Slide 1

Hello and thank you for tuning into today to our Parent and Family Webinar on Second Year Housing: Challenges, Resources, and Options. My name is Jess Tallant and I am the Parent and Family Program Coordinator in New Student Programs & Family Outreach here at Oregon State. Before we get started with today’s presentation, I wanted to take a moment to thank my wonderful colleagues Jonathan Stoll from Community Responsibility and Belonging and Jennifer Viña, and Jen Rouse from University Housing and Dining Services for making this presentation possible.

Living away from home can be scary; maybe even more so for parents and legal guardians. As this can be a very exciting time for students, it can also come with some challenges. These could include roommate conflicts, property damage and unreturned security deposits, city ordinances to adhere to, and maybe even neighbors that get upset for playing music at 3am.

Away from home, students are not just learning in the classroom, they learning to live in community. Students are learning to navigate conflict, access resources, balance an array of responsibilities, and communicate with roommates and property managers. With increased independence, comes increased responsibility.

Slide 2

The rental housing process can be overwhelming for both parents, family members and students. Being a student away from home can feel like being a fish out of water. Maybe you feel like this, too? Your student may be lost as what they should do next. We have a few ideas, and hope this presentation will help you to assist your student be prepared with not only the right resources, but questions to ask as they begin to consider housing options.

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Corvallis is a great place to live. Here’s just a handful of national rankings that confirm this. Corvallis is a small town. It’s relatively safe and consistently ranks as one of the top college towns in the country, and one of the happiest small places in America.

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Corvallis has a competitive housing market. This means there’s a lot of people who want to live here relative to the size of the town and the housing that is available. It also means there’s a relatively low inventory for housing which can make finding a rental property for the following year a challenging process for our students. During this presentation, we will provide you with the tools and resources to help your students successfully transition into a new living situation for their second year or beyond whether that’s on-campus or off-campus.
Many students initiate their search for Fall Housing (which is August/September) as soon as February/March of the year (6-7 months in advance). Applications for on-campus housing typically open during winter term. Students who apply earlier are able to select their own on-campus space, and students who apply later may be assigned by housing staff. Students should be aware that many off-campus housing options become harder to find the closer you are to summer and of course the fall term.

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This webinar provides an introduction into the Corvallis Living Guide, a comprehensive online resource detailing Corvallis tenants’ rights and responsibilities. Most of everything your student needs to know to responsibly live in community is detailed in the Corvallis Living Guide. It is produced by Community, Responsibility, and Belonging, a department within Oregon State University, to help OSU students live successfully within the Corvallis community. Parents, family members and students may use this guide to understand tenant rights, responsibilities, and to access OSU and Corvallis community resources. The Corvallis Living Guide is also available at [www.CorvallisLivingGuide.com](http://www.CorvallisLivingGuide.com) and available in a link at the end of this presentation.

**Slide 6**
To help your student start thinking about the many aspects of finding new housing, start by asking them questions such as these:

- How many roommates do you have and how many bedrooms do you need? What about a general living space?
- Have you considered a roommate agreement or talked about expectations for living in a shared space? Roommate agreements can help students resolve conflicts that may arise when living in a communal living arrangement.
- What is your budget for the upcoming year? What is the price of rent and utilities that is within your expected price range?
- Do you need a co-signer on the lease? Many off-campus housing providers will require a co-signer if the renter has no previous rental history established. Some housing providers will accept University Housing and Dining Services as a former housing provider.
- Are you okay with the location of the potential housing option? Will you need to bike, walk or drive to campus? Students should be aware that housing options that are in close walking distance (about 10-15 minutes) to campus are in high demand and do not stay on the market for very long.
- Do you have access to transportation, or do you plan to use public transportation? Living on campus might be a good choice if you do not have transportation or you don’t wish to use public transport options.
- Are you wanting a 12-month lease or month-to-month? On-campus options run for the academic year. Keep in mind that there are fewer options for month-to-month leases available in the Corvallis community.
- Are you planning to spend a term on an off-campus internship, academic exchange, or study abroad? If so, what is your plan for ending your lease or sub-leasing your space? Inquire about whether the property manager allows sub-leasing. On-campus housing contracts do allow students to leave for academic internship and exchange with no sub-leasing required.
• Do you have pets or special needs that need to be accommodated?
• Does your facility include laundry or will you use a Laundromat? On-campus housing has free laundry included. Not all housing options in Corvallis will have on-site laundry facilities. There are paid Laundromats in Corvallis.
• Do you have cooking equipment or do you know how to cook? How much time do you plan to spend shopping for groceries and cooking? Most apartments in Corvallis include a kitchen facility in the apartment. On-campus housing comes with a dining plan, so that meals are provided, and some on-campus housing has a kitchenette within the suite.
• And lastly, does this housing option include on-site personnel or on-call support to assist with maintenance or other issues might arise? Staffing levels vary among property companies. All on-campus options offer a professional live-in staff member and student staff members residing on every floor or wing.

