

# Housing Efficiency Cheat Sheet

To help CBOs and VPs of Finance and Administration identify areas of greatest opportunity to make housing more efficient, the Business Affairs Forum has compiled a “cheat sheet” of replicable tactics from institutions that have successfully decreased operating costs and increased revenue. Each tactic is evaluated on two fronts: revenue potential and difficulty of implementation. Revenue potential ranges from low (\$) to high (\$\$\$). Implementation difficulty ranges from low (1) to high (3).

	<b>Tactic</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Financial Impact</b>	<b>Implementation Difficulty</b>
<b>Occupancy Rates</b>	<p><b>Fill New Facilities First</b> Channel housing applications to new facilities so that newest facilities may fill first.</p>	One institution channels housing applications to new facilities to ensure they fill first. This practice safeguards less-known facilities from low occupancy rates.	\$\$	1
	<p><b>Establish Learning-Living Communities</b> Build residential communities centered around a theme, such as an honors dorm, a foreign language house, or civic/social leadership hall in order to build a stronger community through common interests and learning.</p>	Learning-living communities help encourage some students to live on-campus longer, generating additional rental revenue to the institution. Additionally, many institutions also find that learning-living communities result in higher GPAs and greater retention rates for students.	\$\$	2
	<p><b>Craft Residency Requirements</b> Require students to live in university housing for at least one year. Institutions that maintain residency requirements point out that the policy benefits both students and the school.</p>	Residency requirements can increase the number of students living in on-campus facilities, thus increasing total rental revenue for the institution. Residency requirements also ensure the institution reaches capacity for all available residential facilities. Additionally, they can encourage students to establish relationships with a wide and diverse group of peers and improve retention from year to year. One institution found that retention for students who live on campus for at least one year is 85-90%, compared to 55-60% for students who do not live on campus for at least one year. However, some caution that residency policies may not always provide financial gain since they require an institution to plan for temporary and overflow housing options that may have otherwise been unnecessary.	\$\$	1
	<p><b>Charge Differential Housing Rates</b> Charge differential rates for differential services, such as single rooms, in-suite kitchenettes, newer facilities, and larger rooms.</p>	One institution recently moved to a differential housing rate structure. Historically, the institution charged the same rate for all housing facilities, but will now charge differential rates for traditional, semi-suite, suite, and apartments. They will also charge differential rates for single occupancy versus double occupancy rooms. The institution estimates this will increase rental revenue by 0.5% over a five-year transition period.	\$\$	1

Source: Business Affairs Forum.

# Housing Efficiency Cheat Sheet (cont.)

	Tactic	Example	Revenue Potential	Implementation Difficulty
Alternative Revenue	<b>Lease Housing Facilities During Summer</b> Lease out housing facilities for summer camps, conferences, and events on-campus and nearby.	One institution rents out campus facilities for conferences and special events during the summer months. Facilities made available during the summer include on-campus residence halls, classrooms, dining halls, gyms, and pools. One summer of 2,000 conference attendees (including quilt makers, motorcycle riders, and legislative staffers) generated an additional \$250,000 in revenue.	\$\$	1
	<b>Offer Custom Carpet Rentals</b> Partner with a custom carpet company, such as Residence Hall Carpets, to allow students to purchase carpets custom sized for their dorm rooms and allow the institution to switch to durable tile floors instead of carpet that must be frequently replaced.	Many institutions have partnered with Residence Hall Carpets to allow students to purchase custom-sized carpets for dorm rooms. The institution's portion of proceeds are used to pay for student life activities and residential life operations.	\$	1
Maintenance, Renovation, and New Construction	<b>Install Central HVAC Units</b> Install central heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) instead of individual HVAC units so that facilities staff can perform maintenance work quickly and without entering individual units.	One institution made all three changes (added central HVAC units, installed durable tile floors, and moved to limited thermostat ranges) between the original apartment buildings and new units. The institution reports that the changes will help minimize maintenance and repair costs over time.	\$\$	2
	<b>Install Durable Tile Floors</b> Remove carpet and install durable tiles, as most student damage fees are carpet-related.		\$	2
	<b>Enforce Limited Thermostat Ranges</b> Implement limited thermostat ranges to prevent students from setting thermostats too cold or too hot. This can help lower utilities expenses.		\$	2
	<b>Implement Electronic Work Technology</b> Implement electronic work order technology to increase efficiency and speed of response.	One institution implemented the Maximo facilities management system to provide maintenance staff with real-time access to work orders, increasing efficiency and speed of response.	\$	1

Source: Business Affairs Forum.