

Career Advancement Los Angeles Survival Guide:

How to Prepare for a Successful Summer in Los Angeles, CA

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L.A. Housing Overview

Whether you are craving some relaxation at the beach, spending time outdoors, or checking out the culture and cuisine – L.A. has it all!

L.A. has been a popular location for summer internships and provides a great opportunity to explore what it is like to live in a different city. The type of housing you're looking for, your budget, and your connections in L.A. are all factors that should help determine where you begin your housing search. The earlier you begin looking, the more options you will have and the easier it will be to choose exactly where you want to live for the summer. In the end, it is best to find housing that is near your job location with easy access to public transportation. This should be a priority when looking for housing; it will make your commute to and from work much easier and it will save you a lot of time and money.

Finding Summer Housing

Here is a list of steps you should take when looking for housing:

1. *Utilize your UChicago Network through technology and social media platforms.* Several students from past internships have found temporary housing by posting to Facebook groups and LinkedIn inquiring about a housing vacancy. Connect with other UChicago students by visiting Career Advancement's Facebook page or the UChicago Class Facebook pages.
2. *Consider finding a roommate.* Most apartments will be expensive and you may end up spending a good amount of your summer income paying for rent. If you can find a classmate, friend, or relative who is willing to room with you or put you up for the summer, economically, this could be your best option.
3. *Location is everything.* It is vital that your housing situation is near your work and/or near transportation that will get you to work quickly.
4. *Decide what is important to you.* Once you've decided on what neighborhoods would be convenient for you, it's always helpful to explore what attractions they have to

offer. Whether you love trying new restaurants, shopping, or visiting museums and other cultural institutions, try to find a place that will give you the most time to explore your favorite things.

5. *Politely ask your employer about housing resources.* Your employer may have suggestions for where to live, or give you the contact information of other interns who will be also on a housing search so that you can room together or get advice from each other.

Online Housing Resources

There are a variety of online housing resources that provide short-term housing vacancies, including:

<http://losangeles.craigslist.org/>
<https://www.airbnb.com/s/Los-Angeles--CA>
<http://losangeles.apartments.com/>
<http://www.westsiderentals.com>
<http://www.oakwood.com/>

Student Housing Organizations

Student Housing Organizations are corporations that own large residential buildings and rent out rooms to students in the summer. Sometimes the buildings are set up like dormitories with single rooms and collective bathrooms, and other times the rooms are more like studio or one-bedroom apartments. It is important to look and apply for housing as soon as possible. Many of the applications for the following housing options come out in January or February and housing can fill up quickly. There are both pros and cons to living in Student Housing, just as there are positives and negatives to living in a dorm.

Pros

- Amenities such as security, maintenance, etc.
- Opportunity to meet other students living in the same building
- Often much more affordable than finding a private apartment: prices typically range from \$1,500 - \$3,500 for the entire summer

Cons

- There is a possibility that you'll be matched with a roommate



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- There are rules and regulations in most of these places that you'll have to abide by

These institutions offer summer housing:

UCLA Housing & Hospitality Services:

<https://housing.ucla.edu/summer-housing/summer-internship-housing>

UCLA provides summer housing to individuals in the LA area. Room amenities including a common living area, a shared bathroom with the occupants of the suite (4-6 people in total), complimentary Wi-Fi and a linen pack. Email: uclahousing@housing.ucla.edu

Loyola Marymount University:

<http://admin.lmu.edu/conferences/intern/>

LMU is located in the Westchester neighborhood on the Westside of Los Angeles. Students interning in the LA area can apply and register to live in a 2-bedroom apartment.

L.A. Neighborhoods

Here is a list of neighborhoods that past interns have suggested for housing options:

Westwood is best known as the home of UCLA. Students may find rooms to rent in the fashionable area east of campus, or in the apartments along Hilgard Avenue. There are lots of restaurants and movies, clothing, drug and convenience stores.

West Los Angeles extends south of Westwood and west of the 405 Freeway. Apartments are clustered near Santa Monica and Olympic Boulevards. The area west of the 405 is popular with students. It has many small apartments, slightly less expensive than those in Westwood, and good bus access along Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevard. Supermarkets, laundromats and restaurants line these streets as well.

