

# Housing in Halifax

*A Guide for  
NSCAD Students  
2023-2024*



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# Renting in Halifax

Two BIG issues for  
renters right now.

## High Rent:

- Average 1 Bedroom: \$1,825
- Average 2 bedroom: \$2,400
- Average 3 bedroom: \$2,880

From: <https://www.zumper.com/rent-research/halifax-ns>

## Low Vacancy:

- Vacancy has dropped to 1%

From: <https://assets.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/sites/cmhc/professional/housing-markets-data-and-research/market-reports/rental-market-report/rental-market-report-2022-en.pdf?rev=8eb3acc0-89b3-49d1-a518-0a381f97b942>

# This means, if you want to rent, you have to:

- **Be Proactive:**

- *Check listings daily.*
- *Check multiple sites.*
- *E-mail, phone call, message on social media, exhaust all options.*
- *Go to every viewing and be early.*

- **Make Connections:**

- *Many rental units in Halifax are found through someone you know.*
- *Tell anyone and everyone that you are looking for an apartment. Someone you know might have a lead on a place.*
- *A friend who can vouch for you will oftentimes be the deciding factor between you, and another potential tenant.*

- **Budget:**

- *It is likely your rent will be your highest cost of living.*
- *Create a monthly budget, include your rent, food, tuition, utilities and all other anticipated costs.*
- *The better idea you have of your monthly costs, the more prepared you can be.*

- **Find Roommates:**

- *In most cases it is cheaper to live with a roommate, 2-, 3-, and 4-bedroom apartments are commonly available in Halifax.*
- *Splitting monthly utilities and other costs will help you save.*

- **Consider a longer commute:**

- *Rent is highest in the downtown Halifax area. The further away you look for apartments, the cheaper they get.*
- *Clayton Park, Armdale, Bedford, Dartmouth, Fairview, Spryfield, and Rockingham are all reliably connected to Downtown Halifax via Public Transit.*



# How to look for an Apartment:

## Online Resources:

- [kijiji.ca](http://kijiji.ca)
- [Facebook Market Place](https://www.facebook.com/marketplace)
- [rentcafe.com](http://rentcafe.com)
- [zoeken.ca](http://zoeken.ca)
- [rentseeker.ca](http://rentseeker.ca)
- [rentals.ca](http://rentals.ca)
- [zumper.com](http://zumper.com)
- [point2homes.com](http://point2homes.com)

## Property Management Sites:

- [killamreit.com](http://killamreit.com)
- [templetonproperties.ca](http://templetonproperties.ca)
- [happyplacepm.com](http://happyplacepm.com)
- [444rent.com](http://444rent.com)
- [universalgroup.ca](http://universalgroup.ca)
- [paramountmanagement.ca](http://paramountmanagement.ca)
- [twincity.ca](http://twincity.ca)
- [mooresuites.com](http://mooresuites.com)
- [southwest.ca](http://southwest.ca)
- [harringtonhousing.com](http://harringtonhousing.com)
- [opendoorproperties.ca](http://opendoorproperties.ca)

**\*\*Please be aware that NSCAD is not affiliated with any of these websites, and we caution you to be aware of renting scams when looking for housing on these sites! \*\***

## Word of mouth:

- Talk to everyone and let them know you are looking for an apartment.
- Check social media and see if you have any friends or know anyone who is subletting or seeking to transfer their lease.

## Explore the City:

- Sometimes landlords may only advertise available units via “For Rent” signs.
- These signs are usually placed in windows or on front lawns.
- They will have a phone number to call on the front of them.

