



# Information for Harvard Spouses and Partners

A Publication of the  
**Harvard Students' Spouses and Partners Association**

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## Welcome

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Welcome to Harvard! This booklet is provided to you by the Harvard Students' Spouses and Partners Association (HSSPA). HSSPA is an entirely volunteer-run organization open to the spouses and partners of all Harvard students, postdocs, and other affiliates. Since 1896, it has provided a way for its members to make friends, find intellectual stimulation, and most importantly, get a sense of belonging to the community of Harvard University.

HSSPA organizes a variety of subsidized outings and activities for Harvard affiliates and their families throughout the year. These include monthly events, such as social gatherings and visits to local attractions, as well as weekly activities. To find out more about what HSSPA currently offers, check out [HSSPA website](#) frequently.

HSSPA membership is free. To join, simply fill the [form](#) on the HSSPA website.

The information in this booklet consists of things that we find interesting or worth knowing; it thus reflects our tastes, opinions, and knowledge. In spite of our best efforts, some information may be out of date, incomplete, or incorrect, and we cannot take responsibility for any errors. In particular, in matters relating to such things as immigration regulations, health care, and insurance, you should always seek the advice of a professional if in any doubt. We consider this booklet a work in progress and are always happy to hear from you. Please e-mail your suggestions, tips, and ideas to [info@hsspa.harvard.edu](mailto:info@hsspa.harvard.edu). We will consider them for future editions of this booklet.

# Resources in and around Harvard

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## Activities & Information for Spouses & Partners

### Harvard Students' Spouses and Partners Association (HSSPA)

Harvard Students' Spouses and Partners Association (HSSPA) is a volunteer-run organization and is open to the spouses and partners of all Harvard students, post-docs, visiting fellows and other affiliates.

Since 1896, HSSPA has provided a way for its members to make friends, find intellectual stimulation and feel a sense of belonging within the University.

HSSPA organizes a variety of subsidized outings, activities and social events throughout the year. We visit popular attractions in and around Boston, such as the Museum of Fine Arts, the Arnold Arboretum, Top of the Hub, and the Boston Ballet.

#### *Regular group meetings include:*

- Music Group
- Social Get-together Group (see below)
- Playgroup
- Painting & Arts Group
- Linkup Study Group
- French Conversation Group
- Chinese Language Group

#### *Seasonal Parties include:*

- Welcome Party (September)
- New Year and Holiday Party (December)

#### *Social Get-together Group*

This group meets weekly at the cafes around Harvard. It offers a regular opportunity to get together with other HSSPA members in an informal, friendly atmosphere, to exchange information and experiences, and to make new friends. New members are always welcome. Please check [Facebook HSSPA page](#) or HSSPA website for the next meet up information.

#### *Communications*

By becoming a member of HSSPA you will automatically receive a newsletter and email announcements. The newsletter includes information on group meetings and activities as well as announcements of other events of interest around Harvard and notices sent by other members.

HSSPA has an active [Facebook Group](#) – once you are a member of HSSPA you can request to join the group. Don't forget to fill the [form](#) on the HSSPA website first!

## Other Socializing Opportunities around Harvard

### Harvard Neighbors

Loeb House, 17 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Telephone: 617-495-4313

[www.neighbors.harvard.edu](http://www.neighbors.harvard.edu)

Harvard Neighbors is a social organization with membership open to Harvard faculty and staff, including visiting scholars and post-doctoral fellows, as well as their spouses or partners. Harvard Neighbors runs regular interest groups on a range of subjects, including a weekly playgroup and a discussion group for international women.

### The Harvard International Office (HIO)

Holyoke Center Room 864, 1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Telephone: 617-495-2789.

[www.hio.harvard.edu](http://www.hio.harvard.edu)

For non-American students and scholars at any of Harvard's schools or other institutions, the Harvard International Office (HIO) is the first port of call for information and advice on a range of issues. These include, most importantly, immigration regulations (visas, work permits, travel), but also taxes, Social Security Numbers, schooling for children, and health insurance questions. The HIO website is full of useful information, and the HIO advisors are available for consultation by telephone or in person. The HIO also has a bulletin board with leaflets and information for spouses and partners.

HIO also holds regular orientations as well as walking/shopping tours.

**Getting Started Orientations:** These sessions cover a variety of topics, including banking, telephones, transportation & safety, health care, Harvard resources (athletics, libraries, etc.), housing, taxes, and visas.

**Spouse and Partner Orientations:** These sessions are designed to discuss issues important for accompanying family members and will cover topics such as visas, work permission, health insurance, safety, English classes, local shopping, schools as well as other organizations of interest.

**Shopping Tours:** These walking tours are designed to introduce people to stores that sell or provide services that most people will use while living here. They are also a great way to meet new people.

Find more information at <http://www.hio.harvard.edu/settlinginatharvard/orientation/>, and the schedule at <http://www.hio.harvard.edu/settlinginatharvard/orientation/schedule/>.

## Family Resources

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### A note about daycare

Please be aware that if you are thinking of putting your child into daycare you should apply for a place as soon as possible - no matter how far in the future you would like a spot.

Some centers that follow the academic year have an application deadline in March/April or even earlier – and there are long waiting lists. If you miss this deadline you may have to wait a full year before you can apply, potentially leaving you 18 months without daycare. Some daycare centers do not follow the academic year however.

### Infants and Toddlers Playgroup at Peabody Terrace

This weekly playgroup is co-organized by HSSPA and the Peabody Terrace Resident Advisors, and is open to the Harvard Community. It meets in the Peabody Terrace Common Room at 900 Memorial Drive, Cambridge. Sessions include lots of free play and conversation, as well as some structured musical activities. The cost of playgroup membership is \$15 for the whole academic year. To sign up or get more information about the playgroup, e-mail [ptplaygroup@gmail.com](mailto:ptplaygroup@gmail.com).

### Child Care at Harvard

The Child Care@Harvard website (<http://childcare.harvard.edu/>) offers information about child care options at Harvard and elsewhere. There is also a bulletin board (link on the main page) for Harvard affiliates where child care services are advertised. Harvard faculty and staff might be eligible to receive financial assistance from the University for child care expenses.

### Parentsgroup-list

This is a Harvard mailing list open to graduate student parents (not faculty or staff) at any of Harvard's schools (though the group is officially based in GSAS). List members post information, recommendations, items for sale, etc. For more information and to join, visit <https://lists.hcs.harvard.edu/mailman/listinfo/parentsgroup-list>.

### Student Babysitters

If you are looking for a babysitter, try the Student Employment Office (<http://www.seo.harvard.edu/>) at Harvard. You can browse ads from undergraduates offering to babysit, or post an ad yourself.

### Playgroup at Harvard Neighbors

Infants and toddlers group meets regularly at Harvard Neighbors (Loeb House Basement, 17 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138). Harvard Neighbors membership is required.

**Coop Kids Storytime & Craft (ages 8 & under).**

Join families every Saturday morning at 11am for fun at Harvard Coop (lower level) at Harvard Square.

Website. [Harvard Coop Events](#)

**Kid to Kid**

Kid to Kid (<http://www.kidtokid.com/>) buys and sells the best things kids outgrow. Find them at 42 Worcester Street, Natick, MA 01760.

**Cambridge Center for Families**

The Center for Families offers families with children (birth to age 8) parenting education and support programs held throughout the city. Check the bi-monthly newsletter on the website for different activities. Website:

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP/programsforfamilies/centerforfamilies.aspx>

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**Harvard ID and Library Cards**

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**ID Services**

8<sup>th</sup> Floor: Holyoke Center

1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138

Telephone: (617) 496-7827

Email:

[id\\_services@harvard.edu](mailto:id_services@harvard.edu)

As the spouse or partner of a Harvard student/scholar without other university affiliation, you are not eligible for a regular university ID or library card. You can, however, get a Special Borrower Card for the Harvard College Library system for a small fee. This will allow you to use most of the university libraries, to borrow books and other materials (with some restrictions), and in some cases to gain free entrance to Harvard museums. In addition, you can store Crimson Cash (Harvard's "electronic money") on your card, and use it as an ID to enter the Holyoke Center tower and other restricted Harvard buildings, as well as on the Harvard shuttle buses.

To get a Special Borrower Card, you must first visit the Library Privileges Office to the left of the entrance of Widener Library in Harvard Yard. You will need a photocopy of your spouse's Harvard ID (or bring your spouse and their ID with you), and you may be asked for proof of marriage or cohabitation if you have different last names. After filling in the application at the library, you will need to go to the ID services office at Holyoke Center 8th floor to get your photo taken and get your card produced.

