

GETTING SETTLED



GETTING TO BOSTON

Congratulations! You've found a roommate (if you want one), found an apartment, and are getting ready to make your move to Boston. Below are the last things you'll need to think about to get settled in your new home. On page 86 you can find a list of companies that provide the services described here that have worked well with the BUMC population in the past.

Driving

Getting into Boston can be a tricky feat. Having a set travel itinerary before you arrive to move into your apartment is a good idea. Boston is surrounded by an interstate system of major highways – if you are coming to the city from outside of Massachusetts, or outside the Boston area, you will probably be taking one of the major highways into the city. Interstate 495 and route 128 surround Boston like rings, with I-90, and I-93 branching off to run through the city itself. Traffic moves quickly and Boston drivers are not known for being the most friendly. Know your exit number well ahead of time, and get in the correct lane as soon as possible so you don't get cut off.

Once in Boston, be mindful of one-way streets. Especially downtown and in the Back Bay neighborhood, many of the streets run one-way perpendicular to major roads like Boylston Street and Newbury Street. The "street view" feature of Google Maps is a great tool for finding out what direction your street runs, and what it looks like before you get there.

The Massachusetts Turnpike

The Massachusetts Turnpike (often times just the "Mass Pike," or "the Pike") is the eastern-most section of I-90 and comes directly into the city of Boston. The Mass Pike is a toll-road, with tolls ranging from about \$3.00 to \$5.00. If you have a Fast Lane electronic toll system (which is compatible with the nation-wide EZPass system), you can get through the tolls much more quickly, especially at large plazas like Sturbridge.

Plan Ahead

If you are planning a local move during Boston's peak moving season (Aug/Sept) and you need to reserve a moving truck, do so at least one month in advance. September 1 is by far the busiest moving day in Boston. If at all possible, try to avoid moving on September 1st! UHaul, Penske, and Budget all have a fairly strong representation in the Boston area, but they will run out of trucks by the first few weeks of August for students intending to move on September 1st.

Watch for Overhead Passes

If you are self driving a moving truck, pay attention to low clearance signs. Storrow Drive and the Jamaica Way are particularly known for this problem – many of their small tunnels and bridges only have 11' of clearance.

Street Occupancy Permits

If you have a large moving truck or van, and want to make sure you have a spot on the street to park it when you arrive at your new apartment, you will need to get a street occupancy permit from the city. In Boston and most of the towns nearby, that permit is issued by the Transportation or Traffic department, and does have a small fee (from \$5 to \$20). Especially if you think your move is going to take a decent amount of time (more than a few hours), having street occupancy permits makes the process much faster and easier by guaranteeing you a parking spot near your new home while you unpack.

Moving Companies

If you have a lot of furniture or heavy items you need to move, a good moving company can help make your relocation a lot easier. Call a few companies to get an idea of what a reasonable quote for your job will be. Movers offer tremendous convenience in a move, but aren't cheap, especially across state lines.





EDUCATION

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

www.boston.k12.ma.us

Central Administration Building
26 Court Street
Boston, MA 02108
617-635-9000

Massachusetts state law mandates that all children aged six years or older must be enrolled in school. The city of Boston has a number of options for schooling, and negotiating the various school zones and registration periods can be daunting at first. Boston has over 140 public schools. Every elementary and middle school is assigned one of three school zones: East, North, or West. The zones are assigned based on the school's location within a neighborhood:

North Zone: Allston/Brighton, Back Bay, Mission Hill, South End, Downtown, Charlestown, North End, East Boston

East Zone: South Boston, Dorchester, Mattapan, Hyde Park

West Zone: Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, West Roxbury

Parents can apply to register their children in any school within their zone, but students are accepted based on a lottery system. Preference is given to students who have siblings in a particular school already, or who live within the "walk zone" of the school (usually a mile or mile and a half from the school itself). If a student is within the "walk zone" of a school, they can apply to it, even if it is out of the normal geographic zone.

Boston also offers a number of kindergarten through 8th grade programs that are city-wide, so students can apply to them no matter what neighborhood they live in. All high schools in Boston are city-wide.

