

Finding an Apartment / House

Most people in Switzerland live in rented apartments. Finding an apartment is not always easy and rent is high.

Housing Market

Most Swiss residents live in rented apartments. Land for construction is scarce and as a result there are not many vacant apartments, particularly in cities and central communes. Rent is high. It is not unusual to spend a quarter of one's income on rent. Looking for an apartment outside of a central commune may be worthwhile. Rent in housing cooperatives is often cheaper. To join a housing cooperating, share certificates (Anteilsscheine) in the cooperative must be purchased at the beginning of the tenancy. Families with little money can apply for support contributions for their rent under certain conditions (Familienmietzinsbeiträge).

Looking for an Apartment / House

Apartments for rent can be found on various websites. Local newspapers also publicize real estate advertisements. Some landlords advertise apartments for rent on notice boards in shopping centres or other locations. Many apartments are not advertised publicly. Asking friends and family if they have heard of a free apartment is recommended.

Tenant Application

Usually, persons who are interested in an apartment will contact the landlord or property manager and make a viewing appointment. Applying for the apartment generally requires an application form. In addition, most landlords require a document proving freedom from debt (Betreibungsregisterauszug) and a rough estimate of income. This is done in order to ensure a future tenant's ability to pay. The document can be obtained at the responsible debt enforcement office (Betreibungsamt). Because landlords usually receive many applications it is recommended that tenants apply for multiple apartments at the same time.

Buying an Apartment / House

Foreigners with a residence permit C can purchase apartments or houses in Canton Basel-Stadt without limitations. This also applies to EU/EFTA citizens with a permit B. People from other countries with a permit B can only purchase an apartment or house if they plan to live in it. If a buyer does not plan to live in the property themselves, they need an approval for the purchase. In any case, a notary is required to purchase a property. People with other permits (L, F) cannot purchase apartments or houses. Further information is provided by the arbitration body for tenancy disputes (Schlichtungsstelle für Mietstreitigkeiten).

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/housing/finding-an-apartment--house