



The following pages contain resources related to finding housing in Boston, developed by PDPA, BU's Housing Offices, and the Boston Postdoctoral Association.

The [PDPA Postdoc Guidebook](#) has information on housing, transportation, banking, and more that may be of use to you as you transition to the University. The MBTA's [Trip Planner](#) and BU's Transportation offices can help you navigate the public transit system as you determine your commute. And remember – you don't have to sign on to something permanent right away. Some postdocs suggest starting with short-term housing or sublets before signing a longer-term lease.

To get a good overview of searching for housing in Boston, visit the Boston University Medical Campus [Housing Resources \(OHR\)](#) website. Review the [FAQ](#) page to answer common questions about moving to the Boston area. OHR can help you with issues you may have getting settled in Boston or working through roommate or landlord conflicts, even after you have found a place to live. You will find information about [tenant rights and responsibilities](#), [neighborhood descriptions](#), [definitions of common rental terms](#), [considerations before signing a lease](#), and other resources to help with your housing search on their [website](#). Please note that BU on-campus dormitory-style housing for graduate students is not available to postdocs.

The [Boston University Real Estate](#) office rents apartments owned by Boston University to full-time Boston University graduate students, current faculty, and staff only. [BU Real Estate](#) leases, manages, and maintains residential apartments, a limited number of parking spaces, and commercial property located on or near the Charles River Campus. Parking spaces are leased to BU Real Estate tenants.

Housing Resources (OHR) offers a new platform listing available rental properties and a site to use for making roommate connections: [BU Off-Campus Services](#). Access to this apartment listing is restricted to the BU community. You may register as a guest for 30 days to search the listings, but to use the Roommate Finder and receive full access to the resources, you must have a BU Kerberos login.

You may also find these resources about neighborhoods in Boston useful and informative. Click to learn about [City of Boston](#) and [Neighborhoods](#) near BU.

Other resources include:

- <http://www.bostonplans.org/housing>
- <http://www.rent.com>
- <http://www.bostonapartments.com>
- <https://www.zillow.com/>
- <http://www.apartments.com>
- <http://realestate.boston.com/>
- <http://boston.craigslist.org/>
- [The City of Boston Rental Housing Resource Center](#)

Facebook groups for Boston-area postdocs seeking housing:

- https://www.facebook.com/groups/gsdhousing/?ref=br_rs
- https://www.facebook.com/groups/HarvardMITHousing/?ref=br_rs
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/harvardgradmarket/>

BPDA Postdoc Housing Resource 2018

Strategizing the Search for Your New Home

It can be a challenge to find a room or apartment in the Boston area that best fits your needs, especially if you're searching from outside the US. The goal of this document is to provide practical resources to incoming postdocs so they can find a home quickly and with ease.

In major US cities, it is common and more affordable to share a house or an apartment with other people. When visiting a shared house, it is highly recommended that you try to learn about your potential housemates to ensure your lifestyles will be compatible, e.g., ask about age, hobbies, work schedule, diet, social life, etc.

In some cases, it may not be possible to find the right place in time for your start date. In this scenario, we suggest first finding a short-term place to stay (for a few days or weeks). Once you are in the area, it is much easier to find, visit, and evaluate long-term options.

The following link explains your legal rights as a tenant in Massachusetts

<http://www.masslegalhelp.org/housing/legal-tactics1>

Lastly, if you have children under the age of six, ask your landlord whether the apartment complies with the Lead Law and preferably has been certified as de-lead. Lead is especially dangerous for young children. More information can be found here:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/environmental-health/exposure-topics/lead/frequently-asked-questions-about-lead.html#10>

1. Introduction to Boston

This Jumpshell blog post has a nearly perfect introduction to finding a place in Boston:

<https://www.jumpshell.com/posts/how-to-find-an-apartment-in-boston>

Includes:

- ✓ Boston neighborhoods browser
- ✓ Interactive rent estimator tool
- ✓ T (Boston train system) information
- ✓ Explanations of Craigslist as a tool to find housing
- ✓ Advice on scheduling visits & quickly selecting housing
- ✓ Connect you with a realtor/agent

