

OFF-CAMPUS LIVING

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY'S COMMUTER STUDENT NEWSLETTER



Housing & Dining Programs

American University

FALL 2010

GOOD NEIGHBOR, GOOD CITIZEN—10 TIPS TO BE A BETTER NEIGHBOR

As a student who lives off-campus, you are automatically a member of a neighborhood and community. Remaining in good standing with your community and consequently with American University is important for all students. Your neighbors in your new community may not be as accepting of college student behavior as peers in the residence halls. Consider the following top ten tips to help you be a successful off campus student:

10. Get to know your neighbors. Forming relationships with your neighbors will encourage them to engage with you about an issue before consulting landlords and/or other authorities.

9. If you see a crime in process, report it. Sounds like a no-brainer, but it is always a good idea to look out for your neighbors—they

will be more likely to look out for you. If something seems suspicious -- call it in, it can't hurt to have it reported.

8. Adjust your behavior around neighborhood children. More than anyone else, children will be watching/repeating what you say and do; make sure your conversations and language in front of children are appropriate.

7. Keep visible property clean. While your landlord probably cares most about the inside of your property, your neighbors pay close attention to the exterior. It is important to know and understand your responsibilities around snow removal and keeping your sidewalks clear.

6. Keep trash contained. Having adequate trash and recycling containers is essential. Uncovered trash

cans or bags can lead to unwanted pests; which can lead to unhappy neighbors. Know your trash pick-up days so that you can put your trash out on the evening before and bring your trash cans back onto your property the next day.

5. Keep noise within your unit. Keep your music to a reasonable level, especially at night. If you are sharing walls with others also remember to vacuum, hang pictures, exercise, etc. during the day.

4. Your pet, your responsibility. Keep your pets on your property or on a leash. Keep in mind that not all people enjoy your pets. Respect them by keeping your pets in your space.

3. Have social gatherings, not parties. There is a clear difference between hanging out with a few friends and hanging out with 50 un-

known people. If you are planning to have a party, tell your neighbors and give them your number. This way they can come to you with complaints and not the police. And remember – Clean up before sun up! Take a look around outside to make sure there are no party favors on your lawn, or the lawn of one of your neighbors.

2. Know community and local rules. Different communities have different expectations for their residents. Get to know these rules by asking your landlord. This is especially important for getting information on parking, trash pickup and quiet hours.

1. Be a representative of AU at all times. Neighbors will assume that your behavior represents the behavior of all AU students. As an AU student, you can be held responsible for your behavior on or off campus.

MEET THE OFF-CAMPUS & GUEST HOUSING COORDINATOR

Michael Buckley works in Housing & Dining Programs as the Off-Campus and Guest Housing Coordinator.

Michael coordinates off-campus housing resources for the university community and summer intern and student housing. He joined the Housing and Dining Programs in January 2010, after a two year tour in Guatemala with the Peace Corps.

Originally from DC, he majored in Marketing at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. After graduating, Michael worked on a real estate team in Washington, DC for several years prior to his Peace Corps service. He is currently pursuing his MBA at American University.

In his position, Michael

works to assist and educate students about off-campus housing. He can assist with locating housing options, finding roommates, understanding tenants' rights, and creating good neighbor relations. Michael can be reached at offcampushousing@american.edu or 202-885-3370.



Michael Buckley
Off-Campus & Guest Housing Coordinator

ROOMMATE COMMUNICATION AND NEGOTIATION

Most students believe that finding the perfect apartment is the key to off-campus housing success. Finding a compatible roommate or roommates can make or break a living experience – even in the perfect apartment.

Clear and open communication is essential. Communicate and negotiate house rules and have a mutual understanding of those rules. Topics to consider: bills, housekeeping, overnight company (friends, significant others, parents), long-term visitors, drinking/smoking, sharing (food, clothing, computers, etc.). If there is a misunderstanding,

talk about it in person. Do not message/text someone sitting in the next bedroom. Small misunderstandings without proper dialogue can lead to major confrontations. Always be understanding and respectful of one another.

