

GRAD Housing Resource Guide



Finding a place to call your own may seem a little daunting, but we're here to help you navigate the process.

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GETTING STARTED

One of the first things you need to know is when to begin your housing search – and the answer is often the sooner the better. If you are already in Chicago, the end of your current lease is likely to determine your timeline. Apartments are usually listed four to eight weeks before they become available.

If you are planning a move to Chicago, use these guidelines to determine when to begin your search.

- **When do you need to be on campus?** If you will be starting in a lab or class over the summer, attending a summer “math camp,” the Academic English Pre-matriculation Program (AEPP), or another summer program, your arrival date may need to be as early as June. If you plan to move just before the school year starts, then you may not need to arrive until late September. If are interested in temporary summer housing on campus, International House has availability in June, July, and August. For more information about that program, visit the International House website.
- **Do you have school-aged children?** If you plan to enroll any dependents in the local schools, be aware that registration takes place over the summer, and public school attendance is based on your address. Enrollment in local schools will often mean at least securing housing – if not actually moving – earlier in the summer, so that you have the information when you contact the school(s) you are interested in.
- **Does your visa status require you to register an address immediately on arrival?** For most international students, you will want to arrange for housing and a phone number before arriving so that your SEVIS registration will be quick and easy.
- **Work backwards.** Once you have determined when you will arrive in Chicago, allow at least 8 weeks for your apartment search. Some options require even further advanced planning (e.g. the University’s Residential Properties units, which often fill by spring).
- **Will you be able to visit Chicago?** If so, a carefully planned trip to the city four to six weeks before your move should allow you to see a variety of units, and speed up the paperwork. If not, you will want to allow some extra time to work through the process remotely.
- **Don’t Panic.** Many times, a landlord will only know that an apartment is going to be available four to eight weeks in advance, and they usually won’t hold a spot open for you for more than one or two weeks. More units constantly become available, and a landlord can often place you on a waiting list for a later opening if you find a building you like.

Before you start, set realistic expectations, and adjust them as you begin to see what is available in your price range. Make a list of your criteria, including budget, size, location, and preferred amenities – this will help guide your search and lead to an informed decision. Be open-minded as you start answering these questions:

- **How will you get to campus?** Do you want to live close enough that you will be able to walk to campus (as most new students do), are you planning to bring a car (with all the extra costs that entails), or will you use public transportation?
- **Do you want to live alone**, or share space and expenses with a roommate?
- **What is your monthly budget?** In addition to rent, remember to factor in other housing-related costs. Will you need to buy furniture or pay for parking? How much are the monthly utility bills? How much is the application fee and the security deposit or move-in fee? Will you have one or more roommates to share expenses?
- **What are your most important criteria?** Distance to campus? Laundry facilities in the building? Is the neighborhood quiet, or does it have many attractions and amenities? Do you have a pet? Do you have children who will attend school or daycare?

After identifying your priorities, it's time to start your search. Keep in mind that the better the features (age, amenities, proximity to bus/train station, etc.), the higher the rent will be. Be prepared to make some sacrifices to stay within your budget.

CHOOSING A NEIGHBORHOOD

The city of Chicago is made up of 77 distinct neighborhoods, each with its own unique characteristics. More than half of our graduate students live near the University's campus in the Hyde Park and Woodlawn neighborhoods (within walking, biking, or campus shuttle distance), but many do choose to live elsewhere in the city and commute to campus. Below, we've provided some information on where UChicago graduate students live throughout the city.

Hyde Park Overview

Hyde Park, home to the University of Chicago, is a diverse, historic neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago. It is located approximately seven miles from downtown Chicago, with Lake Michigan's waterfront to the east, Washington Park to the west, Kenwood to the north, and Woodlawn to the south.

Many of the University's students, faculty, and staff live in or near Hyde Park, thanks to its proximity to campus and its numerous cultural, educational, and religious institutions – as well as restaurants, coffee shops, performance venues, and more.

Hyde Park is also home to several important museums, including the Museum of Science and Industry and the DuSable Museum of African American History, and campus itself boasts the Smart Museum of Art, the Renaissance Society, and the Oriental Institute.

Housing in the Hyde Park Area

Hyde Park, along with neighboring South Kenwood and North Woodlawn, offers a full range of housing options, from high-rises and luxury buildings with lake views, to charming vintage three- or four-story walk-up buildings. There are many private apartments in the neighborhood, as well as a limited number of University-owned

graduate student units, which typically fill very early. The cost of renting in Hyde Park, as in any neighborhood, depends on many factors, including building amenities, size, and location (proximity to campus, shopping centers, or the lake, for example). In general, it will be much less expensive to share an apartment with one or more roommates than to rent a studio or one-bedroom apartment by yourself.

If you opt for housing in the Hyde Park area, a good way to consider location is to look at the routes for the University's [NightRide shuttle service](#). It is designed so that each route begins on campus, and any location in the Hyde Park area is within two blocks of a shuttle stop.

- **East Hyde Park:** This area is home to a mix of options, including the majority of the luxury and high-rise buildings. It is close to Lake Michigan, and provides easy access to public transportation, shopping, and other amenities. Given all of these features, rents may be higher than in other parts of the neighborhood, and street parking in much of this area is limited. It is a 15-25 minute walk to campus.
- **Central and West Hyde Park:** Primarily composed of older, walk-up style buildings, these areas offer a shorter walk to campus – usually 5-15 minutes. Central Hyde Park is close to shopping centers and restaurants; West Hyde Park is primarily residential. Both areas offer somewhat easier street parking and moderate rental prices, especially for shared multi-bedroom apartments, which are plentiful.
- **North Hyde Park/South Kenwood:** Also primarily residential, these areas have a mix of apartments and beautiful landmark homes – and even the occasional converted coach house. Access to shopping areas may be easier, but the walk to campus is 15-25 minutes. 53rd Street is Hyde Park's main retail district. Several stores and restaurants line the street such as Hyde Park Produce, LA Fitness, Cedars Mediterranean Kitchen, Clarke's Restaurant, Akira, CorePower Yoga, Kilwins Chocolates and Fudge, Starbucks, Binny's Beverage Depot and numerous others.
- **South Hyde Park/North Woodlawn:** These residential areas are close to campus – especially to the graduate programs housed south of the Midway Plaisance – but are further from the commercial areas of Hyde Park. Rent prices here are often lower, but students may find having a car desirable for shopping and other errands.