Rancho Park is a residential area south of West LA (about three miles south of campus), where many students find rooms, and sometimes houses, to rent. Nearness to Westwood Boulevard, shopping, restaurants and bus lines are pluses.

Brentwood is home to many young professionals and students attending UCLA, Cal State – LA and USC. You might find rooms or guesthouses in the country-like roads in the northern section of Brentwood, but most apartments are in the triangle bordered by Wilshire, San Vicente Boulevard and Bundy.

Santa Monica is known for its beach, great parks, good libraries and schools, buses to campus, clean air and rent control. There are opportunities to share houses or apartments, or to rent guest houses or rooms. Rental turnover is greater on the south side (Ocean Park) and the inland area off Santa Monica Boulevard than in the exclusive northern part of Santa Monica.

Pacific Palisades is an upscale community located just West of Brentwood and north of Santa Monica, five to six miles from the UCLA campus. Centered along Sunset Boulevard as it winds its way to the Pacific, most of this neighborhood is in the hills and canyons overlooking the ocean.

Palms is a neighborhood bristling with apartments that are more affordable than other areas. Palms has some convenience markets, a couple of laundromats and several restaurants, particularly along Venice Boulevard. There are supermarkets all around the periphery of the neighborhood.

Mar Vista is another neighborhood rich in affordable housing options for students. Single family houses still outnumber apartments, but apartment construction is widespread. There are supermarkets on National and Sepulveda and Whole Foods Market health food store is on National just north of Palms Boulevard. Fix-it shops and small restaurants complement standard fast food restaurants on main streets.

Culver City is an incorporated city five to seven miles south of UCLA and just south of Palms and Mar Vista. Rental prices tend to be affordable and the neighborhood pleasant. There are apartments between Venice and Washington Boulevards and in the area off Culver Boulevard, south of MGM Studios.

Venice is a beach community six to seven miles southwest of the UCLA campus. Modeled after the Italian original (complete with canals), it has always attracted artists and social activists. In the 80s, parts of Venice were gentrified, and the community reflects a mixture of trendy and neglected, pricey and rundown. You've probably heard about the Venice Boardwalk: bargains, roller-skaters, jugglers and "Muscle Beach." Venice has some bargain housing left, but you need to look for it.

Beverly Hills, Sometimes there are guesthouses or rooms for rent in the area, especially south of Wilshire, and sharing an apartment is feasible. Most students, though, use Beverly Hills for fantastic window shopping, people watching, occasional famous-name dining, and magnificent public parks and gardens (along Santa Monica Boulevard north of Wilshire). North of Santa Monica Boulevard, services and public transportation are very limited; they are more plentiful along Beverly Boulevard, Wilshire and Olympic.

Century City, This high-rise commercial center has some condominiums, but not much housing for students. Sometimes there are rooms for rent west of Century City Shopping Center and apartments line Beverly Glen Boulevard. Entertainment is the area's main value. Century City Shopping Center has great shopping, food and theaters offering matinee prices.



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Pico-Robertson provides affordable alternatives compared to higher-priced housing in LA. The small pocket of Los Angeles that abuts Beverly Hills just west of La Cienega Boulevard is popular and close to the Wilshire buses, but prices here are rising. The winding suburban streets of Beverlywood occupy the southwestern part of this neighborhood. Bachelor apartments and rooms for rent are sometimes available here but buses only skirt the area. Shopping and services are concentrated along Pico, Robertson and Olympic Boulevards. Pico has many small kosher groceries, restaurants and name brand discount stores.

West Hollywood is a densely populated city at the foot of the Hollywood Hills between Beverly Hills and Hollywood. A center of design, fashion, music and theater, it is known for its Melrose Avenue boutiques and theaters, famous restaurants and the Pacific Design Center. Look for housing north of Beverly Boulevard to Sunset, between Doheny and Crescent Heights. North of Sunset between Fairfax and La Brea is also popular. Be aware that “greater West Hollywood” extends beyond the official city limits, so West Hollywood rent control may not apply to every apartment. The bus commute is convenient if you live near the Wilshire or Sunset bus to UCLA. If you need to get around LA a lot, this neighborhood is not freeway friendly. It is well served by grocery stores, laundromats, parks, libraries, etc.

