



Rental Guide

Your step-by-step guide to
finding housing in SLO



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

- 3 | Why Listen To Us?
- 4 | A Note to Parents

GETTING STARTED

5	Figure Out Your Roommate Group	19	Fill Out Your Application
8	Set Your Housing Criteria	21	Showings
	Amenities		“So, what’s a showing?”
	Utilities & Miscellaneous		“How do these showings work?”
10	Know The Timeline	22	Ace The Showing
11	Start Looking	23	Submit Your Application & Wait
13	Avoid Getting Scammed	24	How Landlords Decide
			Property Managers
			Independent Landlords
16	Contact Landlords	25	Know Why The Housing Process Sucks
	The Landlord’s Perspective		
	Read First, Email Second		
	A Few More Key Points		
18	Hearing Back	26	You Are The Chosen One
		28	Property Managers & Apartment Complexes



INTRODUCTION

We're here to simplify your off-campus housing process. Some of you reading this will be upperclassmen. You know the process (or at least you knew enough to find a place) and the idea of having to do it again frustrates you. Most of you will be freshmen and sophomores who are still living on campus but desperately want the freedom of living on your own. You've heard rumors, and most of you are a little scared about the process (we were too). How are you supposed to know how to do this?

We've written the PolyRents housing guide to explain all the steps and give you tips on expediting the process.

Why Listen To Us

Our mission is to simplify the off-campus housing process for both tenants and landlords. We've been through the process many times and know how confusing and difficult it can be. Somewhere along the way, we decided to build PolyRents, our technology solution to the toughest parts of the process. PolyRents makes it simple: you fill out one online application, then use it to apply to multiple houses and apartment complexes. An ever-growing list of amazing landlords and property managers in SLO use PolyRents to find and screen tenants. If you're looking for housing this year, we hope you'll have the chance to try PolyRents!

While building PolyRents, we talked with landlords of all sizes and learned a lot in the process. As our friends struggled with finding and applying for housing, we realized the need for a comprehensive guide to the SLO housing market. And that's exactly what this aims to be. We recognize that not everyone is going to use our platform, and that's okay. But nonetheless, we hope that this guide will help you with any part of the process that you're confused about or struggling with.

If you have ideas, questions, comments, concerns, want to buy us a beer, help scale our platform, take us on a date. Anything. We want to hear from you. Send us an email and we'll get back to you ASAP (unless it's 3am...then we'll wonder what you're doing up. Go to sleep.)

Cheers,

The PolyRents Team



A Note For Parents

Hello Parents!

Housing season is right around the corner, and your kids might not want you to be too involved. “Learn by Doing”, right? Well, it turns out they will need your help, and knowing college students, they’ll ask at the last minute. To keep things short, here are four things you can expect to hear:

- » How much can I spend on housing? (If you’re helping them pay)
- » How far from campus will I live? Will it be an apartment or house?
- » Will I have a car next year? (This’ll influence how close to campus they’ll want to live)
- » Can I have a copy of my/your personal information? (This includes Social Security Number, ID, passport, income, etc. depending on the landlord)

We want to make you aware of these common questions before your college student even thinks to ask. Knowing the answers beforehand will make their housing search quicker and save you the fuss of a frantic search.

In the housing search, your primary role will likely be the guarantor. A guarantor is “a person or entity that agrees to be responsible for another’s debt or performance under a contract if the other fails to pay or perform”. In other words, you’re your child’s co-signer. When they apply, landlords will review your credit and income when deciding whether to choose your child as a tenant. When it comes time to sign a lease, you’ll need to co-sign the contract as their guarantor.

We hope this clears up some of the parental confusion surrounding off-campus housing. In the rest of this guide, we’ll provide your son or daughter with practical advice on navigating the difficult process.

Cheers,

The PolyRents Team



GETTING STARTED

Figure Out Your Roommate Group

Having a roommate is almost like being in a marriage. Think of it this way: you live with this person every day, they're usually the last person you see before you sleep, and the first when you wake. You share meals with them, shop together, hang out together, and the list goes on! Now, in the same way that you date someone before you marry them, the same should happen before you choose your future roommate.

Okay, calling it a marriage may be an exaggeration, but the key takeaway here is whomever you choose to be your roommate, you better be compatible.

You do want someone who can commit to your lease and not suddenly leave when a more attractive option becomes available. You do want someone who will pay their bills and rent on time each month. You do want someone who will contribute their share of the housework. But most importantly, you must have someone you enjoy being around and can live comfortably with! Thankfully, the choice is yours.

Your future roommate could be anyone: your best friend, your freshman year dorm-mate, the guy you thought was chill in one of your group projects, or a total stranger. Whoever this lucky person is that gets the privilege to call you "roomie", they should not only be who you want but also who you need.

Confused on what that might look like? (OR Confused on what this person looks like?) Well don't freak out, because PolyRents has it all laid out for you:





WHAT'S IN YOUR GOOD ROOMMATE?

The “Oh-So Good”

The Inviter

They make an active effort to invite you to hang out, or offer to bring you SloDoCo when you're having a late night. They also let you know in advance when they need the room.



The Studious Studier

Earning big grades now and even bigger bucks later. They'll probably win a Nobel Prize one day, so it's safe to assume they'll help you out with your calculus homework!



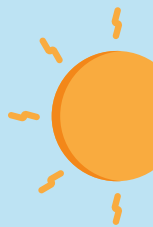
The Responsible Partier

They hang out and party with you, but still remember what you did last night when you might not. Most importantly, they don't mind DD-ing or crawling home with you from the bars at 2am.



The Early Bird

They start their day early and they always get that worm. They could positively impact your sleeping habits, and you might start finishing your work before midnight!



The Daily Cleaner

Not as tidy as Mr. Clean, but neat enough that their side of the room is visible. They do their share of the chores and clean up after themselves. They're also conscious on personal hygiene (thank goodness!).



