

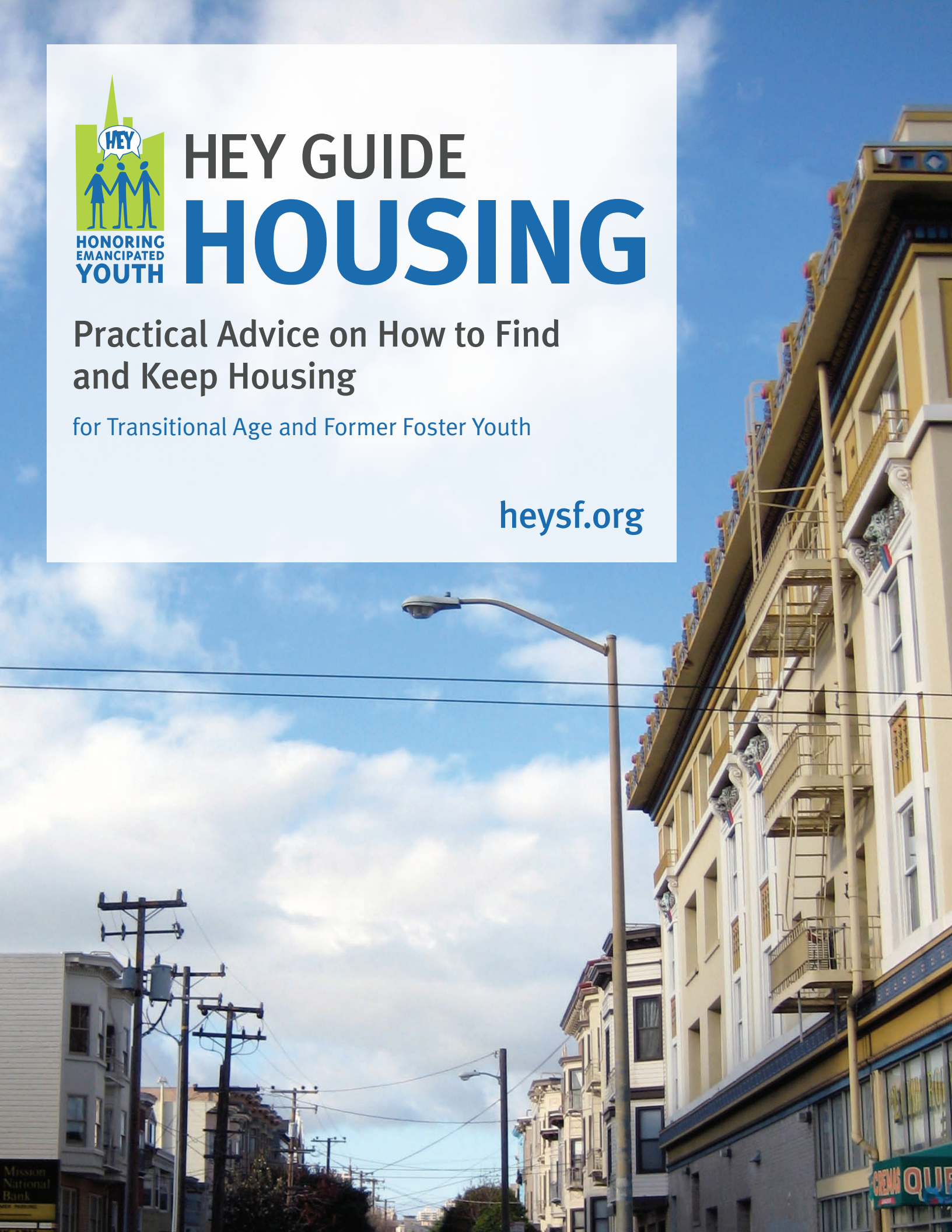


# HEY GUIDE HOUSING

Practical Advice on How to Find  
and Keep Housing

for Transitional Age and Former Foster Youth

[heysf.org](http://heysf.org)



# HEY GUIDE: HOUSING

## apartment

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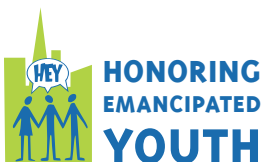
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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first ever *HEY Guide: Housing for Transitional Age and Former Foster Youth*.

Through the diligent effort and support of former foster youth, volunteers and community members, we present to you the first ever *HEY Guide*. This *HEY Guide* is dedicated to housing and is a valuable resource to any young person in the Bay Area, especially former foster youth and disconnected transitional aged youth. We hope this guide will provide a step up to youth ages 18-24 to procure safe and affordable housing in the Bay Area. Be on the lookout for other *HEY Guides* providing advice and assistance around other areas of need for former foster youth and other transitional age youth.

HEY is especially proud of the community support we have received throughout this process. The *HEY Guide: Housing* is entirely written, edited and designed by young volunteers, several of whom have had experience in the foster care and homeless systems. Their bios are provided in this guide, showing that this honest information comes from those who have experienced the difficulties of finding and obtaining housing, especially in the Bay Area. Much support was also provided by our community partner agencies who ensured accuracy of program descriptions and advice provided in this guide.

HEY identifies and raises awareness around challenges affecting local emancipating or emancipated foster youth by bringing together a diversity of voices and experiences, including those of former foster youth, service providers, and other supporters, in finding solutions.

To learn more about Honoring Emancipated Youth (HEY) and the other tools and products we provide for former foster youth and other transitional age youth in the Bay Area, please visit our website at [www.heysf.org](http://www.heysf.org).

We welcome your comments on this guide, and suggestions on other resources needed in the community. Feel free to use this guide in any capacity, and distribute to those helping youth as well as the youth themselves.

Working together towards common goals,

Dana Mandolesi

**HEY PROJECT MANAGER**

**STAFF SUPPORTING EDITOR**

Honoring Emancipated Youth (HEY)

# is an apartment for me?

- + Am I ready for the freedom that an apartment offers?
- + Does the neighborhood I want to live in have apartments for rent?
- + Am I okay with living in a building with many other tenants?
- + Can I pay rent every month?
- + Am I responsible enough to pay bills, clean house and respect my neighbors?

# who do i know?

- + Can someone come with or take me to see apartments?
- + Can someone help me fill out the application?
- + Is there someone that will co-sign for me if I don't have a sufficient credit history?
- + Is there someone who can help me with setting up my utilities?
- + Is there someone who can help me furnish my new place?

## LIVING IN AN APARTMENT

An apartment is one of many units in a building or a house that has one or more rooms, a kitchen and bathroom. An apartment may be owned by a large company or a single landlord. An apartment is rented with monthly payments and usually agreements are signed between the tenant (you) and the landlord. Sometimes in the Bay Area, an apartment is referred to as a flat, and usually that means it is one whole floor in a house that is broken into apartments.

### SOME BENEFITS OF LIVING IN AN APARTMENT

You have the freedom to come and go whenever you want.

You are responsible only for yourself.

### SOME DRAWBACKS OF LIVING IN AN APARTMENT

You have to pay all of your own bills.

If you pay a bill late there is a penalty charge.

### GET ADVICE

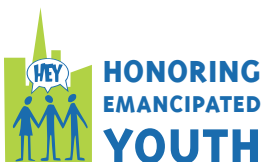
Before you begin searching for an apartment it is useful to create a list of people that you think can help you. Call these people right away and let them know you are looking for an apartment. Maybe they have a good lead for you, or can provide some assistance. Always let people know if you are going to use them for a personal reference.

### POSSIBLE REFERENCES?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

### REMEMBER!

You might need personal references. These should be adults who know how responsible you are and have good credentials. It's best if your references are not family members. Teachers, counselors, work supervisors and neighbors are all good bets.



APARTMENT SECTION 8 ON-CAMPUS TRANSITIONAL HOUSE SHELTER

at **United Way** 221 Main Street, Suite 300 call us at 415-808-4284  
of the Bay Area San Francisco, CA 94105 email [HEYsf@uwba.org](mailto:HEYsf@uwba.org)

+ Basics (pg 4), Budget, Finding a Place, Prepare, Applications, Lease, Paying, Roomates, Leaving

# BUDGETING

The first thing you should do is create a budget. This will help you determine how much you realistically can spend on housing supplies, utilities, rent, transportation, food, clothing, social activities, etc.



## move-in and monthly budget

BILLS	COST
Rent	
Utilities	
Electricity	
Phone / Cell	
Water/Sewer	
Garbage	
Gas/Transportation	
Groceries	
Personal Care	
Laundry	

**TOTAL**                    **\$**

### HOUSING

APPLICATION FEE	\$
DEPOSIT	\$
RENT	\$
LIVING ROOM	\$
KITCHEN	\$
BEDROOM	\$
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>\$</b>

### BEDROOM

BEDDING	\$
MATTRESS COVER	\$
LAMP	\$
POSTERS/PICTURES	\$
ALARM CLOCK	\$
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>\$</b>

### MISC EXPENSES

NEW CHECKS	\$
CELL PHONE	\$
CABLE INSTALLATION	\$
OTHER	\$

**SUBTOTAL:**                    **\$**

### KITCHEN

POTS & PANS	\$
SILVERWARE	\$
COOKING UTENSILS	\$
DISHES	\$
CLEANING SUPPLIES	\$
MOP & BROOM	\$
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>\$</b>

### LIVING SPACE / BATHROOM

VACUUM	\$
LAMP	\$
DECORATIONS	\$
SHOWER CURTAIN	\$
BATHMAT & TOWELS	\$
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>\$</b>

### HOUSING SUBTOTAL:

HOUSING	\$
KITCHEN	\$
BEDROOM	\$
LIVING SPACE/BATHROOM	\$
MISC. EXPENSES	\$

**TOTAL:**                    **\$**

## what is my perfect apartment?

- + What neighborhoods do I like?
- + What am I willing to pay?
- + How many bedrooms and bathrooms do I need?
- + Do I want a washer/dryer in my unit, or in my building?
- + Do I want large or small windows, low or high ceilings?
- + Do I want hardwood or carpets?
- + Do I want new kitchen and bathroom appliances or do I not mind older ones?
- + Do I need storage?
- + Do I prefer a high rise, a low rise, a single house or a flat in a house?

## FINDING AN APARTMENT

In the Bay Area, finding a good apartment can be especially difficult, so start early! Remember, you might not get your dream house, but don't take a place that will make you unhappy. Use the following resources to help you look for your place:

### CRAIGSLIST

[www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org) is the best way to find an apartment in the Bay Area, because new sites are listed constantly!

