



OFF-CAMPUS GUIDEBOOK

Getting around West Palm Beach



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DEAR PBA *Sailfish*

We are thankful that you have chosen to join the PBA family. We are excited for all that you will experience both in the classroom and outside the classroom as a student. Choosing where you will live while you are a student at PBA is a big decision. Our office wants to help all students navigate their options with either living on-campus or exploring off-campus housing options. For more clarity on our residency policies, please consult with our Residence Life Handbook which can be found on the PBA website (pba.edu/reslifehandbook).

For those who want to live off-campus or are outside the parameters for on-campus housing options, we want to provide some direction and tangible resources to help with navigating off-campus housing in Palm Beach County. There is lots to learn about housing availability, navigating the market and finding the best option for your housing needs. Our goal is to assist all students in gaining the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed decisions to secure off-campus housing. We want you to take your time in learning about the community before you sign a lease with an off-campus housing provider. It is important that you gather information, research the market and carefully think through your options before you make any formal commitment.

We have developed this guidebook to assist our Sailfish with their off-campus housing search. We know you will have other questions and are happy to help in any way we can so that you can make an informed decision about your housing needs.

The Office of Residence Life



OFF-CAMPUS GUIDE ASSIST

WHO CAN LIVE OFF-CAMPUS:

- » Students who are living locally with parent(s), grandparent(s) or legal guardian(s) and are commuting
- » Students over 21 years old by the start date of the fall semester
- » Students who are legally married
- » Students who are non-traditional undergraduate, evening students, graduates, or fully online
- » Students who have less than 12 credits at the start of the semester and are not full-time status
- » Students who have met a financial hardship need
- » Students who have registered with the Office of Academic and Accessibility Resources for medical need

OFF-CAMPUS GUIDE ASSISTS WITH:

- » Finding housing
- » Navigating Palm Beach County
- » Preparing for your move
- » Realtors
- » Roommate options
- » Timeline for finding housing
- » Transportation information
- » Understanding leases



HOUSE HUNTING

STEP 1

Identify your
housing wants
and needs

Consider these factors:

- » Lease terms
- » Needed/wanted amenities
- » Location in relationship to campus
- » Bedrooms and bathrooms options
- » Furnished or unfurnished
- » Pet policy
- » Price range

Once you refine what your housing needs/wants are you can start to explore local housing options. You can utilize the University's Off-Campus Housing Marketplace resource found at:

off-campus.pba.edu/listing

STEP 2

Identify housing
options

This Off-Campus Housing Marketplace offers information on:

- » Listings
- » Resources to connect with roommates
- » A place to post or find sublease options
- » Guide
- » Renters education

STEP 3

Tour housing options

Once you find housing options that potentially meet your needs/wants, we encourage you to tour the property, meet the landlord or leasing agent and get a feel for the area. Being in or around the physical property, meeting the staff and seeing other tenants will help you gauge the viability of the property.



Questions to Ask

- » What is the typical lease length?

» Are there short-term lease options for residents?

» What is the monthly rental price and what is included in the rent?

» What percentage of residents are PBA students?

» Is a security deposit and/or application fee required and what is the cost of each?

» Would they waive either fee? Does the property provide individual or joint leasing?

» Do they offer roommate matching on-site?

» Are there policies on overnight guests, parking, or quiet hours?

» Is housing fully furnished? If so, what is provided?
- » What is the pet policy?

» Is subleasing allowed and what are the procedures and fees for this?

» What type of security is provided on-site for residents?

» What is the process for requesting repairs and maintenance?

» Is there a charge for parking or are permits required?

» How many spots are allotted per unit and is there an option to buy additional spaces? What is the cost?

» Is renter’s insurance needed or required? What is the minimum expectation?

» What are some specific amenities offered?

» Are there allowances to be released from a leasing agreement?

STEP 4

Assess safety, landlord compatibility and current resident experience

PBA Reslife is often asked about the safety of off-campus properties and locations around campus. The Reslife Office is not able to promote or demote any specific properties, but we do recommend that students and families talk with other students who have lived in these locations to help inform their decision-making process.