Getting Around Hyde Park

- **Walking or Biking**
Hyde Park is approximately a mile square, so it is typically possible to walk between any two points in the neighborhood in under 30 minutes. Biking is possible almost year-round, and major streets offer bike lanes. Bike racks are available outside of almost every University building. There are also bike-sharing options, including [Divvy Bikes](#), which has several stations in Hyde Park and throughout the city, and offers a [discount](#) to University of Chicago students.
- **Campus Transportation**
Besides walking or biking, the University offers a variety of transit options. During the day, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) operates two routes (#171 and #172), which are free to University students and employees. In addition, the

University provides several shuttle routes, distinctive white buses which start from the center of campus and run various routes around Hyde Park, North Woodlawn, and South Kenwood. A convenient [transit app](#) lets you track each of the buses and shuttles.

- [Daytime CTA Buses](#)
- [UGo Daytime Shuttles](#)
- [UGo NightRide Shuttles](#)

- **Public Transit**

No matter where you live in Hyde Park, you will want to spend plenty of time exploring the city of Chicago. The area is served by several public transit options, including buses and trains that are part of the CTA, as well as Metra Electric trains. Traveling via the CTA using their Ventra Card system has the advantage of allowing you to transfer between buses and trains all over the city, while the Metra train runs on a fixed schedule and is the fastest route if you are only headed as far as downtown.

More information on public transit:

[CTA](#)
[Metra](#)

- **Parking**

As in all big cities, parking in Hyde Park can be a challenge. After 8 a.m. on weekdays, expect to spend 30 minutes or more finding street parking within several blocks of campus; in the residential areas, the same will be true early in the morning and after 5 p.m. If you plan to drive to campus, you may want to apply for a monthly permit for one of the [campus parking lots](#), which is currently \$90/month. If you live in Hyde Park and own a car, the ease of street parking varies widely across the neighborhood; very few buildings offer off-street parking, and if it is available, expect to pay \$90/month or more in addition to your rent. If your car has Illinois license plates, you will need to purchase an annual street parking permit (“City Sticker”) to park on the streets in Chicago.

[Downloadable UChicago Transportation and Parking Guide](#)

LIVING IN OTHER CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOODS

Although the best way to learn about a neighborhood is to explore it in person, we have compiled some information on the eight neighborhoods after Hyde Park that are the most popular to live in among UChicago graduate students, arranged from south (closest to Hyde Park) to north (farthest away).

Getting to Campus

- **Public Transit**

Students who live outside of the University's transit service areas often choose to use public transportation to commute to campus. The city of Chicago is served by several public transit options, including buses and trains that are part of the CTA, as well as Metra Electric trains. Traveling via the CTA using their Ventra Card system has the advantage of allowing you to transfer between buses and trains all over the city, while the Metra train runs on a fixed schedule and is the fastest route if you are only headed as far as downtown. For each neighborhood below, some options for public transit to campus are listed.

More information on public transit:

[CTA](#)

[Metra](#)

South Loop

The South Loop is part of the Near South Side of Chicago, and is one of the fastest growing neighborhoods in the city. It is in close proximity to some of Chicago's most popular attractions, including Soldier Field, the Field Museum, Shedd Aquarium, and Adler Planetarium. In addition to UChicago students, the South Loop is also a popular location for students and young artists from other colleges and universities in the city, including DePaul, Columbia College Chicago, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

With several shopping areas and downtown within walking distance, and most apartments located in new, high-rise buildings, rent prices in this area can be very high. However, it is also among the most convenient neighborhoods in the city for a commute to Hyde Park.

Transportation to Hyde Park:

- Trains: CTA Red Line (Roosevelt, Cermak/Chinatown), Green Line (Roosevelt, Cermak/McCormick Place), or Metra (Museum Campus/11th Street, 18th Street)
- Buses: #55 Garfield (connecting Red and Green lines to Hyde Park), #2 Hyde Park Express (rush hour only), #192 U of C Hospitals Express (rush hour only), #6 Jackson Park Express
- Distance: 6 miles
- Estimated Travel Time: 20-30 minutes

Pilsen

Pilsen is located west of the South Loop, and is also home to many students interested in arts, culture, and music. Because of its proximity to the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Chicago, and other colleges in the city – as well as its affordable rent prices – there is a large student population in the area. Pilsen, known

historically as a predominantly Mexican-American neighborhood, is now blended with artists and students, making it one of the most diverse communities in Chicago.

Housing options include single-family homes, apartments, and new construction, which are often large and reasonably affordable. Pilsen is a quick drive to UChicago's campus, but public transportation offers no direct connection to Hyde Park; the most direct routes are primarily by bus, and you can expect to transfer at least once between Pilsen and Hyde Park.

Transportation to Hyde Park:

- Trains: Bus to CTA Green Line (Cermak/Paulina, then transfer to bus), CTA Pink Line (Damen, 18th, then transfer downtown to bus or train)
- Buses: #8, to #55, or #60, #7, #21 to the Loop (transfer to #192, #2, #6, or train)
- Distance: 8 miles
- Estimated Travel Time: 50-60 minutes

The Loop

As Chicago's official downtown area, the Loop - named after the elevated train tracks which circle the area – is a hub for finance, transportation, government, shopping, tourism, and culture. The Loop is one of the busiest areas of Chicago for commerce and the arts, and has also become a popular residential neighborhood. Condominiums and studio apartments constitute the majority of the options in the Loop, and they generally have luxury amenities such as a gym, doorman, storage, and in-unit laundry. However, since you are in the heart of Chicago's downtown, apartments will be smaller and much pricier than other areas.

With five train lines, several buses, and the Metra all running through the Loop, you should find that a car is not necessary.

Transportation to Hyde Park:

- Trains: CTA Red Line (Lake, Monroe, Jackson, and Harrison) and Green Line (Adams/Wabash, Randolph/Wabash, State/Lake, Clark/Lake); Metra (Millennium, Van Buren)
- Buses: #6 Jackson Park Express, #2 Hyde Park Express (rush hour only), #192 U of C Hospitals Express (rush hour only), #55 Garfield (connecting Red and Green lines to Hyde Park)
- Distance: 7 miles
- Estimated Travel Time: 25-35 minutes

Near North Side

The Near North Side is composed of a handful of other, smaller neighborhoods—Streeterville, River North, Gold Coast, and Old Town. The area is situated between the Loop to the south and Lincoln Park to the north.