### BULLETIN POSTINGS

Community bulletin boards located in: local libraries, groceries stores, coffee shops, churches, and on college campuses.

### NEWSPAPERS

Classified sections in local newspapers.

### REAL ESTATE AGENCIES

They usually don't charge you for the service, they charge the person who owns the apartment, so calling them to see what they have is not a bad idea.

After you know how much you can spend on rent, make a list of the things you want your apartment to have. You may not get everything you want, but it's important to think about the kind of apartment that would make you happy. Ask yourself these types of questions:

*Do I want large or small windows, low or high ceilings?*

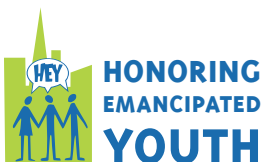
Smaller windows and lower ceilings make your house easier and therefore cheaper to heat.

*Do I want hardwood or carpets?*

Carpets are good for heat insulation, but if you have kids or pets, they might cost you more in the long run, because you might have to pay to have them fixed. Hardwood floors are easier to keep clean, but if you have heavy furniture you have to be careful not to leave dents and scratches.

*Do I want new kitchen and bathroom appliances, or do I not mind older ones?*

Newer appliances may mean more expensive rent, but older ones may mean more expensive utilities.



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# reading apartment postings

Common abbreviations used in apartment ads:

A/C	Air Conditioning
APT	Apartment
BA, BTH	Bathroom
COND	Condition
COV	Convenient
COMP	Completely
FURN	Furnished
FL	Floor
HT	Heat
HW	Hot Water
K, KIT	Kitchen
LDRY	Laundry
LGE	Large
LIVRM	Living Room
MO	Month
NR	Near
PARK, PKG	Parking
RENOV	Renovated
RM	Room
SEC DEP	Security Deposit
UTILS	Utilities
WW	Wall to Wall Carpeting
YD	Yard

An ad is only the information that the landlord thinks will make his or her apartment rent fast. Look at these ads and figure out what the most important questions are to ask yourself and the landlord.

### SAMPLE LISTING

Owner pays trash and water. Cozy, Edwardian style 1 bed 1 bath apt. with period kitchen and bathroom, new paint and blinds, double pane windows. Easy walk to Sequoia station, public transportation and most conveniences. Avail. now. Please call 415-555-1234 to schedule an appointment.

### SAMPLE LISTING

2.5 Bdrms, 1 Bath clean and spacious garden apartment unit in fourplex. Large eat-in kitchen with electric stove and refrigerator. Neutral wall to wall carpet. Laundry facility on the premises, easy street parking. Central location to shops and restaurants. 1 mile from transit. Water and garbage included. Tenant pays PG&E. Security Deposit \$1250 No smoking or Section 8. No pets.

Maybe these are both great apartments, but beware and read between the lines!

*What does cozy mean? Does it just mean very small?*

*How long exactly is an 'easy walk'?*

*What does period mean? It could mean antique and quant, or it could just be old!*

*What does two and a half bedrooms look like?*

*Is the half bedroom big enough for an adult, or would it work for a child's room?*

*Is the place more expensive because of the half bedroom?*

*Do you really need that extra space?*

## children

- + Ask about the Womens, Infants and Children Program (WIC)
- + You may be eligible for TANF/Cal-Works. Go to [www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/default.aspx) for more information.
- + [www.disabilitybenefits101.org/ca/programs/income\\_support/calworks/faqs.htm#\\_q1398](http://www.disabilitybenefits101.org/ca/programs/income_support/calworks/faqs.htm#_q1398) to check your eligibility

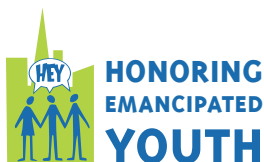
### SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

If you have children, make sure to tell the landlord, but know that he cannot discriminate against you if you do have children.

Having a child should not damage your chances of getting a place. In fact, make sure to stand up for your rights not to be discriminated against for being a parent.

You should ask about the Women, Infants and Children Program, often referred to as WIC. WIC provides vouchers for free food essentials, including expensive baby formula.

Make sure to check the apartment for child safety concerns.



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+ Basics, Budget, Finding a Place (pg 7), Prepare, Applications, Lease, Paying, Roomates, Leaving

# GETTING YOUR PERSONAL DOCUMENTS READY

Before signing a lease, your landlord may want reassurance about your ability to pay rent every month and how reliable you are. You may need to have some of these documents:

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

If you work for a company:

*An employment letter on employer's letterhead verifying length of employment and annual income for the past 2 years (including any bonus, rental allowance or other extra income)*

*A copy of your most recent pay stub*

If receiving federal or state assistance:

*Copies of your 3 most recent benefits checks*

*Applications for assistance programs*

*A letter from a social worker or attorney verifying participation/eligibility*

3 most recent bank statements

Tax forms from previous 2 years

## HOUSING INFORMATION

A letter of reference from your prior landlord or cancelled rent checks for the past 2 months

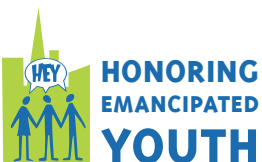
Contact information of previous landlords

Proof of Legal Residency such as a driver's license, a state ID, Social Security Card or Birth Certificate

## be prepared

You probably won't have all this right away, but it's a good idea to start to collect these documents as soon as possible!

Also, if you are looking in more competitive areas, it is a great idea to fill out a generic application that asks all the information a landlord would probably want. There is a link to an application on the next page. If you like the place, you can leave your application and information right away so the landlord knows you're serious, and can start the application process that day.



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# APARTMENT APPLICATIONS

Submitting an application is your first commitment to an apartment, but this doesn't mean you will have to live there if approved. There is usually a \$20-\$30 application fee, so you should only apply to a place you actually want. Before you apply, make sure you've thoroughly inspected the apartment and you can imagine being happy living there because the fee won't be returned to you. Some landlords may ask for a "holding fee" to guarantee you will rent the apartment if you are approved. If you are approved for the apartment, the holding fee will be applied to your first month's rent. If you are not approved, the fee will be returned to you.

## filling out an application

- + [http://www.rentalguide.com/pdf/rental\\_application.pdf](http://www.rentalguide.com/pdf/rental_application.pdf)

It's a great idea to fill out a basic application and bring it with you when you fill out your potential apartment application. Go to [http://www.rentalguide.com/pdf/rental\\_application.pdf](http://www.rentalguide.com/pdf/rental_application.pdf) for a typical master application for San Francisco housing. Print and fill out the form to get the experience of filling out a lease application. Bring it with you so you have all the information if you need to fill out another application at the apartment you are viewing.

## credit and background

- + [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com)
- + [www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov](http://www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov)

Before agreeing to sign the lease, the landlord will probably run a background and/or credit report. This might cost you \$35-50 in California.

### CREDIT REPORTS

Credit reports outline your credit history including: how many credit cards/loans you have, how much you owe on them, and if you've paid them on time. If you have any major debt or don't make enough money, the landlord can choose not to rent to you.

If you don't know what your credit score is—find out now! You can get one free report a year at <https://www.annualcreditreport.com>.

You should print your free credit report and take copies to your apartment interview. If you want to apply, the landlord will sometimes accept a copy of that report, and you won't have to pay for them to run a credit check.

If you don't have a good credit history, or you don't have any credit history, you may need a co-signer. A co-signer is a person who can legally get a lease for an apartment/rental unit when another person (that would be you) is having difficulty. The co-signer makes a legal agreement to be jointly responsible for the monthly rent if the renter doesn't pay.

### BACKGROUND CHECKS

A background check is a police record scan to see if you have been convicted of a crime. Legally, the landlord is not allowed to deny you the apartment based on a criminal record, but the landlord may choose another applicant over you.

You can get a copy of your record at the public defender's office so you can be aware of what it says.

It's possible to seal your juvenile record. Contact your county Juvenile Probation Office.

If you were in foster care, you can seal your case. Call the Foster Care Ombudsman ([www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov](http://www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov)) at 1-877-846-1602 to ask about this process.

# the interview

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## inspecting an apartment

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- + Do all the lights and heat work?
- + Are all the electrical wires hidden and/or secure?
- + Is water pressure decent, and does it get adequate hot and cold water?
- + Are there any cracks or holes in the walls?
- + Do all the windows open and lock?
- + Does the lock on the front door work and does the apartment 'feel' safe?
- + Do the appliances work?
- + Are there any smells?
- + Am I comfortable with the landlord?
- + Are the floors damaged?
- + Do I see any signs of insect or rodent infestations?
- + Is the place clean and ready for me to move in?
- + If I have children, are the stove and countertops high enough off the floor that a child can't reach?

Usually when you go to see an apartment, you have the apartment interview at the same time. You should always dress nicely and, if possible, bring everyone who plans to live there. This is your chance to interview the landlord too, so ask questions!

It's easy to get so excited about a place that you forget to thoroughly inspect it before signing the lease. It's a great idea to bring along a friend or advocate so they can help you inspect the place. It's perfectly okay to take notes to review later and ask the landlord lots of questions, even if they are simple. Don't just take the landlord's word for it, go around and check on things. It is your right to test everything, and the landlord expects that, so don't be shy!

If you see any problems with the apartment, you can discuss them with the landlord before you sign the lease. You can ask the landlord to fix the problems and should get a signed agreement stating which problems they will fix and by when. If the landlord doesn't agree to fix the problems, you may want to reconsider if this is the best option for you. Make a list and take pictures if possible to make sure you don't get charged when you move out.

### REMEMBER!

You are choosing them as much as they are choosing you!

### WHAT IF I DON'T GET IN?

If you don't get into an apartment, don't worry. Keep looking and you'll find another place. If you don't have time to keep looking and need a place to stay right away you can always try transitional housing programs (page 31) or emergency shelters (page 38).



## know your rights

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- + foster care status
- + age, sex or gender
- + race, ethnicity or color
- + religion
- + sexual orientation
- + marital status
- + source of income (unless illegal)
- + disability or medical status

Legally a landlord cannot refuse to rent to you on the basis of any of the reasons listed to the left. If you feel that you are a victim of unlawful discrimination you can report it to your local Tenant Board Association. Your Tenant Board Association can easily be found by running a search in Google under "tenant board + your city".

