By Amanda Elkins, Assistant Director, Attorney

Iowa City-area landlords are already signing and re-signing leases for 2019-2020! Here are some tips for smartly signing a lease:

1. Make sure it is the lease you want to sign! A lease is a legally binding contract that you cannot simply change your mind about. There are plenty of available apartments in Iowa City so don’t feel pressured to sign. Evaluate whether or not you can afford a particular place and whether you feel comfortable with the landlord. Ask to tour the actual unit you are considering renting. You can find information about landlords via online reviews, the housing inspector’s office/website, Iowa Courts Online (www.iowacourts.gov), and the University of Iowa Student Government housing survey.

2. Read the lease! Leases are multi-page documents complete with legal jargon and small print, not to mention addendums and attachments. Read the entire lease and ask a lawyer if you don’t understand a section. Lease reviews are always free at Student Legal Services.

By Christopher Malloy, Director, Senior Attorney

Are you a student who wants to vote on Tuesday November 6th but are not registered to vote in Iowa? If you are a US citizen who resides in Iowa you, may register to vote on election day at the polls. First, you must go to the correct polling place for your current address on election day. You may find your polling place on the Iowa Secretary of State’s website: https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/pollingplace/search.aspx.

When you show up to vote and register on election day, you have to prove both who you are and where you reside. There are several ways to do this. The easiest is by providing your valid Iowa Driver’s license with your current address on it. But that is not the only option. If you do not have an Iowa driver’s license, you may use a photo ID that is current, valid, and that contains an expiration date to prove your identity. The following are acceptable IDs:

- Iowa non-driver ID card
- Out-of-state driver’s license or non-driver ID card
- U.S. passport
- U.S. military ID
- ID card issued by employer
- Student ID issued by Iowa high school or college
- Tribal ID
- Proof of Residence

If the address on your ID is not your current address, you may use another document that contains your name and current address.

The following are acceptable as proof current residence:

- Residential lease
- Bank statement
- Paycheck
- Utility bill (including a cell phone bill)
- Government check or other government document

If you don’t have access to any of these documents, you still have another way to prove your identity to vote. A registered voter from your precinct who knows you and knows where you live may attest for you. Both you and the attester will be required to sign an oath swearing the statements being made are true. It is important to note that falsely attesting or being attested for is registration fraud. It is a class “D” felony and is punishable by a fine of up to $7,500 and up to 5 years in prison.
3. Get Some Roommates (Or Don’t)! If you are planning to have roommates, find them before signing the lease, then sign together. If you all sign the same lease, you are financially responsible for each other when someone does not pay rent. If your potential roommates aren’t reliable, consider asking for a co-signor, signing an individual lease (shared spaces but separate leases) or live alone.

4. Get it in Writing! If your landlord promises to make repairs or updates prior to your move-in date, it should be included in the lease. Once you’ve signed, keep a copy of the lease and attachments for your records. You can also draft a roommate agreement, an example of which is on the SLS website.

If you have questions about renting before, during, or after your lease, SLS may be able to help. Happy renting!

**RAPID FIRE WITH AMANDA!**

What’s your favorite movie?
**HOME ALONE**
Who should everyone be following right now?
**CHRISSY TEIGEN**
If you could sing a duet with anyone, who would it be?
**FREDDIE MERCURY**
If you had one superpower what would it be?
**TELEPORTATION**
What is the weirdest word in the English language?
**PHANTASMAGORIA**
Three people dead or alive you would have dinner with?
**BARACK OBAMA, SERENA WILLIAMS, RUTH BADER GINSBURG**
What would be the title of your autobiography?
**“THE NOTORIOUS A.L.E.”**
What is your favorite board game?
**YAHTZEE**
A book that you read in school that positively shaped you?
**CHARLOTTE’S WEB**
If you could do a flash mob, where would it be?
**THE WHITE HOUSE**

**RAPID FIRE WITH CHRIS!**

What’s your favorite movie?
**SHAWSHENK REDEMPTION**
Who should everyone be following right now?
**EVAN MCMULLIN**
If you could sing a duet with anyone, who would it be?
**KASEY MUSGRAVES**
If you had one superpower what would it be?
**FLIGHT**
What is the weirdest word in the English language?
**OTOLARYNGOLOGIST**
Three people dead or alive you would have dinner with?
**BARACK OBAMA, NADIA MURAD, ELIUD KIPCHOGE**
What would be the title of your autobiography? “PRETTY AVERAGE, BUT STILL INTERESTING”
What is your favorite board game?
**CARDS AGAINST HUMANITY**
A book that you read in school that positively shaped you?
**LONG WALK TO FREEDOM**
If you could do a flash mob, where would it be?
**ON THE FIELD AT A SPORTING EVENT**