Graduate Student Survival Guide
Council of Graduate Students
cogs@umn.edu
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the University of Minnesota! The Council of Graduate Students (COGS) prepared this guide to help make your transition to the University community more pleasant. This book is divided into two parts: the first acquaints you with the University—employment, tuition, health insurance, and the like—while the second provides an insider’s look at the Twin Cities.

THE VERY BASICS

Web Resources

Most information and business pertaining to life at the University can be found on the web. Using the site’s search engine you can find departmental pages, campus maps, University policies, student groups, etc. The central business hub is called OneStop. Through OneStop you register for classes, pay bills, check grades, etc. Furthermore, the Graduate School has resources, policies and a summary of forms needed from entry through graduation. In addition, please check with your individual department and school/college for additional requirements or processes related to your degree completion. It provides information on scholarships and fellowships. More information can be found on the Council of Graduate Students’ homepage. COGS is the governing body for all graduate students and its webpage provides important information, announcements, and links. If you have computer questions, call the U of M Helpline at 612.301.4357.

Printed Resources

The Gopher Guide is a great source of information. If you’re a new student and went to orientation, you received one free in your packet. If not, you can purchase one for $5.95 at the bookstore. The Gopher Guide contains a University calendar, planner, campus maps, resources, and helpful hints.

X.500

Many parts of the University’s web system are unavailable without your X.500 number. Your X.500 is a combination of your last name and some numbers. E.g. John Smith’s X.500 may be smit0048. The X.500 also works as your login to protected parts of the website, thereby allowing you to register for classes, access your financial account, renew library books, and enter the parking lottery. The X.500 number also works as your student email account (i.e. “johns751@umn.edu”). The central administration uses this account to contact all students for University-wide information (policy changes, official notices, etc.) and the library sends out its overdue notices through this account. You can change the options on your account at the U of M email login.

PART I: UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

First Things First

Orientation
New Graduate Student Orientation: The Office of First Year Programs conducts their graduate student orientation program at the beginning of Fall and Spring semesters. We strongly encourage you to attend some or all of this. As a new student, you should receive a brochure about it before starting school here. At orientation, you’ll get a free Gopher Guide and other booklets for new students, and you’ll have a chance to speak with representatives from various offices that may affect your grad school life. This also gives you a great opportunity to meet other graduate students from all over the University.

Department Orientation:

Some departments offer their own graduate student orientation, usually with departmental specific information. You should definitely attend since it will give you a chance to meet the faculty and other students in your program. If your department does not offer orientation, you should meet with your advisor, Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), and/or Graduate Studies Office staff to get the scoop, figure out what classes to take, and learn about your department or graduate program.

U Card

The U Card is the University of Minnesota ID card. Cards can be obtained at the U Card office Coffmann G22), the University Recreation Center (1906 University Ave SE), or the St Paul Gym (1536 Cleveland Ave). Get your U Card as soon as possible! This card serves as your library card, your ID card, and gives you access to certain buildings. (You can also use it as an ATM card (TCF only), copy card, and a cash card at the University Bookstore and other locations where you see the Gopher GOLD logo). Be sure to check online before going to obtain the U Card as the hours can be unpredictable.

U-PASS

The U-Pass is available to all University students. For $97 per semester, you get unlimited rides on all city buses and light rail. This is an incredible deal and easily pays for itself. There is a rush on U-Passes at the start of each semester, so order early through the website.

Campus

The Layout

The University of Minnesota is technically not a University system (like the “UC system,” for example), but a multi-campus land-grant university with coordinate campuses in Duluth, Crookston, Morris, Rochester, and the Twin Cities. The Twin Cities campus has about 47,000 students, and roughly 15,000 of those are graduate or professional students. We are one of the largest Universities in the US, among the nation’s top public research universities, and a leading recipient of federal research, training, and public service grants and contracts. Graduate students come from every state in the US as well as all over the world.
The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus is actually two campuses, one in Minneapolis and one in St. Paul. The Minneapolis campus is further divided by the Mississippi River into the East Bank and West Bank. The banks are connected by the Washington Avenue Bridge. A free campus bus system runs between the campuses (See “Campus Connector,” p. 16.).

**Post Offices**

- 28 Coffman Union, 612.624.8602 32
- St. Paul Student Center, 612.625.9794
- West Bank Skyway Store, 612.624.6338

**Food on (or near) Campus**

**East Bank**

Coffman Union has the most restaurants and coffee shops available on the East Bank with a large food court on the ground floor. Dining options are also available in Nolte Hall, Moos Tower, Phillips-Wangensteen Building, and Williamson Hall. The East Bank is a short walk to Dinkytown, where you can find the Dinkydome food court as well as countless other restaurants, coffee shops, and bars. Stadium Village, also a short walk, offers similar options.

**West Bank**

The West Bank food options are mainly found in the basement of Blegen Hall, the Carlson School of Management’s dining area, the Bistro in the Humphrey Center, and a coffee shop in the Law School. A short walk from the West Bank you find the Seven Corners area, home to several bars and restaurants. A few blocks from Carlson School is the Cedar-Riverside area which houses many good coffee shops, vegan and vegetarian restaurants, bars, and ethnic restaurants.

**St. Paul**

St. Paul campus dining experiences can be found in the St. Paul Student Center, the St. Paul Dining Center, or the Continuing Education Center. The Gopher Spot is located on the lower level of the St. Paul Student Center, Subway and University Dining Services is on the main level. On the corner of Cleveland and Buford Ave there is a family owned café and Mediterranean restaurant. A slightly longer walk, or short drive, from campus yields a few other places to eat along Como, Larpenteur Ave, or Snelling Ave.
ATMs

There are a variety of ATMs available on or near campus. The best resource to find one that you can use without fees is your banks website. If you have a TCF account, your UCard can be used at TCF ATMs. A list of TCF ATMs on/near campus is available online.

Funding for Graduate School

Graduate students are funded in a variety of ways: as Graduate Assistants (GAs), by University fellowships, or through external sources:

- **Graduate Assistant (GA) appointments**: Many graduate students are employed by the University as Graduate Assistants receiving full or partial tuition waivers, healthcare, and a wage. Appointments fall into three categories: Teaching Assistants (TAs), Research Assistants (RAs), and Administrative Fellows (AFs). Teaching Assistants are typically funded from U of M/State of Minnesota funds, while RAs are usually funded by external grants. While many of these positions are distributed within departments, those without GA appointments can find job openings by clicking the link above.

- **Graduate School Fellows**: Fellowships are funded through the graduate school or departments and provide students with a stipend as well as tuition and/or health insurance. The regulations and policies governing these can be found at their website.

- **External funding**: Often external sources of funding are available to students later in their career to fund field work and dissertation writing. Click the link for more information on external funding sources.

The Graduate Assistant Employment office (GAE)

The GAE posts jobs and administers the employment policies for graduate assistants. They publish a Graduate Assistant Handbook every year as well as a newsletter once-per-term, all only on-line. The Handbook contains information on all assistantship policies and your rights. You would be wise to check their web site every few months for information, reminders, and the latest newsletters.

Payroll

If you are a GA you are paid on biweekly basis with pay checks coming on alternate Wednesdays. The U has a delayed payroll system meaning that you are paid for each two-week period 10 days after the period is over. This system means that you do not receive your first pay check until well after the semester begins but you receive your last pay check after the semester ends. Most appointments are 50% (20 hours/week) and are two semesters (about nine months) long. You are paid for an average of 20 hours a week with the recognition that some weeks you will work more, others less, and some (i.e. during winter and spring breaks) not at all. A nine month appointment means that summers are often unfunded. Pay checks can be deposited directly into your bank account; get this information to your department’s accounting/payroll office.
Health Insurance

The cost per student of the GA Plan is $304.00 per month. Each enrollee on the GA plan will pay a minimum of 5.3% of the cost of the monthly premium, which comes to $16.16 per month, billed once per semester ($96.96 per semester) to your student account. The payment of the remaining $287.84 per month depends on your appointment. The University subsidizes the cost of coverage on the Graduate Assistant Health Care Plan, paying a contribution toward the remaining premium of twice your appointment percentage for those employed at least 25% time. For example, if you have a 50% appointment, the University will pay the entire $287.84. If you have a 25% appointment, the University will only pay half (that is 50% of $287.84, or $143.92 per month) and you pay the rest, which is billed once at the beginning of the semester to your student account. There is also subsidized dependent insurance available for spouse, same-sex domestic partner and/or child(ren).