# THE LEASE AGREEMENT

## LEASE

A legally binding document that states your rights and the rules you must follow as a lessee, as well as the lessor's rights and rules they must follow.

## LESSEE OR TENANT

The person who is leasing the apartment—you!

## LESSOR

The person, which is the landlord, who is leasing out the apartment.

## lease specifics

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Every lease should include the following information:

- + Your name and the landlords name.
- + The full address of the unit you are renting.
- + The amount of rent due each month, when that rent is due and who and where you pay.
- + The length of the lease term.
- + Whether or not you are allowed to sublet (meaning rent to another person if you decide to move out early, or share the unit.)
- + Who is responsible for paying the gas, electricity, water, trash, or other fees.
- + How many people, including children, are allowed to live in the unit.
- + Whether pets are allowed and if they require deposits.
- + Information and timeline of any repairs that the landlord agrees to make while you were inspecting the unit.

## filling out the lease

A lease contract can be for a month, a partial year, one year or multiple years. Once you sign a lease you are agreeing to pay the rent and abide by the rules in the lease for the amount of time stated. You must pay rent for the entire time the lease states; therefore, if you decide to break your lease you will have to pay a penalty fee.

Once your lease is up, you can choose to renew your contract or leave. If you renew your lease, the landlord can increase the rent, but only as much as the city allows.

To find out how much your landlord can increase the rent, go to your local Tenant Board Association's website.

Some living agreements are made without signing any documents which are called verbal or oral lease agreements. This may seem like a good idea because you won't be obligated to any rules—but then your landlord won't either! If the landlord disrespects your rights you will need to have documents. Try to get all agreements between you and your landlord in writing.

You need to make sure all of these details are listed, because anything that is not explicitly on the lease may be changed by the landlord. Think about it, if the amount of rent was not on the lease then the landlord could bring you to court and demand any amount of money he wants!

### HOW TO READ A LEASE

When you go through your lease, highlight or underline any parts that you don't understand or that you don't agree with. Ask the landlord, a friend or an advocate anything you don't understand. If you still have unanswered questions make an appointment with your local Tenants Rights Board.

### NEGOTIATING THE LEASE

If you don't agree to the conditions of the lease but you still want to rent the apartment, you can meet with your potential landlord and try to negotiate the terms of the lease. Don't be intimidated by your landlord because even though you need a place, he needs to rent it to someone! The worst that can happen is that the landlord doesn't want to change the terms of the lease.

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### FILLING OUT A LEASE AGREEMENT

Visit [www.habitat.com/lease.asp](http://www.habitat.com/lease.asp) to check out what a real lease looks like for an apartment complex.

# PAYING FOR YOUR APARTMENT

What you must pay your landlord:

## SECURITY DEPOSIT

A security deposit is refundable money that you pay your landlord along with the first month's rent. This deposit ensures the landlord that any damages made to the apartment will be paid for by you. When you move out, your landlord will subtract the damage amount from your full security deposit and give you your remaining balance. Legally, in California, your landlord can not charge you more than two times the amount of monthly rent for your security deposit.

## LAST MONTH'S RENT

Some landlords require new tenants to pay their last month's rent when they sign the lease, at the same time as the first month's rent. They do this to guarantee that if you leave early, they will still have a whole paid month to find a new tenant.

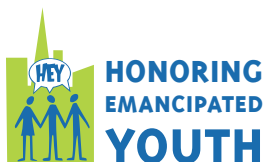
## MONTHLY RENT

Pay your rent by check rather than cash because then you will have proof of payment. If you don't have checks or a checking account, ask for a receipt from your landlord so you can prove you paid. Remember, rent needs to be paid every month, by or before the due date, because if you miss a month you could get evicted or charged a late fee.

## PAST DUE RENT

If you cannot pay rent on time don't submit a check you know will bounce. A bounced check will upset your landlord. You will also have bounced check fees from your bank *and* late payment fees from your landlord. If you know that you cannot pay the rent, talk to your landlord and explain the problem. If you are a good tenant, most landlords will want to work with you because it is a lot of work for them to get a new tenant.

If you do not pay your rent on time, your landlord can decide to serve you a 3-day eviction notice. However, if you pay the rent within 3 days, you will not be required to move out.



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## other cash assistance

- + <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/default.aspx>
- + [http://www.disabilitybenefits101.org/ca/programs/income\\_support/calworks/faqs.htm#\\_q1398](http://www.disabilitybenefits101.org/ca/programs/income_support/calworks/faqs.htm#_q1398)
- + <http://www.snap-step1.usda.gov/fns/>

### GENERAL ASSISTANCE (GA)

If you need help paying for the rent, and you don't have any children, you should apply for GA. GA is a small amount of money that the government provides people who are single or married, but without children. To find out more about your local GA services do a Google search "your city + general assistance."

### WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)

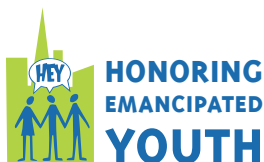
If you have children you may be eligible for WIC which will help you buy food. See <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/default.aspx> for more info.

### TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) / CALWORKS

If you have a child under 18, do not have more than \$2000 in savings, and are unemployed or make very little money, you may be eligible for TANF, which is sometimes referred to as CalWorks. TANF is a government cash program that the government gives to you for a temporary time while you are getting on your feet. Go to [http://www.disabilitybenefits101.org/ca/programs/income\\_support/calworks/faqs.htm#\\_q1398](http://www.disabilitybenefits101.org/ca/programs/income_support/calworks/faqs.htm#_q1398) for more information and see if you are eligible.

### FOOD STAMPS

The Food Stamp Program provides you with an ATM card that has money on it to pay for healthy food items. You must not make very much money and not have more than \$2000 in savings. Go to <http://www.snap-step1.usda.gov/fns/> to see if you may be eligible for Food Stamps in California.



APARTMENT SECTION 8 ON-CAMPUS TRANSITIONAL HOUSE SHELTER

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of the Bay Area San Francisco, CA 94105 email [HEYsf@uwba.org](mailto:HEYsf@uwba.org)

+ Basics, Budget, Finding a Place, Prepare, Applications, Lease, Paying (pg 13), Roomates, Leaving

# LIVING WITH ROOMMATES

Living with roommates will usually get you better deals. However, the choice of whether to live with a roommate and who to live with is an important decision. So, before agreeing to live with a potential roommate, sit down and talk!

## compatibility

How compatible are you and your potential roommate?

- + How would you describe yourself?
- + Have you ever lived on your own?
- + Do you have any pets? Do you like pets?
- + What is your schedule like? Do you have a steady source of income?
- + What do you like to do in your free time?
- + How long do you plan on staying here?
- + Are you in a relationship? If so, does your partner spend a lot of time coming over or are you gone a lot?
- + What times do you usually wake up/fall asleep?
- + What are your cleaning habits?

### LOOKING FOR AN APARTMENT WITH A ROOMMATE

Make sure that you and your roommate agree on what you are looking for in an apartment. If possible, you should always look for apartments together, because you can both see if you like it, and the landlord can meet you both at the same time. If you can't go together, you should make a list of things you both agree on, so if you make a second appointment with the landlord and your roommate, you're not wasting anyone's time.

### ROOMMATES IN THE BAY AREA

The Bay Area is an expensive and crowded place to live. That means that you might have to have roommates, even if you want to live alone. There are two potential routes you can take when looking for roommates. One way is to find someone you want to live with and then go look for empty apartments together. The other option is to look for roommates who already live in an apartment that have an extra room. You can look at <http://sfbay.craigslist.org/roo/> for a list of people who have apartments and are looking for roommates. This option is great in San Francisco, where housing is difficult to find.



## agreement

- + [www.rainbowroommates.com/n\\_p/Sample%20Agreement.htm](http://www.rainbowroommates.com/n_p/Sample%20Agreement.htm)
- + <http://sfbat.craigslist.org/roo/>

### ROOMMATE AGREEMENT

It's a good idea for you and your roommate to discuss and agree on what's expected of each of you including: a cleaning schedule, having friends over, and how to divide rent and utilities. This may seem like a lot, but it can definitely help in the long run to avoid potential problems. Similar to an apartment lease, the roommate agreement should include:

Both of your names.

The date.

How long the agreement will last.

How much each of you agree to pay towards rent each month.

Conditions that you agree to follow, and conditions that your roommate agrees to follow.

Visit [www.rainbowroommates.com/n\\_p/Sample%20Agreement.htm](http://www.rainbowroommates.com/n_p/Sample%20Agreement.htm) to see what a roommate agreement looks like. You can use this one or you can create your own agreement that you feel more comfortable with.

# TIME TO LEAVE

## MOVING OUT

There are a couple easy steps to follow when moving out of an apartment:

Give a written notice to your landlord at least 30 days in advance.

Fully clean your apartment including repairs to anything that has been damaged. Scrub the walls and floors.

Contact your landlord to make an appointment to inspect the apartment.

Collect your security deposit. Sometimes you will have to pick it up on a certain date.

Remember that if you break your lease by leaving earlier than the date on your lease, you may have to pay some of your security deposit.

## EVICTIION

Just as you can choose to leave an apartment, a landlord can choose to end a month-to-month or yearly lease by giving you 30 days notice which states termination of the contract. This means that you have 30 days from the date that you receive the notice to find and secure another apartment. However, a landlord can also serve you a 3-day notice for any of the following reasons:

Failure to pay your rent.

Violating the terms of the lease or rental agreement.

Using your apartment unit to commit a crime.

To move themselves or an immediate family member into your apartment.

A Landlord can't evict you for:

Late payment of rent by one or two days

Personality conflicts

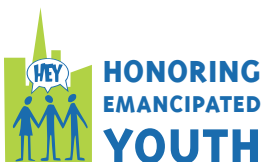
Your race, religion, sexuality, gender or other personal traits

To move someone else into your apartment (like the landlord's friend)

## know your rights

+ <http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/index.shtml>

If you feel your rights have been or are being violated, go to this resource: [California Tenants: A Guide to Residential Tenants' and Landlords' Rights and Responsibilities at The California Department of Consumer Affairs](http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/index.shtml) website at <http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/index.shtml> or contact your local tenant's board.