For a list of Harvard libraries, with opening times and other information, visit <http://lib.harvard.edu/>. The HOLLIS catalog, through which you can search for materials in

all of the libraries, can be accessed here: <http://hollis.harvard.edu/>.

## **Education and English lessons**

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### **Auditing Courses at Harvard**

As the spouse or partner of a Harvard affiliate, you may be able to audit courses at Harvard, i.e. attend lectures not as part of a degree course, without receiving academic credit. You do, however, need the permission of the lecturer. You may contact the lecturer in advance, but usually the best way is simply to sit in on the first session of the course that you are interested in; at the end speak to the lecturer, explain your situation, and ask for permission to audit the course. Permission is usually not granted for small seminars or language courses. For a listing of available courses at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, see the course catalog (<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/registrar> - also available for purchase at the Harvard Coop). Note that unlike at the Extension School, there is no fee for auditing "regular" Harvard classes.

### **Harvard Extension School**

51 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA 02138  
Telephone: (617) 495-4024  
[www.extension.harvard.edu](http://www.extension.harvard.edu)

Harvard Extension School is one of the 12 degree-granting schools at Harvard University. It is part of the Division of Continuing Education in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. It offers over 600 open-enrollment courses in 65 fields, including over 100 online courses. Both undergraduate and graduate degree and certificate programs are available. Courses are taught by Harvard faculty, university scholars, and experienced industry professionals. The flexible, part-time courses are held in the evenings in Harvard Yard; tuition fees apply. The registration process is straightforward.

### **Harvard Summer School**

51 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA 02138,  
USA Telephone: (617) 495-4024  
[www.summer.harvard.edu](http://www.summer.harvard.edu)

If you can't make it during the school year, the Harvard Summer School, also part of the Division of Continuing Education in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University, provides an exciting and enlightening environment for summer study. It offers over 300 open-enrollment courses, including English language courses and courses for teachers.

### **Cambridge Center for Adult Education (CCAE)**

42 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA 02138

Telephone: 617-547-6789

[www.ccae.org](http://www.ccae.org)

The CCAE, based at several locations mostly around Harvard Square, offers a broad variety of courses and workshops—from languages to dance and from cooking to computers. Classes are reasonably priced.

### **English Lessons**

In addition to the Extension School and the Cambridge Center for Adult Education, there are a number of universities, colleges, and private centers in Cambridge and Boston that offer classes in English as a second language (ESL). The cost varies, and can be high for intensive courses. A partial listing of programs can be found on the leaflet available at the Harvard International Office.

There are also some free or very low-cost English courses offered by teaching schools, local churches, voluntary organizations, and public libraries.

To see the information on the English classes by City of Cambridge, visit their website:

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP/programsforadults/communitylearningcenter>

Teaching House Boston trains teachers and offers free English classes to anyone interested in improving their English skills. Classes are conducted by enthusiastic teacher trainees:

<http://thboston.com/teaching-practice-english-course>. Kaplan International Center offers a similar program – visit their Harvard Square office at 39 JFK St, Cambridge for more information.

Harvard Neighbors runs ESL classes for their members.

- Harvard Neighbors: <http://www.neighbors.harvard.edu/interest-groups>

## **Computers**

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### **Harvard Information Technology**

#### **Technology Services/University Information Systems (UIS)**

Telephone 617-495-5450

[www.huit.harvard.edu](http://www.huit.harvard.edu)

#### **Walk-In and Computer Repair**

<https://huit.harvard.edu/pages/computers-software>

Harvard University Information Technology (HUIT) provides all IT related services including two-step verification to access HU services and computer repair. It also sells software and

accessories (including Apple and IBM products), usually at a discount. This Center also offers occasional training workshops.

### **Public computers with internet access**

- Many businesses around Harvard Square offer Wi-Fi hotspots for use with your own laptop; e.g. B.Good on Dunster Street and Boloco on Mt. Auburn Street.
- Public libraries.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

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### **Malkin Athletic Center**

39 Holyoke Street, Cambridge

Telephone: (617) 495-2219

<http://recreation.gocrimson.com>

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As a spouse, you will need to pay a membership fee to use the athletic facilities at Harvard. The amount of the fee varies widely depending on your spouse's school and affiliation. The membership card will give you free access to the gyms, including the Malkin Athletic Center (MAC), Hemenway Gymnasium, and Blodgett Pool. For fitness and yoga classes, there is usually an additional fee.

### **Family and Alumni Memberships:**

\* Must be purchased at the Membership Office in the Malkin Athletic Center (39 Holyoke Street, Cambridge).

\* Family memberships are available only for spouses, qualified domestic partners and dependent children.

\* Family/alumni cards are renewable. Please bring them with you when renewing your membership. Information on memberships is at

<http://www.gocrimson.com/recreation/membership/purchase>.

### **Harvard on the Move**

*Harvard On The Move* ([www.harvard.edu/onthemove](http://www.harvard.edu/onthemove)) is a University-wide initiative created to promote physical and psychological wellness through non-competitive walking and running programs. The program sponsors weekly walks and runs as well as workshops and lectures highlighting cutting-edge research and practical hands-on information. Harvard On The Move is free and open to students, faculty, staff and alumni, as well as neighbors in Cambridge and Boston.

### **Free Group Meditation - Drop In**

<http://cw.uhs.harvard.edu/programs/special.html>

Drop-ins welcome! Come once; come weekly to this informal gathering of meditation. Everyone is welcome – no prior meditation experience is necessary! A 15-20 minute meditation will be practiced by a variety of teachers both live and recorded. Practice will be eclectic and will include loving kindness meditation, breath meditation, walking meditation and

more! Please arrive promptly. Facilitators: Jeanne Mahon & Suzanne Westbrook.

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## **Harvard Information Center**

<http://www.harvard.edu/visitors>

Holyoke Center Arcade  
1350 Massachusetts  
Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Email:

[info\\_center@harvard.edu](mailto:info_center@harvard.edu)

Telephone: 617.495.1573

Monday-Saturday: 9 am - 5  
pm Sunday: Closed

This is a great place to get information about Harvard and campus services, including campus maps, tours, newsletters, and campus shuttle bus schedules. The Center also has two computers with free internet access (the time is limited to 10 minutes).

# Official Matters

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Despite our best efforts the information below may be out of date. Always seek the advice of a professional when in doubt.

## Driver's Licenses

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### Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles

[www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv)

630 Washington Street, Boston MA 02124 (T: Orange Line, Chinatown) 550 Arsenal Street, Watertown, MA 02472 (at Watertown Mall)

If you are a visitor to the U.S. and have a valid driver's license issued by a foreign country that is recognized by the RMV (most countries are; you can find a full list in Appendix A of the Driver's Manual <http://www.mass.gov/rmv/dmanual>), you can drive a car legally for one year from the date of your most recent arrival in the U.S. However, as soon as you establish a residence in Massachusetts, for example by renting an apartment, this privilege is no longer valid and you must obtain a Massachusetts driver's license. In addition, if you intend to buy a car in the U.S., having a local license is advisable. If you already have a driving license from another U.S. state, you can exchange this for a Massachusetts license for a fee.

If you are converting a license from a country other than Canada, Mexico or one of the US Territories, you must take the full - written and road - test plus the eye test. To find out how to get a Massachusetts license, read the Driver's Manual available at branch offices of the Register of Motor Vehicles (RMV) or online (see above). To begin, you will need the following documents:

- Your Social Security Card OR: an official Social Security Number Denial Notice with your passport and your immigration documents (I-94, Form I-20 or DS-2019).
- A document proving your date of birth,
- A document proving that you are a resident of Massachusetts (you can ask for one at your bank),
- A pre-existing document containing your signature.

## Identification Cards

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In order to obtain a Massachusetts identification card, go to an RMV branch office with the same forms that are required for a Massachusetts driver's license (see above) and complete an application. There is a fee. You can also obtain a Liquor ID Card (used for proving your age in bars and restaurants) if you are at least 21 years old.

## Health Insurance

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Detailed information on Health Insurance and related matters can be found on the HIO Website <http://www.hio.harvard.edu/healthcareandinsurance/>. It is briefly outlined below.

Health insurance is a very important part of your stay at Harvard. The U.S. Government is not a major provider of medical care and arranging and paying for medical care is your responsibility. Access to health insurance depends on your affiliation with the University – whether you are a student or scholar. Massachusetts law requires all residents over the age of 19 to maintain health insurance.

The HIO has prepared a handout on health insurance issues for international students and scholars. All international students and scholars should have received a copy of this handout with their admissions materials or visa documents.