Book: Welcome to Boston, 15th edition: A Guide for International Newcomers

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1533124973>

Boston rent prices as of Spring 2017 (does not include Cambridge and surrounding areas, which offers good options for housing, too):

<https://www.zumper.com/blog/2017/05/boston-rent-prices-mapped-this-spring-2017/>

2. Housing websites

Disclaimer: Before we suggest specific websites to help you find housing, we urge you to stay vigilant and keep on the lookout for potential housing scams. This applies especially to persons coming from overseas. Many postdocs successfully use Craigslist to find housing in the US; unfortunately, this website is also highly vulnerable to fraud.

Please see the following link for more tips and two typical scamming examples:

<http://postdocs.mit.edu/home/campus-services-resources-and-tips/housing>

Finally, many people work with a real estate agent, but you may pay a "broker fee" for their services. The fee varies by company and situation; in general, it is similar to the cost of one month's rent.

2.1. List of long-term housing websites

- Boston Craigslist
www.Boston.craigslist.com
A variety of housing openings posted directly by a user (can be a future housemate, landlord, or real estate agent)
- Padmapper
<https://www.padmapper.com/apartments/boston-ma>
Modern web interface (similar to AirBnB), many listings with photos.
- Wicked Local
www.wickedlocal.com
Navigate to Homes > Rentals. Typically posted by real estate agents.

Other sites:

- > www.bostonapartments.com
- > www.boston.com/realestate
- > www.rent.com
- > www.apartments.com
- > www.bostonforrent.com
- > www.zillow.com

2.2. List of short-term housing websites

"Short-term" generally refers to housing for a period less than one year, but can also mean a few days. Many of the long-term websites above also include short-term housing options. Below are additional links

- AirBnB:
<https://www.airbnb.com/>
Room or apartment rental for days, weeks, or months
- Homestay Boston:
<https://www.homestay.com/united-states/boston>
- Sabbatical Homes:
https://www.sabbaticalhomes.com/Home_Type.aspx
Academic community resource for home exchange, home rental, house sitting and sharing opportunities, in addition to finding home tenants and sitters.

2.3. Social media listings

Sometimes students/postdocs exchange housing information on social media platforms. Below is an incomplete list of Facebook groups, which are open to everyone, where you can (1) post what kind of place you are looking for and (2) search for individually-posted room openings.

“Harvard Housing” Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/harvardhousing/>

“Boston Housing, Rooms, Apartments, Sublets” Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/673389662794979/>

“Boston Housing & Apartments” Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/225334081176150/>

2.4. General email pointers

Below are some pieces of information you might want to include when responding to a housing post. Also keep in mind who you will be speaking with, e.g., landlord, potential housemate, outgoing tenant, real estate agent, etc. **Be sure to mention you're going to start a postdoc! Postdocs are often perceived as highly responsible, thus desirable tenants.**

<u>First email</u>	
✓	Bio information: age, gender, nationality
✓	Workplace info: job location, start date, contract length, schedule
✓	Education background
✓	Hobbies and interests
✓	Experience living in shared spaces
✓	What you are looking for in roommates/housemates
✓	Include basic contact information
<u>Subsequent email</u>	
✓	“It was nice meeting you”, “Thank you for your time”
✓	Logistical info: furniture, move-in timeline

3. Housing Search Stories

Housing search processes are highly variable personal experiences. The following stories are intended to give you a more individual look at what the housing search process can entail. We hope these stories mention relatable situations and include instructive strategies.