The “Not-So Good”

The Exiler

Phone calls, friends over, sex. You name it, and they'll kick you out of the room for it. It doesn't matter that you split the cost of the room, you just gotta leave.



The Ferris Bueller

This roomie tends to skip class once, twice... A few times a week. You wish you had the guts to live life to the fullest like they do, but then you remember you're paying an arm and a leg to attend Cal Poly.



The Party Major

You can't remember their major, and you see handles in their hands more than textbooks. They always come home intoxicated and loud, thus waking you up.



The Late Night Light Burner

This roomie is up late and can't seem to quiet down. They're constantly loud while Netflixin', chillin', and hangin' out with friends. Losing sleep is one thing, but think about how big that electricity bill will be!



The Sunday One Day

Cleaning is done once a week... Or whenever they get around to it. Dishes are always in the sink, and their laundry is starting to smell like cheese. You can assume personal hygiene is not at the top of their list of priorities.



There are tons of other questions you need to ask yourself when deciding what you want from a roommate, but we want you to remember these five important deal-makers (or deal-breakers).

The biggest element/factor to keep in mind is:

Whomever you choose to live with will have an effect on the amount of sleep you get each night, your social habits, and your academic habits.

Now to be clear, we're not saying that living with an Albert Einstein roommate will instantly boost your GPA to a 4.0. What we are saying is that if your roommate is a Sunday night party animal and you have 7am Monday morning class, that may hold you back a bit. There's only so much sleep deprivation coffee can make up for.

Alright folks, that's everything you need to know to find your perfect roommate! But wait – you'll probably need more than a single roommate to keep your rent low. Take our advice: replicate the process and go find your ideal roommates. Consider this roommate relationship to be an open marriage...

Once you have your roommate group established, it's time to choose your fearless group coordinator. In the spirit of keeping things simple for the landlord (and your roommate group too), you'll need one contact person for each property you apply to. This person should be well spoken and available to quickly reply to landlord's emails throughout the day. If this person is unprofessional or slow in their email response times, they could blow it for your whole group. Choose wisely – rotating contact people for each landlord isn't a bad idea either.

PolyRents Tips: What You Should Know

Get on the same page: Talk with your potential roommates. Make sure you're both looking for something in a similar size and price range (we'll discuss this in detail next).

Your roommate will affect your habits: Seriously, don't pick someone incompatible. If your roommates stay up late or party, you'll be more inclined to mimic those behaviors (or at least get frustrated when they conflict with yours).

Pick a group coordinator: Establish one person as the main point of contact. This will make organizing everything 10x easier.



Set Your Housing Criteria

Five bedrooms, three bathrooms, a hot tub, and a view of Bishop's Peak, all within 5 minutes walking distance of campus. You know what you want, and you can picture all the awesome times to be had there. The question is, will your wallet be able to handle it?

For starters, the average cost of rent in SLO is about \$800-\$1200/month for a single and \$450-\$800/month (per person) for a shared room.

After you figure out your price range for rent, you need to make sure that your budget is similar to your roommates. If your roommate's budget is around \$950/month, and you're working with \$600/month, you're going to have a tough time finding a home that satisfies both of you.

Once you and your roommates are all on the same page with a price range, the goal is to find the best home for the best price, obviously. There are lots of things that make a home better than another, one of those being amenities.

Amenities

Amenities are features or facilities that make the housing situation more desirable (or in some cases live-able). Not all amenities are necessary for you to live comfortably, but they're something extra for the home to offer. These include, but are not limited to:

- » **Laundry Facilities:** This is one of the most important things you should be looking for. Having an on-site laundry room will save you time, money, and energy as compared to lugging your dirty clothes to the laundromat.
- » **Air Conditioning/Central Heating:** We all know what the weather can be like in SLO. It's comforting to know that air conditioning is an option when it's 95 degrees, as well as being able to turn on the heat when it's 30 degrees.
- » **Dishwashers:** What do you do if you don't have a dishwasher? Hand wash every single dish and utensil. It's not a necessity, but it'll save time and energy to devote to other things.
- » **Outdoor Space:** Nice to have, but not necessary. All depends on your budget!
- » **Workout Facilities, Pools, and Study Rooms:** It's convenient to have these where you live, but maybe not necessary. As a student, you pay for access to these facilities (like the Rec Center and Kennedy Library) with your tuition.

Utilities & Miscellaneous

Utilities are useful and sometimes necessary features and services for the home. They include gas, heat, water, electricity, TV cable, and internet connection.

- » **TV/Internet Connection:** Few apartment complexes (and almost no houses) offer cable or internet as a part of the rent. So you'll most likely have to set it up on your own. Unfortunately, there aren't many providers to choose from, and they're about as reliable as SecureMustangWireless. The primary provider of internet, television, and phone service in SLO County is Charter. The cost for internet service on its own is typically \$40-50. Adding cable television costs an additional \$60+ so consider sticking with Netflix or Hulu to cut TV costs.
- » **Parking:** There is a parking deficit around many areas of SLO. If you live in an apartment complex, or near campus, there could be an extra cost of \$150-300 a year just for parking! Make sure to check with your future landlord for details.
- » **Pets:** Some locations won't let you bring one, and others will. You just need to ask! If the landlord specifies "no pets allowed", then don't even bother asking. The only exception is for specially trained service dogs (as required by California law).

That was a lot to take in, we know. But you now have most of the cost drivers broken down for you. Keep in mind there are still some additional factors that will add value as you search for a place:

- » **Distance from Campus:** You probably want to be near campus, especially if you don't plan on bringing a car. Keep in mind that the closer your home is to campus, the more expensive a room becomes. You know those houses on Hathway behind the Rec Center? Last year a single room rented for \$1100.
- » **Access to Public Transportation:** Check out how far away the bus stop is from your place! Walking, biking, and driving may make sense for some but SLO Transit is one of the easiest ways to get to campus (and it's included in your Cal Poly tuition!).
- » **Lease Start/End Date:** It's favorable to have a lease that starts/ends somewhere in July or August to avoid a rushed move-in/move-out. If your lease starts at the beginning of October, and school starts two weeks earlier, you have a dilemma. Same deal if your lease ends on June 1 and there are still two weeks of classes left. Make sure your lease details work for you and all your roommates.



