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home abroad.

Relocation Guide to New York City, NY

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IOR makes every effort to ensure the information contained in this guide is as current as possible. If you notice errors, or information which is no longer accurate, please contact us immediately so we may correct the issue.

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WELCOME AND OVERVIEW



Photograph Courtesy of [Wikipedia](#)

*"To Europe, she was America. To America, she was the gateway of the earth.
But to tell the story of New York would be to write a social history of the world."
- H. G. Wells*

New York is the most populous, ethnically diverse, and the most international city in the United States. Its urban area extends into adjoining parts of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Located where the Hudson and East Rivers empty into one of the world's premier harbors, New York is both the gateway to the North American continent and an exit to the oceans of the globe. Anchored by Wall Street in the Financial District of Lower Manhattan, New York City has been called both the most economically powerful city and the leading financial center of the world; and the city is home to the world's two largest stock exchanges, the New York Stock Exchange and NASDAQ.

New York has come a long way, from its origins as a humble 17th-century Dutch trading post of New Amsterdam. The city was a major port of entry for immigrants into the United States; more than 12 million European immigrants were received at Ellis Island between 1892 and 1924. The term "melting pot" was first coined to describe densely populated immigrant neighborhoods on the Lower East Side. The New York region continues to be by far the leading metropolitan gateway for legal immigrants admitted into the United States, substantially exceeding the combined totals of Los Angeles and Miami.

New York City experiences a humid subtropical climate and is the northernmost major city on the North American continent with this categorization. The city experiences cold and damp winters with an occasional snow storm, yet the Atlantic Ocean and the partial shielding from colder air by the Appalachians keep the city warmer in the winter than inland North American cities. Summers are typically warm to hot and humid, and while hurricanes and tropical storms are rare in the New York area, they are not unheard of and always have the potential to strike the area.

In reality, New York City is a collection of many neighborhoods scattered among the city's five boroughs—Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens and Staten Island—each exhibiting its own lifestyle and character. From Manhattan's notoriously expensive real estate and high density living, to Brooklyn's distinctive architecture and independent art scene, and Staten Island's suburban atmosphere including 28 miles (45 km) of walking trails and one of the last undisturbed forests in the city. Traveling throughout the boroughs of NYC can feel like moving from one country to another in its diversity.

New York City Overview

- [Official Website of the City of New York](#)
- [Mayor](#)
- Population: 8,244,910
- Land Area: 305 square miles (790 km²)
- Languages Spoken: 850
- Number of Parks: More than 1,700
- City of New York [Parks & Recreation](#)
- New York [Public Library](#)
- [Weather](#) Today in New York City

History

- [Timeline](#) of New York history
- [Museum](#) of the City of New York
- [New-York Historical Society](#)

Recommended Reading (in print)

- For architecture: *AIA Guide to New York City*
- Editor's Choice: [Blue Guide New York](#)
- [Lonely Planet New York City](#)
- Unusual, out of the way attractions: [New York Off the Beaten Path](#)

What to See, Sightseeing Tours, Value Packages and Passes, Tourist Information

- New York City [Visitors Center](#) in Times Square
- Information on [attractions](#)
- Save money on attractions: [City Pass](#)
- Sightseeing packages: [New York Pass](#)
- [Gray Line](#) Sightseeing Tours
- Guided bus tour to sites of favorite film & TV shows: [Screen Tours](#)

Where to Find Arts & Entertainment

- [The New York Times](#)
- [New York Magazine](#)
- [Time Out Magazine](#)
- [The Village Voice](#)
- [Theater ticket discount booths](#)
- Get Broadway and Off Broadway tickets at great prices: [Theater Mania](#)
- [Broadway](#) theater tickets order online
- Cinema listings and schedules: [Movie Fone](#)
- List of New York [Museums](#)

Where to Eat

- Locate restaurants by type; see menus; read customer reviews: [Menu Pages](#)
- Make online restaurant reservations: [Open Table](#)
- [New York Restaurant Week](#): Dine at exclusive restaurants for special value lunch or dinner usually held twice a year.
- [Not For Tourists](#)

Tipping & Sales Tax

When you eat in a restaurant in the US, you are expected to leave your server a tip. Service is not included. In a bar, café or modest restaurant, 15% of the total bill is acceptable. However, in an upscale restaurant (fine dining), a tip calculated on 20% of the total bill is now the norm in NYC.

In addition, you will be paying the 8.875 % sales tax (NY State and NYC combined sales tax).

Note: Clothing and footwear under \$110 are exempt from sales tax in NYC.

Find Customer Reviews on Restaurants, Fitness Clubs, Shopping, Services, and Much More

- [City search](#)
- [Yelp](#)



[Map of the Boroughs of New York City](#)

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY
DIAL 911
FOR FIRE, POLICE & AMBULANCE**

Language line: If the person calling 911 is unable to speak English, they can tell the operator what language they speak. The 911 Operator will have an interpreter on the line within one minute to assist with the translation.

They will ask for the following information so keep this page close to your phone:

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

If you accidentally call 911, please do not hang up. The police will automatically be dispatched to your home to make sure there are no problems. Explain to the Operator the call was an accident.

[POISON CONTROL](#) (800) 222-1222

[ANIMAL POISON CONTROL](#) (888) 426-4435

Other Important Numbers:

CLOSEST CONSULATE OFFICE

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN

WORK PHONE NUMBER

Urgent Care Centers

An Urgent Care Center is different than a Hospital Emergency Room. An Emergency room would be in an absolute emergency. You may visit an Urgent Care Center if, for example, you have a terrible ear ache and need medicine immediately but your Primary Care Physician's office is closed. Many Urgent Care Centers have extended hours and are open early morning until late evening during the week and also some weekend hours. Be sure to refer back to your health insurance company to clarify which urgent care centers and primary care physicians you are allowed to visit using your health insurance. Your insurance card should have a toll-free 1-800 number on the back for you to call and ask questions and clarify which urgent care center would be closest for you. Please always carry your insurance card with you!

Hospitals Lower Manhattan

- [Beth Israel Medical Center](#)
- [New York Downtown Hospital](#)

Hospitals Midtown Manhattan

- [Bellevue Medical Center](#)
- [NYU Langone Medical Center](#) (New York University Hospital)
- [Roosevelt Hospital](#) (Mount Sinai West)

Hospitals Uptown Manhattan

- [Lenox Hill Hospital](#)
- [The Mount Sinai Hospital](#)
- [New York-Presbyterian](#)
- [St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center](#)
- [Weill Cornell Medical College](#)

Veterinary Clinics Lower Manhattan

- [Abingdon Square Veterinary Clinic](#) (West Village)
- [Greenwich Village Animal Hospital](#)
- [Tribeca Soho Animal Hospital](#)
- [Emergency 24hr Vet Care](#)
- [Veterinary Clinic and Hospitals](#)

Pharmacies

There are several major pharmacy chains in New York City, found on nearly every block on commercial streets. Click on "Store Locator" and enter your zip (postal) code to find the pharmacy near you. Several pharmacies are open 24 hours. Check for hours of operation.

- [CVS](#)
- [Duane Reade](#)
- [Rite Aid](#)
- [Walgreens](#)
- [Pharmacies in NYC](#)

A lease is an agreement that outlines the obligations of the owner and the tenants of a house or apartment. It is a legally binding document, so it is important for you to know the exact terms of the lease agreement before you sign it. Please do not sign a lease without reviewing it with your IOR DS Consultant.

Types of rental properties

- **Apartment**

An apartment is rented from a company or individual that owns the property. Apartment buildings are usually multistory with people over, under and beside each other with common hallways or walk ways. Apartments are often rented from a company or individual in the form of an individual lease with no bearing on the other tenants of the building (besides noise complaints, property damage, etc.)

- **Studio Apartments**

A studio apartment is basically a one room apartment with sleeping, dining and kitchen all in one room plus a full bathroom. A “convertible” or “alcove” studio may have a nook or area which can be sectioned off separately for sleeping.

- **Condominium**

A condo is a communally owned estate and the owners share the ownership of the common areas such as grounds and hallways. Condominiums may be apartment style buildings or town house type buildings, but condo owners do not usually own the land. Condo owners are required to pay monthly common maintenance charges, although these might be reflected in your rental rate (it is important to clarify this with your landlord).

- **Townhouse**

A Townhouse is a kind of structure where the individual properties are flush against each other with tiny front and back "yards" and shared walls between them. Almost always they are multistory single family. Usually townhouse owners own the property under their townhouse.