There is some general information on the HIO website about medical practice in the USA: <http://www.hio.harvard.edu/healthcareandinsurance/medicalpracticeintheunitedstates/>

### Students and their dependents

HUHS:

<http://huhs.harvard.edu/Information/Students.aspx>

HUSHP: <http://hushp.harvard.edu/>

All Harvard University students are automatically enrolled in the Harvard University Student Health Plan (HUSHP), unless they can show that they have comparable health insurance coverage on their own, and the cost of the plan is applied to their term bill. Students use Harvard University Health Services (HUHS):

- Urgent care (primary or mental health) is available nights, weekends, and holidays at HUHS in Holyoke Center in Harvard Square.
- All HUHS locations offer primary care and mental health care; HUHS Holyoke Center also provides a range of specialty care services available by referral from your primary care physician.
- Students needing additional help navigating the health care system at Harvard are encouraged to contact the Patient Advocate (<http://huhs.harvard.edu/HealthServices/PatientAdvocate.aspx>).

### Dependents of students

<http://hushp.harvard.edu/hushp-student-dependents>

Students with dependents must purchase health insurance for their dependents – they are not automatically enrolled. If you or your spouse arrives in the United States with a preexisting condition, **including pregnancy**, it is essential that you plan ahead for your health insurance needs.

Dependents do not have to be enrolled in HUSHP but it is sometimes hard to find an alternative that will accept a dependent without the student being enrolled too. Dependents who choose the

Harvard plan must enroll within 30 days of student registration or within 30 days of their own arrival in the United States.

Dependents eligible to be enrolled in HUSHP are:

- Spouse
- Qualified same-sex partnership
- Unmarried dependent children (up to age 19)

### **Scholars and their dependents**

<http://www.hio.harvard.edu/healthcareandinsurance/scholars/requirementsforvisaholders/>

International scholars are not required to purchase the Harvard health insurance plan, but scholars in J status are required by the U.S. Department of State to have health insurance that meets certain standards.

All faculty and staff who choose the Harvard University Group Health Plan (HUGHP – link above) are eligible to select a Harvard University Health Services (HUHS) primary care physician and take advantage of HUHS services, including 24-hour urgent care at HUHS in Holyoke Center (Harvard Square). More details here:

<http://huhs.harvard.edu/Information/FacultyAndStaff.aspx>.

### **Scholars who are Benefits-Eligible**

Harvard University faculty and staff, including postdoctoral fellows, are eligible for a wide range of benefits programs. In most cases, they are eligible for University benefits if employed on a regular University payroll and working at least 17.5 hours per week or are paid at a base annual rate of at least \$15,000.

All questions about Harvard health insurance options are handled by Benefits Consultants in the Office of Human Resources (sixth floor of Holyoke Center, 1350 Massachusetts Avenue). To find out the name of the Benefits Consultant for your area or department, please call 617-496-4001.

### **Scholars Who Are Not Eligible for Benefits**

Scholars who are not benefits eligible must find an appropriate health insurance plan, and if you have a J visa it must meet the requirements. This insurance could be a foreign-based plan or a plan based in the United States. Scholars may also choose a plan outside of Harvard if they do not have health insurance coverage from their home countries.

#### *Harvard University Student Health Plan*

Depending on their job classification, some scholars and some non-employee affiliates may qualify for the Harvard University Student Health Plan (HUSHU). To determine eligibility, scholars should check with their department administrators (see above).

### **Dependents of Scholars**

Scholars wishing to enroll their dependents for health insurance plans should do so when they themselves enroll or when their dependents arrive, if they arrive at a later date. Dependents of scholars who are eligible for employee benefits are eligible for the same health insurance plans as the employee. Scholar dependents must enroll in the Harvard plan within 30 days of the

scholar's appointment start date, or within 30 days of their own arrival in the United States. More information can be found here:

<http://www.hio.harvard.edu/healthcareandinsurance/scholars/dependents/>.

### **Insurance Plans Outside of Harvard**

The HIO has information regarding alternative health insurance plans for those who do not enroll in Harvard plans. The HIO offers this information on four plans, but there are many other companies that offer health insurance for international students and scholars.

See

<http://www.hio.harvard.edu/healthcareandinsurance/scholars/insuranceplansoutsideofharvard>.

### **Dental Care**

<http://huhs.harvard.edu/HealthServices/Dental.aspx>

#### *Benefits eligible Scholars*

HUHS Dental Services offers a full range of dental services for patients from six months of age through their life span. If you participate in the Harvard Delta Dental plan (Delta Preferred Option Plus), the clinic will bill your insurance. See:

[http://www.deltadentalma.com/dental\\_plans/dpoplus.asp](http://www.deltadentalma.com/dental_plans/dpoplus.asp).

#### *Students and non-benefits eligible Scholars*

Dental coverage is not included in HUSHP for students, and there are no dental insurance options for scholars who are not eligible for employee benefits.

Optional dental insurance is available for students and their dependents via the Delta Dental PPO Plus Premier. Enrollment is not automatic. If you wish to participate in this plan, you must enroll during the open enrollment period. More information can be found here:

<http://hushp.harvard.edu/optional-dental-coverage-0>

HUHS Dental Services provides a full array of dental services for a fee and at a discount to Harvard students; the Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM) also offers fee-for-service appointments. See <http://www.harvarddentalcenter.harvard.edu/asp-html/>.

### **Pregnancy**

<http://www.harvardvanguard.org/specialties-and-services/obstetrics-gynecology>

If you are eligible to be treated at the Harvard University Health Services (HUHS) please see below for more information about Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates. Women whose pregnancy is not covered by their insurance plan should contact Maureen Martin ([maureen\\_martin@harvard.edu](mailto:maureen_martin@harvard.edu)) at the Harvard International Office for advice.

#### *Harvard Vanguard Obstetrics and Gynecology*

<http://www.uhs.harvard.edu/HealthServices/HarvardVanguardObstetricsAndGynecology.aspx>

On-site obstetric and gynecology (OB/GYN) services at Harvard University Health Services (HUHS) are provided by Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates, one of the largest multi-specialty physician groups and providers of OB/GYN services in Massachusetts. Please call Harvard Vanguard Patient Registration at 800-249-1767 prior to making your first appointment.

### *Obstetrical and Gynecological Care*

The Harvard Vanguard physicians, nurse practitioner, and nurses provide a wide range of gynecological care for women from adolescence through post-menopause. Obstetrical services at HUHS include:

- Pre-conception planning
- Prenatal care, including all routine testing
- Nutrition counseling
- Fetal-risk screenings
- On-site laboratory services
- Childbirth and breast-feeding education
- Postnatal care
- General health, nutrition, and weight loss education
- General counseling, education, and emotional support

### *Mount Auburn Hospital, The Bain Birthing Center*

Harvard Vanguard providers deliver babies and perform procedures at Mount Auburn Hospital, which is affiliated with Harvard Medical School. The Bain Birthing Center at Mount Auburn Hospital welcomes 2,500 newborns each year in a state-of-the-art facility that offers many different options to meet the specific needs of each family. See <http://www.mountauburnhospital.org/body.cfm?id=715>.

### **Massachusetts Health Connector**

[www.mahealthconnector.org](http://www.mahealthconnector.org)

All Massachusetts residents are required to have health insurance if they can afford it. This also applies to non-U.S. citizens, if they are considered to live full-time in Massachusetts. The Health Connector website offers information about various health insurance policies available (both state-sponsored and through private companies), and allows you to compare policies and coverage.

**MassHealth: For information about this state-provided health insurance scheme, see below under “Assistance Programs.”**

## **Assistance Programs**

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There are a number of state programs that offer assistance to individuals and families with low incomes. The income eligibility limits vary depending on the program. Some programs that student families have benefited from include the following:

### **WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Nutrition**

**Program** <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/basic-needs/food/wic/> Telephone: 1-800-942-1007

This program provides checks for certain basic foods (such as milk, cheese, and eggs) that can be redeemed at many supermarkets. In addition, it offers nutrition counseling and referrals. Assistance is available for pregnant and breastfeeding women, children under 5, and new mothers, who meet income guidelines, regardless of nationality.

**Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (also known as Fuel Assistance)**

<http://www.massresources.org/liheap.html> Telephone: 1-800-632-8175

This program provides eligible households with help to pay winter heating bills. Eligibility depends on household size and income. You can apply for assistance even if your heating costs are included in your rent.

**Note:** most utility companies (electric and gas), as well as some telephone providers (including Verizon), offer a lower rate for customers with low incomes; ask your utility provider for details.