The San Fernando Valley, UCLA’s location near the 405 Freeway makes parts of the San Fernando Valley a viable alternative to more expensive and densely crowded neighborhoods near campus. The freeway can be a nightmare during rush hour, but at other times it is surprisingly efficient. Furthermore, there are alternative routes to the 405-Sepulveda and Beverly Glen Boulevards and Roscomare Road. Despite its reputation as unending suburbia, parts of the Valley are surprisingly country-like. Lacking the coastal breezes found south of the Santa Monica Mountains, the Valley tends to get warmer and smoggier than the westside.

South and West Valley Neighborhoods

Sherman Oaks/Van Nuys, Located east of the 405, they have many apartments along the major north-south avenues. There are also house and condo shares, guest houses and rooms for rent. Carpools and the RTD #560 Freeway Express are alternatives to driving your own car to campus. Ventura Boulevard is not only the commercial lifeline of the neighborhood, it’s the main thoroughfare of the entire south valley.

Encino, This exclusive community is west of the 405 Freeway. Many of LA’s rich and famous live here, and apartments or condos tend to be expensive. Sometimes students can find a guest house or room for rent. Here,

Ventura Boulevard is the Valley version of Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills. It’s fun to window shop even if you can’t touch the prices. Just north of Encino is the Sepulveda Dam Recreation Area, with an eight-mile bike path, golf, tennis and other recreational facilities.

Tarzana is west of Encino, about a half-hour drive, without traffic, from campus. Primarily suburban, most apartments in Tarzana are near Lindley Avenue and Ventura Boulevard. As in most of the Valley, groceries and services are plentiful.

Woodland Hills is an aptly-named upscale suburban. Single family homes predominate. Most condominiums and apartments are near Warner Center, a residential business park north of Ventura Freeway. This neighborhood will more likely appeal to staff and faculty than to students. The Ventura Freeway—the only viable route to campus—is typically jammed during rush hour. You can soften the commute by avoiding rush hour or carpooling.

Canoga Park, North of the Ventura Freeway and Woodland Hills, Canoga Park is a large suburban neighborhood 18 miles from campus. It has affluent as well as run-down areas, so drive around to get a sense of the neighborhood. Restaurants and services are adequate in this part of the Valley, but if you want something fancier, try nearby Woodland Hills.

East Valley Neighborhoods

Studio City lies against the hills at the southern edge of the Valley. Single family homes of TV and movie industry employees predominate, but there are many apartment complexes and some students live here. Small, inexpensive restaurants and shops line Ventura Boulevard.

North Hollywood stretches onto the Valley floor a mile north of Studio City. Students who live here usually own a condo or live with relatives. Along Magnolia Boulevard there are some older, well-kept apartments with large windows and courtyards. Drive through this neighborhood to find housing advertised by signs outside the apartments.

Rental Tips and Expectations

Applying for a Rental Unit

Most landlords will ask you to complete a rental application form. The application will typically ask for the following information:

- Name, address, and telephone number
- Current and past landlords
- Social Security and driver’s license numbers
- Bank account and credit card numbers and addresses



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- Financial information regarding your ability to pay the rent (e.g., monthly income)
- Names of people who will be living in the unit

A landlord may ask about information that reflects on your ability to pay the rent; however, federal, state and local laws prohibit landlords from discriminating against classes of people on arbitrary bases (e.g., race, gender, age, family status).

Cost of Living

A few notes to remember while considering housing cost in L.A.:

- L.A. ranks in the top 5 for most expensive cities in the U.S.; the average monthly rent for a studio or 1 bedroom apartment ranges from \$1,500 – 2,500.
- 2016-2017 Metcalf Interns who had an internship in the reported to have spent the following over the course of the summer:
 - Average Cost of Food/Utilities/Transportation/Entertainment: \$1900
 - Average Rent: \$2700
 - Average Total Cost: \$4600
- While researching for apartments to rent, be aware of scammers on rental websites (e.g. Craigslist). A common tactic used by the seller is stating that they will be out of the city for months, limiting their accessibility. According to two students trying to find housing over the summer, “We also noticed that a lot of the scam responses were the same, someone leaving the city for 3-9 months for a job.”
- Be sure to get in contact (via phone, Skype, etc.) with your landlord or leaser before agreeing to rent the vacancy. Whenever possible, you should visit the space before signing a lease.