- **Single Family Houses**

Single-family houses are free-standing rental properties that are habited by one person or a family. As you do not share this rental space with any other tenants, single-family homes offer the most amount of privacy. Homes also often come with a parking spot and/or garage space, but may require that you handle certain maintenance items (i.e. your lawn, minor repairs, etc.)

Rental Agents

In most situations, your IOR consultant will partner with a local realtor to have access to the most current and extensive property listings as well as the realtor's expertise in preparing and negotiating leases. This agent receives a commission for their assistance, in most US locations this commission is paid by the Landlord, not the tenant. Your IOR DS Consultant will discuss this with you.

Renter's Rights

Tenants who lease or rent property are protected against discrimination by [The Fair Housing Act](#). If you think your rights have been violated, you may write a letter or telephone the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office nearest you. You have one year after the alleged violation to file a complaint with HUD, but you should file as soon as possible.

While you can generally expect the same service from landlords, it's important to know your state's laws. Each state and most major cities have their own tenant rights, laws and protections. [Here are New York's](#).

You can also visit the [HUD website here for a full guide to renters' rights by states](#).

If your rental property ever suffers any defects that make your place uninhabitable, your landlord has a duty to fix it. While some apartments let you make online requests for repairs, as well as provide a phone number for "emergencies," always make sure you document your request in writing. The landlord will then have a certain amount of time to make those repairs.

Privacy

You have the right to privacy. While the landlord owns the property, they can't access it anytime they want. All states have laws stating renters have a right to privacy while renting. Pretty much the only time the landlord can come into your rental without permission or notice is when they're responding to an emergency that threatens injury or property damage.

Any other time the landlord wants to enter your apartment, they need to have your permission and in most cases give you 24-hours' notice before entering.

What to expect from the landlord:

In most states, you are legally entitled to:

- Safe structural elements including floors, walls, roofs, and secure doors and windows.
- Privacy as described above.
- All electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning systems function.
- Working hot and cold water.
- Exterminating infestations of rodents and other insects.
- Access to trash receptacles.
- Landlords cannot discriminate based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or disabilities.
- Apartment buildings sometimes come with laundry and dryer machines in the basement.
- Water, electricity, and gas bills are up to you to pay. **Your IOR consultant will assist you with this process.**

Utilities and Appliances

Your IOR DS Consultant will assist you or provide information on connecting your utilities. It is possible some will be included in your rent, but typically most are not.

If you are moving from Europe to North America, you might be surprised at the relatively large size of the kitchen appliances in your accommodation, especially the refrigerator! It may also surprise some expats that properties are rented **with** appliances. In the US it is standard for properties to include a refrigerator, stove, and oven. Properties may also include a dishwasher, microwave, washer and dryer depending on the location, size, and price point.

****Note that you will need a social security number in order to register and pay for utilities****

Recycling

Ask your IOR DSC about the recycling arrangements and requirements. While domestic waste disposals are common in North America, recycling bins are not always present even if such services exist. Information on recycling in NYC [here](#).



The Lease Process

Review your housing budget with your DSC

Your DSC can help you understand what kind of property you can afford. You also need to take into account that you may be responsible for some of the utility costs of your rental.

Know what you want

What are you looking for in a property? Do you want a studio or a single bedroom? Maybe you want to rent a single family home? Do you need the property to come with appliances, including washer and dryer? Do want it to be close to school or your work? Do you want it to be within walking distance of retail, like groceries or coffee shops? Are you looking for a child friendly area? Keep in mind that outside of the city center in major cities, there is not much public transportation and most locals drive everywhere.

Identify potential apartments

IOR offers home finding services to aid you with this process. Your consultant may work with a local broker who will help to organize appointments and visit properties. They will also assist in the rental application and the leasing process.

Common Abbreviations and Acronyms used in rental housing listings

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
24-hr mtn	24-hour emergency maintenance
AC or A/C	Air conditioning

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
LA	Living area
LR	Living room

Appls	Appliances
Apt	Apartment
BA	Bathroom
BR	Bedroom
Bsmt	Basement
CAC	Central air conditioning
DA	Dining area
Det	Detached
Dk	Deck
DR	Dining room
Dw (D/w)	Dishwasher
Eff	Efficiency
EiK	Eat-in kitchen
Fin bsmt	Finished basement
FDR	Formal dining room
FHA	Fair Housing Act
FMR	Fair market rent
FP	Floorplan
Gar	Garage
H/A	Handicapped accessible
H/W	Hardwood floors
Hi ceil	High ceilings
HVAC	Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning

MBR	Master bedroom
MBTH	Master bathroom
Neg	Negotiable
Ofc	Office
OSP	Off-street parking
Pkg	Parking
PM	Property manager (management)
Pvt	Private
Pwdr rm	Powder room (1/2 bath)
RE	Real estate
Renov	Renovated
Rf	Roof
Rm	Room
SF	Single-family
SFA	Single-family attached
SFD	Single-family detached
Sp, Pl (S/p)	Swimming pool
Sq. ft	Square feet
Th (T/H)	Townhouse
Vw (vu)	View
W/A	Wheelchair accessible
W/W	Wall-to-wall carpeting

Visit

Make this process as efficient as possible by visiting as many potential properties as you can in one or two days. Try to go sometime during the week if possible. Your IOR DS consultant will work with you to set an appropriate schedule and to ensure that the properties you visit meet your needs as closely as possible.

What to do once you're there

As you look at the rental unit, be sure to ask a lot of questions. While you should keep small concerns to yourself about the unit while looking at it, feel free to ask the landlord or apartment manager any questions you might have that will help in your decision. Here are some possible questions you may consider asking:

- What's the monthly rent?
- Are any utilities included with the rent?
- How much is the security deposit?
- When is rent due? Do you have auto-pay?
- What's the make-up of the other tenants? Are they mainly younger students? Married couples with families? Older folks?
- What's the parking situation like? Do you pay for a parking spot?
- Do you take care of small maintenance issues or am I responsible for some of the repairs in the property?
- Am I able to re-paint the walls or make other modifications?

Again, be friendly and polite when you ask these questions.

The Application

The next step in the leasing process for an apartment is to submit a rental application for the location you want. The manager or landlord will be able to give you the application as well as anything else that they may need to have filled out. Your IOR DS Consultant will assist with this process. For a single family home there will likely be a rental application.

You will need your passport, Social Security number, Visa, and proof of employment. Some landlords may charge you an application fee which could be between \$20 to \$400 dollars, depending on the landlord. This could be a combination of an application fee and move-in fee.

Once you've done this, it can take up to a few days to hear back from the property manager. Once your application has been approved the lease approval process will begin with IOR and likely your employer.

Signing the lease

DO NOT SIGN THE LEASE until your IOR DS consultant has reviewed it in full and given their approval.

The lease is a binding contract, so it is very important to pay attention as a leasing agent goes over it with you. It is perfectly normal for you to take your time and read all the fine print for yourself. If you are working with an IOR consultant, make sure to talk with them and receive approval before signing. You will also be given a copy of the lease to take with you and keep for your records, but it is very important to know everything included in your lease from the start.

Some things to look for in a lease:

- Term of the lease and any important dates such as when the rent is due.
- Extra fees for parking spaces or storage, garbage collection, and pets.

- Information regarding utility providers and whether you or the landlord is responsible for those bills.
- Notification requirements in case of renewal.
- Requirements/responsibilities of the tenants to do routine repairs such as lawn maintenance, cleaning or notification of repairs.
- Clauses that allow the landlord to change the terms of the lease after it is signed.
- Restrictions that would prevent you from living normally or comfortably in the home.

Sometimes landlords will ask for a security deposit before you sign the lease. This is normal, but you shouldn't pay in cash. Make sure all payments are made out as a check or money order just in case.

What to expect from the lease

Most leases in the United States include the following or a variation thereof:

- Your employer requires that all leases include a Break Clause in case you are transferred for work or personal needs.
- Contracts will often be for periods of a year or more.
- Minimum stay. Typically three fourths of your lease contract time. If you choose to move out before this date, you will lose your security deposit. If you move out afterwards, you are still required to give a specified number of days notice.
- Security Deposit. Landlords will expect you to leave them with a deposit (usually about one to two month's rent) that they will hold for the duration of your lease. You will receive your security deposit back at the end of the lease provided you don't break any specific clauses in your lease, such as moving out without proper notice, not paying rent, causing damages to the property, etc.
- Landlords should not be given unchecked access to your apartment. If there isn't anything in your lease about landlord's rights to enter the leased premises, suggest the following clause:

Entry by the Landlord. Landlord or his agent will not enter Tenant's home except to deal with an emergency; to make necessary or agreed repairs; to supply necessary or agreed services; or to show the unit to potential purchasers, tenants, or repair persons. Unless there is an emergency, Landlord will give Tenant at least 24 hours' written notice of the date, time, and purpose of the intended entry and will schedule entries during normal business hours, Monday–Friday.