**MassHealth**

[www.mass.gov/masshealth](http://www.mass.gov/masshealth)

Telephone: 1-800-841-2900

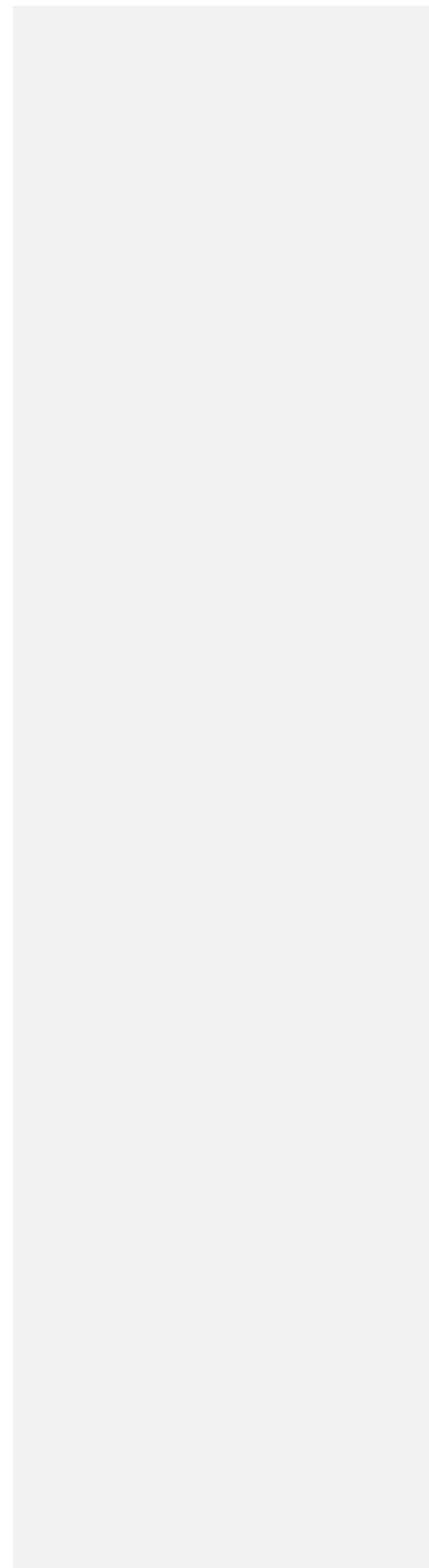
MassHealth is a state-provided health insurance program for people with low and moderate incomes. It offers a range of different coverage plans that pay for things like doctor visits, hospital stays, medication, and dental care. Alternatively, MassHealth can assist with payments for existing health insurance (e.g. the Harvard University Health Services student dependent plan). Full benefits are only available for U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and certain categories of non-immigrants, but limited benefits are also offered for other non-immigrants, including F and J visa holders. Once you fill in and submit an application (called a Medical Benefits Request), MassHealth officials will determine the maximum benefits that you are entitled to.

**Tip:** The nature of many students' incomes—a stipend that only covers part of the calendar year, for example—as well as Harvard's complex two-part student health insurance system sometimes cause confusion for MassHealth officials who decide on applications. If your situation is more complicated than can easily be explained on the application form, we suggest including an additional letter that states your situation as clearly as possible.

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services also runs separate health insurance programs, Healthy Start and Children's Medical Security Plan, for pregnant women and children under 19 who are not eligible for MassHealth, or whose immigration status makes them ineligible for full MassHealth benefits. For details, call the MassHealth service number at 1-800-841-2900 or visit the website: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/insurance/more-programs/childrens-medical-security-plan.html>.

**NOTE:** As a non-immigrant visa holder, you should not accept certain kinds of public assistance (e.g. food stamps, welfare) that would deem you a "public charge." For more information about eligibility for *federal* government programs, you may obtain a publication called Guide to Alien Eligibility for Federal Programs. The book cost about \$30 and is available through the National

Immigration Law Center, telephone 213-639-3900, email [info@nilc.org](mailto:info@nilc.org). However, note that the above-described programs are STATE, not FEDERAL assistance programs



## Visa Information

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**Important note: The information in this section is for guidance only. Make sure to double check all information pertaining to your particular situation. The Harvard International Office and its website are excellent sources of information and advice. See <http://www.hio.harvard.edu/>.**

### Immigration Regulations

There are many regulations that govern international students' and scholars' entrance and stay in the United States. Their enforcement is the responsibility of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). DHS maintains the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), a database of information on students and scholars with F and J visas, and their dependents.

Compliance with SEVIS regulations requires that all F-1 and J-1 students and scholars register with the HIO as soon as possible after their arrival in the U.S., *no later than 30 days* after the beginning program date indicated on their visa documents. In addition, any changes of name or address must be notified to the HIO and the DHS *within 10 days* of the change. F-1 students are required to maintain full-time student status at all times.

### Visa Terminology

#### **Visa document (I-20 or DS-2019 or I-797):**

This is a document that is issued by Harvard to students, scholars, and their dependents. It contains information about the course of study, program, etc. that the student or scholar will be engaged in, and for how long. A valid visa document is needed (a) to apply for a visa, (b) to enter and re-enter the U.S. (alongside a valid visa stamp), and (c) to maintain legal presence in the U.S.: you may not stay in the U.S. beyond the date indicated on this document. If you intend to stay longer, you must obtain a new document from the HIO. For F-1 Student Visas, the relevant visa document is Form I-20; for J-1 Exchange Visitor Visas, the document is Form DS-2019; and for various other types of visas, including H-1B, TN, and O-1, the document is Form I-797.

If any of the information on the form (e.g. program of study, graduation date, or source or amount of funding) changes, you must get a new visa document from the HIO. Even if the information stays the same, the document must be validated at least every 12 months by a HIO advisor.

#### **Visa stamp:**

This is the visa that is stamped into your passport at a U.S. consulate abroad, where you apply for your visa. The visa stamp has a limited period of validity. It must be valid for you to enter the U.S., but you may stay in the U.S. beyond the valid period of your visa *stamp* as long as your visa *document* remains valid, and as long as the time period indicated on your I-94 form (see below) has not expired. If, however, you want to leave the U.S. and then return, you will need

to apply for a new visa stamp abroad; this cannot be done within the U.S.

**Form I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record): [recently updated – information below is copied from HIO website: [http://hio.harvard.edu/New\\_Electronic\\_I-94.php](http://hio.harvard.edu/New_Electronic_I-94.php)]**

Until very recently the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) issued a paper Form I-94, arrival/departure record, usually stapled into the passport whenever an individual entered the United States. CBP is creating an on-line I-94 instead of issuing the traditional paper form at ports of entry.

You will now need to do two things when you enter the United States:

- 1) Check your passport to make sure that the CBP officer has put an entry stamp indicating that you entered on a certain date, in a certain visa status, e.g. F-1, and can stay until a certain date or D/S (duration of status) in the case of F and J visa holders.
- 2) Print out your I-94 via [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94) as you will need it for other purposes.

## Taxes

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Every spring, most students and scholars at Harvard regardless of their nationality must file U.S. income tax returns. There are two types of tax – Federal and State. Filing a Federal return is compulsory for anyone who has received U.S. income in the previous year; filing a Massachusetts tax return may be optional depending on the amount of your income. Even if you received no U.S. income, or you were a dependent, if you were present in the U.S. for any part of the preceding year you must file at least one form.

**Tax forms must be completed (even if a tax treaty exempts you from paying any U.S. taxes) if you were in the United States on any visa other than a tourist visa.**

During the tax return season, the Harvard International Office makes available online tax preparation software, Windstar, which you can use to fill in your tax returns.

Tax returns are normally due in April each year.

HIO tax information page: <http://www.hio.harvard.edu/taxesandsocialsecurity/>.

## Work Permits (Employment Authorization)

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If you are the spouse or partner of a student who holds an F-1 visa (i.e. you have an F-2 visa), you are *not* eligible for a work permit and *may not* work legally in the United States.

If your spouse/partner holds a J-1 visa and your visa type is J-2, you are permitted to work, but you must apply for and receive an Employment Authorization Card *before* you can begin a job. The processing of the application usually takes several months. Your employment

authorization is valid only for the period of time indicated on your DS-2019 visa document. If your stay in the U.S. is extended beyond this date, you will need to apply for an extension to your employment authorization well in advance of the expiry date. You cannot legally continue working once the authorization has expired, even if you have already submitted an extension application.

Details on how to apply for employment authorization can be found on the HIO website. Note that in the letter that accompanies the application, you must explicitly state that you will not use your income to finance your spouse's/partner's studies. It may also be worthwhile to ask specifically for authorization for the entire period that your DS-2019 is valid. See the following page for more information:

<http://www.hio.harvard.edu/immigration/visatypes/j2dependents/workpermission/>.