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# LIVING IN SECTION 8 OR PUBLIC HOUSING

Section 8 or Public Housing is housing that the government helps you pay for. It is either living in an assigned public housing unit, or a *housing voucher program*. Section 8 and Public Housing are separate opportunities, although some counties may not have public housing units. A voucher program is where you choose the apartment or single family home and are responsible for paying a portion of the rent, usually 30-40% of your income. You have to fit the criteria for the program, which are usually very low income, having children, or having a disability. Sometimes being an emancipated foster youth helps too.

In the Bay Area, there are very long waits for Section 8 Housing and Public Housing, but that should not stop you from applying if you think you may be eligible.

## is it for me?

- + Do I meet the set criteria for Section 8 or Public Housing? (see page 18 of this section)
- + How much can I realistically spend on rent and bills?
- + Is the apartment accessible to transportation, work or school?

### A BENEFIT OF LIVING IN SECTION 8/PUBLIC HOUSING

A significant portion of your rent will be paid for you.

### SOME DRAWBACKS OF LIVING IN SECTION 8/PUBLIC HOUSING

With Public Housing, you may be offered a unit in housing projects in a location you don't want.

With Section 8, it may be difficult to find a place to live where the landlord isn't bothered that you are on Section 8 Housing.

Both programs have long wait lists.

## who do i know?

- + Who can help me gather all of the information I'll need to file an application?
- + Who can help me search for a place to live that accepts Section 8?
- + Who can be a personal or professional reference for me?
- + Who can help me get my utilities turned on?

### GET ADVICE

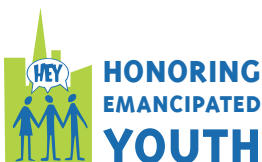
Before you begin the application process for Section 8 or Public Housing, it is useful to create a list of people that you think can help you. These could also be your references for moving into an apartment.

### POSSIBLE REFERENCES?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### REMEMBER!

You might need personal references. These should be adults who know how responsible you are and have good credentials. It's best if your references are not family members. Teachers, counselors, work supervisors and neighbors are all good bets.



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## budgeting

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Even though you may only be paying a portion of your rent, you will still be responsible for supplying your own furniture and other necessities, like dishes and towels. See page 5 in *Living in an Apartment* for a budgeting worksheet.

Also, you may be responsible for your own utilities, which can be expensive—so make sure to ask what your landlord or program covers.

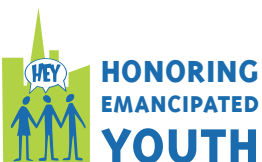
## pros & cons

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Once you have had a chance to do some research on Section 8 or Public Housing it's important to make a list of all the things you liked and disliked about the program. Ask the opinions of a couple people you trust.

pros

cons



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# FINDING SECTION 8 OR PUBLIC HOUSING

## STEP 1

Check your eligibility. Go to [www.hud.gov/renting/phprog.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/renting/phprog.cfm). You can also check the Public Housing Authority or Authorities for your area with a Google search. The Housing Authority is responsible for all the people living in Public Housing or that have Section 8 vouchers.

## STEP 2

See if the Public Housing Authority that you want to apply for is taking applications. You can check their website online, or call them and ask. If they are taking applications, you should fill one out and send it in. Bring it to the post office and ask to have it certified. This costs a little more, but it ensures your application will be delivered. Go to the link listed on Step 1 to find out how to access an application. Remember, you will need to clarify if you are applying for a Section 8 voucher, for Public Housing, or for both.

## STEP 3

You will be notified by mail that you are eligible or not. You may:

- Be put on a waiting list.
- Be determined ineligible.
- Receive a Housing Choice Voucher which allows you to start looking for a place.
- Be offered a public housing unit.

If you are placed on the waiting list:

You will not stay on the waiting list forever, especially if you start to make more money, get married or your situation changes.

If you do move, make sure to update your application with your new address, or you will be removed from the waiting list.

If you receive a voucher:

You are responsible for finding your own apartment, where the landlord accepts Section 8 tenants.

See page 6 of *Living in an Apartment* for advice on how to find an apartment.

Pay attention to the expiration date on the voucher—you must use it before that date or you will lose your rent assistance. Extensions may be given if you have difficulty finding a place, or if you have a disability—make sure to ask for an extension so you don't lose your voucher!

If you are assigned a public housing unit:

You can move in whenever the lease starts.

Make sure to inspect the apartment first to make sure everything is in working order, so you won't be blamed for something that is broken before you moved in. This is usually done for you by the Housing Authority, but it doesn't hurt to check it out, just in case.

See page 10 of *Living in an Apartment* to learn how to inspect an apartment.

# what am i looking for?

---

Once you decide that Section 8 or Public Housing is for you, and you are accepted into the program, you'll need to think about what you are looking for in an apartment.

*Can I find an apartment that accepts Section 8 Housing in a neighborhood that I want to live in?*

*Am I comfortable in the Public Housing Unit that was offered to me?*

*Do I need specific services, for myself, my child or other roommates?*

See page 6 in *Living in an Apartment – What is My Perfect Apartment?* for more questions to ask yourself.

## services available

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- + <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/fss.cfm>
- + <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/tenant.cfm>
- + <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/project.cfm>

These are some options that Section 8 or Public Housing Authorities may offer:

### **HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Family Self-Sufficiency is a program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which encourages local communities to help you get a job that pays a living wage, so in the future you won't need to depend on Section 8. For eligibility, please go to <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/fss.cfm>.

Some of the services include:

- child care
- transportation
- educational assistance
- substance abuse treatment
- counseling

### **FAMILY UNIFICATION PROGRAM**

Family Unification Program or FUP Vouchers—For individuals and families that have been separated from one another due to lack of safe housing. This program allows families to lease an affordable home so that they can be reunited with their children. You must be on the Section 8 waiting list to be eligible for these vouchers.

### **HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER**

Housing Choice Voucher also called Section 8 Vouchers—This program allows low income families to find their own homes, including single family homes and apartments. Once you receive a housing voucher it is up to you to find a unit where the owner agrees to rent to you under the Housing Choice Voucher program. In order to qualify, your income must be below the very-low income limit as established by HUD. To find out what this number is, go to <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/tenant.cfm>.

### **PROJECT-BASED VOUCHERS**

This program is very similar to the Housing Choice Voucher program, the only difference being that project-based vouchers are connected with a specific apartment. To find out more go to <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/project.cfm>.

## GETTING YOUR PERSONAL DOCUMENTS READY

These are some of the documents you might need during the process.

Birth Certificate

Social Security Card

If you are a legal immigrant, bring your green card and/or any other forms that state you are legally in the United States.

Income verification, which includes pay stubs, tax returns and bank statements

Medical insurance card if you have medical insurance (including MediCal, Medicare or Medicaid)

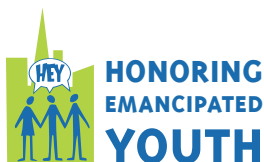
If you currently live in an apartment you will need the lease.

If you currently live in an emergency shelter or transitional housing, bring with you a letter stating that you are residing there.

If you have a disability, bring you with any documentation of your disability.

If you have children, bring your children's birth certificates.

Even if you don't have these right away, it is a good idea to start collecting them. Your county ILSP can help you get them (and sometimes pay for them!) if you are a former foster youth or on probation.



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# HOUSING APPLICATIONS

Public Housing Authorities can be located in a city or a county, and a county may have more than one. You can apply to more than one housing authority at a time, as long as the wait list is open to new applicants. Apply to any county where you would be willing to live. For a list of Housing Authorities in each county go to <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/ca.cfm>.

Call them up and ask how to apply. You might have to get the application in person, or it might be available online. Don't lie on the application—remember this is the federal government! Also make sure you fill out every single question. If you don't have an answer you can fill in N/A for 'Not Applicable'—don't ever leave it blank.

## interviewing

---

Just like interviewing for an apartment you will have to interview to get accepted into an affordable housing program. Dress nicely and do your best to make a good impression. You should ask many questions.

*What types of services are offered by the Public Housing Authority?*

*Where are the public housing units, or where are Section 8 pre-approved units?*

*How long can I live in public housing and how much is my monthly rent allowance?*

*How long is the wait list?*

## what if i don't get in?

---

You could be put on the waiting list or determined not eligible. Applicants on the waiting list are served on a first-called/first served basis. Sometimes due to how many people need affordable housing, your county will periodically choose to close their waitlist until they have more available slots.

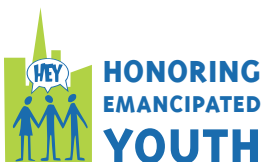
If you are determined not eligible, you can:

re-apply in the future

keep looking for an apartment that is in your price range

apply for transitional housing

enter into a shelter



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# AGREEMENT

## INSPECTION

Just like any apartment you move into you will need to inspect it when you move in. You will need to make sure that everything works so you can live comfortably, but also so you won't be blamed for anything that was broken before you moved in. See page 10 in *Living in an Apartment—Inspecting the Apartment* for suggestions on how to inspect the apartment.

## RULES

Like any place that you live, you have to comply with all the rules and requirements outlined in your lease. The Public Housing Authority will provide a list of rules, and if you are in a Section 8 Voucher apartment or house, you will also have to follow the rules of the landlord's lease.

It is your responsibility to:

Pay your rent on time.

Provide accurate information to the owner of the property and to report any changes in your income.

Conduct yourself in a courteous manner.

Keep your unit clean and properly dispose of all your garbage and recycling.

Not engage in any criminal activity in a unit.

## know your rights

The Public Housing Authorities cannot legally refuse you eligibility on the basis of:

- + Foster care status
- + Sex or gender
- + Age
- + Race, ethnicity, or color
- + Religion
- + Sexual orientation
- + Marital status
- + Source of income (unless illegal)
- + Disability or medical status
- + Attendance at school — whether full or part time

Legally, the Public Housing Authorities cannot refuse you eligibility on the basis of any of the reasons listed to the left, except if you apply for special services for the elderly and the disabled and you are not.

If you feel that you are a victim of unlawful discrimination you can report it to your local HUD office. For an online complaint form or to find out where a Fair Housing office is near you, go to [www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing).

As a tenant you have the right to:

Live safely and peacefully.

Fair treatment without regard for race, color, religion, gender, disability, familial status, national origin, or age.

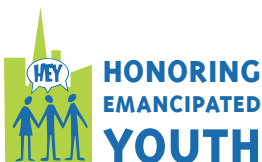
Have repairs made to your apartment or house in a timely manner.

Have all of your notices in writing.

Organize with other tenants.

