



# *Welcome Booklet*

*2020-2021*



*Welcome to our new and returning families!*

This welcome booklet is intended for the families of the British International School of Washington.

It will provide you with a lot of practical information to help facilitate your family's assimilation into this exciting city.

This information comes from the parents of BISW, who are always willing to share their experiences. If you are looking for more specific information that is not mentioned in the booklet, don't hesitate to contact the PA.

Good reading and good luck!

# Contents

<b>Meet the PA Board</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How to Get Around</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Working in DC</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Accommodation in DC</b>	<b>10</b>
Types of Accommodation	10
Finding Housing	11
Young and Hip Areas	12
Family-friendly Neighborhoods	13
Outside of DC	14
<b>Shopping</b>	<b>16</b>
Supermarkets	18
<b>Classes and Activities for Kids</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Classes and Activities for Adults</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Entertainment in DC</b>	<b>24</b>
Links to Children and Family Activities	26
<b>Events not to be Missed in DC</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Recommended sightseeing</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Amenities and Utility costs</b>	<b>32</b>

## Meet the PA Board



The PA at BISW plays a very active role in our community. Families participate positively and actively in the life of the school outside the classroom by chaperoning local field trips, museum visits, volunteering, learning trips, organizing workshops, presentations (career day, specific areas of expertise) and much more. All parents of students at BISW are automatically members of the PA.

The PA Board is a group of parent volunteers that organize events to build community between our parents, students, teachers, and staff. We are:

Lynnette Camus, President

Silvia Inderbinden, Class Rep Coordinator

Tara Proctor, Secretary

Romilly Beard, Secretary

Patrick Camus, Treasurer

Lillian Pinheiro, Communications  
Marie-Eve Celio  
Ivonn Szeverenyi  
Sophia Smith  
Jimena Gasulla  
Baljinder Toor  
Laura Blood

We can all be reached at "first name"@BISWparents.org  
(For example, Lynnette@BISWparents.org)

### **Communications**

The PA communicates through direct emails, the Weekly School Newsletter, our closed **Facebook** page, "*Parents at British International School of Washington,*" and via Class Representatives.

### **Class Representatives**

Each Year Group has a Class Rep. Class Reps are provided a class list with parent contact emails and play an important role in keeping you up to date.

### **BISW PA Events**

The PA is always thinking of organizing events for our families at school. Are you passionate about something and want to share it with our community? Any suggestions, interests or topics are most welcome! Please contact [Lillian@BISWparents.org](mailto:Lillian@BISWparents.org) and [Silvia@BISWparents.org](mailto:Silvia@BISWparents.org)

### **Volunteers**

We Love Volunteers! All PA activities are only possible through the support of our volunteers. Please contact [Lillian@BISWparents.org](mailto:Lillian@BISWparents.org) if you are interested in volunteering for any of our events.

### **Used Uniform Sales**

We are always accepting donations of gently-used, clean uniforms. You may drop them at the front desk, and please label them clearly as "used uniform donations".

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Please contact [lvonn@BISWparents.org](mailto:lvonn@BISWparents.org) and [Jimena@BISWparents.org](mailto:Jimena@BISWparents.org) with any questions.

**PA Drop Box**

We have a PA drop box in the lobby. It is located directly to the left as you enter the lobby on the counter under the sign-in computer. Feel free to use this as an additional means of communication with the PA Board.

## How to get around

Washington DC is home to one of the USA's most active populations, with many of the capital's residents choosing to walk or cycle to work if they live close to the city center. The city does, however, have a solid public transport network to assist commuters and includes various train and bus services.

Expats will find that most places in the city center are located close to one another and so the quickest option when getting around in Washington DC is sometimes walking rather than driving or taking public transport.

### Public transport in Washington DC

Washington DC's public transport network consists of trains and various bus services. The public transport network is operated on an integrated ticketing system, which covers all modes of public transport.

### SmarTrip card

Expats who plan on travelling frequently in and around Washington DC should consider buying a *SmarTrip* card. The card can be used on the Metrorail as well as on Metrobus, the DC Circulator and a few other suburban bus services. It is possible to load flat rate passes onto the card which give commuters an unlimited number of trips within a certain period of time. SmarTrip cards can be purchased and topped up online, at any Metro station and at selected stores in the city.

Secondary kids living in DC area can get a free *SmarTrip* card. The "Kids Ride Free program" allows students to ride for free on Metrobus, DC Circulator, and Metrorail within the District of Columbia to get to school and school-related activities. To be eligible, students must be a resident of the District of Columbia between ages 5 and 21 enrolled in an elementary or secondary public, private, charter or parochial school located within the District. Check the link for more information:

[www.Kidsridefree.dc.gov](http://www.Kidsridefree.dc.gov)

## **Metrorail**

The Metrorail lies at the heart of Washington DC's public transport network. This system consists of six colour-coded lines which run primarily underground to serve the district and overground to some of Washington's surrounding suburbs.

While Washington DC's Metrorail is clean, safe and user-friendly, commuters often complain about the irregularity of services caused primarily by track maintenance and periodic breakdowns.

## **DC Circulator**

<https://www.dccirculator.com>

Washington DC's bus system is useful for commuters as it allows people to reach destinations not covered by the city's Metro system.