## Homes for Queers Halifax:

- This Facebook housing group is for all the queer, trans, two-spirit, other LGBTQ+ umbrella friends of Halifax to help you find lovely housemates and safe happy homes. Post an ad on the wall/discussion board for your spare room, or to find people to start a new house share.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/375470715925910/discussion/preview>

## NSCAD Yard \$ale :

- A place for the NSCAD (and beyond) community to sell, trade, or search for items that aren't quite ready for the love dumpster yet. This can include textbooks, art and art supplies. furniture, clothing, etc. People will often post adds seeking roommates here!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/237461526460762/>



# Lease Agreements

## What is a lease?

A lease is a binding legal agreement signed by the tenants and the landlords. You as a tenant are responsible for whatever is written in the lease. Copies **MUST** be identical and held by both the tenant and landlord. In Nova Scotia there are three types of leases: Monthly, Yearly, Fixed-term (beginning and ending on specific days).

**\*\*It is extremely important to closely read your lease\*\*.** Leases in Nova Scotia must follow certain standard details, but certain rules and stipulations can be added by the landlord.

The “Standard Form of Lease” can be found [here](#). Always refer to this document when you are unsure.

<https://beta.novascotia.ca/standard-form-lease-form-p>

## Residential Tenancies Act:

If you have any concerns about certain rules or regulations in your lease, disputes between you and your landlord, or other issues you may have while renting, make sure you review the document below:

<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/residential%20tenancies.pdf>

## Dalhousie Legal Aid Service:

This community office provides legal services and advice, particularly to students who are renting in Halifax. If you find yourself in a dispute with your landlord, always reach out to Dalhousie Legal Aid before acting.

Address: 5746 Russell Street, Halifax, NS, B3K 0H8

Phone: 902-422-8105

Email: [legalaid@dal.ca](mailto:legalaid@dal.ca)

<https://www.dal.ca/faculty/law/dlas.html>

# !!Red Flags!!

- **Rental Application Fees:**

*This is illegal. If a landlord asks you for an application fee, do not comply and do not continue applying for the apartment.*

- **Model or Sample Units:**

*If you have NOT seen the ACTUAL unit, do NOT sign the lease. Always ask to see the unit you will be renting before signing anything.*

- **Paying in Cash:**

*Never pay your rent in cash, even if a landlord is willing to provide receipts.*

- **Pets:**

*Unfortunately, many rental units are not pet friendly. Unlike other places in Canada, landlords are allowed to restrict pets.*

*In many cases landlords will discriminate against pet owners when choosing a tenant for their property, even if it is listed as pet friendly.*

- **Last Month's Rent:**

*It is illegal for a landlord to ask for the last months rent at the beginning of your lease. All they can ask you for when your tenancy starts is the security deposit (1/2 months rent, and your first months rent)*

- **Extra Deposits:**

*Landlords can ONLY ask for a "Security Deposit".*

- **Landlord refuses to provide Lease.**

*This is illegal as well. If your landlord does not provide you a lease within 10 days, you can terminate your tenancy.*

- **If a landlord tries to raise your rent more than once a year.**

*This is illegal, a landlord is only allowed to raise your rent once every 12 months. This increase is capped at **5%** and your landlord must give you written notice (usually **4** months). Sometimes increases can be reduced by landlords if you can successfully explain how they will be detrimental for you.*

# Rental Scams

*Unfortunately, rental scams are becoming more common in Nova Scotia, oftentimes they will target people coming from out of province.*

- Any sense of urgency to pay a damage deposit is very suspicious. If this occurs, practice caution.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it likely is.  
*Chances are, if you see a beautiful apartment for a low price, with all amenities included... it's fake.*
- **Never pay deposit for a place you have not seen in person.**  
*If a landlord is unable to provide any viewings, this is a big red flag.*
- **Never send any money to a third-party account.**  
*If someone is asking you to send a deposit to their lawyer, a private company or a previously unmentioned real estate company, this is cause for concern.*
- If you are seeing multiple ads for the same apartment across different platforms, be suspicious.
- A landlord asking you to pay a deposit to secure keys is not only illegal, but likely a scam as well.
- If a landlord is asking for wire transfers as a form of payment, this is strange. Wire transfers are not easily traceable and do not provide any official receipts.

# Co-Signers/Guarantors

- A co-signer (also known as a Guarantor), is someone who on behalf of the tenant, signs into an agreement with the landlord which specifies that they will be liable for the rental unit or any other financial obligations.