Registration periods for schools are usually at the beginning of the calendar year; students entering a "transition grade" (kindergarten, 6th grade, or high school) register first, in January, and other students register in February. Registration normally takes place in one of the three Family Resource Centers (one is located in each zone).

- **East Zone Family Resource Center**

Campbell Resource Center
1216 Dorchester Avenue, Dorchester (behind Burger King)
617-635-8015

- **North Zone Family Resource Center**

Madison Park Complex
55 Malcolm X Boulevard, Roxbury (near the Roxbury Crossing T stop)
617-635-9010

- **West Zone Family Resource Center**

Jennie Baron Building
515 Hyde Park Avenue, Roslindale (near Cummins Highway)
617-635-8040

The Boston public schools offer a Showcase of Schools once a year, usually in the fall, where parents will have the opportunity to speak with representatives from all of the Boston public schools. The school system also maintains a blog providing information about school activities:

www.allaboutbps.blogspot.com

School Publications

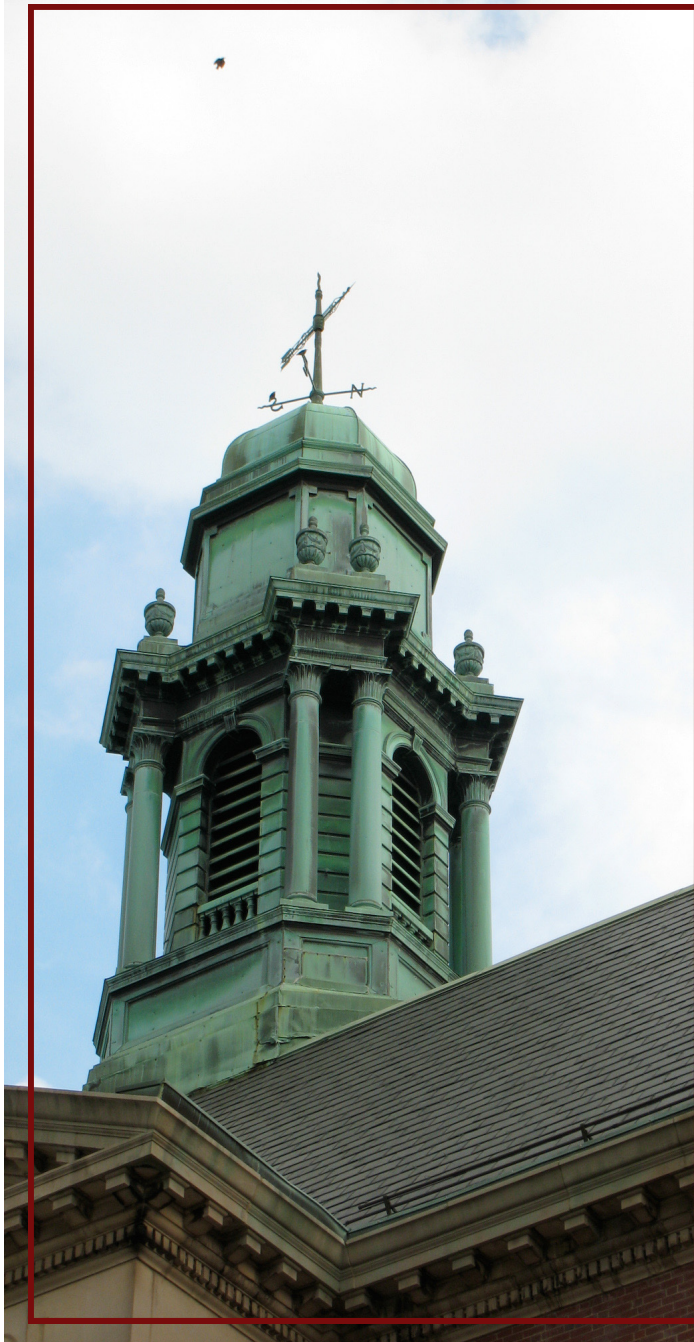
Luckily, the city of Boston produces two excellent resources for parents about the public schools describing school policy, registration procedures, and school zones. Both are available online.

