

THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT | 4th EDITION



OFF-CAMPUS LIVING GUIDE

everything you need to know to find, lease,
and live well in your off-campus apartment

THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT OFF-CAMPUS LIVING GUIDE: YOUR RESOURCE FOR OFF-CAMPUS LIFE - 4th Edition, 2016

We hope that this guide will serve as a resource for you during your time as a Burlington resident and that it helps you build the skills and knowledge to be a good renter, roommate, neighbor, & community member. Please note that all the phone numbers for the resources mentioned in the guide are listed in *Chapter 6*.

This guide is a collaborative effort undertaken originally by the UVM Community Coalition. We would like to thank the many people who contributed to its initial development, including:

**University of Missouri's Community Coalition,
whose work inspired this guide**

University of Vermont Partners:
Community Coalition
Department of Residential Life
Office of Student & Community Relations
Student Government Association

City of Burlington Partners:
Burlington Police Department
Champlain College
City Attorney's Office
Code Enforcement
Community & Economic Development Office

Cover photo: Phil Hammerslough, co-founder of Isham Street Gardening and Other Optimistic Doings (ISGOOD), works with a UVM student resident of Isham Street to plant a greenbelt garden.

Design: Emily Howe & John Mejia | Photography: John Mejia

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1

FINDING AN APARTMENT THAT MEETS YOUR NEEDS



View of Isham Street, one of many historic residential neighborhoods, surrounding the University of Vermont.

When Do I Look for a Place – and Where?

Generally, we recommend beginning your search for an apartment 6-8 months in advance of your desired lease start date. Most leases in Burlington will run from June to June, and some of the most desirable units are rented almost a year in advance. Word of mouth is a great way to start looking for a new place.

UVM Off-Campus Housing Database

Search for off-campus housing; find a UVM roommate, post free sublet ads; buy/sell/giveaway stuff; and find helpful off-campus-living resources. **Access to this site is limited to UVM affiliates.**

- offcampushousing.uvm.edu

UVM-Affiliated Housing

- spinnerplace.com
- redstonecampusapartments.com
- redstonelofts.com

Local Apartment Listings

- burlingtonrent.com
- gridguide.com
- sevendaysvt.com
- vermont.craigslist.org

Finding & Choosing Your Roommates

Choosing compatible roommates is essential to a successful off-campus experience. If you are looking for a roommate, word of mouth can be a great place to start. UVM's Off-Campus Housing Database also has a section of their website devoted to connecting UVM affiliates who are looking for roommates. Contact the [Office of Student & Community Relations](#) (OSCR) for additional resources related to finding and choosing roommates.

You can find a sample roommate agreement on the [OSCR website](#). This is a good resource for deciding how you divide up your rental costs, chores, and for setting expectations about guests, pets, smoking, socializing; etc.

As you select your roommates, keep in mind that there is an ordinance in Burlington that **prohibits more than four unrelated individuals living in a single residence**. Though some properties have been "grandfathered" in and are allowed to have more than four unrelated tenants in a single unit, take this into consideration as you decide how many people you want to live with and as you view properties. Keep in mind that allowing individuals whose names are not on the lease to live in your apartment is illegal and may result in eviction. Consult [Chapter 5](#) for more information about the "Four-Unrelated" Ordinance.

Before You Sign the Lease



Co-signers are almost universally required by landlords for first-time renters.

Before you rent, make sure you know the following:

- Is a co-signer required on the lease? (Co-signers can be parents, guardians or someone else in your life willing to take on financial responsibility for you)
- What are the exact move-in and -out dates?
- Who will pay for electricity, heat, snow removal, water, trash, etc. ?
- Are the security deposit and first month's rent required when signing the lease?

(Note: In Burlington, security deposits cannot exceed one month's rent)

- When is rent due? What is the preferred method of payment? Are fees charged for late payments?
- What parts of the common areas or yard are the tenants responsible for maintaining and where is the equipment to maintain those areas?
- What is the policy on keeping pets and having pets visit?
- Is there on- or off-street parking available? If off-street, how many parking spaces come with the unit? Are parking spaces assigned? If on-street, is a resident permit required?
- How can you ensure the return of your full security deposit?
- How will the landlord give notice before entering?
- What are the restrictions on alterations, such as hanging pictures with nails or painting the apartment?
- Are there any restrictions on smoking or any other conduct that are specific to the property? See [Chapter 5](#) for additional information on city ordinances, including Burlington's noise ordinance.
- Does the landlord allow subleasing? If so, what are the policies and procedures for subletting?
- What circumstances allow for lease termination?
- When is trash and recycling picked up?

A written lease is preferable, as it protects you by providing clear and concise evidence of the exact terms of the agreement. In addition to a conversation about these topics with your landlord, you may also want to consult [Chapter 2](#) of this guide for more information about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant.

Rent & Utilities

- The cost of rent will vary depending upon the number of bedrooms, whether or not utilities are included, recent renovations, and location. Be sure to ask about what is and is not included in the monthly rent, like: heat, hot water, trash removal, snow removal, electricity, laundry, internet, off-street parking, city water, and sewer.
- Ask your prospective landlord what the average cost of utilities for the apartment is, as this is an important factor in determining your projected monthly expenses. You can also call the utility companies directly for the usage history at the rental unit address.
- For questions regarding how your financial aid will work once you move off-campus, visit [UVM Student Financial Services Office](#)

Safety Check

Safety should be a priority when you search for off-campus housing. When choosing an apartment, consider the following:

- Ask if the landlord will do a “core lock change” on exterior doors. This is cheaper than changing the locks, but will still ensure that any duplicate keys made by past tenants will no longer work.
- Check for obvious damage, bugs, rodents, and electrical or plumbing problems. Look at the parking area and trash facilities to see if they are adequate for your household. Talking to the current tenants could also provide useful information about the neighborhood before you move in, especially if you can talk with them when the landlord is not present.