*For example:*

*If the tenant fails to pay 2 months' worth of rent, the co-signer will be required to pay the landlord that money on behalf of the tenant.*

- They are oftentimes requested when the landlord believes that a potential tenant is not able to pay rent on their own. Most of the times this applies to students, especially undergraduates.
- As a renter, finding the proper co-signer is very important. You should choose someone reliable and close to you, such as parents, grandparents, guardians, etc. It should be someone financially secure.
- This policy describes how a landlord, and 1 or more guarantors may sign a guaranteed agreement for the financial obligations of a tenancy (lease) between a tenant and landlord. The policy also identifies the sections of the Residential Tenancies Act this policy applies to and how Applications to the Director can name guarantors if a guaranteed agreement is in place.

The province of Nova Scotia Guarantee Agreements Policy can be found here:

<https://beta.novascotia.ca/documents/guarantee-agreements-policy-residential-tenancies>

# Best Practices while Apartment Hunting

- *Be safe. If possible, always go to apartment viewings with trusted friends, classmates, or family members.*
- *Always see the apartment in person with the landlord present before agreeing to anything. If you are unable to see the apartment in person, send a trusted friend or classmate to view the property with you on video call.*
- *When looking for an apartment, keep in mind its proximity to transit lines, grocery stores and other essential resources.*
- *Thoroughly inspect the apartment. Rust, black mould, pests, water pressure, etc. The landlord is responsible for addressing all these issues.*
- *If you are thinking of living with a roommate, be on the same page and communicate regularly and honestly. Signing a lease with someone is a big responsibility, even if it is your best friend, think about your relationship and how you will live together.*
- *Do not agree to paying rent in multiple increments at a time, paying more than one month's rent at a time is in violation of the tenancy act.*
- *If some amenities are not included in the rent, be sure to ensure to include the estimated costs in your monthly budget.*

# Living in Residence

*While NSCAD does not operate any residences, we have several arrangements with other university residences located in Halifax! Contact the schools below if you are interested in living in residence.*

- **Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU)**

*902-457-5520 or [residence@msvu.ca](mailto:residence@msvu.ca) or [Shannon.fenlon@msvu.ca](mailto:Shannon.fenlon@msvu.ca)*

- **University of King's College (King's)**

*902-422-1271 ext. 215 or [residence@ukings.ca](mailto:residence@ukings.ca)*

- **Atlantic School of Theology**

*902-223-2974 or [bzahra@astheology.ns.ca](mailto:bzahra@astheology.ns.ca)*



# Mount Saint Vincent University

**MSVU is currently accepting residence applications for the Fall 2023/ Winter 2024 semester!**

***\*\*As residences across the city are filling up fast, it is highly recommended to apply as soon as possible if this option is right for you! \*\****

***Please review the MSVU Residence Life web page for more information!***

**[Residence Life | Live on Campus | Mount Saint Vincent University \(msvu.ca\)](#)**

***There is special application spot for students from other institutions, this can be found through this link below:***

**[2023-2024 MSVU Partner Institution Residence Application \(Page 1 of 8\) \(office.com\)](#)**

***\*\*Please note, all rooms are assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis. \*\****

# Rooms, Rules, & Residence Life

Before choosing to live in residence, there are several factors you will have to keep in mind. It is important to consider whether residence properly fits your needs.

This means doing lots of research to ensure that you are happy with your choice of residence.

## Rooms:

Living in residence is not like living in an apartment. Oftentimes you will be living with a roommate who you may not know. While all residence rooms have different rules, common prohibited items include:

- Candles
- Microwaves
- Toasters
- Air fryers
- Panini Presses
- Fridges
- Pets
- Space Heaters
- Alcohol (certain floors only usually)
- Any drug paraphernalia
- Rugs
- Smoking indoors
- Large furniture (Beds, Couches, etc.)
- Candles or incense

In many cases single and double rooms do NOT have personal washrooms, kitchens, or laundry. These are usually shared spaces.

