

Finding an Apartment in NYC



Neighborhoods surrounding MSM

When searching for apartments, we suggest visiting all potential neighborhoods at least twice. Visit once in the day time and once at night. This will give you a clear idea of what the vibe of the area is and if you will feel comfortable living there. Things to consider are:

- Noise levels
- Amount of street traffic
- Distance to/from the apartment to subway and bus
- Availability or proximity to grocery stores, restaurants, night life, laundromat and bank branches

1. Morningside Heights

MSM is located in a neighborhood called Morningside Heights. You can find apartments in this area to be on the smaller side and around \$2400 for a 3 bedroom. Morningside Heights has many nice restaurants and parks, and is close to supermarkets and two subway stations. Living in this neighborhood means you will be a short walk away from MSM.

2. Harlem/Hamilton Heights

This area is located between 125th street and 157th streets. This area is very populated and has many restaurant and supermarket options. There are many apartment buildings just off of the #1 subway line, which is the train to take to get to MSM. There is also the M4 bus that will take you from this area to MSM. Harlem/Hamilton Heights is a bit cheaper than Morningside Heights and typically offers a little more room in the apartments. Your commute to school will be between 10-30 minutes by bus or train.

3. Washington Heights

Washington Heights spans from 158th street through the 190's. Many of our MSM students live in this neighborhood due to the inexpensive apartments and close proximity to the school (~20 mins. by subway door to door). This neighborhood is always buzzing with people out and about on the streets and offers numerous options for places to eat. There are several subway lines and buses to get to MSM and other parts of the city.

4. Inwood

This neighborhood is at the northernmost point of Manhattan and provides a quieter surrounding for its residents. Apartments in this area are typically very large, yet inexpensive (~\$1800 for a 3 bedroom). There are many parks surrounding this area, as well as the Cloisters Museum, which sits atop Ft. Tryon Park. Inwood hosts two subway lines (~30 min. train ride to MSM) and numerous buses. There are several restaurants and grocery stores.

5. Astoria

While not immediately surrounding MSM, this Queens neighborhood is home to a handful of MSM students. Apartment rental rates are similar to those found in Washington Heights and Inwood. It is a quieter neighborhood, with smaller buildings and homes. Transportation to MSM can be found on the M60 bus, which runs from Astoria Blvd. across 125th st.



Housing Timeline:

Usually apartments become available and are publicly listed about one month before the lease will begin. Even though one month seems like a short time to look for and rent an apartment, it is an extremely possible task. We suggest beginning your search two months in advance of your desired move date.



Important questions to ask

Questions to ask potential landlords or brokers

1. How much is due upon signing the lease?
2. Most buildings in NYC include heat and hot water in the rental price. Are heat and hot water included in the price of this apartment?
3. Are any utilities included in the rental price? Expect to pay for power, cable, internet and gas unless stated otherwise.
4. Are pets allowed? Is there an extra charge?
5. Does the super live in the building?
6. What's the closest train and/or bus stop

If moving in with a new roommate, questions to also consider are:

1. Will access to common areas (kitchen/living area) be shared?
2. Will my name be added to the lease?
3. Is WiFi access available in the apartment?

How do I find an apartment?

#1: Check the Student Life Office Off Campus Housing Database.

#2: www.craigslist.com. This is one of the most common places to search for apartments. Often there are pictures and prices for any type of apartment you can dream up. You can search by price, neighborhood, number of bed rooms, etc.

#3: Brokers One of the most common methods of finding an apartment in New York City is using a real estate broker. If you know what neighborhood you want to live in, it's usually best to find a broker based there. Many brokers also have web sites where you can view available apartments, sometimes even with photos and detailed descriptions. Be aware that brokers usually charge a fee for helping you find an apartment.

#4: Word-of-Mouth There is good news for those who would prefer not to pay hefty brokers' fees: a substantial number of New Yorkers find their units by word-of-mouth, mostly from friends, relatives, and co-workers. If you're looking for an apartment, make sure everyone you know knows that you're looking.

#5: Classified Ads The third most common method used by recent movers is a classic: the classified ad. Movers cite using the New York Times, the Village Voice, the Daily News, local or community papers, Newsday, and even Facebook. Foreign-language or ethnic newspapers, such as El Diario and the Jewish Press, are also a good source of classified ads. Many newspapers now post their classified ads online, so make sure to check out the web sites of local papers.

#6: Apartment Referral Service Referral services are a growing resource that savvy hunters, especially those who are comfortable searching on the Internet, should not neglect. For a monthly fee these services will provide you with a list of no-fee apartment rentals as they become available. <http://ars.wustl.edu/home.asp> is just one example of this service.

#7: If you are currently living off campus and looking to downsize or upgrade, finding a vacant Apartment in the same Building is an option. Be proactive and talk to neighbors, doormen, supers, landlords, and/or your management company to see if another apartment is available in the same building. Ask friends if there are any openings in their buildings.

Broker vs. Non-Broker:

If you decide to go through a real estate company, you will be assigned a broker who will look for apartments in your price range and will present several options for you to view. The broker will guide you through every step of the process and will be present at all apartment viewings. While it is sometimes easier to let the broker do the "dirty work" for you, please be advised that the broker does not come cheap. Real Estate companies usually require you to pay your broker anywhere from 12%-18% of the **annual** rent of your apartment, due at lease signing. If you decide to apartment search on your own, there are several things to keep in mind. When searching for apartments online, look for key words such as "apartments listed by owner" or "no fee apartment". These are usually the apartments that are listed directly from the landlord or owner of the apartment/building. After contacting the owner or landlord, you should set up a time to meet them in front of the apartment building so that they can show you the apartment. There should be a legal lease that is signed by both you and the apartment owner/landlord. Trust your gut-if it doesn't feel right, do not sign a lease and continue looking for a place where you feel comfortable.



If you have any questions regarding the information listed in this document, please contact the Office of Student Life at 917-493-4525 or studentlife@msmnyc.edu