Post any materials in the common areas and to provide pamphlets to other residents informing them of their rights.

Be recognized as a tenant and as such have a voice in residential community affairs.



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## PAYING FOR SECTION 8 OR PUBLIC HOUSING

As listed on page 19 of this section there are a variety of programs offered through the Public Housing Authorities. The program you enter depends on the amount you must pay for your rent and utilities. To get a better idea of how much you will have to pay go to [www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/about/fact\\_sheet.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/about/fact_sheet.cfm).

Remember that even though your rent and utilities may be paid for, you will need to buy other items for your apartment. Go to page 6 of *Living in An Apartment – Apartment Basics* and review the monthly budget form.

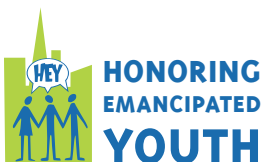
## TIME TO LEAVE

### MOVING OUT

Typically a person can stay in Section 8 or Public Housing as long as their income qualifies them and they follow the program rules as well as the lease agreement. If you make more money, you won't meet the income qualifications anymore. You can look for another place to move, or, sometimes, you can keep the place you're in and personally pay the rent in full.

### EVICTION

If you are terminated from the housing voucher program there are a couple of things you can do. You can start to search for a new apartment that you feel you can afford without the housing subsidy. You can look into finding an apartment with a roommate, which can drastically reduce your rent. You can also try to enroll in a transitional housing program or shelter program while you are looking for a more permanent place.



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Applications, Agreement,  
Paying, Leaving (pg 23)

## is it for me?

- + Do I want to meet new people and build a community on campus?
- + Am I okay with sharing space with people I don't know?
- + Do I want to live on campus or would I prefer to live away from school?

## who do i know?

- + Is there someone to help me gather all of the information that I will need to fill out an application?
- + Is there someone to help me inspect the dorm or on-campus apartment?
- + Is there someone to help me furnish my new place?
- + Is there someone who can help me with the applications to live there and get financial aid to cover costs?

# LIVING ON-CAMPUS

A dorm is a college resident hall, in which students sleep, eat and do laundry. Almost all dorm rooms will come furnished with a twin bed, desk, dresser and bookcase and will be shared with at least one other roommate.

### FAMILY APARTMENTS

Undergraduate and graduate students (there is an age range, so check with your college) with families are allowed to live in family apartments. The apartments are usually close to the university and unfurnished.

### SOME BENEFITS OF LIVING IN A DORM

You will be close to campus and meet people that go to your school.

You can have the extra support that on-campus housing offers, like peer counseling and meal plans.

### SOME DRAWBACKS OF LIVING IN A DORM

You will always be close to campus.

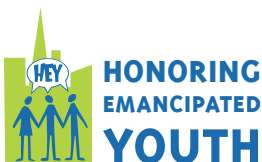
You will not have a place to stay if you want to spend time away from school, or during vacations when school is closed.

### POSSIBLE REFERENCES?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

### REMEMBER!

You might need personal references. These should be adults who know how responsible you are and have good credentials. It's best if your references are not family members. Teachers, counselors, work supervisors and neighbors are all good bets.



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# BUDGETING

Budgeting is necessary because it can prevent you from overspending and help you have money when you really need it!

Fill in each revenue (how much money you have) section for the semester.

Fill in each expense (how much money you spend) section for one month of expenses.

Multiply your expense total by 4 (there are 4 months in a semester).

Subtract your semester revenue from your total expenses and find out how much money you have left!

If your school is in quarters, don't multiply by 4, multiply by however many months are in the quarter.

## your budget

Total Revenue  
\$

— minus

Total Expenses  
\$

= equals

\$

### REVENUE

GRANTS	\$
SCHOLARSHIPS	\$
EMPLOYMENT INCOME	\$
STUDENT LOANS	\$
OTHER INCOME	\$
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>

### EXPENSES

TUITION AND FEES	\$
BOOKS AND SUPPLIES	\$
CAMPUS HOUSING	\$
PHONE	\$
MEALS	\$
CLOTHES	\$
LAUNDRY	\$
CAR	\$
GAS	\$
AUTO MAINTENANCE	\$
INSURANCE	\$
CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS	\$
ENTERTAINMENT	\$
OTHER EXPENSES	\$
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>

# FINDING AN APARTMENT

## ASK YOURSELF

Do I know how to find dorm or other on-campus housing?

Call the college campus main phone number and listen for any information on dorm or on-campus housing.

Go to the school's website and look up on-campus housing.

Talk to your high-school or college counselor about on-campus options.

## ASK YOURSELF

What type of student services am I looking for?

*Do I want to be close to a campus gym?*

*Do I feel safe on campus? How close is a campus police station?*

*Does the university have a medical clinic?*

*Do I have a special diet? Would I prefer to have my meals prepared for me, or would I prefer to make my own food?*

## what am i looking for?

some typical services offered with on-campus living:

- + Housing management and dining services
- + Campus safety
- + Wellness center
- + Gym, workout classes and pool
- + Counseling services
- + Career services
- + Resident Advisors (RA—an undergraduate student who can help you develop a sense of community on campus and reach your academic goals.)
- + Computer lab

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

*What is the deadline for applying to live on-campus?*

*How much money does it cost to live on-campus?*

*Are there any scholarships that are available to supplement the cost of living on-campus?*

*Are there support programs for foster care youth on campus?*

*How do I apply for financial aid?*

*Is living in a dorm required for freshman or first year students?*

*What services are provided in the dorms?*

*Are the dorms spread throughout campus or clustered in one area?*

*What is the student culture like in the dorms? Does it differ from dorm to dorm?*

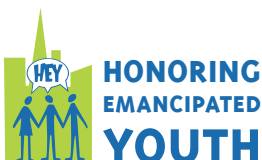
*Do different dorms offer different living situations — like suites or kitchenettes?*

## PROS AND CONS

After you tour the dorm and speak to the management, make a list of what you liked and disliked. Ask some other people their opinions, too.

pros

cons



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# GETTING YOUR PERSONAL DOCUMENTS READY

These are some documents you may need before moving into on-campus housing:

- Identification card (your ID or drivers license)
- Social Security Card or your green card (if you are a legal immigrant)
- Income verification (for financial aid)
- Proof of enrollment in school / eligibility for on-campus housing
- Proof of financial aid
- Other documents required through the school

## DORM HOUSING APPLICATION

### THE APPLICATION

On Campus housing is very limited so fill out a housing application as soon as you have made your decision to live in the dorms and/or have the money.

In order to obtain a housing application, check the university website where you are attending.

You will most likely have to input your name and student number to begin the application process, so you will need to be accepted into the school before you apply for housing.

After you submit your application, you will receive a confirmation through e-mail from the university.

### INTERVIEWING

Sometimes you will have an interview for dorm housing, so the staff can learn about you and who to pair you with in your room. Remember to ask as many questions as possible during your interview!

*How do you determine who my roommate will be?*

*Am I allowed to leave my dorm room whenever I want or is there a curfew?*

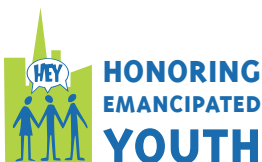
*Am I allowed to bring guests into my room?*

### ASK YOURSELF

What if I don't get in?

If you don't get into dorm housing, you'll have to find your own place. Check out other sections in this handbook that describe other living situations.

You can also speak with a campus RA (Resident Advisor) or housing manager about what they suggest you do.



# AGREEMENT

Every college has different policies. Ask your RA (Resident Advisor) or housing management for a list of rules. Examples of common dorm policies are:

You must be enrolled in at least 12 units to live in dormitory housing.

You can only consume alcohol if you are of legal drinking age.

You may or may not be able to have overnight guests.

No pets

No illegal activity (like drugs)

## know your rights

---

- + <http://www.studentorg.umd.edu/aclu/static.php?page=Dorm%20Rights%20Card>

This link will bring you to “Our Ever Popular Dorm Rights Card”, which will give you a full list of your rights with your Resident Advisor and the Police.

<http://www.studentorg.umd.edu/aclu/static.php?page=Dorm%20Rights%20Card>

You have the right to refuse a search of your room, without getting punished.

You have the right to have advance notice before any person enters your room.

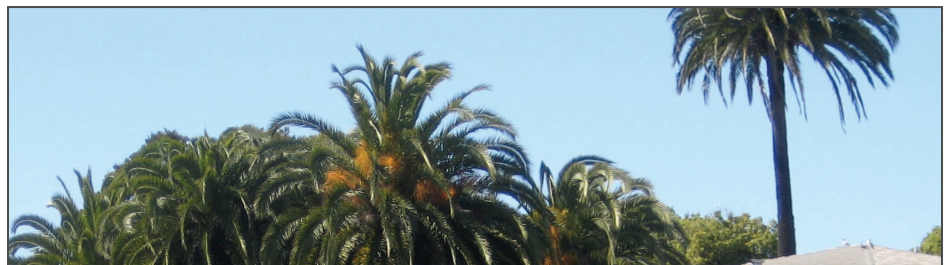
If the police or your Resident Advisor needs to speak to you, you must enter the hallway to speak with them, but they legally cannot make anyone else come out of your room.

## inspection

---

- + Do all the lights work?
- + Is water pressure decent, and does it get adequate hot and cold water?
- + Are there any cracks or holes in the walls?
- + Do all the windows open and lock?
- + Does the lock on the front door work and does the room feel safe?
- + Are there any smells?

When you move into an on-campus dorm or apartment, you will be asked to inspect it with the landlord to make sure everything is in working order. This is important, because if something is broken you want to make sure it is noted in the agreement, so you don't get blamed later. To view a complete list of questions go to *Living in an Apartment*, page 10.



## PAYING FOR YOUR DORM

There are a few options you have to pay for your dorm room, as well as tuition.

Apply for financial aid (you can receive grants, which you don't have to pay back, and loans which you do have to pay back)

Apply for scholarships

Apply for student loans outside of financial aid

If you're still not sure how to pay for your dorm room, go to your university website and search for financial aid as well as scholarships. You can also go to the financial aid office/desk and ask them questions.



## LIVING WITH OTHERS

Living with college roommates can sometimes be a big challenge, but it can also be very rewarding. If you know someone you would like to room with, you can usually make that request on the on-campus housing application. If not, you will be assigned a roommate. It is a good idea to contact your roommate before school starts and talk about who will bring what and make some agreements before you move in. See page 14 in *Living in an Apartment* for more suggestions about roommate agreements.

