

## UIC and the surrounding area

UIC is located southwest of “the Loop.” The Loop is the name for the downtown area of Chicago. UIC is between Halsted Street, Harrison Street, Roosevelt Road and Racine Street.

Nearby neighborhoods include University Village (UIC), Little Italy, Tri-Taylor, Greektown, Chinatown, and the Medical district. Since many university and medical students are in these areas, it is a good place to look for a roommate.

On UIC campus, you can take advantage of free transportation: **shuttle bus** (Intercampus Bus Service), **commuter service** (operates between UIC campus, Union and Northwestern Train Stations; price per ride is \$2.00), **Paratransit service** (available for UIC students, faculty and staff with disabilities, physical handicaps) and **red car** (an escort service between university facilities and from university facilities to points of public transportation; operates between 11pm to 7am). All you need to do is present your i-card to a driver when boarding all buses and shuttles.



University Village

# Vocabulary Help

When you look for an apartment, you may find some confusing abbreviations and terms. The following is a partial list to help you sort them out.

studio: a one-room apartment

BR: one bedroom, DR: dining room, BA: bathroom, kit: kitchen LR: living room

garden apt: basement apartment

rf deck: roof deck

loft: a large open apartment. Usually very expensive.

appl: appliances

frpl: fireplace

rehabbed: recently remodeled

prkg: parking

balc: balcony

Indry: laundry

gar: garage

drman: doorman

sublet: take over remaining rent payments due on another person's lease

utils: utilities

3 flat: A townhouse with 3 floors that are apartments

eat-in-kit: a kitchen with room for a table?

cble or cble-ready: ready for cable-TV hookup

strg rm: storage room

hw or hdwd floors: hard wood floors

W/W carpeting: wall-to-wall carpeting

bldg: building

ac: air conditioning

ht incl: heat included in the price of the rent



**Lease:** an agreement between the landlord and tenant that lists all the rules and stipulations of the rental. Most often, a lease is for a year, but sometimes you can rent for six months.

**Landlord:** The owner and/or manager of the building. The landlord is in charge of maintaining the building and collecting rent.

**Security Deposit:** A deposit, usually in the amount of one or one and a half month's rent, due at lease signing. This money is returned to you after you leave the apartment. If you do damage to your apartment, or do not pay rent, the charges will be deducted from the security deposit. While you are renting, the money sits in a bank account and earns interest, which your landlord must give to you.

**Utilities:** Services such as heat, water, electricity, and cooking gas. Sometimes these services are included in rent, sometimes they are not. Make sure your landlord tells you what utilities are included in rent. If they are not included, you will have to call the gas and electricity companies to set up your service. You will also have to call the telephone company to set up a telephone number.



# Tips for Apartment Hunting



**Ask, ask, ask!** Ask your Tutorium classmates, ask American friends or relatives. They may know someone who has a room or apartment to rent, or know someone who needs a roommate. There are people always looking for subleasees.

**Decide what you want.** Do you want to live alone or with a roommate? Do you want to sign a new lease or move into an apartment that is already occupied?

**Look at several places.** If you look at several different apartments, you have a better idea of what type of apartments are available and if you are getting your money's worth.

**Make sure the location is convenient.** If you must use public transportation, make sure that your new apartment is near a bus stop or el stop. If you drive a car, make sure there is parking available. In some neighborhoods, parking is very expensive. Remember, if you park on the street in an illegal spot, you can be fined \$50 or even get your car towed!

**Make sure you understand** the cost and terms of the lease before you sign *anything*.

A landlord may require a **credit check** before leasing you the apartment. This means that he or she is checking to make sure that you are financially responsible. This is normal for them to ask, but you may want to explain that since you are an international student, you do not have any credit in the US. You can explain that since you are on a student visa, you have financial support. You may have a problem if you do not have a social security number.

**Get everything in writing.** If your landlord promises something, especially regarding your lease, have him write it down and sign it. It could save you a lot of money and trouble later. No matter how nice your landlord is, you should never trust his word, especially if he refuses to put agreements in writing.

**Pay attention to the neighborhood** you are going to move into. There are bad neighborhoods in Chicago. When deciding to how much money you want to spend, consider also the area that you are going to live in. Obviously, avoid places where crime is especially common.

## Tip!



Most apartment rentals include heat in the monthly rent. If heat is not included, ask what the average cost is so you can compare prices.

## Tip!



Find a friend or two and apartment search together. You will be able to find a bigger apartment, and the cost will be lower when it is split between 2 or 3 people.