L.A. Public Transportation

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

The primary regional public transportation agency is the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA), commonly referred to as Metro or MTA. The agency, which operates bus, light rail and subway services, is the third largest transit agency in the United States. <https://www.metro.net/riding/>

The standard Metro base fare is \$1.75 and applies for all trips. Transfers between lines are .50 cents. Day, Weekly, Monthly, and Student passes are available. Metro has a system of

electronic fare collection using a stored value smartcard called the Transit Access Pass (or TAP Card).

- *Metro Rail* is the rapid transit rail system consisting of six separate lines (the Red, Purple, Blue, Expo, Green, and Gold lines) serving 80 stations in the Los Angeles County, California area. It connects with the Metro transit way bus rapid transit system (the orange line and silver lines) and also with the Metrolink commuter rail systems. All Metro Rail lines run regularly between 5am and midnight, seven days a week. Limited service on particular segments is provided after midnight and before 5am. There is no rail service between 2am and 3:30am.
 - *The Red Line* is a heavy rail subway between Downtown LA and North Hollywood.
 - *The Purple Line* is a heavy rail subway between Downtown LA and Koreatown/Mid-Wilshire.
 - *The Blue Line* is a light rail line between Downtown LA's Financial District and Downtown Long Beach.
 - *The Green Line* is a fully elevated light rail between Redondo Beach and Norwalk. It offers indirect access to Los Angeles International Airport via a shuttle bus from the Aviation/LAX station.
 - *The Gold Line* is a light rail line between East Los Angeles and Pasadena.
 - *The Expo Line* is Metro's newest light rail line between Downtown LA and downtown Santa Monica.
- *Metro Busway* is Los Angeles County's bus rapid transit system with two lines operating on dedicated or shared-use busway. <https://www.metro.net/riding/maps/>
 - The Orange Line is a bus rapid transit line between North Hollywood, Warner Center and select trips to Chatsworth.
 - The Silver Line is a bus rapid transit line between El Monte and the Harbor Gateway district of Los Angeles via Downtown LA.

L.A. SAFETY

After living in the city of Chicago, you should be well-versed in safety precautions for urban environments. However, here are some basic tips you should be reminded of before your internship in L.A. Using common sense is good advice and you should also read the following tips for a quick refresher.

General Safety Tips:

- Always remember that there is safety in numbers. Walk with friends, or take populated routes when going places. Be especially careful when walking at night.



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- Plan your route in advance, walk with a purpose, and be alert at all times, especially when talking on a cell phone or using headphones.
- Avoid deserted areas such as parks, alleys, and vacant lots.
- If you think you're being followed, cross the street, change direction, or go to a public place.
- Never display large amounts of cash or flaunt jewelry or cameras in public. If you need to organize your wallet, duck into a store.
- Don't keep your wallet in the back pocket of your pants or backpack, and be aware of your wallet or purse in commotions. Pickpockets often use helpers to create disturbances nearby.
- Use caution when using ATMs and don't carry too much cash around with you. Most places accept credit cards and there are ATMs everywhere. Just make sure you choose one that is in a busy, well-lighted area.
- When Using Public Transportation: On the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority website there are customer safety instructions with a variety of safety information for the Metro. Visit: <https://www.metro.net/riding/safety-security/> to find out more.
- Avoid empty subway cars. Ride with many people or in the conductor's car (usually the middle car of the train).

Connect with Alumni

While you're in L.A. this summer, take advantage of the opportunity to connect with another great resource: University of Chicago alumni! Whether you're interested in working in L.A. after graduation, or you wish to find out more about certain career paths, networking with alumni may be one of the most beneficial things you do during your summer. Research alumni who are currently working in L.A., through the UChicagoWISR Network, an alumni mentoring platform: <https://uchicago.wisr.io/signup> and the online alumni directory: <http://www.uchicagoalumni.org>.



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