



Smithsonian Institution

Office of Fellowships and Internships



2016 D.C. Metro Area Housing Guide

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Introduction

We hope this general information about the greater Washington, DC region and its neighborhoods will be helpful as you plan your relocation. It has tips about renting and getting around the area, and suggestions for housing options and resources.



The following information has been compiled by the Office of Fellowships and Internships to assist Smithsonian interns, fellows, and visiting scholars in locating housing in the greater Washington, D.C. area. This material is provided as a service and does not constitute an endorsement by the Smithsonian Institution. The prices quoted below are always subject to change and we advise you to call the location directly to verify the information contained in this housing list.

Washington, DC

A wide variety of housing options are available throughout the metropolitan Washington, DC area. Personal preference is generally the deciding factor in choosing a place to live. No matter what you decide, there are tradeoffs. If cost is a key issue, remember that generally the farther away from the center of the city, the less expensive the housing. If you rely on public transportation, keep in mind that living outside of the city requires more travel time and is more expensive. If you own a car, you should know that parking is generally difficult in the city, as street parking is scarce and garages often cost \$10 per day or more. Listed below are brief descriptions of some neighborhoods in and around metropolitan Washington, D.C



Northwest (N.W.): The largest area of the District, it is composed of several contrasting neighborhoods, including older areas and those being modernized and renovated. Most neighborhoods within Northwest, DC are served by both Metrobuses and the Metrorail system. As neighborhoods do vary within the city, visitors are well advised to visit the prospective home. Commuting time varies throughout this area, but generally ranges from 10-40 minutes. The following are individual descriptions of neighborhoods in NW DC:

Adams Morgan: This is an urban area near Dupont Circle and Kalorama, centered around Columbia Road and 18th St., NW. Adams Morgan has a diverse population – students, young families, diplomatic officials, recent immigrants and longtime residents of the District. The neighborhood is very culturally diverse with many international restaurants and markets, as well as many shops and free festivals. Adams Morgan is also referred to as Washington Heights, Dupont Circle North or Kalorama. Housing options vary enormously. Adams Morgan is an easy walk from the Woodley Park stop on Metrorail's Red Line or the Columbia Heights and U Street-Cardozo stop on the Green Line.

Cleveland Park: Cleveland Park is a historic neighborhood of single-family houses and large apartment buildings. The Cleveland Park Metro stop (on the Red Line) is conveniently located in an attractive area of small stores, restaurants and a classic movie theater.

Dupont Circle: The Circle is actually the entire area around the intersection of Connecticut and Massachusetts Avenues, surrounded by Foggy Bottom to the south, and Kalorama and Adams Morgan to the north. Dupont Circle is a busy office and shopping area, as well as an urban cultural center. The streets and avenues that radiate from Dupont Circle offer many types of accommodations, from high-rises and smaller apartment buildings, to basement apartments or private rooms in a home. The neighborhood is conveniently served by Metrorail's Dupont Circle stop on the Red Line.

Foggy Bottom: Foggy Bottom is George Washington University's campus and surrounding neighborhood. Housing is limited. Advantages to living in this area include a close proximity to the GW campus, The White House, The Kennedy Center, Watergate Hotel, Trader Joe's grocery store, Pennsylvania Avenue, museums, government agencies, and national associations. Housing options include high-rise apartments and townhouses. Dupont Circle West and the West End may also be considered part of the Foggy Bottom neighborhood. Metrorail's Orange and Blue Lines stop at Foggy Bottom.



Friendship Heights: The area located around upper Wisconsin Avenue, this neighborhood is located on the DC/Maryland border. This area contains high-rises, boutiques, restaurants, and two large shopping malls. Friendship Heights surrounds Wisconsin Avenue, with regular bus service and a Metrorail station on the Red Line.

Georgetown: The Georgetown shopping area caters to tourists, students and young adults. Occasionally townhouses are available to rent by several visitors who share the cost. Families sometimes rent individual rooms, or basement apartments in their private homes. This area can be reached by any bus on Pennsylvania Avenue, but is not directly served by Metrorail.

Glover Park: This neighborhood is a quiet, secluded area located just above Georgetown within walking distance of American University and the National Cathedral. The population of Glover Park consists of students, young professionals and families. Group houses abound in this area, along with smaller garden apartments. There are many restaurants and shops, and Metrobus transportation is available. Glover Park may also be referred to as Cathedral Heights, Observatory, and Upper Georgetown. It is served by the Wisconsin Avenue bus, but is a good walk from the

Logan Circle: The area around this Circle, north of downtown and east of Dupont Circle, consists mainly of Victorian mansions and townhouses, many of which are currently being renovated and revitalized. Due to its proximity to downtown DC, this area has a mixture of accommodations.