Hope your brain didn't explode from all the little details we just threw at you. Now that you know about them, you can make educated decisions about what you want versus what you can afford. If you doubt it, you can probably live without it.

PolyRents Tips: What You Should Know

Consider Amenities: Amenities are nice to have, but not necessary to live. More amenities typically mean more money each month. Weigh your options between what you want and what you can afford.

Ask About Utilities: Ask questions about utility service and billing before you sign a lease. Know whether you or the landlord is responsible for paying the utility companies directly, and which utilities those include.

What About Fido? Landlords and property managers will tell you upfront if they are "pet-friendly." If they aren't, and you really need your pet, start looking elsewhere!

Know The Timeline

When Do I Look & Apply?

- » Most landlords and property managers advertise their rentals between early February and the end of the school year. We'll tell you where to find these listings in the next section!
- » PolyRents recommends you start early so that you'll be less stressed.
- » All the property managers we've talked to want their leases signed before students leave for summer break.

When Do I Move In?

This differs, but most leases start somewhere between the end of the school year (June 15ish) and the beginning of September. So yes, you'll most likely be signing the lease 4-5 months before you move in (it's crazy, we know). If you're not planning on spending the summer in SLO, make sure you account for this in your search.



PolyRents Tips: What You Should Know

Stay Calm: One of the biggest illusions is that you won't get a place. Here's the truth, there are more than enough rental units in San Luis Obispo. The reason it's so stressful is that everyone starts looking at the same time. This means a lot of competition, paperwork and organization.

Check Your Schedule: Watch out for dead week & finals week. These weeks are generally going to be very stressful. If you decide to look/apply during these times, know what you're getting yourself into.

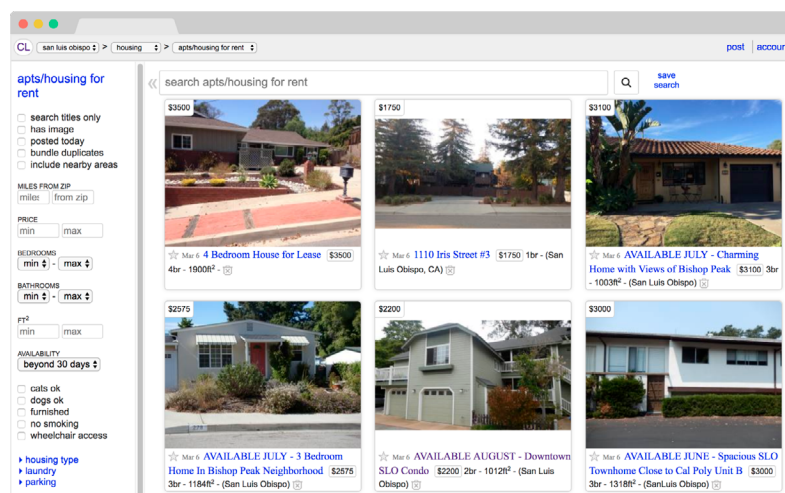
Start Early: Seriously. The number one thing that we hear from upperclassmen is how they wish they had started earlier.

Start Looking

No BS, here's where you look.

1. Craigslist

Craigslist is THE source for listings. Yeah, it looks dated (and sketchy), but landlords love it because it's simple and it works. You'll learn to love it too because it's really the only good search option. On the plus side, it has great filters!



You'll find other websites that offer listings, but many are frustratingly outdated or offer relatively few listings. Almost anything you see on other sites (Apartmentlist, PadMapper, Zillow, Zumper, etc.) is also posted on Craigslist.



2. Property Management Companies

A lot of property managers put their listings up on Craigslist, but some don't. They have more than enough students coming directly to them, so it's not worth their time. Instead, they just upload information to their website. We've included links to their websites (if they have one) in our resources section.

Most of these companies are relatively reliable, and others are kind of sketchy. Use your gut feeling and ask around if possible.

Freshmen note: A lot of these property managers want to see rental history from you. If you don't have rental history, check out [Cal Poly's Educated Renters Certificate Program](#). Several of the major property managers in San Luis Obispo have partnered with Cal Poly. If you take this quick course, you'll show landlords that you're serious.

3. Ask Friends (Mainly Upperclassmen)

If you know any upperclassmen, simply ask them if they're moving out this year (or graduating). If they are, ask them to connect you with their landlord. This will save you a lot of time and energy. Landlords LOVE referrals from their current tenants because it means they don't have to go through the process to find new ones. This doesn't guarantee you'll get the place, but you'll have a significant leg up on the competition.

PolyRents Tips: What You Should Know

Check Craigslist Frequently: Landlords will post their listings and take them down after a few hours. When you're actively looking, make sure to check Craigslist often.

Contact Property Managers: Reach out to different apartment complexes and property managers. They often have email lists to let you know when they open up properties.





Avoid Getting Scammed

You know how your mom always tells you, “If it’s too good to be true, it probably is?” Well, we’re not your mom, but we might as well be considering the life lessons we’re giving you. Mom was right on this one. If something sounds too good to be true during your housing search, it definitely is.

You may be thinking that we’re just paranoid, but anything can happen. Take it from us...

The screenshots below are from an interaction between one of our team members, John, and a scammer via email. Check it out yourself so you can recognize the warning signs if it happens to you!