The DC Circulator buses are shuttle services which operate on a fixed route and schedule. These shuttles primarily connect the main areas in the city center with some of the popular residential neighborhoods. The DC Circulator routes run approximately every 10 or 15 minutes.

## **Metrobus**

Washington DC's Metrobus service consists of hundreds of routes that cover the greater Washington DC area, and serves areas that commuters cannot reach using the Metrorail or DC Circulator services.

## **Taxis in Washington DC**

There are a huge number of cab companies to choose from in Washington DC, and taxis can be paid either by cash or card.

Drivers are required to take passengers anywhere within the Metropolitan area of Washington DC. However, most drivers are reluctant to travel out to Maryland and Virginia.

## **Cycling in Washington DC**

The residents of Washington love to cycle and expats will soon find that cycling is a great way to get around the city.



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Washington DC has an excellent bike-sharing system. The Capital Bikeshare network consists of over 3,000 bicycles that can be picked up and dropped off at any one of over 300 docking stations across the city.

The government has taken steps to make Washington DC more cyclist-friendly by increasing the number of dedicated cycle lanes and the amount of safe bicycle storage facilities.

### **Driving in Washington DC**

Driving in Washington DC is something that expats should avoid, if possible. With the many excellent alternatives available, the majority of the capital's residents opt to use public transport rather than driving, especially in the city center.

Expats who decide to drive in Washington DC will find that parking is often expensive and hard to find. Traffic is routinely congested, and navigation is made complex by frequently changing street directions.

### **Driver Licenses**

In case you need to apply for a driver's license please go to [www.DMV.ORG](http://www.DMV.ORG).

You will find gathered all the information you'll need to make getting your license as easy as possible. First-time drivers and drivers just moving into the state have some unique guidelines and regulations to follow when applying for a new driver's license.

## **Working in DC**

Washington DC has a strong economy, bolstered by federal operations based in the city which account for as much as 25 percent of the city's employees. However, because only US citizens can take up government jobs, expats will need to look to other industries if they wish to take up employment in Washington DC. Luckily, there are other options, with sectors such as tourism and service also making up a significant part of the city's economy.

### **Job market in Washington DC**

Though the largest employer in Washington DC is the US government, there are also several top area industries closely related to, but not actually part of, the government. This opens up potential jobs for expats in sectors such as defense contracting, lobbying, non-profit organizations and publishing. In addition, many expats work closely with governmental agencies and are employed by overseas companies or foreign governments.

Professional and business services are increasingly joining the federal government as top employers in Washington DC, with important sectors being scientific research, finance, healthcare and education.

### **Finding a job in Washington DC**

Online portals are a good way to find a job in Washington DC, as most major employers advertise vacant positions online, either on their own websites or through recruitment agencies. But above all else, networking is probably the most important aspect of a job search in DC.

All expats working in Washington DC must have a valid work permit for the USA.

Links to find jobs:

[www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com)

[www.ziprecruiter.com](http://www.ziprecruiter.com)

[www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

[www.flexjobs.com](http://www.flexjobs.com)

## **Accommodation in Washington, DC**

Washington DC offers a variety of high-quality housing options; however, the actual city limits are considerably smaller than most expect and many expats who move to Washington DC end up living in neighboring Virginia or Maryland. These nearby states generally offer better options for suburban family living and for cheaper accommodation.

Many neighborhoods in Washington DC are full of students attending the assortment of nearby universities, or young professionals who have recently moved to the city to start their working life. Residential family homes are usually found farther out of the city center, and vary in terms of quality and price, depending on their neighborhood and proximity to public transport.

Because property becomes more expensive closer to the city center, commute times via car are long and accommodation near public transportation routes, such as the bus or metro lines, is highly sought-after.

Property prices and rent in Washington DC are among the most expensive in the country and will likely be the largest monthly expense for expats planning to relocate there.

### **Types of Accommodation in Washington, DC**

#### ***Apartments***

Apartments are the most common type of housing in the city and range from single-room studio apartments to luxury multi-bedroom lofts and penthouses. Rent will naturally vary according to size and location, with the more expensive apartments being closer to the city center. Practically all apartment buildings are equipped with modern facilities and amenities.

#### ***Townhouses***

Another option for expats looking to rent in Washington DC are townhouses, which are cheaper than single-family homes but also generally have separate entrances and

multiple levels. These are often historical Victorian homes built in a row along one street, hence they are also referred to as rowhouses.

### ***Single-family houses***

Single-family houses are fully detached residences which may be best suited for a full family, as they normally include a garden and are located away from the city center. Despite being predominantly in the suburbs, single-family detached houses are particularly expensive. It is therefore advised that expats realistically assess their housing budget before making any commitments.

## **Finding housing in Washington, DC**

Due to limited space in the city, expats are advised to begin the search for accommodation as early as possible. Knowing one's price range and desired accommodation type is essential as it will clarify the search and simplify the decision-making process. It is worth considering factors such as space requirements, amenities and proximity to shopping hubs, public transport and schools.

Expats may want to find a local real estate agent who understands the local area and can help identify a home suited to their requirements. If considering living in the Maryland or Virginia suburbs, expats should keep in mind that agents require separate licenses to work in different states.