**\*\*Even though cannabis is legal in Canada, consuming drugs while on campus is usually strictly prohibited, even outside! \*\***

# Rules:

Each Residence will have their own set of rules, fees, and application process, etc.

This means that you will need to properly research each individual residence and find one that is best suited to your needs.

## For example:

- Many residences have mandatory meal plans that you are required to pay for even if you do not use it.
- Oftentimes, residence will regulate the number of guests/visitors you are allowed to host, how long they are allowed to stay, and where they are allowed to go.
- Noise usually must be contained to your private room, and most residences will have *Quiet Hours* (where all noise is prohibited). *Quiet Hours* are usually in place during nighttime and the entirety of Exam Periods.
- Disputes between roommates and other residents are typically required to be solved through a mediation process with a Residence Assistant (RA).

# Residence Life:

Living on residence provides you with a unique opportunity to meet friends and experience a dynamic social life. Being a university student can be stressful, having built-in support through residence is always helpful.

## Sample Activities:

- Barbecues
- Varsity Sports
- Movie Nights
- Trivia
- Dodgeball
- Board Games Night
- Resume Workshops
- Welcome Weeks

**\*\*Demand for residence accommodations have increased in recent years. This means you must be proactive and apply as early as possible\*\***

**If possible, consider paying a deposit and being put on a wait list if your desired residence has no availability.**

**For more Information on university residences, please contact: [belong@nscad.ca](mailto:belong@nscad.ca)**

# Homestay Accommodations

*Homestays are an affordable and practical alternative to traditional on campus and private housing. You will be personally matched with a local host family that offer a friendly and nurturing home environment for you to stay in.*



# Application Process:

Although NSCAD does not currently have an officially designated Homestay program, the Canadian Homestay Network accepts students from all institutions.

The Canadian Homestay network has an online application form that can be accessed below:

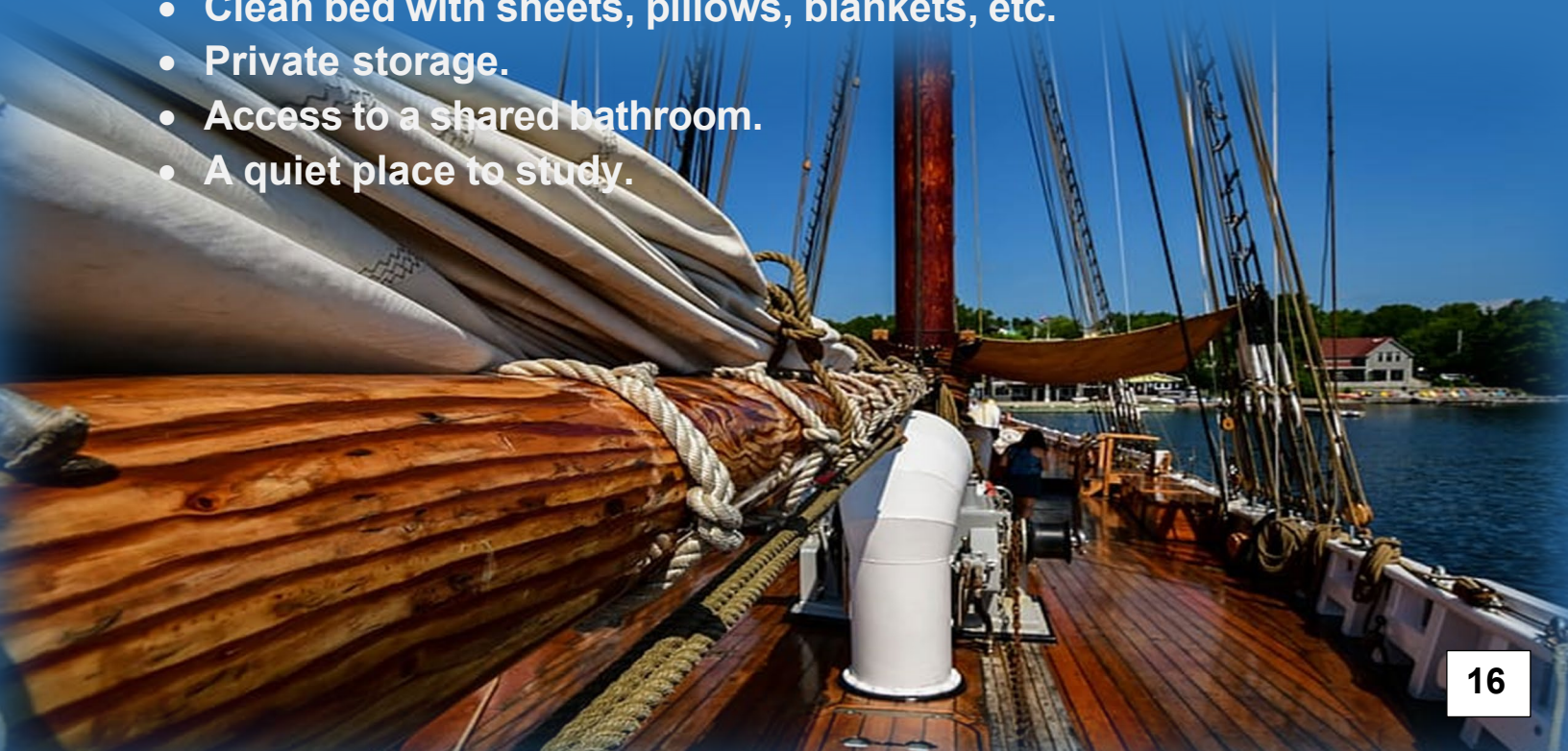
<https://studentportal.chnonline.ca/apply>