Most landlords will be hard-pressed to say no to such a reasonable clause. If the landlord refuses, it's a sure sign that he won't be reasonable in other respects, too. Continue on in your housing search.

Moving In

On your selected move-in date, after the lease has been signed, and deposits have been paid...you should be given your keys and more than likely a move-in form to fill out. Your IOR DS Consultant will assist you with an initial walk through of your apartment. Look for dings in the walls, cracked windows, or other irregularities and report them on this form. This will indicate that these things were there before you moved in and you will not be held responsible for them at the end of the lease term.

Get Renter's Insurance

Renter's insurance covers any loss to your personal property due to robbery or accidents. It also covers any damage you might cause to other tenant's property. For example, let's say your washing machine springs a leak and water seeps through the floor and ruins your neighbor's antique dresser. Renter's insurance would cover that.

Renter's insurance will cost approximately about \$15-125 a month, less if you tack it onto another policy (like auto) you have with an insurance company. A few popular options are [Allstate](#) and [StateFarm](#).

When relocating internationally, your children's education is of great concern. IOR eases this concern by exposing you to the various school options available for your child and helping you to work within the framework of options to find the best solution for your family.

I. **Overview and Philosophy of the United States Educational System**

In most U.S. locations you will have the choice of sending your children to either a public or private school. A public school must accept your child for enrollment if you live within its designated district. A private school may have a general curriculum similar to that of public schools, but may or may not accept your child depending on availability of space, your child's prior academic history, language ability in English, or the result of entrance exams. Private schools charge a fee, which can be quite high. If you are considering private school, be sure you have a clear understanding of your employer's policy regarding reimbursement. In the U.S. approximately 85% of the children attend public schools for ages 5 to 13, and approximately 93% of the children attend public school at the high school level. Many, though not all, private schools are parochial, or religiously affiliated schools.

A third option called 'charter school' is sometimes available. Charter Schools are similar to public schools in that they are free, non-religious, publicly funded, and are held to state and federal academic standards. Each charter school is governed by its own local school community, which often includes parents and teachers - rather than a district. This freedom allows teachers to be more innovative, and communities to shape their local school. Charter schools can set their own hours and adjust their curriculum to fit their student needs, and give teachers the opportunity to experiment with next-generation teaching models including technology and the virtual classroom. Charter schools typically admit students by random lottery and do not restrict enrollment based on location, academic achievement, or other factors private schools may consider.

Most Americans, regardless of their level of education and income, send their children to public schools. Because each town or community typically has its own school system funded by local municipal taxes and state revenues, residents in an area with a higher tax base can usually be assured of quality public education. IOR is very conscientious about placing assignees and their families in areas with good public school systems.

Private schools do not receive state revenue, although they may be entitled to assistance with transporting students and providing for special needs such as speech therapy and assistance of the learning disabled. Private schools are funded through tuition paid by the student's parents. Typically, there are additional fees for books, uniforms, and school supplies, and the parents are usually solicited for additional charitable donations. There may also be book or activity fees at public schools.

The public education system in the U.S. is administered by local and state government, rather than by the federal government. Each state has a board of education which sets policy for all school districts and standards which all students must achieve. In addition, each local district has a board of education which sets local policy and curriculum within the parameters set forth by the state.

School districts can provide specialized programs and services for children with special needs. The general philosophy of education in the United States is to educate the entire diverse, ethnically mixed population with equal educational opportunity for all, while serving the educational needs of the individual student.

If you choose public education for your child, the particular school your child attends is determined by the school district boundaries containing your residential address. The school may or may not be within walking distance to your home. Generally, if the distance to the school is greater than one mile, the school district provides bus transportation to and from school. For those children who do not live far enough away from the school for bus service but are too far to walk comfortably, parents may have the option of paying for bus transportation, or they may choose to drive their children to and from school. Very often parents form 'car pools', sharing the responsibility of driving groups of children.

Generally private schools do not have residential boundaries for their students' families. In most cases, parents rely on car pools to ease the burden of transporting their students to and from school. In selecting your home, consider the driving distance and time to and from the private school.

Ultimately, the school your children attend is determined by your residential address, so it is a good idea to include visits to potential schools and properties in your pre-trip visit. Your pre-trip visit will consist of selected sample houses in a variety of communities, along with information, or perhaps visits, to the appropriate schools. However, there may be a limited selection of homes available within each community. It is possible you may find a school you like, but there may not be any available housing options within that school's enrollment radius. We will show you housing in school districts with proven academic standards, but be aware there are cases when certain schools are unavailable due to housing concerns.

If you are considering a private school, you may wish to visit it as well as a public school to compare. It would be advisable, however, to first determine if the private school has space available for your child. Additionally, you will want to know the amount of tuition and fees for the school, as that may be a factor in your decision.

II. Academic Standards

A. Curriculum:

The overriding objective of elementary and secondary education, public or private, is to prepare students for higher learning and future employment. Each school district or private school will have a unique curriculum which meets the above overriding goals.

Elementary School:

The elementary years (kindergarten through fifth grade) focus on fundamental academic skills, language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics in addition to introduction to technology, art, music, physical education, and sometimes foreign languages. Students' personal development is energized through emphasizing strong work habits which provide a positive feeling toward learning.

Middle School:

Middle School helps children in early adolescence (sixth through eighth grade) transition from elementary to high school and from childhood into young adulthood. The structure of the school day includes contact with several teachers who specialize in their subject matter; students usually move from one classroom to another. Curricular content focuses on expansion of skills in math, science, reading, writing and social studies. Further exploration of foreign languages, practical and fine arts, music, health, physical education and computer literacy are also provided. Middle school students are able to enhance their formal education by participation in school sponsored adult supervised competitive athletics and a variety of clubs and special interest groups.

High School:

The premise of elementary and middle schools is to prepare students for the academic, social, and physical challenges of high school. All high schools maintain defined academic requirements for graduation, however great flexibility of classes is usually available within this framework. Most schools provide more challenging academic courses entitled honors or advanced placement which award college credit to successful students. High school extracurricular and athletic activities are more competitive than those found at lower levels and often provide talented students with opportunities continue this activity in college or university.

B. Grading Systems/Assessment of Child Progress

Schools typically report students' progress to parents with written report cards, which may be either mailed or carried home by the student. Many schools also set one or two days aside each semester for parent/teacher conferences. These conferences are an opportunity for parents to meet with their children's teachers and hear the teacher's evaluations of their student's performance in school. At the elementary school level, where children usually have one primary teacher, a teacher conference may last from fifteen minutes to an hour in length. At the middle school and high school levels, you may meet with your child's teachers for a period of five or ten minutes. If you need additional time with the teacher, you may schedule a follow-up visit

allowing time for a more complete discussion. It is a good idea to participate fully in teacher conferences. Your children's teachers may be able to provide valuable insight regarding your children's academic and social adjustments. Should there be concerns, they may be able to assist you with helpful suggestions of additional resources to contact.

C. Standardized Testing

Challenged to prepare students for higher learning and future employment, all school districts and private schools utilize standardized testing to measure student progress over time and compare themselves to national standards. Such tests are prepared by national groups of parents and educators as well as business and academic leaders. Tests vary from state to state, but typically students in prescribed grade levels (for example, grades 3, 6, 8 and 10) are tested in the areas of reading, mathematics, writing science and social science. Colleges and universities use the ACT and SAT tests to measure incoming student abilities; the results of these tests are nearly as important as high school grades when students apply for entrance into US colleges and universities.