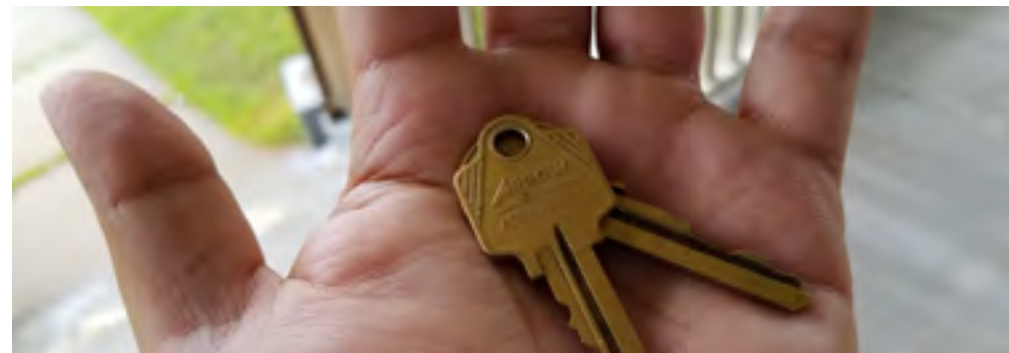
Specific Areas to Check:

- Are trees and shrubs trimmed so a person cannot conceal themselves and views from windows and door aren't blocked?
- Is the house well lit? Are all entry/exit points fully illuminated? Is emergency lighting provided in the apartment community?
- Are the common areas adequately lit? Are these areas well maintained? Is the exterior house number visible from the street (for 911 calls)?
- Are all exterior doors solid wood or metal construction? Are doorframes in good condition? Is there a deadbolt? Are there peepholes on the doors?
- Are screens and windows free of damage? Are there working locks on the windows? Do they stay open without need of a prop/stick?
- Are garbage or storage areas equipped with doors that lock?
- Where are fire extinguishers located and when were they last charged?
- Where are the smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors located on the premises, and are they fully functioning?
- When was the heating system last inspected, and is there proof that it is safe?
- Does the space appear to be cared for? Are stairways, railings, and balconies secure? Is the roof in good condition?
- Is the paint peeling? Beware of lead! Any rental housing built before 1978 should have a state lead paint warning poster. You can contact the [Burlington Lead Program](#) for more information.
- Is there a certificate from the City of Burlington's [Code Enforcement Office](#) posted in the building?

If the property is not compliant with any of the city ordinances listed above and throughout this guide, or if you feel unsafe in any way in the apartment

or its surrounding area, do not sign the lease. You may want to consider calling [Code Enforcement Office](#) to inform them of any health or safety violations that you notice.

Signing the Lease



Make sure to ask for a “core lock change”.

Follow these tips when signing your lease:

- Read the lease very carefully as it is a **legally binding contract**. Get [VT Tenants](#) to look it over with you if you are unsure of anything – it's FREE!
- Keep copies of all documents you have signed and store together in a labeled folder.
- Any changes to the lease must be made in ink. Make sure both parties have initialed and dated the changes. If it is not written down it doesn't exist.
- Do not sign the lease until every passage is fully clear to you.
- Check to see the lease reflects the understandings you made with the landlord at the time you saw the apartment.
- You are **not bound to provisions in the lease that are deemed illegal** by state or federal law, even after signing the lease. If you are concerned with the legality of something in the lease, consult [VT Tenants](#).

Paying Your Security Deposit

Most landlords require a deposit at the time of signing the lease. This deposit covers possible property damage, unclean conditions, and unpaid rent.

- In Burlington, **security deposits cannot exceed one month's rent** and must be held in an interest bearing account.
- It is a good idea to take photos of the rental to document conditions when you move in and out.
- Within 14 days from the date the lease ends or the tenancy terminates, the landlord is required to either return your full security deposit or give

you a written list of documented expenses that account for the portion of the security deposit that was withheld.

- The landlord is only obligated to send the security deposit to the tenant's last known address, so make sure that you communicate the address you want it sent to. Give a self-addressed envelope to your landlord during your move-out inspection.

If the landlord fails to comply with the security deposit procedures listed above, the renter may file a complaint with the City's **Housing Board of Review**. For properties outside of Burlington, contact the City or Town Clerk's office.

Housing Discrimination Resources

Landlords cannot refuse to show, sell, rent, sublease, or otherwise make housing unavailable based on a renter's race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, familial status, marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, or receipt of public assistance.

Landlords also cannot charge some individuals higher rent or falsely state that housing is not available when for discriminatory reasons. If you believe you have been a victim of discrimination, contact one of these agencies:

- [Vermont Human Rights Commission](#)
- [City of Burlington City Attorney's Office](#)
- [CVOEO Fair Housing Department](#)
- [Vermont Legal Aid](#)



*Cookies in the Library:
Edmunds Middle School students
surprise UVM students with cookies
they decorated while wishing them
good luck on exams.*

2 SETTING UP YOUR SERVICES & ESTABLISHING RESIDENCY



Collection of electrical meters for different apartments in the same building in Burlington.

There are a lot of moving parts to setting up your home, even after you have lined up roommates, found a place, signed a lease and moved in. This includes starting up utilities, being clear on your recycling and trash schedule, and even thinking about how to conserve energy.

Utilities

Gas, Oil, Or Propane Service

Burlington area natural gas service is provided by [Vermont Gas](#). There are numerous oil and propane vendors in the Burlington area - you can ask your landlord which company was used by previous tenants.

Electricity

The [Burlington Electric Department](#) is the electrical utility for all of Burlington. If you live outside of Burlington, contact [Green Mountain Power](#).

Water Service

In Burlington, water is provided by the [Burlington Water Department](#). If you are living outside of Burlington, the provider that will serve you is dependent on the location of your residence. Your landlord can tell you which provider to contact.

Trash Collection

If you live in Burlington in a single-family dwelling, you are responsible for providing and maintaining sufficient garbage facilities. The [Chittenden Solid Waste District](#) can provide a list of haulers.

For duplexes and all multi-unit dwellings, the landlord is required by law to make arrangements for trash collection. The landlord must provide properly

sized storage facilities for waste and see that they are collected on a weekly basis. The tenants are responsible for putting waste in the designated receptacle or storage area. In Burlington, you are required by ordinance to move trash receptacles off of the green belt and onto your rental property after it is picked up. If you live outside the city limits, contact private companies for trash collection.

Recycling



Confirm what day your street puts out recycling.

