

## Fraternity and Sorority Housing

North American fraternity and sorority housing refers largely to the houses or housing areas that fraternity and sorority members live and work together in. In addition to serving as housing, fraternity and sorority housing may also serve to host social gatherings, meetings, and functions that benefit the community.

The first fraternity house seems to have been from the Alpha Epsilon chapter of Chi Psi at the University of Michigan around 1845. As fraternity membership was punishable by expulsion at many colleges at this time, the house was located deep in the woods.

Fraternity chapter housing initially existed in two forms: lodges that served as meeting rooms and houses that had boarding rooms. The lodges came first and were largely replaced by houses with living accommodations. Lodges were often no more than rented rooms above stores or taverns. The idea of substantial fraternity housing caught on quickly but was accomplished with much greater ease in the north as southern college students had far less available money for construction.

The first fraternity house in the south was likely one rented by members of Beta Theta Pi at Hampden-Sydney College from at least 1856. Kappa Sigma was then the first fraternity to own a house in the south when, in 1882, its chapter at the University of the South acquired one.

Chapter houses for women's fraternities began when Alpha Phi erected one at Syracuse University in 1886. Many colleges eventually came to support fraternity and sorority housing as they allowed increased enrollment without construction of costly dormitories. The nature of this benefit varied between campuses as some houses were paid for entirely by alumni, some were rented, and some were built on land leased from the college. It was further recognized that, while fraternities having chapter houses did not raise academic performance, it did have a tendency to keep it from falling as the chapters could not afford (financially) to have members leaving school and no longer paying for their rooms.

Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity, Inc. does not provide rent, lease, or own fraternity houses. While the Fraternity will work to address housing needs, it often takes several years for housing to be realized after a chapter has been established.