

DEFEND THE CASTLE

HOW THE OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL SUPPORTS SAFE AND COMPLIANT CAMPUS HOUSING

Arcadia University offers a range of on-campus housing options, from traditional residence halls to apartment-style communities. These spaces are home to students, but they also operate within a framework of University policies and legal requirements designed to protect people, property, and the integrity of campus life. Many offices contribute to safe campus housing, including Housing and Residence Life, Public Safety, and Facilities. The Office of General Counsel (OGC) works behind the scenes to help ensure that the policies and systems supporting campus housing are legally sound, consistent, and protective of the University community.

LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND RISK PREVENTION IN HOUSING:

OGC advises the University on how housing policies align with federal, state, and local law and supports efforts to reduce safety and liability risks in residential settings. Examples include:

- **Disability-related housing accommodations**
Advising on requests to support compliance with the ADA, fair housing laws, and University accommodation policies.
- **Service and emotional support animals**
Interpreting Animals on Campus and housing policies in line with federal disability regulations while addressing shared-space concerns.
- **Security and privacy in residence halls**
Advising on building access systems, cameras, and information sharing so practices align with FERPA, privacy laws, and University data-handling policies.
- **Facilities and vendors**
Reviewing contracts, insurance requirements, and risk provisions for vendors working in residence halls. Contractor personnel may be required to complete background checks to support community safety.
- **Guests and building access**
Supporting the development and application of guest and access policies that promote safety and reduce incidents in residence halls.

Universities across the country continue to see housing-related concerns involving guest access, property security, and shared living environments. Clear policies and consistent expectations help reduce confusion and support a safer residential community. OGC contributes to this work by helping the University evaluate potential risks, clarify policy language, and ensure that housing practices are

grounded in law and institutional policy. While many housing decisions are operational in nature, they often carry legal implications that require careful review and coordination.

POLICY SUPPORT AND INCIDENT RESPONSE

When housing-related concerns arise, multiple offices coordinate their response. OGC's role is to advise on legal and policy considerations so that the University's actions are consistent, fair, and legally supported. This includes guidance on documentation, reporting expectations, and compliance with student conduct and housing procedures, as well as legal considerations affecting student and community safety.

OGC also assists with drafting and reviewing housing-related policies so they remain clear, consistent, and enforceable across campus. Policy development is an ongoing process, and regular review helps ensure that housing rules keep pace with legal requirements and best practices in higher education.

Students with housing concerns should typically begin with Housing and Residence Life, Student Affairs, or Public Safety. Staff and administrators may involve OGC when issues include:

- Legal requirements or accommodation questions
- Policy interpretation or potential policy changes
- Contracts or vendor concerns
- Serious incidents or potential legal risk

Clear policies and consistent practices help protect residents and support a secure campus environment. OGC helps ensure the legal and policy frameworks behind campus housing are strong and coordinated – an important part of *defending the castle*.