### RESOLVING CONFLICTS

When two strangers are living together it's inevitable that conflict will arise. What matters most is how you handle the situation. Below are some tips on how to effectively deal with conflict.

Try to remain calm.

Respectfully communicate what's bothering you; be as specific as possible.

Actively listen to what your roommate has to say.

Reach a solution and be willing to compromise.

If you can't solve the conflict alone, talk to your Resident Advisor (RA).

If you both reach an agreement, make sure you follow the terms of the agreement.

Write the agreement down so you both remember.

# TIME TO LEAVE

## MOVING OUT

There are a number of reasons why a student might want to leave the dorms. Maybe it is cheaper to live off-campus or you want to live closer to your friends or work. If you do decide to leave the dorms, talk to your Resident Advisor (RA) so they know you are leaving and can help you with your move-out process.

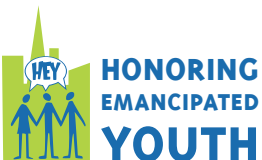
If you are leaving the dorms, it's important to develop a move-out plan in advance. Below is a list of recommended tips to follow:

- Make sure that you have a place to move into.
- Clear out all of your things.
- Clean the floors and scrub the walls.
- Make an appointment with the housing manager to inspect your dorm room together.

## EVICITION

Sometimes students get evicted from living in the dorms because of breaking dorm rules. Remember that there are many things you can do to try to resolve problems before you get an eviction notice. So, if you have a feeling you might get evicted:

- Sit down and have a conversation with your Resident Advisor, who will try and resolve any issues you are having.
- Talk to a staff member from the dorm front desk, or the Housing Department at school.
- See if you can get re-assigned rather than evicted.



# LIVING IN SUPPORTIVE YOUTH HOUSING PROGRAMS

Youth housing programs can be transitional or permanent and are usually for youth ages 18-24. There are programs that serve former foster youth, probation youth, homeless youth, runaway youth, parenting youth, youth with mental illness or other special needs. Most Transitional Housing Programs (THP or THP+) provide foster care youth who have aged out of care and probation youth with housing and supportive wrap-around services. While most programs offer transitional housing that usually lasts 18-24 months, some offer permanent housing.

## is it for me?

These programs:

- + Help people develop life skills that lead to living independently and permanent housing.
- + Might have you pay nothing or a low percentage of your pay check for rent.
- + Provide you with a case manager, someone who can help you organize your life.
- + Will have rules meant to prepare you for independent living.
- + Will offer other services, like a savings account, or help getting a job.

There are many different types of housing programs; some offer you an apartment in a community, some are all in one building or one complex, and some are in host family homes.

### A BENEFIT OF SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAMS

You have the opportunity to work on your individual, educational and employment goals in a supportive environment, with help on your rent.

### SOME DRAWBACKS OF LIVING IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAMS

They often have long waiting lists.

They may ask for you to sign certain agreements and follow more rules than if you lived independently.

### ASK YOURSELF:

*Have I just exited an emergency shelter?*

*Do I need help transitioning from my current living circumstances towards living a stable and independent life?*

*Would I qualify? Am I homeless or about to be?*

### AM I CONSIDERED HOMELESS?

To enter most housing programs, you will need to prove that you are homeless, will be homeless soon, that you cannot support yourself for some reason, or have no money to continue living in acceptable housing.

First off, different programs define “homelessness” differently, so you may have to contact the programs and ask about their qualifications.

Do I share housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing?

Is my primary nighttime residence in a public/private place that is not intended for or normally used as a regular sleeping place for humans like in a basement, garage or outside?

Do I live in a motel, hotel, trailer park, shelter, car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station?

These questions are based on the definition of homelessness, according to the California Department of Education at [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hg/cy](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hg/cy).

If you don't meet the requirements of one housing program, you may still be eligible for others. If one program doesn't accept you, ask them if they have any recommendations for you.

If you emancipated from foster care or are on probation and under 24, you most likely will qualify for a housing program, especially THP+.



## who do i know?

---

- + Who can help me search for a place?
- + Who can help me inspect the housing program?
- + Who can help me gather all of the information that I'll need to file an application?
- + Who can be a personal reference for me?

### POSSIBLE REFERENCES?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

### REMEMBER

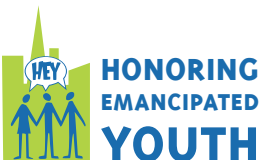
You might need personal references. These should be adults who know how responsible you are and have good credentials. It's best if your references are not family members. Teachers, counselors, work supervisors and neighbors are all good bets.

## budgeting

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Some transitional housing programs will supply you with everything you need to live in your apartment. Sometimes you will have to buy some items. You may or may not be responsible for some of your utilities. Usually you will still have to pay for your own food, cable, telephone or other services.

You should ask the program about the money that you will have to put in. Once they tell you what you will and will not have to buy, see *Living in an Apartment—Budgeting*, page 6.



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+ Basics (pg 32),  
Finding a Place,  
Applications, Agreement,  
Paying, Leaving



# HOW TO FIND A HOUSING PROGRAM

## what am i looking for?

These are some services a THP might offer.

- + Case management
- + Life skills training, such as budgeting and cooking
- + Mental health screening and counseling
- + Medical screening and referrals
- + Insurance application assistance
- + Help in obtaining documents
- + Help to apply for schools
- + Job training assistance
- + Child care services
- + Job placement assistance
- + Educational counseling
- + Money management
- + Drug and alcohol counseling
- + Anger management and other self-help classes
- + A matched savings account

After you decide that supportive housing is for you, you'll need to think about what you are looking for in a program. Making a list of your top priorities is very important because the program you choose should help you successfully transition into your adult life.

*What public transportation or parking is available?*

*Do I just want to live with youth, or am I comfortable living with adults?*

*Am I willing to work with case managers or social workers and can I attend these meetings?*

*Can I follow clean and sober rules? Do I prefer a less restrictive environment concerning drugs and alcohol? Am I comfortable if others are drinking or using drugs?*

*Am I comfortable sharing a room with one or more people I don't know?*

*Can I live in an environment that may have rules, like curfew, limits on partying or other regulations? Are there rules I can't follow?*

*How long can I wait on a waiting list?*

### QUESTIONS TO ASK

Be sure to take notes!

*What is the application process like?*

*Is there a possibility of permanent housing?*

*What kind of agreements do I have to make?*

*What program rules do I need to follow?*

*Do I get my own youth advocate or case manager?*

*Will my case manager or advocate be different than my roommate's?*

*Can I stay in the apartment when the program is over?*

*What kind of support is offered for me to transition out of the program?*

*Where will I transition to after the program is done?*

*How long can I stay?*

*Can you explain the rules around eviction for me?*

*Do I need to live with a roommate?*

*What kind of mediation services do you have in place to help me if I am having a conflict with staff and/or other program participants?*

The following is a brief list of housing programs offered in the Bay Area. These organizations may be located in one city, but may offer housing in another. You can find more by going online and doing an internet search of “your city + transitional housing programs” or “+ supportive housing programs”.

## programs

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More resources are listed in the Resources section of this guide.

**SAN FRANCISCO INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS PROGRAM**

(only for former foster care youth or youth on probation — houses youth at Salvation Army site)  
225 Valencia Street, San Francisco, CA 94103  
415-934-4202 [www.sfilsp.org](http://www.sfilsp.org)

**LARKIN STREET YOUTH SERVICES**

1138 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94109  
415-673-0911 [www.larkinstreetyouth.org/programs/housing/php](http://www.larkinstreetyouth.org/programs/housing/php)

**FIRST PLACE FOR YOUTH**

(only for former foster care youth or youth on probation)  
519 17th Street, Suite 600, Oakland, CA 94612  
510-272-0979 [www.firstplaceforyouth.org/contact/info@firstplaceforyouth.org](http://www.firstplaceforyouth.org/contact/info@firstplaceforyouth.org)

**ALAMEDA COUNTY INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS PROGRAM**

(only for former foster care youth or youth on probation)  
2647 International Boulevard, Suite 312, Oakland, CA 94601  
510-434-3333 [www.alamedacountyilsp.org](http://www.alamedacountyilsp.org)

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM**

(only for former foster care youth or youth on probation)  
Department of Family and Children Services  
373 W. Julian Street, San Jose, CA 95110  
408-975-5129 [www.sccgov.org/portal/site/CC25/](http://www.sccgov.org/portal/site/CC25/)

**BILL WILSON CENTER: TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM**

693 South 2nd Street, San Jose, CA 95112  
408-243-0222 [www.billwilsoncenter.org](http://www.billwilsoncenter.org)

**CONTRA COSTA INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS PROGRAM**

(only for former foster care youth or youth on probation)  
1875 Arnold Drive, Martinez, CA 94553  
925-957-2400

**NAPA INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS PROGRAM**

(only for former foster care youth or youth on probation)  
2261 Elm Street, Napa, CA 94559  
707-253-4756

## pros and cons

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Once you have had a chance to do some research on housing programs, it's important to make a list of all the things you liked and disliked about each program. Think about the pros and cons for a few days and ask the opinions of some people you trust.

pros

cons

# APPLYING FOR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

## documentation

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- + Drivers License (if you have one—if not, get a California State ID)
- + Social Security Card
- + Birth Certificate or Green Card
- + Proof of homelessness or other eligibility (Ask the THP program what they need, and how to get it)

A Transitional Housing Program may require you to have some of the documents listed to the left. If you don't have these documents you can call your county independent living program. Do a Google Search of "independent living skills program + your city or county" to request help in obtaining a copy. You will need to have these documents in order to find any housing. You can also dial 211 from any phone and ask them.

## interviews

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Keep these points in mind when you interview for a housing program.

Research the program on the web.

Write up a list of questions that you have for the interviewer before meeting.

Write up a list of reasons why you want this transitional housing program and how it will benefit your housing situation.

Make sure that you catch the person's name and write down their contact information. If you didn't catch their name the first time, it's okay to ask again.

Arrive early and dress as well as you can.

Bring any documents you already have and ask if they require more.

## applications

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- + [www.dawnfarm.org/Transitional-HousingApandRules.pdf](http://www.dawnfarm.org/Transitional-HousingApandRules.pdf)

A lot of programs require that you pick up the application on site. Not many applications are made available on the web.

