

Finding an Apartment



Finding your own place apart from your family is one of the western modern rites of passage. I say modern because in the not so distant past, a person lived at home until they were married. Having your own place has now become a sign of independence, as well as a sign of our culture's affluence.

Finding the right apartment, however, is not always easy and takes a lot of time. There are many things you need to consider including location, cost of living, need for transportation, as well as potential room mates. It may sound thrilling to move into the Big City after graduation, but make sure you know what you're getting into, or you'll end up back at home counting those Beanie Babies you thought you left behind!

- Figure out how much you can afford and take into account utilities including:
 - Cable TV**2-month deposit
 - Electricity **2-month deposit
 - Water
 - Internet
 - Security Deposit
 - Gas
 - Phone
 - Cell Phone
 - Move-in Fees
 - Parking Costs
 - Insurance

- Think about what cities or neighborhoods you'd like to live in.
 - Consider commute time and what you'd like your local neighborhood to offer
 - Consider how far you are from grocery stores - those bags can be heavy!
 - Consider safety

- Write down what features are important to you, such as
 - Parking privileges
 - Acceptable pet policies
 - Proximity to public transportation,
 - Security
 - Laundry facilities
 - Number of bedrooms and bathrooms (nothing like too few bathrooms to make room mates into doom mates!)

- Once you've decided on a neighborhood, start reading the ads: both online and paper
 - www.craigslist.com (Be wary when on Craigslist!)
 - www.apartments.com
 - www.apartmentguide.com
 - www.rent.com

- After awhile, one unit starts looking like another.
 - Keep a file of clipped newspaper ads, computer printouts and notes.
 - Go through your file and call for appointments to see your choice.
 - Dedicate a day to look through several choices so you can make comparisons
 - Look for complexes that have "move in specials" which eliminate certain fees

- Consider an apartment-finder service if you are new to the area, can't get around, don't have time to go through the classifieds or want fewer choices to consider.
 - These services are contracted by landlords and get commission.
 - They will connect you to those places with which they have contracts.
 - Most private owners do not utilize these services.

- Inspect apartments carefully.
 - Note all damages so that they will return your security deposit

- Fill out an application for the apartment you want. Submit it with a check for the amount you and the landlord agree on to cover a [credit check](#) and show good faith.

- Establish a move-in date, sign a contract and arrange to pay any security [deposit](#) and rent required.
 - Makes sure you have your utilities turned on before you move in or buy candles!!