

**Summer Program Housing  
Recommendations and Best Practices  
October 2019**

**About This Document**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and best practices for providing safe and secure housing for summer programs where student housing is required. This document applies to summer programs that require students to be housed together in a single location for the success of the program. It does not apply to summer programs where students are free to choose and secure their own housing.

**Background**

Each year, the U-M Real Estate Office, Procurement, and the Provost's Office receive inquiries from U-M programs seeking off-campus housing (e.g., in sorority houses, fraternity houses, apartments) for their summer program participants. Typically, the U-M programs are seeking off-campus housing as an alternative to U-M Housing because off-campus housing costs tend to be lower than U-M Housing costs during the summer months and/or because the off-campus facilities offer different amenities or a different type of living environment than U-M Housing.

While these off-campus facilities may be more affordable than U-M Housing during the summer or provide a different living environment, they pose more risk to the students and to the university.

From a safety and security perspective, with off-campus facilities the university has no knowledge of:

- The standards of construction that were used to construct the building
- How well or how often the building is maintained and has no ability to address building or facility issues that are needed
- How secure the facility is and has no DPSS jurisdiction or authority or the ability to address security issues that arise

From a legal perspective, if the university signs an off-campus lease agreement on behalf of the summer program or the students, the university:

- Is liable for any acts performed by the student occupant and is at risk of having to defend lawsuits and perhaps pay for damages a student does to a third-party facility or property or personal injury claims made by a third party due to an action of the student occupant
- Is at risk of having to defend lawsuits and perhaps pay damages for injuries a student incurs at the off-campus facility. (With U-M Housing, we have state of Michigan governmental immunity from this type of liability.)

**Why Is This Important?**

When a U-M summer program provides housing as part of the program, there is a different level of expectation and responsibility placed on the university than when students are free to choose their own housing. The expectation is that the university will place students in the safest, most secure housing available with trained U-M staff to support the students' needs. When students choose their own housing and sign their own lease agreements, they define their own housing selection criteria and assume all liability.

## Recommendations and Best Practices

The Provost's Office, OGC, Risk Management, DPSS, U-M Real Estate Office, and Procurement highly recommend the following best practices to secure safe summer housing for students while minimizing risk to the university:

- If the U-M summer program's success depends on having students housed together in a single location, use U-M Housing for this housing need. U-M Housing is the safest and most secure housing that the university can knowingly provide.
- Submit requests to use U-M Housing as early in the academic year as possible. For example, submit requests in early fall for a housing need the following summer. (Since summer programs are planned months in advance, your units should be able to work with U-M Housing within this time frame.)
- If your unit's summer program has constrained funding and is challenged in covering the cost of U-M Housing, consider providing supplemental funding to the program for this need.
- Request to use off-campus housing only if U-M Housing cannot accommodate the number of rooms, beds, or nights needed for the program. If U-M Housing cannot accommodate the number of rooms, beds, or nights needed, submit the off-campus housing request to [space.utilization@umich.edu](mailto:space.utilization@umich.edu) (a Provost's Office group). The Provost's Office will partner with the U-M Real Estate Office to determine housing alternatives.
- If your unit's summer program is approved to use off-campus housing, the university's preferred approach is to have the students sign leases/agreements directly with the off-campus landlord and have the U-M program either reimburse the students or make separate arrangements to pay the landlord directly for the rent. This approach limits risk to the university and ensures the students are fully aware of their responsibilities of being in the space.
- When promoting the summer program to prospective students, communicate the specific type of housing that will be provided after the housing has been secured.
- If your unit's summer program allows students to choose their own housing, the university does not recommend directing the student to a specific housing facility. From a legal perspective, this implies that U-M endorses the specific facility and exposes the university to the same liability and risk as described earlier in this document. Instead, we recommend providing a list of housing options from which the students can choose."

## Other Important Reminders

- Per Standard Practice Guide 601.23 (Real Estate Transactions), only the U-M Real Estate Office is authorized to contact landlords or commercial real estate brokers and sign rental agreements on behalf of the university. Units may not contact these entities directly, negotiate terms of a rental or lease agreement, or sign rental or lease agreements.