

# Stanford Biosciences Student Association

## Student Handbook 2022-2023

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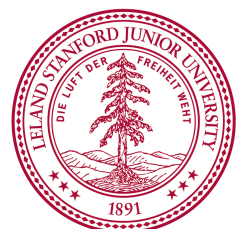


Website: [sbsa.stanford.edu](http://sbsa.stanford.edu)

Facebook: [facebook.com/SBSAofficial](https://facebook.com/SBSAofficial)

Twitter: [twitter.com/SBSA\\_official](https://twitter.com/SBSA_official)

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# Welcome!

The Stanford Biosciences Student Association (SBSA) would like to welcome you to graduate school and to the Stanford community!

SBSA is a student-run organization that serves and represents graduate students from biology-related fields in the School of Medicine, the School of Humanities and Sciences, and the School of Engineering. Our mission is to impart a political voice to graduate students in biology and related fields, to provide educational and career-building opportunities, and to help build community among Bioscience graduate students.

SBSA sponsors a variety of social and professional activities that give students the opportunity to interact with people outside of their department. These activities include:

- First Year Camping Trip (POWR)
- New student orientation
- Monthly social hours (free food and beverages!)
- Fall and Spring BBQs (more free food and beverages!)
- Student and fellowship mentoring programs
- Networking with Stanford Alumni

We welcome your input, energy, and enthusiasm! If you're interested in becoming involved, we have monthly lunchtime meetings - see times at <http://sbsa.stanford.edu/events/calendar.html>.

In addition to our monthly meetings, you can stay abreast of upcoming SBSA events in these ways:

- Website: [sbsa.stanford.edu](http://sbsa.stanford.edu)
- Facebook: [facebook.com/SBSAofficial](https://www.facebook.com/SBSAofficial)
- Twitter: [https://twitter.com/sbsa\\_official](https://twitter.com/sbsa_official)
- Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/sbsa\\_official/](https://www.instagram.com/sbsa_official/)
- SBSA-announce: This mailing list lets you know about current SBSA events and programming. Only SBSA officers and School of Medicine Office of Student Life administrators can post to this list.



- Biosci-ask: Need to borrow a reagent, get help on a protocol, sell some furniture, or find a roommate? Try posting to biosci-ask. Only members of this mailing list can post to it, but any member of the Stanford community can join.
- Biosci-discuss: Use this mailing list to promote events of interest to, raise issues with, or share relevant articles to the biosciences community. There is no moderation of members posting to this list; we will approve non-member posts on a case-by-case basis.

To subscribe to these lists, go to <http://mailman.stanford.edu> and type “sbsa-announce”, “biosci-ask” or “biosci-discuss” into the “Go to Subscriber Page” box.

## Home Program representation in SBSA

The Departments and Programs that are represented by SBSA include those listed below. Each Home Program has its own SBSA representatives.

Biochemistry  
 Bioengineering  
 Biology  
 Biomedical Informatics  
 Biophysics  
 Cancer Biology  
 Chemical & Systems Biology  
 Developmental Biology  
 Epidemiology and Clinical Research

Genetics  
 Health Policy  
 Immunology  
 Microbiology & Immunology  
 Molecular & Cellular Physiology  
 Neurosciences  
 Stem Cell Biology & Regenerative Medicine  
 Structural Biology

# Other awesome SBSA activities



## Upcoming events\*

- Biosciences Activities and Resources Fair (BARF)
- Monthly happy hours
- NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program info sessions and mentorship
- First year mentorship lunches
- Fall and spring BBQs (see above picture)
- Book clubs
- And more!

\*These events may look different due to COVID-19, but we are prepared for hosting in person and virtual events.

## Past activities

- Camping trips in Anthony Chabot and Big Basin for 1st year students (see below)
- Industry Happy Hour at QB3
- Kayaking trip at Elkhorn Slough
- Ski trip to Tahoe
- Visit to Monterey Bay Aquarium
- Terminal Graduate Reunion (TGR)
- Career Exploration Panels
- Trips to the California Academy of Sciences
- Stanford Football Tailgating
- Leadership Retreat
- Alumni Tailgate
- Hikes
- Day trip to Wine Country



# BioAIMS

Website: [bioaims.com](http://bioaims.com)

Facebook: [facebook.com/StanfordBioAIMS](https://facebook.com/StanfordBioAIMS)



The purpose of Biomedical Association for the Interest of Minority Students (BioAIMS) is to address the needs and concerns of current underrepresented graduate