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Property managers tell us that these are the most important things roommates should do, even before searching for a property,

1. Each roommate should determine their own personal budget. Consider how much they can afford in rent every month. Utilities can include garbage, electricity, water, gas, cable, and internet. But this can also include meals, entertainment and anything that might be considered miscellaneous.
2. Roommates should discuss their collective budget. How much can roommates afford to pay in monthly rent collectively? Will roommates have their own room or share? And how might this influence the rent each pays.
3. Roommates should determine a process for resolving conflict. Communication and planning is key. Many students believe that moving in with their best friends will be drama free. Being roommates can certainly change things. A Roommate Agreement is a written contract made between the residents of a rental unit. It outlines the terms and conditions of living together agreed to by the roommates, as well as the rights and obligations of each resident. What happens if a roommate decides to study abroad or someone’s significant other “visits” and spends the night 5 days a week, effectively increasing the number of tenants from 3 to 4? Even if roommates don’t plan for every potential problem, a Roommate Agreement may include a process for resolving conflict that is understood and agreed upon by each of them. They also recommend to agree on the process itself and who would be a 3rd party mediator to mitigate a conflict.
4. We recommend that each roommate put at least one utility in their name to help build credit. Some large cities charge hundreds of dollars in utility deposits. Having a record of making utility payments on time can help reduce or eliminate having to pay large utility deposits in the future.
5. Poor communication can often escalate problems. Communication plays a vital role in human life. It not only helps to facilitate the process of sharing information and knowledge, but also helps roommates, and people in general, to develop stronger relationships.

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Our next slide presents some of the things to think about before signing a lease or contract:
As mentioned before, housing options can be difficult to find in Corvallis due to the tight market. Rental occupancy rates are regarded as relatively low. Encourage your student to consider all types of communities, including on-campus housing for second-year and above students.
Students are encouraged to start the search for housing sooner rather than later to find affordable housing options that best fit their needs. We recommend researching the landlord or property management company prior to signing a lease agreement. Remind your students that most housing providers, outside of UHDS, require an application fee that can range from 20-50 dollars.

Other things to consider to help your student look for a place to live:

- For available rental units, students should check property management websites, Zillow, Trulia, Rent.com, Apartments.com, Craigslist, CorvallisLivingGuide.com, and University Housing & Dining Services’ website to explore housing options. Many housing providers in Corvallis do have their own websites with contact information and housing options on the site.
- Orange Media Network and ASOSU have created a new app to help students find housing. The app will be launched early in 2019.
- Before signing a lease or contract, students should complete a walk-through of their specific rental unit to decide if this is really the place that they want to live. Some housing providers will actually require a walk-through prior to signing a lease. Keep in mind that signing a lease agreement without seeing the condition of the property is very risky and discouraged in most instances.
- There are important questions that students should ask their property managers prior to signing a lease. Encourage them to have on-going conversations with their property manager and establish healthy communication. The following questions would be good conversation points for your student to have with the property manager before moving in.
  - Can I paint the walls or make changes to the property?
  - When is the rent due?
  - Is the last month’s rent due at signing of the lease?
  - If something breaks, who is responsible?
  - How can I best communicate with you (the property management company or the landlord) regarding housing matters?
  - Will you provide appliances? If so, which ones?
  - Who pays utilities?

