

THE ONCE FALLEN HOUSING GUIDE

Found on the Once Fallen website: <http://www.oncefallen.com/>

Housing page: <http://www.oncefallen.com/findinghousing.html>

A Guide by Derek W. Logue Last update June 6, 2017

INTRODUCTION

The two most common questions that are asked of me are how to find housing and how to find employment. This page will cover finding general tips on how to find sex offender housing as well as provide info on specific programs that assist in housing or halfway houses. This page does not address [the legalities of residency and housing issues](#); those issues are covered in other parts of the Once Fallen website.

THE BAD NEWS

The bad news is housing options are very limited especially in areas with strict residency restriction laws. Even in areas not enforcing residency restrictions, few people are willing to rent to those on the registries. At least 30 states have some form of residency, proximity, and even work restriction law in place, and they are starting to increase with popularity after years without new restrictions. Also note that those required to register for life [are barred from obtaining Section 8 Housing](#) (in addition to state laws that may exclude non-lifetime registrants from public housing).

THE GOOD NEWS

The good news is that there **are** ways to find housing. I just won't lie to you and pretend it is a cakewalk. Below are a few general tips on finding housing.

TIP #1: FINDING HOUSING LEADS

In the years since I began seeking housing lists, agencies that interact with registered citizens have increased awareness of the special challenges of finding housing for registered citizens and are starting to make note of programs for registrants. Here are a few places you might be able to find local housing leads:

1. **Local charities:** Churches, community action agencies, homeless shelters or coalitions, and even food banks often have housing lists for low-income agencies, and some may list housing specific to registrants.
2. **Law Enforcement:** Local registry offices may have a lead or two. Your state's Dept. of Corrections website may have a list of programs. Many of the lists on the DoC sites are online. Georgia's list is "THOR", for example.)
3. **The Internet:** If you do a search "sex offender housing [your city]," you might find some lists. Many renters post on Craigslist (most won't post they rent to registrants but will post at times that they don't). What I'd suggest is you wrote down the phone numbers of every place you called because some

renters own numerous properties, thus a list will keep you from wasting your time with repeat rejections.

TIP #2: USING THE REGISTRY TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

It seems ironic to suggest visiting a public registry website, but websites that have mapping software like Family Watchdog may assist you by showing where registered citizens live in a community. (I'm not going to post a direct link since I'm not promoting them but I'm sure you can find one online without my help.) At any rate, a map may help you

TIP #3: DON'T GET DISCOURAGED

Finding a place to live is like finding a needle in a haystack, so expect a *lot* of rejection, especially in places with residence restrictions. They are out there, it's just a long, difficult process. In my previous experience, it took 33 over 130 calls before I found a place that would accept registered citizens in 2007 but only 33 calls in 2014. Whether that is the result of me having better methods of house hunting or the result of changing attitudes regarding renting to registrants remains to be seen. If you can't handle the rejection yourself, pay someone you know a few bucks to call them. You have to grow thick skin because some folks won't be cordial while rejecting you.

TIP #4: HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY

I can't stress honesty enough. It is better to be up-front about asking if prospective landlords rent to registered citizens than to lie to get in only to be ousted later. You will be added at that point to a list that will be added to a list that carries an equally bad stigma-- the Eviction registry.

If you do contact someone and you have the opportunity to "sell yourself" in the way you would while job hunting, be prepared to do so. As a whole, registered citizens are more likely to keep to themselves, pay rent on time, and complain less than other tenants.

Landlords these days may also do credit checks and eviction checks. You may be expected to pay an application fee. Be prepared to deal with that and if there is a fee involved, get confirmation that you would be given serious consideration.

TIP #5: BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

It is aggravating, but be sure you check with the local registration office *before* you even start looking for a home, because sometimes cities, townships, or counties have residency laws that differ from the laws imposed by the state. A five minute call may save you a lot more headache during your house hunt later.

TIP #6: C-Y-A ("Cover Your Ass")

If you find a place, consider yourself lucky or blessed. However, it is important to remember wherever you find yourself, remember there can be complications even after you've settled in. It should be a no-brainer, but be sure to register with the Sheriff's office ASAP; don't delay, as many areas have short registration periods.