III. Definition of School Groupings

A. Pre-School or Nursery School

In the U.S., 3, 4 and some 5 year olds have the opportunity to attend a pre-school under a private system. These schools can be located in a local school, a church, or an independent free standing building. Pre-school is not publicly funded and is fee-based. Typically children are grouped by age. Most of the schools are play-based, although different philosophies of formal education can be found. Typically, 3 year olds attend 2 half days a week and 4 year olds may attend 3 half days a week. Some preschools also serve as day care centers for families in which both parents work. Typically reading is not taught in pre-school, although a few programs can be found which include reading fundamentals. Concentration of learning is on small and gross motor skills, and basic academic readiness skills. Some pre-schools offer a full-day Kindergarten option for those parents who work. The public school kindergarten programs are typically only half day programs with no before or after school care. If a Kindergarten program is offered it follows the state curriculum guidelines, and teaches pre-reading and math skills.

B. Elementary School

Elementary school provides education for children ages 5 to 11, Kindergarten and Grades 1,2,3,4 &5. While kindergarten at age 5 is not required, most families send their children to kindergarten. Elementary school is the beginning of publicly funded school. In the U.S. children are grouped by age and advanced in school by age. There are usually opportunities within the grade for different levels of learning, with opportunities for advanced learners and remedial learners. The public elementary school is usually neighborhood based and the source of playmates for your child. In the U.S., pre-reading skills are introduced in kindergarten (age 5) along with early math skills. Formal reading begins in the 1st grade (age 6). Studies have shown that while children learn to read at different ages, the difference between early and late readers is not a predictor of reading skills by about the age of 8 or 9 years old. In addition to reading

and math, elementary school also has a broad base of writing, science, social studies, art, music, computer, personal development and physical education. Only in a few schools will a 2nd language be introduced at the elementary level. English as a Second Language (ESL) is offered starting at the elementary level in the public school. Parents are allowed to visit the schools, and there are many opportunities for parents to volunteer their skills, particularly at the elementary school. Parents may approach teachers and administrators with suggestions and concerns with their child. Usually the personnel are willing to consider changes if they feel it would be in the best interests of the child. With a child coming to a new country and sometimes starting a new language, feel free to talk to the school if you think something could be done to ease your child's adjustment. The school day is from approximately 8:30a.m. to 3:00p.m. with recess (playtime break) and a lunch break at the school.

C. Middle School

Middle school provides education for children ages 11 to 14, grades 6, 7 & 8. The children attend school in a different location and in the public school system several elementary schools will combine into the same middle school. A middle school is usually 2-4 times the size of the elementary school. Middle school is considered the transition between elementary school and high school and from childhood to young adulthood. Because of this philosophy, U.S. students at this age level are all introduced to the same academic curriculum. The school day is structured differently with the children changing class rooms and teacher with each subject. There are 6-8 different class periods daily. Within the grades children may be separated by academic ability in classes, particularly math and English. Often an introduction to foreign languages is offered. For those who choose, the student may have the option to complete one year of high school foreign language during middle school. If your home country requires more advanced language development at this age, you may want to consider outside supplemental language instruction. Middle school is a time when extracurricular activities such as theatre, music, sports and clubs become important activities in adolescent life.

D. High School

High school provides education for children ages 14 to 18, grades 9, 10, 11 & 12. It is the final level of education before the university, community college, or trade school. The terms Freshman (9th), Sophomore (10th), Junior (11th) and Senior (12th) are also used to identify grade level. At the high school level the student has more specific choices of course work. Each district has a set of minimum graduation requirements, which will include courses in English, math, science, social studies, physical education and a combination of foreign language, fine arts and practical arts. Within this framework the student has various choices from more remedial levels, average levels, and more advanced levels. If a student is prepared for the material, by the 11th or 12th grade a student may have the opportunity to take a college level course for advanced credit in the U.S. university system. In high school competitive sports are offered along with theatre, orchestra, instrumental and vocal music and clubs. Your child will have an opportunity to meet more U.S. children by participating in a school extracurricular activity. Each school district has 1 or more high schools with 800-2500 students. A student's high school

performance may determine the type of university or higher education program they pursue upon graduation. During high school national tests are given to determine the student's potential to advance to various higher education levels.

If your child anticipates returning to your home country to continue higher education within your university system, you might want to consider the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. This program is recognized internationally for entrance to universities. In contrast to the typical high school college preparatory curriculum, the IB semester consists of fewer subjects, studied in greater depth and with a bilingual proficiency. Developed in Switzerland, the curriculum was intended as a secondary education program which could be utilized and accepted worldwide. Not all US schools will offer an IB curriculum.

E. Post-Secondary Education

While most families on international assignment do not bring their older children (19 years+) for education in the U.S. we include a brief description of the US university system. Some form of post-secondary education is available to those U.S. students who seek it. Each state offers a public university system which the tuition is partly subsidized by the state for state residents. Residency of at least 1 year is necessary. Some are medium to large institutions (with undergraduate and graduate level programs). Some can be quite competitive for admission while others may not be competitive at all. Student's admission to the university is in part determined by their high school academic performance and course selection and as well as the results of a national standardized test (SAT or ACT). Post-Secondary is the educational level that students in the U.S. study subjects in great depth and select their majors and career choices. Graduate level programs on the master level, professional level, and PhD level are pursued after completing the 4 years of undergraduate studies.

IV. Life in Schools

A. Atmosphere

It is valuable to visit your child's school to understand the academic and non-academic atmosphere that prevails. Administrators or counselors are happy to serve as tour guides and should always be contacted in advance. Do not be alarmed if your visit takes place during the lunch hour if the children seem a bit rambunctious. Students in American public schools generally enjoy a great deal of personal freedom in the cafeteria, on the playground, and in the halls before and after class. They are supervised by teachers or members of the school staff, but they generally are more relaxed in the lunch room and in the halls. If you are visiting on a rainy day, you may observe "indoor recess" in the gymnasium which could be noisy. Rest assured that when they are in the classroom, students do settle down and work quietly and diligently. Some classrooms are more informally arranged than others. For instance, some teachers prefer to have the children's desks in a circle rather than in rows. Teachers will sometimes assign group projects, where several students work together and are thus not seated at their desks during a part of the classroom period. Teachers are expected, however, to have good control of their classrooms. Private school policy regarding these issues of personal freedom varies. Some

private schools function as the public schools do, while others may have a more closely supervised approach. Again, it is always a good idea to visit the school so that you are comfortable with that particular school's management style.

B. Parental Involvement

In addition to participating in parent/teacher conferences, most American schools encourage parents to become involved in the volunteer activities of the school. Most schools have a "PTA" (Parent Teacher Association) or "PTO" (Parent Teacher Organization). These organizations usually work with the school administration, dealing with issues such as student safety, communication to parents, academic concerns, etc., as well as fundraising and planning special programs to enhance the school experience for the student population.

Getting involved with the PTA or PTO is a great way to become well informed about your child's school. It also provides you with an opportunity to meet and really get to know other parents. There will probably be a choice of committees on which you could work; you do not have to commit to a leadership role. Some volunteer opportunities may involve actually working in the school, volunteering in the school library on day a week or one day a month for example. Be sure to alert the school administration that you would like to get involved, and ask for the name and phone number of the head of the parent volunteer organization at the school. Parent volunteers are usually welcomed and encouraged at all levels at all schools, both public and private.

C. Extracurricular Activities

A well-rounded education requires that students learn their academic subjects as well as develop socialization skills and learn nonacademic skills. Belonging to a group can be a rewarding connection with peers and a good way to develop self-confidence. These are the reasons that schools, public and private, provide numerous extracurricular activities from which their students can choose to participate. At each level of education the opportunities and choices increase. For example at the elementary school level, all students are introduced to art, music, drama and a variety of athletic experiences. At the middle school level, students have required courses in some of the above areas but are provided opportunity to participate in after school activities of their choice. For example, competitive football, soccer, swimming, track, lacrosse, basketball etc. In addition many clubs allow students to pursue other interests, for example, computers, drama, fine arts, forensics, jazz band, photography, yearbook and student council. Almost universally, each activity or club is sponsored by adults, using specialized instruction, who demonstrate a working knowledge of the activity and a desire to teach children. An even greater variety of extracurricular experiences are available at the high school level, many of which help students identify strengths, talents and interests which may direct them to future colleges, vocations or avocations.

D. Facilities

All schools maintain facilities other than classrooms which enhance or support their educational mission.

Libraries and Media Centers

Libraries are universally available and are accessible to students throughout the day and often after hours. Libraries often contain a “media center” which maintains and makes available other types of educational materials including computers and software, audio and video tapes, slides, sound sequences, projectors and recorders of various types for use individually or in groups. The wide availability of computers and access to the internet has provided almost unlimited opportunities for students and teachers to obtain information that can enhance and facilitate learning.

