

## CHAPTER 2 - HELPFUL HINTS FOR MOVING

Moving zaps your energy and can be disorienting, which can last for a couple of months. However, we know you will survive, just as we did. Once you arrive and get involved, you'll find things settle down quickly. To help you keep your sanity and survive during your transition, we've developed this chapter to help get you from where you are to where you are going. While this chapter is written with the developmental program participants traveling to Washington, DC in mind, most of the advice is applicable for any relocation. This chapter includes information about what you should do before you leave your Home Center, things you should do after you get to your Assignment Center, and all kinds of tips for in between. The following information is based on lessons learned from previous experiences - use the advice wisely and as applicable to your individual situations.

### Before Leaving Your Hometown

Surf the net first! Wherever you are going there are numerous useful sites on moving. For general moving information you might try <http://www.monstermoving.com/> or <http://www.movingcenter.com/mc.dll?page=home>.

Likewise, there are numerous sites dedicated to living in specific cities and neighborhoods. One URL recommended for the DC area is the Washingtonian Home Page, which provides tips on dining, private schools, doctors, etc. (<http://www.washingtonian.com/>). Most other institutions, such as utilities, real estate agents, newspapers, and school systems, have web sites that can be extremely useful.

Web Sites at the Field Centers:

Ames	<a href="http://www.netview.com/svg/">http://www.netview.com/svg/</a>
Dryden	<a href="http://www.palmdalecam.com/">http://www.palmdalecam.com/</a> <a href="http://www.cityoflancastrca.org/">http://www.cityoflancastrca.org/</a> <a href="http://www.lancasterchamber.org/">http://www.lancasterchamber.org/</a>
Glenn	<a href="http://www.cleveland.com/">http://www.cleveland.com/</a> <a href="http://www.nhlink.net/cleve/cle.htm">http://www.nhlink.net/cleve/cle.htm</a> <a href="http://www.travelcleveland.com/">http://www.travelcleveland.com/</a> <a href="http://www.cleveland.oh.us/">http://www.cleveland.oh.us/</a> <a href="http://www.cleve-visitors-guide.com/">http://www.cleve-visitors-guide.com/</a>
Goddard	<a href="http://www.mdisfun.org/">http://www.mdisfun.org/</a> <a href="http://www.baltconvstr.com/">http://www.baltconvstr.com/</a> <a href="http://www.dnr.state.md.us/">http://www.dnr.state.md.us/</a>

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

Johnson <http://cass.isc.nasa.gov/meetings/clearlake.html>

Kennedy <http://www.icflorida.com/>  
<http://cocoaf1.us1.myareaguide.com/>  
<http://www.digitalcity.com/orlando/towns/town.adp?city=Cocoa&state=FL>  
[http://www.brevardcounty.com/about\\_brevard/libraries.shtml](http://www.brevardcounty.com/about_brevard/libraries.shtml)

Langley <http://www.hamptonroads.com/>

Marshall <http://www.al.com/huntsvilletimes/today>  
<http://www.al.com/huntsville/>  
<http://www.huntsville.org/>  
<http://www.introhuntsville.com/>

### **Selecting Your Home**

a. Unless you are the adventuresome type, we recommend that you research several possibilities to minimize time wasted and find a place to live before you leave your home state. Call real estate companies; for the most part they are willing to help as much as they can. Also, look through the "FOR RENT Magazine" (Good Resource) or a similar reference for places you could be interested in and call for price information and general rental descriptions; most telephone numbers provided are toll-free. Reference [Chapter 3 - Housing Information](#) for more information on where developmental program participants have found housing in the past (Good Resource).

b. We recommend that you locate as close as possible to your office to minimize commute time. The heavy traffic in the D.C. area can be frustrating -- especially in bad weather. If you can find housing within walking distance to public transportation, as many of us did, you will find it a convenient, reliable and safe way to travel to and from work. If you are considering driving to work, it is recommended you live close to an I-395 access in Virginia. In Maryland, we recommend the Kennelworth Avenue, Route 50/Baltimore Washington Parkway Corridor. The closer that you are located to the district the better you are. Further out than the Duke Street exit in Virginia is not recommended.