 **John** [redacted] 3/31/16 ☆ [reply icon] [dropdown icon]
to rob [redacted]
Hello!
My name is John [redacted] and I am a first-year business student at Cal Poly. I'm very interested in renting the house you have posted on Craigslist. If the house is still available, I would love to discuss how we could move forward on obtaining a lease for me and my 2-3 roommates. Thank you!
John
(760) [redacted]
<http://slo.craigslist.org/apa/4401014326.html>

 **Cohen** [redacted] 3/31/16 ☆ [reply icon] [dropdown icon]
to me [dropdown icon]
Thanks for interested in my property, My name is Cohen [redacted] I own the home you are interested in. The home is still available for rent, but I will only be interested in renting it out to a very responsible being presently **I and my family live & work in Minnesota.** You can go ahead and view the surrounding of the house and neighborhood area at your own convenient time. **If interested after the walk through,** get back with the requested info below & see below for more details about the home.
Address: 2 [redacted] Price St,
City: San Luis Obispo
State: CA
Zip Code: 93401
County: USA
Type Single Family Home
Bedrooms 3 Bathrooms 2
Pets Allowed: Cats, Small Dogs, Large Dogs
Deposit: one months rent \$1,650 plus security deposit of \$1,000
Features: Den/Office, Dishwasher, water, Garage, Newer Property, Garbage pick-up, Scenic View, Yard, Washer and dryer.
Requested information for proper record and documentation such as :
PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF
Full Name _____
Home Phone () _____
Cell Phone () _____
Current Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Reasons for Leaving _____ Rent \$ _____
Are you married _____
How many people will be living in the house _____
Do you smoke _____
Do you have a pet _____
Do you have a car _____
Occupation _____
Move In Date _____
How soon can you make the payment _____
How soon do you want to receive the keys and the document _____
Application Comment _____
=====Please make sure this questions are fill correctly because the best way you answer with your comment will impress me the more to accept your applications. We can make arrangement for the keys and documentation including an Authorization letter to be shipped to you, this will give you the opportunity to view house. Looking forward to hear from you so we can proceed on the documentation and shipment of the keys to you.
Regards

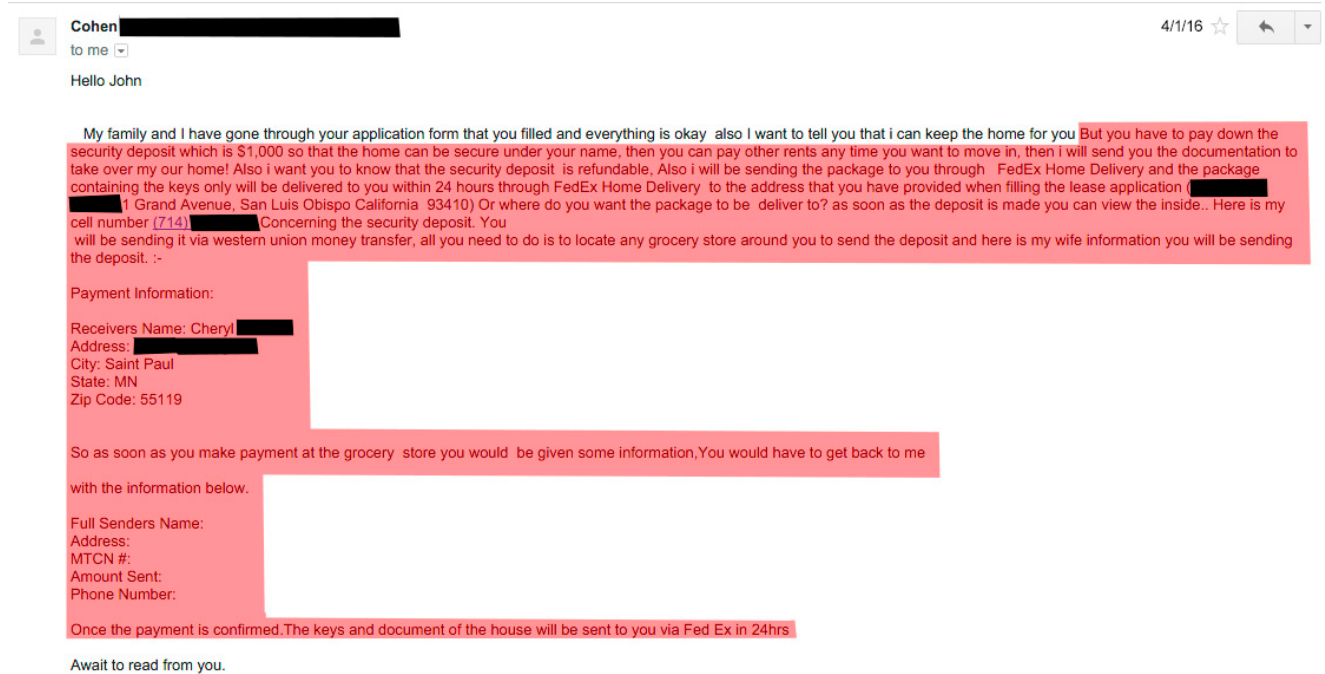


At first glance, it seems like a fairly typical first email from a landlord. John found the listing on Craigslist, contacted the landlord for further information, and got a response. Aside from numerous typos, there are two giveaways that this is a scam:

1. The landlord does not reside in the state.
2. He tells you to do a walkthrough of the house on your own.

You always want to meet the landlord and have them show you the house so they can answer any questions you may have. The fact that John couldn't meet the landlord should have been a major indicator that something was wrong. Would you want to continue pursuing this house if you couldn't at least meet the person you're supposed to send a check to every month?

Your answer should be heck no. But John was desperate and decided to send his 'application' back anyway....



Now it's just plain obvious.

The landlord is asking for a down payment of \$1,000, and John hasn't been inside the house, or signed a single document yet. Supposedly after he sends the deposit, then they'll send him the keys and documentation via FedEx. Right.

