Wagner Peer Advisor Housing Tips

Moving to NYC? Already live here but looking for a new apartment? This is a compilation of friendly advice from Wagner Peer Advisors. Let us know if you have any questions or feedback – this is a work in progress, informally collected to give you the benefit of some other Wagner students’ experiences. We hope you find it helpful!

Neighborhoods
Wagner’s Admissions Office has a useful map showing where many Wagner students live. The clusters of Wagners around NYC tend to reflect which train lines are convenient to NYU and which neighborhoods are relatively affordable for grad students. So this map is a great place to start.

Also, ask friends and/or peer advisors what neighborhoods they’d recommend. If possible, visit a few different areas and walk around to get the feel of them. Peer advisors have organized some ‘neighborhood chats’ which might be a good opportunity to learn more about the various locations. If you are looking at a particular neighborhood (or a specific address), check www.hopstop.com to see how long your commute would be from there to NYU.

Price
Apartments in NYC are expensive. A one-bedroom in Manhattan’s East Village might cost approximately $2900. A three-bedroom in Brooklyn, shared among three roommates and involving a 30-45 minute commute to NYU, could be closer to $800-$1000/person. Check out this website for information on trends in rental prices, by neighborhood:
http://www.mns.com/manhattan_rental_market_report/#neighborhood_price_trends

An unlimited Metrocard (subway & bus) costs $112/month, so factor that in if you are planning to commute every day.

To get an apartment, you usually have to put down first and last months’ rent, plus a security deposit. In addition to this, you may have to pay a broker fee. Expect this to be 10-15% of the annual rent. If you do not have a very large income (or any income at all), you will probably need a guarantor to sign with you. It is also common for a prospective landlord to do a credit check.

Roommates
Some people have very good luck finding roommates on Craigslist; others have very bad luck. There’s a lot of uncertainty involved. Another option is to post on the Wagner Wants listserv – that way, you and your future roommate will definitely have at least one thing in common. (People also sell furniture and used books on Wagner Wants.) In addition, consider other groups where you might find a good roommate. For example, do you tend to get along with the kinds of people in the Brooklyn Ultimate Frisbee
Meetup group? Message them. Do you have a friend who could send an email to her NYC-based chorus? This kind of networking cuts down on some of the uncertainty of Craigslist.

Know Your Priorities
It’s unlikely that you will find every single thing you are looking for in one apartment, so it helps to know what you definitely want and what you’re willing to live without. In addition to the basics of people, place and price, consider amenities like: Dishwasher, laundry, proximity to park/grocery store/etc., natural light, air/ventilation, space (e.g. is there a living room? A kitchen with plenty of counter space?)...

Timing
Apartments tend to go on the market about a month before they’re available. It’s difficult – but not impossible – to find a place more than a month in advance. (Consider using a broker for help with this.) It’s also possible to find an apartment that you can move into on very short notice, but it can be rather stressful, especially if you’re starting school at the same time. To the extent possible, try to schedule your in-person apartment searching days about 3-4 weeks before you would want to move in. Also, be prepared to decide and sign quickly when you find something you like!

Lastly, if you don’t find a place right away, don’t despair. Eventually, it WILL work out!

Useful links:
- http://www.padmapper.com/
- www.craigslist.com