Recycling is required in Vermont. For more information on your neighborhood's specific pick up time and other information in Burlington, contact the [Department of Public Works \(DPW\)](#).

Curbside recycling may be put out **ONLY** on the day assigned for pick up on your street. Outside of Burlington, contact the [Chittenden Solid Waste District \(CSWD\)](#) for details. For a recycling information go to [cswd.net](#).

Note: Your household can receive up to 3 blue bins free of charge at the DPW (645 Pine Street) or at a CSWD Drop-Off Center, check their website for locations.

Compost

CSWD also has information on their website about all things composting. Whether you're interested in starting a pile at home or utilizing their drop-off center, consult [cswd's composting page](#).

Cable and Internet

There are multiple providers for cable or satellite TV as well as high-speed internet access in the Burlington area – a quick search online will connect you to a number of different options.

Energy Efficiency & Conservation

- Turn off and unplug all unnecessary electronics.
- Utilize "sleep" settings on computers. Make sure to turn off equipment during extended periods of inactivity.
- Use a microwave or toaster oven when preparing small portions.

- You can save 3% of your heating costs for each degree you set your thermostat back by (make sure to keep heat above 55 degrees in winter to avoid frozen pipes!).
- Take quick showers; use washing machines and dishwashers with full loads only; and use cold water when using a washing machine (it is equally effective at getting clothes clean).
- Many appliances/electronics consume electricity while they are "off", like appliances with clocks). Save money and energy by unplugging these devices while they are not in use.
- To prevent heat loss, seal and weatherstrip doors windows and install plastic sheeting on the inside of all windows. Note: consult your landlord before any weatherization efforts.
- Save money by replacing light bulbs with LED bulbs. They last up to ten times longer than incandescent bulbs and use two-thirds less energy.
- To reduce the use of hot water, install low-flow showerheads and sink aerators. Note: consult your landlord before installing these items.

Registering to Vote

For Burlington visit [ci.burlington.vt.us/elections](#) for details. Outside of Burlington contact your local **City** or **Town Clerk** for voting requirements and registration information.

Drivers Licenses & Vehicle Registration

Within 30 days of establishing residency, drivers need to obtain a Vermont Operator's License. The [Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles \(DMV\)](#) maintains an office at 4 Market St. in South Burlington. You can obtain a license or register your vehicle at this office.



UVM's Upward Bound and OSCR teamed up with Isham Street's ISGOOD and Burlington Health & Rehabilitation to garden along the street's greenbelts.

3

DEVELOPING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS



ISGOOD co-founders Phil Hammerslough (with cap) and Brian Cina (in foreground) welcome Isham Street residents every Fall with a neighborhood-wide event with the help of OSCR.

On move-in day, inspect the apartment with the landlord and take photos to compare to photos you will take on move-out day. A sample move-in checklist is available at uvm.edu/oscr. Make a list of existing damages with your landlord on move-in day, date it and have all parties sign it.

After You Sign the Lease

When moving in:

- Ask your landlord/property manager for the location of the electrical panel and water shut-offs in case of emergencies.
- Introduce yourself to your neighbors. Knowing your neighbors will increase your safety and enjoyment since friendly neighbors can look out for each other. If you feel comfortable doing so, provide your neighbors with your contact information.
- Put only your last name(s) and first initial on the mailbox or your mail may not be delivered.
- Assemble a list of who to call if there is an emergency with your rental property and post a copy on the fridge.

Your Responsibilities as a Renter

- Pay rent on time.
- Keep the property clean. Notify the landlord of problems (like leaks); if you don't, you may be liable for the damage!
- Provide proper notice before terminating a rental agreement – this is **2 rental periods** (i.e. 2 months) before your lease ends in Burlington.
- Contact the landlord prior to subletting your apartment, and don't al-

low anyone to live in the unit if their name is not on the lease.

- Allow the landlord to enter the premises to make needed repairs and inspections with 48 hours' notice. In an emergency situation, like a fire or flooding, the landlord can enter immediately.
- Ensure that your household and guests avoid disturbing other tenants and neighbors – remember that sound travels, especially at night and in cold weather.

Being A Good Neighbor

Burlington's neighborhoods are diverse and each street has its own character. After you move in and get settled, get to know your neighborhood.



Developing positive relations with neighbors takes effort but is a win-win situation.

- Introduce yourself to your neighbors. If you feel comfortable doing so, share your contact information with those living closest to you for easy communication.
- Check in with neighbors from time to time and ask how things are going.
- Be kind, offer to help your neighbors with moving furniture, shoveling snow or sharing garden vegetables. They may be willing to help you in return (lending you equipment, watching your apartment while you are away, etc.)
- If you host a social gathering, make a plan for managing noise and traffic. Share this plan with your neighbors to reassure them in advance of the event.
- Call for help early if a conflict with a neighbor is beginning to escalate by contacting the *Community Justice Center* or the *Office of Student and Community Relations*.

Your Landlord's Responsibilities

Burlington has a minimum housing code, which means landlords must:

- Provide a livable property that complies with all building, fire and housing codes.
- Pay for repairs due to ordinary wear and tear.
- Provide written notice to tenants when ownership of the property is transferred to a new landlord.
- Give proper notice to the tenant before ending the rental agreement; in the case of an eviction, follow proper legal procedure.
- Follow fair housing laws that prohibit discrimination
- Provide a minimum of 48 hours' notice before entering the premises, except in the case of an emergency.



Contact VT Tenants for any questions around VT Rental Law.

Managing Repairs

If you live with one or more people, you should select a spokesperson who will be responsible for contacting the landlord and requesting repairs. Note the following:

- Ordinary wear and tear is the responsibility of the landlord.
- You need to pay for damages caused by you or your guests.
- When repairs are necessary, ask the landlord to make repairs within a reasonable period of time. If repairs are not made, make a written request for the necessary repairs and keep a copy of the letter.
- If the dwelling becomes unsafe due to repair problems, please contact the Burlington [Code Enforcement Office](#).
- Prior to withholding rent payments for repairs, check with a legal advocate such as the [Student Legal Services](#) at UVM or [Vermont Legal Aid](#). You can also contact [VT Tenants](#) for copies of tenant action sheets and other form letters.
- You should recognize and report small maintenance problems as soon as possible. Fixing these can help avoid bigger and more costly repairs.