The Near North Side is very popular with shoppers and tourists, playing host to the Magnificent Mile shopping district, Navy Pier, the comedy clubs of Old Town, and innumerable restaurants, bars, parks, and nightclubs. There are even a few beaches, and the Lakefront Trail connects the area both to neighborhoods to the north as well as Hyde Park to the south.

The Near North Side is a mix of old mansions, luxury high-rise condominiums, and renovated walk-ups. As one of the most exclusive and expensive areas in Chicago, the rent in Near North can be quite high. Public transportation makes the area easily accessible - the Red, Brown, and Purple Line trains all run throughout the neighborhood, along with several bus lines.

Transportation to Hyde Park:

- Trains: CTA Red Line (North/Clybourn, Clark/Division, Chicago, and Grand)
- Buses: #55 Garfield or #192 U of C Hospitals Express (connecting Red and Green lines to Hyde Park, #192 rush hour only), #2 Hyde Park Express (rush hour only)
- Distance: 11 miles
- Estimated Travel Time: 50-60 minutes

Lincoln Park

Lincoln Park includes both the park of the same name, as well as the residential areas to the west. Inside the park is the Lincoln Park Zoo, one of the oldest zoos in the country and a popular (and free) attraction. There are plenty of bars, pubs, and other nightlife spots throughout the neighborhood, and with DePaul University in the center of Lincoln Park, it is a popular place for college students.

Lincoln Park real estate is a mix of three- and four-story apartment buildings, single-family homes, condominiums, and high-rises providing housing options for families, college students, and young professionals. A wide range of public transit options make it easy to get around the city, though parking everywhere on the north side is a challenge.

Transportation to Hyde Park:

- Trains: CTA Red Line (Fullerton)

- Buses: #55 Garfield or #192 U of C Hospitals Express (connecting Red and Green lines to Hyde Park, #192 rush hour only)
- Distance: 12 miles
- Estimated Travel Time: 55-60 minutes

Wicker Park

Wicker Park has long been a popular community for young Chicagoans, but in recent years the demographics have evolved to include families and other individuals who enjoy the dynamic atmosphere of the area. Known as one of the hippest places in Chicago, Wicker Park is also one of the city's most popular destinations for culture and entertainment. Lying west of Lincoln Park, this is arguably Chicago's creative epicenter, with art galleries, theaters, performance art venues, bars, restaurants, and clubs.

The housing options in Wicker Park range from apartments and walk-ups to luxury mansions. While many of the vintage houses remain, plenty of new condos have sprung up. All these options provide affordable real estate to young professionals and families. Compared to nearby Logan Square, the rents tend to be higher and the spaces are often smaller.

Wicker Park is also an ideal location for commuters to downtown, as the Loop is only 10 minutes away on the Blue Line. Also, several CTA bus lines run through the neighborhood.

Transportation to Hyde Park:

- Trains: CTA Blue Line (Western, Damen, Division; transfer to the Red Line or bus downtown - no direct transportation to Hyde Park)
- Buses: #55 Garfield or #192 U of C Hospitals Express (connecting Red and Green lines to Hyde Park, #192 rush hour only)
- Distance: 12 miles
- Estimated Travel Time: 50-60 minutes

Lakeview

Just north of Lincoln Park is Lakeview, a student-friendly neighborhood that boasts an active nightlife and entertainment scene. Lakeview encompasses four distinct areas: Boystown, Wrigleyville, East Lakeview, and Central Lakeview. Boystown is known for its LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) community, while Wrigleyville is famous for the eponymous Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs baseball team.

The wide range of housing options in the neighborhood include high-rises, single-family homes, condominiums, multi-unit apartment buildings, and lofts. Keep in mind that the rents can vary widely in this area, depending on the location and amenities.

Lakeview also offers easy access to the rest of the city via the CTA – the Brown, Red, and Purple Lines all run through the area, as do many buses. If you opt for a location near the Red Line, your commute to campus might be long, but simple: one train will take you almost all the way to Hyde Park.

Transportation to Hyde Park:

- Trains: CTA Red Line (Sheridan, Addison, Belmont), Brown Line (transfer to Red Line or bus; Addison, Paulina, Southport, Belmont, Wellington, Diversey)
- Buses: #55 Garfield or #192 U of C Hospitals Express (connecting Red and Green lines to Hyde Park, #192 rush hour only)
- Distance: 14 miles
- Estimated Travel Time: 60-75 minutes

Logan Square

Logan Square is a diverse, family-friendly neighborhood west of Lakeview with a growing number of restaurants, nightlife, and retail. Like Wicker Park, it is very popular among students of all ages. It has long been a destination for many different immigrant communities, and despite rapid change in recent years, is still home to a very diverse population.

Logan Square housing options range from old mansions and new condos to affordable walk-ups and economy apartment complexes. Students mainly choose this neighborhood because of the relatively affordable rents and sometimes larger apartments.

Although there is no direct route to Hyde Park, the neighborhood has good public transit links, with stops on the Blue Line and many bus routes.

Transportation to Hyde Park:

- Trains: CTA Blue Line (Logan Square, Western) to the Loop (transfer to Red Line or bus downtown), Metra (Healy, transfer at Union Station downtown to bus or train)
- Buses: #55 Garfield (connecting Red line to Hyde Park), #2 Hyde Park Express or #192 U of C Hospitals Express (rush hour only, downtown to Hyde Park) or #6 Jackson Park Express (downtown to Hyde Park)
- Distance: 14 miles
- Estimated Travel Time: 75-85 minutes

THE SEARCH PROCESS

Finding an Apartment

When moving to a new city, looking for housing can seem daunting, especially if you can't visit in person. Starting your search well in advance of your move – based on the timeline information provided on this site – will make the process much less stressful.

Once you decide how much you can afford and what you are looking for, the easiest place to start is with online listings, looking at the cost for what you want in different parts of Hyde Park or other neighborhoods. You may want to connect online or by email with current students who can offer advice to help you feel more confident during your apartment search.

Size, location, and the condition or amenities of a building are the most significant factors in the price of an apartment. You may find a wide range of apartments available which fit your budget in different neighborhoods across the city. After you have an idea of what you can afford in the area you are targeting, narrow down your choices and shorten your list of possible apartments. Then begin contacting properties that seem like a good fit to learn more, or if possible to make appointments for tours.

