

Learning Objectives

- Design functional shared kitchens for multiple tenants
- Set up comfortable common living areas
- Create inviting bathrooms that are easy to maintain
- Maximize curb appeal to attract quality tenants
- Establish house rules and shared space expectations

Why Common Areas Matter

In coliving, shared spaces are what separate a **house with roommates** from a **premium coliving experience**. Well-designed common areas justify higher rents, reduce turnover, and create positive tenant experiences.

THE 80/20 RULE OF COMMON AREAS

80% of tenant satisfaction comes from 20% of your common areas: a clean kitchen, reliable WiFi, and a comfortable living space. Nail these three things and your tenants will stay longer.

The Shared Kitchen

The kitchen is the highest-traffic shared space and the #1 source of tenant complaints in coliving. Getting it right is essential.

Kitchen Essentials for Coliving

Must-Have Appliances

- **Full-size refrigerator**
(consider two for 5+ rooms)
- **Stove/oven** (working and clean)
- **Microwave**
- **Dishwasher** (game-changer for cleanliness)
- **Toaster**
- **Coffee maker**

Kitchen Supplies to Provide

- Basic pots and pans set
- Cooking utensils
- Plates, bowls, cups (2 per tenant)
- Silverware set
- Dish soap and sponges
- Paper towels
- Trash bags

Kitchen Organization Tips

- **Labeled cabinet space:** Assign each tenant a cabinet or shelf
- **Labeled fridge space:** Use bins or shelf dividers
- **Cleaning schedule:** Post a rotating kitchen cleaning schedule
- **Trash system:** Use a large trash can with foot pedal, plus recycling bin
- **No-clutter rule:** Nothing left on counters overnight

PRO TIP: THE "ORPHAN SHELF"

Keep one shelf for items without labels. Post a sign: "Items on this shelf will be donated/discarded on Sunday." This naturally keeps the kitchen organized without constant management.

 **Living Room / Common Space**

A comfortable shared living area adds perceived value and makes tenants feel like they're in a home, not just renting a room.

Living Room Setup**Furniture**

- **Durable sofa** (leather or performance fabric)
- **Side table(s)**
- **TV with streaming device** (Roku/Fire Stick)
- **Floor lamp**
- **Bookshelf** (doubles as display/storage)

Nice-to-Haves

- Gaming console
- Board games
- Area rug
- Wall art
- Plants (low-maintenance)

MATERIAL SELECTION TIP

Choose **easy-to-clean, durable materials**. Leather or faux-leather sofas wipe clean. Avoid light-colored fabrics. Use washable slipcovers if fabric furniture. Opt for LVP (luxury vinyl plank) flooring over carpet in common areas.

Shared Bathrooms

Bathrooms are the second most important shared space. Clean, well-organized bathrooms keep tenants happy and reduce maintenance.

Bathroom Essentials

- **Shower curtain with liner** (replace liner every 3-6 months)
- **Bath mat** (non-slip)
- **Toilet brush and holder**
- **Plunger** (in every bathroom)
- **Small trash can**
- **Mirror** (full-length if no closet mirror in bedrooms)
- **Towel hooks or bars** (one per tenant who shares the bathroom)
- **Shower caddy system** (assign spaces)

Bathroom Maintenance Tips

- Install a **good exhaust fan** to prevent mold
- Use **mold-resistant caulk** around tubs and showers

- Provide **toilet paper and hand soap** (standard in most coliving)
- Consider a **bidet attachment**—inexpensive and appreciated
- Post **simple rules**: "clean up after yourself, report leaks immediately"

Laundry

Access to laundry is a significant selling point for coliving tenants.

Option A: In-House W/D

- Most convenient for tenants
- Budget: \$500-1,000 per set
- Higher utility costs
- Consider coin-operated for cost recovery

Option B: Nearby Laundromat

- No equipment cost
- No maintenance
- Lower utility bills
- Less convenient—may reduce rent potential

Curb Appeal

First impressions matter. When potential tenants drive by or see listing photos, the exterior sets their expectations.

High-Impact, Low-Cost Improvements

IMPROVEMENT	COST	IMPACT
Fresh exterior paint (front door + trim)	\$100-300	★★★★★
Pressure wash driveway & walkways	\$50-150	★★★★★
New house numbers	\$20-50	★★★★★
Updated porch light	\$30-80	★★★★★
Landscaping cleanup + mulch	\$100-300	★★★★★
New doormat	\$20-40	★★★★
New mailbox	\$30-80	★★★★

CURB APPEAL BUDGET

You can dramatically improve curb appeal for **\$300-600 total**. This is one of the highest-ROI investments you can make in terms of attracting quality tenants and commanding top rents.

House Rules for Shared Spaces

Clear expectations prevent conflicts. Post house rules in common areas and include them in the lease agreement.

Sample House Rules

1. Clean kitchen after each use—don't leave dishes in the sink
2. Take out trash when full; recycling goes in the blue bin
3. Quiet hours: 10 PM - 7 AM (Sunday-Thursday), 11 PM - 8 AM (Friday-Saturday)
4. No smoking inside the house (designated outdoor area available)
5. Guests must leave by 11 PM on weeknights; overnight guests limited to 2 nights/week
6. Report maintenance issues immediately via [preferred method]
7. Shared laundry: remove clothes promptly when done
8. Keep personal items in your room, not common areas
9. Respect each other's space, belongings, and schedules
10. No illegal activities on the property

Smart Home Features

Technology can reduce management headaches and add perceived value.

Recommended Smart Features

- **Smart lock (front door):**
No key management, easy code changes (\$100-200)
- **Smart thermostat:** Control remotely, set limits (\$100-250)
- **WiFi router:** High-speed, mesh system for full coverage (\$200-400)
- **Security camera (exterior only):** Deter issues, monitor property (\$50-150)

Optional Upgrades

- **Smart locks per room:**
Keypad entry (\$80-150 each)
- **Water leak sensors:**
Prevent water damage (\$20-40 each)
- **Smart plugs:** Control lighting remotely (\$10-25 each)
- **Video doorbell:** Package theft deterrent (\$100-200)

Action Steps

1. **Walk through your property** and assess every common area
2. **Create a shopping list** for kitchen, living room, and bathroom supplies
3. **Plan curb appeal improvements**—prioritize by impact
4. **Draft house rules** customized for your property
5. **Complete the Property Setup Completion Checklist**

Key Takeaways

- **Common areas make or break** the coliving experience
- **Kitchen organization** is the #1 factor in tenant satisfaction
- **Durability over aesthetics**—choose materials that last and clean easily
- **Curb appeal** is a high-ROI investment (\$300-600 can transform a property)
- **Clear house rules** prevent 90% of roommate conflicts
- **Smart home tech** reduces management burden and adds value



Your Deliverable

Make sure your property is 100% ready before listing rooms.



Module 5 Complete!

Your property is renovated, furnished, and ready for tenants. Next: launching your listing and managing operations.