This is all administered through the Office of Student Health Benefits located in Boynton Health Service, (612) 624-0627 or 1-800-232-9017. All persons eligible for coverage must enroll to obtain coverage under the health care plan. To enroll you must fill out an enrollment form and turn it into the GAIO. Shortly thereafter, your insurance card will be mailed to you. You can obtain an enrollment packet (including the enrollment form) from your department or by contacting the GAIO. In general, if you’re seeing an approved provider for medical care, the costs are covered 100% after the $10 office visit co-pay, and your out-of-pocket expense for prescription drugs is $10 co-pay per generic and $25 co-pay per month for brand name formulary prescription drugs (one co-pay/3-month supply for birth control pills). Dental care is provided through the U of M Dental School. Preventive dental care (cleanings and one set of x-rays per year) is covered 100% for graduate assistants. Other care is discounted. Call for information or an appointment, 612.625.2495. Be sure to mention that you have Graduate Assistant Health Insurance. Dependents have access to deeply discounted dental care, whether enrolled on the GA health plan or not.

Registration, Fees, and Tuition

Registration

From this website click on “Web Registration” then “Search” to find the classes being offered by department. You can add a class by clicking the “Add” button next to the listing. Full classes or classes with pre-requisites often require a pass number which can be obtained from the professor teaching the class.

If you are on an assistantship, you are required to register every term in which you hold an assistantship. Most fellowships also have a registration requirement. Definitely ask before registering for credits you don’t need. Also, remember to register on time (before the beginning of the term) to avoid paying late fees unnecessarily!
**Fees**

Student fees must be paid each semester. Fees include: Student Services Fee, Course Fees, Collegiate Fees, International Student Service Fee, and School/Program Fees.

All Graduate Students will be expected to pay the **Student Services Fee**, even those with graduate assistantships. This fee ($365.90/semester) is used to fund student groups, the school newspaper, and other services. The **Technology and Collegiate Fees** vary and depend on which department you belong to. The **International Student Service Fee** is billed to international students to fund the International Student and Scholar Services office in addition to a SEVIS fee which must be paid before applying for a visa. Some colleges and programs also have additional fees aimed at covering the costs of materials and instruction. Ask your Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) about extra fees.

All fees are billed to your student account each semester. The fees can be paid all at once or in installments. The **Installment Plan**, however, includes a $35 per semester charge that will be added to your balance on the next bill in addition to a $30 late fee anytime you pay less than the minimum amount by the due date.

**Tuition**

Tuition is often waived for those with assistantships or fellowships. Tuition waivers are calculated on the same basis as health insurance: at twice your appointment percentage. For example, those with 50% appointments get a 100% waiver. Typically if you have an assistantship at 25% or greater, you will receive resident tuition rates, as do members of your immediate family. If you held at least a 25% assistantship for at least three terms, you and members of your immediate family are eligible for resident tuition. Check with Graduate Assistant Employment for details.

**Leave of Absence Policy**

While graduate students are expected to maintain active status through continuous registration until they graduate, the University recently instituted a policy that would allow students to take up to a two-year leave of absence without having to reapply. Graduate students must gain approval of their leave of absence through their college.

**Academic Resources**

**Libraries**

From the U of M Library’s home page you can follow links to: on-line catalogs, indices, news services, electronic journals, on-line book renewals, interlibrary loan requests, and more. There are also numerous specialized collections on campus. See the libraries web site for more information, and for hours and locations.

**Locations:**
Minneapolis East Bank

- **Bio-Medical Library**: Diehl Hall
- **Walter Library**: the education, psychology, science and engineering library. The second floor contains a beautiful reading room which is ideal for studying.

Minneapolis West Bank

- **Wilson Library**: the social sciences, literature, arts, history, and business library. There are printing services in the basement and plenty of study rooms (loud and quiet). It is also possible to rent a carrel for the semester giving you an on-campus private study area.
- **Law Library**: Walter F. Mondale Hall (612.625.3478)

St. Paul

- **Magrath Library** (pronounced “magraw”): the agriculture, horticulture, ecology, food science, biochemistry and biology library.

For a complete list of libraries, their collections, services, and hours go to their website.

The libraries use both Dewey Decimal and the Library of Congress (LC) systems to catalog books. If you use on-line searching, most of the Library of Congress books are preceded by “LC.” Most of the big libraries have maps posted throughout the stacks, so you can figure out where the Dewey and LC books are shelved. Journals are shelved in a separate section, in alphabetical order by journal title.

Library Copying

In Walter, St. Paul, and Wilson libraries, you can buy copy cards for $10 or $40 or add cash to your UCard in order to use the self-service copy machines. You can also have the people at Photocopy Service (3rd floor of Bio-Med, 1st floor of Walter, near Circulation in St. Paul, in the basement of Wilson) do it for you. The hours vary depending on the library and the cost is slightly more than doing it yourself. In the Biomedical Library, only cash and budget numbers are accepted—no copy cards. In most of the small collections, only copy cards and/or coins are accepted. Many libraries also offer the option of scanning and e-mailing; this saves paper, ink and money.

On-line periodical search indices

Many, many journal and newspapers can be accessed through the library’s website. From the library website, click on “indexes” or “E-journals” which further opens up a whole series of different periodical catalogues—some are very general (i.e. Lexis-Nexis which contains newspaper articles from the world’s major newspapers), some are general within academic fields (i.e. J-STOR which carries major academic journals within the humanities and social sciences), and some are very discipline-specific. Access is usually restricted to U of M-affiliated persons and requires your X.500 username and password.
Bookstores

The bookstore in Coffman Memorial Union is a massive 46,000 square foot store on the ground level. Aside from text books, the store carries general books, school supplies, art supplies, and anything you could ever want emblazoned with the University logo. St. Paul and the Law School still maintain their own bookstores.

**Coffman** (612.625.6000) Coffman Union, 300 Washington Ave. S.E. Minneapolis.


**Law School** (612.626.8569) Mondale Hall (West Bank), 259 19th Ave. S. Minneapolis.

**NOTE:** *There is no sales tax on textbook purchases in Minnesota; watch at the register to make sure you aren’t mistakenly charged sales tax on a book you need for class.*

Computers

**Umart** is the University’s gateway to discounted computer hardware and software purchases as well as support for you computer and peripherals. The website grants you access to discounts from major companies like Dell and Apple, as well as several smaller vendors who have special deals through the University.

The University provides all students, faculty, and staff with one e-mail account (the X.500). This account includes email and 50MB of space on a University server.

Some departments give you an account on their server. If you have two or more email accounts, you should set up forwarding so that all of your mail goes to the account you use. Most campus departments and offices will send e-mail to your X.500 account, so make sure that account forwards to the one you are using. To view and change your e-mail options go to the **U of M email login**.

Wireless Network

Over the past few years, the University has been greatly expanding their wireless network. Almost the entire Minneapolis and St. Paul campus and their environs are on the network. You will need your X.500 username and password to use the network from public and private computers.

Supercomputing

The University houses the **Minnesota Supercomputing Institute for Advanced Computational Research** in Walter Library. Here you will find a variety of computing laboratories, collaborations, and programs. Laboratories include the Basic Sciences Computing Laboratory, the Scientific Development and Visualization Laboratory, the Biomedical Modeling, Simulation, and Design
Laboratory, the Computational Genetics Laboratory, the Scientific Data Management Laboratory, and the LCSE-MSI Visualization Laboratory.