Safety Recommendations

- » Is the property and surrounding areas such as parking lots, mail parcels, amenities or club house well lit?
- » What is the condition and structure of the front door? What types of locks does it have? Is there a peep hole for visibility?
- » Are the property entrances guarded or gated?
- » Do all windows and sliding glass doors have locks and can they be secured?
- » Are the windows and doors hurricane rated and/or what are the preparations and supplies for hurricane concerns?
- » What modifications are you permitted to make to secure the property as you would like?
- » Are there enough working smoke detectors in the living space, hallways and bedrooms, etc? Are they battery-operated or hardwired?
- » Are window air conditioners secured from inside?
- » Is the assigned mailbox lockable? How are packages delivered onsite?

STEP 4 *(continued)*

Assess safety, landlord compatibility and current resident experience



Questions to ask other tenants about the landlord

- » Was the place ready for move-in at the start of the lease?
- » Does the landlord/property make timely repairs?
- » Does the landlord provide appropriate (24 hrs) notice prior to entering the premise?
- » Does the landlord/property provide appropriate and timely notice of contractual changes or property updates?
- » Have there been any amenities out of service and for how long?
- » Is the landlord/property both respectful and easy to work with?
- » Would you rent from this landlord/property again?

STEP 5

Select and secure your housing option

Once you have identified your needs/wants, visited the site, assessed for safety and gained a thorough understanding of the commitment, you are ready to secure your off-campus housing option. The last step to secure your housing is to sign a lease. A lease is a binding contractual agreement between the landlord/property and tenant for a specified period of time and financial amount.

Students need to fully read and understand what they are committing to with this off-campus lease. There are legal expectations, financial obligations and real consequences if prematurely signed. The responsibility is on the student/tenant to be informed. A parent who signs as a guarantor for the student's lease can also face financial and additional consequences if not informed of the agreement.



COMPARING LEASES

WHO SIGNS THE LEASE?

The tenant (student) and the landlord always sign the lease. If signing a joint lease, the other roommates would also sign the document. Landlords may require you to have a guarantor to sign the lease because the student cannot demonstrate a credit history or ability to pay for the lease terms. The guarantor guarantees the landlord that the rent for the apartment will be paid.

Types of leases

- » **Individual Lease:** An individual lease is when the tenant signs for a single room, meaning they are individually responsible for paying rent and any damages to that room.
- » **Joint Lease:** A joint lease is signed by all occupants, making the entire group responsible for damages, and paying the full rent.
- » **Hybrid Lease:** A hybrid lease is a combination of a joint and individual lease because it has qualities of both.



How to find a lease

- » You can advertise your apartment and sublease options of your property through our Off-Campus Housing Marketplace.
- » You can find roommates through the marketplace.
- » There are groups on Facebook where students post housing options, sublets and roommate requests.
- » The Office of Residence Life will host an off-campus housing fair, roommate mingle and send out notices of off-campus housing throughout the spring semester.

WHY YOU SHOULD SIGN A 12-MONTH LEASE:

- » You need housing over Christmas break and/or summer break.
- » You have an internship, student teaching or work locally which requires you to stay beyond the academic year.
- » You plan to do graduate school after your undergraduate studies.

WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER A SHORT-TERM LEASE : LESS THAN 12 MONTHS

- » You do not need housing for 12 months.
- » You will be gone for a period of the semester (ex: study abroad).
- » You plan to graduate in May and leave the area.
- » You have work or an internship elsewhere.
- » You will not be here over the summer.
- » You cannot afford a 12-month lease.

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a white t-shirt with "Christ Fellowship" on it, dark shorts, and a black cap, is walking on a paved sidewalk. He is pulling a large black rolling suitcase with a purple suitcase on top of it. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a grassy area and some trees.

PREPARING TO MOVE

Security Deposit

Most leases require a security deposit. The deposit is held by the landlord for the length of the lease to guard against losses, such as those incurred due to damages not resulting from normal wear and tear or from a tenant moving out before the lease expires. The security deposit is usually equal to one- or two-month's rent and is paid in advance or with the first month's rent. In addition to the security deposit, some complexes have extra fees that must be paid prior to move-in, such as a pet deposit or parking registration.

