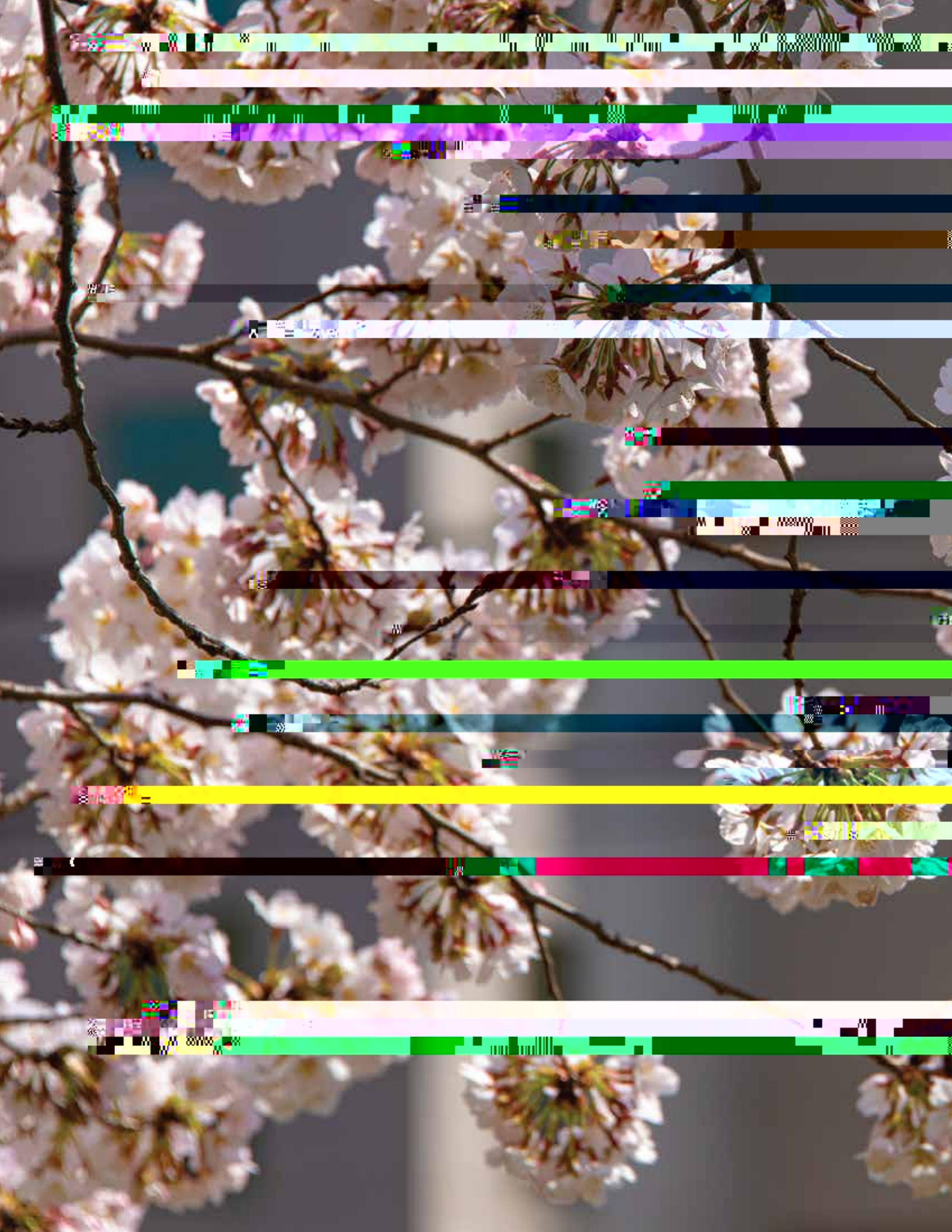




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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY





# EAGLE LIVING GUIDE

# WELCOME TO YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

American University's Office of [Community and Government Relations](#) works with our students and our neighbors to help ensure we live in clean, safe, and friendly communities on campus and off. The Eagle Living Guide provides valuable information that will help make living in your neighborhood a rewarding experience.