## Getting a Job

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### **Paid work**

Getting a job in the USA can be a daunting prospect for many spouses. The Career in Transit blog (<http://careerintransit.wordpress.com/>) gives some helpful information and resources for spouses in Cambridge.

For job-hunting and CV help you can visit to the Literacy Project through the Cambridge Public Library (<http://www.cambridgema.gov/cpl/Services/theliteracyproject.aspx>) or attend a career information session run by Harvard (for the community) in the Holyoke Center - or at Harvard Business School - details here: [http://www.employment.harvard.edu/careers/pdf/hbs\\_community\\_outreach.pdf](http://www.employment.harvard.edu/careers/pdf/hbs_community_outreach.pdf). There are also some resources on Boston.com: <http://www.boston.com/jobs/>.

There are also a number of resume writing workshops and trainings available outside Cambridge. You can check the library in your neighborhood.

There are many websites with useful articles on job searching. Here are just a few examples:

<http://blog.psgstaffing.com/2016/02/02/ask-a-recruiter-staying-organized-during-your-job-search/>  
<https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-write-a-cover-letter-31-tips-you-need-to-know>

General jobs websites are:

- Monster <http://jobs.monster.com/l-boston,-ma.aspx>
- Simply Hired <http://www.simplyhired.com/a/local-jobs/city/l-Boston,+MA>
- Indeed <http://www.indeed.com/l-Boston,-MA-jobs.html>

The New England HERC is also a place for professionals to find jobs:  
[http://www.newenglandherc.org/home/index.cfm?site\\_id=660](http://www.newenglandherc.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=660)

Finally, Harvard offers many kinds of administrative jobs – their website is here:  
<http://employment.harvard.edu/>

Staffing agencies are another resource to find employment. A few of them are used by many HSSPA members in the past and their experiences were positive. There are few points to keep in mind about staffing agencies. They are mostly a good step towards a permanent job but in the beginning they pay less than a regular employment and mostly offer temporary work. But once you are at the work, you can meet people and show your skills. That's mostly what you need to find a better job, rather than waiting for recruiters to call.

### **Volunteer work**

If you can't work because of visa restrictions you can still volunteer at many institutions in Boston. A list of suggested places to volunteer is on the HIO website:

<http://www.hio.harvard.edu/spousespartnersandchildren/volunteeringopportunities/>.

## Daily Life

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Two great sources of information to help you settle into life in the area are:

1. The MIT Spouses and Partners Newcomers Guide: <http://spouses.mit.edu/newcomers>
2. Reddit Boston: <http://www.reddit.com/r/boston/> - ask questions, find answers.

## **Things to do in Boston, Cambridge and Harvard Square**

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The following websites contain a wealth of information on what's on in your neighborhood!

Boston Central: [www.bostoncentral.com](http://www.bostoncentral.com)  
Cambridge Office of Tourism: <http://www.cambridge-usa.org/> Harvard Square: [www.harvardsquare.com](http://www.harvardsquare.com)  
Harvard University events: <http://www.harvard.edu/events>  
Celebrate Boston: <http://www.celebrateboston.com/events.htm>  
Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/>

### **Be a tourist**

There are plenty of touristy-things to do in Boston and Cambridge. Check out the brochures outside the Harvard International Office for ideas! Some suggestions include: *walk the Freedom Trail, visit Boston Common and the Public Gardens (ride a Swan Boat in summer!), visit Copley Square, see the Arnold Arboretum, go on a whale-watching cruise or a harbor cruise, eat Italian food in the North End, go to Fenway Park to see a baseball game, see the Blue Man Group, visit the Museum of Fine Arts, go to the Samuel Adams Brewery.* For other ideas check out <http://addison.hubpages.com/hub/21-free-things-to-do-in-boston>. You can get half-price tickets to shows via BosTix: <http://www.bostix.org/home4>

### **Public Libraries and Museum Passes**

As a resident of a town, you can join the local public library for free. In addition to books, CDs, and other materials for loan, public libraries offer a variety of services and activities, including English classes, book clubs, and children's story hours, as well as the Museum Pass program. This program provides discounted entrance passes and coupons for various Boston-area attractions, including the Children's Museum, the Museum of Science, art museums, and many others. For information on and links to public libraries in Cambridge, Somerville, and surrounding communities, visit [www.mln.lib.ma.us](http://www.mln.lib.ma.us). For the Boston Public Library, see [www.bpl.org](http://www.bpl.org). The main branch of the Cambridge Public Library is the closest to Harvard Square, located at 449 Broadway.

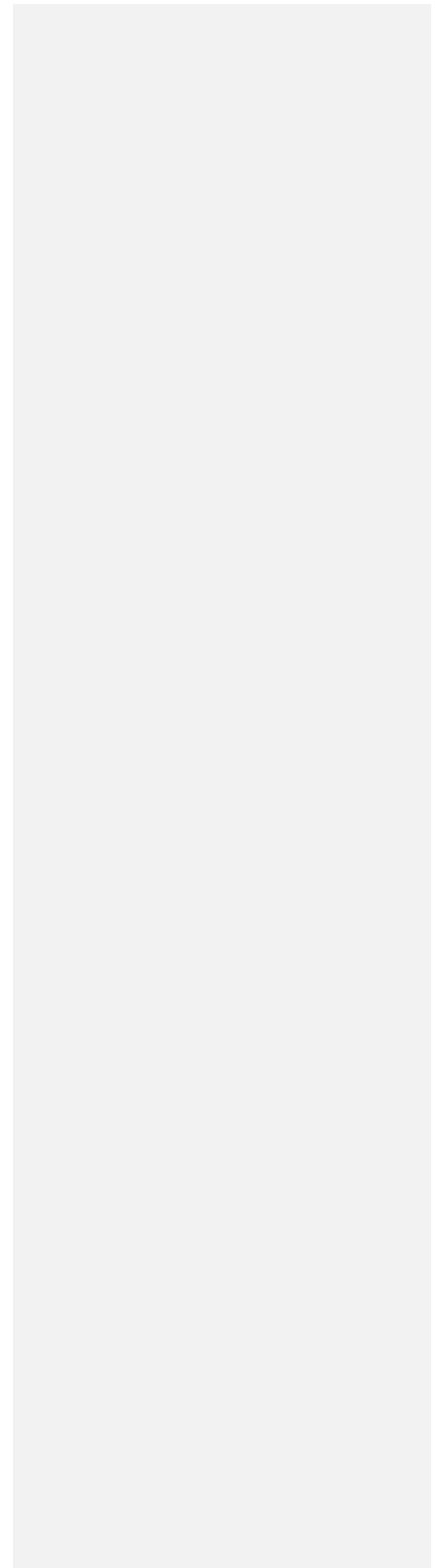
### **Harvard Museums**

Harvard has several museums and often it is possible to get free entry using your Harvard ID or Special Borrower's Card. Check out the list of museums here <http://www.harvard.edu/resources-offices/museums>

**Free museums – selected times**

See <http://freemuseumday.org/bos.html>

*Please check the Museum's individual websites before making your journey!*



## Outings and Innings

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<https://outingsandinings.harvard.edu> (Harvard ID needed)

9 Holyoke Center Cambridge, MA 02138

Telephone: (617) 495-2828

E-mail: [outings\\_innings@harvard.edu](mailto:outings_innings@harvard.edu)

This is Harvard's window to culture and recreation in the greater Boston area. Purchase tickets for movies, museums, theatre, dance, music, sports and seasonal attractions at a saving of up to 50% from Outings& Innings. O&I is open to all Harvard faculty, staff, affiliates and students. The website is accessible only by ID and PIN. Everyone must create a customer account BEFORE a purchase can be made. A spouse /partner can be linked to the primary ID holder.

### Movie Tickets

O&I carries AMC/Loews, Landmark (Kendall Square Theatre and Embassy Theatre in Waltham are the two local theatres), National Amusements/Showcase and Regal Entertainment. Tickets have no expiration date and may be redeemed nationwide. Save up to 35%. The Brattle Theatre, Mugar Omni Theater at the Museum of Science, and Jordan's Furniture Imax tickets are also available but have expiration dates.

### Museum Passes

O&I stocks Museum of Science Exhibit Hall and Planetarium, Children's Museum, Peabody Essex Museum, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, ICA-Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, and Harvard Museum of Natural History tickets. Save up to 60%! *Please note: A Harvard student ID grants the ID holder free admission to the Museum of Fine Arts, ICA-Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and the Harvard Museum of Natural History. You may purchase discounted companion tickets from O&I from all of these museums except the MFA.*

### Date-Specific Performing Arts & Sports

O&I offers an ever-changing menu of theatre, dance, music and professional sports.

