

# CRS Report for Congress

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## Relocating to the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area: Sources of Information

Lynne Kennedy  
Information Management Specialist  
Information Research Division

### Summary

This report will introduce a newcomer to the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area to sources of general interest, neighborhoods, housing, and public transportation. The intended audience is congressional staff needing short-term or summer housing, although many of the sources given may also be helpful for those needing more than a 3-6 month lease. Sources suggested are often accessible by their Internet addresses. This report will be updated annually.

### Basic Information

Someone considering a move to a different city or part of the country often wants specific facts to offset or confirm information learned from the media or from friends. The official Washington, D.C., tourism Web site [<http://www.washington.org/>] is a good source for topics of general interest for those planning a temporary or permanent move to the Washington metropolitan area. For information about the Northern Virginia area, go to [<http://www.virginia.org>] or call (804) 786-4484. For information about the two Maryland counties that border Washington, D.C., go to the Internet at [<http://www.pg parks.com>] and [<http://www.goprincegeorgescounty.com>] or phone (301) 699-2407 for Prince George's County and go to [<http://www.co.mo.md.us>] or phone (240) 777-6800 for Montgomery County.

### Choosing a Neighborhood

For many, the next step in beginning a search for housing in an unfamiliar city is to learn about its various neighborhoods. The American University Housing Web page at [<http://www.american.edu/handbook/capital.html>] gives a concise view of a number of Washington, D.C., neighborhoods, including public transportation options and eating and entertainment highlights.

Safety statistics and other related information about Washington area neighborhoods can be obtained by calling the appropriate local police department for the particular area:

Washington, D.C.	(202) 727-4383
Arlington County, VA	(703) 228-4330
City of Alexandria, VA	(703) 838-4520
Fairfax County, VA	(703) 691-2131
Falls Church City, VA	(703) 241-5053
Montgomery County, MD	(240) 773-5125
Prince George's County, MD	(301) 336-8800

### Online Newspaper Sources for Housing

- The **Washington City Paper** offers detailed online listings of housing to rent and to share. The address is [<http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com>]. Once in the system, select “housing” under “Classifieds.”
- The **Washington Post** offers an extensive online list of apartments and homes to rent. At [<http://www.washingtonpost.com>], click on “real estate” under “Marketplace.”
- The **Washington Times** also offers an extensive list of housing possibilities. At [<http://www.washingtontimes.com>], click on “Classifieds” under “Marketplace” and then “real estate.”

### Universities

- **Catholic University**, located in Northeast D.C., offers summer housing from Thursday, May 17 to Sunday, August 12. Rates per person range from \$161-189/week and \$23-\$27/night for a double to \$175/week and \$25/night for a single. For more information, call (202) 319-5277 or visit [<http://housing.cua.edu/>].
- **Gallaudet University**, located in Northeast D.C., offers intern housing from May 15-August, 2001. Rates per person range from \$189/week and \$27/night for a single to \$161/week and \$23/night for a double, including free shuttle bus to Metro (Union Station). A 2-week minimum stay is required. For more information, call (202) 651-6090.
- **George Washington University**, located in downtown Washington (near Foggy Bottom Metro station), offers summer housing from Saturday, May 26 - Saturday August 4, 2001. There is a 30-day minimum stay. Costs range from \$24 to \$37 a night. For more information, call (202) 994-9193, e-mail [sumhouse@gwu.edu](mailto:sumhouse@gwu.edu), or visit [<http://gwired.gwu.edu/summer>].

- **Georgetown University**, which is located in Northwest Washington, offers accommodations on a first come, first served basis from June 4-August 5, 2001. A shuttle service is provided because Georgetown is not near a Metro station. There are rooms and furnished apartments. A 3-week minimum stay is required for residence hall; an 8-week stay is required for apartments. Costs vary, so it is best to get more information by calling the housing office at (202) 687-9211 or by visiting [<http://www.georgetown.edu/housing/summer>].
- **Howard University**, located in upper Northwest Washington, in the Shaw neighborhood, offers accommodations from June 1-July 31, 2001, at a rate of \$18 per night. Requests for housing must be submitted in writing. For additional information, contact the University at (202) 806-566 or e-mail your questions to [residencelife@howard.edu](mailto:residencelife@howard.edu).
- **University of Maryland, College Park**, has limited on-campus summer housing. Call (301) 314-7884 for information. For temporary housing near the College Park campus, visit [<http://www.umd.edu/OCH>].

## Web Sites for Apartment Listings

Most unfurnished apartment leases are between 6 and 12 months in length. Occasionally, a lease for unfurnished and furnished apartments can be found for just 3 months. The following Web sites offer information about apartments:

- **All Apartments** allows you to search an extensive database for apartments available in the Washington metropolitan area. You can find them on the Web at [<http://www.springstreet.com>].
- **The Apartment Connection** is a free apartment locator service for D.C., Northern Virginia, suburban Maryland, and Baltimore. The World Wide Web address is [<http://www.theapartmentconnection.com>]. While you cannot search their listings online, you can use their Home Page to access a detailed apartment request form to which they guarantee a response within 24 hours. They can be reached by telephone at (888) 994-7368.
- **National Temporary Apartments, Inc.** places individuals in short-term furnished apartments in Washington, Northern Virginia, and suburban Maryland. Parking and utilities are included in the price of most apartments. For additional information, call (800) 258-1973, ext. 91273, or (877) 234-5005, or visit the Web site at [<http://www.rent.net/ads/nta/>].

## Public Transportation

Metrorail (subway) and Metrobus provide the most efficient way of getting around Washington. Five rail lines and an extensive bus system connect Washington, D.C., with the Maryland and Virginia suburbs. Metro lines are named for colors: red, yellow, blue, green, and orange. Metro train stations open at 5:30 a.m. Monday through Friday, and

at 8 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday. They close at midnight, Sunday through Thursday, and at 2 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. The bases fare is \$1.10, with higher fares based on time of day and length of trip.

Station entrances are marked by brown pylons, capped with the letter “M” and with colored stripes to indicate which lines are available at that station. A row of farecard machines will be at the bottom of the escalator. Purchase your farecard after first consulting the Metro map and fare chart. The biggest bill accepted by the farecard machines is a \$20; however, these machines return change only up to \$5 in coins, with quarters the largest. All machines accept major credit cards. Unfortunately, the Metro staff present in the central area of the station is not equipped to give change.

Before proceeding to the trains, insert your farecard into the turnstile gates. The card will usually pop out at the back. Look for the brown pylon that indicates which side of the subway platform to use. The train’s color is indicated on the front of the first car; the final stop is displayed next to the doors. At your destination, reinsert your card into the turnstile. The fare is automatically deducted. If there is money left, your card will pop up again. If you need to continue your trip by Metro bus, be sure to obtain a bus transfer at your originating station before boarding the train. Buses travel to Georgetown and other areas not serviced by Metro.

To obtain more precise information about schedules, special fares, parking, and other information, one can go to [<http://www.wmata.com>]. To obtain schedules for connecting Metrobus service, locations of Metro farecard sales offices, other public transportation information, and free Metro pocket guides, or to learn about coming events and how to get to the events by Metro, call (202) 637-7000.

## **Disclaimer**

This information is offered with no assurances from the Congressional Research Service of accuracy beyond the contact telephone numbers and Internet addresses as of May 4, 2001. In addition, inclusion in this report does not represent an endorsement of the facilities or services cited.