**Laboratory Work**

If you work in a lab, you have the right to a safe working environment. By the same token, you have a responsibility to learn the applicable regulations and to work safely. There are many resources to help you. Lab Safety Services and the Hazardous Waste Program, as well as Radiation Protection, are in the [Department of Environmental Health and Safety](mailto:). Training is offered in various locations on different schedules depending on the type. You may be required to attend training before beginning work in a lab. Your supervisor, PI (Principle Investigator), or department head can give you more information.

DEHS also runs a chemical recycling program so that unused chemicals can be redistributed instead of being put into the waste stream. This program also includes glassware and other miscellaneous lab equipment.

If your research involves human or animal subjects, it must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). This includes any research for any purpose, even surveys of adult humans.

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**Student Support Services**

**Directors of Graduate Studies (DGS)/Graduate Studies Offices**

Many of the requirements for your degree are program-specific. Your DGS should give you this information. The Grad Studies Office in your program can also give you information about acceptable progress, financial support, and career options or services.

**Career services**

Career services offices are affiliated with each college. However, the graduate school does not have its own office. Figure out which college your department or program is affiliated with and go there. For example, a graduate student in Physics would go to the Institute of Technology career services office. These services are located throughout both the Minneapolis and St. Paul Campuses.

**Preparing Future Faculty**

Preparing Future Faculty is a nationally recognized program for doctoral students to learn more about careers as faculty. The program consists of three courses, two of which are required to earn the certificate of completion, as well as a teaching practicum at the University or another local institution. Many students find these courses helpful for their assistantship and for improving
communication skills. The Center for Teaching and Learning Services also conducts many workshops and provides numerous services for TAs and instructors.

**International Students**

International students currently face very strict visa requirements. The Office of Homeland Security has recently launched the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) in order to monitor the visa status of international students. Failure to comply with visa requirements could have serious consequences including deportation or being prevented from re-entering the country. For more information on visas, travel restrictions, and other issues facing international students, visit the International Student and Scholar Services’ website.

The **Immigration and Naturalization Service** (INS) office can be found at 7850 Metro Parkway, Bloomington, 612.854.7754.

**Office for Conflict Resolution/Student Dispute Resolution Center**

If you have a problem that you cannot resolve by talking with departmental officials, the U has an exceptionally helpful office. The **Student Conflict Resolution Center (SCRC)** is also a well-respected service and provides dispute resolution regarding students with campus-based issues.

**The Council of Graduate Students (COGS)**

COGS is the official body representing graduate students at Minnesota. Every program that houses graduate students (i.e., all PhD students, MS, MA and some specialized Master degree programs including MFA, MPP, MPA, as well as a few others that are not part of a professional Master’s degree program) selects a representative to COGS. Together these representatives advocate for graduate student interests, work with the staff within the new Office of Graduate Education and each College/School Dean’s office, serve on various committees, and interact with University-wide administration to make life better for graduate students. COGS also nominates students for College of Liberal Arts, University Senate and Graduate Education Council Committees. In addition, COGS distributes travel and leadership awards for those presenting academic work or doing research.

Becoming involved in COGS is a great opportunity to have a voice in decisions that affect you, and a nice way to meet other graduate students. Contact: 612.626.1612, 303 Johnston Hall, cogs@umn.edu

**Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA)**

GAPSA represents all graduate and professional students at the U of M. COGS, along with the college boards of the Medical School, Law School, Dental School, School of Public Health, Carlson School of Management, and other professional programs, elect representative members to GAPSA. GAPSA represents these students to the University’s central administration, the Regents, and the state legislature. Currently, COGS has the largest representation within GAPSA due to the number of
graduate students at the University of Minnesota. Contact: 612.625.2982, 234 Coffman Union, gapsa@umn.edu

**University Student Legal Services**

This service provides advice on many legal issues (but not conflicts with the University) and offers a free notary service for students. (160 West Bank Skyway, 612.624.1001)

**Child care**

- **CL Alliance** is available to all U faculty, staff and students to help them locate suitable child care. **Commonwealth Terrace** (651.645.8958) and **Como Community Housing** (612.331.8340) each have child care on site.

The **U of M Child Care Center** (612.627.4014) provides child care to children ages 3 months to pre-kindergarten of U students, faculty, and staff. There is usually a waiting list for the U of M Child Care Center.

The **Shirley G. Moore Laboratory School** (612-624-5593) offers morning and afternoon programs for children aged 2-5, 2-5 days a week. Special needs children are accepted.

**Campus Groups and General Resources**

There are many student groups and administrative offices on campus which offer a broad array of support and resources. The following list is just a brief sampling. For a full list of student organizations see: [http://www.sao.umn.edu/StudentOrgs/](http://www.sao.umn.edu/StudentOrgs/)

**Women**
- Institute of Technology Program for Women
- Office for University Women
- Women in Science and Engineering
- Women’s Student Activist Collective

**International Students**
- International Student and Scholar Services
- Minnesota International Center
- African Student Association
- Indian Student Association
- Ethiopian Student Association

**Students of Color**
- Office of Multicultural and Academic Affairs American
- Indian Student Cultural Center
- La Raza Student Cultural Center
- Black Student Union
- Black Motivated Women
- Black GAPSA
- Asian American Student Union
- American Indian Cultural Center
- Hmong Minnesota Student Association
- Middle Eastern Student Association

Disabled students
- Disability Services
- Disabled Student Cultural Center

GLBT
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Programs Office
- Queer Student Cultural Center
- Steven J. Schochet Center for GLBT Studies

Equal Opportunity
- Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

Campus Safety

Campus Escort Service (612-624-WALK)

Available 24/7. It’s free and available throughout the entire campus and some of the surrounding area. There are also yellow emergency call boxes (with blue lights on top) located throughout campus allowing you to call police in an emergency.

Sexual Violence

The Aurora Center for Advocacy and Education offers a 24-hour crisis line, advocacy, referrals, and more. (407 Boynton Health Service, 612.626.2929; Crisis Line: 612.626.9111)

U of M Police Department

The UMPD is a full-service police department for the University Community. They’re in charge of the escort service, and they investigate crimes and provide prevention programs. You can also call them if you find doors unlocked after hours. (100 Transportation and Safety Building) (612.624.3550 non-emergencies; 911 emergencies)

Sports and Fitness
Recreation Center

There are two locations to utilize recreation facilities the Rec and St. Paul Gymnasium. Located just past Shepherd Labs in Stadium Village, the Rec Center is open to everyone in the U community for a small fee (included in your student service fee if you’re taking 6 credits or more). They have swimming pools, an indoor track, several weight rooms, tennis, racquetball, handball, squash, basketball, indoor soccer courts, saunas, and the rest. The Rec also offers classes (aerobics, martial arts, sports, etc.) and personal trainers for reasonable fees. You can rent a locker and a towel for $1 per day. Semester locker rentals are available for $40.00; they go fast, so take care of it early if you want one. You will need your UCard to get into the Rec Center. (1906 University Ave SE, Minneapolis, 612.625.6800)

While smaller than its Minneapolis cousin, the St. Paul gym has cardio and weight equipment, racquetball and squash courts, swimming pool and cardio classes, plus an indoor rock climbing wall and boulder cave, outdoor track, volleyball and tennis courts, and softball fields. (1536 N Cleveland Ave, St. Paul, 612.625.8283)

Intramural sports programs

This program is coordinated through the Rec Center. Various sports are offered throughout the year, including summer. Intramurals can be a great way to build community in your department. Many departments have mixed grad and faculty teams as a department tradition.

Parks and Recreation

The Twin Cities has numerous parks, paths, and green spaces. Bike riding is very popular and accessible. Information on walking and bike paths, parks, and lakes is available at Minneapolis Parks and Recreation and St. Paul Parks and Recreation websites. For information on gear purchase or rental (See p.29.) or for information on the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and other non-local recreation destinations (See p. 30.).