Fitness Facilities/Gymnasium

Fitness facilities, or ‘gyms’ as they are typically referred to, are supplied by almost all schools in the United States. Gyms often consist of a large indoor court with various sports equipment. They are open during lunch hours and for specific hours before and after school for athletes or students who wish to exercise. Many gyms will be accompanied by a weight room and a locker room with a shower. Students are sometimes expected to use these communal showers following Physical Education classes or general use of the gym’s facilities.

SCHOOLS IN YOUR AREA

Generally, to register your child for school you will need to have a passport and/or birth certificate, proof of immunizations, any applicable past school records and proof of residency. Most public schools have boundary areas, and you must show proof (i.e. copy of lease or home purchase agreement) to be allowed to register in that particular school. Please always confirm requirements with the school you are interested in before assuming that your child will be able to attend that school.

Grade level in the public school system is determined by the age of the child. Typically, the child must be 5 years old by September 1st to enter kindergarten. School districts may be very strict about the age requirement, but inquire with the school district you are interested in to determine if there are any exemptions for foreign students who are ahead in grade level. You may also want to ask about any gifted or advanced programs as well as their English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs. Some elementary schools also offer a pre-Kindergarten program for children who miss the September 1st requirement. You may inquire at the school districts for availability.

Contact your IOR Destination Services Consultant for more assistance with schooling questions.

Public Schools in New York City

[The New York City Department of Education](#) operates over 2,000 public schools, the largest school system in the United States. The department covers all five boroughs of New York City. Some schools belong to a geographic “school district”. These “Zoned Schools” admit children according to place of residence. Other schools require a rigorous application process including academic achievement, testing and interview. There are also Charter Schools organized around special fields such as arts and music, science and technology, fashion and marketing, finance, and environmental studies. New York City Public Schools also offer academic programs in a variety of languages. Gifted and advanced academic programs abound, most notably illustrated by Stuyvesant High School, one of New York City’s most prestigious public high school.

If you are new to New York City public schools or need help with the enrollment process, see below for information about new student registration.

- Learn [how to register](#) for elementary, middle, and high school this fall.
- Find a [Family Welcome Center](#) near you.
- Get information about [Charter Schools](#) including admissions lotteries for schools, open houses, performance reports. [Directory of Charter Schools](#)



Welcome Centers

[Family Welcome Center](#) staff members are available to assist New York City families with enrollment in pre-Kindergarten through high school. Some schools, such as [Park Slope 39](#), do offer scheduled tours to prospective families.

Family Welcome Centers are open 8am to 5pm, Monday through Thursday, and 8am-3pm on Friday. Closed on Holidays. Locations: Brooklyn (4), Bronx (2), Manhattan (2). Queens (3), Staten Island (1)

Specialized High Schools in NYC

In addition, there are nine [Specialized High Schools in NYC](#), eight of which require students applying for admission to take the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT). At the time of the test, students list (in priority order) the specialized high schools they are interested in attending. The tests are scored by an independent company. Specialized high school offers are based solely on test results, the student's ranked order of the schools, and seat availability.

Schools requiring the SHSAT:

- Bronx High School of Science
- Brooklyn Latin
- Brooklyn Technical High School
- High School for Mathematics, Science and Engineering at the City College
- High School of American Studies at Lehman College
- Queens High School for the Sciences at York College
- Staten Island Technical High School
- Stuyvesant High School

Private Schools in NYC

- [The British International School](#) - is proud to be an I.B. World School, authorized to deliver the Primary Years and Middle Years program, taught by a world-class faculty. BIS-NY is a school that welcomes students and families from around the world. The [tuition](#) is \$45,550. Registration fee, uniforms, bus fees, after school activities and not included. Ages 3-14
20 Waterside Plaza,
New York, New York 10010
- [Collegiate School](#): K-12 all Boys. [Tuition](#) averages \$49,800. Registration fee, books, uniforms, bus fees, after school activities and meals not included.
301 Freedom Place South
New York, NY 10069
- [Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School](#): Pre K-12. [Tuition](#) averages \$48,000. Registration fee, books, uniforms, bus fees, after school activities and meals not included.
5 West 93rd Street
New York, NY 10025

- [The Dwight School](#): Pre k-12, Dwight was the first school in the U.S. to offer the comprehensive [IB curriculum](#) (Primary Years, Middle Years, and Diploma Programs) from preschool through grade twelve. It was also the first school in New York City to offer the preschool PYP. Widely known as the most challenging and respected pre-university course of study anywhere in the world, the IB is the only universal curriculum where students are graded according to international benchmarks. [Tuition](#) ranges from \$4600 to \$46,750 depending on the age of the student. Registration fee, books, uniforms, bus fees, after school activities and meals not included.

291 Central Park West

New York, NY 10024

- [Ethical Culture Fieldston School](#) : Pre K-4. [Tuition](#) averages \$48,000
- [Metropolitan Montessori School](#): Pre K-6. [Tuition](#) averages \$42,000
- [The Rudolf Steiner Waldorf School](#): Pre K-12. [Tuition](#) averages \$44,000
- [Saint David's Catholic School](#): All boys Pre K-8. [Tuition](#) averages \$46,000
- [United Nations International School](#): K-12 offers the [IB Program](#). [Tuition](#) averages \$38,000

International Schools (Public and Private)* in Greater NYC Metro Area

- [Whitby](#): Located in Greenwich Connecticut only 45 minutes from New York City. Whitby is an independent, coeducational private day school for student's ages 18 months through eighth grade. Founded in 1958 - America's longest continuing Montessori school and birthplace of the American Montessori Society. Accredited by the American Montessori Society and the highly regarded International Baccalaureate for grades Pre-K through 8. [Tuition](#) averages \$40,000.
- [International High School](#) is a four-year public high school in nearby Paterson, New Jersey offering the International Baccalaureate Program. Paterson is 12 miles from Ridgefield Park. Approximately 25 students will be selected for admission to the [Paterson Public School Accelerated Cohort](#). Students selected for the program will be admitted to an honors program aimed at preparing students for the rigors of advanced coursework during their 11th and 12th grade years. The selection committee at International High School will review applications.
- [Linden High School](#) - located about fifteen miles away from New York City. Because the International Education program at Linden High School is a not-for-profit endeavor, the tuition is considerably less than that charged by private schools in our area, approximately \$20,000.
Grade 9-12
2 East Gibbons Street
Linden, NJ 07036 USA
International admissions <http://lamastra9.wixsite.com/lindeninternational>
Tuition costs are approximately \$20,000 per year. Registration fee, books, uniforms, bus fees, after school activities and meals not included.
- [The Red Oaks School](#) - Red Oaks families reside in five counties in a 30-mile radius of the school and originate from over 26 countries. We are a regionally and globally diverse community of students, faculty, and administration. That's only part of what makes Red Oaks a wonderful school. We offer two internationally recognized educational programs – Montessori at the lower

school and International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme at the upper school.
21 Cutler St.

Morristown, NJ 07960 (approx. 30 miles from NYC)

[Tuition and fees](#) \$13,225 to \$24,975/year, depending on the age of the student. Registration fee, books, uniforms, bus fees, after school activities and meals not included.

- [Newark Academy](#) - Located on 68 acres in NJ, Newark Academy is a private day school for grades 6 through 12, offering the IB program.

91 South Orange Avenue

Livingston, NJ 07039 (approx. 22 miles from NYC)

[Tuition](#) \$39,350. Registration fee, books, uniforms, bus fees, after school activities and meals not included.

**When you are considering a private school, you may wish to visit it as well as a public school to compare. It would be advisable, prior to visiting, to determine if the private school has space available for your child. The deadline for receiving applications for kindergarten-grade 12 is typically late fall to early spring, for enrollment for the upcoming school year. Some private schools allow International families to apply throughout the year, but is dependent on available space.*

International Baccalaureate Program Assessments

IB students complete a variety of assessments — written, oral, art portfolio, group science project, group math project — that occur during the regular school year. IB teachers grade these projects and use the results to predict their students' performance on IB external exams taken in May of the senior year. IB external assessments in all subject areas are exams, which vary by discipline. Some are oral, some are written, and some are cumulative portfolios. Students take their exams on campus. Instructors then send the exams to outside examiners for grading.

Receiving the IB Diploma requires that students earn a minimum of 24 points. Marks for each subject area range from 1 (lowest) to 7 points (highest). Students can also earn an additional three points from the ToK essay and the Extended Essay. The maximum number of points possible is 45. Final IB grades are released typically in July. Students who find that the full Diploma Program does not best meet their interests or talents may elect to take individual IB courses, for which Certificates may be earned.