Introducing the Boston Public Schools

www.bostonpublicschools.org/files/introBPS09English.PDF

Guide to the Boston Public Schools

www.bostonpublicschools.org/files/BPSGuideSY10English.PDF



Schools outside of Boston

Cambridge Public Schools

www.cpsd.us

Administrative Office

159 Thorndike Street

Cambridge, Massachusetts 02141

617-349-6400

Cambridge uses a Controlled Choice Plan for school registration. When parents complete an application for their children to attend school, they can pick three schools they would prefer their children attend. Cambridge works to ensure that students are placed in schools that parents have requested as much as possible, but also strives for mixed racial and socio-economic classes.

Cambridge Public Schools at a Glance:

www.cpsd.us/Web/PubInfo/Schools-at-a-Glance_08-09.pdf

Cambridge Public School policies:

www.cpsd.us/web/PubInfo/CPS_PolicyGuide0607.pdf

Brookline Public Schools

www.brookline.k12.ma.us

Central Administration

194 Boylston Street (Rte 9)

Brookline, MA 02445

617-730-2401

Registration for schools in Brookline is directed by district. Residents must register their children for schools by filling out the appropriate forms and bringing them *in person* to one of Brookline's middle schools, if registering a child for kindergarten through 8th grade, or Brookline high school if registering for 9th to 12th grade. Residents who are renting need to bring the registration materials (found on the main website) and a copy of their lease.

Schools Outside the Boston Area:

The Massachusetts Department of Education

www.doe.mass.edu

The MDE should be the first stop for a parent for information on all of the school districts in the state, as well as the individual schools themselves.

CHILDCARE

If you have children, you will likely need to make arrangements for childcare. Boston and the communities surrounding it offer a number of options for both, but quality can vary significantly from one center or school to the next.

BU Resources

The Office of Family Resources

www.bu.edu/family

985 Commonwealth Avenue

617-353-5954

The Office of Family Resources is an information and referral service that provides assistance to BU students, faculty and staff. Their services include part-time and full-time early childhood learning centers, a babysitting referral service, school vacation programs, and community referrals for childcare resources. Visit their website at www.bu.edu/family for complete listings and details of their services. Students can schedule an appointment with the office to learn more about city/university resources.

The BU Children's Center

www.bu.edu/family/childcare-centers-on-campus/boston-university-childrens-center/

The Children's Center is a full-day (8 a.m. to 6 p.m.) daycare program for children aged 2 to 6 years of BU students, faculty, or staff. The Center is open for during the entirety of the academic year (September to June), with additional programs during the summer months. Students interested in getting a spot for their child need to attend an orientation session, usually held in October, the year before their child would attend. Tuition for the Children's Center changes yearly, but currently stands at about \$985 per month.

Early Childhood Learning Laboratory

www.bu.edu/family/childcare-centers-on-campus/preschool-at-bu/

The Early Childhood Learning Laboratory (ECLL) is a preschool affiliated with and located in the School of Education. It is a laboratory and demonstration school and employs an innovative, inquiry-based approach to curriculum design. The preschool provides a half-day program (from 8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.) for children between the ages of 2 years 9 months and 5 years. There is also an extended day program until 2pm, though space is limited. Applications are taken year-round and are located on the Office of Family Resources website. Space is limited and BU affiliation is not required.

Non-BU Resources

MAchildcare.com

www.machildcare.com

The website www.machildcare.com has listings of childcare centers in Massachusetts, and also offers news about parenting, community resources, infant/child health updates, and some community activities for kids.

Boston Parents' Paper

<http://boston.parenthood.com/>

670 Centre Street

Jamaica Plain MA 02130

617-522-1515.

The Boston Parents' Paper provides many ideas for classes, entertainment, schools, special events, where to buy children's clothes or furniture, etc. Look in any public library for a free issue.

Warm Lines

www.warmlines.org

225 Nevada Street

Newtonville, MA

617-244-4636

WarmLines Parent Resources is an organization that connects parents to each other. For \$90 you can become a member and may participate in playgroups. A computerized system will match you with other parents, help you find childcare or babysitters, or guide you to over 100 pre-schools.