### Seasonal Attractions

Discounted tickets are available for a wide range of seasonal attractions, including Old Town Trolley Tours, Provincetown Fast Ferry, Charles Riverboat Sightseeing Tours, Boston Duck Tours, Southwick's Zoo, Six Flags Theme Park, Water Country, Edaville USA, King Richard's Faire, Boston Flower Show, Rhode Island Spring Flower & Garden Show, Davis Farmland and much more.

### Ski Tickets

Discounted lift tickets are available to Loon/SugarLoaf/Sunday River, Wachusett Mountain, Waterville Valley and Attitash/Wildcat Mountain. Tickets are valid any day during the current ski season. *Please note: For Wachusett Mountain, beginner packages, anyday, and night skiing tickets available. On weekends, take the Commuter Rail from Porter Square and Wachusett*

*Mountain will pick you up at the T station!*

## Postal Service

The United States Postal Service (USPS) website is here: [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com). Most post offices are open Monday-Friday 7:30 am to 5:00 pm and Saturday 7:30 am to 12:00 pm, but opening times vary between branches. The main post office at Harvard Square is:

125 Mount Auburn St, Cambridge, MA  
02138 Telephone: 800-275-8777

Mon-Fri: 7:30am -  
6:00pm Sat: 7:30am -  
3:00pm

## Transportation

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### MBTA

[www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com)

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) is the main provider of public transport in the greater Boston area. It operates subways (known as the "T"), buses, and commuter rail services. Street-side "T" signs indicate subway or bus stops. Services run seven days a week from approximately 5:00 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. The website contains detailed maps and schedules for all services, as well as information on the electronic card payment system (CharlieCard/CharlieTicket). Charlie Cards are available from the CharlieCard Store at Downtown Crossing station.

You can also use your Charlie Card to get a discount at many retailers in Boston – check out this link for more details: [http://www.mbta.com/riding\\_the\\_t/CharlieCard\\_Discount\\_Book/](http://www.mbta.com/riding_the_t/CharlieCard_Discount_Book/)

### Harvard Shuttle Bus

[http://www.uos.harvard.edu/transportation/passenger\\_transport\\_services/](http://www.uos.harvard.edu/transportation/passenger_transport_services/)

The campus shuttle bus operates several routes around the Harvard Square area. Call 617-495-0400 for schedule information, or pick up a copy of the current schedule at the Information Center in Holyoke Center. The schedule is also available from the above website.

The service is free, but officially limited to Harvard students, faculty, and staff. A separate company operates a shuttle bus (M2) between Harvard Square and the Longwood Medical Area. For details, visit <http://www.masco.org/directions/m2-cambridge-harvard-shuttle>. Students, faculty, and staff affiliated with the medical schools, FAS or GSAS ride for free with

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their Harvard ID cards; others pay \$3.25 per ride (via Crimson Cash or prepaid tickets).

### **Harvard Evening Van Service**

Telephone: 617-495-0400

[http://www.uos.harvard.edu/transportation/passenger\\_transport\\_services/evening\\_van\\_service.shtml](http://www.uos.harvard.edu/transportation/passenger_transport_services/evening_van_service.shtml)

This on-demand service operates from 7:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. every night (last call taken at 2:30 a.m.) during the academic year. You will be asked for your Harvard affiliation. The van will pick you up and drop you off at any address within the service area for free (maps of the service area are available at the Information Center). Wait times can be long at busy periods, e.g. when it rains.

### **Rental Cars**

Some rental car companies with branches in Cambridge include the following:

**Enterprise** [www.enterprise.com](http://www.enterprise.com)

#### **FRESH POND**

26 NEW ST (FRESH POND)  
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

#### **CAMBRIDGE / CENTRAL SQRE**

25 RIVER STREET  
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

**Hertz** [www.hertz.com](http://www.hertz.com)

24 ELIOT STREET  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

**Thrifty** [www.thrifty.com](http://www.thrifty.com)

#### **HARVARD SQUARE**

**HOTEL** 110 MT  
AUBURN STREET  
HARVARD SQUARE  
HOTEL CAMBRIDGE,  
MA 02138

**Zipcar** [www.zipcar.com](http://www.zipcar.com)

Zipcar is a very convenient car-sharing service, with a fleet of hundreds of cars all around Boston and Cambridge. Once you join (there is an annual fee), you can rent cars by the hour or day. Gas and insurance are included in the hourly/daily rate. Reservations can be made online or by phone, and your membership card is used to open the car that you have

reserved—no need to go anywhere to pick up keys. Harvard affiliates get reduced-price memberships. If you don't have a US license you can still use your foreign license to register with Zipcar – instructions on what to do are here: [http://members.zipcar.com/apply/foreign-drivers?license\\_plac](http://members.zipcar.com/apply/foreign-drivers?license_plac).

## **Bikes**

Cycling is a great way to get around Cambridge. It usually isn't too difficult to find a second-hand bike to buy – through Craig's List (<http://boston.craigslist.org/gbs/bik/>) or the Harvard-run Quad Bikes (<http://www.quadbikes.org/>) located at 51 Shepard St (at the corner of Shepard and Walker Streets), Cambridge. Another place for new or used bikes is Cambridge Bicycle: <http://cambridgebicycle.com/>.

For used bicycles, Cambridge used Bicycles that tunes up vintage & modern bicycles, with commuter models & photoshoot props.  
Address: Cambridge Antique Market, 201 Monsignor O'Brien Highway, Cambridge, MA 02141

At Porter Square, there is another bike shop. Bicycle exchange at porter square offering cycles for sale & rent, plus parts & repair services.  
Address: 2067 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02140

For the more serious biker popular cycling shops are Wheelworks (<http://wheelworks.com/>) in Davis Square, Cambridge Bicycle (<http://cambridgebicycle.com/>), 259 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge between Central and Kendall Square, or Landry's Bicycles (<http://www.landrys.com/>), 890 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston. Otherwise you can buy new bikes from the likes of Target, Kmart and Walmart.

Boston has a bike rental scheme called The Hubway (<http://www.thehubway.com/>). For an annual or monthly membership you can borrow bikes for up to 30 minutes for free (or pay if you need it for longer). The scheme operates during spring, summer and fall, and there are bike stations all over Cambridge.

A map showing the bike paths in Boston and Cambridge is available from the City of Boston website here: [http://www.cityofboston.gov/images\\_documents/bike%20map\\_tcm3-14074.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/images_documents/bike%20map_tcm3-14074.pdf).

## **Phones, Internet and TV**

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### **Phones**

The main mobile phone (cell phone) operators in Boston are AT&T (<http://www.att.com/>), T Mobile (<http://www.t-mobile.com/>) and Sprint (<http://www.sprint.com/>). T Mobile has a branch in Harvard Square, and AT&T and Sprint are near Porter Square. Cell phone reception with different carriers is very dependent on your location in Cambridge. It is common not to have a landline installed.

Expect to pay at least \$30 per month for a pre-paid SIM-only plan. For about \$60 you can get

“unlimited” calling and texting, and around 1GB of data per month. Note that incoming calls are charged as well as outgoing calls. You may have difficulty getting a contract (post-paid) if you don’t have a credit rating.

If you need a new phone you can buy one through one of the cell phone operators on a plan, or you can buy it outright, unlocked, from places like Best Buy (<http://www.bestbuy.com/>).

To keep in touch with home many of us use Skype, or apps like [What’s app](#), [Facebook messenger](#) or [Viber](#). You can put money on your Skype account and then use it to call overseas for very cheap rates.

### **Internet and Cable**

The internet (and cable TV) providers in Boston are Verizon (<http://www.verizon.com/>) and Comcast (<http://www.comcast.com/>). Your physical address will determine whether you can get fiber or cable. Expect to pay around \$50 per month just for internet. You can pay more for faster speeds and/or cable TV.

### **TV on demand**

The three places to get TV on demand (via the internet) are Netflix (<https://signup.netflix.com/>) for \$8/month, Hulu (<http://www.hulu.com/>) for free and HuluPlus for \$8/month, and Amazon Prime (<http://amzn.to/SignupPrime>) for \$80/year (which includes many other benefits such as free shipping on Amazon purchases).

