

# Apartment Hunting Guide



UCLA Community Housing Office  
[www.cho.ucla.edu](http://www.cho.ucla.edu)

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# Presentation Outline

- Living Considerations/Creating a Budget
- Resources to Utilize/Search Strategies
- How to look for apartments
- What to do when you find a place
- Preparing for your new apartment
- Issues with Security Deposits



# Before you begin...

- Determine what kind of living situation you desire...
  - Roommates, distance, etc...
- But also determine what kind of living situation is affordable and realistic...
  - Create a budget, but be honest with it.



# Living Considerations

- Living on your own or with others?
  - Tradeoffs between cheaper expenses and dealing with roommates
- Distance from UCLA and transportation options?
  - Walk to campus; ability to get on-campus parking; living next to a bus route to campus (BruinGo!)
- Move-in date and Lease Options
  - Does it coincide with your current lease and/or the academic year?
  - Do you need a fixed 12-month lease? Or do you need a shorter 6-month or “month to month” lease?



# Budgeting your expenses

- How much can you honestly afford?
  - Include your guaranteed income sources: financial aid, employment, and help from your family.
- Rent will most likely be your largest monthly expense, besides tuition.
- Factor in *fixed* monthly expenses, such as utilities and transportation/parking.
- Then add variable costs, such as food/groceries, personal items, and entertainment.
- If you end up with a money shortage, then you will need to reduce your rent and/or fixed and variable costs.



# Local Rental Prices

## Average Apartment Rates: July - December 2010

	Westwood 90024	West L.A. 90025	Palms 90037	Brentwood 90049	Rancho Park 90064	Santa Monica 90401-90411
Room in Private Home	\$960	\$814	\$766	\$972	\$845	\$810
Studio	\$1,146	\$957	\$878	\$1,296	\$1,038	\$1,181
1-bedroom apartment	\$1,497	\$1,152	\$1,195	\$1,447	\$1,177	\$1,597
2-bedroom apartment	\$2,267	\$1,674	\$1,504	\$1,841	\$1,640	\$1,938
Condo	\$2,215	\$2,409	\$1,498	\$2,070	N/A	\$2,500
Guest House	\$1,200	\$1,117	\$1,125	\$1,000	\$988	\$1,125



# Example of Monthly Expenses Estimate

2 bedroom/4 occupant apartment in Westwood Village  
(not including tuition and books)

[Each Occupant]	Cost
Rent (Westwood Village)	\$ 753
Utilities/Internet	\$ 70
Cell Phone	\$ 50
Food and groceries	\$ 412
Incidentals/Entertainment	\$ 80
Transportation (BruinGo!)	\$ 30
<b>Estimated Total</b>	<b>\$ 1395</b>



# Beginning the search!

- Now that you know what you want and what you can afford, it is time to start looking.
- Seriously start searching about 4-6 weeks prior to your desired move-in date.
- Utilize your resources:
  - Search the Internet and Rental Listings
  - Network! Tell friends and coworkers – anyone can be a potential lead on a place.
  - Visit neighborhoods and search for “For Rent” signs or “For Lease” signs.



## UCLA Housing & Hospitality Services

- Besides on-campus housing, UCLA offers apartments in Westwood, Palms, and Mar Vista.
- Eligibility:
  - Single UCLA undergraduates, graduates, faculty/post-docs.
  - Students/faculty with spouses and same-sex domestic partners and/or children.
- View buildings, rates, and submit an application (\$30) at [www.housing.ucla.edu](http://www.housing.ucla.edu)



- For non-University owned housing
- [www.cho.ucla.edu](http://www.cho.ucla.edu) – CHO's website
  - Search for Vacant/Shared/Sublet/Roommate Listings
  - You can also market yourself as someone who is looking for a roommate or someone one who is available as a roommate
- CHO Website Publications
  - Rental Rate Survey, ZIP Code Map, Neighborhood Profiles
  - Commonly used legal rental forms



# Other Resources to Utilize

- [www.lifeafterdorms.com](http://www.lifeafterdorms.com)
  - Free service for UCLA students that allows you to search for apartments
- [www.dailybruin.ucla.edu](http://www.dailybruin.ucla.edu)
  - UCLA's student-run newspaper contains a Rental Listings section, focused mainly on apartments.
- [www.bruinwalk.com/apartments](http://www.bruinwalk.com/apartments)
  - Not sure about how things may turn out with your prospective apartment? This website provides reviews from students for a large number of apartments in the Westwood area