Transportation on Campus

Walking

Call 612-624-WALK for a campus escort, 24 hours a day (p. 14). Minnesota law dictates that drivers must stop for pedestrians in a crosswalk.

There are tunnels and skyways connecting most of the University. The West Bank tunnels are open later and reach more of the campus than the East Bank tunnels. Some would argue that they are easier to navigate, too. The tunnels in St. Paul are quite extensive, reaching most buildings West of Gortner Ave. Maps are available at Parking and Transportation Services or on the website. Tunnels and skyways are marked with “Gopher Way” signs.
Biking

Bike trails are all over the Twin Cities; it is one of the best networks of bike trails and routes in the country. The Transitway connects the Minneapolis and St. Paul campus. Many people commute by bike (some year-round!). The state, city, and county tourism offices will send you maps of bike routes. If you register your bicycle you’ll get all kinds of useful information mailed to you from Metro Commuter Services, and it will be easier to recover your bike if stolen. For more biking information see the Minnesota Department of Transportation’s Biking webpage. Make sure to check out the Midtown Greenway for a dedicated walking and biking path.

In the business districts, and when otherwise posted, it is illegal to ride your bicycle on the sidewalk. Furthermore, the same rules for cars apply to bicycles: don’t run stop signs or traffic lights, don’t run down pedestrians, and don’t ride on the wrong side of the road. Bike theft is a problem on campus. If you value your bike, get a good lock.

Good bike shops?

Near the Minneapolis campus are Campus Bikes (213 Oak Street), The Hub Bike Co-Op (301 Cedar Ave S and 3026 Minnehaha Ave), Freewheeling (1826 S 6th Street), and Erik’s Bike Shop (1312 4th Street SE). Near the St. Paul campus, there are the Express Bike Shop (234 Snelling Ave N) and the Bicycle Chain (1712 Lexington Ave N).

Campus Buses

The University provides free and frequent shuttle service between the Minneapolis and St. Paul campus, between the East and West Banks of the Minneapolis campus, as well as to some commuter/carpool lots. All of the campus shuttles can be identified by their maroon and white colors. All buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts, and many are equipped with bike racks. Buses get extremely crowded during certain parts of the day and on cold days. All University shuttle routes operate on special hours on weekends, during finals week, and during summer.

To catch a campus bus, simply wait at a bus stop, most of which are clearly marked (Some, like the one at Wiley/Anderson Hall, are heated!). You do not need to show a bus pass or any form of identification to ride the campus buses.

The Campus Connector

The Connector provides service between the St. Paul, East Bank, and West Bank campus approximately every five minutes from 7:00am to 6:30pm, every 15 minutes 6:30pm to 10:00pm, and every half-hour after that until midnight during the academic year. Buses are less frequent and have shorter hours during summer session and intersessions. Some Campus Connectors offer fast limited-stop service connecting the St. Paul, East Bank, and West Bank campus between 7:30am and 5:00pm. Look for buses that say “Limited Stop.” Limited Stop buses only stop at: Blegen Hall,
Weaver-Densford Hall/Transportation & Safety Building, Huron Boulevard Parking Complex, Transitway at Commonwealth Avenue, and St. Paul Student Center.

**The Washington Avenue Bridge Circulator**

The Circulator provides service between the East and West Bank campus via the Washington Avenue and 10th Avenue bridges. It operates Monday through Friday every 15 minutes from 7:30am to 10:00am, every 7 minutes from 10:00am to 3:00pm, and after that every 15 minutes until 4:45pm. The Washington Avenue bridge circulator does not operate during weekends, vacation periods, and summer sessions.

**Campus circulators**

These user-friendly mini-buses circulate the St. Paul and East Bank campus. Service on the routes operates every 15 minutes from 7:00am through 4:45pm Monday through Friday when school is in session.

**U Paratransit Service**

This service (612.282.6619) provides free curb-to-curb transportation on campus for people with permanent or temporary disabilities. Reservations are accepted up to two days in advance.

**City Transit**

Many city buses go through or near campus. In addition, there are many express buses which have limited schedules but use the freeway and are usually as quick as traveling by car. Schedules and other information are available at Coffman Union and the St. Paul Student Center, as well as various campus locations.

**Basics**

You should try to get to your stop a few minutes early. Watch the display on the front of the bus to make sure it’s your route (a number will be displayed, as well as major destinations for that route). To pay for the ride, hold your U-Pass up to the “go-to” machine until it beeps. If you are paying with cash, put your change into the coin slot or slide your bill into the bill feeder. You can use one dollar bills and any combination of coins, including pennies. Drivers will not make change. When you want to signal the driver to stop, pull the cord above the windows about a block before your stop. The bus drivers usually know a lot about the routes, and where to get off if you know where you are going. Feel free to ask the driver if you have any questions.

**Fares**

Riding the bus or light rail is free with a U-PASS (See p. 4.). However, without one it can be expensive. Local Fares cost $1.75 or $2.25 (rush hour) and Express Fares cost $2.25 or $3.00 (rush hour). Rush hour is: Monday-Friday 6:00-9:00 am & 3:00-6:30 pm. Discounts are available for those under 12, over 65, or with disabilities.
Metro Transit’s trip planner

This service is awesome. You can find the best possible bus route and time to any destination within the metro area. This service is especially useful for those who do not know the bus system yet. The same service is also available by phone (612.373.3333 or 612.341.4BUS) making it possible to choose your bus route from anywhere.

Hiawatha Light Rail

The Hiawatha Line, or LRT, stretches from Minneapolis’ downtown Target Field to the airport and the Mall of America. The fares for the light rail are the same as buses. The closest stops to the University are on 6th St. in the West Bank (behind Riverside Plaza) or by the Metrodome (a short bus ride on the #16 or 50). Individuals with U-Pass should hold it to the go-to machine at the stops before boarding.

Central Corridor Light Rail

In addition to the Hiawatha Line, a second light rail line is under construction. The new light rail line will stretch from downtown Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul, going directly through campus on Washington Ave and University Ave. As a result, access and transportation routes throughout campus are often changing. It is important to double check transportation routes you are taking, whether biking, driving, or taking Metro Transit of University connectors.

Metro Mobility

Metro Mobility (651.602.1111) provides transportation service to people with disabilities for a small fee per ride. Call for more information.

Transfer

When you pay by cash, ask for a transfer. The transfer allows you to board any bus (with few exceptions) for the next two and a half hours. If you are using a U-Pass or some other pass, transfers are built in.

Cars on Campus

To be perfectly honest, the parking situation at the University stinks. Carpoools are the most cost-efficient option (next to biking and mass transit, p. 15-16), but definitely not the only option. The University Police are enthusiastic about giving tickets and towing. Know the policies when you park and try not to take risks. Getting a parking ticket will cost you $34 - $500 depending on the severity of the violation. Parking and Transportation Services (612.626.PARK) oversees on-campus parking.

Contract Parking

Information in this guide may change periodically. If you find inaccurate information, contact:
Council of Graduate Students (COGS)
303 Johnston Hall 101 Pleasant St SE Minneapolis, MN 55455
612.626.1612
cogs@umn.edu
Contract parking means you pay a set fee at the beginning of a semester for a certain lot, thereby guaranteeing you a spot in that lot. To get a contract, you must enter the Parking Lottery on the website. Lottery for Fall is usually held in late July; Spring lottery happens around early December. Graduate students are allowed to renew their Fall contracts for Spring and Summer. You can also talk to faculty members going on vacation or sabbatical about using their space while they are away.

Grad students are also eligible for an “Occasional Use Parking Contract”. This contract is valid for 22 uses between September and January. Keycards are programmed for use between 4:30 p.m. until midnight, Monday through Friday and all day on Saturday and Sunday. Cost is $74; the fee is charged directly to your student account.