c. Find out what the parking arrangements and rules are in your housing complex. Ask if there is a parking fee. If you bring two cars with you, find out if there are any additional charges. Remember-everything is negotiable. Another question to ask is whether or not underground

parking is available. This really came in handy during the "Blizzard of '03" and eliminated having to dig your car out of the snow.

d. For Headquarters developmental program participants, if you plan on searching for housing during your Orientation trip (if you are in the DC area) it would be a good idea to first settle on what area you wish to live, (i.e., "The District", Northern Virginia, or Maryland). This will eliminate having to "zig-zag" over the entire area during your search and make efficient use of the short time you'll have during Orientation.

### **Moving Household Goods**

The **rules for moving your household goods** change year to year so it is best to get pre-approval from the Program Director prior to taking any action that is not clearly spelled out in an official document

a. If you have your unaccompanied baggage moved by a professional mover, first research different movers to obtain the most reasonable moving charge without compromising the quality of the move. Ensure that the shipment is direct and NOT dropped off at a warehouse for temporary storage.

b. When you have agreed to go with a particular mover, confirm packing and moving dates. Most moving companies do not guarantee their estimated dates of delivery; the best they can do to estimate delivery is to give you a window. Nominal delivery for 3000 - 4000 lbs. (average weight for 1 bedroom set, 1 living room set, kitchen items, clothes, and miscellaneous items) of unaccompanied baggage can range from 8-12 days after pick-up. Make sure you work the delivery window into your schedule.

c. Consider packing your goods yourself and/or wrapping your furniture with protective materials (i.e., bubble wrap, foam cushioning, cloth covers). Most movers will use up as much of the materials as they can to increase their packing charge. Some movers will include the packing charges in the total. Confirm these details before agreeing to go with a particular mover. NASA does not pay for packing.

d. Check, sign and keep a copy of the bill of lading (list of items shipped). Confirm the address of your new home and the telephone number of the person to be called if there are problems on the way. Give the driver specific directions.

e. Confirm the delivery date and time of your shipment with the movers.

f. Make arrangements for payment of movers. Verify beforehand if the movers you've selected accept personal checks; half the time they don't. You will need a credit card, certified check, cashier's check, bank check (drawn on a bank, signed by an officer), traveler's checks or cash.

g. If you decide to move your furniture yourself by renting a truck, ask for a discount. As some development program participants found, the price is often negotiable. Also, it is fairly easy and inexpensive to hire people to load and unload your furniture. Check for the least expensive place to return the truck--DC, Virginia, or Maryland. One arriving participant arranged to have the trailer returned by a departing participant so they both saved the one-way charges. Find out when their office is open, and whether you can leave the vehicle and put the keys in a drop box.

For renting your own truck, call each rental company (Ryder, Penske, U-haul just to name a few) because the cost varies greatly from month to month for each of the companies independently. The cost is based on supply and demand.

If your pickup location has a lot of trucks and the drop off location does not have many, then the price to rent will be low. The reverse is true also; if the pick-up location has a limited number of trucks and there are too many trucks at the drop-off location, then the price to rent will be much higher.

The key is to start looking early and continue to track the prices at each of the rental companies. When you feel comfortable with the rental cost, you can lock in at that price with just a credit card. At this point you are guaranteed at this price. However, if the cost drops prior to the pick-up day, some companies will give you the lower price, as long as you request it. Check with each company for their specific rules.

The rental company allows an adequate amount of time to reach your destination. It falls within the 300 miles per day limit that the government enforces. Don't wait until the last minute to rent trucks as they are not always available, especially near the end of the month.