Van Ness/Forest Hills: Van Ness/Forest Hills is residential area just north of Cleveland Park. Housing options range from high-rise apartment buildings to full sized houses. Close to the University of the District of Columbia, American University, and many embassies, Van Ness/Forest hills caters to college students, families, and diplomats alike. Van Ness/Forest Hills is on the Red Line of the Metrorail and is also serviced by Metrobus.

Woodley Park: Woodley Park is a comfortable neighborhood of town houses and large apartment buildings. It is north of Dupont Circle, south of Cleveland Park, and west of Adams-Morgan. Metrorail's Red Line station at Woodley Park is in the middle of a small but attractive shopping area. It is also the Home of the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park.



Northeast (N.E): This is the area around Catholic and Gallaudet Universities and Union Station, a large shopping and dining complex housing the Amtrak train terminal. Metro-buses travel regularly through all major arteries within Northeast, and the Green and Red Lines of Metrorail service neighborhoods of this area.

Southeast (S.E): The neighborhood most famous in this area is “Capitol Hill”, location of the U.S Capitol, the Library of Congress and many other major government offices. Southeast is a very historic area, consisting of important federal buildings and residences representing diverse architectural styles. Public transportation via metro buses and the Metro-rail system are available on a frequent basis with Orange/Blue Line stations at Capitol South and Eastern Market.



Southwest (S.W): This is the downtown area near the Smithsonian museums on the Mall and Washington’s waterfront. Public transportation exists in the way of Metrobuses and the Metrorail system with a Green Line stop at Waterfront, Blue/Orange Line stops at Smithsonian, and Blue/Orange/Yellow/Green Line stops at L’Enfant Plaza.



Maryland

Bethesda, Maryland: The downtown of Bethesda is rapidly being developed and has a very urban feeling. The Bethesda stop on Metro's Red Line is centrally located on Wisconsin Avenue. There are many large, new apartment buildings, some of which are rental. There are many restaurants in Bethesda, of all types and price ranges.

Silver Spring, Maryland: Located on the other end of the horseshoe loop of the Red Line on Metro from Bethesda, but not far geographically, is Silver Spring. Several large apartment buildings are convenient to the shopping district on Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue. Metro's Silver Spring stop is central to, and above it all here, where the subway is actually elevated.

Takoma Park, Maryland: Takoma Park is also on the Red Line of Metro, but rather to the east across the border from the Northeast quadrant of DC. The Takoma Park Metro stop is near a small, low key central shopping area.

Virginia

Alexandria, Virginia: Alexandria, an attractive historic city, offers a wide price range in the housing and a wide variety in types of housing, although many landlords may not advertise in newspapers. The main thoroughfare from DC to Alexandria, Shirley Highway (Memorial and 14th St. Bridges) is very crowded during rush hour. Old Town Alexandria has a wide array of shops, restaurants, and other attractions. The Yellow and Blue Lines on Metrorail make three stops in the Alexandria area.

North Arlington, Virginia: Arlington is an inner suburb of Washington, immediately across the Potomac in Northern Virginia. There are many types of housing in North Arlington including townhouses, garden apartments, large high-rises, luxury apartments, duplexes, and individual homes. North Arlington is served by several stops on Metrorail's Orange Line.



South Arlington, Virginia: As in North Arlington, there are varied types of housing. Crystal City is a section of high-rises off the US Route 1 overlooking the Potomac River and accessible by Metrorail on both the Blue and Yellow Lines. A new development of apartment complexes has been built at Pentagon City, adjacent to the Fashion Centre shopping mall and also accessible on both the Blue and Yellow Lines.

About Renting

The Security Deposit

If you are considering renting housing, you'll need to factor in the cost of a security deposit. A security deposit usually equals one month's rent, which you give to your landlord in addition to your first month's rent. Your security deposit is used to pay for any damages which might occur during your occupancy, to pay for cleaning/repairs when you move out (if you don't leave your apartment in satisfactory condition), or to hold if you don't pay your rent. Mainly, the security deposit is an initial expense to consider when renting, one you should get returned provided you fulfill the requirements in your lease when vacating.

Average Rent

The following are monthly rentals of unfurnished apartments that give you an approximate idea of what you can expect to pay. However, rents vary greatly within the metropolitan DC area.

Apartment Type	Typical Rent
Efficiency	\$700-\$2,000
1 Bedroom	\$1,000-\$3,000
2 Bedroom	\$1,500-\$4,500
3 Bedroom	\$2,000-\$5,000

Allow Time for Reference Checks

Many landlords require reference checks (employer, past rentals, credit rating, and the like) prior to your move-in, so allow time for this. Once a lease is signed, it usually means at least a week before you can move in.