This should be an immediate red flag. Once you send that deposit, you're not seeing your money ever again, let alone those house keys. The fact that the most thorough sentence in this email correspondence is how to do a wire-transfer through Western Union should have been a dead giveaway. Halt the emailing. Don't send that security deposit.

Moral of the story: Never send money to anyone. If you can't see the place, move on.

We're not trying to intimidate you as you gear up for your housing search. Rather, we're hoping to enlighten you to the fact that there are bad people out there who will try to take advantage of you. Especially at a time when you're desperate to find a home.

The allure of an easy rental property may sway you to do silly things against your better judgment. So be cautious and don't fall victim to common scams – like sending a fake landlord a thousand bucks.

PolyRents Tips: What You Should Know

If you're looking for a place, you could potentially run into scammers. Be aware and make sure to follow our tips.

- » **Landlords CAN Show You The Place:** When leasing their properties, landlords can give their tenants 48 hours notice that they'll be showing the property. This means the landlords can show you the property as long as they let the current tenants know ahead of time. If you can't see the place, pass.
- » **Never Send Money To Anyone:** Any mention of 'Western Union', 'Moneygram', or PayPal is a major red flag.
- » **You'll Only Pay An Application Fee Upfront:** When applying to places, you will have to pay an application fee (\$40 MAX). This is normal. What's not normal is asking you to pay anything above this amount.

These can be tricky. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to us for advice. We're here to help!



Contact Landlords

Once you and your group have found a place that you all at least somewhat agree on, your next step is to contact the landlord to either schedule a showing or get an application. This part is important! Landlords receive hundreds of inquiries when they put their properties on Craigslist, and they need a way to sort through them all. Identifying professional applicants from the get-go is a simple, yet effective sorting process for them.

The Landlord's Perspective

Owning and renting a property to college students can be lucrative, but it's also risky. Landlords are trying to minimize this risk by renting to a quality group of students. There are a lot of ways you can put your best foot forward with the landlord (like using PolyRents and kicking-ass at the showing), but you won't even get to that point if you don't pass the landlord's first test: the initial contact.

Read First, Email Second:

- » Some listings will announce a showing time (you should still email them introducing yourselves).
- » Some will ask for specific information.
- » Some will ask you to email for an application.

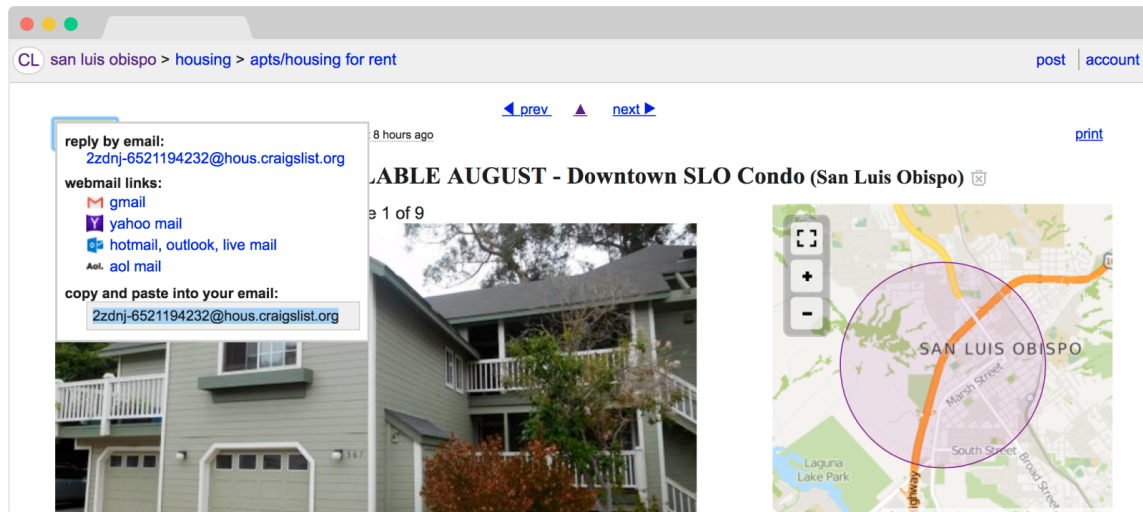
Before you think about contacting the landlord, read the dang listing...all of it. For example, one post had this notice at the bottom.

****No showings before Jan 2, 2016. If you are interested in more information or would like to apply and schedule a showing, please email your contact information including name, email and phone number. Please include number of occupants, any pets and employment status. Thank you!**

A Few More Key Points:

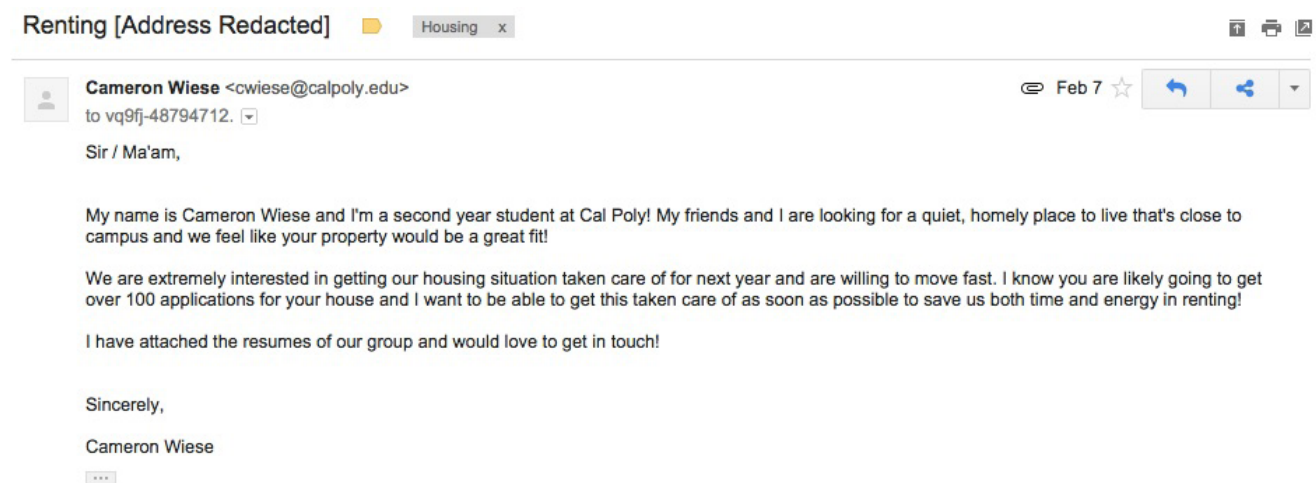
- » If the listing specifically says no pets and you have a cute little puppy, don't bother asking for an exception.
- » If they say "5 tenants", don't ask if they'll let you have 7. There's a city-mandated maximum occupancy on most properties in SLO so the landlord will not budge.

