

# Buying First Apartment Checklist

By Nicole Nichols-West

- Preparation**
  - Get an early start** Start searching months in advance of when you actually want to move in. Finding your first apartment is a big move, and you don't want to have to settle.
  - Check into cost of living** Do some research on the cost of living in the neighborhood of your prospective first apartment. Research average rent prices, as well as utilities, parking, food, and transportation.
  - Find out about the landlord** The landlord will be a very important person in the day to day life in your first apartment. Ask other residents if he or she is accommodating and responsive to their needs.
  - Research crime data** Look into the crime statistics in the neighborhood of your prospective first apartment. Is it safe? Are muggings or break-ins common? Ask other residents if they feel safe in the neighborhood.
- Around the apartment**
  - Look around the building** Aside from the apartment you are looking at, consider the rest of the building as well. Are the hallways clean and well taken care of? Is it quiet? Is the elevator in good condition?
  - Check the laundry facilities.** Is there a laundry room conveniently located in the building of your first apartment? If not, is there a laundromat nearby?
  - Ensure that all windows are sealed well**
  - Ensure that doors are correctly adjusted and aligned**
  - Check for uneven, loose chipped or cracked tiles**
  - Examine the appliances and make sure they work**
- Surroundings**
  - Consider public transportation** If you are reliant on public transportation, make sure that the service you need will be nearby your first apartment. Contact your local public transportation authority on available routes and times.
  - Look into local schools (if applicable)** If you are a parent, the schools nearby your first apartment are of the utmost importance. Remember, the location of the apartment determines which public schools are available to your child.
  - Stores/Day to day needs** Are there banks, grocery stores, gas stations and other basic needs nearby? Having these everyday staples nearby your first apartment can make your life a lot easier.
  - Are there pests? Make sure to look into the presence of pets and pest control services in your first apartment** A rodent or bug problem can make an otherwise nice apartment an unpleasant place to live.
  - Check cell phone reception** When visiting the apartment, remember to take out your cell phone and make some calls. Check for dead spots in every room in the apartment.
- Finance**

- Have your desposit** Make sure you have your deposit ready when you finally decide on your first apartment. If someone pays it before you, you could lose out on a great place.