The capital offers a range of accommodation options and there are areas and suburbs in Washington DC to suit almost every expat, from those wanting to experience the buzz of city living to those preferring the quiet life in the leafy suburbs. Where an expat chooses to live in DC will ultimately depend on their lifestyle preferences and their budget.

Areas close to the city center such as Adams Morgan and Georgetown are perfect for young professionals and students, while Dupont Circle and Anacostia offer a greater number of living options for expats moving to Washington DC with a family.

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As a result of the city's unique location and proximity to the neighboring states of Virginia and Maryland, expats will find that it is even possible to live outside DC and commute to work in the city on a daily basis.

## **Young and Hip Areas of Washington, DC**

Washington DC has a fairly large student population and young graduates flock to the capital to start their careers. There are lots of areas close to the city center that cater well for this demographic.

There are always new bars, eateries and trendy fashion boutiques springing up to serve the younger market. Rents tend to be higher close to the city center and so these areas are most suitable to those with a higher disposable income.

### ***Adams Morgan***

This is a central area close to Washington DC city center. Adams Morgan is a cosmopolitan part of Washington which has traditionally been popular with expat communities hailing from Central America, North Africa and the Caribbean. In recent years, much gentrification has taken place, and this has resulted in the growth of high-cost housing complexes in the area, which has subsequently driven out some of the poorer immigrant communities. However, there is a strong multicultural atmosphere that remains in Adams Morgan, which is evident in the diverse range of international shops and eateries that can be found in the area. There are lots of rental options and this is a popular area for young professionals as it is close to most workplaces in the city center. It is also a popular nightlife spot and home to some of Washington DC's top nightclubs and bars. Furthermore, the area is served well by public transport as it has a number of subway stations in close proximity.

### ***Georgetown***

Georgetown is a historic area in northwest Washington DC which is known for great shopping, nightlife and dining options. This neighborhood is characterized by old houses, cobble streets and trolley tracks, which are all part of Georgetown's historic charm.

Georgetown is located close to the Potomac River and it's common to see residents walking, jogging and cycling along the canal path. The fact that this area is also home to Georgetown University means that there is a large student population and always plenty going on in terms of entertainment, sporting events and lectures. The area is also home to many foreign embassies, making it a popular neighborhood for expats working in the diplomatic sector.

## **Family-friendly Neighborhoods of Washington, DC**

Each year, large numbers of expats are transferred to Washington DC for work on packages that allow them to bring their families along. The city is a great place to set up a family home. Washington DC has some of the USA's top schools and universities. For expats moving there with children, being close to good schools will certainly be a priority.

### ***Dupont Circle***

This is a great neighborhood in which to set up home as a new expat family in Washington DC. Dupont Circle has many different accommodation options on offer, with everything from large apartment communities to spacious family homes and condos. Dupont Circle is therefore an area suitable for a variety of people, from professional expats to those with young children.

This neighborhood has a vibrant entertainment scene and people come to Dupont Circle from all over Washington DC to eat at some of the city's top restaurants. There are also lots of coffee shops, bookstores and art galleries.

There is a strong community spirit in this area and residents are often seen relaxing, playing chess or walking their dogs at the grassy circle. Good public transport links make travelling anywhere in Washington DC from Dupont Circle easy.

### ***Anacostia***

Anacostia is a previously neglected residential neighborhood which lies alongside the Anacostia River in southeast Washington DC.

Anacostia is popular with families because of its proximity to some of DC's best schools and availability of spacious housing options. It is also a good option for those who prefer to be further away from the hustle and bustle of the city or those on a

tight budget as rents are very reasonable. Getting around Washington DC from Anacostia is easy as there are regular Metrorail services to the city center.

## **Outside Washington DC**

For those who are working in Washington DC but prefer a quieter suburban life, there is also the option of living in parts of Virginia or Maryland. Expats will find that certain parts of these neighboring states are well connected to Washington DC by both road networks and public transport.

### ***Rockville and Bethesda***

Due to their proximity to the capital, the suburbs of Rockville and Bethesda, which are in Montgomery County in the state of Maryland, have become popular spots for those working in Washington DC.

Rockville and Bethesda have diverse populations and offer a variety of housing options from high-rise condos to modern family homes.

Rockville is only 25 minutes' drive from Washington DC's city center and is well placed on the I-270.

Bethesda is located 20 minutes' drive from DC and is connected to the capital by the I-495.

Both areas are also well served by public transport. While rental costs are not cheap in Rockville or Bethesda, many expats choose to live in these areas because the properties tend to be more spacious. In addition, these areas are in close proximity to a number of good schools.

### ***Alexandria***

Alexandria in Virginia is an independent city located just seven miles (11km) south of Washington DC. It is a charming area steeped in history and there are lots of old buildings, churches and museums here. While the area doesn't have the buzz of Georgetown or Adams Morgan, Alexandria does have a fair number of good restaurants and entertainment facilities.

This city is well located on major roads such as the I-95, I-395 and Route 1. When it comes to public transport, there are bus services linking the city to Washington DC.

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### ***Falls Church***

Falls Church is one of the best places to live in Virginia. Living in Falls Church offers residents an urban feel and most residents own their homes. In Falls Church there are a lot of restaurants, coffee shops, and parks. Many families and young professionals live in Falls Church.

### ***Arlington***

Living in Arlington offers residents an urban feel and is a popular spot for families and young professionals who want larger houses but lower rent than in DC. There are a lot of bars, restaurants, coffee shops, and parks.