Leases

When a Lease Expires

- Leases specify a date on which you must move out. Check your lease for notification requirements.
- Some leases contain an automatic renewal clause. These leases are automatically renewed unless you notify the landlord that you will move out when the lease ends.
- Any agreement between you and your landlord allowing you to stay after the lease ends should be in writing. Otherwise, if there is a disagreement, you may be charged.
- Plan ahead! Schedule moving trucks and lease storage units well in advance of your move out day. Arrange for utilities to be turned off. Make sure all your garbage can be disposed of properly.

Subleasing

If you would like to move out before a lease ends, you may want to arrange a sublease, if the landlord allows it. Subleasing is transferring a lease to another person who then moves in and pays rent. Consider these points when thinking about subletting:

- Before subleasing to another individual, you must get the landlord's approval. This should be done with a written agreement.
- When subleasing, YOU (the original tenant) are still responsible to your landlord for the original lease – that means you can be held responsible for any problems caused by the new tenant (non-payment of rent; damage).
- You should fill out a written agreement with the subletter. Consider requesting a security deposit equal to one month's rent to protect you against any damages they may cause. You can find a sample sublease agreement at uvm.edu/oscr.

Lease Termination

If a landlord approves, you may cancel a lease before it terminates. You and your landlord must sign a statement that the lease has been cancelled by mutual agreement.

Eviction

A landlord may not remove you from the property or lock you out without a court order. The landlord may begin eviction proceedings if a tenant:

- Damages property
- Fails to pay rent

- Violates terms of the lease
- Injures the lessor/another tenant
- Allows drug-related criminal activity on the premises
- Fails to vacate at the end of the lease term

Living With Roommates

There are a variety of ways to help roommate relationships are more harmonious and less stressful. For example:

- Before moving in, coordinate how shared household goods like furniture and kitchen supplies will be handled.
- Organize a group meeting to discuss how you will manage your household, including conflict, cleanliness, communication, and paying bills.
- Check in with your roommates regularly to make sure your household is adequately maintained.
- Discuss how utilities and other costs will be divided and what you will do if someone doesn't contribute their share as agreed upon.
- Specify a date for everyone to have their share of the rent ready. This date should be well in advance of your rent due date.
- Everyone on the lease can be ticketed for noise, whether or not they are present. **Tickets range from \$300 to \$500 per tenant.**
- Do not let conflicts linger. If you have a problem with one of your roommates, be sure to talk about it right away. There are several ways to respond to roommate conflict, including:
 - Let it go. Sometimes we need to make adjustments for different life styles, preferences, and tastes.
 - Take personal responsibility and change your behavior or attitude (e.g. If you are leaving dirty dishes in the sink, start washing the dishes!)
 - Communicate early and often. Take the time to have a heart to heart talk about the issue and problem solving together before things escalate will resolve the conflict.
 - Contact the [Office of Student & Community Relations](#) or the [Community Justice Center](#) for conflict mediation resources.



Sometimes it is necessary to sit down and have a serious conversation about something before it creates a toxic living environment. Here are some tips for have one of those difficult conversations:

Get ready...

- Choose a good time and place for your conversation.
- Think about what has happened from your perspective and theirs.
- Understand the impact the conflict is having on you and others.
- Decide what is important and your goal in having the conversation.
- Open by identifying issues & finding common ground.

Talk it out...

- Avoid blaming, faultfinding and making assumptions.
- Listen to everyone's perspective before moving to solutions.

Problem solving...

- Move to problem solving when the issue is clear and agreed upon.
- Brainstorm solutions and commit to taking action.
- Check-In with each other to see if the conflict is really resolved.

Moving Out

Just like moving in was a process with multiple steps, moving out involves good planning, communication, and timing. Here are some tips:



Lily (left) and her roommates take advantage of SMOP to donate usable furniture.

- When you move out, make sure to clean the place thoroughly. Clean the oven, refrigerator, bathroom, etc. If you do not do this, the landlord may deduct money from your security deposit.
- Contact **ALL** the utility companies to terminate your services.
- Remove your name(s) from the mailbox, and have your mail held at the post office until they receive your new address.
- Make arrangements to have your landlord do a walk through before you move out. It is your right to be present at this inspection.
- Return your keys to the landlord.

- Give the landlord your forwarding address so that your security deposit can be returned to you.
- Participate in the **Spring Move Out Project (SMOP)** in late May.

SMOP is an annual community-wide recycle/swap/trash event held in the Spring in Burlington. This is an opportunity for people who are moving out to bring their unwanted but usable household items to a place where they can be swapped or recycled. There are also onsite dumpsters for getting rid of unusable items and trash for a fee.

Contact the *Office of Student & Community Relations* for more information.

4 YOUR HEALTH & SAFETY WHILE LIVING OFF CAMPUS



Consider the following tips for making your life off campus safe and healthy.

When living on campus, you had a variety of services that kept you safe and healthy. While some of those - like healthcare providers - are still available to you, there are some important systems that are not. In specific, managing fire and property safety for your household will now be your responsibility.

Accessing Resources

Whether you live on- or off-campus, you have access to UVM resources. The *Center for Health and Wellbeing* provides comprehensive clinical care, counseling and psychiatry services, and health promotion resources. You can learn more at uvm.edu/health. Additional community health and wellness resources can be found in *Chapter 6*.