If your trip requires you to stay at a hotel overnight, park your moving truck/trailer where it will be easy to get out the next day.

h. Consider moving insurance. Even though your belongings are covered by home or renter's insurance at each of your addresses, many insurers only cover 10% of your belongings elsewhere, like in storage or on the road. Obtain a copy of your mover's handbook to reference how to handle claims in case of damages or lost items.

## **Driving Your Personal Vehicle to Your Developmental Work Assignment Location**

If you drive your personally owned vehicle (POV) to your developmental work assignment location the reimbursement rules are essentially the same as any POV travel. You must travel at least 300 miles per day. If you have more than a one-day drive, a little planning ahead could save you time and energy. Consider the locations or potential locations where you plan to spend the night and access the GSA per diem website: <http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/perdiem/perd03d.html>.

There you can get a list of per diem rates for that state and a list of properties that meet the GSA per diem in that location. Also note that if the county where you spend the night is not listed, the lodging cost is only reimbursed up to the flat rate of \$60.00. If you are traveling with a pet, you might want to visit the website <http://www.takeyourpet.com> for pet friendly lodging and other helpful tips for making the trip as smooth as possible for both you and your pet(s).

## **Renting Furniture**

The question of whether to bring your furniture, rent, or buy furniture depends, of course, on your individual situation. Remember that NASA only pays for up to 350 lbs. You are on temporary duty and should not need your entire household. Some people move everything, while others bring nothing but clothes and some other small items. Some Participants elect to purchase rather than rent or transport needed furniture. Several stores carry relatively cheap sofas, tables, etc. such as Walmart, Target and IKEA. And don't forget to ask past participants and network for creative ideas. Some people have even picked up great free things off [craigslist.com](http://craigslist.com) or [FreeCycle.com](http://FreeCycle.com).

If you rent, most furniture rental companies have a minimum on the amount you can rent, as well as the number of months you must keep the furniture. Some non-smoking participants have had problems with stinky furniture so you might insist on "non-smoking" furniture. A few of the rental agencies used by participants are listed below. Some apartment complexes may rent to you. One participant negotiated to buy an apartment full of previously rented furniture for less than it would have cost to rent for a year, and will probably be able to sell it back! Another alternative to renting furniture may be buying stuff from the departing program participants. It may even be possible to buy a complete package to fill a 1 bedroom apartment for ~ \$1000.

Some furniture rental companies in the D.C. area:

## Cort Furniture Rental

Virginia 703-379-8846 (Alexandria);  
703-671-8900 (For Furniture Sales)

Maryland 301-881-7388 (Rockville)

D.C. 202-223-9241

## Aaron Rents Furniture

Virginia 703-941-7198 (Alexandria)

Maryland 301-424-3922 (Rockville)

Ask for the "Manager's Special" and make sure you ask about the rental period and the delivery fee. This means Aaron's will pick out your style of furniture, which will include: a sofa, chair, two lamps, living room table, end table, kitchen table with four chairs, bedroom dresser, nightstand dresser, and full size mattress and box spring with bed frame.

## House Insurance

- a. Check with your home insurance company to be sure that your home will be covered while away. A number of home insurers will not cover a home that has been empty for more than 30 days. Some will cover the house as long as there is documentation that someone is visiting the house at least every 30 days.
- b. Renter's insurance is recommended to cover those items you take with you to D.C.

## Mail

- a. Make a list of places you'll need to notify regarding your change of address--magazines to which you subscribe, credit card companies, etc.
- b. Arrange for the forwarding of mail by the post office if you wish to receive your mail in D.C. You may want to renew this in 6 months to catch any stragglers.
- c. Arrange to have your mail at your Home Center forwarded to your developmental work assignment location. Ask a trusted secretary or office mate to weed out the junk for you. If you are doing an assignment at a non-NASA location, you can usually arrange to have your e-mail

forwarded automatically to the new organization (call your local computer HELP desk for assistance).

d. If you plan to give up your residence, it might be a good idea to "acquire" a local street address by cultivating a good friend or relative. Post office boxes with no corresponding local street address aren't technically allowed, and will be canceled if the box clerk figures it out. You will also need a "home" address for tax purposes.

e. Keep in touch with your Home Center organization and co-workers. Make arrangements to have your mail forwarded to you on a weekly basis. Keep up to date on what's happening at your Home Center and keep them informed of your experiences. Don't become "out of sight, out of mind" to your Home Center.