## **Shopping**

Shopping is a key activity for the well-heeled in Washington DC. The city's oldest neighborhood, Georgetown, hosts several designer boutiques and expats can enjoy a scenic shopping and dining experience at picturesque local retail centers such as Georgetown Park and the Washington Waterfront.

Expats should drop in to the Georgetown Flea Market to browse its selection of antiques, jewelry, books, rugs, toys and linens, or could head to Penn Quarter and Chinatown for a similar selection.

Another great shopping area is the Dupont Circle neighborhood. It is full of bookstores and designer boutiques as well as vintage shops. Expats exploring the area can also enjoy the Fresh Farm Market.

## **Outlets**



### ***Tanger Outlet National Harbor***

Drive from downtown DC: 30 minutes

Maryland's National Harbor is home to a huge selection of discounted name-brand stores, from Tommy Hilfiger to Le Creuset to Michael Kors or J. Crew Factory's

### ***Leesburg Corner Premium Outlets***

Drive from downtown DC: 50 minutes

The open-air shopping center boasts over 110 outlet stores from designers and brands like Coach, athletic retailers like Adidas, and a host of places to shop for new workwear, like J. Crew Factory, Ann Taylor Factory Store, and Brooks Brothers Factory Store.

### ***Queenstown Premium Outlets***

Drive from downtown DC: 1 hour.

With a similar line-up as the Leesburg location, this installment of the Premium Outlets brings some bargain shopping to the Eastern Shore from big-name retailers.

### ***Hagerstown Premium Outlets***

Drive from downtown DC: 1.5 hours

This Maryland outlet mall is packed with over 100 discounted retailers

### ***Arundel Mills Outlet***

Location: 28 miles northeast of Washington in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, at the intersection of the Maryland Route 295 (the Baltimore/Washington Parkway) and Route 100, near Baltimore/Washington International Airport (BWI).

Arundel Mills is one of the Baltimore-Washington area's largest outlet malls with more than 200 national stores outlets under roof. You'll also find a variety of restaurants, from fast casual to sit-down restaurants. For fun, check out the Cinemark Egyptian 24-screen movie theater and Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament, a dinner theater featuring knights, horses, and jousting.

### ***Potomac Mills Outlet***

Located just off from I-95 at exit 156 in Prince William County, Virginia. The mall is about 30 minutes south of Washington, DC.

Potomac Mills is one of the world's largest outlet malls with more than 220 discount stores featuring designers and brand names including Nordstrom RACK, OFF 5th Saks Fifth Avenue, Polo Ralph Lauren, Brooks Brothers, Nautica, Banana Republic, Gymboree and much more. Potomac Mills has numerous dining options ranging from fast-food to sit down restaurants. There is an AMC 18-screen movie theatre too.

## **Shopping Malls**

### ***Pentagon City Mall***

The Fashion Centre at Pentagon City, commonly known as Pentagon City Mall, is one of the premier shopping malls in the Washington DC area, located just minutes from the nation's capital and convenient to the Pentagon City Metro station. This upscale mall includes 170 stores including Macy's, Nordstrom, Ann Taylor, Bailey Banks & Biddle, Banana Republic, Zara, Coach, Guess, Talbots, Swarovski Crystal Gallery and Williams-Sonoma.

### ***Tysons Corner***

Tysons includes not one, but two retail campuses specializing in high-end brands in Northern Virginia. Browse through goods from more than 300 shops at Tysons Corner Center, including brands like Michael Kors, Nordstrom, Lord & Taylor and C. Wonder. Cross the eight-lane street and you'll find the luxury store-filled Tysons Galleria, which boasts notables like Prada, Chanel, Coach, Elie Tahari.

### ***CityCenter DC***

CityCenter DC is vibrant neighborhood development enlivened with a mix of condominiums, apartments, offices, public spaces, hotel, restaurants and shops. Some world-class shopping and dining include Hermes, Dior, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Salvatore Ferragamo, VINCE, Kate Spade NY, Canali, Burberry, Paul Stuart, Momofuku, Milk Bar, Fig & Olive, DBGB Kitchen & Bar and much more.

### ***Westfield Montgomery***

Westfield Montgomery is a shopping complex in Bethesda, Maryland. Anchor stores include Macy's, Macy's Home, Nordstrom, and offers 195 stores. It is a high-end shopping center that offers shoppers an extensive selection of stores and restaurants.

## Supermarkets

Most supermarkets here have loyalty cards. Beware, if you don't have the loyalty cards, shopping can be very expensive so it's worth signing up on your first shopping trip. These will give you access to lower prices and advertised special offers. Discounts are often advertised as "buy 10 for \$10" but that does not mean that you need to buy 10. Each of the items will be \$1, though this is often only available to loyalty card holders.

**Giant:** Large supermarket, often in precincts with a CVS drug store nearby. Loyalty card gives you discounts on petrol at Shell Garages.

**Safeway's:** Loyalty card gives you access to instore discounts. Also does home delivery.

**Wholefoods:** Great fresh foods. Good organic meat range and fish counters that display the sustainability of the fish available. Lovely bread and cakes counter.

**Balducci's:** Good for fresh food and their deli counter is great. It has a loyalty card but the rewards only kick in after you spend \$250.