3.1. Moving from Australia: A couple with a cat

I moved to Boston from Sydney, Australia with my boyfriend and our cat three years ago. The distance alone made this very challenging, but there were a lot of issues we hadn't anticipated. We arrived in the US with a grand total of four suitcases, just in time for 4th of July. Luckily for us, a good friend already lived in Boston and invited us to stay with her while we found an apartment. Short-term rentals such as AirBnB or hostels are very expensive here, so I would recommend that any internationals moving here ask their lab or institution

about help with accommodation. We also found out that most areas with high student populations have tight timelines corresponding to university semesters. Leases typically begin on September 1st and you will need to start looking early if you are out of this cycle. There is also a very high demand for rental properties, so don't be surprised if an apartment you see is gone within a few days. The other consideration, of course, is cost. A one- or two-bedroom apartment in the cities of Boston/Cambridge/Somerville can set you back anywhere from \$1600 to \$3000 a month. Most lease agreements will require you to pay at least first and last month up front, but up to four months' rent is common. You will often have to pay one month's rent as a non-refundable brokerage to the real estate agent. All of these factors mean that you should be prepared to pay several thousand in your first month here. It was extremely stressful for us in the first few months, as we saw our savings being eaten away. Neither of us wanted a long commute given the nature of lab work, so this was an unavoidable reality. I can't imagine how much more stressful it would be to make this move with a larger family!

It is really important to find a good real estate agent who is local and willing to help. First, do some research on the neighborhoods in Boston considering the cost of renting, commute, and lifestyle fit. You will need to decide this early as you need to focus your efforts. We chose Allston for its proximity to the Longwood Medical area, student vibe and relatively low cost. Then, you need to contact agents via email or phone. A good early sign is how responsive and transparent the agent is. We were fortunate to find one that was friendly, focused and honest. Lastly, ask them to shortlist apartments for you to view as soon as you get to Boston and choose one early. Boston has four distinct seasons, so be prepared for the season you arrive in, since you may find yourself moving furniture in multiple feet of snow or the scorching heat!

There are a lot of positives to life in Boston, despite the initial stresses. It is extremely safe and livable. Public transport, and pedestrian and cycling culture mean that you won't need a car to commute or get around the city. There is a high population of young scientists and it is extremely easy to meet new people from all around the world. New England also has a lot to offer for weekends out of Boston. Overall, I would say that internationals moving to Boston should do some research on the city and its housing, so they can make their move as straightforward as possible.

Welcome to Boston! Get to know us!

Boston Postdoctoral Association (BPDA)

www.bostonpostdocs.org

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BostonPostdocs/>



Boston Housing Reference Sheet

Map of Boston and neighborhoods



Basic Boston Housing

Traits:

1. *Boston is an old city, and our housing is old too. Many apartments do not have elevators, central air conditioning, or laundry in-building.*
2. *Boston's rental housing is in short supply. Many apartments too pricey to afford alone. Finding roommates is key.*
3. *Boston is a college town, which means most apartments begin to turn over during the summer and continue up to the beginning of September.*

Students are *strongly* encouraged to start their apartment search early and to visit apartments before signing a lease. Most landlords will not rent to tenants who they have not met.

Good Links to have:

Housing Resources
bumc.bu.edu/ohr

Off-Campus Services
offcampus.bu.edu

City of Boston
cityofboston.gov

TranSComm -
Transportation Solutions for
Commuters
bumc.bu.edu/transcomm

BUMC students live all over the Greater Boston area.

Popular Neighborhoods

1. **The South End**
Home of BUMC, closest to campus. About 25% of BUMC student population lives here.
2. **Fenway/Kenmore**
Location of the Charles River Campus, easy to access from BU Shuttle. About 15% of BUMC students live there.
3. **Allston/Brighton**
Not very convenient, but cheap and easy to find housing. About 5-7% of students live here.
4. **Back Bay**
Fairly convenient, beautiful. Near 5% of students live here.

Price Ranges

- Very Expensive:
Studios: \$2200-\$3200
1 Bed: \$2500-\$4100
2 Bed: \$2800-\$4800
3 Bed: \$3400-\$5200
- Expensive
Studios: \$1700-\$2500
1 Bed: \$1900-\$2700
2 Bed: \$2600-\$3500
3 Bed: \$3000-\$3600
- Moderate
Studios: \$950-\$1500
1 Bed: \$1200-\$1800
2 Bed: \$1800-\$2500
3 Bed: \$2300-\$2900

- Inexpensive (for Boston)
Studios: \$800-\$1200
1 Bed: \$1000-\$1400
2 Bed: \$1200-\$1800
3 Bed: \$1600-\$2200

Commuting Times

- Close
Commute under 30 minutes, no transferring.
- Average
Commute under 45 minutes, one transfer.
- Long
Commute up to 60 minutes, Sometimes two transfers.