### **Utilities: Telephone, Electricity and Cable TV**

a. Arrange to have all appropriate utilities disconnected at your home one day after departure (so you won't be without them).

b. Notify utilities of the date you'd like service to start in the new location.

c. Have the telephone in service at least one day prior to the moving van's arrival if you are having your unaccompanied baggage moved. Use the phone number that you are given with caution since it might change before it is installed (i.e., don't print the number on your checks in advance!).

d. The following is a list of utilities with their addresses and phone numbers in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

### **Telephone**

There is usually a connection charge that is not reimbursed. To avoid having to pay a deposit (refundable after 1 year) and advance payment, have your current telephone company send you a "Letter of Credit" and then forward it to the consultant with whom you initiate your new telephone service. They may waive your deposit if you have a good telephone credit history. The service consultant should ask you for your current area code and telephone number.

Request local telephone books (Virginia, DC, and Maryland) and Bell Atlantic IQ card(s)--at no charge. Arrange for long distance service separately with the company of your choice. Long distance will be billed with your local monthly bill (if you want it to be). Provide your local phone company your long distance provider.

For cellular telephone owners looking to transfer or establish new service, HQ periodically holds "cell phone days". Ask the Exchange Shop for the HQ contact and get the latest deals and providers. Some Center Exchange Shops may have this information for the local areas as well.

Note to Verizon customers: To initiate service anywhere, dial the local area code (202, 703, 301, or 410) then 954-6222.

## **Electricity**

If you do not have a "power credit history," you may need to pay a security deposit. If you have a "power credit history," the local power company usually will get the information they need from your service request. If you prefer, you could have your current power company send you a "Letter of Reference" and then forward it to the new utility.

### Virginia

Dominion Virginia Power <http://www.dom.com/customer>  
Baltimore Gas & Electric 800-685-0123

### District of Columbia (DC)

Pepco (DC, Prince George and Montgomery Counties)  
202-833-7500

Currently, there is no deposit required for new service. However, if you become delinquent in your bills, you may be required to pay a deposit of \$100 or more (depending on your location and the degree of the delinquent amount). Pepco may alter this no deposit policy in the future but they do not have plans to do so at this time.

## **Cable TV**

Obviously, this service is optional. Depending on where you live you may have a different cable company. Below there's a list of the different cable companies and their phone numbers. An estimated cost of basic monthly services, installation cost, and additional premium channels depends on the company. Rates in the area are nominal for cable television.

Comcast Cable of Alexandria  
617A S. Pickett Street  
Alexandria, VA 22304  
Customer Service: (703) 823-3000

Comcast Cable of Arlington  
2707 Wilson Boulevard



Arlington, VA 22201  
Customer Service: (703) 841-7700

Comcast Cable of Washington DC  
900 Michigan Avenue NE  
Washington, DC 20017  
Customer Service: (202) 635-5100

### **Internet Service Providers**

This is another optional service. Many Internet service providers (ISP's) offer nationwide service. If your ISP does, you will still likely need to contact them for a local access number in your new community.

### **Tax Records**

- a. Have your W-2's and other tax forms forwarded.
- b. Take your current year tax records and any tax information you will need to fill out your next year's return. It is a lot easier to pull the records together yourself than to try to tell someone where to find them.
- c. You may want to talk to a Tax Consultant regarding maintaining your residence, payment of state and local income taxes, etc.
- d. Your work address and permanent address are still at your Home Center. If you file Federal taxes using, for example, a Virginia address, you may be liable for Virginia State taxes in addition to those in your home state.
- e. Be aware of the tax laws: If you are continuing at your developmental work assignment location after your program year, it is suggested that you return to your home center for at least 30 days before starting the detail. If you are gone for more than 365 days from your home state, you are required to pay taxes on your per diem.