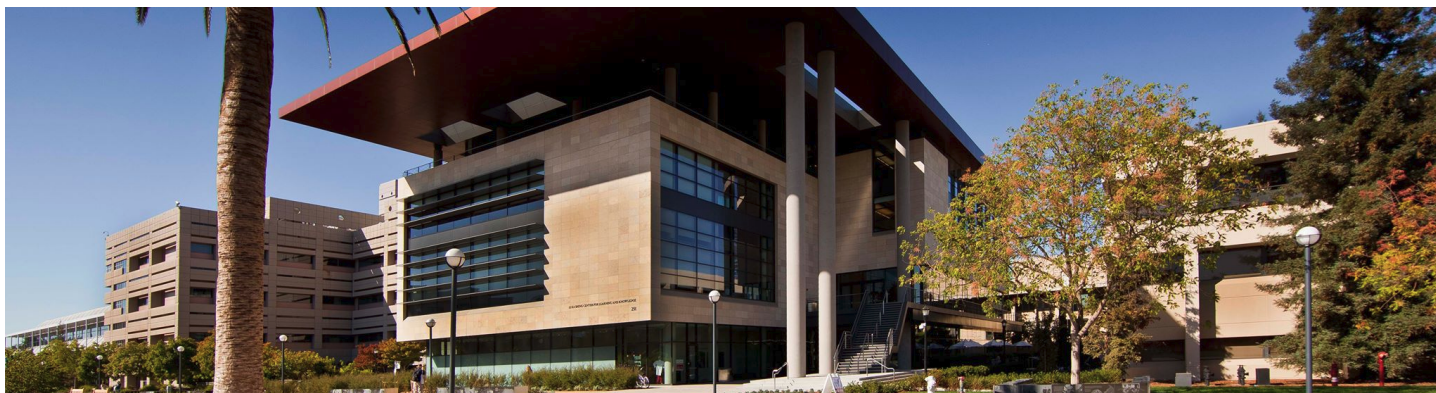
students in the Biosciences. BioAIMS is committed to promoting a supportive community and to enriching the opportunities available for underrepresented students pursuing an advanced degree in science. BioAIMS is an independent organization that works closely with SBSA and offers many useful programs for ALL first-year students. BioAIMS is for EVERYONE!

The goals of BioAIMS are:

- To promote the recruitment and active retention of underrepresented students for graduate studies in the biological sciences.
- To facilitate academic success through academically focused workshops.
- To stimulate professional growth through career development sessions
- To foster a student support network through social interactions

Subscribe to the [bioaims-all](#) listserv for BioAIMS officer announcements and the [bioaims-discuss](#) listserv for relevant events and discussions shared by BioAIMS members.

# Li Ka Shing Center for Learning and Knowledge (LKSC)



SBSA will be your liaison to LKSC. The fourth floor of LKSC houses student facilities available only to medical students and biosciences graduate students, creating seamless social, professional, and academic experiences for these students.

The fourth floor of LKSC has:

- A balcony with study/lunch tables as well as comfy chairs and couches
- 24/7 gym equipped with treadmills, ellipticals, bikes, dumbbells, stretching mats and more
  - Complimentary lockers are available for daily use (not overnight) and showers
- Berg Commons - lounge space with kitchen, ping-pong and foosball
  - Kitchen has two full-size refrigerators, two microwaves, toaster, water boiler and more
  - This is a shared space with dishes and appliances for common use - just make sure to clean up after yourself!
  - Public computers - Networked to a printer on the floor, with general internet access.
  - Couches and a GIANT TV (72") - The TV is equipped with cable and a Blu-ray player and the couches are oh-so comfortable leather.
- Reading Room - where SBSA General Meetings are held. Also available for individual/group study.
- Study Rooms - Rooms can hold 3-8 people (depending on the room) and the larger ones include screens that you can hook your laptop up to using VGA and DVI. You can sign up for the rooms up to 24 hrs in advance for no more than 6 hours on the sheets located on each room's door.
- Retreat Room - Also known as the Technology-free Room, Quiet Room, or Nap Room. This room has 3 fully reclining chairs, and large comfy leather couches. Feel free to come relax (and even nap) in this room, but no computers or cell phones allowed. Cell phones can be used as alarms (but this is it!)
- Graduate Student Room - A study room only for Biosciences grad students, complete with white boards, tables, chairs, and no windows

Obtaining Access to LKSC:

- A medical ID badge is needed to access LKSC's 4th floor. Find out how to obtain an ID here: <https://biosciences.stanford.edu/current-students/incoming-new-students/new-student-photo-identification-and-building-access/>.
- Gym Access: For access to the gym on the fourth floor of LKSC, you will need to sign the LKSC Fitness Center Waiver Form (instructions are provided in the link above). Approval for that access is given by the management of LKSC. Allow 72 hours for access to be activated after the waiver form is signed.

# Navigating graduate school

Graduate school is both extraordinarily rewarding and demanding at the same time. Getting perspective on what to expect, how to anticipate and deal with potential problems, and just hearing the experiences of others can be invaluable. Below are a series of resources/articles both as you start and continue through graduate school.

If you have suggestions for additions to these lists, please contact [sbsa-officers@lists.stanford.edu](mailto:sbsa-officers@lists.stanford.edu).