Search Timeline

5-6 months before move-in:

- Do your research
- Decide on your housing budget and where in Boston you want to live
- Choose at least two neighborhoods to explore
- Begin contacting potential roommates
- Schedule a visit to Boston

2-3 months before move-in:

- Visit Boston
- Meet your potential roommate(s)
- Using the Housing Resources available, search for an apartment
- View apartments
- Submit an application for the apartment you want
- Meet the landlord prior to signing a lease

4 weeks before move-in:

- Reserve a truck for moving day
- Apply for a parking permit from the city

1 week before move-in:

- Review your lease
- Notify the post office about your address change
- Double-check your move-in directions
- Make sure you have a parking permit
- Confirm truck reservations
- Call to have utilities turned on during your moving day, and turned off at your old apartment

Move-In Day Standards:

- Apartment unit is safe, clean & sanitary
- Landlord contact info is posted
- All smoke alarms working

All rental units must meet Standards on move-in day.

Call 311 to report non-emergency issues



Boston Housing Reference Sheet

Getting Around Boston

Public Transportation Close to BUMC

The MBTA is Boston's public transit authority mbta.com

Trains: Orange Line (at Massachusetts Avenue), Red Line (at Broadway Station)

Buses: #1, #8, #10, #47, CT1, CT3 (Newton and Concord Streets, Mass. Ave.). Silver Line (on Washington Street)

Taxis: are plentiful on Washington and Tremont Streets, especially in the evening. Uber and Lyft available throughout Boston.

The BU Shuttle: a free shuttle that travels between the BUMC and Charles River campus. It stops at Albany Street every 10 to 20 minutes bu.edu/thebus

Bicycle Cages/Racks on campus bumc.bu.edu/transcomm

Hubway: Boston's bike sharing system, thehubway.com

Finding Roommates

Most students in Boston will live with roommates to make housing more affordable. Before deciding to live with a roommate, students should make sure they have three "C's": *credit, consideration, and communication*. Roommates in Boston are "jointly and severally" liable for rent, meaning that if one roommate doesn't pay, everyone else has to make up the rest.

Popular Roommate-Finding Resources

Off-Campus Services offcampus.bu.edu
BU login and password required for access roommate listings.

Your BUMC Class Facebook page

Craigslist. Carefully search for roommates boston.craigslist.org

Finding Housing

BU Resources

1. Housing Resources bumc.bu.edu/ohr
Located on the Medical Campus, Housing Resources assists students with their housing search from the beginning of the process to reading and signing a lease. Contact 617-638-5125 or ohr@bu.edu.

2. BU Off-Campus Services offcampus.bu.edu, is the apartment and roommate database with listings throughout the Greater Boston area.

3. BU Real Estate bu.edu/realestate offers University owned apartments for rent. Graduate students who want to live in housing that is managed by Boston University and located on the CRC should call 617-353-4101.

4. Facebook
Incoming classes have pages for students to connect, find roommates, ask housing questions and learn from others about their housing search. There are also a number of Boston Housing Facebook groups allow those seeking housing in the Boston vicinity to connect.

Online Resources

1. Offcampus.bu.edu Best online resource to available apartments begin by searching these listings.

2. Boston.craigslist.org/nfa
Boston's largest online apartment-hunting tool. It can be used to find apartments, roommates, short-term housing, even furniture. See apartments 'By Owner'.

3. Padmapper.com Search for no-fee listings by neighborhood.

Realtors

If you are short on time or have very specific criteria, using a realtor is a good option. They can drive you around, show you several apartments during one appointment, and may know a lot about the neighborhood where they work. Most Boston realtors charge a **realtor fee** or commission, which can be up to one month's rent. offcampus.bu.edu

Property Managers

Landlords hire managers to rent/maintain their buildings. No realtor fee is charged.