## Housing

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### Harvard Housing Office

Holyoke Center, Room 807, 1350

Massachusetts Ave Telephone: (617) 496-7827

<http://www.huhousing.harvard.edu/HarvardUniversityHousing/index.aspx>

In addition to dormitory housing for single students, Harvard University owns and manages a large number of apartments and houses that can be rented by university students, faculty, and staff. The units are generally located close to Harvard Square and priced at market levels (i.e. rents are not discounted). Details about the residences and about the application and rental process can be found here:

<http://www.huhousing.harvard.edu/ProspectiveResidents/Application.aspx>.

The Harvard housing office also maintains an online listing service, HRES Apartment Source, where local landlords and agents advertise available apartments. It can be accessed here:

<http://huhousing.offcampuslisting.com/>.

Our members recommend allowing plenty of time to find housing if you have children as many apartments contain lead paint. Finding an apartment without such paint can be a challenge. Other useful (non-Harvard) websites for locating housing in the Cambridge area include the

following: MIT European Club: <http://euroclub.mit.edu/marketplace>

Lesley University Housing (available to non-Lesley affiliates): <http://www.lesley.edu/real-estate/apartments/>

Craig's List: <http://boston.craigslist.org/hhh/>

Boston.com: <http://www.boston.com/realestate/new/>

Apartments.com: <http://www.apartments.com>

Yahoo.com: <http://homes.yahoo.com/>

Studenthousingindex.com:

<http://studenthousingex.com>

Many of the Harvard Schools' websites offer useful information for living off campus. These include the following:

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

[http://www.gsas.harvard.edu/current\\_students/living\\_off\\_campus.php](http://www.gsas.harvard.edu/current_students/living_off_campus.php)

Harvard Law School

<http://www.law.harvard.edu/current/student-services/housing/>

Harvard Divinity School

<http://www.hds.harvard.edu/life-at-hds/housing-resources>

In addition, the **City of Boston** has a website dedicated to housing information for students:  
<http://www.cityofboston.gov/rentalhousing/students.asp>

## Banking

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Despite what you will hear you don't need a social security number to open a bank account. Just take some photo ID to a branch and you should be able to open an account immediately. The Harvard Credit Union requires you to have your Harvard ID number before opening an account.

People in the US use checks for many transactions (e.g. rent) and internet banking is reasonably primitive compared to other countries. You may not be able to electronically transfer money between different US banks for example. In our experience banks are able to handle international transactions quite easily however.

Getting a credit card is difficult if you've never lived in the US before or you don't have a Social Security Number. If you want a credit card you will probably need to get a 'bonded' card where you pay a deposit and get a card with the limit of that deposit. After a year of using this card correctly (paying it off on time) you should have enough of a credit rating to apply for a real card. Some post-docs, however, have reported that Bank of America will happily give you a regular credit card without this process.

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## Disabled persons resources

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The resources for disabled persons listed below were found on this MIT website:  
<http://web.mit.edu/facultyworklife/community/boston/disabilities.html>. This website contains many other links to resources that could be of use to people with a disability.

- **Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) – the T: Accessible Services** Accessible services, stations and buses:  
[http://www.mbt.com/riding\\_the\\_t/accessible\\_services/](http://www.mbt.com/riding_the_t/accessible_services/)
- **Accessible Cambridge Taxicabs**  
For an accessible Cambridge taxicab, call: Accessible Cambridge Taxi Program at 1-866-654-1003
- **Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation's Universal Access Program** Outdoor recreation opportunities in Massachusetts state parks for visitors of all abilities:  
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/massparks/accessibility/>
- **Mass.gov: Disabilities**  
Disability services and information, sponsored by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: <http://www.mass.gov/portal/health-safety/disability/>
- **DisabilityInfo.org**  
Disability-specific information for people with disabilities residing in Massachusetts:

<http://www.disabilityinfo.org/>

- **The DRM Regional Resources Directory: Massachusetts**  
Sponsored by DisabilityResources.org; guide to disability resources on the Internet:  
<http://www.disabilityresources.org/MASSACHUSETTS.html>

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## Shopping

As well as physically going to a store and buying something, many people in the US shop online. Retailers often ship for free if your order is large enough (e.g. over \$25), and you can get free shipping from Amazon if you join Amazon Prime (<http://amzn.to/SignupPrime>) for \$99/year. This price also includes access to a large number of online TV show and book library.

The big shopping malls in the area are The Prudential Center (<http://www.prudentialcenter.com/>) in Boston and The CambridgeSide Galleria (<http://www.cambridgesidegalleria.com/>) near MIT.

## Furniture and Household Goods

### Facebook: Harvard Grad Market

This group is a great place to buy and sell furniture from other people at Harvard. They say “In an effort to make moving-out & moving-on more sustainable, this group is designed to help Harvard Graduate Housing residents: donate / sell / buy / barter goods.” HSSPA members report it is possible to buy an entire apartment’s worth of furniture from a single person. You will need to request to join the group before you can see any advertising and this may take a few days.

### The MIT student furniture exchange

[www.web.mit.edu/womensleague/fx](http://www.web.mit.edu/womensleague/fx)  
350 Brookline Street, Cambridge,  
MA 02139

A big hall full of second-hand furniture and other items (dishes, toys, some electronics). Open Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10am-4pm, as well as the first Saturday of each month, 10am-1pm. Open to the MIT, Harvard, Suffolk, and Boston University communities. Customers must show a valid university ID in order to make a purchase.

### Craigslist Boston

<http://boston.craigslist.org/>

Classified listings for anything and everything, including furniture, apartments, jobs, tickets, etc. You can find some excellent bargains, but be prepared for lots of e-mailing and watch out for scams.

### **IKEA**

[www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com)

1 Ikea Way, Stoughton, MA 02072

The Swedish store that you either love or hate. Offers probably the cheapest new (and reasonably good quality) furniture and furnishings in the greater Boston area. IKEA is located south of Boston on Route 24, about half an hour's drive from Cambridge. It is possible to get there by commuter rail or bus, but renting a car (or Zipcar) is easier.

### **Crate & Barrel**

[www.crateandbarrel.com](http://www.crateandbarrel.com)

777 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

More upscale and also pricier, but the furniture is of good quality.

### **Target**

[www.target.com](http://www.target.com)

180 Somerville Avenue, Somerville, and 550 Arsenal St, Watertown (at Watertown Mall)

A chain of big stores with a bit of everything, from furniture and cleaning supplies to clothing and cosmetics. Prices are generally low (though don't beat those at IKEA); this is a good place to get all kinds of household basics. You can get to the Somerville store via bus 70/71 from Harvard Square.

### **Supermarkets**

(As recommended by our members)

#### **Market Basket**

<http://www.mydemoulas.net/>

400 Somerville Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143

This is probably the cheapest supermarket in the Cambridge area, and has a very good selection of fresh fruits and vegetables. You can get there by bus: Bus 87 stops right in front, buses 83 and

86 stop a few blocks away. Market Basket accepts WIC checks.

### **Whole Foods Market**

[www.wholefoodsmarket.com](http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com)

340 River Street, Cambridge, MA 02139

115 Prospect Street, Cambridge, MA 02139

200 Alewife Brook Parkway, Cambridge, MA

02138 (also other locations)

Whole Foods Market is generally more expensive but offers a very good variety of fresh produce and cheeses. It also carries lots of organic food and other organic products, including cosmetics and some clothing. WIC checks not accepted.

### **Trader Joe's**

[www.traderjoes.com](http://www.traderjoes.com)

1317 Beacon Street, Brookline, MA 02446

748 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, MA 02139

211 Alewife Brook Pkwy, Cambridge, MA 02138 (Fresh Pond)

(Other locations in Coolidge Corner, Back Bay, and Arlington Heights).

Somewhat cheaper than Whole Foods Market, the eccentric Trader Joe's is particularly good for ready-made meals, sauces, and snacks, as well as European cookies and chocolate. No WIC checks.

### **Star Market / Shaws**

[www.shaws.com](http://www.shaws.com) / [www.starmarket.com](http://www.starmarket.com)

49 White Street, Cambridge, MA 02140 (Porter Square)

699 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138

275 Beacon Street, Somerville, MA 02145

(also other locations, including one near MIT)

This is a standard supermarket with average prices and lots of locations.

### **New Deal Fish Market**

[www.newdealfishmarket.com](http://www.newdealfishmarket.com)

622 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA 02141

If you're looking for fresh fish and seafood, this is the place.

**Russo's**

[www.russos.com](http://www.russos.com)

560 Pleasant St, Watertown MA 02472

All kinds of fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, cheeses, pasta, bakery... and also flowers. You need a car to get there but it's worth visiting.

