

# How to Live and Entertain Yourself on a Student Budget

Everyone knows that entering graduate school means rearranging/reorganizing how you live, especially when it comes to your finances. The following information is provided as a beginning step on how to live on a student budget. There is much more information out there...you just need to make sure to look for it.

## Entertainment

The biggest piece of advice for entertaining yourself on a student budget: **LOOK FOR FREE EVENTS!!**

Or if free isn't in the picture...always look for discounted tickets or prices. Most student sports or theater is offered at discount prices or free to students. Happy hours are good for those that wish to hit the bar scene but don't want to spend a lot of money and for the more cultured types art districts, museums, gardens often hold free day events.

Where to go to find reasonably priced entertainment in Colorado:

- Colorado-for-Free: <http://colorado-for-free.com/index.htm>
- Denver's ArtDistrict: <http://www.artdistrictonsantafe.com/>
- Westword: [www.westword.com](http://www.westword.com)
- Metromix: <http://denver.metromix.com/events>
- Free-Attractions.com: [http://www.free-attractions.com/state\\_pages/colorado.htm](http://www.free-attractions.com/state_pages/colorado.htm)

Other pieces of advice:

- Always carry your student ID with you and ask about any student discounts.
- Keep your ears open. Events are always being advertised on TV and radio. But also use your fellow classmates to find out about events you may have never thought about looking up.
- Denver Center Performing Arts Student discount: If you go to the box office roughly 1 hour before a performance begins they occasionally will sell students \$10 tickets to shows with your student ID.

## Transportation

Regional Transportation District (RTD)

<http://www.rtd-denver.com>

- Bus/Lightrail/Skyride to DIA/Access-a-Ride
- Be sure to check with your program to see if they offer special student discounts and/or free RTD passes

## Housing

It is important to determine what you need versus what you want but can live without. If you would prefer to be close to the University, you may decide upon a smaller apartment compared to a larger apartment further away. Is location your priority, or the apartment size? Be honest with yourself and with a little luck you'll find a place that is perfect for you. Here is a list of some questions you may want to ask yourself to help determine what kind of place you want to live:

- Do you need a place within walking distance of campus?
- How far are you willing to commute to campus every day?
- Will you consider taking the bus if you can save money on rent?
- What kind of housing do you want? An apartment, house, or something else?
- How much are you willing to spend on housing every month?
- How long are you planning to occupy this apartment?
- What type of lease is right for your situation?
- Do you need someone to co-sign your lease? Who?
- Do you need an option to sublet your apartment, or will you stay for the entire lease?
- Do you want the utilities to be included in the rent?
- Do you have a budget in place for other housing costs, like a telephone, cable TV, internet, parking, electricity, and other costs?
- Do you need a very quiet place to study?
- How big do you want the bedrooms to be?
- Do you want a place for a dining room table?
- Do you like hardwood floors or carpets?
- If a place is unfurnished, do you have a plan for getting basic furnishings?
- Do you want a balcony, deck or yard?
- What is the laundry situation? Are there hook-ups or are they provided?
- Are you willing to do minor maintenance, yard work or snow removal?
- Do you need storage space?
- Do you need a parking space?
- Do you need a non-smoking environment?
- Do you require easy access to amenities (e.g., a drug store for regular medication refills)?
- Do you want to live alone or with roommates?
- How many roommates? Who are they?
- Will they be available to help you look for a place?
- Do you need an accommodation that allows pets?
- How important are amenities like a dishwasher, air conditioning, elevator, swimming pool or workout facilities?

The more questions you ask, the fewer surprises you will have later!

Most universities offer some housing assistance so be sure to check out program websites to see if they have special links to student housing and/or companies that work with students looking for housing.