**Trader Joes:** Organic and Eclectic products. Trader Joes offers a smaller range of products than most of the other supermarkets and most of the lines are own label.

**Harris Teeter:** The fresh fruit and veg section always has several types of fruit cut up for tasting and there's always crackers, cheese and food being cooked as you go round.

**Wegmans:** Quality foods, friendly staff and a large range of produce. Some stores have kidzones where you can drop kids off to play while you shop.

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**Costco:** Wholesaler that anyone can join for \$60 annual fee. Great for cleaning products and large-scale consumers.

## Classes and Activities for Kids

There are lots of recreational centers run by the counties and private companies that offer very wide range of classes in all age groups.

### **Washington DC**

[dpr.dc.gov/page/kids-sports-fitness](http://dpr.dc.gov/page/kids-sports-fitness)

### **Montgomery County, MD**

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/.../sports](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/.../sports)

### **Fairfax County, VA**

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/.../athletics/sports-directory](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/.../athletics/sports-directory)

### **Arlington, VA**

[www.parks.arlingtonva.us/sports](http://www.parks.arlingtonva.us/sports)

## Private Lessons

### ***Balance Gym Glover Park***

2121 Wisconsin Ave NW - Washington, DC 20007

Secondary students receive FREE membership at this gym, and parents get discounts. Just mention that you are part of the BISW community!

### ***Soccer***

[www.alexandria-soccer.org](http://www.alexandria-soccer.org)

[www.arlington-soccer.com](http://www.arlington-soccer.com)

[www.dcyouthfutbolclub.org](http://www.dcyouthfutbolclub.org)

[www.stoddert.com](http://www.stoddert.com)

[www.kidsprosoccer.com/home](http://www.kidsprosoccer.com/home)

[www.dcway.com](http://www.dcway.com)

## ***Swimming***

[www.goldfishswimschool.com](http://www.goldfishswimschool.com)

[www.recreation.georgetown.edu/programs/aquatics](http://www.recreation.georgetown.edu/programs/aquatics)

[www.britishswimschool.com](http://www.britishswimschool.com)

[www.kidsfirstswimschools.com](http://www.kidsfirstswimschools.com)

[www.american.edu/recfit/aquatics.cfm](http://www.american.edu/recfit/aquatics.cfm)

[www.ymcadc.org](http://www.ymcadc.org)

## ***Basketball***

[www.dc.1on1basketball.com](http://www.dc.1on1basketball.com)

[www.hoopeducation.com](http://www.hoopeducation.com)

[www.dcfrey.com/sport/basketball](http://www.dcfrey.com/sport/basketball)

[www.ymcadc.org](http://www.ymcadc.org)

## ***Ballet and Dance***

[www.mbtddance.org](http://www.mbtddance.org)

[www.joyofmotion.org](http://www.joyofmotion.org)

[www.tinydancers.com](http://www.tinydancers.com)

[www.marylandyouthballet.org](http://www.marylandyouthballet.org)

[www.fillmoreartscenter.org](http://www.fillmoreartscenter.org)

[www.ymcadc.org](http://www.ymcadc.org)

[www.flamenco4kids.com](http://www.flamenco4kids.com)

[www.washingtonballet.org](http://www.washingtonballet.org)

[www.tippitoesdance.com](http://www.tippitoesdance.com)

## ***Martial Arts***

[www.dcsdka.com](http://www.dcsdka.com)

[www.dcaikido.com](http://www.dcaikido.com)

[www.dynamisacademy.com](http://www.dynamisacademy.com)

[www.ymcadc.org](http://www.ymcadc.org)

[www.pentagonmma.com](http://www.pentagonmma.com)

[www.yongstudios.com](http://www.yongstudios.com)

## ***Gymnastics***

[www.ymcadc.org](http://www.ymcadc.org)  
[www.thelittlegym.com](http://www.thelittlegym.com)  
[www.dynamitegc.com](http://www.dynamitegc.com)  
[www.gosilverstars.com](http://www.gosilverstars.com)

### ***Acting and Performing Arts***

[www.imaginationstage.org](http://www.imaginationstage.org)  
[www.roundhousetheatre.org/education/programs-for-youth](http://www.roundhousetheatre.org/education/programs-for-youth)  
[www.nationalconservatoryofarts.org](http://www.nationalconservatoryofarts.org)

### ***Arts and Crafts***

[www.annabananaartsandcrafts.com](http://www.annabananaartsandcrafts.com)  
[www.childrensartstudio.org](http://www.childrensartstudio.org)  
[www.redpandaart.com](http://www.redpandaart.com)

### ***Reading Clubs***

Check your local Public Library for events, story time, crafts activities and reading clubs.

*Georgetown Library* ([www.georgetownpubliclibrary.org](http://www.georgetownpubliclibrary.org)) is located close to school and offers many activities after school and during weekends.

# Classes and Activities for Adults

## Health and Fitness

**Classpass** - is a fabulous option for exploring different types of classes. It's a membership that allows access to multiple gyms/classes all over the cities. Download the app for more information.

