

# LIVING IN NASHVILLE

*A Quick Glance at What New International Students of Peabody College Want to Know Before Arriving*

Updated: February 3, 2023

## tips.

- Students recommend the Bank of America: convenient and less than a 10 minute walk from campus
- Keep a credit or debit card from your home country with you

## links.

- [Vanderbilt ISSS website](#)
- [How Credit Cards Work](#)
- [Understanding Credit Cards](#)

## BANKING

One of the first priorities upon arriving in the US should be opening a **checking account**. Use the checking account to pay for rent and bills. You will receive a **debit card** that can be used for most all purchases in the US.

When you go to open a checking account take the following items with you:

- Home address
- Student ID
- Passport and I-20/DS-2019 or social security

## COST OF LIVING

You will want to set **realistic expectations** for the living expenses you will likely have in Nashville.

- Grocery bill: \$50-\$80 a week
- Cell calling + data: \$20+ per month
- Common lunch on campus: \$10
- Common restaurant meal: \$10-\$20
- Lifestyle expenses: \$20-\$40 a week
- Travel: \$1000 (small trip) / \$2000 (large-trip)
- Books and Academics: \$500 per academic year
- Health fee+Student insurance: \$2150 per term
- Transportation: \$50+ per month
- Rent: + Utilities: \$900+ per month (see below)

## tips.

- Save money by avoiding delivery and eating out
- Check budget options (Mint Mobile, Visible) for your calling and data
- Eating out, the average tip is 15-20%
- Most goods and food have 10% sales tax

## links.

- [Peabody resources](#)
- [Passport to Nashville: The Commodore Card](#)
- [Budgeting and Goal Setting](#)
- [Nashville's International Grocery Stores](#)

## tips.

- Download Google Maps to get up-to-minute information on public buses
- Don't buy a car without doing your research: for used vehicles, use online resources like CARFAX

## links.

- [Vanderbilt Transportation](#)
- [Nashville Public Transit](#)
- [Greyhound \(long-distance buses\)](#)
- [Getting a Tennessee Driver's License](#)

## TRANSPORTATION

There are many ways around the city; know what is the best option for you!

- **Public bus:** Your Commodore Card allows you free use of Nashville's buses
- **Car:** Many international students purchase a car. Must obtain a driver's license and car insurance.
- **Ride-sharing:** Use apps Uber and/or Lyft.
- **Bike:** Nashville is relatively flat, but be safe!
- **Car Rental:** For long trips, consider renting a car. Must be at least 21 years old and have a license. Check [Vandy's website for car rental discounts!](#)

## tips.

Take initiative! Connect with current students to learn more and incoming students to find roommates. Reach out if you need help!

# HOUSING

Most graduate students live **off-campus**. Know the housing resources and begin arranging your housing **as soon as you can**.

## links.

- [Vanderbilt ISSS: Finding a Place to Live](#)
- [Vanderbilt Off-Campus Housing Search](#)
- [Housing search: Zillow](#)
- [Housing search: Apartments.com](#)
- [LGBTQI Friendly Housing](#)
- [Graduate student housing](#)

## HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS

You will be required to sign a lease for your housing situation. A lease is a **contract** binding you to its conditions.

- Most leases are for **12 months**. They can range from 6-24 months.
- Read through the lease carefully and reach out to others if you have questions.
- Be clear about important features like air conditioning, washer/dryer, Wifi, parking, etc.
- There are usually large fees for terminating the contract early.
- Nashville average rent (2022): \$1819 per month. You may need to do significant searching to find suitable options at lower price points.
- **The average rent in Nashville has increased by over 12% in two years.**

## ROOM-HUNTING

Work out what you can afford. Don't forget additional expenses, like electricity, internet, trash, and furniture. **Average rent for students is over \$800 a month.** One way to reduce costs is to live with others.

- **The VU Peabody Admitted Students Facebook page** is a great resource for connecting with potential roommates. Use it to reach out!
- Identify multiple housing options that could work for you. Make sure to contact the landlords and let them know you are interested.
- Start looking at least **2-3 months** before move-in.
- Try to find a way to tour the locations before signing a lease.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

Understand the differences between Nashville's various neighborhoods. Look through the **neighborhood resource** that Peabody has created and think about which location works for you. Most students live in a neighborhood close to campus, but others intentionally live further away to experience another side of Nashville.

A few popular neighborhoods:

- **12 South:** About a five-minute drive to campus. There are awesome restaurants from laid-back spots to fine dining.
- **Hillsboro Village:** Walking distance to campus. You will see lots of college students. Cute shops, coffee houses, and great food are also plentiful.
- **Edgehill:** Walking distance to campus. Comprised mostly of individual homes. This is a quiet area, centrally located with a few restaurants and shops.
- **West End:** Walking distance to campus. Centrally located with many condos, apartments, and chain restaurants. Lots of students live in the area. Home of Centennial Park, the biggest urban park in Nashville and a great place to relax.

Adapted from: Peabody Office of Student Engagement & Well-Being - Nashville: A Neighborhood Quick Guide