If you're ready to start looking, check out the "[Online Resources](#)" page for a list of brokers and sites which aggregate apartment listings, or "[Management Companies in Hyde Park,](#)" with a list of some of the largest such firms in our area.

Tips for Your Search

Don't feel like you need to rush through this process and accept the first place you find. Keep in mind that new listings come up regularly, and landlords may only know they will have a vacancy four to eight weeks in advance. Here are a few tips to help you avoid common mistakes.

- **Renters have rights** The City of Chicago has extensive rules and regulations governing the rights and responsibilities of both the landlord and you, the tenant. You may find it helpful to review these regulations before starting your search, and you should definitely review them before signing a lease. The City provides a summary of the Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance, as well as a link to the ordinance itself, [here](#). [Renter's Rights](#)
- **Condition of the unit and the building** In person or online, check the general condition in the apartment, and also around the building (Google Maps Streetview is helpful if you can't do this in person). It's OK to ask the landlord to let you ask the current tenant questions, although they probably will not put you directly in touch with them for privacy reasons. If anything seems to be broken or not functioning, you should ask that the maintenance be completed before your actual move-in date and that the agreement to do these repairs be included in your lease agreement. You will also have an opportunity to list these items upon move-in.

- **Ask about utilities** Don't forget to ask the landlord about which utilities are included in the rent and which are not. Most listings will describe this up front, but it's fine to double check.
 - **Things to check for if you or a friend can visit an apartment**
 - o Turn on all the faucets to check the water pressure and how quickly it gets hot
 - o Turn on all the lights; not every room in an apartment will have ceiling lighting
 - o Check the locks on the doors and windows to make sure they work
 - o Check for holes or water damage on the floor, walls, and ceilings
 - o If provided, check to make sure the air conditioning and heating work properly (Note: most older buildings do not have central air conditioning, and heat is often provided via radiators which you will not be able to turn on or off at will)
 - o Take note of the number of electrical outlets and where they are located
 - o Ask to see the laundry room or any other amenities the building offers (storage, bike room, etc.)
 - o If you are unsure about an area, consider visiting in the evening
- Take notes on these items based on either provided photos or your visit, and use these notes to compare units. You can also use this apartment comparison checklist.

Questions to Ask

Asking questions is just as critical as seeing apartments and neighborhoods. Below you will find some questions to ask when evaluating properties:

The Apartment and Lease

- How long is the lease period? Most are one year, but feel free to ask about other options.
- How much is the rent, and what was the rent of the last tenant?
- How often does the rent go up, and by how much?
- Does the landlord ask for a security deposit or a move-in fee? In what circumstances can you get this deposit back?
- What would be the results of breaking the lease early?
- How old is the apartment?
- Is there central heat and/or air conditioning, or is the unit heated by radiators?
- What is the pet policy? Note that buildings may allow only certain types of pets, and may charge a fee if you have one.
- What is the apartment maintenance process? How are emergency repairs taken care of? Is the building supervisor or engineer located on-site?
- Does the landlord have any other special policies you should be aware of?

Utilities

- Which utilities, if any, are included in the rent? (Water is usually included; heat is often but not always included; additional amenities like electricity, cooking gas, internet, or cable television are rarely included.)
- Will the utilities be handled by the manager or landlord, or do you need to re-apply? Most renters will need to establish their own electricity accounts, and often natural gas as well; you can also choose to sign up for internet or cable services.

Parking

- Does the building have parking available? How much does it cost? Is there a waiting list?
- Is any visitor parking available?

Location

- Where are the closest grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, laundromats and/or dry cleaners, and train lines or bus routes?

Furniture & Appliances

- Is the unit furnished? If so, what is provided? Note that furniture rentals are available through companies like Cort Furniture (<https://cort.com/studyusa>)
- What appliances are included? Almost all units include the stove and refrigerator, but dishwashers and microwave ovens are less common.
- What condition are the appliances and furniture in?

ONLINE RESOURCES

Management Companies and Brokers

Broadly speaking, there are two easy routes to finding an apartment in Hyde Park - or any other neighborhood. One is to work with a management company that has many units available, usually in a large number of buildings. The other option is to work with broker or listing company, which usually does not own or manage any properties, but works with a large number of management firms and helps connect apartment seekers with options that meet their criteria for location, budget, etc.

The easiest place to begin your search is to use online apartment listing websites to get an idea of what prices are like in each neighborhood you're interested in. On these sites, you can narrow your results by applying filters with your preferences such as price range, neighborhood, number of bedrooms, whether it allows pets, etc. They will show apartments from many different management companies, and sometimes from individuals renting out their condominium or house.

Here are a few of the many sources for apartment listings throughout the Chicago area. Almost all of them will allow you to contact the landlord or even apply for an apartment through the site, and some, such as StudentSpace or Apartment Finders, can even arrange in-person showings for you.

Please note that the University does not endorse or promote any specific company, vendor, or rental agent; the companies mentioned here are offered for informational purposes only.

- Apartments.com
- Chicago Apartment Finders
- Domu
- StudentSpace Housing
- Trulia
- Zillow
- Zumper

Management Companies in Hyde Park

Many students choose to use online apartment listing sites or brokers, who work with a wide variety of management companies. However, it is also possible to work directly with a management company that has many units available.

There are two types of property management companies—those that own and manage one or more buildings, and those that manage units or buildings on behalf of other owners. Because management companies usually work with a large number of tenants, they offer services like leasing agents to show you available units, 24-hour emergency service numbers, and so on.

The management companies listed here offer a range of options in Hyde Park, Woodlawn, and Kenwood.

Please note that the University does not endorse or promote any non-University company, vendor, or rental agent; the third-party companies mentioned here are offered for informational purposes only.

- University Residential Properties
- Vue53
- Hyde Park Places
- Hyde Park Property Management Company
- Cagan Management Group

- Mac Properties
- Parker-Holsman
- TLC Management
- Twin Towers
- Kass Management

Classified Ads

In addition to sites which focus on housing, there are other sites which have advertisements for a wide range of goods and services. These are usually posted by private individuals, and not companies, and so it is a good idea to exercise caution when arranging to meet someone you have contacted through a classified ad. However, in addition to apartments, these can be a good way to find used furniture, appliances, and other items you may need. Please note that the University does not endorse or promote any specific company, vendor, or rental agent; the companies mentioned here are offered for informational purposes only.

