

## California State University Housing has High Demand, but Low Supply. Why?

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As the end of the Spring semester approaches, transfer and newly admitted students prepare to take their next step in their academic careers. One decision they will need to make is whether to live on campus. Thousands of CSULB students apply for on-campus housing, but fewer than 10% are accepted. For many, it's not just about where they'll live—it's about whether they'll succeed.

One of the most competitive California State Universities, Long Beach, receives over 120,000 applications to CSULB. Only 42% of those students get accepted, and less than 9% get accepted into on-campus housing. As one of the top three most in-demand and competitive schools in the California State system, why are so few of its students accepted into housing?

As a Residential Assistant at CSULB, I typically represent the Housing Department in a positive light. As RAs only know so much about the department's projects and initiatives, I am aware that more housing is planned to be fully functional and ready by the fall of 2026. Although this is good news, I also hear from my residents about the hardships they face in trying to secure housing on campus.

CSULB currently provides three villages for student housing, two on campus and one apartment-style village 1 ½ miles from campus. In all three villages, about 3,690 students live on campus. The majority of them are freshmen and transfer students. As a resident and department representative, I see a problem in this that a student who needs housing for the next academic year must enter a lottery system to determine if they will be accepted into housing again. If they do not, they have to go through the stressful process of finding people to live with and finding an affordable place near the school, if they are lucky. These returning residents are between 18 and 20 years old and have never rented or lived independently, except for the previous academic year, when they were fed and cared for on campus.

As an individual who not only lives but also represents and is an employee of the department, I find it difficult to understand why we, as a department, are unable to accept all, if not most, of our applicants. Our current housing facilities and villages in Parkside, central and south, as well as those in the hillside east and west, were constructed in the 1950s. With this construction, the university has grown to become one of the most applied California State Universities in the State, and therefore, our demand went high, but our housing space remained low. As of 2021, Parkside North has been the newest addition to the dorms family, being the biggest dormitory to house the most residents in a single building. In 2026, La Playa, located in the Hillside village, will be the next building with more than four stories and will have similar architectural qualities to Parkside North.

The Department of Housing and Residential Life is always excited for future projects with the university to house more students who applied for housing, as well as have the space for any of our past residents who wish to return to our facilities. Unfortunately, the time is currently unavailable due to the amount of bedding and staff we have to house these future residents, but the future is bright for the department, and I'm sure that more projects are to come once more space and funding have been accounted for. For maintenance, the department is excited for the arrival of La Playa and maintains good relationships with its current residents as well as seeking potential residents who wish to house with us in the near future.

As someone who has gone through the process of applying for housing at CSULB, I know it was a very stressful time. I was an 18-year-old, and I was on the waitlist while all of my classmates who applied were also accepted into housing. It took me weeks of persistent calls and questions about why I had not been accepted into housing until I finally received the acceptance letter. I had to rush to find a roommate and a room before the deadline, just a few days before.

Although I am grateful for the opportunity that the housing department has provided me, I have my opinions on why housing should allocate spaces for on-campus living while upgrading the current spaces for both future and current residents. To maintain its reputation as one of California's top state universities, CSULB must prioritize expanding and improving student housing—not just for future students but for the ones already here.