**Balance Gym** - Discounts to school community in Glover Park

**Equinox** - Foggy Bottom and Bethesda

**Crunch** - Tenleytown

**The St. James** - offers activities for adults and children (Springfield, VA)

**Urban Athletic Club** - Glover Park

**WSC** - Glover Park and other locations

**Golds Gym**

## Cardio/Strengthen Classes

**Orange Theory**

**Barry's Bootcamp** - Dupont Circle

**Blast**

**Earth Treks** - Crystal City

**Solidcore**

**PureBarre**

**Urban Boxing**

**Spin**

**SoulCycle**

**Zengo Cycle**

**Yoga**

**CorePower Yoga**



## Entertainment in DC

The monthly Washingtonian magazine and regional counterpart for Virginia are great magazines to read when you first arrive as they cover all areas of Washington (or Virginian) life.

Check-out websites too and if you have a favorite band it's worth subscribing to some of the sites as you'll get preferential pre-booking opportunities.

Even if you don't want to subscribe to the Washington Post, make sure you buy it on a Friday as there's a special weekend supplement. That tells you everything that's going on in DC, and lots of Maryland and Virginia too.

Washington Parent Magazine comes out monthly and is free at supermarkets like Wholefoods. They have a what's on guide for the month, not as detailed as the Washington Post, but still helpful, plus lots of listings for party venues and activities, summer camps, etc.

### Ticket Agencies

**Goldstar** – offer half-price event tickets to members. Membership is free, you just sign-up for their weekly newsletter.

**Ticketmaster** – [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com)

**StubHub** – [www.stubhub.com](http://www.stubhub.com)

**Ticketfly** - [www.ticketfly.com](http://www.ticketfly.com)

### Venues

**Wolftrap** is the only Performing Arts Centre run by the National Parks Service. For further info check out their website at: [www.wolftrap.org](http://www.wolftrap.org)

**Olney Theater Center** – [www.olneytheatre.org](http://www.olneytheatre.org)

**The Kennedy Center** - The Kennedy Center is a wonderful complex of theaters with opera, ballet, concerts – both modern and traditional. It's worth a visit just to wander

around as they have a good shop, free lunch-time concerts, and restaurants. There's even a free shuttle bus service from Foggy Bottom metro.  
[www.kennedy-center.org](http://www.kennedy-center.org)

### ***The Anthem***

Nice concert venue, good food and kid friendly  
[www.theanthemdc.com](http://www.theanthemdc.com)

### ***MCI Center***

A large venue for all the big names. Sports and entertainment.  
[www.mcicenter.com](http://www.mcicenter.com)

### ***The National Theater***

The home of mainstream plays and musicals including lots of pre-Broadway runs and touring companies.  
[www.thenationaldc.com](http://www.thenationaldc.com)

***Verizon Center*** - Home to Washington Wizards (basketball) it doubles as a sports and concert venue.

### ***The Birchmere Music Hall*** – Alexandria

[www.Birchmere.com](http://www.Birchmere.com)

***Strathmore Hall*** - A great, modern concert venue with not a bad seat in the house. Children aged 7 –17 get free admission to concerts by the National Philharmonic (when accompanied by a paying adult, of course). Strathmore is right by a metro station but there's also free parking at the metro in the evenings.  
[www.strathmoremusic.centernorthbethesda.org](http://www.strathmoremusic.centernorthbethesda.org)

## **Links to Children and Family Activities**

[www.washingtonfamilies.com](http://www.washingtonfamilies.com) - Details of popular parks, attractions and events.

[www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org) - Boy Scouts of America. Local scout council Tel (301) 530 9360

[www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org) - Girl Scouts of America. Tel (800) 478 7248

[www.co.mo.md.us](http://www.co.mo.md.us) - Montgomery County official website

[www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) - National Parks official website

[www.washington.org](http://www.washington.org) - Official site for tourism in DC

[www.supernovamommy.com](http://www.supernovamommy.com) - Free and Cheap activities in Northern Virginia.

[www.novaoutdoors.com/nova/Parks](http://www.novaoutdoors.com/nova/Parks) - and their facilities in Northern Virginia.

[www.redtri.com/dc-kids](http://www.redtri.com/dc-kids) - activities with kids in DCMV region

[www.kidfriendlydc.com](http://www.kidfriendlydc.com) – check for activities to do every weekend!

## Events not to be Missed in DC

### What is on in Washington DC

Washington is a historical and cultural center of the United States and there are many great festivals and celebrations highlighting the country's diversity and honoring its heroes and significant achievements.

Here are some of the most popular annual events in Washington DC to look forward to.

#### ***Martin Luther King Day (January)***

The life of Martin Luther King Jr is honored annually in January, the month of his birthday. A number of commemorative events take place around Washington DC on the third Monday in January, including a wreath-laying service at the Martin Luther King Memorial and a parade. The day is also designated as a national day of community service.

#### ***St Patrick's Day Parade (March)***

Washington DC's version of this famous event is a family day out to celebrate the unique culture of Ireland. Expect dancers and singers, Irish musicians, marching bands, pipe bands and floats.

#### ***National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade (April)***

The annual Cherry Blossom Festival Parade is a fun and colorful event that takes place along Constitution Avenue. Floats, marching bands and celebrity performers put on a grand spectacle of music and entertainment in a celebration of spring.