## Advice for starting graduate students: choosing a lab

- [How To Choose a Good Scientific Problem](#)
- [Decisions, decisions](#)
- [Choosing The Right Research Adviser](#)
- [PhD Students: Should You Switch Labs?](#)
- [How to choose a thesis advisor?](#)
- [How to succeed in science: a concise guide for young biomedical scientists. Part I: taking the plunge](#)
- [How to succeed in science: a concise guide for young biomedical scientists. Part II: making discoveries](#)
- [The PhD journey: how to choose a good supervisor](#)

## Advice for starting graduate students: being successful

- [A graduate school survival guide: "So long, and thanks for the Ph.D!"](#) - It's a long read, but worth it.
- [How to Become a Successful Scientist](#)
- [No, You're Not an Impostor](#)
- [PhD survival guide](#)
- [Surviving and Thriving in Graduate School](#)
- [The importance of stupidity in scientific research](#)
- [Vantage Point by Richard Zare: My top 10 principles for success](#)
- [What Makes a Great Student in the Lab?](#)
- [A grad school survival guide](#)
- [Advice I give to my PhD students](#)
- [The Worst Advice Grad Students Get](#)
- [101 Tips for Finishing Your Ph.D. Quickly](#)
- [Defining Success for Grad Students](#)
- [Guide for Women in STEM](#)
- [Scholarships for Women in STEM](#)

## Career

- [Navigating the Path to Industry: A Hiring Manager's Advice for Academics Looking for a Job in Industry](#)
- [Emerging network of resources for exploring paths beyond academia](#)
- [Career Opportunities in Biotechnology and Drug Development](#)

## Mentoring

- [Entering Mentoring: A Seminar to Train a New Generation of Scientists](#)
- [Adviser, Teacher, Role Model, Friend: On Being a Mentor to Students in Science and Engineering](#)



# Stanford opportunities and resources



Below are a subset of the various opportunities and resources available around campus. For a more comprehensive student-generated list, we would like to direct you to the [BioAIMS resources page](#). BioAIMS maintains a carefully curated list of Stanford groups, offices, and programs that are available to support Biosciences students through their graduate experience.

## Fellowships

[Student-curated list of funding opportunities](#)

Stanford Fellowships

- [Bio-X](#)
- [Stanford Interdisciplinary Graduate Fellowship \(SIGF\)](#)
- [DARE: Diversifying Academia, Recruiting Excellence](#)
- [Gerald J. Lieberman Fellowship](#)

Outside Fellowships

- [Funding Information for PhD students](#)
- [NSF GRFP](#)
- [NDSEG](#)
- [NRSA Predoctoral Fellowship \(F31\)](#)

## Outreach

- [Diversity outreach and engagement](#)
- [Future Advancers of Science and Technology](#)
- [Science Bus](#)
- [Splash!](#)
- [East Palo Alto Tennis and Tutoring](#)
- [East Palo Alto Stanford Academy](#)
- [Stanford Institutes of Medicine Summer Research \(SIMR\) Program](#)
- [SSRP-Amgen Scholars Program](#)

## Campus Involvement

- [ASSU / GSC](#)
- [SBSA](#)
- [BioAIMS](#)
- [ADVANCE](#)

## Professional Development

- [CEO Internship Program](#)
- [BioSci Careers](#)
- [d.school](#)
- [Ignite](#)
- [StartX](#)
- [SPARK](#)

## Teaching

- [Center for Teaching and Learning](#)

## Writing

- [Biosciences Grant Writing Academy](#)
- [Hume Center for Writing and Speaking](#)

## Sports

- [Red Zone \(free tickets!\)](#)
- [Stanford Intramurals](#)

# Useful Stanford websites

## Offices

Office	Phone	Website	Location
Stanford Biosciences Student Association		<a href="http://sbsa.stanford.edu">http://sbsa.stanford.edu</a>	
BioAIMS		<a href="https://www.bioaims.com/">https://www.bioaims.com/</a>	
Office of Graduate Education, Stanford Biosciences		<a href="https://biosciences.stanford.edu/contact/office-of-graduate-education/">https://biosciences.stanford.edu/contact/office-of-graduate-education/</a>	
Graduate Life Office (GLO)	650-736-7078	<a href="https://glo.stanford.edu/">https://glo.stanford.edu/</a>	750 Escondido Rd, Suite 207
Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education (VPGE)	650-736-0775	<a href="https://vpge.stanford.edu/">https://vpge.stanford.edu/</a>	450 Jane Stanford Way, Building 310
Graduate Student Council		<a href="https://assu.stanford.edu/gsc">https://assu.stanford.edu/gsc</a>	
BioSci Careers	650-721-1893	<a href="https://med.stanford.edu/bioscicareers.html">https://med.stanford.edu/bioscicareers.html</a>	MSOB, 1265 Welch Road, Suite 100
Cardinal Careers	650-723-0992	<a href="https://haas.stanford.edu/resources/students/public-service-careers/public-service-careers-advising">https://haas.stanford.edu/resources/students/public-service-careers/public-service-careers-advising</a>	562 Salvatierra Walk
Vaden Health Center	650-498-2336	<a href="http://vaden.stanford.edu/">http://vaden.stanford.edu/</a>	866 Campus Dr.
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)	650-723-3785	<a href="http://vaden.stanford.edu/caps/">http://vaden.stanford.edu/caps/</a>	866 Campus Dr. 2nd Floor
Student Financial Services	650-723-2772	<a href="http://fingate.stanford.edu/">http://fingate.stanford.edu/</a>	632 Serra St Suite 150
Housing	650-725-1600	<a href="https://rde.stanford.edu/studenthousing">https://rde.stanford.edu/studenthousing</a>	565 Cowell Lane
Registrar	866-993-7772	<a href="http://registrar.stanford.edu/">http://registrar.stanford.edu/</a>	Tresidder Union, 459 Lagunita Drive
ID Cards	650-498-2273	<a href="https://uit.stanford.edu/service/campuscard/cardoffice">https://uit.stanford.edu/service/campuscard/cardoffice</a>	Tresidder Union, 459 Lagunita Dr.
Lane Medical Library	650-723-6831	<a href="http://lane.stanford.edu/">http://lane.stanford.edu/</a>	300 Pasteur Drive, Rm L109
Parking and Transportation	650-723-9362	<a href="http://transportation.stanford.edu/">http://transportation.stanford.edu/</a>	415 Broadway, Redwood City

