



Q&A

Compiled by CSSA-2004

1. How much should I pay for the airport pick-up fee if someone offers me the help?

The parking fee will still be paid by the new comers, and CSSA will pay volunteers \$5/trip (Reagan) or \$10/trip (IAD) for the gas fee. Generally, we don't provide the pick-up service for Baltimore/Washington International Airport (BWI), which is too far from the DC. To those who want to donate some money for new comers in helping temporary housing and picking up, please refer your email to cssa@gwu.edu or current president.

2. How to get to GWU without pick-up help?

Call cabs in front of the airport. Remember to put the school address and some cash in your pocket.

Other ways out:

From National Airport, take the Blue line in the Metro going to the direction of "Addison Road", and get off at "Foggy Bottom/GWU" station. Shuttle minivans are fine too, and will cost about \$20 per person.

From Dulles, take the shuttle, about \$25 per person.

From BWI, take the shuttle, about \$50 per person.

3. How to find temporary housing?

There are two solutions here:

The first and the most convenient way for Chinese students is to get help from the Community Living and Learning Center. Contact the Center before arrival to reserve your temporary housing, which is ONLY available on campus for all students from August 4-21, 2002. Fill in a form indicating your Name, Sex, Age, your contact information, and arrival and departure date.

The contact information of the Community Living and Learning Center is:

Summer Housing Services 500 23rd Street, NW.,

Columbia Plaza Suite B100, Washington D.C. 20037, USA.

TEL: 202-496-6305

FAX: 202-496-8323

EMAIL: sumhouse@gwu.edu

The second way you could go is to get help from CSSA. Before arriving in D.C., send a requesting mail to cssa@gwu.edu, which indicates the date you arrives, your personal profile (Male/Female, Age, and a photo in order for the convenience of the pick-up), and the price you can afford for the temporary housing.

Here is another list of a few suggestions of reasonably priced, convenient accommodations. You can also check the Internet for additional hotels or contact a travel agent.

The Adams Inn

TEL 202 745-3600

FAX 202 319 7958

Carlyle Suites

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TEL 202 234 3200

FAX 202 387 0085

Davis House

TEL 202 232 3196

FAX 202 232 3197

Hostelling International Washington D.C.



TEL 202 737 2333
FAX 202 737 1508
International Student Housing
TEL 202 232 4007
FAX 202 387 4115
International Guest House
TEL 202 726 5808
FAX 202 882 2228
Kalorama Guest House (Woodley Park)
TEL 202 328 0860
FAX 202 328 8730
Kalorama Guest House (Adams Morgan)
TEL 202 667 6369
FAX 202 319 1262
River Place Apartments
TEL 301 951 4111
FAX 301 907 7329
Roommates Preferred, Ltd
TEL 202 234 5789
FAX 202 965 4156
Simpkins Bed and Breakfast
TEL 202 387 1328
Thompson-Markward Hall
TEL 202 546 3255

4. How much should I pay for the temporary housing?

If you get help from the Community Living and Learning Center or you are going to live in hotel, they will show you the price. You may be able to get a student rate or travelers aid discount at some hotels if rooms

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are available. Ask if such discounts apply when you call for a reservation. Do it as early as possible.

If you get help from Chinese student through CSSA, the money you should pay is:

$(\text{Rent} + \text{Phone} + \text{Utility}) / \text{Days in the month} * \text{Actual days}$

5. Housing around GWU:

There are some popular apartments where many Chinese students choose to live.

- Departments on campus: On campus. Not easy to get. Very convenient. Living condition is not quite good.
- River House (3 buildings): Pentagon City, 5-min walk to arrive at a metro station. Rent is a little higher. Living environment is quite good. Convenient, quiet and clean. Free park, swimming pool and gym.
- Crystal House (2 buildings): Crystal City, 5-min walk to arrive at a metro station. Rent is a little higher. Living environment is good. Convenient, quiet and clean. Free park.
- Court House: Old apartments. Rent is a little cheaper. Living condition is not good.

The following resources are also quite useful for you.

CSSA: <http://gwucssa.iscool.net>

Marvin Center 4F RM416 (Off-campus housing office): Foggy Bottom campus.

After choosing your dream room, please put your emphasis on the lease. You should read carefully the contents of the lease. Pay attention to the rent period, utilities fees, furniture fees and deposits. The more details you know about the lease, the less inconveniences you will meet in the future.



6. Health Insurance Issues:

Health insurance is an important issue for international students, especially Chinese students. Because in USA, medical expenses are very expensive, we strongly recommend you buy a medical insurance plan. There are several options:

1): The university offers a health insurance program developed especially for GW students. For more information about the 2001-2002 GW Student Health Insurance Plan, underwritten by Aetna, you can contact:

Chickering Claims Administrators Inc.

