

United States Conference of Mayors

# Best Practices for Short-Term Rentals



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# United States Conference of Mayors Best Practices for Short-Term Rentals

The travel recovery has become a travel revolution. People are traveling to a wide variety of cities and towns, both urban and rural, which is leading to a redistribution of where people travel and live - and creating significant opportunities for more communities across the United States to benefit from the tourism and the sharing economy. The short-term rental (STR) economy [supports hundreds of thousands of jobs around the world](#) and [provides millions of new direct and indirect tax revenue to government budgets](#). STRs can help communities small and large thrive when clear regulations are put in place. We worked with Airbnb to take a look at cities around the country that are developing regulatory frameworks for STRs. These cities worked with residents and other stakeholders to develop fair short-term rental rules that benefit local residents and their communities.



# Case Studies on STR Regulations



## ALEXANDRIA, VA

**Mayor Justin Wilson**

Population 154,706

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/business-resources/short-term-residential-rental-registry>

In Alexandria, every STR property must be registered annually with the Department of Finance within 30 days of the property being offered for rental. The registration process is simple and free. If the STR operator has revenue greater than \$10,000 annually, and they rent more than four separate dwelling units, they must obtain an additional Business, Professional and Occupational License (BPOL). This approach empowers residents who share their home on an occasional basis to earn supplemental income without unnecessary regulatory barriers. STRs do not require zoning or permitting approvals solely on the basis of being an STR, but normal zoning or permitting provisions like maximum occupancy rules still apply.

## CAPE CHARLES, VA

**Mayor Adam Charney**

Population 1,180

[https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/northamptoncounty/latest/northampton\\_va/O-O-O-25120](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/northamptoncounty/latest/northampton_va/O-O-O-25120)

In Cape Charles, STR owners are required to get a regular business license from the County and to complete and submit Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT). The number of occupants is limited to 3 per bedroom. Noise limits must be in accordance with the existing noise ordinance. STRs are prohibited in structures that are not defined as dwellings. The law expressly prohibits STRs being used as event spaces unless also permitted as an event venue. They require basic safety rules like having installed smoke detectors in each sleeping area and outside each sleeping area in the vicinity of the bedrooms and on each floor.





## CLARKSVILLE, TN

**Mayor Joe Pitts**

Population 170,957

[https://www.cityofclarksville.com/DocumentCenter/View/5487/Ordinance-1-2020-21\\_2?bidId=](https://www.cityofclarksville.com/DocumentCenter/View/5487/Ordinance-1-2020-21_2?bidId=)

<https://www.cityofclarksville.com/924/Permits>

The Clarksville City Council recognized the growth in popularity of STRs and wanted to be able to monitor listings to ensure public safety. They created simple registration and permitting rules along with reasonable safety requirements for each property. The registration fee is \$150. A permit is not required for individuals who operate only one STR unit or for individuals who operate and list only one single room as an STR or for those who operate an STR for less than six months of the year. They require registration permit numbers to be displayed on all advertisements of the STR. Permits are offered in a residential or non-residential district of the city. This straight-forward permit process with reasonable and well-defined timelines sets clear expectations and addresses public safety concerns without creating a barrier for residents looking to supplement their income through hosting.



## COLLEGE STATION, TX

**Mayor John Nichols**

Population 126,477

<https://mcclibraryfunctions.azurewebsites.us/api/ordinanceDownload/15047/1188040/pdf>

College Station recently revised its STR ordinance to require an STR permit and permit numbers to be displayed on all advertisements for the property. The city also requires verification of an account for payment of hotel occupancy taxes that are remitted by STR operators. Each STR host must equip the rental with working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and one working fire extinguisher that meets standards. STR operators are required to collect and remit the hotel occupancy tax.