- » If they ask you to include your name, email, and phone number in the first contact, and you want a response, you need to include it.
- » After you've read the listing and are thinking the property would be a good fit, click the reply button, copy the email address, and send a message.








When you reach out to landlords, make sure to be professional. You're not buying an Xbox or a used mattress (...gross), you're trying to convince them to rent their home to you. Make sure to be on your best behavior.

One more time: read the listing and send them the information they ask for.



If they don't have their name in the listing, keep it gender neutral and professional. We suggest either simply using "Hello" or the more formal "Sir / Ma'am" (if that's your thing).

Hearing Back

 **craigslist 4879471228** <vq9fj-4879471228@hous.craigslist.org> Feb 7   
to cc47f43cd1d732. 

Hello, Cameron,

Thank you for your interest in my house on Stanford Drive. I will be showing the house by appointment to qualified applicants on February 14 or 15. I'm happy to answer any questions you have beforehand; just ask!

Attached is the application that I need in advance from each roommate, and a copy of the "house rules". Please return the applications to me as a group so that I don't get confused. After I've reviewed them, we can make an appointment to all meet there on the 14th or 15th.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Regards,
Landlord Name

...

Original craigslist post:
<http://slo.craigslist.org/apa/4879471228.html>
About craigslist mail:
<http://craigslist.org/about/help/email-relay>
Please flag unwanted messages (spam, scam, other):
<http://craigslist.org/mf/b98e9d2948c58ded26854f2685fe814ecb7028b5.1>

Usually, the landlord will get back to you with instructions. Make sure you get all the information that they need and return it to them in a timely manner. Some, like our example landlord, will ask you to fill out an application. Some will coordinate a time to meet with you. Some will be fake listings trying to scam you. Whatever the case, we have other posts that cover those points in greater detail.

- » Did the landlord invite you to a showing?
- » Did the landlord ask you to fill out an application?
- » Did the landlord ask you for a bunch of money via Western Union (or sound scammy?)

Make sure to respond accordingly.

PolyRents Tips: What You Should Know

Read The Listing: The number one complaint we hear from landlords is that students don't bother reading the entire listing, and therefore waste their time.

Be Professional: This is by far the most important part. Treat your interactions with the landlords like you would a job interview.

Keep Contacting: Even if you hear back from one landlord, keep reaching out to properties that would fit your group.



Fill Out Your Application

Alright, it's time to fill out the application for a house you really want. You're probably not too excited about writing all your personal information down for a total stranger to check out, but remember: you're asking this person to live in their house, so it makes sense that you'd have to divulge some personal info. There's really not much that needs explaining on your application, either you know your personal info or you don't.

Don't forget that you will also need to pay your application fee in order for your application to be processed by the rental company. If you're dealing with a landlord who only has one or two rental properties, this may not occur, but almost all property management companies will charge you. The cost is generally between \$20-\$30 per person, and if you're applying to more than one home – which you probably should be – these costs can add up.

For your rental history, make sure to put your most recent landlord (with their contact information if requested). If you only have one, put the dorms as your second previous address. If you're still living in the dorms, put that as your main address and write "N/A" for the landlord section.

This is an example rental application from a Property Management company here in town. We don't endorse this company by any means, but they have a simple and clean application.

OFFICIAL USE ONLY:		Date _____	Initials _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Cosigner w/ Application		Total Received \$ _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cosigner form to be received	<input type="checkbox"/> CASH		
<input type="checkbox"/> No cosigner needed	<input type="checkbox"/> CHECK # _____		

MCNAMARA REALTY
 REAL ESTATE AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
 390 Higuera St. San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
 office 805.543.7777 fax 805.543.7791
 www.slrealty.com

THERE IS A \$20 NON-REFUNDABLE APPLICATION FEE FOR EVERY APPLICANT ABOVE THE AGE OF 18 WHEN SUBMITTING THIS APPLICATION

PERSONAL INFO	Rental Address: _____	Avail. Move In Date: _____
	Name: _____	Driver's License# _____ DOB: _____
	Co-Applicants (include relationship): _____	
	Current Address: _____	City _____ State _____ Zip _____
	Tel Home: _____	Cell: _____ Social Security #: _____ - _____ - _____
	Email Address: _____	Do you smoke? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Do you have pets? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO # of Animals and types: _____	
	Landlord Name: _____	Tel: _____ How long at Current Address: _____
	Reason for Leaving? _____	Current Monthly Rent: \$ _____ May we contact Current Landlord: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Previous Landlord Name: _____	Tel: _____ Length at Previous Address: _____
HISTORY	Previous Rental Address: _____	Reason for Leaving? _____
	Permanent Address: _____	City _____ State _____ Zip _____
	Occupation/Position Held: _____	Student? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO School Attending: _____



After a few times applying, it's going to become very annoying to fill out a separate application, collect it from your roommates, and then turn it in and pay another fee every time you apply.