Our office is available to assist you however we can. Please reach out to us by email at [communityrelations@american.edu](mailto:communityrelations@american.edu) or by phone at 202-885-2146 or connect with us via Twitter and Instagram @AUinYOURHOOD.

We are here to support you, and we hope you have the best year yet!

## EXPECTATIONS OF AU STUDENTS

When you register and enroll in classes at AU, you agree to abide by the university's policies and [Student Conduct Code](#). It's important to note that your actions as a student apply to actions both on and off campus, and it's your responsibility to know your rights and responsibilities as an AU student.

The Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Services adjudicates alleged violations of non-academic conduct. This conduct includes violations for students as well as student organizations. For example, if your student organization was alleged to have violated AU policy, it is possible your organization and you may go through the conduct process separately.



## University Response to Student/Neighbor Concerns



Meeting with  
Office of the Dean  
of Students



Private meeting  
with the Director of  
Conflict Resolution  
Services



Individual meeting  
with the Director of  
Student Conduct /  
Eagle Living Guide



Administrative  
meeting, including  
a meeting with  
the Director of  
Student Conduct







## SECURITY DEPOSIT

A security deposit is an amount of money paid by a tenant to a landlord to provide protection to a landlord in case a tenant fails to meet obligations in a lease or rental of a property. Here are things you can do to protect your security deposit while you are renting and when you move out.

Before you move in all your belongings, inspect the apartment/house. Make a list of any damage like cracks or holes in walls and floors, water damage, appliances not working properly, etc. Make sure you sign and date the list and ask your landlord to do the same. Taking photos during your walk through is increasingly important—this action will prevent the landlord from charging you for pre-existing damage.

If you have caused any damage beyond normal wear and tear, the landlord may keep all or a portion of your security deposit to cover damage when you move out. Under DC law, the landlord can inspect your apartment three days before to three days after you move out. A Notice of Inspection should be sent to you at least ten days prior to the inspection. If possible, try to be present for your inspection. If you are unable to be there for the inspection, take time-stamped pictures of the entire property after you have removed all your belongings. Save these pictures to confirm any damage after the landlord completes the final inspection.

### As a tenant, you should know your rights regarding your security deposit:

- A landlord cannot charge a security deposit that exceeds the amount of a full month's rent.
- All security deposits must be deposited by the landlord into an interest-bearing escrow account and held in a trust in a financial institution in DC.
- A landlord can use a security deposit to cover repair expenses for damage to the property caused by the tenant or the tenant's guests.
- A landlord cannot use a security deposit for damage caused by normal wear and tear.
- A landlord has 45 days to either return the deposit or notify you by certified mail of plans to withhold some or all the deposit.
- If you do not receive your security deposit, you must first submit a demand letter by certified mail to your landlord requesting the return of your security deposit. If the landlord continues to improperly withhold your security deposit, you may have to bring legal action against the landlord.

## RENTERS' INSURANCE

Your landlord's insurance policy does not cover any of your personal belongings. We recommend that all renters purchase some form of renters' insurance. Renters' insurance can protect your personal property in the event of theft or damage. Also note it is relatively inexpensive—just dollars a month.

Check with your parents or legal guardian to find out whether you are covered under their insurance policy. Students are typically covered under their parents' policies when living in on-campus housing, but they are typically not covered when renting privately-owned property off campus.

Speak with an insurance agent to understand the array of policies and coverage options. Normal coverage may include fire, lightning, windstorm, explosion, vehicles, smoke damage, water damage from plumbing, and theft. Floods, normal wear and tear, and earthquakes may not be covered.





## SAFETY AND SECURITY

### AMERICAN UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT (AUPD)

[AUPD](#) is present 24 hours a day, seven days a week to support and respond to safety and security needs on the campus. As an off-campus student, AUPD can assist you in contacting the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) or other law enforcement for off-campus crimes or safety concerns.