These are some good questions to ask going in before signing the lease with the property management company or the landlord.

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OSU students are fortunate to live in a community with so many resources from both the university and the City of Corvallis. The following list highlights some of those resources for students to utilize while living either on campus or off campus housing.

- CorvallisLivingGuide.com is a great resource for students to find information about their rights and responsibilities. This resource guide provides students with much of the same information that we have covered in this. They can refer to it whenever they have questions or concerns about living off-campus. And this can be found not only through this link but through the Oregon State website.
• The Corvallis Livability Code was established in 2015 to promote public health, safety, preservation of community enhancement/livability and prevention of blight. The new code holds property managers and landlords more accountable for keeping their properties habitable and safe to live in.

• The Corvallis Housing and Neighborhood Services is a division of the City of Corvallis. If your students ever run into issues with their property managers regarding the condition of their housing they can access this resource.

• The UHDS website contains everything that students will need to know about living on-campus after their first year. Students can also always speak to UHDS support staff during regular business hours to have their questions and concerns resolved.

• ASOSU Student Legal Services are provided to OSU students through Access the Law. This resource is paid for through the Corvallis campus student incidental fees. Their office provides legal advice and representation to OSU students when they have a dispute that does not pertain to the University. Among other legal services, ASOSU Student Legal Services will review leases and may advise students on how to resolve problems with their landlord according to landlord-tenant law.
  ○ Students may not be aware of the legal implications of signing a lease agreement or contract. It is important that they understand all the details of their lease so that if an issue arises with their housing situation the student is aware of their rights and responsibilities. Remind students to thoroughly read their lease agreement. Students should keep a copy of their agreement, refer to it as needed, and ask their property manager questions when they are uncertain or need clarification.

• For roommate conflicts in particular, The University Ombuds Office and Neighbor-to Neighbor are fantastic resources
  ○ The University Ombuds Office promotes a civil and inclusive campus community by providing informal, impartial, and confidential conflict management services to all members of the university community.
  ○ Neighbor-to-Neighbor is a mediation service serving Benton, Linn and Marion counties in Oregon. They’re dedicated to providing peaceful solutions to conflict through mediation, facilitation, education and training to provide families, neighborhoods, and crime victims the means to achieve peace and reconciliation. Neighbor to Neighbor can help mitigate conflicts between neighbors and roommates, too.

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Before students actually move into their new living space, encourage students to carefully inspect it by taking pictures before moving in. Have the landlord or housing staff member sign a document of the existing conditions of the space. Encourage students to also introduce themselves to their neighbors and build good rapport. Having relationships with neighbors can be practical. You never know when you might need a cup of sugar or when you may need someone to keep an eye on your goldfish.
Let students know that it is their responsibility to keep the property safe, sanitary, and free from damage. If something breaks in the home for any reason, it is in the student’s best interest to communicate this immediately to their property manager. A problem with water in a bathroom, for example, is cheaper and better mitigated sooner rather than later.

One important safety measure that many people often forget is to check their smoke alarms once a month to ensure they are working properly. It is the tenant responsibility to replace batteries or notify property manager if the smoke alarm isn't working. Another thing to consider is whether on-campus or off-campus, students should protect their belongings by always locking their door and keeping valuable items stowed/locked away.

We also want to gently remind students they are expected to be upstanding members of the Corvallis and University communities. The University’s Student Code of Conduct maintains behavior expectations both on and off campus.

We realize that living away from home can be challenging for students, and that support from family and university can sometimes make all the difference. Thank you for your support. We hope this presentation has provided you with the tools you may need to assist your student while they search for housing and thank you again for tuning in.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the following offices in our contact information slide.

Thanks again, for watching.