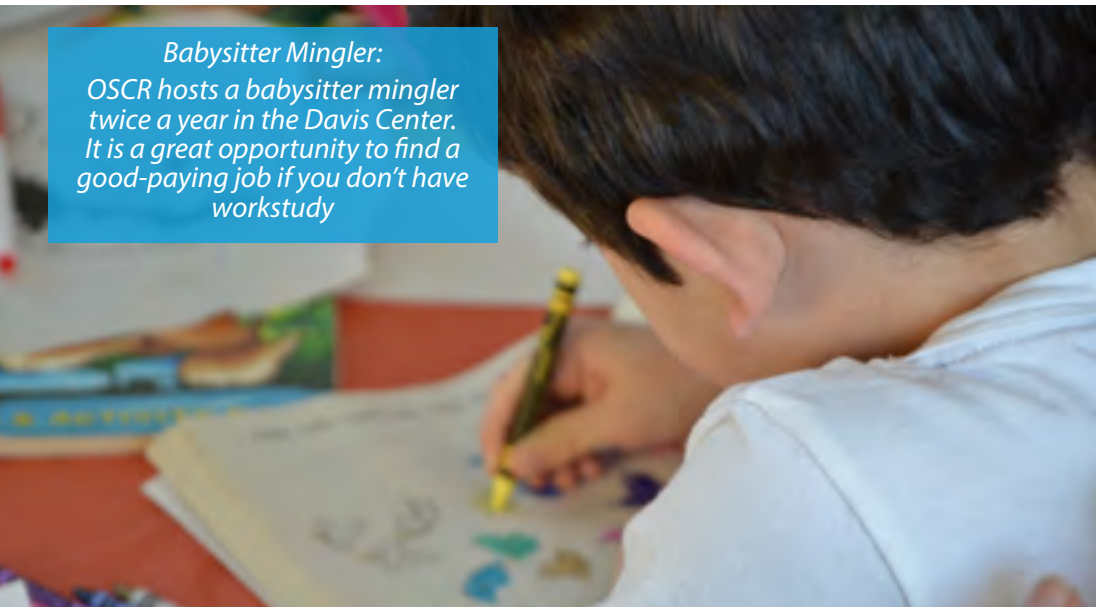
Personal Safety & Relationship Violence

Keeping Yourself Safe

- Travel in small groups or pairs and pay attention to your surroundings. Stick to well-traveled, well-lit areas. Trust your instincts! If something feels wrong, get away to a public place, be loud & call attention to yourself. Do not worry about being polite.
- Keep belongings close to your body. If someone tries to rob you, give up your property immediately.
- If you think someone is following you, cross the street, move to the nearest group of people or ask for help. Consider reporting suspicious behavior to the police.
- Know how alcohol affects your body and decisions around sex. Attend parties with friends you can trust, agree to look out for one another, and make a plan for how all of you will get home safely.

Babysitter Mingler:

OSCR hosts a babysitter mingler twice a year in the Davis Center. It is a great opportunity to find a good-paying job if you don't have workstudy



- Do not accept an open drink from anyone. Again, do not worry about being polite.
- Take a self-defense class to increase your knowledge, confidence, and assertiveness.
- If you experience an off campus bias or incident or hate crime (behavior that is motivated by bigotry and prejudice regarding a person's real or perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, gender, age, or disability, gender identity and/or expression), the following resources can assist you: *Burlington Police Department* (911 for emergencies, 658-2704 for non-emergencies) or *UVM Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity* (656-3368).

Keeping Others Safe

Get involved if you believe someone is at risk. If you see a person in a vulnerable situation at a party or believe that a friend is sexually coercing someone, say something. Report suspicious behavior to the police, even if it's "just a hunch." Your tips may be one of many being received about an individual. Every bit of information about a potential threat is critical.



Gender-Based and Sexual-Violence resources are available for everyone through the Women's Center.

Healthy Relationships & Relationship Violence Cues

In a healthy relationship you know your boundaries and can communicate them clearly and firmly. When you expect and give respect in your relationship you feel: safe and never scared of your partner, free to say no to things you don't want to do, free to see friends and family when you want, free to express your opinions and beliefs, good about yourself, free to end the relationship if you want to.

Be aware that the following cues may be a warning of future relationship violence, stalking, and emotional abuse:

- Insults you; makes belittling comments; ignores you or sulks; gets jealous easily or is possessive.
- Tries to control you- how you should look and who you should be friends

with, disregards your choices and opinions; does not respect your boundaries (emotionally or physically).

- Drinks heavily, uses drugs or encourages you to do the same.
- Invades your personal space or intimidates you; goes through extreme highs and lows or you become afraid to upset them.
- Directs physical violence at you, your property, your pets, or anyone else.

Gender-Based Resources

- *Men's Outreach Coordinator* 656-3340
- *The Women's Center* 656-7892
- *LGBTQA Center* 656-8637

Keeping Your Belongings Safe

Preventing Burglary

- Burglaries are usually crimes of opportunity. Report all crime and any suspicious activity to the local police or **dial 911**. In non-emergency situations, you can reach the **Burlington Police Department** at **658-2704**
- The vast majority of burglaries occur at residences where a door or window has been left unsecured.
- Keep your doors and windows locked at all times, especially when you are alone, sleeping, or when the apartment is unoccupied (even if only for a few moments)!
- If you return home and see a slit screen, a broken window, or an open door, do not enter the apartment. Instead, call the police and await their instructions.
- If you think you hear someone breaking in, leave safely if you can and call the police. If you cannot leave, lock yourself in a room with your phone and then call the police. If it is night time and an intruder is in your room, pretend that you are asleep to avoid escalating the situation.
- Do not open the door for someone you do not know – including common doors to apartment complexes or multi-unit homes. Service and repair personnel should have a pre-arranged contact person.
- Be sure you have blinds or curtains on your windows, and keep them closed at night.
- Make sure all lighting fixtures are working.
- Place items of value out of sight and in locked areas. Do not leave valuables unattended in common areas.
- Make a list of your valuables and mark them. Take photos of the items

and list their serial numbers and descriptions.

- Avoid walking alone at night.
- Guard against identity theft. For information on preventing identity theft, visit consumer.gov/idtheft.
- Guns are responsible for many accidental deaths in the home every year. If you do own one, learn how to store it and use it safely. And, make sure that your lease does not prohibit firearms on the premises

Protecting Your Vehicle

- Lock your car, even in your own driveway.
- Never hide a spare key on the vehicle.
- Roll up windows completely.
- Remove keys from ignition.
- Never leave your car running unattended
- Park as close as possible to a source of light or activity.
- Do not leave valuables in open sight.
- If you have a garage, use it and lock the garage door.
- Important papers, credit cards, etc. should never be left in a car.
- The title to a vehicle should never be kept in the vehicle.

Note: Do not park near a roof that has snow and icicles on it – it is rarely the building owner's responsibility if the snow and ice slides and damages your vehicle.

