

# Housing Guide

## Greenheart Exchange's Work and Travel Program

Greenheart Exchange knows that finding housing in an unfamiliar place can be challenging! This guide offers many resources for your search for affordable, accessible and safe housing in the United States.

### Housing Policies

- Housing should not be more than 20 miles away from your workplace
- You must have reliable transportation to and from work
- A bedroom should have no more than six occupants and there should be no more than six occupants per bathroom
- Housing must be at least partially furnished, and you should have your own real bed – no air mattresses or sleeping on the floor

### Your Important Deadlines

#### Starting your Program

- Report your housing address to Greenheart Exchange in [GEO](#) at least 30 days prior to your DS-2019 start date
- Submit your housing address to validate your program within 7 days after your DS-2019 start date

#### Changing Housing During your Program

- Secure new permanent housing within two weeks or your program will be shortened
- Submit to Greenheart Exchange your new housing address, contact information for your landlord and a copy of your housing agreement/lease. Greenheart program will contact your landlord to verify this housing
- Submit an address change in [GEO](#) within 24 hours of moving in



### Starting Your Search

- Your job offer should list a few housing leads. Start with these as they will give you an idea of the area
- Look at online listings on Craigslist, Airbnb, VRBO, and social media groups, but be wary
- Factors to consider: cost, convenience, the neighborhood, amenities, and security
- Conduct a Google search of the management company and look for any poor reviews
- Conduct a Google search of the landlord by searching '[Name] arrest record'
- Search the landlord's name utilizing the [National Sex Offender Registry](#)
- Call the landlord or management company directly. If there are any concerns, follow up with your host employer
- Read the lease agreement carefully. Ensure that the term covers the duration of your program

### Questions to Ask

- How many bedrooms and bathrooms does your housing have?
- How many people are there per bedroom?
- How many people are there per bathroom?
- How much is rent? What is the pay cycle (monthly, weekly, etc.?)
- Will I have my own bed?
- What are reliable transportation options to work?
- Is there a lease? (Read the details before signing)
- Is there a security deposit? How much is it?
- Is there housing fully furnished?
- Request photos of the housing, specifically the bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchen, and living room.
- What utilities are included? (gas, electric, water, internet, cable)

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### Expectations as a Tenant

Your lease/placement agreement will lay out all the guidelines your landlord/host employer expects you to follow. Read these documents carefully and ask your landlord/host employer questions if anything is unclear.

- Upon arrival, make sure all appliances and amenities are in good condition. Report any issues
- Make a detailed inventory of furnishings and take pictures of each room to document move-in conditions
- Contact your landlord/host employer right away and notify them of discrepancies
- Take care of your living space as if it were your own
- You are liable for any damages you may cause. Your security deposit may not be fully refunded for those reasons.

### Don't Get Scammed

When conducting a housing search online, be aware of the potential for scams. Don't be afraid to ask your host employer for advice.

Common scam scenarios include:

- Landlord rents the same unit to different people
- Landlord rents units that do not exist or are not under the landlord's management

Warning signs of a scam:

- The landlord cannot give detailed information about the unit
- The landlord asks for large amounts of money to be sent to a personal bank account
- Rent is very inexpensive for that particular area – it's too good to be true
- Cannot find the address or leasing management's name online

### Additional Resources

The following websites offer further tips on finding housing, avoiding scams and verifying listings.

[www.rent.com](http://www.rent.com)

[www.apartmentratings.com](http://www.apartmentratings.com)

[www.scampulse.com](http://www.scampulse.com)

[www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)

[www.rentersunited.org](http://www.rentersunited.org)



### Transportation

Safe and reliable transportation is a requirement and improves the quality of your experience. The below resources will help you navigate:

- [Google Maps](#) provides comprehensive public transportation information for most cities across the U.S. It shows bus routes, subway systems, walking directions, and can help you plan trips using public transit
- [Transit App](#) provides real-time information on buses, subways, and other public transport in many major cities across the U.S. It's available as an app for smartphones
- City-specific Websites: Conduct a Google search of the city you are in "[City Name] transportation"