

Housing Advice for Incoming Graduate Students

CU Boulder Philosophy

Compiled by Sam Director, June 2019; revised 4/22/21

Dan Coren:

I think CU Grad and Family Housing is by far the best option for an incoming grad student. It's safe, reasonably maintained, perfect location, pretty quiet, and probably about the cheapest option in Boulder. Plus Denver is insanely expensive too! Even Broomfield is expensive.

Alex Wolf-Root:

Unfortunately, housing in Boulder is tough. I wish I had something else to say, but it's the truth. (Happy to talk much more in detail about that if you'd like in the future.) Honestly, [Craigslist](#) is one of your better bets. Obviously it's always a bit of a gamble, but check it regularly, and post something about yourself in the "housing wanted" area too. There's also a CU-specific forum called [Ralphie's List](#) (Ralphie is our Buffalo [bison] [mascot](#)) that you should use. Additionally, there are some spots in [Graduate & Family Housing](#), but those are very hard to come by. Info on that is here. If even moderately interested, apply ASAP. I'd say your odds are low, but things happen over summer and a slot might come up. Don't bank on it, though.

Feel free to reach out with any other housing questions or whatever that might pop up. Again, housing is tough in Boulder, both finding spots and paying the ridiculous rent, but hopefully you can make it work. And if you haven't already, it might be worth contacting whichever prof you've been talking to to see if they can connect you with other incoming grad students to maybe room with.

Unrelated, but if you happen to be in town on June 7th, our graduate labor union (not yet recognized but has done a lot, though I'm biased as I'm quite involved) is doing a potluck / sign-making party at a local park. And general info on the union can be found on our site, though here's a direct link to our (brief, slightly outdated) [rent page](#) as that's most relevant for present purposes.

Tommy Bonn:

my advice is apply for Grad and Family Housing ASAP! For the first year I got a 2 bed at Timber Ridge for \$1400, and that was a pretty good deal/management situation.

Dawn Jacob:

I used Ralphie's List (<https://ralphieslist.colorado.edu/>) to find a roommate. There were enough people using it that I had a few good prospects who I ended up talking with by phone, and I'm super happy with the roommate I found!

Some apartments will "pre-lease", so that you sign in May or June for an apartment in August. When we looked last summer, probably half the places we were interested in were pre-leasing, and the other half were of the "available the 1st of next month" variety. Pre-leasing is more common among the property management groups.

If you have a pet, especially a dog, almost everywhere will charge pet rent (\$25-\$50/month) and will limit certain breeds/sizes. If you get your dog certified as a "service dog" (though whatever halfway-official-seeming online service you can find) you can bypass pet rent and maybe breed/size restrictions as well.

Four-Star Realty is one of the big property management groups. They manage a ton of properties and were good about stacking appointments back-to-back to see multiple places efficiently. However, their summer staff consists mostly of college seniors and recent graduates, so the whole setup can feel a bit unprofessional. We found almost everything they showed us to be better suited to undergrads than grad students.

Fowler Property Management is one of the other big ones. The couple places they showed us were AWFUL: dirty, over-priced, etc. Also, the people they sent out to show us apartments often failed to have all the information on the apartments and couldn't answer basic questions. They were a waste of our time, and based on our interactions we didn't trust anything they told us.

Our best apartment prospects came from watching for private landlords listing on Craigslist. (Again, though, most of these are 'available now' apartments.)

Once Caitie and I decided to room together, we planned to both come to Boulder for a weekend in the beginning of June. We met each other and spent two days looking at apartments. We probably saw about 12 places, and we ended up deciding between three we liked. Even though we were looking at Aug 1 rentals, there were probably 3-4 places we planned to see but that had leases signed in the day or two before we arrived! (So, nice places, especially pre-lease ones, go quickly!!) Ultimately, we're super happy with what we found.

Caleb Pickard:

The floor price on 2 bedroom units is around \$1,100/month. It won't be easy to find a unit that cheap, and you almost certainly won't find one any cheaper. 1 bedroom units are considerably more expensive per person per month. I haven't seen too many 3-bedroom units with competitive prices (i.e. prices that are better per person per month), but I haven't looked in a couple years.

The Hill (just west of campus) is relatively expensive and frat-y. That's where a great many of the older under grads live. Not recommended.

If you want a place within walking/biking distance from campus, you might check out the Goss/Grove area. I lived there with another grad student for 3 years and easily walked to and from campus everyday.

Many first year grad students end up living down on Table Mesa, which is a little over 2 mi from campus. Not great for walking, but it's bike-able and there are regular buses to and from. (You'll get an unlimited bus pass when you get to campus)

In terms of price/location, the best option is probably graduate family housing, but that can be a difficult-get without a family since families get priority on the waiting-list. I'm living there this year, but only because my roommate and I have been living together for 4 years and therefore count as a "family." Still, worth looking into. If not for the coming year, then in the future. And, to that end, it would behoove you to establish a long-term roommate relationship with someone so that you, too, can apply as a "family" in future years. (I think they want two years worth of leases to count a co-habiting couple as a family.)

Jasmine Carter:

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Daniel Carr (4/22/2021)

Four Star Realty/Four Star on the Hill controls a sizable share of affordable housing in Boulder. They are nightmarishly incompetent and unethical. If anyone finds a good deal on a Four Star apartment, I would advise against it due to the hidden costs resulting from having a very bad landlord. I can give more specifics if anybody wants to be talked out of renting from Four Star.

Megan Kitts (4/22/2021)

One note about the advice from Sam is that it says in a few places to check Craigslist for room or house listings. I don't know anyone, at least from my year, that found success doing that, but maybe we were anomalous.