### **Automobile**

#### **a. General**

In some locations a car is a near necessity, while in others it may be a luxury. You will certainly enjoy an automobile in Washington, D.C.; however, it is not an absolute necessity. If you use public transportation (Metrorail, Metrobus, Virginia Railway Express), you will find that a tank of gasoline will last you a long time. Although driving to work at NASA HQ is an option (and many employees do drive or carpool), using public

transportation is highly recommended. If you are thinking about driving to work, parking costs \$120/3 months or \$8.00/day at the HQ garage.

b. Plan your trip.

If you decide to drive to your new residence, determine how many miles that it will take you. If the trip is a long one, have your car checked out to make sure it can make the trip safely. For HQ or GSFC program participants, if you happen to be near (or don't mind traveling to) the Orlando, Florida area, another option is taking the Auto Train, which leaves from Sanford, Orlando on a nonstop 16-hour trip to Lorton, Virginia (just south of Alexandria). This option will save the miles on your car and saves you from driving. Your car is carefully valet driven into the train while you board, and carefully valet driven out of the train while you depart. The train ride is comfortable, but a little bumpy during some parts of the trip. Calling Amtrak for price quotes as early as possible is definitely recommended.

c. Registration

Depending on where you choose to live, you may be technically/legally required to register your car after a number of weeks/months. Most developmental program participants probably choose not to do this. Virginia newcomers, with out-of-state tags and permits, must apply for a Virginia driver's permit and vehicle registration immediately on becoming a resident of the state. There is a 30-day grace period for new residents. If you want to know the specifics of the rules for Alexandria, the Department of Motor Vehicles' number is 703-761-4655. If you call, we recommend that you ask all your questions anonymously, as you may not like the answers you get. Virginia has something called a Personal Property Tax. If you live in one of these counties and decide to register your car in Virginia, you will have to pay this tax on your car (approximately 4.5% of its current value prorated for the actual length of time the car is garaged in the county). In some cities (e.g. Alexandria), you may have to pay this tax to get a parking sticker to park overnight on city streets even if you don't register your car. Registering a car may be considered establishing residency and could have major tax consequences.

We've heard that police (in both Virginia and Maryland) have been known to seek out and ticket parked cars with out-of-state plates that have been observed for a period of time. This has not been our general experience, although there have been a couple of instances where the police have worked cooperatively with apartment managers to try to crack down on cars not properly registered. There may be some advantage to living at a place that has indoor or private parking. Our only recommendation to you is to use your best judgment.

If you keep your car registered in your home state, make sure you make arrangements to renew your registration before it expires--either before you move, through the mail, have a friend/relative do it via a power of attorney form, or take care of it during a trip back home. Some states/counties require annual automobile emissions tests or other inspections before registrations can be renewed. This requires the car to be physically there. You may be able to have your car tested/inspected ahead of time, before you move to D.C.

d. Driver's License

Similar to automobile registration, again, use your best judgment concerning your driver's license. Make sure your license doesn't expire during your developmental program year. If it does, make arrangements to renew it with your home state--either before you move, through the mail, or during a trip back to your home state. Most states require that you be physically present to renew your license.

e. Insurance

You should consult with your current automobile insurance agent concerning coverage options for your car.

Mention the fact that you will be on extended travel under federal government travel orders. Some developmental program participants do insure their automobiles locally by simply transferring their coverage/policy to a local agent of the same company (assuming it's a national company).