Keep common areas clean. This should be part of the roommate negotiation process. Working together to keep common areas clean will help reduce tension in the house or apartment. Options can include: cleaning schedules, a scheduled all-roommate cleaning day, hiring a housecleaner for a monthly visit, etc.



Best friends do not always make ideal roommates. You might like hanging out together, but do you want to hang out 24/7? Those little ticks and quirks that make him or her a fun friend might not seem so

fun when you're sharing a room or apartment. Be sure to talk through potential challenges before making the move together and keep the lines of communication wide open.

LIVING OFF-CAMPUS / BEING INVOLVED ON CAMPUS

On-campus residents have an easy connection to the campus community. As an off-campus student, it is important that you make the extra effort to be involved. Take advantage of the many events during the first few weeks to begin to get connected to campus, discover involvement and leadership opportunities, and learn more about campus life.

Did you know that research shows that the more involved and engaged you are in your university experience, the more likely you are to be academically successful (Alexander Astin's Theory of Student Involvement, 1984)? In-

involved students are more likely to succeed academically, personally and socially.

American University offers many options for involvement. There are more than 220 student organizations on campus through Student Activities. Student organizations sponsor over 2,000 individual events annually that include concerts, conferences, lectures/speakers, general meetings, movies, receptions, special events and workshops.

Multicultural Affairs, GLBTA Resource Center and the Women's Resource Center all sponsor

programs and events on campus. If you're interested in service opportunities, get involved with the Center for Community Engagement & Service. They offer service opportunities in Washington DC and around the world through their Alternative Break programs.

Student employment on campus is another option

for campus involvement. Contact individual departments for specific opportunities or visit the student employment listings on the American University Human Resources website (www.american.edu/hr/).

Make the most out of your AU experience! Be an active, involved member of the campus community!

American University
Student
Activities
american.edu/activities

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY CONFLICT MEDIATION SERVICES

Contributed by the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution

What does Conflict Resolution Services do?

We provide free, confidential, and voluntary conflict resolution services to AU student, faculty and staff. This includes direct services, such as conflict coaching and mediation. Part of our mission is also outreach and education about conflict, alternative dispute resolution and mediation. Each semester we provide free mediation training for those interested. This training qualifies AU community members to serve as volunteer mediators.

What is mediation?

Mediation is a voluntary, confidential process in which an impartial, third party assists people in finding a mutually acceptable solution to their dispute. Mediation can resolve conflicts without legal and/or conduct intervention. Mediation acknowledges that some conflict is natural. Choosing to respect others while working towards a peaceful resolution is the key to a successful outcome.

What is conflict coaching?

Conflict coaching assists individuals in finding ways to manage or address individual conflicts in their lives. Generally this occurs in a one-on-one meeting. This service is available if another party declines mediation or if an individual wants to address conflict without a third party, but needs assistance in planning to do so.

Benefits of Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution's mediation and conflict coaching are usually faster and less costly than other methods of dispute resolution.

Conflict resolution does not create "winners" and "losers" but seeks mutually satisfying solutions for all parties.

Conflict resolution addresses not only a current conflict, but helps those involved learn how to address conflict as it occurs naturally in life.

While conflict resolution can involve third parties, the final decision is made by the parties directly involved, not by someone outside the conflict.

Conflict resolution can address each conflict and party individually, rather than using a generalized solution.

Who are the Volunteers?

Conflict Resolution Services is run largely by volunteers who have been trained for a minimum of 20 hours in mediation. Many seek additional training. Conflict Resolution Services also offers internship opportunities for interested students.

How can I use Conflict Resolution Services?

The first step in using any of our services is to contact the office at 202-885-1313 or [conflictresolu-](mailto:conflictresolution@american.edu)

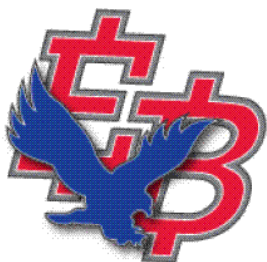
[tion@american.edu](mailto:conflictresolution@american.edu). A staff member or volunteer will respond to your request and arrange an initial appointment. Our general office hours are 9-5 Monday-Friday, but we offer flexible scheduling as needed.

How can I receive training in Conflict Resolution?