Visit [www.dawnfarm.org/TransitionalHousingApandRules.pdf](http://www.dawnfarm.org/TransitionalHousingApandRules.pdf) to check out what a transitional housing application looks like. Print and fill out the application so you will have all the information ready when you get the actual application for the program you want.

### WHAT IF I DON'T GET IN?

Keep in mind that just because you sent in an application and interviewed well doesn't mean that you will get into a housing program.

#### YOU MAY BE PUT ON A WAITING LIST

If you are placed on a waiting list, but you need housing immediately, you can ask the program to refer you to another program. Another option is to do more research on your own.

#### YOU MAY NOT QUALIFY FOR THE PROGRAM

Ask for recommendations to other programs, or suggestions for cheap housing.

## AGREEMENT

Every housing program has a different set of rules to follow while in the program. For a complete list of rules, check with the program staff directly. Here are some possible rules.

You may be required to stay clean and sober.

You may be required to either be in school full-time or to work.

You may be required to have regular check-in meetings with a case manager.

You will be held to whatever agreements you make, and if you break them you may have to leave.

### KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

No matter where you choose to live you will always have rights.

The right to not have your mail read.

The right to safety and privacy.

The right to address conflict situations without fear of being kicked out of the program.

The right to explain your side of the story.

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly we recommend that you tell a staff member or report it to your social worker, ILSP, youth advocate or to Honoring Emancipated Youth.

## living with others

While living in a housing program, you may have a roommate. Since you may not be able to choose your roommate, you should let the coordinator know if you have any special requests. To prevent any conflicts, remember two simple things: clean-up after yourself and try to be understanding. Even though you may not be able to choose your roommate, you can still create a roommate agreement. See the *Living with Others* section in *Living in an Apartment* on page 14 for a roommate agreement. If you do have problems with your roommates, speak with a staff member or your case manager.



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+ Basics, Finding a Place, Applications, Agreement (pg 36), Paying, Leaving

# PAYING FOR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

## other cash assistance

Most housing programs are free or require you to pay a small amount for rent. Almost all of them will require you to put in some money to give you the experience of paying for housing. Sometimes that rent money you pay is actually saved in a savings account that you get back at the end of your term.

### GENERAL ASSISTANCE (GA)

If you need help paying for the rent, and you don't have any children, you should apply for GA. GA is a small amount of money that the government provides people who are single or married, but without children, to help them out. To find out more about your local GA services do a Google search "your city + general assistance."

### WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)

If you have children you may be eligible for WIC which will help you buy food. See <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/default.aspx> for more info.

### TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) / CALWORKS

If you have a child under 18, do not have more than \$2000 in savings, and are unemployed or make very little money, you may be eligible for TANF, which is sometimes referred to as CalWorks. TANF is cash program that the government gives you for a temporary time while you are getting on your feet. Go [http://www.disabilitybenefits101.org/ca/programs/income\\_support/calworks/faqs.htm#\\_q1398](http://www.disabilitybenefits101.org/ca/programs/income_support/calworks/faqs.htm#_q1398) for more information and see if you are eligible.

### FOOD STAMPS

The Food Stamp Program provides you with an ATM card that has money on it to pay for healthy food items. You must not make very much money and not have more than \$2000 in savings. Go to <http://www.snap-step1.usda.gov/fns/> to see if you may be eligible for Food Stamps in California.

## WHEN IT'S TIME TO LEAVE

Transitional Housing is, in most cases, a temporary living situation. Here are a few things to keep in mind when leaving.

## leaving

Some examples of what will be inspected:

- + Windows
- + Doors
- + Blinds
- + Walls
- + Floors
- + Carpets
- + Refrigerator
- + Bathtub

### MOVING OUT

You should be very proud of yourself once you reach this point in the program, because you've successfully completed the program or you've decided that you can live on your own! When you move or leave the program your room and/or living space will be inspected for cleanliness and any broken fixtures.

### EVICTION

Just as you can choose to move out of a housing program, they can decide to evict you from the program. If you break major rules, consistently break smaller rules or fail to pay your rent without speaking to staff, you may be evicted from the program. Make sure you know the rules, so you can avoid eviction.

# LIVING IN AN EMERGENCY SHELTER

Emergency shelters are housing for people to live in temporarily when they either can't continue living in their current housing situation or are homeless. You can stay there any time from one night to 90 days, depending on the shelter. This should be your last choice, but if you need one, don't be embarrassed to use them. Shelters can be a great way to get back on your feet.

## is it for me?

- + Am I homeless?
- + Will I be homeless soon?
- + Can I find a place to stay with friends for the night or for the meantime?
- + Do I want a temporary place to stay or would I like to find a long-term placement?

### SOME BENEFITS OF STAYING IN AN EMERGENCY SHELTER

You will have a place to stay for the night.

The program may be able to help you find long-term housing or provide other services.

### SOME DRAWBACKS OF STAYING IN AN EMERGENCY SHELTER

It is a temporary housing situation and you will need to find something else that is long-term.

You may have to wait to get into a program or get assigned a bed.

## who do i know?

- + Who can help me search for an emergency shelter?
- + Who can help me gather all of the information that I will need?
- + Who can be a personal reference for me?

Before you begin your search for emergency housing, create a list of people that you feel can help.

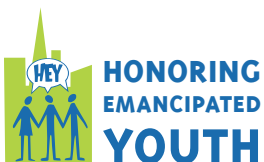
### POSSIBLE REFERENCES

Who do I know? How can they help me? What's the best way to contact them?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

### REMEMBER!

You might need personal references. These should be adults who know how responsible you are and have good credentials. It's best if your references are not family members. Teachers, counselors, work supervisors and neighbors are all good bets.



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+ Basics (pg 38),  
Applications, Prepare,  
Agreement, Paying,  
Roomates, Leaving

# finding a shelter

- + <http://www.youthline.org/yldb/listing.asp?cat=Shelters>
- + <http://www.fosteryouthalliance.org/Housingresources.htm>

There are many shelters throughout the Bay Area. If you walk into a shelter they should be able to help you find one that fits what you are looking for. If you can, try to find a youth shelter because adult shelters can be intimidating for young people.

For a list of Shelters in San Francisco go to [www.youthline.org/yldb/listing.asp?cat=Shelters](http://www.youthline.org/yldb/listing.asp?cat=Shelters).

For a list of shelters in Alameda County go to [www.fosteryouthalliance.org/Housingresources.htm](http://www.fosteryouthalliance.org/Housingresources.htm).

Or, you can also search for shelters on the internet by doing a Google search with “your city + emergency youth shelters,” or calling a hotline. Some additional resources and hotlines are listed in the *Resources* section of this guide.

## services

These are typical services offered at a shelter:

- + Laundry
- + Showers
- + Lockers
- + Peer counseling
- + Information and referrals
- + Basic medical care
- + Counseling
- + Free phone calls
- + Clothing referrals
- + Snacks
- + Case management
- + Support groups
- + Health education
- + Family planning/counseling
- + Pregnancy tests
- + PAP smears
- + Emergency contraception
- + HIV tests and counseling

Once you decide you want to enter into an emergency shelter, you need to determine what shelter will give you the services you want. Ask:

*Am I able to make free phone calls at the shelter?*

*Does the shelter offer lockers so I can keep my personal belongings safe?*

*If I have kids or pets are there accommodations for them?*

*Can I get there on public transportation?*

*Does the shelter offer meals?*

*How long can I stay at the shelter?*

*Does the shelter offer special services for youth, adults, men, women, disabled, the mentally ill, etc?*

*Am I able to receive case management?*

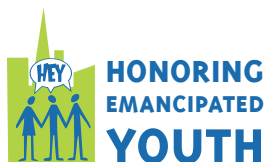
*Will they help me find a permanent place to live?*

### PROS AND CONS

Even though you feel like you need to choose an emergency shelter quickly, you should spend some time calling or visiting a few places to make sure you will be comfortable and safe there.

Try to make some plans before you will be completely homeless so you can make the best choice. If you need housing tonight, call YouthLine at 1.888.977.3399.

If you have time to do some research, you can make a list of pros and cons to make the best decision. If you don't have much time, ask a lot of questions to make sure you and your things will be safe.



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+ Basics (pg 39),  
Applications, Prepare,  
Agreement, Paying,  
Roomates, Leaving

# EMERGENCY SHELTER APPLICATIONS

Every shelter has a different application process. You can walk into a shelter and ask what the application process is or schedule a meeting with a staff member. Typically, if you are applying for emergency housing, you need to either be homeless or experiencing the threat of homelessness. If you have received an eviction notice, or are being kicked out of your housing, you should qualify. Unlike a lot of transitional housing programs, emergency shelters don't often make you fill out an application, but some do. If you fill out an application, be prepared to fill out basic information which may include:

Your identifying information

Guardian information if you are under 18

Emergency contact

Education level

Medical information

Most shelters require you have a TB test before you can stay. You can get a free TB test at most youth clinics, like Larkin Street Youth Services. If you don't know of a clinic, ask the shelter staff, or call 211 and ask them.

## interviewing

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- + How long can I stay in the shelter?
- + What types of services does your program offer?
- + What are the rules and regulations to stay in the program?
- + Do you offer services to help me find permanent housing?
- + Do you have a place to store my things?
- + Do you help finding jobs?

Most shelters conduct an *in-take*, which is a process to assess where you are right now, what services you need, and what your future plans are for housing. During the *in-take*, a staff member may ask you some personal questions. This is so they know their program will work for you, so try to answer honestly.

Listed to the left are some key questions to ask during your interview.

### ASK YOURSELF

What if I'm not accepted into an emergency shelter program?

Look for another emergency shelter that will give you shelter for the night.

Ask the staff what else you can do and if they know of other programs.

## know your rights

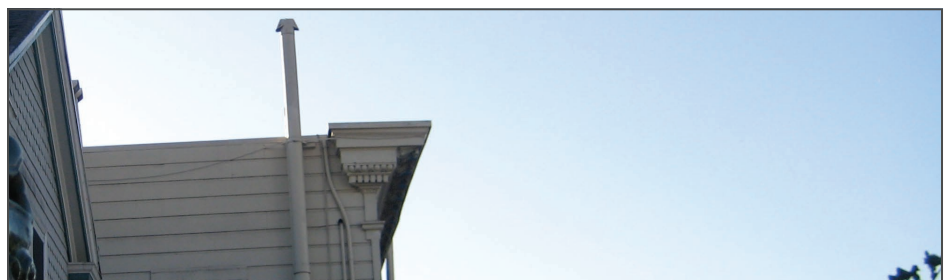
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Legally, a shelter cannot refuse you a bed on the basis of any of the following,

- + Foster care status
- + Age, sex or gender, race, ethnicity or color
- + Religion
- + Sexual orientation
- + Marital status
- + Disability or medical status.