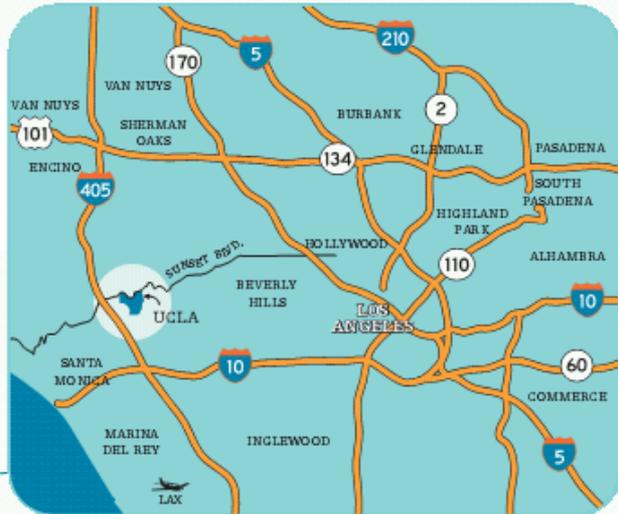


# What should I look for?

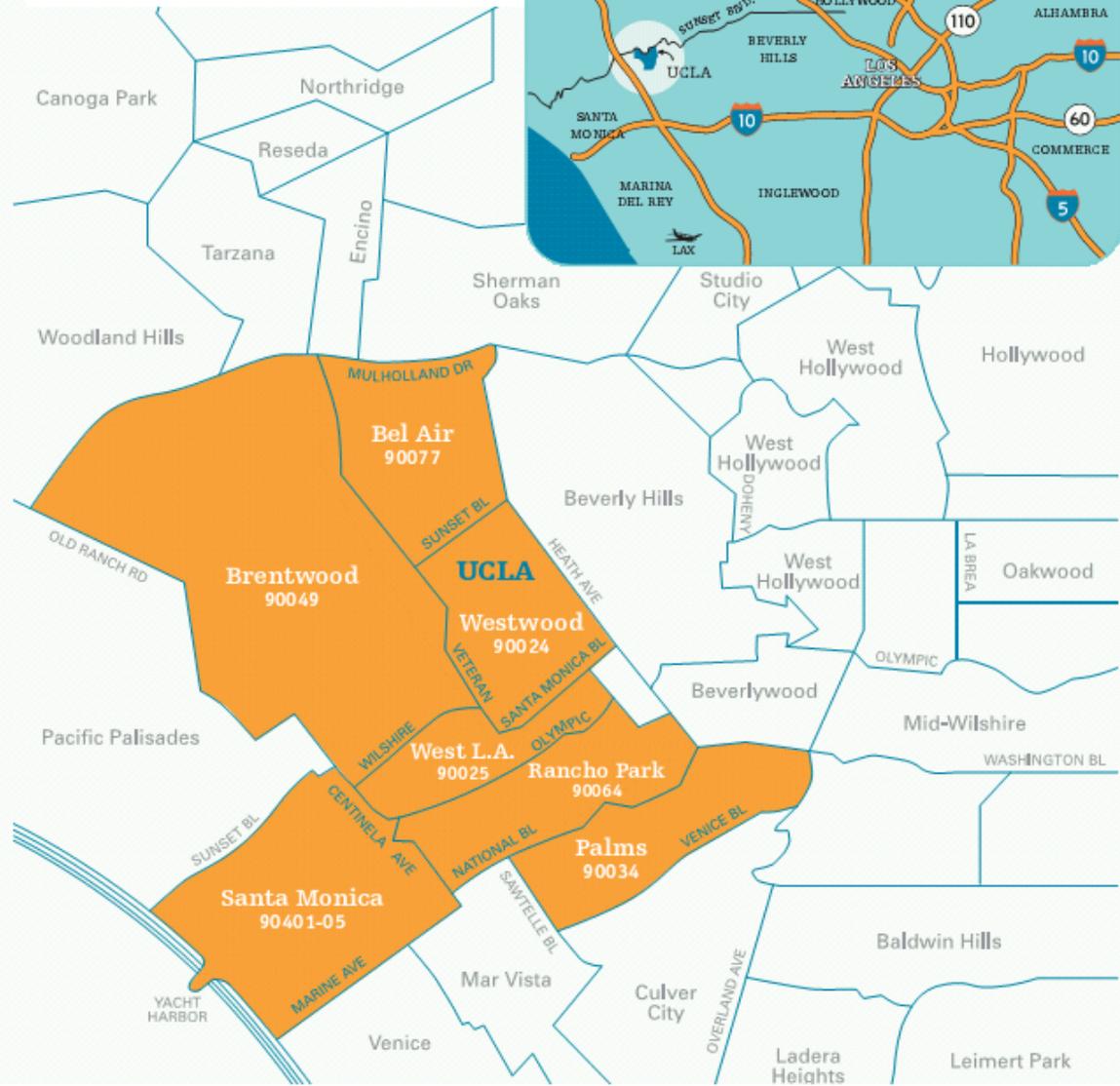
- You know how much rent is affordable to you...
- Measure tradeoff between distance from campus vs. roommates vs. rent amount.
- Living on your own: studios, guest houses.
- Living with others: apartments, condos, houses, roommate needed, and room in private home.