Becoming an IB Diploma Student

In general, a successful IB student has an academic record that reflects grades of mostly A's and B's with the occasional C or C+. In addition, an academic record that reflects strong effort grades is a good indicator of potential success in the IB Program. Other qualities that bode well for success in IB courses include strong communication skills (both writing and speaking), solid organizational skills, an interest in learning about international perspectives, a strong work ethic and a full commitment to meeting the requirements of the Diploma Program. In order to be considered as a potential IB student, a student may be recommended by a teacher, request a recommendation from a teacher or request an appointment with the IB Coordinator. The next step for each potential IB student is an interview with

the IB Coordinator and/or the Dean of Faculty. During their interview, students will have the opportunity to explain why they wish to participate in the program and how they see themselves benefitting from the IB curriculum. Applicants will usually participate in a short writing exercise.

University Recognition

American and international colleges and universities recognize the value of the [IB Diploma](#) and appreciate the rigor and range of the IB curriculum. The International Baccalaureate organization touts its diploma as “a passport to higher education.” Universities “welcome the unique characteristics of the IB Diploma Program students and recognize the way in which the Program helps to prepare students for university-level education. IB students routinely gain admission to some of the best-known universities in the world. Most of these institutions have established recognition policies for the IB Diploma. In general, high marks (5, 6, 7) in a course earn advanced standing or credit for entering university students.

Additional School Resources

- [GreatSchools.com](#)
- [US News School Rankings](#)
- [www.eschoolprofile.com](#)
- [www.schooltree.org](#)
- [Top 10 NYC Elementary Schools](#)
- [The Parents League of New York](#) is affiliated with 300 member independent schools and can provide some guidance with school profiles. See full list of NYC independent schools [here](#).
- [National Association of Independent Schools](#)
- [Info](#) on private schools on City of New York website
- [ERB](#) provides admissions testing for NYC independent schools

Colleges and Universities

- [The City University of New York](#)
- [College of Mount Saint Vincent](#)
- [Columbia University](#)
- [Fashion Institute of Technology](#)
- [Fordham University](#)
- [The Juilliard School](#)
- [Manhattan School of Music](#)
- [Mannes College/ The New School for Music](#)
- [Marymount Manhattan College](#)
- [New School University](#)
- [New York University](#)
- [Pace University](#)
- [Parsons /The New School for Design](#)
- [St. John's University](#)
- [The State University of New York](#)
- [Touro College](#)
- [Yeshiva University](#)



Columbia University

BANKING

Banks and other financial institutions, such as credit unions, offer a variety of services. These services include:

- checking and saving accounts
- credit and debit cards
- online bill pay
- loans
- insurance
- financial planning

Banks in the United States are insured by the Federal Government for deposits up to \$250,000 per depositor per bank. The bank or credit union will display the letters FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) as proof.

Checking and Savings Accounts

To open a checking or savings account you will need the following information:

- Two forms of picture identification including but not limited to your passport, driver's license, or work ID.
- Social security number. If you have not yet received your social security number, the bank can open an account with a W8 Temporary Tax ID form (available at the bank). You will need to call the bank with your social security number once it arrives in the mail.
- Local mailing address. You may use your office address as your mailing address, but be prepared to call your bank branch as soon as you have your permanent address.
- Letter of Employment
- Cash for the initial deposit can range from ~\$25-\$150 dollars.

Checks

More businesses and banks are offering online or automatic bill paying options. However, you may still need to pay some bills by mail. **NEVER SEND CASH!** You will want to order at least the minimum quantity of checks. This will cost a set fee that the bank will charge you. The checks will be pre-printed with your name, address, telephone number and account number and will be mailed to your home.

ATM or Debit Card

The most popular way of obtaining cash is by using an ATM (Automated Teller Machine) card, also referred to as a debit card. ATM's are located in most banks, malls, airports, grocery stores, and in many other public places. You will be given a PIN (Personal Identification Number) for using your card. It is important that you memorize this number and not keep written record of it with your card in order to protect your account. Most ATM's will take all cards, but many banks will charge a service fee for using another bank's ATM. Through the ATM you may deposit, transfer, and withdraw funds. There will usually be a limit to the amount of money you can withdraw in any 24-hour period.

Credit Cards

For many international transferees, the lack of a US credit history can be a challenge. In most cases, you will not be approved for a US credit card initially. One suggestion to assist in building your US credit history is to open a **secured credit card**. With approval from the bank, you can put a certain amount of money in a savings account that will remain in the account. The secured credit card would have a credit limit equal to the amount deposited in the savings account. You will need to use your secured credit card and make the minimum monthly payments, you may also pay in full the amount due. After 9 months or so, if the bank sees that you have a good payment record, they may approve you for a regular credit card.

Security

Always pay attention to the other people around you at an ATM. Do not use the machine if you are suspicious of someone's behavior. It is safer to find another ATM or to come back later. Do not put your PIN number in with anyone close enough to see it.

Credit card theft is another increasing problem. In order to protect your card from being abused, never give your credit card or credit card number to a service provider you have not called. Another precaution is to destroy or shred copies of receipts and bills. Criminals will not hesitate to dig through the trash to find a copy of your credit card number.

Major US Banks

Below is a list of links to some of the larger US banks. Not every bank is represented in all US locations; in some cases you may find that the local bank is a better option for you than some of the larger banks. Your IOR DS Consultant can help you in selecting a bank by sharing the various options available locally as well as the products they offer to support expatriates.

- [Bank of America](#)
- [JP Morgan Chase](#)
- [Citibank](#)
- [HSBC](#)
- [TD Bank](#)
- [US Bank](#)
- [Wells Fargo](#)
- [List of New York City Banks](#)

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION/DRIVING

New York is a walking and public transportation city. A majority of New Yorkers do not own a car. They often use rental cars for excursions outside the city. Many New Yorkers own a bicycle, and some ride them to work. The primary means of travel within the city is public transportation. NYC is truly the city that never sleeps...for the subways and buses run 24 hours.

The MTA (Metropolitan Transit Authority) operates an extensive system of subway lines and bus routes, as well as suburban commuter train lines to Long Island, Westchester County to the north, and southern Connecticut, NE of the city. The Long Island Railroad (LIRR) departs from Pennsylvania Station. The train lines to Westchester County, north along the Hudson River, and southern Connecticut depart from Grand Central Station. For fares and schedules see [MTA](http://www.mta.info).

Public Transportation

New York City differs from other large cities in its subway fare system as there are no fare zones. A subway ride costs the same for one stop or twenty. New Yorkers use a [Metrocard](http://www.metrocard.com) to access subway and buses. You can purchase a 10-ride, 20-ride, or unlimited, which is valid for a specific time period whereby you can ride an unlimited number of times by both subway and bus. City schoolchildren ride for free on school days and travel by subway without an adult by age 11.

[Subway map](#)

[Manhattan bus map](#)



Taxis and Car Services

Yellow taxis circulate in Manhattan day and night. There are no taxi stands. You simply raise your arm at any part of the street to “hail a cab”. The taxi driver can take no more than four passengers. The fare is calculated by time and distance. At certain busy times of the day, there is a fare surcharge. It is customary to add a 15% tip to the fare. You can now pay by credit card, as well as cash.

In addition, there are car services that you book in advance, either by telephone or online. They are generally black Lincoln town cars and have a “T” on the license plate like yellow taxis. Many companies have an account with a car service to transport their executives around town without the hassle of waiting for a random yellow cab in the street.

Taxis and car services are regulated by the New York City [Taxi and Limousine Commission \(TLC\)](#).

Transportation “App” Options

Several web based phone applications to secure a driver are available throughout the New York area. The driver knows your approximate location based on your phone GPS. Payment is automatic through the app and fares may be cheaper than a taxi.

- [Uber](#)
- [Lyft](#)

Rail

[Amtrak](#) Trains depart from Pennsylvania Station to points throughout the USA.

Airports

[The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey](#) operates the region’s three major airports.

- [JFK International Airport](#)
- [Newark \(New Jersey\) Liberty International Airport](#)
- [LaGuardia Airport](#)

Car Rentals

Every residential neighborhood has several car rental companies. Rates vary according to demand. If you plan on renting a car on a holiday week or weekend, it is wise to reserve well in advance because there may be no cars available. For better rates, try [Dollar Rent A Car](#) or [Budget Rent A Car](#). [Hertz](#) and [Avis](#) are generally more expensive.