Legally, a shelter cannot refuse you a bed on the basis of any of the reasons listed, unless the shelter is for a very specific group of people and you don't qualify. Otherwise, you may get refused because all their beds are full.

If you feel that you are a victim of discrimination you can report to your social worker or YouthLine at 1.888.977.3399.





# GETTING YOUR PERSONAL DOCUMENTS READY

Some shelters don't require documents and some do, so just ask. If you don't have any documents you should eventually get a State ID, your birth certificate and a Social Security card. Ask the shelter staff how to get them. If you are or were a foster youth or in the juvenile justice system you can call your county Independent Living Program.

# AGREEMENT

All shelters have different rules. Make sure you know them and don't break them, or you will get kicked out. Usually there is a curfew and you can't have guests.

# PAYING FOR AN EMERGENCY SHELTER

Shelters have no cost, they are free.

# LIVING WITH OTHERS

While living in a shelter you will most likely have roommates and share common spaces with others that are in the program. You may or may not sleep in a large common room. In shelters, there can be all kinds of people, so make sure you are in a place where you are comfortable with the other people living there.

# TIME TO LEAVE

## MOVING OUT

Different shelters have different rules and different lengths of time you can stay. In general, you should go through some sort of check-out process so they know you are leaving and can prepare. You should not check out until you have something else lined up.

## EVICION

Just as you've chosen to enter into the shelter, they can decide to evict you from the program. If you break the rules you will be evicted. Shelters may not be patient with you, because there are often waiting lists for beds.



## resource guides

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# RESOURCES

This is not a complete list, but will get you started when looking for housing. Remember that if you call a program that is not right for you, ask them for suggestions of a different place!

### YOUTH LINE

Contact Youth Line at 1-888-977-3399 or [www.youthline.org](http://www.youthline.org). It's free and they have lists of all types of resources and can answer your questions about any kind of services.

### 211

Dial 211 from any phone and they will tell you about programs the Bay Area.

### TAY SERVICE PROVIDERS

Visit [www.taysf.org](http://www.taysf.org) for the most comprehensive list of Transitional Age Youth Service Providers in San Francisco and the Bay Area.

### DREAMCATCHER

If you are homeless, runaway, or having a crisis, call Dreamcatcher at 1-800-319-1114.

## general

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### WWW.LIFEPORTAL.COM

Life portal is a website that has information on everything from places to crash, eat, get a job, and other resources. This site is specific for transitional age youth.

### WWW.211.ORG

You can also call 211 from any phone to get connected with important community services like transitional housing programs, emergency shelters and much more.

### WWW.CASEYLIFESKILLS.ORG

Tons of advice for transitional aged youth to help you assess what you need in life.

### WWW.BAHA.ORG

Listings for housing, jobs, storage, medical clinics, and transportation services in the Bay Area. 1-800-774-3583

## apartment

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### **SFBAY.CRAIGSLIST.ORG**

Craigslist is a list of classified ads to search for apartments, jobs and other opportunities.

### **WWW.ILPONLINE.ORG/IMAGES/834/CRIBSHEET.PDF**

Tip sheet from Foster Youth United on how to find and keep your own place.

## section 8

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### **SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING AUTHORITY**

San Francisco Housing Authority Section 8 Housing Department

1815 Egbert Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94124

415-715-3280 <http://www.sfha.org/>

The Housing Authority in San Francisco is where you would go to apply for Section 8 or Public Housing.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING ONLINE**

Affordable Housing Online is a site that explains what Section 8 housing is, where you can find your local housing authorities, and what you need in order to qualify.

<http://www.affordablehousingonline.com/section8housing.asp>

## dormitory

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### **E-CAMPUS TOURS**

E-campus Tours is a useful website where you can see images, take tours, and find out facts about prospective colleges.

<http://www.ecampustours.com>

### **COLLEGE BOARD**

College Board is a helpful website for students planning to continue to higher education. They have information on how to pay for college, how to apply, and how to research colleges. They also include useful tips to living in a college dorm.

<http://www.collegeboard.com>

### **DORMTOURS**

Take tours of dorms!

<http://www.dormtours.net>

### **COLLEGE CONFIDENTIAL**

A discussion forum for college admissions, financial aid, SAT prep and more.

<http://talk.collegeconfidential.com>

# housing programs

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## **BOSS EMERGENCY SHELTER**

They have lots of transitional and permanent housing programs in Alameda County. This website gives phone numbers to contact for different programs.

*<http://www.self-sufficiency.org/what/housing/programs/>*

## **FRED FINCH YOUTH HOUSE**

Fred Finch Youth House is a transitional housing program for homeless youth who are under 25.

Fred Finch Youth House  
3800 Coolidge Avenue, Oakland, CA 94602  
510- 601-8966 *<http://www.fredfinch.org>*

## **ARK HOUSE**

Ark House is a transitional living facility for LGBTQ identified persons.

Ark House  
1025 Howard Street, San Francisco, CA 94103  
415- 861-6130 *<http://www.arkofrefuge.org>*

## **SAN FRANCISCO INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS**

SF ILSP offers after care case management for emancipated foster youth including help with transitional housing for youth under 21.

San Francisco Independent Living Skills  
225 Valencia Street, San Francisco, CA 94103  
415- 934-4202 or Toll Free: 1-800-818-2989  
*[http://www.sfilsp.org/ilsp\\_aftercare.html](http://www.sfilsp.org/ilsp_aftercare.html)*

## **LARKIN STREET YOUTH SERVICES**

Larkin Street provides services for homeless youth, including an emergency youth shelter, transitional housing services, employment and education services.

Larkin Street Youth Services  
1138 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94109  
415-673-0911 *<https://www.larkinstreetyouth.org/>*

## **FIRST PLACE FOR YOUTH**

First Place For Youth Provides a range of services including financial assistance, transportation assistance, and life skills training for current and former foster youth.

*Alameda County:* 519 17th Street, Suite 100 Oakland, CA 94612  
*Contra Costa County:* 2702 Clayton Road, Suite 207 Concord, CA 94519  
*Solano County:* 1545 N. Texas Street, Suite 100 Fairfield, CA 94533  
*San Francisco County:* 131 Stewart Street, Suite 200 San Francisco, CA 94105  
510-272-0979 *<http://www.firstplaceforyouth.org>*

## **COVENANT HOUSE**

Covenant House has a drop-in center and emergency shelter for any youth who are without stable housing or need help.

Covenant House  
2781 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94612  
510-625-7800 *<http://www.covenanthouse.org/>*

## emergency shelter

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### **GLIDE MEMORIAL CHURCH**

Glide Memorial Church has a walk-in center that can help you find a place to stay and some food to eat. They also offer medical care, childcare, job training, and employment opportunities.

Glide Memorial Church  
330 Ellis Street (at Taylor), San Francisco, CA 94102  
415-647-6000 <http://www.glide.org>

### **HOMELESS PRENATAL PROGRAM**

Homeless Prenatal offers wrap around services for homeless parents and pregnant women including counseling and advocacy, mental health services, and help moving into housing.

Homeless Prenatal Program  
2500 18th Street (at Potrero), San Francisco, CA 94110  
415-546-6756 <http://www.homelessprenatal.org>

### **LARKIN STREET**

Larkin Street provides services for homeless youth through a range of housing options from emergency shelter to longer term housing.

Larkin Street Youth Services—Diamond Youth Shelter  
563 Central Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94117  
415-564-1020

Lark-Inn For Youth (18-24 years)  
869 Ellis Street, San Francisco, CA 94109  
415-749-2968 <https://www.larkinstreetyouth.org>

### **FOSTER YOUTH ALLIANCE**

Go to <http://www.fosteryouthalliance.org/Housingresources.htm> for a huge list of shelters in Alameda County.

### **YOUTHLINE**

Call Youthline at 1-888-977-3399 for San Francisco shelters or go to [www.youthline.org](http://www.youthline.org).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without volunteers, HEY's work would be too big for our tiny staff of three. HEY is proud that the *HEY Guide: Housing* has been entirely written, edited and designed by young volunteers, with staff support. HEY thanks these volunteers for their commitment to creating stronger systems of support for foster youth who age out of care, as well as any transitional age youth in the Bay Area.

### **DYLAN RUGGLES, WRITER**

Dylan Ruggles is a 23-year-old, gender/queer artist-activist, born and raised in San Francisco. He has been involved in various social justice efforts, including advocacy, for the past seven years. A former foster care youth himself, Dylan has a personally vested interest in true youth empowerment through reforming and retooling systems that impact young people's lives and decisions. While employed with Honoring Emancipated Youth (HEY), Dylan spearheaded the development of a housing toolkit for current and former foster youth, as experience has taught him that access to stable housing is a vital part of real self-determination for foster youth. Currently, Dylan is completing his undergraduate degree in biology at Mills College. When not studying like a mad scientist, he also cultivates his ardent love of photography and math geekdom.

### **VALERIE CIZEK, CHIEF EDITOR**

Valerie Cizek heard about Honoring Emancipated Youth through a college professor. She decided to volunteer for HEY because she found a connection between her life experiences and the organization. She participated in an independent living program, NorthStar Center located in Bend, Oregon, which is similar to the service of a transitional housing program. Valerie grew-up and continues to live in San Francisco. She attends San Francisco State University and works in the nonprofit sector.

### **GRAHAM MISENHEIMER, DESIGNER**

Graham Misenheimer is a freelance graphic designer who recently relocated to San Francisco. He heard about HEY and the work they do and was excited to volunteer for a good cause in the Bay Area, especially knowing how hard it can be to find housing in the city. Although he is usually coding a website or inking an illustration, he always reserves plenty of time to appreciate living in San Francisco, exploring the city on foot or bicycle.

### **SPECIAL THANKS TO DANA MANDOLESI,**

**HEY PRODUCT MANAGER**

**STAFF SUPPORTING EDITOR**

*Photographs by Jennifer Cotter*