Securing Your Place While Out of Town

Whether you are going home during an extended university break, or are just leaving town for a couple of days, the following tips are ways to increase the security of your residence:

- Be sure there is good lighting around all doors.
- Lock all doors and windows
- Do not hide spare keys outside.
- Have someone you trust watch over your house while you are away.
- Don't leave valuable items in the open or near windows.
- Close all curtains and blinds.
- Put a hold on mail and package delivery
- Consider the use of timers for interior lights or radios.
- In winter, do not turn the heat off. Check your lease for directions on settings – generally, **no lower than 55-60 degrees to avoid frozen pipes.**

Fire Safety

Be sure smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are working, and consider installing new batteries at the beginning of each semester. **DO NOT** disable smoke detectors for any reason! Tenants can be fined for disabling a smoke detector. If you are having trouble with a smoke detector, immediately contact your landlord. If the landlord fails to correct the problem in a timely manner, contact [Code Enforcement Office](#).

- Do not overload electrical outlets. Use a fused power strip to plug in multiple appliances.
- Know where your fire extinguishers are and how to use them. There should be one in every kitchen and on every floor of your house.
- Put out candles and incense when unattended. Check your lease to see if candles and incense are allowed.
- Extinguish all smoking materials thoroughly.
- Clean up immediately after parties and take all trash outside.
- Do not leave food unattended on the stove or in the microwave.
- Know where escape ladders or emergency exits are. Plan your escape routes. Know at least two ways to get out of your apartment. Make sure all exit doors are not locked on the inside and the path is not obstructed.
- Know at least two ways out of your apartment.
- Keep external gas vents free from debris and clutter.
- Stuffed indoor furniture cannot be used outdoors or on porches.

Burlington city ordinance prohibits grills and barbecues from being used on porches. Use grills and other cooking equipment at least 15 feet away from the residence or any structure.



Remember to always secure your bicycle. A bicycle thief will choose the easiest one to steal.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety

Burlington prides itself on being a pedestrian and bicycle friendly city. There

are laws and local ordinances in place that are designed to allow orderly flow of traffic in a manner that is safe for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. Consult *Local Motion* for resources that will help everyone follow the rules of the road.

Renter's Insurance

How would you replace your stuff if it was stolen or destroyed by fire or flood? Renter's insurance is available at a relatively low cost (as little as \$10/month) and is one of the wisest purchases an apartment resident can make. Check to see if you are covered under your parent/guardian's insurance; if not, get renter's insurance. If you have car insurance, you may be able to bundle them at a discounted rate.

Ride the City Bus for Free

UVM students, faculty, and staff can ride the *Green Mountain Transportation Authority* buses for free by swiping their valid UVM ID Card. For bus schedules go to cctaride.org.

Late-Night Transportation

For information about the off-campus CATS shuttle and taxi companies that accept Cat\$cratch check out *UVM Transportation and Parking*.

Assistance for Victims of Crimes

The *Parallel Justice Program* provides assistance to people who have experienced a crime in the city of Burlington. It is a FREE service that helps victims regardless of whether the crime is reported or the perpetrator is ever caught.

Welcome Bags:

Every Fall OSCR, with the help of volunteers, interacts with over 500 off campus student households while distributing bags.



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LAWS & ORDINANCES YOU SHOULD KNOW



Be mindful of how your actions can have an impact on yourself, your friends, and your community.

Alcohol Laws

Although hosting a party can be fun, you should be aware of the responsibilities and consequences if alcohol is present at your event.

Open Container

Any person who possesses an open container of alcohol on any street, sidewalk, city parking facility, or any other public place is in violation of city ordinance.

Illegal Possession of Alcohol

Any person under the age of 21 that purchases, asks for, or in any way receives alcohol can be charged with a violation of city ordinance and state law.

Selling Alcohol Without a License

It is unlawful for any person to sell, in any quantity, without acquiring a liquor license. If you sell alcohol at or charge admission to a party, the person accepting the money could be charged with selling liquor without a license. Sentences for this violation involve up to two years in prison and/or fines of up to \$1000. If alcohol is served to a minor, the server could also be charged with furnishing alcohol to a minor.

Furnishing Alcohol for Minors

Purchasing alcohol for an underage friend is illegal. It is unlawful to enable the consumption of alcohol by minors. This includes providing a place or opportunity for minors to consume alcohol. Party hosts could face both civil and criminal liability for any injury to guests or damage to property.

Keg Registration

Keg sales are recorded and can be tracked by both the [Vermont Department of Liquor Control](#) and local police. If a keg is confiscated by police at a party at which underage persons have consumed alcohol, the purchaser of the keg is liable

Use or Possession of a Fake ID

Any person who is less than 21 years of age, who uses a reproduced, modified, or altered license, or one that is not theirs, for the purpose of purchasing, asking for or in any way receiving any alcohol can be ticketed and fined.

Driving Under the Influence

The legal blood alcohol content (BAC) limit for a DUI is .08. For those who are under 21, the legal limit is .02. Consequences for driving under the influence include: fines, license revocation, classes, community service, jail time, and misdemeanor or felony charges on one's record.

Noise Ordinance

Burlington's neighborhoods are a mix of families, students, senior citizens and working people. Noise at night has an impact on the entire neighborhood. Be mindful of your noise level at all times.



Late night noise is one of the top quality-of-life complaints in Burlington. It affects everyone equally.

- Noise that is deemed unreasonable is prohibited 24 hours a day. Be mindful of the volume of your music, television, and conversations at all times. Some neighborhoods are densely populated and it is easy to disturb your neighbors.
- 10:00 pm to 7:00 am have been designated by the **City Council** as quiet hours. This means any noise that disturbs others or that can be heard beyond the dwelling unit is prohibited.
- In Burlington, you could be charged with a violation of local ordinance and fined up to \$500. If you receive two noise tickets within two years, the third offense is a criminal charge.

- In Burlington, everybody on the lease will be ticketed if a noise violation occurs at your residence as a result of a party/social event, even if you are not present. This includes if you are studying abroad or out of town for the weekend.
- A social event is defined as a gathering in which one or more of the people present is not a resident of that premises. Tickets can range up to \$500 per person on the lease, often totaling to several thousand dollars. This is another reason to be mindful of who you live with.