**Costco**

[www.costco.com](http://www.costco.com)

2 Mystic View Road, Everett, MA  
02149 71 Second Avenue, Waltham,  
MA 02451

To shop at Costco, you must purchase an annual membership card. In addition to food, Costco carries clothing, electronics, and household supplies. Most things are sold in bulk quantities, and prices are low. It is possible, but not easy, to get to Costco by public transport; going by car is both easier and quicker.

**Food from other countries**

- Chinese: Chinatown (109 Lincoln St, Boston, MA 02111)
- Korean: H Mart (581 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139)

**Clothing and Shoe Shopping**

(Some inexpensive options suggested by our members – check store websites for other locations)

**H&M**

<http://www.hm.com/us/>

- Downtown Crossing: 350 Washington St., Boston · 100 Newbury Street, Boston ·  
Cambridgeside Galleria, 100 Cambridgeside Place, Cambridge

**Payless Shoes**

[www.payless.com](http://www.payless.com)

- Watertown Mall, 550 Arsenal St, Watertown · Cambridgeside Galleria, 100  
Cambridgeside Place Cambridge · Central Square: 599 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge

**Maxx**

[www.tjmaxx.com](http://www.tjmaxx.com)

- Downtown Crossing, 350 Washington Street, Boston · Fresh Pond Shopping Center, 198  
Alewife Parkway, Cambridge · Cambridgeside Galleria, 100 Cambridgeside Place Cambridge

**Marshalls**

[www.marshallsonline.com](http://www.marshallsonline.com)

· Downtown Crossing, 350 Washington Street, Boston · 500 Boylston Street, Boston · Arsenal Mall, 455 Arsenal Street, Watertown

### **Wrentham Village Premium Outlets**

[www.premiumoutlets.com](http://www.premiumoutlets.com)

1 Premium Outlet Boulevard, Wrentham, MA 02093  
(outside Boston, almost an hour's drive from Cambridge)

### **Charity Shops**

There are several charity/thrift shops in Cambridge. These are great places to pick up cheap clothes, crockery (plates, bowls, mugs, glasses) and other household items (furniture, clothes hangers, books etc). Many of these places will also take donations, so when you move back home you can donate your household goods to them.

### **Charity Shops**

· Christ Church Thrift Shop (17 Farwell Pl, Cambridge – Harvard Square) · The Goodwill Store: [www.goodwillmass.org/](http://www.goodwillmass.org/) 520 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge – Central Square 230 Elm St, Somerville – Davis Square

### **Places to donate items**

On the Rise, a day shelter in Cambridge for homeless women and women in transition. They are often looking for household items to help women who are transitioning into permanent housing. <http://www.ontherise.org/>

Boomerangs in Jamaica Plain. If you have enough furniture, they will come and pick it up. Boomerangs is run by AIDS Action committee, and all proceeds go to support their programming. <http://www.shopboomerangs.org>

### **Restaurants**

(As recommended by our members) Don't forget to check out Yelp for restaurant reviews: <http://www.yelp.com/cambridge-ma-us>

*Tippling:* The standard tip in Cambridge/Boston is 15-20% for a sit-down meal and \$1 per drink at the bar.

### **Food Trucks**

Food trucks have become a fixture of Cambridge and Boston for lunch. Try fare from local

restaurants at (often) cheaper prices. The schedule of food trucks at Harvard can be found here:  
<http://www.commonspaces.harvard.edu/food-truck-schedule>

## **Restaurants**

### **Otto Pizza**

1432 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge - Phone: 617-873-0888

### **Le's Restaurant (Vietnamese soups and more)**

36 JFK Street, Cambridge, MA 02138 - Phone: 617-864-4100

### **Border Café (tex-mex and cajón)**

<http://www.bordercafe.com>

32 Church Street, Cambridge - Phone: 617-864-6100

### **Clover Food Lab (Sandwiches)**

<https://www.cloverfoodlab.com>

1326 Massachusetts Ave - Phone: 617-395-0240

### **Anna's Taqueria (Mexican)**

[www.annastaqueria.com](http://www.annastaqueria.com)

1 Porter Square, Cambridge (Porter Square) - Phone: 617-661-8500

236A Elm Street (Davis Square) - Phone: 617-666-3900

446 Harvard Street, Brookline - Phone: 617-277-7111

### **Redbones (Barbeque)**

[www.redbones.com](http://www.redbones.com)

55 Chester Street, Somerville - Phone: (617) 628-2200

### **Café Sushi**

<http://cafesushicambridge.com/>

1105 Mass. Ave, Cambridge - Phone: (617) 492-0434

### **Ryles Jazz Club**

[www.rylesjazz.com](http://www.rylesjazz.com)

212 Hampshire Street, Cambridge – Phone: (617)

876-9330 Very popular Sunday jazz brunch.

### **Minado (Japanese Seafood Buffet)**

[www.minado.com](http://www.minado.com)

1282 Worcester Road, Natick, MA 01760 – Phone: 508-647-0495 About half an hour's drive from Cambridge.

**Shanghai Fresh (Chinese)**

[www.theshanghaifresh.com](http://www.theshanghaifresh.com)

735 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge - Phone: (617) 868-8877

**Bakery and Cafe**

**Tatte Bakery & Café**

[www.tattebakery.com](http://www.tattebakery.com)

1288 Mass Ave, Cambridge - Phone: (617) 441-4011 318 Third St, Cambridge - Phone: (617) 354-4200

**Crema Café**

[www.cremacambridge.com](http://www.cremacambridge.com)

27 Brattle St, Cambridge – Phone: (617) 876-2700

**Flour Bakery + Café**

[www.flourbakery.com](http://www.flourbakery.com)

114 Mount Auburn St, Cambridge – Phone: (617) 714-3205

**Darwin's** [www.darwinstd.com](http://www.darwinstd.com)

1629 Cambridge Street, Cambridge – Phone: (617) 491-2999

**Hair Salons**

A good place to check for local salons is Yelp: <http://www.yelp.com/cambridge-ma-us>. Most hair salons give a discount for first-time visitors.

Some local hair salons that members have used are:

**Judy Jetson:** 1765 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge (617-354-2628). <http://judyjetson.com/>

**Hair by Christine and Co:** 217 Highland Avenue, Somerville (617-776-6470).

<http://www.hairbychristineandco.com/>

**Franco Hair Studio:** 157 Hampshire Street, Cambridge (617-547-3867).

<http://www.francoshairstudio.com/>

**Faron Salon:** 1784 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge (617-354-3313). (This salon apparently offers a Hijab Friendly, Women Only section). <http://portersquaresalon.com/>

**Central Barber Shop:** 1611 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge. (617-354-3596)

**Charlie's Barber Shop:** 1794 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge. (617-876-1116)  
<http://www.charliesbarbershopcam.com/>

# Annual Events

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Here is a selection of events that usually occur in Boston/Cambridge throughout the year. Check the internet/local news for more details.

## **March**

St Patrick's Day parade: <http://www.southbostonparade.org/>

## **April**

Red Sox Opening Day: <http://boston.redsox.mlb.com/>

Boston Marathon: <http://www.baa.org/races/boston-marathon.aspx>

## **May**

Duckling Day Parade: <http://www.celebrateboston.com/attractions/make-way-for-ducklings.htm> Harvard Square Mayfair Festival: <http://www.harvardsquare.com/>

Harvard Commencement: <http://commencement.harvard.edu/>

## **June**

Cambridge River Festival

## **July**

Fourth of July: <http://www.july4th.org/>

## **August**

Restaurant Week: <http://www.restaurantweekboston.com/>

Tax Free Weekend

Tanglewood Music Festival: <http://www.bso.org/Home>

## **September**

Moving Day (students moving in and out of apartments)

## **October**

Head of the Charles Regatta: <http://hocr.org/>

Halloween (in Salem):

<http://www.salemweb.com/hh/> Oktoberfest in

Harvard Square

## **November**

Harvard vs Yale (The Game)

Thanksgiving – Black Friday

Sales

## **December**

Boston Common Tree Lighting Ceremony

Holiday Pops (Boston Symphony Orchestra):  
<http://www.bso.org/> Boston Ballet Nutcracker:  
<http://www.bostonballet.org/>



## References

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Many references in this booklet are taken from Harvard and external websites. Please check whether the information provided is still up-to-date before making plans or decisions.

Our members' experiences have been a valuable source of information for this booklet and yours could be too. If you find information that you think would be useful to share with others in next year's issue, please e-mail us at [info@hsspa.harvard.edu](mailto:info@hsspa.harvard.edu). Other feedback and suggestions are also welcome.

**We hope you enjoy your stay at Harvard!**

