

Housing Supplement

Anytime you move to a new place, it can be stressful and difficult to get accustomed to new things. Your move to Hawaii may be the first time for you in a new country with a new language to learn, so we hope this guide helps you with some of the issues you may encounter.

Housing

Homestays

For those of you living in homestays, you may find yourself in a situation different than what you had expected. If you are accustomed to doing things a certain way in your home country, you may feel uncomfortable or like you can't be as free in your new home. Here are some suggestions to help:

- Try speaking directly with the host family about your concerns. If you do not say anything, they might not realize that something is bothering you.
- If you are not sure, always **ask**. Just by asking, you can avoid potential problems.
- If you feel uncomfortable talking to the host family directly, please see the Housing Coordinator about your problem and he can talk to the host family on your behalf, and also give some advice.

If you still cannot resolve the issue, please come to the front office and ask for the Housing Coordinator so that he or she can assist you.

Apartments

Many students find that living on their own is very beneficial. One of the big issues in Hawaii is the high cost of living, so many people choose to share a room or an apartment, as it is a much cheaper option.

Apartment Searching

- One of the most popular ways to search for living arrangements is through a website called Craigslist: (www.Honolulu.Craigslist.org)
Other options are www.hotpads.com; www.padmapper.com or www.apartments.com
- We remind you to **NEVER** wire money to landlords via [western union](#) because no legitimate [property manager](#) will ever ask you to do that.
- Some places may ask you to sign a lease, which is a contract with a long list of stipulations you have to follow. Please carefully read the lease before signing it. If you do not understand something, or do not agree with a certain item in the lease, please make your concerns known to the real estate agent or property manager.

- Most apartments require a minimum lease of 6 months or 1 year. If you sign this type of lease and then need to leave the property earlier than expected, a penalty may be levied against you (sometimes as high as all of the unused rent).
- For those on short term stays in Hawaii, renting a room on a month-to-month basis is often possible through room/apartment sharing.

Apartment problems

- As soon as any problem occurs, be sure to contact your landlord and explain the problem. Also, try to follow-up with a written letter or email, and keep a copy because it is recommended to always have a paper trail.
- It is recommended to acquire Renter's Insurance, as it will protect you in the case of a burglary or other unforeseen event. Many insurance companies offer this service.
- All landlords and renters are protected by laws that are outlined in the following handbook: [State of Hawaii's Landlord - Tenant Handbook](#)

Cell Phones

Getting a cell phone can be quite easy depending on your situation. The easiest way is to purchase a pre-paid phone, and add airtime as needed. The other way is to sign a contract with a phone company.

1. Pre-paid (No Contract) Phones, recommended for students

- Almost all major cell phone carriers offer a prepaid option.
- These phones can be bought in Wal-Mart, Don Quixote, and Walgreens to name a few.
- The phone itself will range from \$9.99-\$200.00 depending on the features of the phone. These phones have *no contract*, so there is no fee for cancellation.
- Pre-paid cards can be bought for as little as \$15.00 to \$100.00 or more. Please be sure to read about the plan and make sure that it meets your needs.

*If your cell phone is unlocked and has a SIM card slot, you may be able to purchase just the SIM card and make calls from your phone in Hawaii. Ask the employee at the cell phone shop if your phone can be used.

2. Contract Phones

- Provided by most carriers. Prices are set in stone (optional add-ons: unlimited data, text and additional minutes - offered by most)
- Most contracts are for 1 -2 years. Ending the contract early will cost you a cancellation fee of up to \$700.00.