## General

Biosciences: Incoming and new students	<a href="https://biosciences.stanford.edu/current-students/incoming-new-students/">https://biosciences.stanford.edu/current-students/incoming-new-students/</a>
Biosciences: Events	<a href="http://biosciences.stanford.edu/events/">http://biosciences.stanford.edu/events/</a>
VPGE: Gateway for New Graduate Students	<a href="https://vpge.stanford.edu/gradgateway">https://vpge.stanford.edu/gradgateway</a>
Financial Aid Support Programs	<a href="https://financialaid.stanford.edu/grad/funding/index.html">https://financialaid.stanford.edu/grad/funding/index.html</a>
Student Services Administrators	<a href="https://biosciences.stanford.edu/contact/home-programs/">https://biosciences.stanford.edu/contact/home-programs/</a>
School of Medicine Diversity	<a href="https://med.stanford.edu/diversity/programs.html">https://med.stanford.edu/diversity/programs.html</a>
Mental Health and Well-Being Resources	<a href="https://vaden.stanford.edu/well-being">https://vaden.stanford.edu/well-being</a>

# Racial Justice Resources

## BioAIMS Allyship Toolkit

BioAIMS has created a living [document of resources](#) for the continued self-education of allies towards more effective allyship.

## OGE Resources to Center Black Community Needs

The Office of Graduate Education (OGE) has [created a resource](#) for faculty and staff to engage in difficult conversations and better support students, postdocs, and research staff.

## Resources Offered by Black Leadership in ASSU

- [Anti-racism resources for white people](#): Resource guide compiled by Sarah Sophie Flicker and Alyssa Klein for white people to deepen their anti-racist work.
- [Confronting white supremacy](#): Educational resource sheet put together by educators to discuss and dismantle white supremacy in the classroom.
- [Resource Hub for Black History and Activism](#): Google Drive compiled by Charles Preston, filled with books and other important work by Black activists and readings on a range of topics.
- [Beyond the Hashtag](#): How to Take Anti-Racist Action in Your Life: Article written by Zyahna Bryant about how to take steps towards non-performative activism and anti-racist actions.

## D-CORE

The [Stanford SOM Diversity Center of Representation and Empowerment \(D-CORE\)](#) in the Lane Library serves as a physical space for community members who want and need to celebrate their identity and serves to connect trainees, build community, and reduce isolation. In partnership with the ADVANCE Summer Institute, Lane Library has installed a Racial Justice Library in the D-CORE.

## University Resources

- [Centers for Equity, Community, and Leadership](#) (ECL) provide a gateway to intellectual, cultural and leadership opportunities for all Stanford students through various community centers.
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) is available regardless of location. CAPS and the School of Medicine Mental Health Team offer crisis counseling for urgent needs. Appointments are available. Clinicians are always on call, even after hours, at (650) 723-3785.
- The [Graduate Life Office](#) is available during office hours at 650-736-7078, or 24/7 at (650) 723-8222, pager ID number 25085.
- The [Bridge Peer Counseling Center](#) offers counseling by trained students 24/7 at 650-723-3392.
- [Well-being coaching and drop-in community support hours](#) 15, 30, and 60-minute support sessions with Well-Being at Stanford Coaches
- [Connect and Recharge](#) groups are being offered to support faculty, trainees and staff throughout the School of Medicine, Stanford Health Care and Stanford Children's Health who feel stressed, struggling with anxiety, sleep, or feeling isolated.
- The [Office for Religious Life](#) offers spiritual guidance for students at 650-723-1762.
- If you are aware of someone in distress, contact CAPS or the [Office of the Dean of Students](#).

# Finances

## Mind over Money

Stanford Student Affairs runs [Mind Over Money](#), a program with tools and resources for financial literacy.

## National Science Foundation Fellowships

The [NSF Pre-Doctoral Graduate Research Fellowship](#) is a three-year prestigious, nationally-competitive (about 10% of applicants are successful) fellowship. **Everyone who is eligible should apply!** Ph.D. students may apply during the first or second year of their Ph.D. Citizenship requirements apply. For more information, application details, and eligibility requirements, see the website.

We would also recommend anyone who is eligible to apply for the [National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate \(NDSEG\) Fellowship](#).

## Estimated Taxes

If taxes are not withheld from your stipend (likely they are not), you will need to pay quarterly estimated taxes to the [IRS](#). Check with your [Student Services Administrator](#) to determine how to estimate your quarterly taxes.

Learn about how to pay taxes on your grad student stipend at [Personal Finance for PhDs](#). The Bechtel International Center has [information for international students](#).

## Banking

The closest ATM to the School of Medicine campus is located near the Stanford Hospital cafeteria, with ATMs for both the Stanford Credit Union and Wells Fargo. There is a small branch office of the Stanford Credit Union near the Emergency Room entrance to the Stanford Hospital.

