July 2012

Dear Incoming Graduate Students,

Welcome to the Northwestern community! This document is designed to give you information about finding housing in the Evanston/Chicago area. Much of this information was compiled over the years but for the most part is still quite accurate.

Current graduate students generally live in Evanston and Chicago, with a handful residing in the surrounding suburbs. If you want to live close to school, Evanston is a good choice. In Evanston, the concentration of undergrads and the rents tend to increase as you get closer to the Northwestern campus. The quality of the apartment can go down, because many landlords know that undergrads don't care about the condition and aren't very good at keeping apartments clean.  There is shopping along Chicago Ave. in the Main and Dempster areas as well as on Sherman from Clark to Grove. Those are nice areas to live if you want to be close to shopping, restaurants, and bars.  Many people living in Evanston will walk, ride the [intercampus shuttle](http://www.northwestern.edu/uservices/transportation/shuttles/intercampus/intercampus.html), bike, or take the train to school. Some people in Evanston may drive to school, but you should be aware of the University enforced [Walking Zone](http://www.northwestern.edu/up/parking/permits/walking-zone.html). If you live within about a mile of campus, you can’t get a permit to park at school.

Many people choose to live in Chicago because of the amenities that come with living in a city, (e.g., restaurants, bars, clubs, museums, parks) and because there are more neighborhoods to choose from. Most graduate students live in neighborhoods along the El (i.e., the red line) from Lincoln Park up to Rogers Park. Some people consider parts of Rogers Park and the area near Howard unsafe but rents are very affordable so I would recommend deciding yourself. People who live in Chicago tend to live as close to the red line as possible for easy access to the El.  If you plan on living in the city south of the Belmont stop, keep in mind that the purple line express only runs during weekday rush hours. Attached is a map of neighborhoods, the El, and average prices for different types of apartments. The red line is on the map -- it runs north-south and is the furthest set of tracks east; the stations are marked with white circles. A lot of bars, clubs, and things to do can be found in the Wrigleyville/Lakeview/Lincoln Park area, so many graduate students live there to experience the city life. Some people bike from Chicago (typically in the warmer weather), but most people drive or take the train.

Rent can vary greatly depending on neighborhood, size of the apartment, and number of roommates. Typically, people in Evanston pay more for rent, but there are exceptions. The table below shows some average costs (but these can range greatly) of the students here based on a 2006 survey (numbers have gone up slightly since then):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Housing** | **Average Cost****Evanston** | **Average Cost Chicago** |
| *Studio* | $880 | $865 |
| *One bedroom* | $1088 | $950 |
| *Two bedroom* | $1626 | $1360 |
| *Three bedroom* | $1750 | $2100 |
| *Per Person inc. utilities* | $850 | $835 |

Other options for living arrangements are Engelhart or Seabury Hall, which are graduate student residence halls in Evanston. Generally, you have a small, furnished room to yourself and share a kitchen and bathroom with a roommate. Studios and one bedrooms are also available. One bedroom singles and apartments are generally reserved for couples and families but you may be able to score one if you get lucky. You can contact the [Graduate Housing Office](http://www.northwestern.edu/gradhousing/) for more information at (847) 491-5127.

Many apartments have heat included in the price of the rent.  This means that the heat is water-based (radiators or baseboard heating) and that you may not have control over when it is turned on; however, your utilities bill won't skyrocket in the cold, winter months like it does for people who pay for their own heat (central air/gas heating).  Some places will have air conditioner units installed in windows or walls.  Some people like to install their own A/C in the window for the hot summer months (July/August).  You might also want to consider the availability of parking, laundry, policies on pets, and proximity to grocery stores such as Dominick’s, Jewel-Osco, and Whole Foods.

Parking on campus near Cook Hall costs $501 a year. Similar to many campuses, construction sometimes makes parking difficult. One alternative is a parking lot located at Ryan Field, just over a mile from campus. However, shuttles run Monday-Friday and the permit only costs $25. More parking information can be found at: <http://www.northwestern.edu/up/parking/>

In terms of looking for housing, students generally make trips during the summer. Others come a few days early in the fall before orientation. The whole process usually takes just a few days (normally allow 2-5 days for processing of rental application paperwork once you find an apartment you like). Most landlords recommend starting to look 20-45 days before you want to move in but you can usually find places available almost immediately. Many people in your class and current graduate students may also be looking for roommates.

Please do not hesitate to contact us about places to stay while apartment hunting or if you are looking for possible roommate contacts. Also, let us know if you need more details about neighborhoods, costs, parking, owning a car, etc… There are some helpful housing websites listed below.

Good luck!

-MSSA

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For information on Northwestern, Evanston, and Chicago, including maps, you can visit:

<http://nulink.northwestern.edu> Website with comprehensive list of NU resources

<http://www.cityofchicago.org> Website for city of Chicago

<http://www.cityofevanston.org> Website for city of Evanston

<http://www.visitchicagonorthshore.com> Website for the North Shore (i.e., northern suburbs)

For information on housing:

<http://www.northwestern.edu/offcampus/>

*Websites listing apartments for rent:*

<http://www.apartmentpeople.com> (also contains nice links with maps of neighborhoods)

<http://www.ChicagoApartmentFinders.com>

<http://www.chicagoreader.com> (“Rentals” at the top right)

<http://chicago.craigslist.com>

<http://www.apartments.com>

<http://www.rent.com>

*Realtors in the Evanston area:*

Dahl & Associates (847) 869-5843

Farnsworth-Hill (847) 328-3330 <http://www.farnsworth-hill.com>

Northshore Property Management (847) 491-9039 <http://www.nsapts.com>

Evanston Neighborhood Properties (847) 864-8800 <http://www.evanstonliving.com>