Furnishings

One solution for furniture is to rent a furnished apartment or find space in a group house. In addition, Washington has an abundance of lower-priced furniture stores and you may want to investigate leasing furniture rather than buying.

Another alternative to buying new or leasing furniture is buying secondhand pieces. Be sure to check bulletin boards at area universities for end-of-semester furniture sales or consult newspapers for ads on garage sales, estate closings, and the like.

Getting Around

Public Transportation

Depending on where you live, you can ride Metrorail or Metrobus to get around the DC area. Metrorail is a modern, safe and comfortable subway/commuter rail system. Metrobuses are also convenient and relatively reliable. For all Metro information, call 202/637-7000 from 6:00am - 10:30pm or look at the Metro website: www.wmata.com

Metrobus stops are marked by red, white and blue signs. Look for the route number and/or letter above the windshield of the bus. It will show you where the bus is going. Printed routes of Metrobuses may be obtained on board the bus or at neighboring Metrorail stations.

There are six lines in the Metrorail system: Red, Orange, Blue, Silver, Green and Yellow. Every Metrorail station is marked by a tall bronze or black column with a large "M" at the top. The majority of Metrorail stations have elevators for riders with disabilities, in addition to the usual escalators. Inside each station is a color-coded map to help you plan your trip. It will also tell you the amount of the fare and approximately how much time your trip will take. There are traditional paper fare-cards and SmarTrip Cards. A \$1 surcharge is applied to each trip using a paper fare-card. A SmarTrip Card is a plastic rechargeable card that costs \$2 and can be encoded with up to \$300. More information is available at www.wmata.com/fares/smartrip. Fares are based on when and how far you travel; the minimum one-way fare is \$1.95, and fares can be as much as \$5.00 for longer distances during rush hour. A fare-card must be purchased to ride the trains and is used to enter and exit each station. Be sure to obtain a transfer when changing from Metrorail to a Metrobus. There are two fare periods for both Metrorail and Metrobus: rush hour and non-rush hour. It costs more to ride either the Metrorail or bus during rush hours. Rush hour times are 5:00am to 9:30am and 3:00pm to 7:00pm, Monday through Friday. Metro hours of operation are currently 5:00am to midnight Monday through Thursday, 5:00am to 3:00am Friday, 7:00am to 3:00am Saturday, and 7:00am to midnight Sunday.

Parking

Parking is limited in many areas. If a parking space/lot is not provided with an apartment, ask about the availability of off-street parking and parking regulations in the neighborhood. It is generally the policy of the District of Columbia government not to issue parking permits to vehicles with out-of-state license plates. Unfortunately, DC does not recognize a fellowship as equivalent to student status for the purposes of applying for temporary tags.

Your Housing Search

The following are some points you may wish to consider as you begin your search for temporary housing in the Washington, DC area:

How long do you want to stay in DC? What is the length of your appointment? Six weeks? Three months? A year?

Do you plan to live with others or on your own? How are you going to find a roommate?

How much personal space do you need? Could you share a room? Do you want a dorm room, apartment, or house?

How much can you pay for housing? Will your stipend cover all your costs? Will you use savings? Do you need access to public transportation? Will you have a car? How will you deal with parking? Can you walk everywhere you will need to go? Do you want on-site laundry? Can you get to grocery stores, dry cleaners, movies, ect. easily?

Off-Campus Housing Referral

The housing offices at the universities listed below are good sources of information for off campus accommodations. You can check their listings for housing and can obtain copies of the Apartment Shoppers' Guide and maps of the city. Please apply in person; no mail or telephone inquiries are accepted.

The American University

Office of Housing & Dining Programs

Anderson Hall First Floor

4400 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20016-8142

George Washington University

Housing Programs

John Quincy Adams House

2129 I Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20052



On Campus Summer Housing

The following local universities offer low cost, short term housing for visitors during the summer months. Spaces are limited, so it is advisable to write or call as soon as possible for an application for the upcoming summer.

[The American University](#)

Office of Housing & Dining Programs

Anderson Hall First Floor

4400 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20016-8142

Phone: 202/885-3370

[Catholic University of America](#)

Office of Housing Services

160 Father O'Connell Hall

620 Michigan Avenue, N.E.

Washington, DC 20064

Phone: 202/319-5615

[George Washington University](#)

Housing Programs

John Quincy Adams House

2129 I Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20052

Phone: 202/994-2552

[Howard University](#)

Office of Residence Life

2401 4th Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20059

Phone: 202/806-6131



Hint: Check age restrictions!