## RALEIGH, NC

**Mayor Mary-Ann Baldwin**

Population 469,124

<https://raleighnc.gov/permits/short-term-rentals>

Raleigh, NC has embraced STRs as a way to boost [tourism](https://news.airbnb.com/partnering-with-visit-raleigh-to-support-economic-recovery/) (<https://news.airbnb.com/partnering-with-visit-raleigh-to-support-economic-recovery/>) and their local economy. The City's registration system requires STR Hosts to procure a zoning permit from the city. The zoning permit number authorizing the STR must be posted on all advertisements. STRs are allowed in all residential zoning districts and there is no limit to how often Hosts can rent space in their homes. The City also allows STRs in accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and enforces short-term rental rules on a "complaint basis." Within six months of the regulations going into effect, the city reported having received only one complaint.

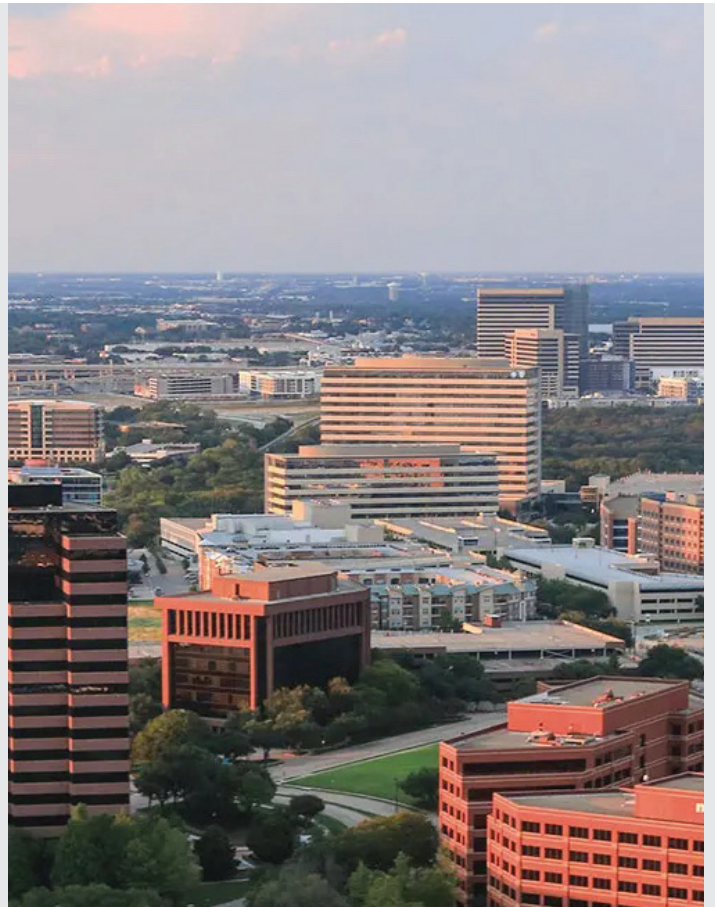
## RICHARDSON, TX

**Mayor Paul Voelker**

Population 116,382

<https://mcclibraryfunctions.azurewebsites.us/api/ordinanceDownload/10221/1175094/pdf>

Richardson defines a STR as a residential property that is rented wholly or partly for a fee for a period of less than 30 consecutive days. They require an annual registration with a fee of \$75. They require materials to be posted at the STR location including this helpful [neighborhood information](#) guide. They do not allow STR visitors' vehicles to be parked on a public street in front of any property other than the STR they are renting, and cars may not be parked on non paved areas on the property. Visitors must comply with the existing noise ordinance and the city has a 24-hour response line for neighbors to report issues.





## TULSA, OK

**Mayor G.T. Bynum**

Population 411,401

<https://www.cityoftulsa.org/STR>

Tulsa, OK recognizes that STRs play a substantial and positive role in the community. The City set out to establish an effective way to ensure that neighborhoods are protected from potential negative impacts such as party houses, noise concerns and parking. The ordinance requires an annual license for each short-term rental with a total fee of \$375 renewed annually and classifies STR's into two categories: Principal Use STR and Accessory Use STR. A principal use STR is a dwelling unit that is not the primary residence of a household and Accessory Use is the primary residence of the household. The ordinance requires a local contact person who can be reached by the city 24 hours a day. Under the law in Tulsa, it is the responsibility of the STR operator to prevent nuisance behavior and maintain neighborhood peace and quiet. They require the license to be posted within the interior of the rental. STR operators who have properties with 5 or more rooms are required to collect a lodging tax of 5% from guests and remit to the city. Before this ordinance, all short-term rentals were required to go before the City Board of Adjustment for approval.