AUPD officers are commissioned in Washington, DC, and have full law enforcement authority on all AU-owned and-leased property. AUPD officers are required by law to attend the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area's Campus Public Safety Institute Police Academy.

AUPD officers respond to all police, fire, and medical incidents on campus with the assistance of university police dispatchers. AUPD uses the Crisis Intervention Response model when responding to individuals that may be experiencing a crisis.

You can contact the AUPD at **202-885-2527** for non-emergency needs or **202-885-3636** for emergencies.

AUPD offers several services and programs to the university community including AU Alerts, police escorts, self-defense classes and the RAVE Guardian App and Safe Ride to Campus program described in more detail below:

**RAVE Guardian App:** Be sure to download the Rave Guardian app (available on the Apple App Store or Google Play) to transform your phone into a personal safety device. The RAVE app helps students find contact information for emergency help. The app discreetly contacts the AUPD via a panic button that transmits your location, and a safety timer notifies your selected guardians and AUPD when the button is not deactivated. You can also send anonymous crime tips to AU Police through the app.

**Safe Ride Back to Campus Program:** The goal of AUPD's Safe Ride Back to Campus Program is to get you out of a potentially dangerous situation by calling AUPD directly on your phone or through the Rave App. AUPD will then call a LYFT driver to pick you up and bring you straight to AUPD. The LYFT goes directly to AUPD to pay for the ride. This program allows AUPD to be aware of what happened, which could be a potentially dangerous situation, and AUPD can follow up with the appropriate support and a ride home, if you need it.

## HOME SAFETY

Keep your home and yourself safe by ensuring your landlord has installed working locks on all doors and windows in your residence and making it a common expectation among your roommates that your home remains secured when no one is home.

An important part of building a community of care is to help with reporting anything you see as suspicious. Remember the phrase, "If you see something, say something." Be familiar with those who live near you, pay attention to common vehicles, and alert neighbors if you see any suspicious activity in or near their properties during the day when you may be home and they may be at work. Call 911 if you suspect the police need to be involved.



Here are some tips to keep you safe when you are at home:

- Always lock the doors to your house.
- Contact your landlord immediately if you have concerns about the security of your house. The landlord is required to provide effective locks for your residence.
- Leave an exterior light on at night.
- Keep your valuables out of sight to discourage theft.
- Record information about your electronics including the make, model, and any serial numbers in the event they are stolen or missing.
- Do not go in, but call 911 and wait for police if you come home and see an open door or broken window.
- Ask your landlord for a security camera covered fully by the city through DC's [Private Security Camera Rebate Program](#).

## FIRE SECURITY

Take these fire safety actions immediately when you move in, and be sure you check them regularly:

- Avoid using extension cords whenever possible.
- Do not overload electrical outlets.
- Keep combustible materials like curtains, sheets, and rugs away from appliances that may heat up or have open flames.
- Make sure piles of paper and trash are kept tidy and away from wires and heating appliances.
- Do not leave cooking food unattended and have a fire extinguisher accessible in your kitchen. Cooking food left unattended may activate the smoke detector, which will alert the rest of your building or house to evacuate the premises.
- Be careful when smoking inside your home.
- Ensure fire extinguishers are in optimal working condition and accessible.
- Check your smoke detectors.
- Make an **evacuation plan** and an alternate evacuation plan in the event of a fire or a gas leak. Discuss a meet-up location in case of an emergency. Make sure you have a fire escape ladder in all upper-level rooms.





## LIVING IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

### YOU AND YOUR NEW RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY

One of the most important aspects of living on-campus is understanding that you are now a part of a residential community. There are new expectations and responsibilities that come with living in neighborhoods such as Spring Valley, Wesley Heights, Tenleytown, Fort Gaines, AU Park, Cleveland Park, and Palisades.