Before you apply, ensure to review the website for more information regarding meal plans, pricing and available resources for homestay students:

<https://canadahomestaynetwork.ca/for-students/#joinCHN>

## Accommodations include:

- Furnished room with a window.
- Clean bed with sheets, pillows, blankets, etc.
- Private storage.
- Access to a shared bathroom.
- A quiet place to study.



# Temporary Accommodations

*If you are moving to Nova Scotia prior to finding a permanent housing arrangement, these are some temporary accommodations that you may find useful:*

- **Moore Properties International:**  
**info@mooresuites.com**
- **Airbnb**
- **VRBO**
- **Hostels**



# Plan Ahead:

- If you require short-term accommodations when you arrive in Halifax, book as early as possible.

Summer and Fall are busy tourist seasons in Halifax. This means hostels, hotels and rental apps like Airbnb may have very low availability.

- Certain hostels, hotels and rental apps require you to be 18+ to check in.
- Credit cards are often times required to book any short-term accommodations.

## Hostels:

Hostels are a great and cheap temporary option for those needing a place to stay. There are two hostels located in Halifax:

- **Halifax Backpackers:** Both Dorms & Private Rooms, laundry on site, Wi-Fi, storage. Located in Halifax North End and close to everything!  
<http://www.halifaxbackpackers.com>  
[halifaxbackpackers@gmail.com](mailto:halifaxbackpackers@gmail.com)
- **HI Halifax, Heritage House:** Located in the South End of Halifax near the downtown area, this heritage building offers storage, Wi-Fi, and a full kitchen.  
<https://hihostels.ca/en/destinations/nova-scotia/hi-halifax>  
[halifax@hihostels.ca](mailto:halifax@hihostels.ca) 902-422-3863



And remember...

# We are here to help!!

We understand that finding housing in Halifax is a difficult task right now, but we are here to help in whatever way we possibly can!

Do not hesitate to contact the Office of Student Experience with any questions, concerns, or help you may need. We will do our best to point you in the right direction and provide the best possible assistance that we can!

Finding a place in Halifax is **100%** possible, do not be afraid to reach out to friends, family, classmates, and the NSCAD community!

[ose@nscad.ca](mailto:ose@nscad.ca)

902-494-8260