Further afield, the Stanford Credit Union and Wells Fargo both have locations in Tresidder Union. Bank of America also has ATMs at Tresidder (see campus map). There is also a Wells Fargo in the Sharon Heights shopping center (near off-campus apartments) on Sharon Park Drive, and a Bank of America one block down.

Other locations include\*:

### **Bank of America**

395 Quarry Road  
Palo Alto, CA 94301  
(650) 853-5831

### **First National Bank**

1215 El Camino Real  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
(650) 470-8888

### **Bank of the West**

414 S. California Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94301  
(650) 327-6000

### **Chase**

300 Hamilton Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94301  
(650) 853-2602

\*This does not constitute an endorsement by SBSA

## **Emergency Aid and Special Grants**

For students dealing with challenging financial situations, Stanford offers several support programs including emergency grants, family grants, and cash advances (could be helpful for students on salary, who do not get paid until a few weeks after the quarter starts). More information about these programs can be found here:

<https://financialaid.stanford.edu/grad/funding/index.html>

<https://biosciences.stanford.edu/current-students/resources/hardship-program/>

# Housing

## Sticker shock

Housing is expensive here. Why? Essentially, there are a lot of people with a lot of money here, and a limited supply of housing options. The tech industry is booming, and the standard salaries for most employees are \$80k and upwards, so the base salary of other applicants for apartments in the area is quite high. In addition to high salaries, there are many people who have enormous additional income from investments and stock from companies before they were publicly traded. Also, Bay Area real estate is viewed as a "safe investment" from people abroad, so many foreigners will pay full cash price up-front for residential property. These cash offers often out-compete Bay Area residents who would otherwise buy these houses and properties, so those people continue to rent. Additionally, due to some very vocal community advocates who oppose new housing developments, the population growth along the whole peninsula has dramatically outpaced the supply of new housing. What this means for you: Housing is very expensive, and very competitive.

## Apply for on campus or off campus housing

Unlike many peer institutions, Stanford has numerous and affordable campus [housing options](#) and it is a popular choice among graduate students. All housing are apartments, commonly studios or 2-4 bedrooms, and equipped with a full kitchen and bathroom (not at all like undergrad dorms!). They come fully furnished, but it's possible to disassemble the bed it comes with to use your own, and to add additional furniture. All incoming students are guaranteed housing their first year if they check the "live anywhere" box on the application. You can apply with a roommate, or Stanford will assign you a roommate.

There are some [off-campus Stanford subsidized apartments](#), but with the completion of the construction of Escondido Village Graduate Residences (EVGR), Stanford's newest on-campus building, off-campus housing is expected to be phased out. Preference for off-campus housing is given to returning students already residing in off-campus housing, but renewal for these contracts will be unavailable starting in 2022.

## Family housing: what if I have a spouse or partner and/ or children?

Stanford also has housing options if you have a significant other and/ or children. If your significant other is not affiliated with Stanford, you are both still eligible to apply for this option. Many of the designated couples and family housing units are in Escondido Village. If you have children, there are separate move-in dates for you that coordinate with local school schedules. For couples with children there is sufficient space and you can expect to be assigned to on campus housing within a courtyard. Please note, however, that a change in relationship or family status does not change your priority with respect to housing. Therefore if you lose your priority status by choosing to live off campus when you arrive you will not have guaranteed housing even if you have children or change your relationship status.

Family housing on Stanford campus is one of the highlights of graduate school for most students with children. The housing is set up to provide a safe and fun play area for children and to foster a community among families. Housing surrounds a gated courtyard with a playground and grassy area where children play throughout the day. Most children find plenty of playmates their age and the diversity of families living here results in a strong support network for student families. There are a good number of families with stay at home parents as well as nannies, so children are playing in the courtyard all day long. With many families out, parents and nannies have someone to chat with while watching their children. Make sure you meet your community associate (CA) soon after moving in so that you can get connected into the community.

## Deadlines

As soon as you are accepted as a new student at Stanford and decide to attend, fill out the housing application through Axess. Housing selection is a lottery for ALL graduate students after the application date. **This year, the deadline was May 6th, 2021.**

Useful links:

<https://rde.stanford.edu/studenthousing/housing-options>

<https://rde.stanford.edu/studenthousing/assignments-contracts>

<https://web.stanford.edu/dept/rde/cgi-bin/drupal/rde/calendar/events/list/>

## Have roommates

The price of a studio or 1 bedroom, whether it's on campus or off campus, comes with a \$\$\$ premium. Living with at least one other roommate dramatically reduces your rent and utilities costs. Stanford will assign a roommate to you through campus housing, but if you have someone in mind and you follow all the application instructions, you can choose your roommate. Most Stanford graduate students are pretty great, and make wonderful roommates. Even with roommates through campus housing, your contract is only for you. Your rent payments and housing status are unaffected by any personal or financial decisions your roommate makes. Outside of Stanford, there are many young working professionals who are open to having a Stanford grad student as a roommate.

For some unknown reason, Stanford will not tell you who your roommate is, meaning you cannot contact them before you get there. You can try giving Housing permission to pass along your contact information to your roommate. If you need to do any shopping for kitchen or communal items, consider waiting until you arrive in case your roommate already has some items. If you choose to apply with a specific roommate (or group of roommates), you can apply for gender-neutral housing if the group is made up of different genders. You will need to coordinate with your group so that your housing application lists the same housing preferences in the same order, as you will all be assigned the same lottery number.