You can pretty much guarantee you're going to have to call your parents to get your (and/or their) social security number or bank account information again on your next application. Since you're waiting for your whole group every time, you're going to stress because you're prioritizing an application over your academic and social life, and you seem to keep losing \$30 every time you apply for a home. It's like a race that you must pay to enter, but have no clue who you're competing with, and you must keep entering until you do win. Talk about frustrating.

We recommend two options:

1. Make a photocopy, or take a picture of the first rental application you fill out. That way you'll have all the information ready to copy over for next time!
2. Use PolyRents. We make it easy for you to fill out your information once, connect with your roommates, and then either apply digitally to properties we've partnered with or download/print your applications to give to the landlord.

PolyRents Tips: What You Should Know

Be Prepared: Get all of this information up front and have it ready to go before you start applying.

Don't Leave Anything Blank: Fill out the entire application. If you don't have something, like a car, write "N/A" instead of leaving it blank.

No Job? If you don't currently have a job, write "Full time student" or put your previous employer.

Personal References Shouldn't Be Relatives: Most landlords are only going to call your parents and any previous landlords.



Showings

You've found a home that you and your roommates really want, from the photos at least. You've initiated communication with the landlord, and now you want to see the place for yourself! After reaching this point, the landlord will most likely give you a time (or range of times) when they're showing the property. We highly advise you to accommodate those times even if someone in your group has to miss class. Chances are, if you're not willing to miss class, someone else will be.

“So, what's a showing?”

A showing is an opportunity for you and the landlord to meet each other, and for you to see the property and make sure it's what you want – even if that's just a roof with four walls.

We think it's pretty straightforward.

“And... how do these showings work?”

You show up on time, walk through the house, check the place out, and ask any questions you have. Again, pretty straightforward, but we want to remind you of a few things:

You need to make a good impression.

Landlords are looking for quality tenants. It's important that you show up on time, look presentable, and be personable. If you've followed our advice on contacting the landlord, you'll want to be confirming their positive first impression of you.

You need to make sure the property is going to work for your group.

You should come to the showing with a pretty good idea of what your needs are. Know that the location and cost will work for you, otherwise you're wasting your time. Other than that, the showing is your opportunity to check out the parking situation, bus route, amenities, and bedroom/living space.



Ace The Showing

Unless you have a sweet hookup for housing, you're going to be competing for your dream home just like everyone else. All those people you saw at the showing are now racing to complete their applications before you. Multiple groups competing for the same house is not only stressful for you but also the landlord! They have to manage and coordinate the applications and guarantor forms of every group as they come in, while simultaneously making their tenant choices. Their goal is to find quality tenants who will take care of their investment, and they don't want to spend a ton of time on this process.

The easier you make things for the landlord, the easier it will be for them to rent to you.

PolyRents Tips: What You Should Know

Be Early: Show up 5-10 minutes early for your scheduled time slot.

Dress Up: At a minimum, dress like you would for a date. Ideally, dress like you would for a job interview.

Come Prepared: Take a one-page resume with a personal bio and your photo with a copy of your application. Landlords want to know who is living in their property (builds some trust) and have a face to associate with a name. You can either create your own or use PolyRents.

Be Conservative: Don't talk about drinking, partying, pets, etc. It won't help and might worry the landlord enough to avoid your group all together.

Submit Your Application & Wait

After you submit your application, you'll wait to hear back. Depending on the landlord, you may hear back in two days or two weeks. If you applied through a property management company, you'll probably hear back sooner because they have dedicated staff for reviewing applicants. If you applied to an independent landlord, you'll probably be waiting longer.

If you haven't heard back after three days, you should send a polite follow-up email like:

Hi <Landlord>,

This is John Smith. We just want to follow up on the status of our application with you for 123 California.

Thank you,

John Smith

In the meantime, you need to keep applying to places. If the landlord takes two weeks to tell you, "You didn't get the place, sorry!" then you'll be two weeks behind. And if you get two weeks behind, you're going to be more stressed out. We don't want that to happen to you, so after you apply to one place, keep looking until you hear back.

When you do hear back from one of the landlords and move onto signing the lease, we suggest sending the other landlords a note along these lines:

Hi <Landlord>,

Thank you so much for considering us for 123 California Blvd. We just heard from another landlord for a property we applied to, and we're signing the lease this week. Just want to let you know so you don't spend unnecessary time evaluating our applications.

Thank you,

John Smith

This isn't necessary of course, but it's a good idea. This way if your current option falls through (for whatever reason), you may be able to reconnect with one of the other properties you applied to. Who knows, maybe they have more than one house.



PolyRents Tips: What You Should Know

Keep Applying: You're going to need to keep looking for places. It's not over until you sign the lease!

Keep Other Landlords Updated: When you hear back, let the other outstanding landlords know. They'll appreciate it.

How Landlords Decide

After the showing where you either saw or heard about the competition, you may wonder, "How does the landlord possibly decide who to rent to?". The simple answer is, it depends.

Property Managers

Most of the property managers in SLO follow the law and operate under the Fair Housing guidelines set up by the State of California. These guidelines state, "The landlord should take the time to check out the information and make a selection based on the first qualified applicant(s)". It's recommended that property managers follow this, but it's not law.

This means that property managers will accept applications and review them in the order they receive them. If they feel comfortable with the group, their references, and their financial stability, they'll rent to the group. What does this mean for you? Be prepared and submit your applications as soon as you can.

Independent Landlords

Next, you need to know that the Fair Housing Act only applies to landlords who have more than 3 rental units. This means that this law doesn't apply to the many independent landlords on Craigslist who are renting one home. Because of this, these smaller landlords tend to base their decisions on a separate set of criteria.

In our experience, independent landlords base their decision on an emotional basis. The house you're looking at is most likely their retirement plan. They bought the house a few years ago and have been renting it out to students. Since students can be quite rowdy at times, these landlords need to make sure that their \$500,000+ investment isn't going to burn down. To put it plainly, they'll base their decision off whether or not they trust you.