Renter's Insurance

Renter's insurance provides a tenant with coverage for loss or damage to the property. The apartment you will live in will likely have insurance for the exterior of the building. Each property is different, so make sure to get clarity on what they cover and do not cover. Most properties require tenants to provide proof of renter's insurance before signing the lease or moving into the property. Some students may already have or can get coverage through their parent's homeowners insurance policy.

Transportation

West Palm Beach is a thriving and growing community. It is important to explore your transportation needs and options and how you will get to and from campus. PBA will require a commuter parking decal. However, there are other parking garage options around campus to consider. Please see the Campus Parking page on my.pba.edu for more resources and clarity on onsite parking options.

WEST PALM BEACH PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Check out the city's website to explore transportation options such as Palm Tran, Tri-Rail, Brightline, Ride WPB, Circuit and carpool options, benefits and incentives.

- » [Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency](#)
- » [Palm Tran Public Transportation](#)
- » [Tri Rail](#)
- » [Bright Line](#)
- » [Circuit](#)



Scan the QR code to see all
West Palm Beach transportation services



Furnishings

Most apartments in the area come unfurnished, however there are some fully furnished options available. The term “fully furnished” can mean different things to different landlords, so getting clarity on what is and is not provided is important before you sign your lease. We encourage you to ask for this to be defined in writing or as part of the lease agreement.

There are local companies that you can rent from to furnish your apartment. West Palm Beach also has a thriving secondhand retail community. Often graduating students will sell or gift furniture to undergraduate students. There are several ways to outfit your apartment without breaking the budget.

Cable and Internet

Some complexes include cable and internet with the rent cost, others do not. Get clarity on what is and is not covered in your monthly rent. Some complexes provide basic/baseline levels of internet and cable and then will allow you to upgrade services for additional fees. If your landlord or property does not provide cable or internet, you will need to explore which company to purchase a package from. Make sure you fully understand the commitment, financial obligation and termination standards. Ask about all the fees such as monthly rates, package/bundle options, any connection or set up fees associated with the product.

Utilities

- » Gas
- » Electric
- » Water
- » Trash
- » Internet
- » Cable

Some properties cover some utilities in the rent, others do not. Again, get clarity on what is and is not covered in your rent cost. Once you find out what utilities are your responsibility, you will need to reach out to the corresponding companies to set up the utilities you need. Each company will be a separate contract. If you have roommates, determine how you will split the cost, who will be on the contract and how you will navigate payments each month.

TIMELINE

The housing market is constantly ebbing and flowing with availability in West Palm Beach. Most complexes will know 30-60 days out on what availability they have. We encourage you to call the properties you are interested in to see their current availability, anticipated future availability and how to stay informed of those opportunities. Some properties will allow you to add yourself to a waitlist for future openings.

If you want housing for August, start exploring and watching the market in April, May and June. Anticipate signing a lease in June, July or August based on availability with the desired property. Most complexes will expect their tenants to renew their leases 30-60 days (about 2 months) prior to the end of the lease agreement. Units usually go quickly, so you will want to be informed and ready to commit when a property becomes available. There are lots of properties in the area that are under construction or are not open yet. You can get on waitlists for these properties to find out their anticipated opening date. Often these new properties are eager to lock in tenants several months prior to opening.

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING MARKETPLACE

- » [Off Campus Housing Market](#)
- » Listings, roommates, subleases, guide, renter education
- » Picture of the website

RESOURCES

- » Realtors
- » Off-campus Housing Marketplace
- » Agreements with The Grand (work force housing)