## MIDLAND, TX

**Mayor Lori Blong**

Population 131,325

Midland, TX Ordinance No. 10190

<https://www.midlandtexas.gov/1029/Short-Term-Rental>

Midland, TX passed a simple ordinance that requires STR operators to collect and remit an 7% occupancy tax on the price of the rental.

# Working with STR platforms like Airbnb

STR marketplaces like Airbnb have been working to make it easier for local governments to enjoy all of the community benefits that come with STRs and have a number of tools and initiatives in place.

## **TAX COLLECTION**

In general, governments tend to see more revenue from STRs when platforms collect and remit tourism taxes on behalf of their hosts. To date, Airbnb has collected and remitted over \$7 billion in tourism taxes globally. In the US, Airbnb collected and remitted over \$1.9 billion in tourism taxes across all 50 states in 2022 - an increase of approximately 27 percent from 2021. These tourism taxes are a vital source of funding for local governments and the communities they support, especially in areas that saw revenue streams decimated by the pandemic.

## **CITY PORTAL**

<https://www.airbnb.com/cityportal>

A first-of-its-kind solution for communities partnering with Airbnb that provides insights into local Airbnb activity, and direct communication and support. With Hosts in more than 100,000 cities and towns around the world, one of Airbnb's priorities is to work with governments on fair, balanced short-term rental regulations that both protect the benefits of home sharing and help meet the unique needs of each community. To build on these efforts, Airbnb introduced the City Portal in 2020.

## **AIRBNB LAW ENFORCEMENT PORTAL**

<https://airbnb.com/lert>

Our law enforcement portal provides a dedicated secure and streamlined channel for law enforcement to submit valid legal and emergency requests for information from Airbnb.

Through the portal, law enforcement officers are able to securely track requests, and receive status updates and customized email notifications. We recently expanded this portal to more languages in support of the vital work of law enforcement around the world, and it's now available in English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Portuguese, Portuguese (Brazil), Korean and Japanese. All requests through this channel are handled in line with our Terms of Service, Privacy Policy and [Law Enforcement Guidelines](#).

## **NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT LINE**

<https://www.airbnb.com/help/article/3290>

In December 2019, Airbnb launched a neighborhood support line in the US that provides a direct channel for neighbors to speak to Airbnb about urgent concerns with a nearby listing or guest



behavior in their community. This hotline has proven to be an important tool in Airbnb's efforts to combat unauthorized gatherings and enforce our ban on disruptive parties, in accordance with our parties and events policies.

## **CUSTOM EDUCATION CAMPAIGN**

Airbnb can deploy location-specific education campaigns devised in collaboration with local governments to help short-term rental operators navigate the steps they need to take to comply with local rules and laws and continue to be a responsible Host in their communities. Such a campaign could be carried out through a variety of channels, including:

- Email notifications and in-product notifications
- Localized Responsible Hosting Pages
- Online education workshops

## **LOCALIZED RESPONSIBLE HOSTING PAGES**

Once a STR law or regulation is passed, Airbnb can develop in collaboration with local governments a dedicated [Responsible Hosting Page](#) tailored to the locality that will offer existing and prospective Hosts specific information on their obligations and responsibilities, as well as guidance on the steps they need to take to comply.

## **PERMIT FIELDS**

Airbnb can add a dedicated space to each listing advertisement in the community to allow Hosts to add their local permit number and have it displayed publicly.

## **PARTY BAN**

In 2020, Airbnb announced a temporary ban on parties at STR listings and in 2022 codified that as their [official policy](#). Disruptive parties and events are prohibited on the platform, including open-invite gatherings. "Party house" properties are strictly prohibited as well. The policy includes serious consequences for guests who attempt to violate these rules, varying from account suspension to full removal from the platform. The ban has been well received by Airbnb's Host community and they've received positive feedback from community leaders and elected officials.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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