PolyRents Tips: What You Should Know

Know How Property Managers Decide: Property Managers run on “first come & first qualify”. If you get your application in first, you'll have a higher chance of getting the place.

Know How Landlords Decide: Independent landlords are going to decide based on whether or not they trust you.

Know Why The Housing Process Sucks

It's only been a couple weeks since you've started looking for a place to live next year, but time is ticking and you're becoming nervous. Soon you're desperately avoiding being homeless next year, or worse – living in PCV.

After you find a place on Craigslist, you start imagining your life next year. The bedrooms are huge and the house is super close to campus. Life there would be perfect. You've already dropped \$30 on the application fee, organized all your roommates, skipped an important class to see the place, and didn't study for a test to get everyone's applications together just so that the landlord would consider your group. Your hopes are high, and you're sure you made a great impression on the landlord.

As you're sitting in your English lecture (clearly ignoring lecture material), you get an email from the landlord. Your face lights up, and you immediately block out whatever else is going on. “This is it!” you think to yourself.



Hi John Smith,

Thank you for applying to 123 California Blvd. I'm writing to let you know that we've selected another group of tenants. Sorry, and best of luck with the rest of your search.

Good luck,

<Landlord>

Your emotions tank. You think about all the time, money, and energy you spent trying to get the place. Now you have to go do it all over again, but this time you have a midterm coming up that you have to study for, and there's also a group project you have due Tuesday. Suddenly, the stress from the first time around doesn't seem that bad. You're about to deal with it all over again, and now there's so much more going on.

But there is a silver lining: you've done it before. You have a rough idea of how the process works, and it's not unknown territory anymore. Last year, the upperclassmen who found housing had almost no help. They had to figure it out on their own. This year, you have PolyRents.

If you're just joining us, go back through the other sections and repeat the process with some of our tips. It should give you an advantage.

You Are The Chosen One...

Congrats! You made it. The next step is pretty easy, you'll just coordinate a time to meet with the landlord to sign your lease.

When you sign, almost all landlords are going to require a security deposit. Make sure you figure out the amount and desired method of payment ahead of time, and have it ready when it's time to sign the lease.

When paying, make sure you figure out with your roommates how much everyone is paying to reach the total amount.



Before you sign the lease, you're going to need to:

- » Talk to your guarantors (if they're helping you pay)
- » Get \$\$ ready (you'll need the first month's rent + the security deposit)
- » Read the entire lease to make sure it's what you expected

At this point, you just want to get that sucker signed so that you can get back to studying for "Survey of Indigenous Studies" and watching Netflix.

PolyRents Tips: What You Should Know

The Landlord Wants Your Money: The deposit amount will most likely be the first month's rent + the security deposit.

Smile, You're Done! The process is over. You've signed the lease. Now get back to whatever it is you do.

Property Managers & Apartment Complexes

We've done quite a bit of research on the housing space in San Luis Obispo. Through our research, we've compiled the names and websites of almost all of the property management companies and apartment complexes in SLO.

How Does This Help Me?

Most property management companies in San Luis Obispo have websites where they list available rental units. Larger property management companies often post properties exclusively on their website. Because of this, you'll need to check their websites often for the latest availability.

Small- and medium-sized property managers generally post on their websites and Craigslist. In some cases, the listings on Craigslist are more reliable and up-to-date.

Why Am I Only Seeing Homes For Sale?

Some property management companies handle both rentals and sales. They often display their "For Sale" listings prominently while rental listings are a bit more difficult to find. If they have a search function on their website, we recommend looking for a "Property Type" option and selecting "Rentals".

See An Issue in The List?

This list is the result of multiple years of research by PolyRents and we try our best to keep it up-to-date. That said, things change and people make mistakes, so there may be errors and/or omissions on this list. If you notice something that's incorrect or have new suggestions for us, please click the chat button and let us know!



Property Management Companies:

- » [Aurora Property Services](#)
- » [Bjerre and Garcia Realty](#)
- » [California-West](#)
- » [Castle Keepers](#)
- » **[Comet Realty](#)**
- » [Davies Co.](#)
- » **[Farrell Smyth](#)**
- » Ferrini Enterprise – (805) 543-4794
- » [Goetz Manderley Property Management](#)
- » [Haven Properties](#)
- » [Horizon Realty & Property Management](#)
- » JDR Real Estate Services – (805) 781-3595
- » [J.B. Enterprises](#)
- » [Kimberly's Global Real Estate Corp](#)
- » [Patterson Realty](#)
- » [Peak Property Management](#)
- » [Real Property Management \(RPM\) Central Coast](#)
- » [REG Property Management](#)
- » [San Luis Obispo Realty & Property Management](#)
- » [SLORent.com / King-Valley Property Management](#)
- » [SLO Rental Shoppe](#)
- » [Melson Realty](#)
- » [Moxie Property Management](#)
- » [McNamara Real Estate](#)
- » [Mission Property Group](#)
- » Nelson Real Estate – (805) 546-1990
- » [Western Realty](#)

Apartment Complexes:

- » Boysen Square – (805) 544-2101
- » [Cal Park](#)
- » Cedar Creek (managed by Farrell Smyth)
- » [College Garden](#)
- » [De Tolosa Ranch](#)
- » Garfield Arms (managed by California West)
- » Lee Arms
- » [Murray Station / Casa Bonita](#)
- » [Mustang Village](#)
- » [San Luis Village](#)
- » [Fairview Apartments](#)
- » Ferrini Apartments (managed by JDR Real Estate)
- » Foothill Hacienda (managed by California West)
- » [Stafford Gardens / Las Casitas](#)
- » [The SLO](#) (dorm style, required meal plan)
- » [Valencia](#)
- » [555 Westmont](#)