- Craigslist: A national site which allows you to search by location and category
- Hyde Park Herald: The local neighborhood newspaper, with online ads
- University of Chicago Marketplace: The University community's classified site, which has apartments, jobs, furniture, and services

Listing Agents or Realtors

While you can do your own search for properties listed on online resources, working with a listing agent, or even a realtor (real estate agent), may provide you access to units that are not listed yet. Some of the sites listed above, and all of the major property management companies, have staff who will assist you in identifying which of their listings or properties are a good fit for you, and if you can visit, will show you several units. Realtors typically focus on selling properties, but a few also work with rental units.

A listing agent or property management representative can help you with a search for housing based on your criteria. A good agent with past experience of the neighborhood can also keep you away from buildings with a history of problems, or even help you negotiate the terms with your future landlord. Be sure to discuss any fees they may charge in advance - while in some cases the renter is responsible for paying any fees, in others the fees are covered by the landlord.

Where to Stay if You Visit Chicago

If you do decide to visit Chicago to conduct your apartment search, it is a good idea to line up your appointments for showings in advance. Making sure that your visit includes a week day may be helpful, since not every management company will be open on the weekend.

Once you have decided to visit, there are a few ways to arrange accommodations during your stay.

- Contact your school or department and ask if any current students might be willing to put you up during your stay
- Consider a hostel, such as the HI Chicago in downtown, the Freehand Chicago in River North, the Urban Holiday Lofts in Wicker Park, or several others, which you can find on HostelWorld.com or Hostels.com.
- If you have the budget for a hotel, options in Hyde Park include the Hyatt Place-Chicago South/University Place and the La Quinta Inn & Suites Chicago-Lake Shore.
- There are hundreds of hotels across the city, so feel free to explore for more ideas.

Please note that the University does not endorse or promote any specific non-University company, vendor, or rental agent; the third-party companies mentioned here are offered for informational purposes only.

THE RENTING PROCESS

Rental Application Process in Chicago

Whether you choose to live in the Hyde Park area or elsewhere in the city, you can expect the application process to be basically the same. There are typically several steps involved, and it can take anywhere from a few minutes (if you are well prepared), to a few days (if, for instance, you need to gather documents or communicate back and forth with the landlord or your co-signer).

Filling Out the Application Form

As the first step of securing rental housing, you should be prepared to fill out a rental application when you find an apartment you are interested in – there is usually an application fee, though, so you will not want to apply for several units all at once. The rental application includes the applicant's personal information, social security number (if any), employment or school information, references, etc. This information will be used by the landlord to run a credit check, criminal background check, verification of your prior addresses and rental history, your source and amount of income, and a personal reference check.

For international students who may not have a Social Security Number yet, it is a good idea to have a copy of your passport, as well as your UChicago admission letter, financial aid offer letter, and your I-20 form.

Sample Rental Application

Pay the Necessary Fees

Depending on the company or landlord you are renting from, you may be asked to pay

an application fee, a security deposit, move-in fee, pet deposit, or other costs. Ask the leasing agent or landlord about which of the fees are refundable, and under what circumstances. If your application is not approved, any deposits – but not the application fee – should be returned. However, if you are accepted and change your mind, you may forfeit what you have given them. Ask lots of questions, and ideally do not submit a full deposit until you have decided to take an apartment.

Submit Proof of Income

You can expect to be asked to present some proof of income and employment. If you have them, consider bringing pay stubs or other financial records, or documentation of any University financial award or other sources of income you will have, when looking at or applying for apartments.

Credit and Background Check

In almost all cases, the landlord will run a credit check on the applicant(s) and/or your co-signer. Some may also want to conduct a criminal background check. These allow the manager to determine your level of financial responsibility, and to ensure the safety of their community.

Co-signers (Guarantors)

If you do not have a rental history, or have poor credit, you may need to have someone sign as a guarantor on your lease. The co-signer or guarantor will also be required to sign the lease, and will share legal and financial responsibility with you for the terms of the lease. This is not the same as applying with a roommate.

Signing the Lease

Once your rental application is approved, the landlord or manager will prepare a lease for you to sign. You, along with any roommates, and any co-signers or guarantors, will all be required to sign the lease. After signing the lease, you will need to pay first month's rent, as well as any move-in fees or security deposits you have not already paid.

Housing and Leasing Vocabulary

- **Amenities:** The features and services offered by an apartment or building. This may include things like on-site laundry facilities, parking, fitness center, bike room, extra storage, childcare center, playground, and community room.
- **Co-signer (or Guarantor):** A co-signer is someone who assumes responsibility for a lease with a tenant who otherwise would not meet the landlord's financial qualifications. If you have no rental history or bad credit, you may be required to have a co-signer or guarantor. This is different than having roommates who also sign the lease on their own behalf.
- **Condo or condominium:** An apartment that is owned by an individual in a building, with the common areas of the complex shared among all condo owners. Many condo owners rent out their units, either through a management company or listing site, or through classified ads.
- **Credit Check:** Landlords will review a potential tenant's credit history through one of several credit rating agencies before approving a rental application. This

provides the landlord with an understanding of your financial history. You need to give written consent which permits the landlord to check your credit, but almost all applications will require this.