Each semester, we offer a free 20-hour mediation training for interested students, faculty, and staff. Visit our website to apply and find dates for the next training. We also offer ongoing educational opportunities and simulations. Contact us or visit our Facebook group "AU Conflict Resolution Services" for more information.

Office Profile

American University's Conflict Resolution Services is part of the Office of Campus Life. The office staff includes: the director, the assistant director, an administrative assistant, graduate students, and work-study students. The assistant director maintains primary responsibility for oversight of the program and serves as the first point of contact. Our staff selects, trains, and supervises mediators; conducts intake interviews and conflict coaching sessions; facilitates mediation sessions; designs and implements programs; and provides outreach activities to students, staff and faculty, in conjunction with Campus Life, Human Resources, and Academic Affairs.



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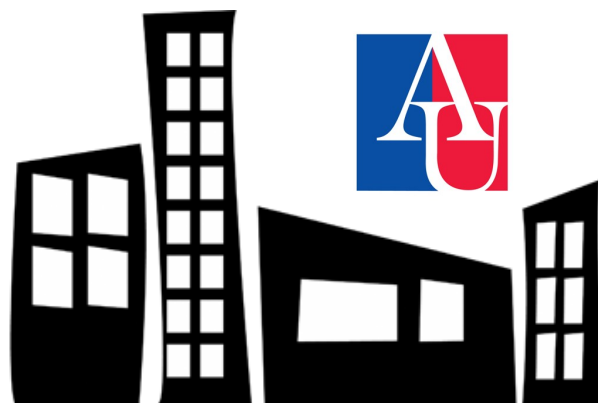
GOOD NEIGHBOR GUIDELINES

Cited from the American University 2010-2011 *Student Handbook*
(www.american.edu/handbook)

As members of a community, we all have responsibilities to the city where we live and to our neighbors. It is important to foster good relations with one another in order to maintain and enhance the quality of life, safety, and desirability of the neighborhood we share. To help maintain good relations with your neighbors, keep the following in mind.

You are part of a community and your actions affect your neighbors. While you may view your residency as temporary, be considerate of the fact that most of your neighbors have chosen their homes as their primary residence. As a courtesy, you should notify your neighbors if you plan to have a gathering or a party. Remember that the District and the surrounding cities have strict regulations regarding noise levels and the consumption of alcohol. It is your responsibility to be familiar with them and comply with them.

Your neighborhood may have requirements regarding the upkeep of your front and back yards. You should help foster a sense of community in your neighborhood by involving yourself in neighborhood events such as meetings, crime watch prevention groups, and opportunities for community service.



Off-Campus Housing American University

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TIPS TO A 'GREENER' HOMELIFE

Contributed by Sophia Benedicktus, Assistant Director of Operations (Housing & Dining Programs)

What is Sustainability?

Sustainability is meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

These are ways that you can get involved at home:

Energy

- Replace incandescent light bulbs with light-emitting diode (LEDs) lights
- Use power strips and turn them off when you are away for long periods of time to conserve energy
- Buy Energy Star appli-

ances and electronics (computers, laptops, lamps, etc.)

- Use alternative methods of transportation, such as riding the metro, using the free AU bike share program, or trying AU's new ride share program called Zimride

Food

- Shop at the farmers market on the Quad every Wednesday for fresh produce.
- Use the campus organic garden
- Buy reusable utensils

Trees

- Print double-sided
- Use Blackboard to

submit assignments electronically

- Purchase recycled paper for assignments

Waste

- Recycle paper, plastic & metal
- Keep and sort recycling in bins at your residence
- Buy in bulk to reduce packaging

Water

- Kick the bottle water habit, fill your reusable container at the tap
- Turn off water while brushing your teeth
- Take shorter showers to conserve water

JOIN Eco-Sense

Eco-Sense is the American University student organization dedicated to promoting environmental sustainability on campus, in the community, and in our students' everyday lives through awareness, volunteering, promotion of sustainability best-practice on campus, eco-certification, and political activism. All actions are aimed to incorporate social justice issues as well to create a healthy and environmentally sustainable future for all. For more information contact au_eco_sense@yahoo.com.

www.american.edu/offcampushousing