#### ***Smithsonian Folklife Festival (July)***

This unique Washington DC tradition is the city's largest annual cultural event, attracting around a million people a year. The festival aims to celebrate the heritage of different states and regions as well as international communities. Attendees can enjoy music and dance performances, storytelling, exhibitions, and delicious tastings of traditional foods.

### ***National Independence Day Parade (July)***

Washington DC is the place to celebrate the Fourth of July in America. The city comes alive with a huge and impressive parade, numerous music performances, arts and crafts festivals, a famous evening performance by the National Symphony Orchestra on the steps of the Capitol building, and of course a massive fireworks display.

### ***National Book Festival (August/September)***

The National Book Festival is an annual celebration of literature, involving a full day of book signings and performances, as well as a poetry slam and select film screenings. The festival is a great place for expats to feed their literary appetite and broaden their cultural understanding of the United States through representatives from across the country showcasing books from their states.

### ***Halloween (October)***

There are many options to celebrate Halloween around the District of Columbia. Adults can choose from some wild Halloween parties and families can select a kid friendly event to enjoy

### ***National Christmas Tree and Pageant of Peace (December)***

This unique festival celebrating the holiday season takes place amidst decorated trees all around the White House Ellipse, with a Santa's Workshop and musical performances from bands, choirs and dancers. The celebration includes a National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, in which the president turns on the decorative lights and ushers in Christmas festivity across the country.

## Recommended sightseeing in Washington DC

### ***National Mall***

The National Mall is a national park in the heart of the city. It constitutes a tree-lined strip stretching two miles (3km) from the US Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial, and is surrounded by many of DC's key attractions.

### ***US Capitol Building***

The US Capitol Building is Washington DC's most popular landmark and home to the US government. It contains the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as the Supreme Court and one of the three branches of the Library of Congress, the largest library in the world.

### ***White House***

The infamous White House has been the residence and administrative headquarters for every president of the United States since 1800. Tours are available and provide a fascinating insight into the House's previous inhabitants.

### ***Washington Monument***

Located at the National Mall, this tributary obelisk is the tallest masonry structure in the world and offers great views of the city from the gallery.

### ***Lincoln Memorial***

Built in a Greek style as a tribute to the fathers of America's democracy, the Lincoln Memorial salutes the 16th US president, Abraham Lincoln. A number of important marches and speeches have taken place here, including Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

### ***Jefferson Memorial and Tidal Basin***

The design for the domed white memorial to Thomas Jefferson, the third US president, is based on the Roman Pantheon, its low dome supported by 54 Ionic columns. Inside, appearing in a dramatic silhouette through the columns, is a 19-foot statue of a standing Jefferson, and around are engraved excerpts of the Declaration of Independence and other writings. The monument stands alone at the far end of

the Tidal Pool, which reflects the monument in its surface, and all around the edge of the water are cherry trees, a gift from Japan. These are one of Washington's greatest attractions when they bloom each spring, surrounding the basin with a cloud of pink flowers and celebrated with the Cherry Blossom Festival.

### ***Smithsonian Institution***

The Smithsonian Institution is the world's largest museum, education and research complex, and is made up of 19 museums and galleries of unparalleled quality as well as a zoo. Receiving approximately 30 million visitors a year, this attraction is a must-see.

### ***National Gallery of Art***

The National Gallery of Art is the most popular art museum in North America and houses one of the world's leading collections of artworks. Art buffs and casual visitors alike are sure to enjoy taking in the work of many of history's most renowned artists, such as Van Gogh, Picasso, Monet and more.

### ***Smithsonian National Zoo***

The National Zoo is part of the Smithsonian Institution, so you'll find no admission prices or tickets to visit. As one of the oldest zoos in the United States, the National Zoo is sure to be a highlight of your visit to Washington, DC, especially for the young and young at heart.

### ***U.S. National Arboretum and the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum***

Located northeast of downtown Washington, D.C., the United States National Arboretum rewards its visitors with beautiful outdoor spaces. The arboretum's outdoor collections range from dogwoods to azaleas to magnolias, but none of the plants are the area's primary attraction. Instead, most travelers make the trek here for the National Capitol Columns and its bonsai collection.

The area's bonsai trees sit in the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum, which boasts an astounding 300 miniature trees that staff members rotate through the museum's three pavilions and special exhibits gallery.

### ***Old Town Alexandria***

Home to one of the oldest historic districts in America, Alexandria boasts a heavy dose of colonial charm. But, it's still a living, breathing, functioning city creating new chapters stacked atop its storied past. Bisecting Old Town from west to east is King Street, a thoroughfare bustling with restaurants and cafes, bars and bistros, stands and shops.

### ***Waterfronts in and around Washington DC***

The banks of the Potomac and Anacostia rivers are flourishing with some of the DC region's most exciting destinations for live music, sports, dining and on-the-water activities.

When visiting the Capital Region, hop on a water taxi or river cruise and plan to take advantage of one of the nation's greatest collections of riverfront communities.

Georgetown and Old Town Alexandria got their start as bustling ports in the mid-1700s and continue to be thriving neighborhoods today. Reinvigorated waterfronts are connecting the city back to the water at The Wharf and Capitol Riverfront.

Meanwhile, attractions pepper the shoreline stretching from Arlington to National Harbor to George Washington's Mount Vernon and beyond.