## Living off-campus: how to find housing

If you elect to live off campus, Craigslist, Zillow, Padmapper, and SUpost (Stanford-affiliated version of Craigslist) are good places to start your search. Many departments have listservs where it is common for people to inquire about housing wanted and housing offered. Additionally, there is a single listserv for bioscience students in all of the home programs.

The time frame for off campus availability and move-in dates fluctuates wildly. Many apartment complexes will not hold housing for which you've been approved for longer than a few weeks, which can make it difficult to plan months in advance. Summer and early fall is also generally when housing prices are at a peak. A common alternative is to sublet an open room in a house or apartment with an ongoing lease. While this option can offer much more flexibility depending on availability, it is advised to be prudent about the legality and liability of any particular scenario. If the option to sign a formal written lease with consent of the management company is not made available to you, that's a red flag that something sketchy might be happening which could leave you vulnerable to potentially expensive and inconvenient legal liabilities. Rent at your own risk.

## Living off-campus: transportation options

If you elect to live off campus and outside of comfortable biking range, try to look for a place near the Caltrain line. Caltrain is the main form of public transportation on the peninsula (BART connects SFO airport, San

Francisco, and the East Bay). Stanford offers free Caltrain passes to [eligible](#) students who live off campus. You can bring your bike on the Caltrain, and there is also a free shuttle system called the [Marguerite](#) that circulates between the Palo Alto Caltrain station and the Stanford campus.

[http://transportation.stanford.edu/alt\\_transportation/EcoPass.shtml](http://transportation.stanford.edu/alt_transportation/EcoPass.shtml)

## **Statement of support letter from your department**

Although your stipend may seem meager, your full support package is quite impressive. Stanford is paying full tuition, fees, and health insurance for you, which totals to about \$80 - 90,000. When you apply for an apartment, they will often ask for proof that your income is 3x the monthly rent. Many landlords and rental companies don't "get" what being a graduate student means, where your money comes from, and where it goes. You can request a "letter of support" from your department that details your full compensation package, which will increase your chances of your application being accepted.

## **Credit score**

It is common for landlords and rental companies to run a credit check with your application. Do everything you can to improve your credit score (e.g. refinance your student loan payments favorably, reduce your credit card debt, request an increase in your credit limit).

Remember, you are able to get a free copy of your credit report every 12 months:

<https://www.ftc.gov/faq/consumer-protection/get-my-free-credit-report>.

## **Pets**

Pets are fuzzy and adorable, but they can make finding an apartment a huge pain. Stanford campus housing does not allow pets at all (with the exception of service animals), but you will find that many students have pets. However, keep in mind that housing does not allow you to have members outside of your household enter your residence to pet-sit. Although it is possible to find off campus housing where pets are allowed, there are additional monetary premiums you will pay. Monthly rent tends to be higher for places that allow pets, and there are additional cleaning/ damage deposits required. They can also limit your potential roommate pool because many people are allergic. In addition to the other costs of pet ownership (food, toys, treats, additional cleaning, vet bills, and time), please take the time to consider whether pet ownership would fit into your lifestyle as a graduate student.



# Transportation

## Transportation at Stanford

**Paying for Public Transport:** Clipper® is an all-in-one transit card that keeps track of any passes, discount tickets, ride books and cash value that you load onto it, while applying all applicable fares, discounts and transfer rules. This lets you customize your card for your own transit needs. The Clipper card can hold multiple passes, ride books or tickets (which are specific to the transit system being used), as well as up to \$300 in cash value at one time. Cash value on your Clipper card can be used to ride any participating transit system (includes Caltrain, BART, SamTrans, VTA, SFMTA, AC Transit, Golden Gate Ferry, San Francisco Bay Ferry). The Clipper card can now also be stored directly on your phone. Visit the Clipper card website (<https://www.clippercard.com>) for more details.

**IMPORTANT:** Many stations do not have Clipper reload machines, and Clipper machines in general take a notoriously long time to process payment. Adding value online will take **1 or 2 days** to process. Setting up Autoload is heavily recommended - your Clipper card will immediately reload as soon as your balance falls under \$10, so you never have to worry about how much value you have left.

**Gas:** There is nothing better to welcome you to California than gas prices at \$4 plus per gallon. Generally, the best gas prices are in Mountain View (south on El Camino) or in Redwood City (north on El Camino). There are even cheaper prices in Sunnyvale (south of campus), but it's farther away than the other two cities.

**Parking:** All vehicles parked on campus are required to have a parking permit. There are day passes for visitor parking and also permits for those living on campus. There are also metered spots near the Med School campus in Parking Structure 1, the LKSC parking lot, and near the Cantor Arts Center. You can check out the current parking permit rates online at <https://transportation.stanford.edu/parking>. All permits, including daily permits, can be purchased online.

If you live off campus, you can purchase A or C parking permits, which allow you to park in designated spots around campus. If you only drive to work occasionally (a few times a month or less) you can purchase daily permits for parking in A or C spots. If you live on campus, you will most likely be purchasing ES parking permits around your residence.