For certain dormitory housing you must be over 18.



The Newspapers

The Washington Post, The Washington Times, and The City Paper all list available housing within their classified sections and many newspapers are available on the Internet. The City Paper is a free weekly news and entertainment paper that has an extensive classified housing section. Most neighborhoods and communities publish their own local newspaper, such as The Uptowner and The Northwest Current, which are generally free and are often found in smaller racks of stores within each neighborhood.

You can place your own “housing wanted” ad in a campus paper, or subscribe to a paper and respond to the Summer Sublet ads. The papers will be mailed to you, so you will be receiving them several days/weeks after publication. Some university papers to contact:

The American University Eagle is published on Mondays and Thursdays. You must send a check and indicate the number of weeks you want the ad to run when you send the advertisement (202/885-1414x3)

The Georgetown Hoya comes out twice a week, Tuesday and Friday, until May 25th (202/687-8350).

The George Washington University Hatchet comes out twice a week, Monday and Thursday (202/994-7079).



Online Resources

There are many online resources about housing in Washington, D.C. We encourage you to do basic online searches for housing. A good things to search for is intern housing or use websites like [Craigslist](#), [Airbnb](#), [Trulia](#), or other real estate websites. You may want to search for apartments, rooms, or sublets, which are better suited searches for short term stays.

* **Be very careful when finding housing online!**

Pictures are good and an address that someone can check out is even better.

Never send money to an untrusted source.

Neighborhood Abbreviations

When reading through the classified section of a newspaper, you may find some of the locations difficult to understand. The following is a list of abbreviates used for some of the neighborhoods in the metropolitan Washington, DC area:

District of Columbia

Adms Mrgn/AdMo – Adams Morgan
AU – American University
Cap Hill – Capitol Hill
Clvd Pk - Cleveland Park
Conn Ave – Connecticut Avenue
Dup Cir – Dupont Circle
Dwntn – Downtown
Fog Bot – Foggy Bottom
Frndship Hgts – Friendship Heights
G'town – Georgetown
Mt Plsnt – Mount Pleasant
NE – Northeast
NW – Northwest
SE – Southeast
SW – Southwest
Wdly Pk – Woodley Park

Virginia

Alex – Alexandria
Arl – Arlington
Arl N – Arlington North
Arl S – Arlington South
Ball or Blstn – Ballston
Falls Ch – Falls Church
FFX – Fairfax
Ross or RsslN – Rosslyn
Spgfld – Springfield

Maryland

AAFB – Andrews Air Force Base
Beth – Bethesda
CH CH – Chevy Chase
Coll Pk – College Park
Gaith – Gaithersburg
Germ – Germantown
Hyatts – Hyattsville
Rockv – Rockville
Sil Spg – Silver Spring



Additional Tips

* Another housing option is the Group House, usually 4-6 people sharing a large house and splitting the rent and utilities. Leases are most often month-to-month. Rent tends to be lower than in an apartment. Houses are primarily occupied by people in their twenties and located near university campuses. "Housing to Share" listings can be found in local papers (The Washington Post and The City Paper) and through University Off-campus housing referrals (see above). Be sure to check the certificate of occupancy if more than six unrelated persons are renting rooms in a group house or an entire house.

* Be aware that renting is a business transaction. Personal presentation is very important, so dressing formally is more likely to produce a favorable response in rental agents.

* If your college/university has an alumni chapter in the Washington metropolitan area, the office on your campus can provide you with its address or telephone number. The local chapter can be a good source of housing information.

* Often landlords do not advertise vacancies in newspapers but post signs on their properties. The best way to find these is to walk or drive through neighborhoods where you would like to live.

* Many Realtors are contracted with landlords to rent housing. Consult the ads under the real estate heading in the Yellow Pages of a phone directory to find realtors that handle rentals.

* Verbal rental agreements are binding and legally enforceable, but it is safer to have a written agreement in order to avoid misunderstanding the terms and conditions. Be sure to retain a copy signed by the landlord's agent in order to protect yourself in the event of a dispute. Most landlords will have lease or rental forms. DC rental agreements or leases made by persons under 18 must be signed by a parent or guardian. Rental agreements or leases made by persons under 18 can be and generally are binding in Maryland and Virginia, but landlords may require a parent's or other co-signature.

*When investigating prospective housing options, look for security in and near the building (i.e., locked doors, access of laundry room to outsiders, well lit hallways and laundry rooms, grilled windows on ground floors (a must for basement apartments) and well lit streets nearby).

Please feel free to contact the Office of Fellowships and Internships at 202/633-7070 or siofi@si.edu if you have any questions.