

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING GUIDE

FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN SILICON VALLEY

2026 – 2027

UCSC Silicon Valley
Extension
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

CAUTIONS ABOUT THE RENTAL MARKET

Please be aware that the housing information in this guide is not directly affiliated with the University. It is your responsibility to check the information and use appropriate care when making decisions about renting property.

WATCH OUT FOR SCAMS

Be cautious when using any online rental sites such as Craigslist, Roomster, or Rent.com. Never give someone money or bank information before you see the room or home. Scammers may say that they are not in the U.S. so they cannot meet you in person, or say that you have to send them money before seeing photos of the rental. If possible, request to see a property in person. If it's not possible, see if you can tour virtually on Facetime or Zoom before sending money or giving your personal information.

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Thank you to Joy Martin of JM Consulting for your help in creating this helpful guide.



HOW TO CREATE YOUR BUDGET

To find a place to live, you need to create a budget so you know how much you can spend on housing.

RENT — The largest cost will be your rent. If you choose to rent an apartment on your own, expect to pay \$1,200 – \$2,000 (USD). If you rent a room in an apartment or house, expect to pay \$700 – \$1,000 (USD).

HOUSING APPLICATION FEES — Some apartment complexes may charge a fee to process an apartment application. Fees range from \$20 to \$100. If you are going to live in a house with roommates, you may not have to pay these kinds of fees. Make sure that you ask.

HOUSING SECURITY DEPOSITS — Most renters in the U.S. will be asked to put down a security deposit to cover any unexpected damages that may occur while they live there. The deposit is usually the equivalent of 1-2 months of rent. If you pay a deposit, make sure you ask for a receipt. Do not make cash payments. Write a check or buy a cashier's check to give to the building owner.

UTILITY FEES — Heating, gas, electricity, WiFi, phone, and other expenses are usually not included in your rent. Be sure to clarify what you're paying before you sign a lease.

SCHOOL EXPENSES — Books, tuition, and health insurance all add up. You may choose to pay the entire school tuition fee at once or over three quarters.

OTHER MONTHLY EXPENSES — Your budget will also include food, laundry, furniture, sheets, towels, clothing, going out, traveling, transportation, lunch, coffee, and other expenses.

Visit [Numbeo.com](https://www.numbeo.com) for a current reference for the cost of living in Santa Clara.

HOW TO FIND A PLACE TO LIVE

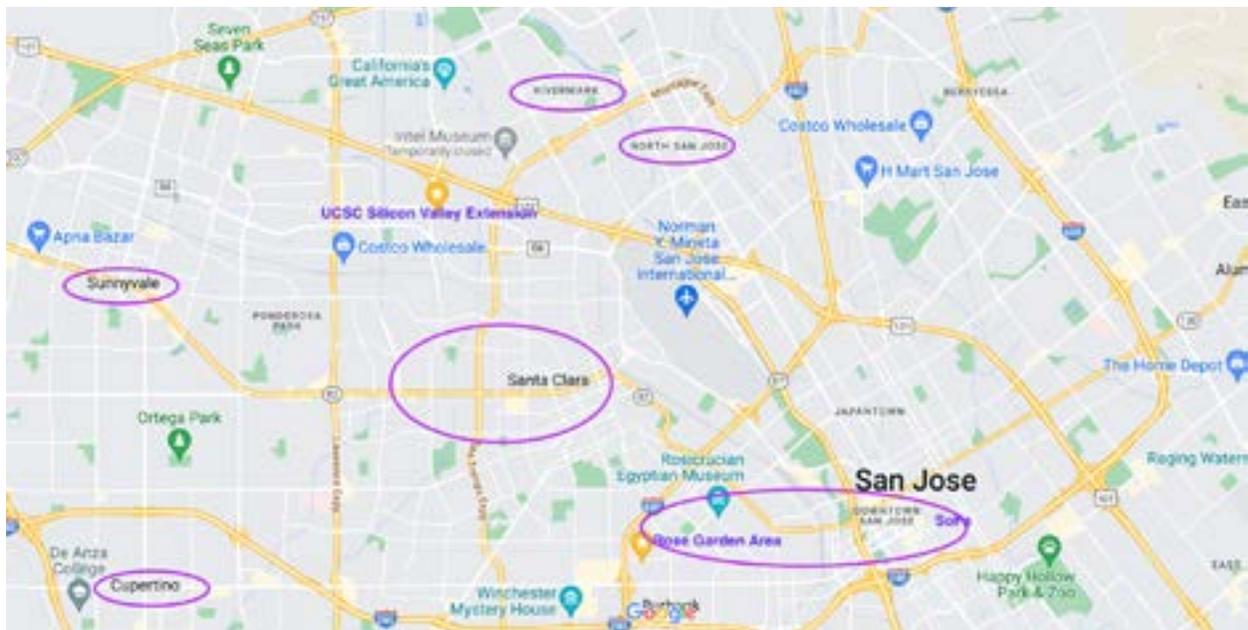
You'll have great living options in Silicon Valley, but it can be a challenge to find the right place at a cost you can afford. When looking for your future home, consider public transportation, street parking, and access to shops. Use Google Maps to learn where to catch public transportation to and from UCSC Silicon Valley Extension. The Silicon Valley Campus has convenient access to shopping and dining, freeways, transit lines, the San Jose International Airport, and Silicon Valley's top tech companies and most sought-after startups. We're located at the corner of Bowers Avenue and Scotts Boulevard in Santa Clara and have a bus stop right in front of the building.