- **Credit Report:** This is the report prepared by the credit rating agencies. It will describe your personal credit history – whether you have made bill and debt repayments on time, have delinquent accounts, or have been sued. This report gives the landlord information about a potential tenant’s trustworthiness.
- **Eviction:** A legal process to remove a tenant from a rental unit because the tenant has violated the rental agreement by damaging the property, failing to pay rent, etc.
- **Fixture Fee/Fix Fee:** A fee paid by the tenant for appliances already in a unit.
- **Full Bath:** A bathroom which includes a toilet, sink, and bathtub or shower. A “Half Bathroom,” on the other hand, has a toilet and sink but no shower.
- **Furnished Apartment:** An apartment that comes with basic furniture such as a bed, sofa, kitchen table and chairs, etc.
- **Landlord:** The person or company who offers a property they own or manage for rent. This may be the owner of the building, a property manager hired by the owner to rent his/her apartment, or an individual renting out their home or condominium.
- **Lease (Leasing Agreement):** A written legal contract between a landlord and a tenant stating the dates, cost, rules, and other terms of the rental agreement for a predetermined length of time. A lease must be in writing to be valid.
- **Lessee:** A tenant under a lease (i.e., you as the renter).
- **Lessor:** One who grants a lease (the landlord).
- **Loft apartments:** An open-plan apartment, often with large windows and high ceilings, often created from an old industrial property, such as a factory or warehouse.
- **Rental period:** Can refer either to the length of time between rent payments (usually one month), or to the length of the lease.
- **Renter's Insurance:** Insurance protecting the tenant in case of damage or loss due to fire, flood, or theft. Agreements usually include clauses covering injury to a guest or visitor. Some leases will require you to secure renter’s insurance. The landlord’s insurance will not cover your belongings.
- **Security Deposit:** A deposit, often equal to one month’s rent, is sometimes required at the start of the rental agreement against any damages/losses that might occur while you live in the unit. This amount should be returned to you at the end of your lease agreement if all the terms of the lease have been met.
- **Square Feet:** All measurements will be given in feet and inches (indicated with ‘ and “), with total size indicated with square feet (SF or another abbreviation may be used). 600 SF is about 56 square meters; 900 SF is about 84 square meters.
- **Sublease or Sublet:** A lease by a tenant to a third party (sublessee or sublettor), usually renting all or part of the rental property for a shorter term than the tenant’s term while still maintaining full responsibility to the landlord. This may occur if, for example, you rent out your apartment to someone else for the summer.
- **Studio:** An apartment which is composed of a single room and a bathroom. The main room functions as the kitchen, living room and bedroom. Usually appropriate only for one person.

- **Tenant:** A person who rents or leases a rental unit from a landlord. (Also known as a lessee.)
- **Termination:** The ending of a rental agreement by either party.
- **Utilities:** Utilities include basic services like electricity, natural gas, heat, and water. You may also want other services, such as internet, cable television, or telephone. Ask your landlord which you will need to sign up for. Depending upon your building, the heat may be included, or may be powered by gas or electricity, and the same is true for your appliances and other items.
- **Warranty of Habitability:** The warranty of habitability implies that the tenants have the right to live in a safe, healthy and clean apartment, which does not have a negative impact on their welfare.

Common Abbreviations

Here are some of the most common abbreviations that you will come across during your apartment search.

- **A/C:** Air Conditioning
- **APT:** Apartment
- **BA:** Bathroom
- **BD or BR:** Bedroom
- **BSMT:** Basement
- **CAC:** Central Air Conditioning
- **CBL:** Cable
- **CPT:** Carpet
- **DR:** Dining Room
- **ELV:** Elevator
- **D/W:** Dishwasher
- **HDWD:** Hardwood
- **HW:** Hot water
- **LR:** Living Room
- **MBR:** Master Bedroom
- **MO:** Month
- **MWV:** Microwave
- **PRV:** Private
- **RDR:** Radiator
- **REF:** Refrigerator
- **SQ FT:** Square Feet
- **W/D:** Washer and Dryer
- **WTR:** Water
- **YD:** Yard

Leases

A lease is a legally binding document that contains the agreement between a landlord and a tenant, including details about the length of the rental period, the amount and payment schedule of the rent, maintenance of the unit, pets, utilities, and any other legally allowed terms or conditions the landlord chooses to add. Reading and understanding your lease is the best way to protect your rights as a tenant.

Sample Lease Agreement

The following is a summary of the major components that you will see in most rental agreements.

- **Information about the unit, lessor, and lessee:**
Usually apartment leases include basic information about the unit – including address and sometimes a brief description – as well as the names, contact information, and other details of the tenant(s) and the landlord. All adults who will live in the unit should be listed on the lease.
- **Lease term:**
This section includes the dates on which the lease will start and end, and possibly renewal and termination details.
- **Rent:**
This part of the lease agreement states the amount and due date of rental payments, along with the penalty for late payments.
- **Fees and Deposits:**
In this section the landlord details any deposits or fees such as security deposits, pet deposits, and other charges.
- **Rules and Regulations:**
There are some rules and regulations that the tenant should follow during his/her tenancy. This part of a lease agreement states specific regulations, including rules regarding pets, guests, modifications to the unit, and so on.
- **Access to Premises:**
Your landlord may need to access the property for repairs, inspections, and to show the unit to potential tenants or buyers. This section regulates when a landlord may enter the unit as well as the type of notification required.
- **Other Lease Details:**
There are often separate clauses regulating repairs, utilities, renter's insurance (if offered or required), and so on.

Renter's Insurance

You may wish to invest in a renter's insurance policy to cover your belongings in the case of theft, weather damage, or other incidents. The landlord's insurance policy will typically cover only the building itself, so in the case of water damage, a power surge, or a break-in, they will not cover any loss or damage to your possessions. Renter's insurance may also provide you protection in the case that someone is injured in your apartment. You can comparison shop and sign up for renter's insurance through a wide range of websites. After shopping around, it's a good idea to sign up through the specific insurance company's own website. Below are a few major U.S. insurance companies which offer this type of coverage.

Please note that the university does not endorse or promote any specific non-university company, vendor, or agent; the third-party companies mentioned here are offered for informational purposes only.

[Renters Insurance.net](#) will provide quotes from several companies

[Allstate](#)

Esurance
Geico
Nationwide
State Farm

Setting up Utilities

Be sure that any utilities that are included in your rent are expressly noted on the lease agreement. The most commonly included utilities are water and heat, although wide variation is possible. In most, but not all, cases, you will need to establish your own accounts with the utility companies for electricity, natural gas, and any additional services you want.

Typically, the landlord will – or can on request – provide you with a list of the names and contact information for the utility companies that provide service to the building or the area. Call each of them a week or more prior to your move in date to allow the provider time to create an account for you, and if necessary to schedule an appointment to visit the premises.

Students who do not yet have a Social Security Number (SSN) should visit this page on our Office of International Affairs site for more information on setting up utilities without this identification number.

Electricity and Natural Gas

When planning ahead for utility costs, be sure to ask the landlord or prior tenant for monthly estimates for electricity and/or gas. Don't forget to take account of Chicago's weather: if it's not included, home heating can be a major expense in the winter, and most apartments do not have air conditioning - installing a window unit during the summer months might require a surcharge, and most certainly will raise your electricity bill noticeably. Most appliances other than the stove/oven (range) run on electricity; most stoves/ranges and sometimes the heat will usually be run by natural gas.

