchange for room and board? (for example, babysitting, lawn work, walking dog, etc.).
3. Will I be sharing a room with a member of your family?
4. Do you have children? What ages?
5. Are there any house rules regarding use of the television, computer, refrigerator? Any other house rules/preferences?
6. Do you have pets? What kind/s?
7. How will meals work? Should I be responsible for my own groceries and meals?
8. Am I allowed to have guests? What are your expectations for having guests?
9. Is there reasonable, convenient transportation to my work site?
10. Will there be curfew expectations? If so, what are they?

Please adhere to the following guidelines when staying with an alumnus or parent host, unless your host has specifically informed you that he or she has a different expectation:

1. Bring current copies of The Oberlin Review and other campus publication/s of interest. If you are able, bring a small gift – something Oberlin-related is nice.

2. Exercise friendliness and common courtesy when addressing the alumnus/a or parent and his/her family. You can't overuse "please" and "thank you." Be sure to write a thank you card afterwards.
3. Clean up after yourself – especially in shared areas of the home. Keep your personal belongings together and your room tidy. Wash your dirty dishes and always rinse the bathtub/shower after using it.
4. Bring a music player with headphones, and use headphones if you wish to listen to music during your visit.
5. Always ask first before you invite a guest into your host's home.
6. Always ask first if you need or wish to use something belonging to your host. This can include going into closets, kitchen pantry, etc.
7. Bring your own supply of toiletries.
8. Be respectful of your host's "lights out" routine.
9. Always notify your host in advance if you are not going to be returning home during the night for any reason.
10. Do not expect your host to provide transportation for you.
11. Do not smoke cigarettes, bring drugs and/or consume alcohol in your host's home.
12. Do not monopolize the TV or computer. Never use the computer to view any inappropriate material. If possible, bring and use only your own computer.
13. Enjoy! You will probably find that you have much in common with your host/s.

Please let us know if you have any questions, need assistance, or have any feedback regarding your housing experience. Contact the Office of Career Services at career.services@oberlin.edu or 440.775.8140, and you will be connected with a member of our professional staff.

I certify that I have read and understood the guidelines set forth in this Temporary Housing Guide and I consent and agree to these guidelines.

Signature

Date

Name (Printed)

Age

TO BE READ AND SIGNED BY PARENT/GUARDIAN, IF MINOR:

I hereby represent that I am the parent or guardian of the minor whose name appears above. I have read and understood the guidelines set forth in this Temporary Housing Guide and I consent and agree to these guidelines on behalf of myself and the above minor.

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian of Minor