GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

HOUSING GUIDE

ARLINGTON CAMPUS EDITION

Welcome Mason Nation!

Welcome to Mason and congratulations on your acceptance into your chosen degree program! But don't celebrate for too long: there is work that still needs to take place to secure housing in the greater Arlington area. Use this guide to jumpstart your housing search and refer back to it often, especially if you get discouraged. Sometimes finding an apartment in the Arlington is a process. We are here to help!

On-Campus Housing Options

Mason provides a limited quantity of university sponsored housing for graduate and professional students in Manassas at Beacon Hall (33 miles west of Arlington). To find out more about graduate housing options on our Science and Technology campus in Prince William County, please visit Housing and Residence Life website at housing.gmu.edu.

Mason Off-Campus Student Services

One of the many services Off-Campus Student Services provides is an off-campus housing locator (och.gmu.edu) that is open to all Mason students. This locator can help you not only find housing in the metro Arlington area, but can help find roommates and offer other great resources. This university sponsored site is definitely worth checking out! Give them a call at 703-993-6563 or email at ocamp1@gmu.edu with any questions.

Click on the photos to learn more about our favorite ways to get around Arlington!

Where To Look: Ways to Find an Apartment In or Near Arlington

Online: Your first inclination may be to visit apartment-hunting websites to get the ball rolling. It's convenient, easy, and a good way to create a list of potential apartments to visit and scope out. If this is the best method for you, you have plenty to choose from. Here's a short list of some of the best:

1. Zillow: One of the most popular sites for finding apartments, Zillow boasts the largest rental network on the internet. You can choose your desired location with a click on their interactive map.

2. Trulia: Trulia's stand-out feature is their interactive map that allows you to search by crime rate, school rating, driving commute time, number of local restaurants and shops, median age, traffic volume, and earthquake shaking intensity, even though they don't have as many listings as other sites. Contacting the property is as easy as a click.

3. Craigslist: A tried-and-true website that doesn't have the frills of the others, but it can still get the job done. Since anyone can post listings, be wary of scams.

4. Apartments.com: This site has a very user-friendly interface and focuses solely on finding apartment rentals. It allows you to search for apartments that fit unique parameters like air conditioning, parking, and in-unit washer and dryer. Some listings include virtual tours.

Rental Agencies

If you don't have time to visit a bunch of apartments or simply don't want to stress over apartment hunting, you should consider hiring someone to do the work for you. There are several rental agencies in the greater Arlington area ready to take the load off your shoulders and ease the apartment-finding burden:

1. Apartment Detectives: Its service is unique to the metro DC area and has been in business since the 90s. They make the calls and schedule appointments for you in a matter of a day or two.

2. Padfinders: Padfinders bills itself as an "apartment matchmaker" and uses "locators" to find the right apartment for you. It's a free service.

3. City Chic Real Estate: Their rental match service claims to find you a place in 7 hours or less. They charge a $350 fee for this impressive feat, which is a small price to pay to skip apartment hunting in Arlington's competitive market.

When to Look:
The Best Time To Rent Apartments

We recommend beginning your apartment search about 2 months before you plan to move in, with 1 month being the absolute minimum. Summer months are known to be super competitive in the Arlington and Northern VA rental market.

Student Apartments at The Rixey

The Rixey gives you the perfect location to all that Arlington and DC has to offer. Just a few blocks to the Ballston-MU metro station, a quick metro ride can get you to downtown DC, and just a short walk to the Arlington campus. For more information about the Rixey please click here.

7 Tips for Apartment Hunting in Arlington

1. Move fast—apartments go quickly. If you're sure about a place you're seeing, it's best to come with the leasing application filled out along with any necessary supplemental materials or else that apartment may very well be gone by the time you get home. The proverbial early bird gets the great apartment every time. Make sure it's you!

2. Figure out parking costs. Parking in a garage can add an extra $300/month to your expenses. Some apartments don't have adequate parking at all. You want to know this before you sign your lease and move in. Another option you have is to park your car on the Arlington campus in Founders (soon to be renamed Van Metre) Garage, if you purchase a Mason Arlington parking permit specifically for this location. Visit https://parking.gmu.edu/arlington/#founders for more information.

3. Don't be afraid to negotiate. It doesn't hurt to ask. Know what your money can get you, know your value as a prospective tenant and communicate accordingly when negotiating. Read your lease thoroughly before you agree to its terms.

4. Consider getting a roommate. Northern Virginia and Metro DC is one of the most expensive areas in the country to live in. It'd be more than beneficial to ease the high cost of living and rent with a roommate. If sharing space is something you're open to, try sites like och.gmu.edu, Roomster.com, and Craigslist to find a roommate(s).

5. Consider renting a room/basement in a private home. Many homeowners rent a room or basement out for short term leases. This can be an affordable option if you are willing to share a kitchen, laundry, and possibly bath with the homeowner or other renters. Private renters can also post rooms for rent on och.gmu.edu.

6. Be open to looking just outside of Arlington. If you are good with commuting to the Arlington Campus, consider apartment hunting in the surrounding areas—such as Fairfax, Alexandria, or Falls Church. You'd only be joining thousands who commute to Arlington for school and work.

7. Research your landlord or management company. Check reviews and make sure they have good ratings. Ask to be put in contact with current tenants to get their opinion. Does your future landlord seem a little sketchy? Go with your instinct and try to find someone you can trust.

Before You Look:
Get These Squared Away Before Beginning Your Apartment Hunt

- **Set your price range**

  One bedroom apartments in Arlington rent for $2,151 a month on average and two bedroom apartments average $2,870. The farther away from Arlington the more affordable rents may be, depending on if you are willing to find and live with a roommate.

- **List your must-haves and flexibles**

  Looking for luxury apartments or affordable, budget-friendly ones? Ones with laundry facilities? A pool? It's important to know which amenities you're willing to give up from the ones you can't live without. Create a list of 5 must-haves and 5 would-like-to-haves, and use that to guide your search. It's also helpful to rank these in order of importance: location, rent cost, amenities, neighborhood, and transportation.

- **Neighborhood**

  If you're new to Northern Virginia or unfamiliar with any of Arlington neighborhoods, Urban Igloo has a great resource that provides comprehensive overviews of each neighborhood, complete with local restaurants and hot-spots. However, nothing beats visiting the neighborhoods in person and getting a feel for yourself. Have fun and make a tour out of it if you can.

- **Metro accessibility**

  Metro accessibility is important if you plan to get around without a car or bike. Some areas in are not so well-connected, and likely, the closer an apartment is to a metro stop, the more expensive.

About University Life Arlington

University Life (UL) Arlington serves as a resource for all students on Mason's Arlington Campus. UL supports every student from orientation through graduation and coordinates with a variety of offices throughout Mason to ensure that Arlington students receive the support they need. UL aims to connect programs with topics relevant to the interests of Arlington Campus graduate and professional students. In addition, UL serves as a resource for student organization and a hub for campus leadership activity. The Student Organization Resource Center (SORC) is located in the UL suite and is available for any student looking to get involved.

Contact us!

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