Noise Fine Reduction Restorative Program

If you get a noise ticket, ask yourself: "Do I feel responsible for causing noise that has negatively impacted my community?"

- **If NO**, you have the right to contest your ticket. There is a range of non-waiver penalties. For more information, contact the [City Attorney's Office](#) at (802) 865-7121.
- **If YES**, you are eligible to participate in the Burlington [Community Justice Center's Restorative Noise Program](#).

Noise is a big issue in Burlington's downtown neighborhoods. The program provides a restorative response to noise tickets. If you receive a noise ticket and willingly accept responsibility for causing noise that negatively impacted the community, you are eligible to participate.

If you received a party/social noise ticket, you can reduce your fine by \$100 by participating in a two-hour session where you will learn about the history of Burlington, how to avoid future tickets, and ways to solve the issue of noise in our community. Reduce your fine by an additional \$100 by performing 10 hours of approved community service.

If you received a general noise ticket you can reduce your fine by \$100 by performing 10 hours of approved community service.

To take advantage of these programs, you must contact the [Community Justice Center](#) within **seven (7) days of receiving a ticket**.

Parking Regulations

- Be considerate of your neighbors and observe all parking signs to avoid being ticketed and towed
- Do not block driveways or park on any portion of the sidewalk.
- Vehicles cannot be parked on any green space or grass, including front lawns or edges of driveways.
- Vehicles cannot be parked with "For Sale" signs displayed.

Residential or Permit-Only Parking



Pay attention to signage to make sure you avoid parking fines which can be as much as \$125

Some streets in Burlington are posted as residential parking only. You must have a valid parking permit, or a guest pass to park on these streets. In order to obtain a residential parking permit, contact the [Burlington Police Parking Enforcement Division](#).

The University of Vermont has numerous parking restrictions and all on-campus parking requires a permit. For questions related to on-campus parking contact UVM Transportation and Parking Services at 656-8686 or check online.

Parking Bans

Burlington maintains a warning system of yellow lights mounted on utility poles throughout the city. These lights are activated when a snow parking ban is declared or when street maintenance, such as sweeping, will occur.

During a parking ban, parking is prohibited on any street in residential areas from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am, and in the downtown/Church Street Marketplace areas from 12:00 to 6:00 am. Vehicles found on the street will be towed and ticketed (**\$95.00 fine**).

To receive updates about parking bans and access information about where to park during a ban, visit burlingtonvt.gov.

Other Parking Issues

- Parking your vehicle anywhere other than your driveway for more than 5 days is prohibited
- Leaving a wrecked or dismantled vehicle on a public street or private property is prohibited.
- It is illegal to park unregistered vehicles (this includes expired license plates and vehicles with no license plates) on the street.

Trash & Recycling Regulations

- Properties must be kept clear of excessive trash. Yards and greenbelts

must be kept clear of inappropriate items such as tires, appliances, furniture, etc. Debris on the property can result in a fine.

- It is a violation of city ordinance to keep your indoor furniture or broken or discarded furniture on your porch or in your yard. These items are a fire hazard.
- Occupants of a single-family house (including rentals) are responsible for setting up the disposal of garbage.
- Recycling is required by ordinance.
- Every apartment should have a set of small recycling bins or a large recycling tote. Consult Chittenden Solid Waste District (872-8111) if you have any questions about recycling in Burlington.
- Make sure that you know when recycling and trash are scheduled to be picked up. Leaving your recycling and trash bins on the greenbelt at any other time may result in a fine.

Other Ordinances You Should Know

Fireworks

Discharging fireworks within the city limits is illegal. Outside of Burlington, check with the local police before using fireworks of any type. Please remember that fireworks can be frightening and disruptive to unsuspecting neighbors, children, and pets. They can also be hazardous if not carefully controlled.

Public Urination

Any person found urinating in public can be charged with a violation of local ordinance and fined. Depending on where the violation takes place and if someone witnesses the incident, you may be charged with sexual misconduct and be required to register as a sex offender.

Possession of Stolen Property

It is illegal to steal or receive stolen property, including street signs. Any person caught could be arrested and charged with a misdemeanor or felony, depending on the value.

Trespassing Laws

Any person found trespassing on private property can be charged with a misdemeanor. It is disrespectful and illegal to cut through your neighbors' yard. The Burlington Police have had numerous cases in recent years where intoxicated persons have entered the wrong residence, thinking it was their own or a friend's. It is a felony offense to enter into an occupied dwelling without permission! Intoxication is no excuse for going onto someone else's property or into someone else's house.

Responsible Pet Ownership

Owners must scoop their dog's poop anywhere in the City. Also, owners are responsible for the level of noise created by their dog. Barking dogs, dogs off leash, and **not scooping the poop can result in a fine of \$50 to \$500.**

Off-Campus Behavior Has On-Campus Impacts

Students are representatives of the University to the Burlington community. In addition to the regulations outlined in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, off-campus students must abide by local ordinances and state laws. The *Burlington Police Department* shares municipal and criminal violations data with UVM, and those individuals identified as UVM students are referred to the *Center for Student Conduct (CSC)* for action. The sanctions for off-campus misconduct may range from a Disciplinary Warning up to and including Dismissal from the University.

Drug Convictions & Your Financial Aid

Students may lose or become ineligible for Pell grants and any other type of federal assistance if they have been convicted of drug charges in state or federal courts.

One conviction for drug possession will result in withholding of aid eligibility for two years; more than two convictions of drug possession will result in a permanent bar to federal financial assistance. The only exceptions to this bar will be in cases where the student has satisfactorily completed a drug-rehabilitation program, or the conviction is reversed or set aside.

Juniper the Pug, one of OSCR's Official Puppy Mascots, reminds you to pick up after your dogs.



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OTHER RESOURCES



View of the City of Burlington from the belfry of Old Mill.