As a student, you will find yourself among a diverse population of families with children, working professionals, elderly residents, and new homeowners whose lifestyle and investment in their properties and neighborhood is likely based on a much more long-term vision of what type of community they have chosen to live in. While you may be living in the area around the AU campus for one, two, or three years, please keep in mind that the residents and families who live in these areas have invested their livelihoods here. They want to be able to enjoy their homes and property year-round in a safe and friendly manner.

To ensure that you are welcomed and able to successfully engage with your neighbors, it is important that you know, understand, and abide by DC ordinances established by the local government, any homeowner or condominium or tenant association regulations, and AU policies that may apply to on-campus behavior.

### BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Nothing will influence your quality of life as an on-campus student more than being a good neighbor. To that end, we highlight ways for you to develop positive relationships with your neighbors as it is an important aspect of building a community of care.

You only get one chance to make a first impression. So, introduce yourself or have your roommate group introduce yourselves together. By introducing yourself, you increase your own social and professional network. It makes the neighbors feel more comfortable and allows you to make a good first impression. When introducing yourselves to neighbors, it is important to share the best way to contact each other. Sharing phone numbers and/or email addresses can create an open line of communication.

Periodically, look for opportunities to perform random acts of kindness...pull neighbors' garbage bins back toward their houses, toss newspapers closer to their doors, pick up trash on the sidewalk when you see it, offer to help with yardwork. Small favors don't go unnoticed.

If you establish a relationship early on, it can help in creating trust and respect among you. Showing respect towards your neighbors goes a long way in strengthening that relationship. You don't have to be best friends, but it's critical to show and treat your neighbors the same way you would like to be treated. It's much easier when there is a conflict to talk it through if you know each other's names and have had some positive interactions.



## HOSTING SOCIAL EVENTS

Social events on campus can help or hinder your on-campus living experience. As humans, we are social in nature. However, having social events with excessive or frequent noise can lead to serious consequences, especially as a DC resident. Some of those consequences can be DC citations and lead to AU consequences as a violation of the [Student Conduct Code](#).

Inviting your neighbors to your events, such as barbecues and cookouts, is one of the great ways to build positive relationships with your neighbors. Interacting with your neighbors in environments like these provides a space for you both to get to know each other more and build on the relationships you have established.

## DC Noise Laws

American University encourages neighbors to contact the MPD when noise is disrupting them, particularly in the late-night hours. No neighbor wants to knock on a student house door to ask that you and your guests lower the noise level, and they do not want to wait until the next day to address it with you directly. The reality is neighbors want the noise to stop so they, and perhaps their children, can sleep or otherwise enjoy their homes.

MPD will be the first to answer and to arrive on scene but may invite AUPD to come to the scene to assist in identifying students. AUPD can capture additional information as it relates to students involved in the situation

Social events at your home or activity on the street with excessive noise can lead to serious consequences within the District of Columbia and could be potential violations of the [Student Conduct Code](#).

You need to be aware of two noise laws.

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# MAINTAINING YOUR HOME

## KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Necessary maintenance and upkeep of your property will be quite different depending on where you live. If you are living in a house, you are likely responsible for the upkeep of your property in and around your house. This maintenance could include mowing the grass, maintaining the gardens, weeds, and/or painting. Keep your backyard and porches clear of debris, old furniture, and trash.

Inside the house, you are responsible for the upkeep of basic appliances such as cleaning stoves, washers and dryers, and your refrigerator. Your lease may include any specific information about maintaining indoor spaces, so contact your landlord if you have questions or concerns.

In an apartment or complex, your property manager will maintain the grounds and surrounding areas. Additionally, most upkeep of your apartment is included, and you should contact your building's property manager right away to fix anything that may be broken. While living in an apartment complex, your community may have specific rules and guidelines to follow, whether it be modified quiet hours, smoking policies, or trash disposal rules, among other things.

Most importantly, regardless of where you live, you should read your lease. Your lease may contain important information regarding basic maintenance and upkeep of your home and the responsibilities of both you and your landlord. For example, if you are responsible for mowing the grass, then you should determine how you will mow it because excessively long grass is subject to a fine in DC.







