

1. Have a BOA, which will be the board of directors of the corporation that will own the property.
2. Be incorporated. Moreover, "not for profit" does not mean they do not make a profit at the end of the year. It means the profit is not distributed to stockholders. Get a not for profit designation by getting a form letter from International Headquarters and applying with the IRS. It is easy to do, so do it.
3. Have a healthy enough chapter to support a house. A conservative rule of thumb is for the chapter size to be "two times the house capacity, plus 20." In other words, to support a house that houses 12 beds, you ought to have a chapter of 44 members. That way, there are guys on a waiting list to move in and others to pay parlor dues for the privilege of hanging out at the house.
4. Healthy includes financially healthy. Do your guys pay their rents now? Alternatively, do they move in and out of apartments because they are kicked out? Part of that is character, but if the caliber of guys is such that they will not pay their rent at an apartment complex or the dorms, they may not have the right discipline to live in a fraternity house.
5. How much have you set aside in savings? 10% of your budget each year? Somebody is probably going to have to make a down payment if you are actually going to buy the thing. If the corporation has cash, cash talks.
6. Find a good house. Use the above formula. It should be competitive or better than the average house on campus, as low maintenance as possible, and worth the investment.
7. Financing can be done in several ways. The most common is to get a bank loan (usually 20% or more down payment) and finance it for 15 years or so. On the other hand, the seller may be willing to finance it. If he does, be sure to get a lawyer involved. You do not want to pay money for years and wind up with nothing, which can happen. Another option is lease/purchase, where you are actually leasing it but the payments will be credited toward purchase of the house. Again, use an attorney or a realtor. If you have the alumni support, it is possible for them to raise the money -- at least the down payment -- or to cosign the note. Not the most preferred way, because the deal should fly on the strength of the chapter, and this places more risk on the alumni who have to explain what they are doing to their wives. But, if the alumni are stronger than the chapter, this is an alternative.
8. Who is going to be the property manager? Who is going to call the plumber or the electrician when something goes wrong (and, believe me, IT WILL!)? Who is going to collect the rents, pay the mortgage, and boot out the deadbeat? Plan all those things out in advance so they are not problems later on down the road.

It has been suggested to start out small. Forget getting a 30 or 40 room mansion to start out with. Try looking for a reasonably priced three or four bedroom home that you can either lease or rent under the chapter's name, hopefully somewhere near your University. Have several fraters move into the home and pay reasonable rent, along with their dues, to help offset the cost of the lease and utilities. The chapter will also have to absorb some of the costs of the home, but not necessarily. The economics of your area will dictate that. Mark the house as a Teke house and use it for your chapter activities such as socials, parties, meetings, study sessions etc.