Surface lots run approximately $65.50/month; ramps $97.25/month; and garages $127.25/month. Contract parking guarantees you will have a place to park and allows you to come and go throughout the day. Usually the Buckeye Lot on the East Bank, the 21st Avenue Ramp on the West Bank, and Lot 108 in St. Paul are available in the student lottery. There are some reciprocity privileges after 4:30pm and on weekends.

Public Parking

Public parking refers to lots, ramps, and garages available to everyone. Except for a few contract and permit-only lots, most parking facilities allow public parking. Ramps tend to be more convenient, but also more expensive. Surface lots tend to be cheaper, but a little farther out. However, commuter/carpool lots offer very cheap all-day rates and are served frequently by campus buses, making them an attractive option.

Some ramps offer off-peak, early entry rates of $6 on weekends. There is usually space in the Huron Blvd. lots, located at Fourth and Huron, for $4.00 a day. This is about a 15-minute walk from Smith Hall, or you can take the campus connector (p. 16). Most of the parking is full by 9:00am during the winter, but other times of the year it’s not so bad. If you are patient, you can park on some streets in Dinkytown for free.

Carpool Lots

These lots are for cars of two or more people (you don’t have to be registered as a carpool). You can park for $2.50 per day in the carpool lots (lot 33 on East Bank, Lot 94 on West Bank, Lot 108 in St. Paul). After 9am, the carpool lots convert to regular $4.00 per day parking. You can join a carpool on the website.

Meters

There are parking meters all around the campus and its environs. All University meters, take QUARTERS ONLY. Most meters right on campus are very short term (12 minutes/quarter, one hour
max); those close to the campus will give you anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes/quarter, two hour or more max. Most campus meters are in effect until 10:00pm; some are only until 6:00pm. More often than not, you don’t have to feed meters on Sundays or University holidays, but some are daily no matter what. Always check signs posted near and right on the meters to be sure.

**Free Parking**

Through the efforts of many dedicated students and administrators, and the understanding of Parking Services, select ramps are FREE from 8:00pm to 8:00am Monday-Saturday and all day Sunday. The only exception is for events; event parking rates are charged from 3 hours before to 30 minutes after the start of the event. Event rates can be anywhere from $6 to $10. Facilities included are: 4th Street Ramp, Gortner Avenue Ramp, and 21st Avenue Ramp. Several lots and ramps also have special off-peak rates, usually around $6. Each ramp varies; check the website for details.

There is free street parking in the Dinkytown and Marcy-Holmes Neighborhoods on the East Bank. On the West Bank you can be guaranteed a fee spot on the other side of I-94 between the Interstate and Franklin Avenue. This is a long walk through the Augsburg campus but the price is right and spaces are plentiful! Also, during off hours one can usually find 1, 2, or 4 hour parking on the Augsburg campus.

Free parking near the St. Paul campus is along Como Ave. and the surrounding side streets. It is a walk uphill to campus, but you can catch the St Paul circulator if you like. Parking along Cleveland Ave. and the neighborhood directly west of campus is limited to 1-2 hours and is strictly enforced.

**Motorist Assistance Program**

Motorists parking legally in any University facility can use this service for free. MAP (612.626.PARK) offers services including changing tires or jump-starting. Hours can change seasonally, but are typically extended well beyond regular business hours.
PART II: LIVING IN THE TWIN CITIES

There are far more interesting things about Minnesota, like its rich local cultural and art scene, thriving immigrant communities, and the fact that it was just declared the most literate city in the nation. However, the weather is all anyone talks about, so let’s get it out of the way:

It Gets Cold Here!

So, how cold does it really get? Usually there is a week or so in January when the temperature hovers around 0°F, with a wind chill that will make your bones shake. Otherwise, winter temperatures are usually in the 10-20s (Fahrenheit) and sunny. Don’t wear fewer clothes than you need to, especially for fashion’s sake. You’ll find that people are far less concerned with fashion in the winter. Don’t go out without a hat and scarf. Make sure you get a jacket that is both warm and keeps out the wind; you might think about very tightly-woven wool (or wool with a wind-proof shell), down, or synthetic insulating material. Leather is not good in very cold weather—it just freezes—but it does stop the wind. Dress in layers. Get a parka that goes below your waist; and make sure your coat has a hood; sometimes you want both a hat and a hood. Get some warm water-proof boots that go above your ankles.

Many folks around here are engaged in all kinds of winter activities: snowshoeing, downhill (on hills, not mountains, sorry) and cross-country skiing, ice skating, broomball, ice hockey, ice fishing, curling etc. The way we see it, it would be a shame to spend so much time in grad school here and not try at least one of them. These activities will help you enjoy winter and make summer more enjoyable.

Some warnings:

- Don’t drink too much alcohol when it’s cold out; you’ll be tempted to stay out longer and risk frostbite.
- Keep jumper cables, blankets, and a few candy bars in your car in case of emergency.
- If your car locks freeze, don’t pour hot water on them, they’ll just refreeze. Instead, get some lock de-icer or make your own with a little rubbing alcohol.
- Don’t get your car washed if it is below freezing.
- Pay attention to snow emergencies and parking bans. Both Minneapolis and St. Paul have websites explaining how snow emergencies work, and where parking bans will be after a snow emergency is declared. Each city has a separate policy, so make sure you know which one you are parking in. If a snow emergency is declared, it will be announced on the radio, television, and will be posted on the city’s web site (See p. 24.)
- If driving in the snow, keep plenty of stopping distance between you and the vehicles in front of you, brake gently, and don’t accelerate rapidly. If it is your first time driving in the winter, it’s helpful to practice winter driving techniques in a snowy, open parking lot, so you’re familiar with how your car handles. If you start to skid, steer gently in the direction you wish to go and do not slam on your brakes – check your car owner’s manual for more specific tips. Most tire shops sell winter driving guides once the weather turns colder.
• Beware of highway on/off ramps and bridges—they get less sun, have more exposure to moisture, and are often the iciest.
• The University almost never completely closes due to bad weather, but individual classes will be dependent on the instructor—check your course website or email your instructor. Also, don’t try to drive in bad snowstorms if you are not experienced. When they say “no travel is advised,” take them seriously. Secondary routes are generally not plowed until two or three days after a snowfall.

Housing

The average price for a one bedroom apartment in most neighborhoods runs from $500 to $750, and two bedrooms go from there to around $1,100. More often than not, heat, water, and garbage pick-up will be included in the rent for an apartment, but not for a duplex or house. Make sure you talk about this with the landlord before you sign the lease. For important questions to ask before signing a lease, visit the Office of Housing and Residential Life website. You can also use their search engine to find a place or a roommate.

Finding a place to live

Many of the local newspapers have classified ads, roommate ads, housing search engines, and neighborhood profiles on their websites. Craigslist Minneapolis also has a lot of housing options. The Star Tribune publishes a Relocation Guide—available for purchase at most grocery and bookstores—with in-depth neighborhood profiles.

Neighborhoods

When choosing a neighborhood think about things like: safety, transportation, parking, and traffic. Are there convenient buses, bike paths, and nearby attractions and amenities such as: Laundromats, coffee shops, restaurants, bars, museums, and theaters? You will find that many neighborhoods in the Twin Cities have their own feel. Some of the most popular neighborhoods for students include:

Dinkytown and Marcy-Holmes: Just north of the East Bank, Dinkytown is dominated by undergraduates. The area is home to a variety of restaurants, bars, shopping, and most of frat row. It offers quick travel time to the U and downtown. Nearby Marcy-Holmes is close as well but less centered on undergrads.

Uptown: The corner of Hennepin Ave S and West Lake Street comprises the cultural hotspot known as Uptown. With a reputation as one of the hippest neighborhoods of the Cities, Uptown offers some of Minneapolis’ best restaurants, stores, and galleries. As such, it is gentrified and expensive. If you decide to live here and have a car, try to find off-street parking, because the narrow streets
and dense population make it difficult to find parking, especially in winter. Bussing to the U is easy since there are multiple express routes serving the area (113, 114, 115).