P.O. Box 410378

Cambridge, MA 02141-0004

(800) 213-0579

www.chickering.com

2): The Mid-West National Life Insurance Company of Tennessee (recommended by Chinese Embassy)

Its website: www.student-resources.net

Its contact phone: 1-800-237-0903

3): You can also ask other Chinese students about their specific suggestions.

Option 1 is more expensive than option 2, while option 1 has more coverage.

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7. What are the important things to do during the first week of stay in USA?

1): Check in at ISO, which is located in ISO, 2029 K Street, NW. Bring your valid passport, I-94, I-20 or IAP-66

2): Apply for Social Security Number (like Chinese Shenfenzheng). Before applying for SSN, you must get a letter from ISO. SSN office is located at: 2100 M Street, NW

3): Deposit your money; do not take too much cash with you. There are NIH bank (1919 Penn Avenue, NW), Bank of America (2001 Penn Avenue, NW), Riggs Bank (1919 Penn Avenue, NW), Citibank (1775 Penn Avenue, NW) etc.

4): Finding an ideal apartment, you can contact other Chinese students and see whether you can share the apartment for a couple of weeks if you can not find yourselves so that you can avoid expensive guesthouse or hotel expenses.

8. How Can I buy cheap or used textbooks?

A: Almost every Chinese student will be amazed at the high price of new textbooks in US. Usually we will try to find the used books in the following ways before buying the new ones:

- **SEARCH ON-LINE** You can get the books' title, author or ISBN from your advisor or professor first, in which ISBN is the best one because every book has its unique ISBN number while the version of the book update every year. Using this information, you can search the books in many web sites such as amazon.com, half.com and etc. The price of the books selling there are reasonable and some of used books are almost totally new. You can even sale your own used books there.

- **BUY IN GW BOOKSTORE** In the beginning of every semester; GW Bookstore will have a batch of used books to sale, which were collected from the old students. These used books usually have 25% discount. Some books only have a few and you need to check early and frequently. These books are also usually in good conditions.

- **ASK FOR OLD STUDENTS** There will be many selling information of textbooks posted on GW CSSA web site, bulletin boards in Gelman library, Academic Center and anywhere else on Campus. You can also send emails to ask for some book on CSSAPOST. In this way, you often only need to pay 50% to 60% of the original price.

- **COPYING** If you really want to save money or have financial problem, the cheapest way is to copy the



textbooks. You can borrow from other, or buy from the bookstore first and then return them in the permitted periodic, which is 14 days in the beginning of every semester and 3 days during the semester. The copying center in Gelman Library, basement of Marvin Center are all available. The cheapest store for copying is Office Depot, the closest one to our campus is at 2000 K street, NW.

9. How can I apply for credit card?

A: If you want to stay in US, credit history is one of the most important records in your life. You'd better to get a credit card as soon as possible. After getting your SSN (social security number), you can start to apply for it. There are many credit card companies, but they can be classified into four categories: VISA, MASTERCARD, AMERICAN EXPRESS and DISCOVER. Everyone has its advantage and popularity, so you can apply anyone to start your credit history. The problem is that you have no credit history in US

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before and it is very difficult for you to be accepted for the first card. The following methods are recommended to fix this problem:

-Apply for a debit card while you open an account in your bank, it usually need deposit for your card and is not the real credit card, but it can help you to build your credit history and you will be easily accepted by other credit card companies after certain period. Bank of American, NIH and some other big bank all have this service.

-Try to apply as many companies as you can on-line, perhaps some one will be accepted. There are some successful examples for the student card of American Express, you can check it on Americanexpress.com. While you are apply for, you should pay attention whether it has annual fee, we usually try to avoid to pay any charge of that.

- The best way is applying in the promotion activities given by the credit companies on campus, you only need to fill in some forms and then you will get some fairly good souvenirs, such as T-shirt, portable radio or camera, etc. The successful rate in this way is very high.

Once you own your first credit card, it will be very easy for you to get as many card as you want, you will be submerged in the letters inviting you to apply for their cards soon. Almost everyone is no annul fee, low APR and high credit line. But do remember not to take too many cards, which will decrease your credit history.

10. Which bank should I save my money?

Upon arrival in the United States, you should open a bank account as soon as possible. We recommend local banks branch with international department. Those around GWU include:

Bank of America

2001 Pennsylvania Ave, NW.

202-624-4953

Chevy Chase Bank

1850 K Street, NW.

202-822-3640

Citibank

1775 Pennsylvania Ave, NW.

202-857-6838

First Union National Bank

1700 Pennsylvania Ave, NW.

202-879-7140

NIH/GW Federal Credit Union (GW branch)

2100 Pennsylvania Ave, NW.

1800-877-6440 or 301-718-0208

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Riggs Bank, NA

1919 Pennsylvania Ave, NW.

202-835-7117

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