## **Amenities and Utility costs**

As soon as you have a place to live, no matter if you have decided to rent or buy, you need to set up your US utilities (heat, running water and electricity). This can be a bit confusing at the beginning. Many city and state websites will provide information for newcomers, including utility company and service provider details.

### **Timeline for Setting up Your US Utilities**

You will probably not want to move into your new home and find that you're stuck there without access to electricity or running water. Therefore, it is important to take care of your utilities early on in the game. In some cases, your utilities can be set up rather quickly, in others you might have to wait a while. Contact your providers early on and find out how much time they need and what the exact process will be like. You should also ask them if you are required to pay a deposit, so that you can plan your US budget accordingly.

Some upper-class residential areas in the United States are gated communities. If you are choosing such a community as your new home, you should find out how to navigate the security fence when you are moving in and/or when an employee of your utility company has to visit your house for some reason. You might be able to get the security code from your landlord.

### **Utility Cost Factors**

Although you will probably invest a big part of your budget in your rent or mortgage payments, you should not underestimate the cost of utilities. If, on top of water, gas, and electricity, you factor in phone and internet costs, the total might not be much less than your monthly rent. This is why it is important to know how much you will have to spend on power, water, and waste disposal. Also keep in mind that these costs can vary strongly depending on if you live in a small apartment or in a big house with a yard.

**Power** - (through gas and electricity) is probably the biggest figure on any utility bill. The amount you will be charged at the end of the month depends on how much you use and how much your provider charges per kilowatt-hour. Keep in mind that the prices fluctuate heavily depending on the time of year and even on the time of day. To estimate the costs, ask your landlord what exactly is included in the rent and how much their previous tenants paid for their gas and electricity. In addition, you can use a utilities cost calculator to get a better idea of how much you will have to spend. In general, these are the monthly costs you can expect in additional charges:

**Water and sewage service** – It can amount to anything between \$10 and \$200 per month (depending on the size of your home)

**Garbage pick-up** – It starts at \$10 (additional fees may arise for recycling)

## **Electricity**

In the past, each region in the US had one electric company which was responsible for providing all households with electricity. Today, due to deregulation, you can compare costs and services and choose the US utilities provider which suits you best. If you are unsure, your friends, neighbors, landlord or real estate agent can probably recommend a company that offers good value for money. Of course, you can also contact the different providers directly and ask about available rates.

If that is the case, you should also ask about their billing options. They might offer budget billing, which gives you a monthly bill that you have to pay on the spot. If you choose auto billing instead, your US utilities provider will deduct the amount you are supposed to pay from your account or bill it to your credit card. If your new home had electric service in the past, turning it back on under your name should not be a big deal. In many cases, it can be done with just a phone call. Make sure to make that phone call way ahead of time. Some US utilities companies need a few working days to set up your connection. On top of that, you might have to wait even longer during the peak moving times in summer. Ask your US utilities provider to confirm the date

when they will connect your new place to their system and tell them exactly when you will move in.

The 10 biggest electricity companies in the United States are the following:

Pepco

Duke Energy Corporations

PG&E Corporation

Exelon Corporation

Edison International

NextEra Energy, Inc.

Southern Company

American Electric Power

FirstEnergy Corp.

Xcel Energy Inc.

National Grid plc

Please remember that the list above is not extensive and that a smaller, local US utilities company might be able to offer you a better deal. Before you sign up with any US utilities provider, try to find out if your heat is powered by electricity as well and if you will need it much throughout the year. If heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (often referred to as HVAC) are powered by electricity as well, your bill might be a lot higher than expected.

## **Water and Household Waste**

Who you have to turn to for running water depends largely on where you live? If your new home is in a rural area, you may receive your water from a well. If this is not the case, then you must contact the responsible US utilities company and ask for a connection to their system. The process should not be much different from that of setting up your electricity connection. In most cases, water and sewage services are provided by your city or county. You might be asked to pay a deposit which you will get back after one year of positive payment history.

Household waste disposal should be provided by your county or city as well. Contact them as soon as possible to find out if and when the garbage truck will stop by your house and if you are required to recycle. In addition, you may have to dispose of some items at special facilities (if these items are considered hazardous, for instance) or recycling centers.

## **Phone, Internet and Cable TV**

Many internet and cable TV providers offer package deals at a reasonable price. In some cases, this option is much cheaper than buying cable TV individually. It makes sense to shop around to get a good deal.

Some expats choose to forego your traditional landline phone in favor of your mobile phone. Particularly those who are out and about a lot might find that relying solely on their cell phone can be an advantage. You can choose among many providers and many plans or buy a prepaid cell phone for starters. The options are endless and which one you ultimately choose depends on your needs. Do you need that bigger texting plan? Can you live without HBO? Keep in mind that much like other utilities providers, your phone or cable company will need some time to set up your connection, so get in touch with them early on.

Home and cell phone bills can amount up to \$70-\$250 altogether.

An internet connection can cost up to \$50.

Cable and satellite TV are between \$25 and \$150.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR BEING PART OF OUR COMMUNITY!

This guide is designed to give parents, grandparents, and other caregivers ideas and tips that will improve your transition from another country, state or school. Our school is a partnership involving parents, students, teachers, and the school board. Your involvement in the school gives you the opportunity to strengthen that partnership, and to be part of a dedicated team.

Please consider volunteer whenever you have opportunity and get to know better our wonderful community!