Onein3boston.org

www.onein3boston.org

In addition to civic resources, social events, and job networking, Onein3Boston also has a number of resources for parents looking for childcare and school information. In particular, the search tools on the **Childcare Resource Center** website and the **Action for Boston Community Development Inc.**'s programs are very useful in learning about childcare options across the city.

Other Nearby Universities

For students who have families and may be associated with more than one university, most other Boston-area schools have some form of childcare resources similar to the BU Office of Family Resources and their learning labs and daycare centers.

SETTING UP YOUR APARTMENT

Once you've arrived at your new place, the last step is to make it feel like home. Getting furniture, setting up utilities, and arranging whatever internet and phone options you need are the final pieces in your housing search.

Utilities

As soon as you sign a lease for an apartment, you should begin to setup your utility services. If you schedule your utilities in advance, they should be in good working order upon your arrival. Waiting until your move in date can leave you without power for a few days.

Contact the utility providers and set up an account for your apartment that will begin on the day that you move in. Make it clear to the companies that you are a new tenant, and are not responsible for any energy expenses prior to your move in date. You may need to have your landlord or realtor call the utility company to validate that you are a new tenant.

Cell Phone/Cable/Internet

Most cell phone carriers have a good signal in Boston. Most of the cable/internet service providers in the city offer special bundle packages for cell phone, high-speed internet access, and cable television (prices tend to hover around \$100). If you do not already have a phone, or are looking to change carriers, these bundle deals can help save some money on phone costs.

Furnishing Your Apartment

Most apartments in Boston are unfurnished. Furnished apartments are rare and expensive. Most students will either bring their own furniture, if they already have it, or buy or acquire furniture when they arrive in Boston. If needed, it is also possible to rent furniture on a short- or long-term basis through one of several local furniture rental companies.

If you are in contact with the tenants who are vacating the room or apartment you plan to move into, you may want to ask if they have any furniture they wish to leave behind. In many cases people are happy to do this in order to avoid having to move large items.

For students who do not have their own furniture, here are a couple of options for getting the pieces you need.

- **Buy it from a local furniture store**

Boston has no lack of furniture stores for all price ranges. See the appendix, page 86, to find some common stores that students patronize to find furniture in a student-friendly price range.

- **Find it on the OHR's Furniture Forum**

The OHR hosts a furniture forum on its main site where students can swap, share, or trade furniture with one another.

While most pieces are for sale, some students (especially students who are graduating and moving on to residency) are willing to give away furniture for free, if the students who want it agree to come pick it up.

- **Find it on Craig's List**

Craig's List has a huge bulletin board for swapping and selling furniture. Students who view it like a larger, non-school specific version of the OHR furniture forum won't go too far wrong. Just like the OHR forum, Craig's List has a number of posters who are just trying to get rid of pieces, and may give them away if someone can pick them up.

- **Find it on September 1**

For the truly entrepreneurial, September 1 is the biggest move-in and move-out day of the year. Many students in undergrad-heavy neighborhoods like Allston/Brighton and Mission Hill leave old furniture on the sidewalk. While the vast majority of this furniture is too old or broken to use, some of it is salvageable, and all of it is free! A quick note: never take anything off the street that has a cushion on it - mattresses, couches, or chairs - because those can be great hiding places for bed bugs and other nasty critters.

Renter's Insurance

Renter's insurance is a way of protecting your valuables and property in the event of a disaster. Most policies cover the cost of replacing your property in the case of damage or destruction due to fire, water damage, theft, or other unexpected event.

Renter's Insurance is important because it covers specifically the value of your property. Many landlords have insurance to protect their property, or the building in general, but their insurance coverage does not offer tenants any security. Renter's Insurance can cover the cost of new furniture, new computers, iPods and other expensive electrical equipment, and clothing if you were to lose them in a fire or theft. The typical policy is between \$150 and \$250 a year (only \$10 to \$15 a month on average). You may need to include a specific provision for flooding. Policies can have two different coverage types: Actual Cash Value (ACV), or Replacement Cost Coverage (RCC). ACV policies will reimburse you up to the cost of your property at the time you lost it, so a four year old computer is worth less than a brand-new one. A RCC policy covers the cost of replacing the item (so it would cover the cost of replacing your computer with a new computer). RCC policies tend to be a little more expensive. If your building suffers massive structural damage for some reason, or is unlivable, some insurance policies will help you with temporary living accommodations.