Map Websites

- [Google Maps](#)
- [Expedia](#)
- [MapQuest](#)
- [Bing Maps](#)

AAA Travel Protection

[AAA](#) is a membership organization that offers benefits such as roadside service and towing, discounts on car products and services, maps, reference materials, etc. Call 1-800-352-5382 for additional information and cost.

Social Security and Tax ID Information

Social Security Procedures

[United States Social Security Administration](#)

1-800-772-1213

Upon arrival in the United States, employees holding work visas will be required to apply, in person, for a Social Security number. The Application for a Social Security Card (SS-5) can be used by anyone who has never been issued a card, needs a replacement card or has changed his or her name. Your IOR Destination Services Consultant will assist you with this process and can answer any questions you might have.

THIS SERVICE IS FREE.

To get an original number and card, you'll need to complete an Application for a Social Security Card ([Form SS-5](#)), and show the following documents IN PERSON at the local social security office.

- Passport
- [I-94](#)
- Work Visa
- Any other documents received by US Immigration

If all of your information is confirmed, your Social Security card will arrive in the mail in approximately 2-4 weeks. Several days after you have successfully completed the application process, you may be able to take your identification with your receipt back to the Social Security office to inquire about your Social Security number before you receive your card. Your IOR Destination Services Consultant will assist you with this process.

L-2 Visa Employment Opportunity Law Changes

The L-2 visa allows the dependent spouse and minor, unmarried children of qualified L-1 visa holders to enter into the U.S.

Changes took place on July 27, 2006 that applies to spouses of L-1 Visa holders in the US on an L2 Visa. Prior to that date, spouses on L-2 Visas were not permitted to obtain a social security card and were denied the right to be employed in the US. The law change now permits L-2 Visa holders (spouses only, not dependent children) to work on a full-time basis in the U.S. with proper employment authorization from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The L-2 Visa holder must apply for a social security card in addition to applying for an Employment Authorization Document before they can begin employment.

Social Security Numbers

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has issued guidelines, which permit E-1, E-2, and L-2 spouses to obtain Social Security Numbers without having to first obtain Employment.

Authorization Documents (EADs) from the CIS. They must show proof that their spouse is in E-1, E-2 or L-1 status, and present an original marriage certificate in the native language. However, before they are authorized to work, they must obtain an EAD. [The new SSA guidelines are online here.](#)

Employment Authorization Document (EAD): L-2 Visa holders can apply for this document utilizing USCIS Form 1-765, Application for Employment Authorization. They must provide the following forms of identification: valid passport, 1-94 Arrival-Departure Document, Marriage Certificate from home country, two identical and color photographs taken within 30 days of application. Currently, the process from application to EAD issue takes 3 to 4 months. The L2 Visa holder may also engage in full-time study in the US. A dependent child still may not apply for an EAD card except in cases of severe hardship. Local offices are open Monday thru Friday 9am to 4pm.

****Notice**** Social Security offices are closed on all US Federal holidays.

Obtaining a Driver's License/State ID Card

In the US, a driver's license or ID card is issued by each individual state and not by the federal government. Since there is no national identity card in the USA, and many Americans don't have a passport or carry around a birth certificate, a driver's license issued by your state is often the only official piece of identification for many citizens. Since 9/11, you will need to show a valid driver's license or State ID card to enter many big office buildings.

You are allowed to drive in New York as long as your license from your native country remains valid. An International Driving Permit is strongly suggested because it acts as a translation for your information, but these documents are not required. However, if you are to become a NY resident, you must obtain a NY driver's License within **30 days**. Specific information is [here](#).

Please see further instructions on [how to obtain](#) an official state ID card or driver's license.

You can find the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) location closest to you [using this DMV locator](#).

Your Destination Services Consultant will also assist you with the proper procedure.

TV, Cable, Telephone, and Internet

The main service providers for TV cable, landline telephone and internet all offer combination packages. They are in stiff competition with each other, so special offers change monthly, sometimes even weekly.

- [AT&T](#)
- [Comcast](#)
- [DirecTV](#)
- [Dish](#)

Mobile Phones

There are four major wireless carriers in the US.

- [AT&T Wireless](#)
- [Verizon Wireless](#)
- [Sprint](#)
- [T-Mobile](#)

Computers, Electronics, Cameras

- [Best Buy](#) is a national chain. Apart from sales, their [Geek Squad](#) repairs PC computers.
- [J & R](#) is located in the Financial District
- [B & H Photo Video](#)
- [Tekserve](#)
- [Apple Stores](#)

Housewares and Furniture

- [Bed Bath & Beyond](#) is a national chain whereas the name explains, you can buy necessities for the bedroom and bathroom. From bath towels to comforters.
- [Ikea](#): Swedish-owned furniture shop for all home and home office furniture, soft furnishings, home accessories, flooring, crockery and children's toys.
- [Home Depot](#) is a national chain where anything for renovation or home appliances can be bought. There's paint, tape, hammers and doors.
- [Crate and Barrel](#) is a national chain that sells more modern style furniture compared to Ikea. It is slightly more expensive but has more design.
- [Furniture Envy](#) is a national chain that sells furniture.
- [Pottery Barn](#) is a national chain that sells kitchen supplies, furniture and household items.
- [Williams-Sonoma](#) is a national chain that sells kitchen supplies.
- [Rooms to Go](#) is a national chain that sells furniture.
- [The Container Store](#) is a national chain that sells storage boxes, organizers and the sort.
- [Z-Gallery](#) is a national chain that sells affordable furniture.
- [Pier 1 Imports](#) is a national chain that specializes in imported furniture.

- [Target](#) is a national chain that sells anything from groceries, microwaves to furniture.
- [Kmart](#) is a national chain that sells anything from groceries, microwaves to furniture.
- [Walmart](#) is a national chain that sells anything from groceries, microwaves to furniture.

Food Shopping

New Yorkers go to market at a wide range of open air [farmers markets](#), large gourmet markets, small specialty shops and conventional supermarkets.

- [Chelsea Market](#) is an indoor market with specialty foods, fish and produce, and restaurants.
- [Chinatown](#) – all of it! The entire neighborhood is replete with fish and produce markets at a fraction of the price of markets further uptown. While you are there, stop into one of those seedy looking noodle shops with ducks hanging in the window. You'll eat a feast for \$20.
- [Citarella](#) started out 70 years ago as a seafood market. Today it sells fish, meat, cheeses, bread, produce and wonderful prepared foods in its deli section that resembles a French charcuterie.
- [Fairway Market](#) is unique to the NY metropolitan area. The stores look like large warehouses stocked with produce, meat, fish, cheeses, breads and international foods.
- [Freshdirect](#) Order groceries online and have them delivered to your door.
- [Grownyc](#) is a network of over 100 greenmarkets throughout the five boroughs of New York City. Some are seasonal, but most greenmarkets are open year round.
- [Trader Joe's](#) is a national chain selling fresh produce, interesting frozen foods and inexpensive wines at reasonable prices.
- [Union Square Greenmarket](#) is world-famous because some of New York's finest chefs buy there. Local farmers sell fresh food on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday 8:00am to 6:00pm.
- [Whole Foods Market](#) is a national chain selling fresh fish, meat, produce, cheese, bread, pastry, and delicious hot and cold food bar.
- [Zabar's](#) is the food jewel of the Upper West Side. It's crowded, but West Siders love it.

In addition, there are local supermarket chains found all over New York City: [A & P](#), [D'Agostino](#), [Food Emporium](#), [Key Food](#), [Pathmark](#), and [Waldbaum's](#) are the most common names. There is no sales tax on food, but items like paper goods will be taxed. Because we New Yorkers go most often to market without a car, all the supermarkets will deliver to your door.

Your Destination Services Consultant will help you locate the closest markets to your home.