**Car Free Incentives:** If you commute from off campus but do not plan on buying a parking pass you can join the Commute Club (<https://transportation.stanford.edu/commute-club>). It rewards people who find alternative forms of transportation up to \$300 a year in Clean Air Cash or Carpool Credit.

## Getting Around Campus

**Bikes:** Stanford has a very big biking culture, as you'll soon find out when you try to cross the street when classes are changing. The spread of academic buildings and residences prompts most graduate students to purchase bikes, to speed up the 25 minute walk from their apartment. There are several places to get bikes, including the Stanford Campus Bike Shop at Tressider Union, The Bike Connection on El Camino, and Cardinal Bikes on El Camino. Parking & Transportation Services lists a variety of places to purchase new and used bikes, as well as a host of other good info at <https://transportation.stanford.edu/bicycle>. Be sure to note that you're required to register your bike at the P&TS office. **Always lock your bike** securely to a bike rack, preferably with a U-lock.

**Shuttle:** Stanford's free Marguerite shuttle system also covers the entire campus in a dense mesh of routes. You're never more than a five-minute walk from a stop. Check out the website for specific times, route details, etc. <https://transportation.stanford.edu/marguerite>.

Note: Be sure to check out the Shopping Express route, which runs to the San Antonio Shopping Center regularly seven days a week. And if you live in Menlo Park there are two shuttles that run there during normal working hours (SMP and Bohannon).

## Getting Around the Bay

**Caltrain:** Caltrain provides commuter rail service along the San Francisco Peninsula, through the South Bay to San Jose and Gilroy. There is a convenient stop near University Ave in Palo Alto that you can get to easily via Stanford's Marguerite shuttle. If you are living off-campus, apply for Stanford's Pilot Go Pass program for unlimited travel on Caltrain: <https://transportation.stanford.edu/pilotgopass/>, but keep in mind that this program is slated to end at the end of 2021.

**Buses:** Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) bus system has a Route 22 that runs along El Camino from Menlo Park to San Jose. You can catch the bus at the Palo Alto Transit Station and take it to Showers Dr. to get to the San Antonio Shopping Center (about a 20 min ride) – see shopping needs section. The 22 bus runs about every 10-12 min. Check out the website for specific details (<https://www.vta.org/go/routes>).

SamTrans has 48 bus routes that run through San Mateo County, some into San Francisco (airport) and Palo Alto.

**Car Rentals:** If you find yourself in need of a car, you can rent at the Enterprise rental office on campus. They have a discount for Stanford students. Their address is 360 Oak Road, Stanford, CA 94305-4502, (650) 833-8060. They are located *inside Parking Structure 5* (look on a Stanford campus map), next to the Marguerite Shuttle Office. Open Monday through Friday: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday: 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Check out their website for more info. (<https://transportation.stanford.edu/enterprise>)

**Zipcar:** Zipcar has a strong presence at Stanford, with 50 cars at 18 locations around campus. For brief, occasional use of cars, such as trips across the bay, into San Francisco, or into Napa, Zipcar is a pretty safe bet. More information can be found at the Parking and Transportation Services website. (<https://transportation.stanford.edu/zipcar-stanford>)

**BART:** Bay Area Rapid Transit is a rail system that starts at Millbrae and runs through downtown SF and to the East Bay. Main connection between BART and Caltrain is at Millbrae Station, connect here to take BART to the San Francisco Airport (SFO).

## Getting to the Airport

**SuperShuttle:** Shared ride service to nearby airports. Stanford has a student discount for \$6 off each way when a reservation is made online. Use code: T9X58

# Shopping needs

## Shopping Malls

### Stanford Shopping Center

This mall is the closest but is also the priciest. <https://www.simon.com/mall/stanford-shopping-center>

Major Stores: Nordstrom, Bloomingdales, Macy's (and Macy's Mens), Neiman Marcus

Other Stores of Interest: Crate & Barrel, Gap, Apple Store, Abercrombie, JCrew, Urban Outfitters

Directions: Right next to the hospital/medical school. Can take the Marguerite A Line shuttle. On the corner of El Camino and Quarry Rd and El Camino and Sand Hill Rd.

### Hillsdale Shopping Center

This shopping center is smaller than the Stanford Shopping Center with a larger selection of more moderately priced stores. It is located north of campus off Hwy 101 at Hillsdale Blvd and El Camino. <https://hillsdale.com/>

### Valley Fair Shopping Center

It is twice the size of Stanford Shopping Center with a wide range of stores from high-end to regular stores. It is located south of campus in San Jose. <https://www.westfield.com/valleyfair>

### San Antonio Shopping Center

This place is a "one-stop shopping" kind of place – ideal for setting up house.

Stores: Wal-Mart, Target, Safeway, Trader Joe's, The Milk Pail, Ross, and Kohl's.

Directions: From any campus exit on El Camino, turn right on El Camino and go 3-4 miles (south). For the best entrance to Wal-Mart and Target, make a left on Showers Dr. (the first street/traffic light past San Antonio and Whole Foods on the right hand corner). Target will be on your right and Wal-Mart (and all other stores) will be on your left. Safeway is on California St. (Make a left at the first traffic light on Showers Dr. onto California St.).