### **Training/School**

a. Notify schools to forward transcripts if you plan to register for classes for credit.

b. Training funds are limited to \$1,000 per participant for a year. If you are on good terms with your organization, you may want to get them to agree to pay for some classes early in the year. You can also request training funds from your Home Center while on assignment.

### **Your Child's School / Day Care**

#### Levels K-12

If you are bringing school age children, you are in for the parenting adventure of a lifetime! Determining where you live will be extremely important, as the quality of school systems varies greatly. Private, both religious and non-religious, schools can be very expensive, and they fill up very quickly. Fairfax County Schools, on the other hand, are considered excellent and offer a wide range of services.

Make sure that you contact the school system your child will enter well ahead of time to determine the transcript requirements and the birth and physician documentation that will be required. Inquire about after school programs if both parents will be working.

## Virginia

### Alexandria

Alexandria City Public Schools  
2000 N. Beauregard Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22311  
(703) 824-6600  
<http://ci.alexandria.va.us/link/redir.pxe?www.acps.k12.va.us>

### Arlington County

Department of Human Services  
3033 Wilson Blvd., Suite 700-A  
Arlington, VA 22201  
(703) 228-1300  
<http://www.co.arlington.va.us/dhs/index.htm>  
[dhs@co.arlington.va.us](mailto:dhs@co.arlington.va.us)

### Fairfax County

10700 Page Avenue  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
(703) 246-2991  
<http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/>

## Maryland

Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation  
(301) 333-0193

### Anne Arundel County Public Schools

2644 Riva Road  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
<http://www.aacps.org/aacps/boe/ADMIN/PINFO/info.htm>  
(410) 222-5311

### Montgomery County

Montgomery Child Care Association  
2730 University Blvd. W, Suite 616  
Wheaton, MD 20902  
(301) 946-1213  
<http://www.mccaedu.org/>  
General Information: [mcca13@aol.com](mailto:mcca13@aol.com)

Prince George's County Public Schools  
14201 School Lane  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772  
(301) 952-6001  
<http://www.pgcps.org/>

District of Columbia (DC)  
Washington Child Development Council  
2121 Decatur Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
Phone: 202-387-0002

### **Child Care**

For individuals moving to the DC area who have young school age children and require before, and/or after school care be aware that the options, which are available depend highly upon your location and school system. In Alexandria, there is a before and after school program which is run by the Campagna Center on South Washington Street in Alexandria. Because this program has limited enrollment and the number of children requiring care exceeds the capacity of the program as well as the local daycare centers, if you are considering living in the Alexandria school system, you might want to secure child care prior to making any final commitments on housing. In addition, there are licensed daycare providers and a list of their names and telephone numbers is available from the city.

### **Medical/Dental**

- a. Gather medical and dental records, including recent X-rays, for all family members.
- b. Fill and transfer prescriptions.
- c. After you arrive and have successfully relocated, find out where the nearest hospital is located that accepts your health care benefits plan. Hopefully, you will not need to go because of a life-threatening emergency, but it will be beneficial if you have the information handy. Also, included in the following, are recommended doctors and doctor referral services.

NOTE: The importance of identifying and even meeting the general physician that you plan to use during your assignment at the start of your assignment cannot be emphasized enough. This may ensure that the

physician will promptly see you if needed and, more importantly, that you are comfortable with your selection of a physician.

Doctor Referral Services: Definitely Recommended

The American Medical Association has an online doctor-finder:

<http://www.ama-assn.org/aps/amahq.htm>

Maryland

AMI Doctor's Hospital (301) 552-8118

Johns Hopkins Hospital (301) 955-5000

Virginia

Arlington County Medical Society, Inc. (703) 528-0888

Fairfax County Medical Society, Inc. (703) 934-8818

<http://www.fcms.org/index.html>

Alexandria Hospital, Capitol Hill Hospital, Columbia Hospital for Women, Washington Hospital Center

Physicians Referral Service, Arlington Hospital (877) 424-3627

d. If you plan to use the HQ Physical Fitness Center, it may be a good idea to get a physical from medical services at your Home Center before you leave. Bring the records with you and save yourself some time when you sign up. If you plan to use the HQ Physical Fitness Center and have had any previous medical problems related to blood pressure or heart and you have not had a current treadmill test at your Home Center, you should expect to be required to have a treadmill at the Occupational Health Center before they will clear you to use the Fitness Center. Plan ahead and schedule an appointment for clearance. Due to limited staff, a treadmill test may take several months to schedule.