**Cedar-Riverside and Seward**: Just south of the University’s West Bank and the Mississippi River is Seward, known for its mix of college and immigrant populations. Surrounding the West Bank campus is Cedar-Riverside, which has the same demographics but a more vibrant commercial section. Rents here are reasonable, bussing is good, and the biking is great.

**Como**: Como Avenue runs from Minneapolis to St. Paul, giving the area to the north and east of Dinkytown the name of Como, not to be confused with Como Park in St. Paul (near Lake Como). Student-centered, the neighborhood is also home to one of the two housing co-ops — a great option for families. The neighborhood is mostly residential, but is relatively close to downtown and the U. Rents vary, but tend towards reasonable.

**Northeast**: Northeast, an amorphous conglomeration of neighborhoods North of Downtown Minneapolis and East of the Mississippi River, is the city’s next big thing. Cheap rent and property, decent transportation, proximity to the U and Downtown, and a unique local culture have made Northeast very attractive to graduate students, urban hipsters, and young couples starting families. Metro transit recently added a university express bus serving parts of Northeast (118), which will allow for much better bussing.

**Loring Park and Steven’s Square**: Loring Park and the Stevens Square neighborhood are just west of downtown between Nicollet Avenue to the East and the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden to the West. It’s a bit on the expensive side, and parking is an absolute nightmare. However, the neighborhood makes up for this with its proximity to Downtown and Uptown, its attractive architecture, and a generally young urban demographic. Stevens Square is a small community just south of Loring Park and north of Franklin Ave. Rents are far more reasonable than Loring.

**North**: North Minneapolis is not as popular for students, mainly due to the higher crime rate and distance from the U. North still has parks and bike trails, and there are some places that are quite nice, depending on where in North you are. Generally, you will probably find lower rents. Unfortunately, there are no express bus routes, which means you will probably have to transfer in downtown to get to the U.

**South**: The rest of South Minneapolis is varied, but in general it’s a nice place to live. It is fairly easy to park anywhere in South Minneapolis, unless you are very close to a large commercial district. South Minneapolis is also where a majority of the City’s bike trails are. If you plan to use transit, check your proximity to express bus routes (111, 113 and 152) or light rail.
**St. Paul:** In addition to Como, there are many neighborhoods near the St. Paul campus. The area just west of campus is known as St. Anthony Park. This neighborhood is residential, though there are some shops and a grocery store at Como Ave. and Carter. This is the location of the second housing co-op. Some students live near Midway, the stretch of University Ave that connects both cities, and Grand Ave (Merriam Park), a rather trendy neighborhood with Macalester College at its center. Transportation from these neighborhoods is not as direct since they are further from the U, but both have vibrant commercial areas to make up for it.

**Suburbs:** There are too many suburbs to talk about them all here. Most suburbs are served by express buses that will take you into downtown and some of them directly to the U, but living in a suburb usually means that you are committed to driving a lot of the time. Rents in inner-ring suburbs will generally be on par with those in the cities, but the further out you go, the higher it will get.

**Renter’s Rights**

If you have problems with your landlord there are a number of services you can turn to. The Minnesota Bar Association provides a comprehensive list of Tenant Unions and legal resources for renters. In addition, you can visit the University Student Legal Services center (p. 13).

**Property Tax Refund**

(See p. 26)

**Family Student Housing**

If you’re married, have a same-sex partner, or have children, you can live in one of two family housing communities: Como Student Community (612.378.2434), between the Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses, and Commonwealth Terrace Cooperative, Inc (651.646.7526) adjacent to the St. Paul campus. Both are considerably cheaper than market-value apartments and both provide day care centers on site. Apartments are unfurnished.

**Utilities**

**Power, natural gas:** XCEL is the major local provider, although there are some smaller providers restricted to certain municipalities. Your city hall or landlord should be able to tell you which providers you should call. By law your primary source of heat cannot be disconnected during cold weather months (Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Cold Weather Rule), but you must meet certain criteria. There are also heating assistance programs for winter that your utility can tell you about if you cannot afford to pay your bills. For information about these programs, call your utility’s customer service department.
**Phone:** Qwest is the major telephone service provider to the Twin Cities; some suburbs also have their own local phone companies, but this is rare. You can have your choice of long distance carriers and your choice of most cell phone providers as well.

**TV:** Cable TV varies by city and area. In general, Comcast serves the Cities. Satellite services are also readily available, and digital cable is on the rise as well. As for regular old broadcast TV, you can get most of the stations fairly clearly, but it may involve a lot of antenna-tweaking. There are two PBS stations.

**Internet:** Cable internet is available through Comcast running at about $60 month. DSL can be provided by almost all dial up companies, but you’ll also need to get the actual phone line from Qwest. The University offers some deals on internet. The City of Minneapolis also provides broadband internet through USI Wireless in a number of locations. A subscription to USI wireless is needed to access this service.

### Transportation

**Biking, Campus Buses, City Buses, and Campus Parking**

(See p. 13-17)

**Drivers license**

If you want to get a Minnesota drivers license or register your car in this state, call the DMV at 651.296.6911 or go to their website. You have 60 days to get your license and register your vehicle. Registration fees are dependent on the value of your car and how new it is; the minimum fee is $35. You must have proof of insurance (no-fault and liability) to register your car. You will have to take the written exam even if you have a valid license from another state; the fee is $43.00

**Snow Parking**

When it snows you have to move your car off the street so they can plow. If you fail to do this they will tow. To make matters worse, Minneapolis and St. Paul have separate rules for snow emergency parking. Most apartment complexes with parking lots will give notice or have standardized rules for plowing. If you travel during the winter, make arrangements with someone to move your car in case it snows. For information on snow emergencies and parking rules in Minneapolis or St. Paul, go to:

Minneapolis: 612.348.SNOW www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/snow/


**Freeways and Highways**
Interstate 35 stretches from Texas to northern Minnesota. However, in the Twin Cities, it splits into I-35E (St. Paul) and I-35W (Minneapolis). 35E and 35W are two separate roads, NOT directions. I-35W and I-94 both provide access to the U of M, Minneapolis campus. The Twin Cities highway system is old and serves as a splendid example of failed urban planning. It was built during massive suburbanization, but not built with the suburbs in mind. Evening rush hour starts at 2 or 3pm and ends around 7pm.

**Traveling to and from the Twin Cities**

The [Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport](https://www.mspairport.org) is located in Bloomington off I-494 and Highway 5. There are two terminals: 1 and 2. Most flights come through 1 while Southwest and a few other carriers leave from 2. There are daily flights to most major cities in the U.S and the world. A taxi averages around $24 from downtown Minneapolis. However, light rail is by far the most convenient way to get to the airport (See p. 17.).

[Amtrak](https://www.amtrak.com) service is available to Madison, WI and points East and West. The Amtrak station is at 730 Transfer Road (1.800.872.7245) and available on the #16 bus route. There are also two [Greyhound](https://www.greyhound.com) bus stations: downtown Minneapolis (1100 Hawthorne Ave. 612.371.3325) and downtown St. Paul (166 University Ave. W. 651.222.0507); for reservations, call 1.800.231.2222. [Mega Bus](https://www.megabus.com) is an affordable bus system that serves the upper mid-west and east US.

## Legal and Political Information

### Taxes

Minnesota state taxes are higher than most in the nation. In each city, sales tax is 7%, in the suburbs it is 6.5%. There is no sales tax on clothing, food, prescription drugs, or textbooks. There are high taxes on alcohol, tobacco, and gasoline. Residents of Minnesota need to file both federal and state income taxes. Forms are available from post offices and libraries (including those on-campus) and on-line.

Many graduate students are exempt from paying social security and Medicare taxes saving you and the U each 7.65% of your salary. The rules have changed frequently in the past, but currently you have to be registered for at least 4 credits in the term in which you are exempt (or 1 credit for ABD and Advanced Masters) and have some form of student employment. If you think you’re paying FICA and you shouldn’t be, contact Graduate Assistant Employment (p.6).