Other Utilities

It is uncommon for apartment buildings to include internet or cable television access as part of the lease/rental agreement. Telephone service never is. Depending upon where you live, you may have multiple or only one service option for cable television or telephone. Check with your landlord or the companies you are interested in, or ask other tenants in the building. Many providers are available for mobile (cellular) phone service.

Breaking, Subleasing, and Assigning a Lease

Once signed, the lease is a legally binding contract, and there are often significant costs, fees, and paperwork involved in the event you attempt to break your lease. If you attempt to break your lease or abandon the unit without the landlord's agreement, you are still liable for your rent through the remaining term of your lease. To avoid this situation, it is best to work with your landlord to find another qualified tenant for the apartment. There are two options for this, subletting and re-renting.

Sublease

You find someone to take over the apartment, and the rent, from you until the end of the lease. The original lease will remain your responsibility until the end of the lease term – that is, you would still be liable if the person you sublet to did not pay rent, or damaged the apartment.

Re-lease

Less commonly, you may arrange with the landlord to release you from your lease obligations. You and the landlord still need to find someone to rent your apartment, and they may be more open to this if you have someone interested in the unit. This option is less risky, but your landlord can charge you a fee for re-renting as well as any expenses spent during his/her search for a new tenant.

In addition, you may wish to sublease your apartment in the event you plan to travel for an extended period during the term of your lease. As noted above, in the event you do wish to sublet your apartment, even if only for a portion of the term of your lease, you will need your landlord's prior written consent. In addition, you will remain responsible for any apartment damage or any rent not paid by your subtenant, so please choose any subtenant carefully.

Rights and Responsibilities

Residents of Chicago are governed by a "Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance." Most leases in the Chicago area are designed to follow the guidelines set in this ordinance. By identifying each party's rights and responsibilities, it protects both you and your landlord. A summary of the ordinance can be found [here at City of Chicago's website.](#)

Responsibilities of Tenants

- Make the rental payments in a timely manner. Otherwise, you can be subject to late fees and/or eviction.
- Follow the terms of your lease. Failure to do so may result in your eviction.
- Take pictures and document any damage visually and in writing before you move in, and send copies to the landlord. Otherwise, the landlord has the right to charge you for any damage to the apartment when you move out.
- Keep your apartment in good condition, and use all the appliances and facilities appropriately.
- Maintain good relations with your neighbors – keep noise volumes at appropriate levels, and use shared spaces courteously.
- Your landlord has the right to access your apartment if they have a good reason – maintenance, inspection, or showing it to a potential new tenant. However, you have the right to require at least one or two days' prior notice from your landlord, except in the event of an emergency.
- Give written notice about whether you want to terminate or renew your lease, usually at least 30 days before the end of your current lease.
- Follow proper garbage disposal procedures, including recycling.

- Notify your landlord of any maintenance needs as soon as possible, preferably dated and in writing. Most will have an online form allowing you to do this. If the landlord does not take care of any issues, you may have the right to proceed with other actions – review the terms of your lease carefully, along with the renter’s rights website, to learn more.

Responsibilities of Landlords:

- Provide the tenant with a safe apartment which is maintained in accordance with city health and safety regulations.
- Return the security deposit if all the obligations of the lease are met. (Although security deposits must be refunded, move-in fees or other charges usually are not.)
- Provide tenants with written notice at least 30 days in advance if a lease is being terminated or cannot be renewed.
- Provide water with adequate water pressure and a reliable water heater.
- Provide a heating system in good working order. There are specific rules regarding the temperature that must be maintained in the apartment if the landlord controls the heating levels.
- Accept a reasonable offer for subletting the apartment without additional fees. Subleasing is legal under the “Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance.”
- Provide a lease agreement that does not violate any laws. If a lease contains illegal clauses, they are not enforceable.

LIVING WITH A ROOMMATE

Are you considering living with, or actively looking for, a roommate? There are certainly many advantages to deciding to share an apartment – from cost savings to even potentially a new friend. If you do decide to look for an apartment with a roommate, there are a few things to keep in mind.

Finding a Roommate

There are a variety of ways to go about identifying a possible roommate, even if you do not know anyone else who is or will be in Chicago. As with the apartment search itself, it’s best to consider beforehand what you need or want in a roommate – is it important that they share your cleaning or social preferences? Are you willing to live with pets, or with someone who smokes? Where are you hoping to live, and do you have a preference for a type of apartment? Once you’ve identified your needs in these areas, consider some of the following options for finding a roommate.

- Connect with current or incoming students on listhosts or social media. Does your school, department, or division have a listhost, Facebook page, or other way to contact others in those programs? UChicagoGRAD’s Admitted Graduate Students Facebook page is one such example.

- Use a roommate matching service. These are offered by some of the major rental companies we list elsewhere, including Vue 53, Hyde Park Property Management, Mac Apartments, and others.
- Look for listings of current tenants advertising for a new roommate. The University's Marketplace site and other listing sites will often have ads seeking a new roommate. You could also post such an ad asking for someone to apartment-hunt with.
- Make sure that you are clear up front about the items you identified as most important to you, and think about how you will know the person will be a reliable and safe roommate. Once you have identified a potential roommate, consider discussing with them the sorts of issues that may arise. Dealing with these issues up front may save you from problems later, and should be addressed before signing a lease with them. Consider creating a written agreement in advance spelling out your arrangement.

Remember that once you sign a lease together, you will each individually be responsible to the landlord for all Tenant obligations under the terms of your lease, including the rent and any damages to the unit – so please choose your fellow tenants carefully.

- Do you share the concerns that you identified as most important? That is, will your preferences regarding cleaning, lifestyle, studying, and social habits be a good fit with this person's preferences?
- Will he or she respect your personal property and privacy?
- How will you divide the rental payments, utility expenses, and even groceries?
- Who will provide or pay for which household items (furniture, kitchenware, etc.)?

Tips for Living with a Roommate

Planning ahead is a great way to ensure that you and your roommate are a good fit. Going into the roommate relationship with open lines of communication, and having a plan for addressing issues if they arise, will help you prevent unnecessary conflicts. Below are some tips to help you make the most of this experience.

- Be sure that you are being a good roommate. Adhere to the terms of your agreement and your rental obligations, and be open to dialogue and feedback.
- Avoid implicit language and try to be explicit – don't expect him or her to be able to read your mind.
- When possible, communicate with your roommate in person. This is more likely to be effective than communicating via impersonal notes or other forums.
- Be flexible – if both of you are open to compromise and adjustment along the way, new situations can be addressed constructively.
- If an issue arises that you are not able to reach agreement on, ask a neutral third party to help you find a solution together.