The website www.netquote.com can help identify an insurance provider that works with your needs.

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STREET OCCUPANCY PERMITS

Boston

www.cityofboston.gov/transportation/streetoccupancy.asp

Brookline

www.town.brookline.ma.us/Transportation/parking/moving.html

Cambridge

www.cambridgema.gov/traffic/MovingVanPermit.cfm

MOVING COMPANIES

Excellent Moving and Storage

www.excellentmoving.com

57 Lincoln Street
Brighton, MA 02135
617-254-0322

Gentle Giant Moving

www.gentlegiant.com

29 Harding Street
Somerville, MA 02143
617-661-3333

Intelligent Labor and Moving

www.intelligentlabor.com

2518 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140
617-864-0620

Precision Moving

www.precisionmovingcompany.com

495 Columbia Street
Somerville, MA 02143
617-623-7700

FURNITURE RENTALS

American Furniture Rentals

www.bu.rentfurniture.com

485 Wildwood Avenue
Woburn, MA 01801
781-721-4555

American Furniture Rentals (AFR) has a partnership with BU and offers special deals for BU students.

Cort/Putnam Furniture

www.putnamfurniture.com

(Cort/Putnam has several showroom locations in the Boston area)

Rental Showroom
98 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116
617-542-8383

PURCHASING FURNITURE

Basic Carpet and Furniture

www.basicboston.com

Two locations in the Boston area:

Allston:

151 Harvard Avenue
Allston, MA 02134
617-254-1060

Cambridge:

997 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
617-491-6500

College Furniture

www.collegefurniturecheap.com

137 Harvard Avenue
Allston, MA 02134
617-254-5949

Economy Hardware

www.economyhardware.com

Economy Hardware has several locations in the Boston area

Back Bay/South End location

219 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02115
617-536-4280

Ikea

www.ikea.com

1 Ikea Way
Stoughton, MA 02072
781-344-4532

Ikea is not easily accessible without a car.

Target

www.target.com

South Bay Center
7 Allstate Road
Dorchester, MA 02125
617-602-1921

UTILITIES

Electricity

NStar (provides electricity to Boston, Cambridge, Brookline)

www.nstaronline.com/residential

Bill Paying Address

NStar Payment Center

P.O. Box 4508

Woburn, MA 01888

Customer Service (setting up new accounts): 800-592-2000)

Gas Heating**Key Span**

www.keyspanenergy.com

Set up new accounts online and contact Key Span through online contact form.

617-469-2300

CELL PHONE/CABLE/INTERNET**Comcast**

www.comcast-ne.com

Several locations throughout the city; visit website to find closest center

1-800-COMCAST

RCN

www.rcn.com

800-RING-RCN

Verizon

www.verizon.com

Verizon Wireless Store

283 Harvard Street

Coolidge Corner

Brookline, MA 02446

Store: 617-278-3920

General Customer Support: 800-870-9999

BECOMING A RESIDENT

In addition to setting up your home, you may want to look into some other aspects of being a resident of the city. Below are some offices that provide civic services you may want to know about.

REGISTERING TO VOTE**Boston Election Department**

www.cityofboston.gov/elections

Brookline Town Clerk

www.townofbrooklinemass.com/townclerk

Cambridge Department of Elections

www.cambridgema.gov/election

CHANGING DRIVER'S LICENSE**Boston Registry of Motor Vehicles**

www.mass.gov/qrmv/boston.shtm

630 Washington Street (in Chinatown)

Boston, MA 02111

617-351-4500

Learn about Jury Duty

www.mass.gov/courts/jury

Note: full-time students in Massachusetts (regardless of where their permanent address may be) are eligible to serve jury duty in the Commonwealth.