If you moved here to accept employment (i.e. as a graduate assistant) you may be able to deduct moving costs—transportation and shipping—on your income taxes. You do not need to itemize, but do need Form 1040. You may have up to three years to amend your return retroactively. In addition, because many graduate students fall into a low income bracket, we are often eligible to file both federal and state taxes for free using on-line services which are listed and linked at
The University also offers workshops for international students on filing taxes.

Property Tax Refund
This tax refund is unique to Minnesota. It is based on the premise that a large portion of your rent goes to property taxes which your landlord pays. To make this payment progressive, the state offers a refund based on the ratio between your wages and rent. This refund is not widely known but can prove to be a windfall. Because of our relatively low wages and the high cost of rent it is possible to receive between $50 and $300 back. If you rent and your annual income is less than $53K/yr. or you own a home and your income of less than $98K you are eligible. You can obtain the form the same place you get other tax paperwork. Your landlord is required to give you a Certificate of Rent Paid by January 31, in order for you to file. Refunds arrive around August 15. NOTE: It has recently been clarified that tuition benefits/waivers MUST be included in the “Nontaxable Income” on Line 5 of the form.

Marriage
Minnesota does not recognize common law marriage. There is a five-day waiting period for a marriage license, so plan ahead. Licenses are issued by your county. There is an active movement to establish benefits for same sex couples.

Politics
Yes, Minnesota’s former governor—Jesse Ventura—was a professional wrestler. This should give you an idea of the experimental spirit of state politics. For historical reasons, Minnesota’s Democratic Party is actually the semi-autonomous Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL). The Green Party, Independence Party, and other third parties have also made strong showings here. Minnesota has a reputation for being a liberal state lead by Minneapolis and the Iron Range. However, Southern Minnesota and the suburbs have been getting increasingly conservative. The governor at present is Republican Tim Pawlenty. The Senators are Democrats Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken.

Voting
To vote you must be 18 or older, a US citizen, and have resided in Minnesota for 20 days. Minnesota is one of the few states to have same day voter registration. All you need to vote is proof of your Minnesota address. This proof can include: Minnesota Driver’s License or State ID (or receipt for a new one), a student ID, a utility bill or fee statement with your address on it, or a registered voter to vouch for you at the polling place. You can pre-register by filling out a form at any Post Office or county office.

Services and Shopping

Banks (locations near the U of M campuses)
Twin Cities Federal (TCF)

Note: Your U-Card automatically gives you the option of opening a TCF account. 219 19th Avenue S, 612-626-6810 (West Bank Skyway) 1501 University Avenue SE, 612.823.2265 (Dinkytown) 615 Washington Avenue SE, 612.823.2265 (Stadium Village)

US Bank

401 14th Avenue SE., 612-USBANKS (Dinkytown) 718 Washington Avenue SE, 612.379.8900 (Stadium Village) 2383 University Avenue (St. Paul), 612.USBANKS

Wells Fargo

3430 University Ave (near Hwy 280), 612.627.3400 general line: 612.667.9378

Firstar Bank

427 Snelling Ave. N., St. Paul, 651.659.0416

Credit Unions

Working for the U makes you eligible for membership in two credit Unions. Both offer low-interest loans, better-than-average interest on savings, and free checking. U of M Federal Credit Union, Affinity Credit Union

Groceries

Rainbow and Cub are the cost-effective supermarkets in the Twin Cities. Lund’s and Byerly's are more expensive. There are other supermarkets in various neighborhoods (Whole Foods, Kowalski’s Market, SuperValu, etc.). Many neighborhoods have grocers and bodega-type places as well. Almost all supermarkets are open 24/7.

The Twin Cities houses many co-ops and organic/health food stores. The closest ones are Seward (2823 East Franklin Avenue, Mpls), The Wedge (2105 Lyndale Avenue S, Mpls), Hampden Park Foods (928 Raymond, St. Paul), and Mississippi Market (Fairview and Randolph Avenues, St. Paul, and Selby and Dale Avenues in St. Paul). You don’t need to be a member to shop, but you can save money if you are. Many co-ops have reciprocal membership.

There are also several farmers’ markets around town during spring and summer. Prices are reasonable and the selection is often fantastic. Among the largest and most accessible are on Thursdays at Nicollet Mall, Downtown Minneapolis, and on weekends at E 5th and Wall Streets in St. Paul. There is also a daily market at Glenwood and Lyndale Avenues in Minneapolis. Market season usually starts around April and goes until mid or late Fall. For more information see: http://www.mplsfarmersmarket.com/ and http://www.stpaulfarmersmarket.com/

Department Stores
Target is based in Minneapolis and, as a result, it’s just about everywhere including downtown Minneapolis. There are also K-marts, Wal-marts, Sam’s Club, etc., throughout the suburbs.

Furniture

If you need cheap furniture there are a few Salvation Army and Goodwill locations (the closest Salvation Army is at 1604 E Lake Street, and the closest Goodwill is at 2505 University Ave W). For cheap furniture, try Hotel Furniture Liquidators (946 Payne Ave, St Paul and 1800 University Ave W, St Paul) or Diamond Lake Furniture (2050 Marshall Ave, St Paul or 501 Snelling Ave N, St Paul). Slumberland has an outlet store in Little Canada; Hom has outlet stores within their Bloomington and Coon Rapids stores. Also, a place called 5-day Furniture (9056 Penn Ave S, Bloomington) has great new, cheap furniture. If you need a bed, the cheapest places are the made-on-the-spot ones (Original Mattress Factory, Minnesota Mattress, Verlo). IKEA also has a store near the Mall of America.

But by far the place to get office furniture is the University’s Reuse Program Warehouse. Here you can buy fabulous, inexpensive furniture from computer gear to a whole line-up of ’70s vintage chairs, desks, and filing cabinets. You can also purchase stadium lights, library shelves, dot matrix printers and just about anything else you could possibly want. The warehouse is open to the public on Thursday 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and is located at 883 29th Avenue SE, Minneapolis.

Shopping on the Cheap

There are many reputable used appliance dealers in the Twin Cities if you need a washer, dryer, or other large appliances. In addition, the Horizon outlet mall in Woodbury, just off of I-94 (Co.Rd. 19) includes Spiegel, Eddie Bauer, Levi’s, and Bugle Boy. They also carry linens and kitchen appliances. If you need immense selection or a gift for the impossible-to-buy-for, your best bet is the Mall of America (off I-494 in Bloomington), the largest indoor shopping mall in the world (at 4.2 million square feet, with an amusement park in the middle of it and an aquarium beneath).

Arts and Recreation

Long hailed as one of the hippest urban areas between the coasts, the Twin Cities are among the most arts-supportive cities in the United States. It has world-class museums and is second only to New York in theaters per capita and symphony concerts per year. The city also boasts a legendary music scene. Throughout the year there are many festivals celebrating the rich artistic tradition and culture of the Cities, including the Fringe Festival, the Twin Cities International Film Festival, the St. Paul Winter Carnival, and the Aquatennial celebration in Minneapolis.

Museums

The Twin Cities have excellent museums. The Weisman Museum is free and is located on the U of M, Minneapolis Campus. The Minneapolis Institute for the Arts is always free (2400 3\textsuperscript{rd} Ave S,
Minneapolis) and houses numerous visiting shows as well as an exceptional collection. The Walker Art Center (Hennepin Ave and 12th Street, Minneapolis) is the newly renovated and expanded modern art museum. The Minneapolis Sculpture Gardens located outside the Walker and is open daily with free admission. All these museums host various artistic and cultural events throughout the year and attract major traveling exhibits.