## Health Care

To obtain the best health care that fits the needs of you and your family, it is suggested that you obtain from your Center Personnel Office the latest copy of the booklet "Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB) 2003 Enrollment Information Guide and Plan Comparison Chart". This, and other related information is available at

<http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/>. This booklet contains information about enrollment in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Programs, including those offered in the Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia, and Maryland areas where most of you will be living. Note: The Washington, D.C., area is listed under the District of Columbia.

Review the FEHB booklet, talk to your Center Personnel Office, and identify those plans, which appear to be best for you. To help you decide,

each plan publishes an official brochure that details its benefits. These brochures are available through the NASA HQ Personnel Office or via the Internet.

Members of Blue Cross Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan do not have to change a thing when you come to Washington, or most other locations. This is a national plan for Government workers. Refer to <https://www.premera.com/wa/members/fep/fep.asp> for information and health care providers-

You may want to visit your potential new doctor or Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) Clinic and Hospital during your Planning Trip. The nearness of your health care provider and facilities may have a major impact on where you decide to live while you are working at HQ. Also, talk about health care to the people you meet during your Planning Trip to get the latest opinions on which doctors and HMO's are considered good or bad.

After you decide on a plan, your Center Personnel Office should help you complete the necessary paperwork. The justification for changing plans outside the usual open season is that you are changing duty stations. By careful planning, you can have your new Health Benefits Plan effective on the day you arrive at your developmental work assignment Center.

Also, when switching plans to one offered in your new area, you may find that your bi-weekly payroll deduction for health benefits may be less or more than you are presently paying!

## **Bicycle**

If you are coming to DC bring it! If you are an avid bike rider there are a lot of bike trails to use. Perhaps you can even ride your bike down to Mount Vernon! In fact, you don't even need to be an "avid bike rider" to enjoy the many bike trails in the D.C. area. See Chapter 6 for more information on bike trails.

## **Voter Registration**

Pick up some applications for absentee ballots so you can vote in your local district, or re-register when you get to HQ.

## **Grocery Stores**

The major grocery stores in the DC area are Giant, Safeway, Shoppers Warehouse and Harris Teeter's. Giant and Safeway seem to be the most popular however, Shoppers Warehouse is the cheapest. Get a check-

cashing card for the grocery store you plan to use. They generally do not accept checks without one. Safeway does not require a check-cashing card but in order to get their "special weekly deals" you have to apply for a Safeway Card. Also, be advised that food prices are generally higher than what you may be used to. Almost all of the chain grocery stores now accept credit cards. In Virginia, there's a Wal-Mart off of Van Dorn St. in Kingstown and a Target near Pentagon City Mall (just off of I-395).

### **Have Fun!**

- a. Start going out and exploring early! The year goes really fast.
- b. Get oriented to the area. Get a good street map of your area ("ADC" maps are good) and just explore! We found that a good time to drive around is 9 or 10 a.m. on Saturday/Sunday when the traffic is relatively light. Don't try to get oriented during weekday rush hours, however!
- c. Remember-- this is YOUR YEAR! Make the most of it and take advantage of it. You have the freedom and flexibility to make changes and correct situations. Always remember that you are here on a leadership development program. Take advantage of your opportunity to live in another area for a year. Go out and see and do things. There will never be enough time to see everything there is to see here. Do things with your fellow program participants on a regular basis. They are your support group and social group. You will come to appreciate this aspect as time goes by. It will go by fast.

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