NAVIGATING

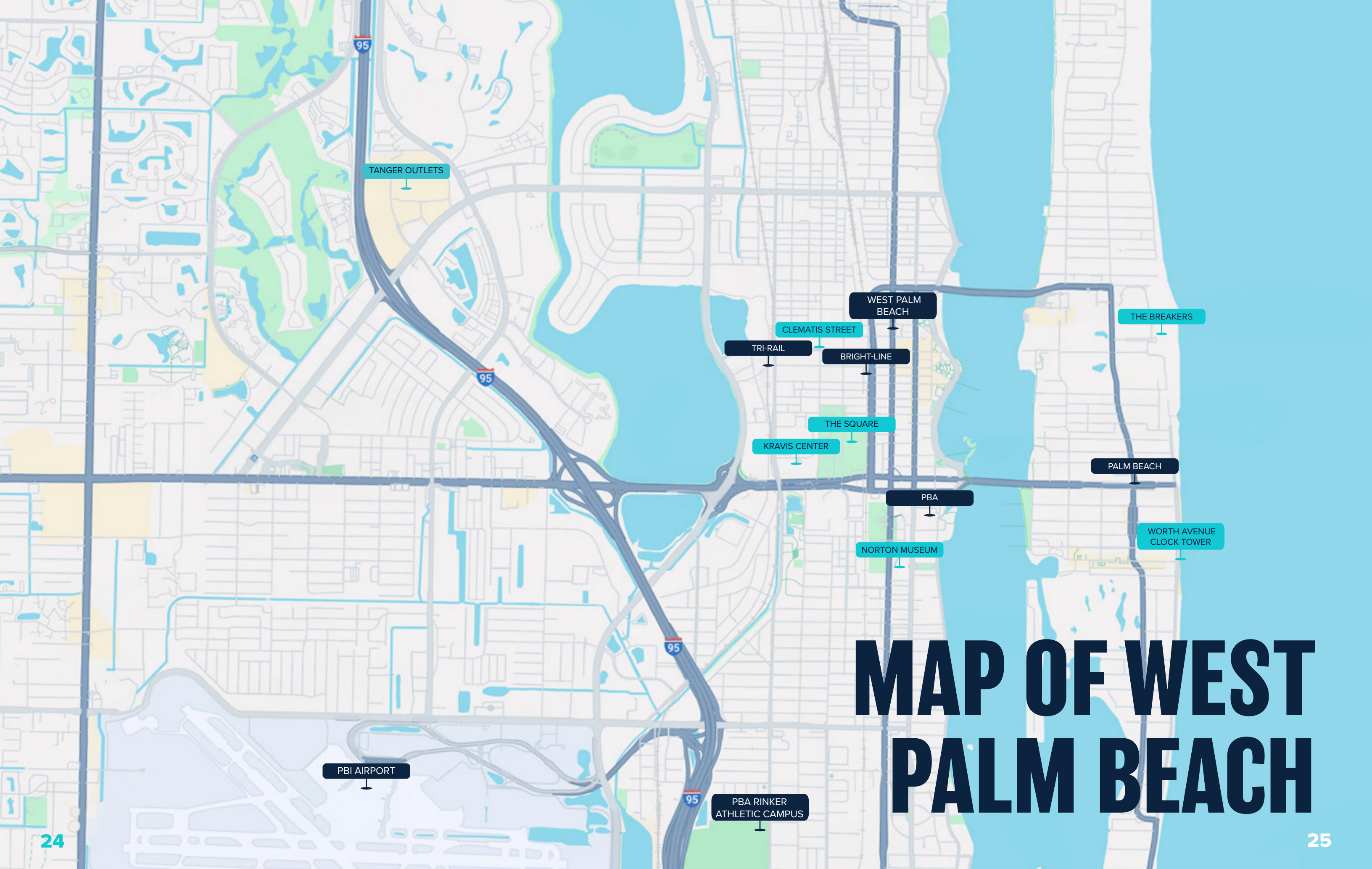
WEST PALM BEACH

ARTS, CULTURE, SPORTS AND BUSINESSES

- » Expo Center at the South Florida Fairgrounds
- » The Ballpark of the Palm Beaches
- » Grandview Public Market
- » Henry Morrison Flagler Museum
- » iThink Financial Amphitheater
- » Maltz Jupiter Theater
- » Meyers Amphitheater
- » Palm Beach Dramaworks
- » Palm Beach Zoo and Conservation Society
- » Roger Dean Chevrolet Stadium

WALKABILITY

- » Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens
- » Clematis Street Historic Commercial District
- » Kravis Center for the Performing Arts
- » Norton Museum of Art
- » Palm Beach Convention Center
- » The Society of the Four Arts
- » The Square, Downtown West Palm Beach





Palm Beach Atlantic
UNIVERSITY

Enlightening Minds
Enriching Souls
Extending Hands

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