POPULAR AREAS IN A VERY BIG CITY

Just next door is San Jose, a city of about one million people, plus numerous other big cities. The most popular neighborhoods for students include: Santa Clara Square, Rivermark, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale. In your housing search, focus on North San Jose, West San Jose, and Central/Downtown San Jose. Because of high traffic, getting to South San Jose and East San Jose can be a 45–60-minute drive to the UCSC campus. Here are some popular areas:

- **Santa Clara Square** (across the street from UCSC Silicon Valley Extension) Grocery stores, restaurants, and small boutiques.
- **Rivermark Neighborhood** (2-3 miles from the Silicon Valley Campus) With lots of apartment complexes and townhouses.
- **North San Jose** (5-10-minute drive from the Campus) Many apartment complexes.
- **Downtown San Jose** (close to San Jose State University) Many apartment buildings and city living.
- **Santa Clara & Rose Garden San Jose** (neighborhoods close to Santa Clara University) A suburban neighborhood area with many houses and rooms for rent, and smaller apartment complexes.
- **Santana Row** - (About 6 miles from the campus) Upscale apartment complex on top of an outdoor shopping and restaurant area.

MAP OF NEIGHBORHOODS AROUND UCSC SILICON VALLEY



RESOURCES

COMMON RENTAL SITES

- [Zillow](#)
- [Rent.com](#)
- [Apartments.com](#)
- [Craigslist](#)
- [PadMapper](#)
- [Roomster](#)
- [ForRent.com](#)
- [Trulia](#)
- [HomeStays](#)
- [Kapi Residences](#)

To get a list of placements in Silicon Valley, email placement@kapiresidences.com

POPULAR NEIGHBORHOOD SITES

Santa Clara University is a private university in a lively student neighborhood around it. See: [Bungalow.com - SF Bay Area](#)

San José is a student city and there is a lot of housing around SJSU. Here are some websites:

- [San Jose Uloop Housing](#)
- [Facebook SJSU Housing Group](#)
- [ApartmentFinder - SJSU](#)
- [Facebook San Jose Housing](#)

HOUSING—WHAT TO EXPECT

APPLICATION FEE—If you apply to live in a large apartment complex, you may have to pay an application fee usually between \$25–\$75 (USD)

BACKGROUND CHECKS—When renting an apartment, be prepared to fill out a background check. This usually requires bank account information, previous addresses, and personal and professional references.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER—Landlords may request a Social Security Number to check on your financial history. If you do not have a Social Security Number, please state that you are not eligible for a Social Security Card and let them know you are on a student visa

SECURITY & LAST MONTH'S RENT—It is normal for a landlord to require first and last month's rent, and a damage deposit.

UTILITY COSTS—Utilities (water, gas, electricity) may or may not be included in the rental amount. This information will be contained in your lease; this is a legally binding agreement, so make sure to read it carefully before signing.

LEASES—Landlords are looking for responsible, financially secure tenants. They prefer to have local references.

VERIFICATION—But, it will help if you provide some documents such as a copy of your financial statement and verification of enrollment.

WRITTEN AGREEMENTS—When you find the apartment of your choice, be sure to receive a lease agreement. All rental agreements or leases should be in writing. Read it thoroughly and make sure you understand it completely. If there is any language you do not understand, ask a reliable person to explain it to you.

Do not rent a place without a lease. If your landlord does not give you a copy, it is important to request one; your lease is the only evidence of your legal tenancy and is designed to protect both parties' rights.

At a minimum, a lease or rental agreement should include the following:

- rental rate
- required damage deposit
- length of occupancy

SOME STRONG ADVICE: Make sure you keep all the documents together in a file. This may include your lease and any other documents. Make sure you read and understand EVERYTHING or do not sign!!!

PREPARE AHEAD

When visiting a potential rental, prepare your questions. You can carry a small notebook to write the answers. Here are some good questions:

1. How much is the rent per month?
2. Is a security deposit required?
3. How much is it?
4. How can I get it back?

TIP: Before you move in, take photos of everything. When you move out, anything in the same condition won't be taken out of your security deposit.

5. Can I look at the lease to see the terms (month-to-month, six-month, or one-year)?
6. Make sure you sign a lease and receive a copy at the time you sign, not later.

NOTE: After you sign a lease, you cannot get out of it and you lose your security deposit and you have to pay for the entire period.

7. What is the cost for utilities, such as gas or electricity, if these things are mentioned in the lease?
8. Is there parking?
9. What is the penalty for late rent payments?
10. Where is the nearest bus stop?

WHEN IT'S TIME TO LEAVE

How to end your lease when you are ready to move out?

1. Give the required notice to your landlord. Usually, it's a 30-day notice, but read the lease to see how much time to give. Make sure you give notice in writing and include all related information, including the date you are going to move out. Be sure to include your future address, so that you can receive your security deposit.
2. Plan a date for your landlord to inspect the apartment. The place should be as perfectly clean and just as you found it. If something is broken or in disrepair, you may lose your security deposit.

QUESTIONS

Please visit our website or contact our International Team, extensioninternational@ucsc.edu with any questions you may have.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR HOUSING SEARCH!