## TRASH AND RECYCLING

Trash and recycling collection procedures differ depending on if you live in a house or an apartment complex. The [DC Department of Public Works \(DPW\)](#) collects trash from single-family residences and residential buildings with three or fewer living units.

If you are living in a house, you will be responsible for putting your trash and recycling on the curb for the city-sponsored trash collectors to pick up. DC has specific pickup and drop-off times. Check the DC Department of Public Works website to [verify your collection day\(s\)](#) and check the [holiday pickup schedule](#). Make sure your trash bins have secure lids and are not overflowing. You can email [dpw@dc.gov](mailto:dpw@dc.gov) with any questions.

If you live in an apartment complex, your trash will be collected through an apartment-sponsored program. Most apartment complexes have trash chutes or centralized trash disposal locations where you place your trash and recyclables.

### Bulk Trash

By appointment, DPW collects from residential households that receive DPW trash collection large, bulky items—like furniture and appliances—that cannot be picked up on a normal trash day. (Bulk trash is not a large quantity of bagged trash or loose items.) Learn more about [bulk trash collection](#) on the DPW webpage. Those who live in apartment complexes should contact their landlords to see what arrangements might be made as the city's bulk trash collection services are unavailable for commercial properties that contain more than three units.

### Zero Waste DC

With the District of Columbia's goal of diverting 80 percent of the city's waste by 2032, DPW has expanded its list of recyclable items. Typical items that can be recycled are paper, plastic, cardboard, metal, glass, cartons, paper and plastic lids, and to-go containers. Styrofoam and foam packing are not recyclable. Find out what can be recycled at [zerowaste.dc.gov](http://zerowaste.dc.gov).

## SNOW REMOVAL

If you are residing in a house, you will be responsible for clearing pathways, sidewalks, and stairs around your property after a snow or ice storm. [DC law](#) states you must remove snow and ice from walkways within the first eight hours of daylight after a storm ends. If the snow is not removed within the first 24 hours after the storm ends, you may be issued a fine from the city. Sidewalks and pathways should be clearly visible and easily accessible. Help your elderly neighbors out with snow removal around their properties. They will appreciate it and be friendly to you in return.





## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

As an on-campus student, you have many other resources at your disposal, and we would like to highlight a few of the DC resources here:

- [Advisory Neighborhood Commissions \(ANC\)](#) are non-partisan, neighborhood bodies made up of locally elected representatives called advisory neighborhood commissioners. The commissioners are their neighborhood's official voice in advising the DC government on issues affecting their neighborhoods. The neighborhoods closest to the AU campus are within the [ANC 3D](#) and [ANC 3E](#) boundaries. Find out which ANC covers your neighborhood with the [ANC Finder](#).
- [DC City Services](#), also known as 3-1-1, is a toll-free number to request assistance with city services and information for residents. Some of the things you can call them for are to report a missed trash pickup, schedule a bulk trash pickup if you have a lot of things to give away, and report any city repairs like streetlamps, potholes, etc. An online request system is available.
- [Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs](#) (1100 4th Street SW, [dcra@dc.gov](mailto:dcra@dc.gov), 202-442-4400) protects the health, safety, and quality of life of DC residents by ensuring that houses and buildings follow the DC Housing Code. The department helps you understand the regulations around maintaining a healthy and safe living environment within your property or residence, specifically regarding code compliance and inspections.
- [Department of Health](#) (899 North Capitol Street NE, [doh@dc.gov](mailto:doh@dc.gov), 202-442-5955) is concerned with the health and safety of all DC residents and conducts inspections of homes regarding air quality, mold, and vermin infestations.
- [Office of the Tenant Advocate](#) (2000 14th Street NW, Suite 300; 202-719-6560) provides support for residents regarding their leases or landlords. This office also teaches you about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant within the community. It can be super helpful for you as a student if you are having issues with understanding your lease or need free legal advice with your landlord or property.

