

## Before You Leap

# United States

Although many international assignments originate in the United States, the country remains a popular destination for inbound moves. Sylvia Theriault, GMS, executive vice president of Full Circle International Relocations, New York, NY, offers some essential knowledge on housing and schooling options for first-time assignees headed to the United States.



## Housing

### Housing Types

Apartments in major metropolitan areas are available in either mid- to high-rise buildings or in converted older homes/row houses. Low rise/garden apartments are found in more suburban environments. In New York City, further distinctions are made between condominiums, cooperatives, or solely rental units.

Town houses (or row houses) are available in many parts of the United States and not necessarily in town. This housing is built in rows or clusters with adjoining walls the neighboring house. There is usually a small backyard or garden.

Single-family homes are free-standing houses surrounded by a yard or garden and mostly found in purely residential areas or suburbs of major U.S. cities. This generally is the most family-appropriate and expensive type of housing.

Furnished rental housing is not usually available except as corporate housing, which is defined as fully-furnished (including housewares) rental accommodation and which are almost always apartments.

### Availability

In general, the most expensive rental markets also are the most challenging places to find a good rental property. Availability is good, but demand is also good. Therefore, once an attractive property is found, dallying too long before deciding is not advised.

### Lease Formalities

Rents always are quoted as monthly rates. In order to secure a property, the first month's rent plus a security deposit equal to 1-2 months' rent is required along with signing the lease. Any real estate commission due is payable at the lease signing.

Landlords in major metropolitan areas with low vacancy rates usually will not agree to shorter than a one-year lease.

A cancellation clause is difficult to get until the second year of lease.

## Education

### Choices

For independent/private schools, most major metropolitan areas have schools with French, Japanese, German, and British curriculum and language. There also are many excellent American or IB curriculum private schools.

### Cost

Independent schools can run as high as US\$25,000 and up per child.

Public schools are funded by local taxes and some U.S. government grants, but otherwise are cost-free to the families.

### Curriculum

Independent, or private, schools that do not receive any state or federal funds can follow the curriculum of their choice; religious, classic, American, IB, or other national curriculum. ESL generally is not available.

There is no standard U.S. curriculum. For public, or state-funded, schools, each state develops their own, however, there are federal education goals that they need to meet. Public schools' curriculum often equals or exceeds those of independent schools. ESL is offered in most public schools.