In addition to art museums, the Twin Cities’ historical and science museums are also quite impressive. The Minnesota Science Museum in St. Paul is geared towards families but has something for everyone (120 W Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul). It offers student discounts. There is also the History Museum (345 Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul) and the Mill City Museum (704 S 2nd Street, Minneapolis).

**Music Scene**

The music scene in the Twin Cities is unparalleled for a metro area this size. There are two major orchestras: Minnesota Orchestra and St. Paul Chamber. The St. Paul Chamber is the only full-time, professional chamber orchestra in the U.S. Minneapolis also houses The Dakota, a nationally respected jazz club.

The Ordway Theatre hosts traveling Broadway shows. During the summer Orchestra Hall hosts the Minnesota Orchestra’s Viennese Sommerfest—an incredible month-long festival with performances nearly every night and free shows on Peavey Plaza, adjacent to Orchestra Hall. Tickets for some concerts are dramatically discounted if purchased through the [Minnesota Orchestra’s web site](mailto:https://www.minnesotabounds.org) the week of a concert or by student rush.

Minneapolis boasts a legendary rock scene, most famous for punk, indie, and alternative music. The Twin Cities has developed one of the strongest underground hip hop scenes in the country. Two undeniable legends originate (and still reside) in Minnesota: Bob Dylan and Prince. The rock scene finds its home at First Avenue and the 7th Street Entry downtown, as well as the Triple Rock Social Club, the Cedar Cultural Center, and the 400 Bar on the West Bank. The Turf Club in St. Paul and the Hexagon Bar (always free!) in Seward showcase some of the best local music. Most large concert tours stop in the Twin Cities, either at Minneapolis’ Target Center or State Theatre, or St. Paul’s Xcel Energy Center and Roy Wilkins Auditorium.

**The Great Outdoors**

With over 10,000 lakes statewide, there is a wealth of parks and beaches. Many of these parks provide canoe and paddleboat rentals, as well as walking/running/biking paths. The St. Paul Student Center Outdoor Store (612.625.9794) rents outdoor equipment, has classes and workshops, and
holds used equipment sales a few times a year. REI (in Roseville & Bloomington) also rents and sells equipment as does Midwest Mountaineering and Thrifty Outfitters (both on Cedar near the West Bank campus).

**Gopher Sports**

All of our athletic programs are NCAA Division I in the Big Ten. The University’s sports complex is concentrated in Stadium Village, a neighborhood encompassing the South side of the East bank. The football team plays at the TCF Bank Stadium. Minnesota teams are typically arch rivals with Wisconsin and Iowa. Visit their website for information about athletic events and student ticket rates, or call 612.625.4838 (men’s athletics) or 612.624.8000 (women’s athletics). Graduate Students are eligible to purchase student athletic tickets to U of M athletic events, including season tickets at the student rate.

**Pro Sports**

Besides University sports, the Twin Cities are home of the Vikings (football), the Twins (baseball), the St. Paul Saints (minor league baseball), the Timberwolves (basketball), and the Wild (hockey).

**On-campus entertainment**

For on-campus events, check the [U of M events calendar](https://www.umn.edu/events).

On-campus museums and galleries are generally free to U of M students. Events at Rarig Center, Ted Mann Concert Hall, Northrup Auditorium, U Film Society (near the Bell Museum), and the Weismann Museum are generally discounted for students. There are opportunities for free concerts and performances on campus.

**Coffee Shops**

There are a variety of coffee shops in and around the Twin Cities. Ask around because everyone has a favorite! Some suggested ones are:

**East Bank Campus:**
- Espresso Expose
- Starbucks
- Tea Garden
- Java Junction
- Coffman Union

**West Bank:**
- Mapps
- Hard Times
- Afro Deli & Coffee

**Uptown:**
- Spy House
Things to Do, Places to See

Short Day Trips

**Caponi Art Park:** This was the residence of a Macalester College art professor. It was turned into a city park and sculpture garden with plenty of groomed trails. They hold classes and host special events throughout the summer, including outdoor concerts. Free. 1205 Diffley Road, Eagan, 651.454.9412

**Bakken Museum of Electricity and Life:** The former residence of the founder of Medtronic and inventor of the pacemaker, this museum features all aspects of electricity from the mundane to truly bizarre, including questionable medical devices. There is a beautiful and fascinating library in the basement. If you’re lucky enough to have your research take you in this direction, take advantage of it. The librarians will fetch books for you and serve you coffee or tea while you research! 3537 Zenith Ave. S., Minneapolis, 612.927.6508

**University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum:** The Arboretum includes acres of landscaped gardens, lakes, and scenic trails as well as the University’s experimental apple orchards where you can get great apples in the fall. It is free with your student ID card. 3675 Arboretum Drive, Chanhassen, 612.443.2460

**College of St. Catherine’s Labyrinth:** If you need to ponder why you’re in graduate school, this is the perfect spot. Call first; there are some restrictions on available times. Randolph and Fairview Avenues, St. Paul, 651.690.8830

**“U Pick” Farms:** There are lots of U-pick farms in the Twin Cities area growing just about anything—strawberries, pumpkins, asparagus, etc. Some farms have small shops with crafts and food items. The Minnesota Office of Tourism has a booklet that lists area farms and growing seasons. [http://www.exploreminnesota.com](http://www.exploreminnesota.com)

Day trips or longer

- Common Roots
- Caffetto
- Joe’s Garage

**Other areas around town:**
- Riverview Café
- Café Latte
Stillwater: An adorable town about 20 miles east of St. Paul on Hwy 36 on the St. Croix River. You can go boating, float under the historic lift-bridge, go antique-shopping, or enjoy a number of restaurants downtown or on the water.

Taylors Falls: This is a popular canoeing destination. Rent a canoe at Taylors Falls and stop at one of the scenic picnic spots along the St. Croix River. Taylors Falls Canoe Rental, 37350 Wild Mountain Road, Taylors Falls, MN 55084, 651.465.6315

St. John’s Abbey and University: This large Catholic monastery rests on a 2400 acre wildlife refuge. The buildings display a multitude of styles of architecture including many of Marcel Breuer. At the Great Hall you can purchase a loaf of the famous St. John’s Bread and pick up maps for self-guided walking tours. There’s also the Hill Monastic Manuscript library. If you arrive at the right time, you can observe or participate in mass in the Abbey church. About 70 miles west of Minneapolis on I-94, look for the St. John’s University exit. General info: 1.800.544.1816

Red Wing: This is a very scenic river town. It’s home to Red Wing shoes, pottery, woolen goods, and a lot of antique and craft shops. There’s a casino outside of town on the Prairie Island Reservation. It’s located about an hour SE of the Twin Cities on Highway 61.

Duluth and the North Shore: Duluth is a 2 ½-hour drive north of the Twin Cities on I-35. It is a very beautiful, hilly port city on Lake Superior. It contains many wonderful parks and museums in addition to the U of M Duluth campus. If you drive along the North Shore you will find many small hotels and campgrounds, the Lutsen ski resort, and a lighthouse.

Boundary Waters Canoe Area: The BWCA area is vast and popular destination for extended camping trips. Be sure to get good information before you leave; there are bears in the woods and you can easily become lost. The St. Paul Student Center outdoor store (p. 29) has information and rental equipment.

Lake Itasca State Park: Lake Itasca is the headwaters of the Mississippi River. This Park contains bike trails, campgrounds, and nature tours. It’s a 4 ½-hour drive NW of the Twin Cities on Hwy 71. 218-266-2100

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Important Phone Numbers

- **Emergency Response** 911
- **University Police** 612.624.3550
- **Medical Emergency** 612.273.2700
- **Crisis Connection** 612.379.6363
• Crisis Counseling 612.625.8475
• Crisis Intervention Center 612.347.3161
• Emergency Maintenance 612.625.0011
• Environmental Health and Safety 612.626.6002
• Poison Center 1.800.764.7661
• Sexual Violence Crisis Line 612.626.9111
• Suicide Prevention 612.347.2222
• Escort Services 612.624.9255 (WALK)