Landlord/Tenant Information

- *UVM Office of Student & Community Relations*: 656-9405
- *Vermont Tenants*: 864-0099

Emergency Numbers

- *Burlington Police Department*: 658-2704
- **UVM Emergency Operations Line (Recorded Info.)**: 656-0000
- *UVM Police Services*: 656-3473
- *Vermont State Police*: 878-7111

Healthcare

- *UVM Medical Center*: 847-0000
- *UVM Student Health Center*: 656-3350
- *UVM Women's Health Clinic*: 656-0603

Support Services

- **Community Information and Referral**: 211
- *HOPE Works (Sexual Violence Agency)*: 863-1236
- *Howard Center (Mental Health Services)*: 488-6000
- *Outright VT (LGBTQ Agency)*: 865-9677
- *Planned Parenthood*: 863-6326
- *Pride Center of Vermont (LGBTQ Agency)*: 863-0003

- *Spectrum Youth & Family Services*: 862-5396
- *Steps to End Domestic Violence*: 656-1996
- *Vermont Cares (HIV/AIDS Agency)*: 863-2437

Burlington Area & Vermont Resources

- *Attorney General Consumer Protection Hotline*: 656-3183
- *Burlington Community Justice Center*: 865-7155
- *Burlington Department of Parks and Recreation*: 864-0123
- *Burlington Department of Public Works*: 863-9094
- *Burlington Fire Marshall's Office*: 864-5577
- *Burlington Housing Board of Review*: 865-7122
- *Burlington International Airport*: 863-1889
- *Burlington Lead Program*: 865-5323
- *Burlington Parking Enforcement*: 540-2380
- *Burlington Police Department*: 658-2700
- *Burlington Public Library (Fletcher Free Library)*: 863-3403
- *Chittenden Solid Waste District*: 872-8111
- *City Hall*: 865-7000
- *Code Enforcement Office*: 863-0442
- *Community & Economic Development Office*: 865-7144
- *Green Mountain Transportation Authority*: 864-2282
- *Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce*: 863-3489
- *Parallel Justice Program*: 264-0764
- *State of Vermont Health Department*: 863-7200
- *Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles*: 888-998-3766
- *Vermont Human Rights Commission*: 1-800-416-2010
- **Vermont Department of Consumer Service Hotline**: 1-800-622-4496

Resources for UVM Students

- *Academic Support Programs*: 656-4075
- *Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity*: 656-3368
- *Mosaic Center for Students of Color*: 656-3819
- *Alcohol and Drug Counseling*: 656-0784

- *Counseling and Psychiatry Services*: 656-3340
- *LGBTQA Center*: 656-8637
- *Men's Outreach Coordinator*: 656-3340
- *Parking and Transportation*: 656-8686
- *Student Legal Services*: 656-4379
- *Student Financial Services*: 656-5700
- *Women's Center*: 656-7892

Utilities

- *Burlington Electric Department*: 865-7300
- *Burlington Water Department*: 863-4501
- *Chittenden Solid Waste District*: 872-8111
- *Green Mountain Power*: 1-888-835-4672
- *Vermont Gas*: 863-4511



The Following Resources Were Used in Creating This Guide:

Vermont Tenants Handbook

Burlington Code Enforcement Office

UVM Student Government Association

Burlington City Attorney's Office

University of Missouri Off-Campus Living Guide

UVM Office of Student and Community Relations

Burlington City Ordinances

UVM Division of Student and Campus Life

Burlington Police Department

Members of the UVM Community Coalition



A closing circle on Fletcher Place. One participant said after the event, that they had never felt more welcomed into a community as they had that day - after just two circles and breaking bread together. A sense of belonging can make all the difference in the world.

We are the UVM Office of Student & Community Relations (OSCR). We are committed to creating a safe and socially just environment for off-campus students and neighbors. To do this we provide resources and education to our students so that they have successful experiences transitioning to and living off campus. We also work with students, neighbors, and city partners on creative initiatives to improve the quality-of-life in our shared community. The theories listed below inform our practice:

Restorative Practices (RP)

Foremost among these is the use of Restorative Practices. In its most basic terms this means that we work “with” people and not “to” or “for” them. We use opening and closing circles at every meeting in order build stronger relationships with partners. This also means that when harm is done we seek to repair the harm and rebuild trust by centering the experience of the person that was harmed in those efforts. For more information on what Restorative Practices is visit iirp.edu.

Social Justice (SJ)

As part of UVM's Division of Student Affairs, we have committed ourselves to bringing a social justice lens to everything we do. That means that we put resources into helping all our staff, including student staff, gain cultural competency and a deeper understanding of social justice. This includes professional development opportunities both on- and off-campus. Monthly discussions on a variety of topics and action plans focused on constantly improving our programs to ensure ever-increasing diversity and inclusion.

Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR)

We also used Community-Based Participatory Action Research to inform our work. It is our belief that by engaging with the collective genius of all of our community members (especially those from historically marginalized populations) we better serve our whole community.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) & Collective Efficacy (CE)

We believe that taking care of our environment, both built and natural, is really taking caring of ourselves. We use the theory of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design 2.0 with a focus on Collective Efficacy to do this. This ties in with both CBPAR and RP, which teaches us that the collective work of individuals in the context of a supportive community, will have the capacity to solve their own problems. When our environments are cared for and beautiful, especially when that involves working with nature, we feel better socially, mentally and physically.

Results-Based Accountability

To measure our progress we use Results-Based Accountability which asks us not only what we do and how much we do but most importantly, who is better off because of our work. We measure our outcomes not by the goals we set ourselves but by the positive outcomes we measure in our community.

If what we have shared in this guide has sparked an interest in you to be more engaged in your community, reach out to us at oscr@uvm.edu.

UVM OFFICE OF STUDENT & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Contact information:

- The Pearl House, 12 Colchester Avenue, 1st Floor
- uvm.edu/oscr
- 802.656.9405
- oscr@uvm.edu

Staff

- Emily Howe, Office Manager
- John Mejia, Assistant Director
- Gail Champnois, Director

You can contact us for the following:

- Resources for finding off-campus housing
- Resources for understanding leases and VT rental law
- Getting involved in the Burlington community
- Addressing landlord-tenant issues
- Resolving conflict with landlords, neighbors, roommates
- Responding to off-campus bias and discrimination
- Understanding city ordinances

Let us know how we can help!



*Edmunds Middle School's After-School Program staff chaperone students as they give out **Have a Heart** flyers and Lake Champlain Chocolates to remind UVM students to be mindful of their noise level.*