



**Black Affinity Housing
Frequency Asked Questions (FAQ)
Housing & Residence Life
Office of Campus Life**

1. What is Affinity Housing?

Affinity Housing brings individuals together based upon a shared identity, value, focus, or goal. Students will spend intentional time together and create community within this space that affirms and celebrates the identities of Black students. Affinity Housing will allow participating students to maintain a sense of self-worth, reconnect with a sense of identity and pride, and provide participating students with the opportunity to regroup, process experiences, and be surrounded by a community of support.

2. What is the purpose of this community?

Black Affinity Housing provides an intentional residential community dedicated to celebrating, exploring, and affirming Black student experiences at American University and beyond. The live-in experience provides an educational foundation that encourages dialogue and community building that is mindful of the diverse social, cultural, and academic needs of Black students. Black Affinity Housing will support a stronger sense of community identity and belonging for participating students.

3. Is there an application process for admittance?

Students must complete a 2020-2021 housing application and select a bed space. Students interested in being part of this community are encouraged to attend one of the informational sessions to learn about the purposes and goals of Affinity Housing. A series of informational sessions have and will continue to be held to provide the community with information.

4. What are requirements for participating in this community?

Students are required to complete a housing application and be a registered AU student during Fall 2020.

5. Will I be able to select my own roommate for this community?

Students will be permitted to select their own roommate, or one can be assigned by the assignments team.

6. Is this community for upper-class students only?

This community is open to all students enrolled at American University. We anticipate 80% of the available bed spaces (45 spaces) will be assigned to sophomore and upper-class students, and 20% (12 spaces) are for first-year students. Adjustments will be made based on demand.



7. How will placement for this community occur?

Sophomore and upper-class students will be able to choose available spaces during the information sessions or during the Return Room Selection process. First-year students will be placed in the community during assignment placement in June 2020.

8. How many participants will be accepted into this community?

Affinity Housing will have a total of 59 residents. This includes 57 residents and 2 resident assistants (RAs).

9. Will all participants be Black?

Any American University student may live in this community. While it is likely that most of the participants will self-identify as Black or African American, we recognize that identity is nuanced and personal.

10. What kind of activities will happen in this community?

As in all residence halls, there will be various activities planned throughout the year. Participants will have opportunities to connect socially and engage in educational discourse about issues that impact the Black community at American University, locally and throughout the world. Participants will also have the opportunity to identify and plan activities throughout the academic year.

The focus in the first few years will be on strengthening community ties and building up to a more structured format for programming by exposing students to faculty, scholarship, and community leadership. Additionally, OCL will identify and leverage opportunities for faculty in the African American and African Diaspora program, as well as other faculty, to engage with the affinity group in a mentoring relationship.

11. Who will be the leaders in this community?

The community will be supported by Residence Life staff, including one Community Director, two Resident Assistants and one graduate assistant. Additionally, the community will identify key campus stakeholders to support and guide the development of this community experience. The formal structure of the community will be developed once returning participants are identified and with the support and assistance of Residence Life, Center for Diversity and Inclusion and the Black Student Caucus.

12. Why was Roper selected as the residence hall for this community?

Given its size (two stories with space for 59 students), Roper will provide a small and intimate community setting for its residents.



13. Will there be any renovations done before the next academic year?

Yes. The interior of the building will be re-painted (based on AU residential facilities standards) and the kitchen and lounge will be remodeled during May-June of 2020. Carpet will be replaced in the kitchen area, also based on AU residential facilities standards. New blinds have already been installed over winter break 2019. A residential community desk will also be added to this residential community.

14. How long is the commitment for this community?

Participants will only be required to participate for one academic year. Students will be given the opportunity to return to the community for future academic years.

15. How does this community differ from other residential learning communities on-campus?

As in every learning community, this space will be an educational, social and mentoring space. Affinity Housing provides the opportunity to allow Black students to foster an affirming space – one that provides breathing space and the ability to recharge. The proposed structure for the affinity housing is based on the current needs of students and broader campus community. Black students have consistently expressed a need for opportunities to connect with and build community on AU's campus. Affinity Housing will provide the structural support needed to help students develop greater agency and community and rebuild fractures that are current barriers to a sense of belonging.

16. Will students participating in another living-learning community be allowed to live in Affinity Housing?

First-year students who participate in any living-learning community (Honors, FDDS, UC, CBRS or three-year programs) will not be able to live in Affinity Housing. Students will be invited to participate in some of the programs offered throughout the year but will not be living in this community if they are participating in a living-learning community.