Let's be honest here-- chances are if a renter will rent to you, he's likely less concerned about his property or the quality of his tenants. If your search is in an urban area, you are more likely to find residence with higher crime and lower standard of living. Thus, I suggest getting Renter's Insurance; most Insurance companies offer Renter's Insurance for around \$15 a month, and it will cover you in case of theft, fire, or other problems. However, even if you are staying in the Bates Motel, be sure to take good care of your property. Building a good rapport with the landlord will help you as you often need good references for a new lease.

Because of the constantly changing nature of residence restriction laws, I suggest keeping about three month's rent in a savings account. Even if you are on disability, keep about \$1200 or so in your account at all times (Rules of Social Security Disability/ SSI allows you to keep up to \$1500 in savings without penalty. This applies to those on SSI, the rules to those drawing from the lifetime earnings fall under different rules. You can contact Social Security for specific rules on property and savings issues). I'd also suggest you improve your credit rating. There are many ways to do that, but having a good credit score helps should you need to move in the future.

Keep in mind also that there is always the chance that the feds will swing by for compliance checks; under the controversial Adam Walsh Act, the US Marshals have been given jurisdiction in compliance checks (I question the constitutionality of that provision). Remember just because you are on a registry does not mean they can come in and check your residence without a warrant. That being said, *"No police agency or even the US Marshals can come into any residence without a warrant, if a person is off of supervision. The only time they can is, if it is an emergency (fire, or other such emergency) or they hear someone being hurt."* See my article on [POLICE/ COMPLIANCE CHECKS](#) for more information.

TIP #6: MOVING TO ANOTHER STATE

Moving to another state is a greater hassle than moving across town. Because cities, counties, and states have differing laws, the best way to find out what laws are applicable in your area is to contact the Sheriff's office in the county you want to move to. You may have to fill out a "notice of intent to move/ reside" form. Another major problem is states register offenders differently. You may live in a state that gives you a "Tier 1/ Low Risk" designation with 10 year registration in one state, while another state gives lifetime registration or may reclassify you a Tier 3/ High Risk" because of the circumstances of your crime.

Once you are raised in Tier levels, it is hard to go back down. Also, some states do not simply restrict where you live, but restrict who you live with, which is especially important if you are planning on moving to a residence where a minor resides. This applies to any registrant, not always ones with child victims.

It should be noted that if you move from one state to another and you are set to be removed from the registry in state A, state B may not honor the end of your home state's registration period. I received a call, for example, from a man whose registration period expired in Ohio but moved to Florida and was forced to register in Florida. See the 50 state guide link at the top of the page to get a general idea of what each state requires. Remember that some locations, such as Florida, that allow restrictions beyond those the state codes.

Post-Release Housing Options -- Transitional Housing or Shelters open to Registrants

Post-release housing is difficult to find. I've found a few, listed below. I'll post more as I find it, but even after years of doing this, the housing listed below are the only leads I have. The contact info can be found below. Listing them here does not imply any mutual endorsement, and each program has differing standards regarding admission, fees, and regulations, so contact them directly for more information.

Because of the constantly changing nature of programs and services, it is hard to keep my database up to date, so any leads on more housing GREATLY NEEDED! If any of these leads are no longer valid, please contact me immediately so we can remain current for others in need. Simply being listed here is no guarantee of accuracy or quality of service. For more info and on rules and restrictions, find the contact info on each site. I'm willing to list any leads, be it a program or just an apartment complex or even just a spare room.

PLEASE NOTE: The resources listed here vary in form & function. Many programs are "transitional" or "halfway" houses, some may be temporary shelters, and some may simply be housing referral services that cater to Registered Citizens. *Please also note that just because I don't have a state listed, a housing option does not exist in your state.* If your state has a state-specific group listed on my [LINKS PAGE](#) you can try contacting them as well.

IMPORTANT: Many programs may only accept residents from within the state. Please keep that in mind, as many programs are flooded with inquiries.