RECREATION

Arts and Culture

- Please see The New York Time's [Arts & Entertainment Guide](#) for a list of events.
- Please see the [Department of Cultural Affairs](#) for upcoming cultural events.
- [Museum of Modern Art](#)
- [The Tonya Harding & Nancy Kerrigan 1994 Museum](#)
- [The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)
- [9/11 Memorial and Museum](#)
- [American Museum of Natural History](#)
- [The Museum at FIT](#)
- [The American Folk Art Museum](#)
- [International Center of Photography](#)
- [Whitney Museum of American Art](#)
- [BLDG 92](#)
- [Brooklyn Museum](#)
- [Ellis Island](#)
- [New York Transit Museum](#)
- [Coney Island Museum](#)
- [New York Hall of Science](#)
- [Queens Museum](#)
- [Museum of the Moving Image](#)
- [Bronx Museum of the Arts](#)
- [Historic Richmond Town](#)



Metropolitan Museum of Art Photo Courtesy of [Getyourguide](#)

Entertainment and Performing Arts

- [Lincoln Center](#)
- [Broadway](#)
- [Rockefeller Center](#)
- [The Public Theater](#)

Zoos and Aquariums

- [Bronx Zoo](#)
- [Central Park Zoo](#)
- [New York Aquarium](#)
- [Queens Zoo](#)

Parks and other Recreational Activities

New York City has over 1,700 parks and beaches. A beach on the Atlantic Ocean or Long Island Sound is only a subway ride away. [City of New York Parks & Recreation](#)

In addition, the **State of New York** operates a network of parks. Some are located in New York City. Others are a short drive from the city limits. They offer picnic areas, swimming pools, hiking trails, and camping. To see the variety of state parks, check the website of the [New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation](#).

Bicycling is a favorite pass-time. There are dozens of bicycle stores all over town that sell and rent bikes. Your Destination Services Consultant will direct you to the bicycle store near you.

[Chelsea Piers Sports and Entertainment Complex](#) is a 30-acre waterfront sports village located between 17th and 23rd Streets along the Hudson River Park. Among other sports, there is the Sky Rink, a huge ice skating rink built in an old pier jutting out into the river.

Run the [New York City Marathon](#)

Sports

New York is very proud of their professional sports teams. New Yorkers are often torn between rooting for two different teams within the same sport. For example, when it comes to professional Baseball, New Yorkers are either a [New York Mets](#) or a [New York Yankees](#) fan. Other sports teams in New York are:

- [Brooklyn Nets](#) (NBA)
- [New York Knicks](#) (NBA)
- [New York Liberty](#) (WNBA)
- [NY Giants](#) (American Football)
- [New York Jets](#) (American Football)
- [New York Islanders](#) (NHL)
- [New York Rangers](#) (NHL)
- [New York City FC](#) (Men's Soccer)
- [New York Red Bulls](#) (Men's Soccer)
- [Sky Blue FC](#) (Women's Soccer)



Yankee Stadium Courtesy of [Wikipedia](#)

Expat Resource Guide

- www.expatechange.com

New York Social Directory

- www.manhattansociety.com/social.html

Google Translator

- [Translate](#) 90 languages to and from language of choice using iTunes.

Volunteer Opportunities

- [Volunteer Match](#)
- [United Way](#)

Parent & Children Resources

- [Mom's Clubs](#) - social groups offering events and outings with mothers and their young children.

Smart Phone Apps for Travel:

- [Uber](#) : Similar to a taxi service but all web based. Payment also handled online, do not pay or tip driver directly. Uber driver knows your approximate location based on your phone GPS.
- [Lyft](#) : Wherever you're headed, count on Lyft for rides in minutes. The Lyft app matches you with local drivers at the tap of a button. Just request and go.
- [Google Maps](#) : Map by direction
- [Apple Maps](#) : Map by direction
- [Map Quest](#) : Map by direction
- [Waze](#) : Community based traffic & navigation with alternate route suggestions
- [CityMaps2Go](#) : The #1 travel app lets you discover exciting new places. Beautiful photos and insider tips at the touch of a button. You will receive stories about places you like and can instantly save and find them on your maps and in your lists.

Smart Phone Apps for Communication:

- [WhatsApp](#) : Free local & international Real Time messaging
- [Line](#) : Exchange free instant messages with friends whenever and wherever with one-on-one and group chats. LINE is available on all smartphone devices (iPhone, Android, Windows Phone, Blackberry, Nokia) and even on your PC.
- [Viber](#) : Free text, calling, photo messages and location-sharing with Viber users. No registration, alias or invitations required. Instantly integrates with your own contact list. Best-quality mobile calls using 3G or Wi-Fi.
- [Skype](#) : Stay in touch with your family and friends for free on Skype. Download Skype today to chat and call on desktop and mobile.

Smart Phone Apps for Local Information/Reviews:

- [Angie's List](#) : Referrals for doctor, dentist, child care, maid, mechanic, painter, plumber, etc.
- [Yelp!](#) : Find local businesses, restaurants, bars, clubs, events, etc. with map, lists, and reviews
- [Next Door](#) : Neighbors share community events, items for sale, recommendations for babysitters, doctors and handymen, crime reports, ideas about how to improve their neighborhood and more.
- [Meet Ups](#) : Meetups are neighbors getting together to learn something, do something or share something. Cultural groups advertise gatherings here as well.

Smart Phone Apps for Weather:

- [WTHR13](#) : Local weather and closings; includes radar and forecast
- [Weather Channel](#) : National and international time, temperature & weather
- [Tornado](#) : Set up tornado alerts & siren

U.S. IDIOMS

Idioms are words, phrases, or expressions that are not taken literally- they have meaning beyond a literal translation of the words. Idioms are generally used in casual, familiar conversation but can also come up in certain business settings. Here are some examples of commonly used American English idioms:

- better off** - in a more fortunate position
- Big deal!** - So what? That doesn't really matter.
- (to) blow things out of proportion** - to exaggerate; to make more of something than one should
- (to) call it a night** - to stop an activity for the rest of the night
- dime a dozen** - so plentiful as to be nothing special; common
- (to) do the trick** - to achieve the desired results
- (to) give someone the cold shoulder** - to ignore someone on purpose; to snub someone
- (to) get the ball rolling** - to get started
- (to) go back to the drawing board** - to start a task over because the last try failed; to start again from the beginning
- happy camper [slang]** - a happy person; a satisfied participant
- (to) have a heart of gold** - to be very kind and giving
- (to be) head over heels in love** - very much in love
- (to) hit the nail on the head** - to be right
- (to) learn the ropes** - to learn the basics
- (to) lose one's touch** - to no longer be able to do something well
- made of money** - very rich
- needless to say** - obviously
- piece of cake** - very easy
- (to) pitch in** - to help
- (to) pull an all-nighter** - to stay up all night to do work
- rule of thumb** - a useful principle
- (as) sharp as a tack** - very intelligent
- (to) sit tight** - to wait patiently
- (to) stab someone in the back** - to betray someone
- (to) tell someone off** - to scold; to tell someone in strong words what one really thinks
- When pigs fly! [slang]** - never
- (to) twist someone's arm** - to persuade someone; to convince someone
- (to be) up in the air** - not yet determined; uncertain

Many common American idioms come from sports, here are some examples:

strike out- to fail or to do poorly at something (*baseball*)

(to) call the shots- to make the decisions; to be in charge (*basketball*)

ballpark- a guess or an estimate (*baseball*)

down and out- lacking money or prospects; penniless or destitute (*boxing*)

down to the wire- to the very end or last minute (*horse racing*)

drop the ball- to make an error, to miss an opportunity (*football, baseball, rugby*)

hands down- with great ease; unconditionally; often (and originally) in the phrase “to win hands down” (*horse racing*)

(to) have someone in your corner- to have the support or help of someone (*boxing*)

(to) hit it out of the park; home run- to be wildly successful, to do a great job (*baseball*)



To learn even more idioms, visit the following links:

- [Everyday American English Idioms](#) - with example sentences.
- [Useful Idioms for Lower-Intermediate to Advanced Students \(Teacher's Resource\)](#)
- [Idiom Site A-Z](#)
- [Sports Idioms](#)
- [English Language Learning: American English Idioms](#)

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Holidays can be confusing as there are national (federal) holidays, bank holidays, state holidays. Verify those in your area with Human Resources at your place of business, especially before planning vacations or weekend get-aways!

[Federal Holidays](#)

[New York Holidays](#)

The following are federal holidays in the United States and need to be treated as such by employers:

- New Year's Day January 1*
- Martin Luther King Day Third Monday in January
- Memorial Day Last Monday in May
- Independence Day July 4*
- Labor Day First Monday in September
- Columbus Day Second Monday in October
- Veterans' Day November 11*
- Thanksgiving Day Fourth Thursday in November
- Christmas Day December 25*

*If a holiday falls on a Sunday, the day following is observed as the legal holiday.



[New York City Skyline](#)