

# WUSA Housing Report

A Summary **May 2021**

## Overview of Actors

### Provincial Government

Currently limits inclusionary zoning which would help rent prices in student areas.

### Regional Government

Affordable housing is not targeted to students, no students were mentioned in housing plans & students were not consulted.

### Municipal Government

Currently no plans for affordable housing, wants Northdale (university neighborhood) to be mixed-use which can lead to gentrification.

### Developers and Landlords

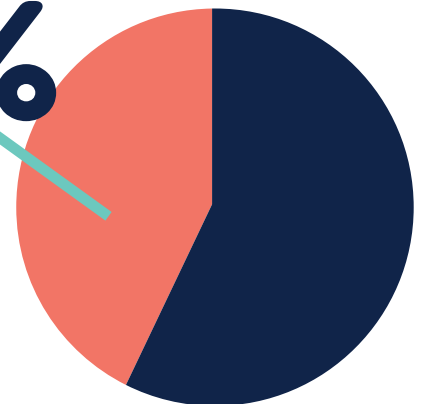
24% of Waterloo Housing Stock is owned by 5 landlords, students pay 10% more in rent than non-student households do.

### University Housing System

Regional Councillor proposed that the university partner with an off-campus private developer to ensure safe/credible housing, but the university administration did not consider this.

# 42%

of all student specific housing in Canada is located in the City of Waterloo.



# Actions by WUSA



**Had success** advocating in conjunction with other student groups to the provincial government for the creation of the Ontario Standard Lease, which is now legally required for landlords to use.



**Funds a legal service** available to students who may need legal help with a housing concern.



**Sits on the Town and Gown Committee** which has ties to the municipal government.

# Enforcement Measures

## Landlord and Tenant Board

Exclusive jurisdiction over tenant matters in the province, costs \$50 to file a complaint and has long wait times to process cases.

## Rental Housing Enforcement Unit

Enforces the provincial Residential Tenancies Act and takes complaint by phone.

## City of Waterloo By-Law Enforcement

Will inspect a rental unit for maintenance issues at no cost, but must be invited by a current tenant. Students have been less likely to request inspections in the past.

# Supply, Demand & Homelessness

Canadian universities have been increasing enrollment in recent years, causing an influx of students to campus towns.

There are no homeless shelters in the City of Waterloo (Kitchener & Cambridge shelters often at overcapacity).

Rental rates have been increasing for years while more affordable housing has not been built.

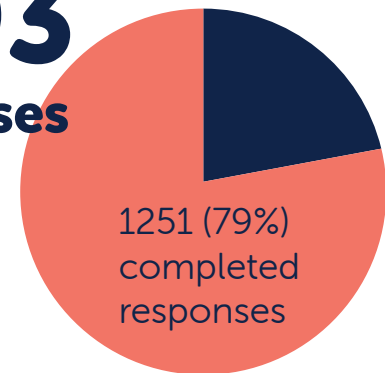
An estimated 4% of post-secondary students in Canada experience homelessness.

# Survey Overview

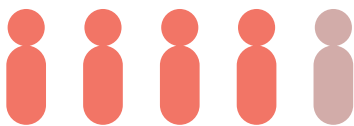
Goal: determine difficulties and come up with ways WUSA can further support safe and affordable housing for students.

Most students are in co-op and live in Waterloo not with their family.

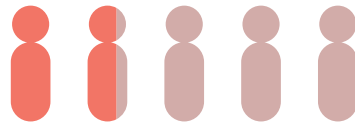
**1593**  
responses



# Student Satisfaction



**80%** of respondents had at least 1 major maintenance issue per term.

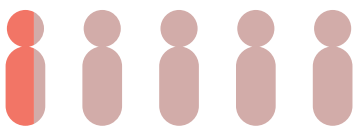


**35%** of respondents spend between 51-80% of their monthly budget on housing.

# Common Maintenance Issues

1. Lack of Heating/Ventilation (39%)
2. Poor Water Quality (38%)
3. Pests (31%)

# Student Behaviour



**15%** of students knew their landlord used the Ontario standard lease



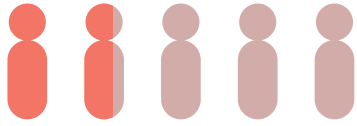
**63%** of students never accessed housing or legal services.

# Top Factors When Signing a Lease

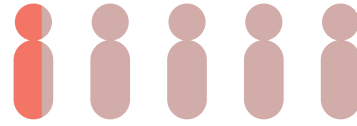
1. Cost (72.5%)
2. Location (70%)
3. Included Utilities (63%)
4. Cleanliness (61%)

# Additional Concerns

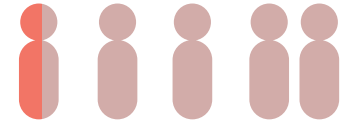
During COVID-19...



**35%** of respondents moved in with family.




**16%** of respondents moved out but were still paying rent.



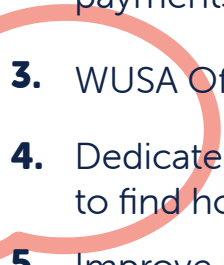
**11%** of respondents of students terminated their leases (more students wanted to but were not allowed).

## Recommendations

### Advocacy on Municipal and Provincial Levels

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1. Regulation of 3-year leases w/ 1 year termination clauses clauses often put students at a disadvantage and allow penalties, withholding of deposits, and other fees to be incurred.
  2. Closing landlord dispute process loopholes allow students to file a maintenance or lease complaint with the appropriate authorities before they move in to preemptively enforce regulations before students move in.

### Awareness Campaign for Students

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1. Promotion of the rental housing support portal available at the City of Waterloo website.
  2. Promotion of the Ontario trillium benefit (provides quarterly payments to help with housing costs).
  3. WUSA Off-Campus housing events.
  4. Dedicated webpage with tenant rights information, FAQs, where to find housing, resources for legal aid, etc.
  5. Improve usability of UWaterloo Off-campus housing website.