

## How Living Off-Campus Affects Your Eligibility for Financial Aid

Some undergraduate students, who are considering moving off-campus, as well as those who currently live off-campus, often ask how living off-campus impacts their financial aid. We hope to answer your questions with the following information:

### ***Q: Does living off campus impact my financial aid eligibility?***

**A:** No. When we determine your financial aid eligibility, a standard room and board budget is used for undergraduate students, whether they live on or off-campus. So no matter where you live, your room and board expenses are considered in your financial aid cost of attendance. Some may think off-campus living is less expensive. However, do not forget to factor in and consider all off-campus expenses such as rent, utilities, renter's insurance, phone charges, food, furnishings, cleaning supplies, and transportation before making your decision.

### ***Q: I live off-campus now and have financial aid. Can I use my financial aid to pay my off-campus expenses?***

**A:** Maybe. This depends upon the amount of your charges on your student account and the amount of your financial aid. If you live off-campus, your student account will be charged for tuition and fees. If the total charges appearing on your fall semester account are \$2,493 (in-state) for example, and your financial aid for the fall semester equals \$5,496, then you have a \$2,135 credit balance on your account. In other words, if your financial aid exceeds your directly billed University expenses, then you may have the excess amount *refunded* to you to pay your off-campus living expenses. You may have heard the term "refund" used around campus to represent the above scenario.

On the other hand, if you live off-campus and your aid totals around \$5,596 for the fall semester, and your fall charges are \$8,153, you can see that in this case you would still owe \$2,557 to the University in addition to providing for your off-campus living expenses.

Every situation is different. Students must look at their own financial aid eligibility and University charges to determine if there will be a credit balance on their student account to assist with off-campus living expenses. The financial aid information on your AppalNet Account is a good resource to use to look up your financial aid and student account information.

### ***Q: I live off-campus now. If I have excess financial aid to pay for my rent, food, etc., when can I expect to receive those funds?***

Again, every situation is different. That depends on whether you completed your FAFSA by the priority deadline, when the financial aid award package has been finalized, and the financial aid has been posted to your student account. The best scenario is to have a back-up plan to pay for your off-campus living expenses from your personal funds. Generally, students do not receive their refunds until after their rental payment is due in August and January.

***Q: I live off-campus now. Can a Financial Aid Counselor write a letter to my rental agency that I will be receiving the funds to pay my rent?***

No. Financial Aid Counselors do not have the authority to write such a letter. The rental agreement is between the student and the rental agency. Appalachian is not involved in rental agreements for off-campus living.