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Whether you have school age-children or are planning to start a family, location is an important consideration for student parents. In addition to finding an apartment, you will need to consider where your children will go to daycare or school, whether the area is popular with other young families, and whether you will have easy access to playgrounds, your pediatrician, and family-friendly activities. Here are our tips for renting with children.

Take schools into consideration

For families with young children, local school options may determine where you choose to live. Can you afford a private school? If so, how will your child get to school? Will your child attend a public school? If so, students are assigned to a school based on their home address. Chicago Public Schools (CPS) begin on the first Tuesday of September every fall, but registration for places happens much earlier in the summer. Here are some resources to help you explore which school's area you may want to rent in. Before signing a lease, you can also call the school to confirm that it is in their attendance area.

Note that many schools will require a physical examination and immunization records before enrolling a child, and CPS will require proof of your address in Chicago.

[UChicagoGRAD's Family Resource Center Parent Guide](#) includes information on public and private schools in the area. You may also want to consult the [Chicago Public Schools' School Locator Map](#).

Proximity to playgrounds and daycare

Chicago – and Hyde Park – boasts a wide variety of parks and playgrounds. Living within walking distance of a place for your children to play outdoors, or near child-friendly attractions like the Museum of Science and Industry, will have great benefits. If your children are preschool age, consider the variety of options and cost of daycares or childcare co-ops.

[UChicagoGRAD's Family Resource Center Parent Guide](#) also includes information on childcare options and child-friendly attractions.

Look for family-friendly housing

If the building is a family-friendly one, then living there with little kids will be easier – and probably more fun. Generally, buildings with larger apartments are more likely to be family-friendly; a nearby playground, or a bike room harboring plenty of kids' bikes are good indicators of a child-friendly environment. Having neighbors with children is a built-in way to make friends for the whole family.

Laundry facilities

Having an in-unit or on-site washer/dryer will make life much easier for families with children. In-unit laundry is mostly found in newer or renovated – and thus usually more expensive – properties, but an on-site laundry room is fairly typical. Some buildings might allow you to have a portable washer and dryer that you can easily connect to the sink when required. Asking your landlord in advance whether it is allowed or not may prevent future conflicts.

INFORMATION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Talk with your potential landlord beforehand about the accessibility features of the property. What type of resources do you need?

- Are there in-unit features such as grab bars, sufficient clear floor space, appropriately located outlets and switches, or emergency alarm systems designed for individuals with hearing and/or vision loss?
- Are all of the common areas of the building, such as the mail room, laundry, and hallways, accessible as well?
- If alterations are needed for the unit to fully suit your needs, will the landlord provide or facilitate them?

Related links:

- [University of Chicago Student Disability Services](#)
- [University of Chicago Graduate Student Housing – contact them directly to inquire about accessible units](#)
- [Fair Housing Act Information](#)
- [Disability Rights in Housing](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Housing Webinars

Offered in the spring and summer, these webinars provide an overview of the apartment-search process and timeline. For dates and to register, please [click here](#).

Monthly Budget Spreadsheet

The first thing you need to determine is how much you can afford to budget for your rent and utilities. Use this worksheet to estimate what your expenses will be, and then keep track of actual expenses. Consult any information provided by your school or department on what they suggest you allocate for each type of expense. Remember to take into consideration your summer expenses, and whether any funding or resources you may have will need to cover 12 months rather than just the academic year.

See more on the next page →

Expenses	Monthly Cost
Rent	
Utilities (Electricity, Water, Gas, Internet, Cable TV)	
Renter's Insurance	
Groceries	
Household/Personal Products	
Mobile Phone	
Transportation (Bus, Gasoline)	
Parking (Home and/or Campus)	
Laundry and Dry Cleaning	
Entertainment/Eating Out	
Health, Auto, or Other Insurance	
Clothing	
Other expenses	
TOTAL	

Apartment Comparison Checklist

Filling out a comparison chart like this one will provide you with an easy way to compare properties. You can use the following checklist to keep track of the features of each apartment.

About the Lease	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
How much is the monthly rent?				
What are the dates of the lease period?				
Which utilities are included? (E.g. Heat, Water, Electricity, Internet, Cable, etc.)				
If utilities not included, what was the average monthly cost of utilities for previous renters?				
Date Available				
Rent Late Payment Charges				
Is subleasing allowed?				
How much is the security deposit or move in-fee? Is it refundable?				
What is the penalty for breaking the lease early?				

How much advance notice is required for lease termination?				
What is the expected annual rent increase?				
Are pets allowed? Which ones?				
Is there an extra pet deposit or monthly fee?				
Apartment and Amenities				
Air Conditioning				
Stove / Refrigerator				
Dishwasher				
Microwave				
Furniture Included				
Cable/Internet/Phone				
Condition of Bathroom(s)				
Carpet/Floor Condition				
Ample Closet Space				
Adequate Storage Space				
Balcony or patio				

Gym/Pool				
Laundry Facilities				
Parking Spaces Available/ Monthly Fee				
Guest Parking Available				
Bike Room				
Distance to Campus or Shuttle Stop				
Closest Public Transit				
Closest Grocery Store or Shops				

Moving Checklist

Moving can be a challenging experience. Below are some useful tips for making the process easier.

One Month Before Your Move	
Consider the layout/size of your new apartment, and decide what you will bring, leave behind, or give away	
Get boxes and packing supplies	
Contact the utility companies using the information your landlord provided	

when you signed your lease and begin setting up your services	
Purchase renter's insurance	
Change your address with the postal service	
Begin packing	
One Week Before Your Move	
Change your address with credit card companies or any other vendors	
Contact your landlord and confirm the exact time and date of your move, and when and where to pick up your keys	
Reconfirm with your moving company, truck rental, or other helpers about the move day	
Complete all but your final packing	
Register for any new services you plan to use, such as the CTA's Ventra Card, a car share service like ZipCar, or a bike share service like Divvy Bikes	

Move-In Day	
Meet your landlord and get your keys	
Take time and do a pre-move in inspection with time-stamped pictures of the unit before you move anything, ideally with the landlord. Take pictures of any damage (like cracking paint or broken door knob), and document any issues in writing to the landlord.	
Be sure you know where your laundry room, bike room, storage, or other amenities are located	