## Bed Linens and Housewares

### Bed, Bath, & Beyond

There are two Bed, Bath, & Beyond locations close by. The one in Mountain View is closest for those living in EV or Rains. If you live on the west side of campus, the Redwood City one is closer.

#### Mountain View

Hours: Open daily from 9 am - 9 pm

Directions: Go south on El Camino for 2 miles, Turn left onto W Charleston Rd (at a major traffic light, Ford and Volvo car dealerships on the right corner). Go for about 2 miles and Bed, Bath, & Beyond will be in a shopping center on the left before Hwy 101

#### Redwood City

Hours: Mon – Sat 9 am – 9pm, Sun 9 am – 7 pm

Directions: Go north on El Camino for 4 miles. Store will be on your left just past the underpass.

### IKEA

Great for picking up extra furniture like bookcases, desks, chairs, etc. Essentially, you have to assemble

everything yourself.

Store Hours: Open Daily 10 am - 9 pm

Directions: From campus take University Avenue (Palm Drive turns into University after you cross over El Camino) all the way through Palo Alto (about 2 miles) and cross over Hwy 101. Turn right on Donohoe Street and continue on E. Bayshore Rd. IKEA will be on your right.

Note: Best Buy and Office Depot are across the street in the Ravenswood Shopping Center.

## **Grocery Stores**

### **Safeway**

This is the cheapest grocery store and there are lots of locations. Listed below is the closest one. However, if you live in the Sharon Heights neighborhood or on-campus in Lyman, there is a closer but smaller Safeway on Sharon Park Drive (aka “secret Safeway”). Be sure to get a Safeway card at customer service desk or when checking out to receive the discount/sale prices.

Hours: Open 24 hrs

Directions: Go north on El Camino (less than 1 mile past Stanford Shopping Center), Safeway will be on left. To enter, turn left on Middle Ave (at a traffic light with Shell gas station on the left corner).

Note: There is a Staples across the street if you need office supplies.

### **Trader Joe’s**

Mixed goods store with primarily dried goods and really good frozen foods and snacks. Their produce is pretty hit or miss. It is also a good place for cheap wine. Locations in Town & Country (very close to downtown Palo Alto), San Antonio Shopping Center, and Menlo Park.

### **The Milk Pail**

A European-style open-air market with great (and cheap!) produce, cheeses, breads, etc. (A must try!) It is located across the street from Safeway in the San Antonio Shopping Center on California Street.

### **Whole Foods**

This is a medium-to-pricey organic grocery store located in downtown Palo Alto. They have lots of great fresh produce, breads, and meats. They also have a pretty thorough beer and wine selection.

Hours: Open daily from 8 am to 10 pm

Directions: From campus, take University Ave to Emerson St. (the second street after the underpass) and turn right. Whole Foods is at the end of the third block, at the corner of Emerson and Homer.

### **Sigona’s Farmers Market**

This is a small market with great fresh produce and a great selection of dried fruits and nuts located in the Street Market Area of the Stanford Shopping Center (next to Schaub’s Meat, Fish, & Poultry).

Hours: Mon-Sat 9 am - 7:30 pm, Sun 9 am - 6:30 pm

### **Costco**

This is a wholesale retailer similar to Sam’s Club. A membership is required (can split between two people) and items are primarily sold in bulk. I don’t think you would use Costco on a frequent basis, but it would definitely be good if you were planning to throw a big party or something. You can also purchase items like beds, desks, TVs, etc. here, and also fill up on gas.

### Mountain View

Hours: Mon-Fri 9 am - 8:30 pm, Sat-Sun 9 am - 7 pm

Directions: Take El Camino south to Rengstorff (about 4 miles). Make a left on Rengstorff, and Costco will be in a shopping center on the left immediately before Hwy 101.

### Redwood City

Hours: Mon-Fri 9 am - 8:30 pm, Sat-Sun 9 am - 7 pm

Directions: Take El Camino north towards Woodside Rd (about 4.5 miles). Turn right on Laurel St., then left onto the ramp for Woodside Rd. Take a right on Middlefield Rd, and Costco will be on the right.

## **Farmers Markets**

### **Downtown Palo Alto**

Saturdays 8 am - 12 pm, year-round

Gilman Street, between Hamilton Ave and Forest Ave, behind the Downtown Post Office.

<https://www.pafarmersmarket.org/>

### **California Ave**

Sundays 9 am - 1 pm, year-round

California Avenue, between El Camino and Birch St.

<https://uvfm.org/palo-alto-sundays>

### **Menlo Park**

Sundays 9 am - 1 pm, year-round

Chestnut Street, between Santa Cruz Ave. & Menlo Ave.

<https://www.localharvest.org/menlo-park-farmers-market-M3662>

## **Electronics**

### **Best Buy**

Hours: Mon-Sat 10 am - 9 pm, Sun 11 am - 7 pm

Directions: Go south on El Camino for 2 miles, Turn left onto W Charleston Rd (at a major traffic light, Ford and Volvo car dealerships on the right corner). Go for about 2 miles and Best Buy will be in a shopping center on the left before Hwy 101

## **Office Supplies**

### **Staples**

Hours: Mon - Fri 7 am-9 pm, Sat 9 am-7 pm, Sun 10 am-6 pm

Directions: Go north on El Camino for about 1 mile. Staples will be on your right, across from the Safeway.