

RELOCATION AND HOUSING



As another service year friend put it, "Relocating is always hard. You don't know anybody, you don't know what to do on a Friday night, and you have no idea how to get anywhere." Amen. Relocating looks different for everyone, but in no time you will be settled and #livingthedream.

GETTING THERE:

FLYING:

[Shopping for your flight](#) on a Tuesday and being flexible about your [travel dates](#) are both great considerations to keep in mind when booking travel. Tuesdays are the most inexpensive day of the week to buy flights! It also can help to use the [incognito mode](#) on your web browser to help score the cheapest deals. Consider using deal-finding apps and websites like [Hopper](#), [Skiplagged](#), and [Airfarewatchdog](#). [Google flights](#) is also a good way [save money when booking your flight](#).

CONSIDER OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:

Look to see what forms of public transportation can get you to your new location. If there are options to take a bus or train, that may be cheaper than flying!

DRIVING:

Driving your own car or renting may be the best option if you have a lot of belongings you are planning to move with you, or if it is cheaper overall. Use a [cost of driving calculator](#) to estimate the cost of your trip, and if renting, don't forget to factor in total miles, fees, and insurance into the cost of your rental.

MOVING YOUR BELONGINGS:

Research a few options to move your items. You can look into shipping boxes, paying for extra suitcases while you travel, driving everything with you, or using a service like [Pod](#). If you know of another service year corps member who is also relocating to the same area, see if you can split costs. Pack light! Instead of paying to relocate all of your belongings, consider storage or leaving things at home or at a friend's place. This may be worth it if you are unsure if you want to permanently relocate to your new location after your service year. Sometimes, instead of moving everything, it might be cheaper to sell your things and buy new ones when you get to your new location, especially if your items were purchased used or from a discount store in the first place (Here's looking at you, Ikea and Craigslist!). If you currently live or are relocating to a college town or a transient city, you may save time and money in the long run.

STARTING YOUR HOUSING SEARCH

As soon as you have committed to your service year, [begin searching](#) for housing. Ask your program if they have any housing resources or suggestions and if they can connect you with any current service year corps members or alums who can give you tips. These service year connections are a great place to start when looking for potential roommates. You can also look up housing or AmeriCorps networking groups on Facebook or other platforms to find others who may be able to support with housing. Whether or not you can connect with a service year network, starting your housing hunt early will help you form realistic expectations of the typical housing options in your area, and some options may be open well in advance of your move. Make a list of your desired amenities and the type of living experience you want. Are you willing to pay more to be in the heart of downtown? Would you take a longer commute to have yard space? Figure out your needs and wants and start your search there.

Make sure you know your stipend early on. This will help determine your price range for housing, and remember to factor in utilities within that cost. Ideally, your total housing should be around 30% of your income, and no more than 50% – use our [budget guideline](#) to help you plan this out! might help you create budget.

WHERE TO SEARCH

Check out websites like [Zillow](#), [Apartments.com](#), [Padmapper](#), [Hotpads](#), or [abodo](#) to start your search. [Craigslist](#) is also a common option to find housing, especially if you are looking to live with roommates. Pro tip: It's never out of the question to ask for pictures or videos of the space. While a lack of images doesn't necessarily mean a post is a scam, often the most legitimate ones tend to include several pictures of the space.

ROOMMATES

If you can't find others serving to live with, you might consider looking for houses or apartments with extra rooms. If you can't make it to your new location before you need to sign a lease, set up a video call to gauge how you'll get along with your future roommates. [Prepare some questions](#) to ask your potential roommates to make sure you would be a good match. Whether you're living with friends or people who you are just meeting, it's important to [set expectations early](#) about your shared living situation. Figure out how you'd like to handle shared expenses and keeping your new place clean. [Ask about habits](#) and talk about what your expectations are for social situations. Some people are looking for roommates to be their new friends, while others are just looking for people that they can split bills with, so be honest about what you are looking for. Your schedule and your finances are probably among the most important considerations you'll want to keep in mind as you screen potential roommates.

WHEN VISITING AN APARTMENT:

If possible, visit before signing a lease. Turn on the faucets, make sure all burners on the stove work, flush the toilet, etc. – you might feel a little crazy, but it's better to know before you move in if anything needs to be fixed! [Ask a ton of questions](#) and bring a notebook to write everything down to avoid mixing up the details if you are seeing multiple places.

If you can't do the tour in person see if a friend in the area is able to tour for you. Pictures and videos of the exact apartment are a must if you cannot visit it in person!

BEFORE YOU SIGN THE LEASE:

Actually take the time to read the lease and make sure that the rules, maintenance process, vacancy notice, and any other terms discussed are included. Understand exactly who is responsible for utilities and how they are paid. [If anything is unclear, ask](#). Once you sign this lease, it is a legally binding document, so address any potential issues ahead of time.

MOVING WITH A PET

If you decide to bring your furry friend with you, make sure to factor them in early to your moving plans. Pet friendly spaces are critical, no matter what kind of pet you have. Make sure to check the lease to see if there are any restrictions over how many and what kind of animals are allowed. Many places charge an additional monthly fee on top of the rent if you have a pet living with you.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- Do you need to find a place with a backyard for your pet?
- Is your new place near a dog park?
- Do you have a car to transport your animal to the vet?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP IN MOVING A PET:

- [ASPCA: Moving with your Pet](#)
- [Moving with Pets: 10 Tips for Success](#)

UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS

Once you move, remember that you will need to [change your address in many places](#). It should be among the [first things you do once you make it to your new place](#). Some of these changes, like updating your bank information, can often happen before you move, where other things like updating your drivers license often must be done in person in your new state's Department of Motor Vehicles.

MAKE IT YOUR HOME!

Congrats on moving in! Now that you have a new place, make it a place that you want to be. Furnish it with things that make you happy, and start to explore your new neighborhood. [Check out our guide to living it up in your new community!](#)



CHECK OUT MORE RESOURCES TO [#SURVIVINGYOURSERVICEYEAR](#)