# LOS ANGELES and surrounding communities



# Where to look for apartments?



# Transportation Options

- Parking Options in Westwood
  - Apartments usually contain 1 space per bedroom.
  - Additional spaces sometimes are rented out for around \$50-\$150 per month.
  - Street parking is very limited.
  - Parking on campus – [www.transportation.ucla.edu](http://www.transportation.ucla.edu)
- Public Transit
  - BruinGo! Allows UCLA students/staff/faculty to ride the Big Blue Bus and Culver City Bus for 35 cents/ride or \$30/quarter.
  - Research routes at [www.bigbluebus.com](http://www.bigbluebus.com) and [www.culvercity.org](http://www.culvercity.org)
  - Passes are sold at [www.transportation.ucla.edu](http://www.transportation.ucla.edu)



# Selecting Your Apartment

- Schedule an appointment to see the actual apartment unit and meet the property manager in person.
- Run the faucet to feel that the water pressure is normal.
- Do not sign the lease on the basis that the manager has told you things will be fixed!
- Does the area seem quiet or noisy?
- Is parking available?
- Are any utilities included?
- Know the surrounding areas and the amenities, i.e, close to a bus stop, by a grocery store...



# Sealing the deal

- Complete the application and wait for credit check.
  - Typically these contain non-refundable fees between \$15 and \$40
- Signing the lease.....
  - Make sure that the terms are correct and the starting and ending dates of the lease are as you wanted.
  - Read the terms for your deposit, i.e. How much is it? When can you get it back?
  - A lease is a legal document! Know what you are agreeing to!



# Leaving your old apartment

- Give your current landlord a “30-day Notice to Vacate,” even if your lease will be expiring
  - <http://www.cho.ucla.edu/housing/formd.pdf>
- You may request the landlord to perform a “pre-inspection” of your apartment 14 days prior to move-out
  - Landlord will give you a list of items needing fixing
  - You may choose to fix the items or let landlord deduct items from your security deposit
- Confirm with landlord the time and date to move-out and give back your keys



# Preparing for your new apartment

- Prior to move-in, confirm with the landlord:
  - Move-in date
  - Location and time to pick up the keys
  - Any amount due, such as 1<sup>st</sup> month's rent or security deposit.
  
- Establish utility service if they are not included
  - Electricity – [www.ladwp.com](http://www.ladwp.com)
  - Gas – [www.socalgas.com](http://www.socalgas.com)
  - Cable/Internet/phone – Verizon, AT&T, or Time Warner



# Move-in day

- After you have picked up the keys and are ready to move-in, remember to inspect the apartment for damage and problems.
  - The landlord may have already scheduled to do this with you
  - Regardless, document everything wrong, no matter how minor.
  - Take pictures of everything.
  - If your landlord is not present, e-mail or send landlord your list of issues.
  - If your landlord promises to fix them, have it in writing. If not, keep this as documentation in the future against any deductions from your security deposit.



# Problems with Getting Your Deposit Back.....

- The landlord has 21 days from the date of your vacancy to either give you back the deposit in its entirety or provide a checklist or letter stating why you are not getting any or some of your deposit back.
- If you wait the full 21 days and have yet to receive any notice, you can send a formal certified letter to your landlord stating that you are owed the full deposit back because the allotted days for their action has surpassed. They have 7 days to respond from the day they receive the notice. If you hear nothing at that point.....



- Located at A239 Murphy Hall
- “provide legal counseling and assistance regarding a wide range of legal issues to all currently registered and enrolled UCLA students. We are able to help students with a variety of problems, including landlord/tenant relations”
- [www.studentlegal.ucla.edu](http://www.studentlegal.ucla.edu) or 310-825-9894
- You are entitled to sue for the money in small claims court



# Questions?

**UCLA** Community Housing Office  
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**[www.cho.ucla.edu](http://www.cho.ucla.edu)**

**[www.housing.ucla.edu/ask](http://www.housing.ucla.edu/ask)**

