



Graduate Student Life

Quick Reference Guide and To-do List for **NEW** Graduate Students

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BEFORE LEAVING HOME	3
GET NECESSARY DOCUMENTS, SUCH AS YOUR I-20 (INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS).	3
MAKE TRAVEL PLANS FOR ARRIVING IN BETHLEHEM	3
ARRANGE FOR TEMPORARY HOUSING	4
BRING MONEY FOR INITIAL EXPENSES	4
HAVE ENOUGH MONEY FOR ANNUAL EXPENSES	5
PREPARE FOR THE WEATHER IN BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA	5
BRING THE RIGHT CLOTHES (INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS)	6
FIRST DAYS ON CAMPUS	6
FIND AND FURNISH A PLACE TO LIVE	6
VISIT LOCAL GROCERY STORES	6
ATTEND ORIENTATION PROGRAMS THE WEEK BEFORE CLASSES BEGIN	7
FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE LAYOUT OF LEHIGH	7
GET AROUND LEHIGH	7
REGISTER FOR CLASSES	8
GET AN IDENTIFICATION CARD (MUST BE REGISTERED FOR CLASSES FIRST).....	8
SET UP AN EMAIL ACCOUNT AND LAN ACCOUNT	8
COMPLETE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING (INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS).....	8
GET A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN).....	9
FIRST WEEKS ON CAMPUS	10
OPEN A CHECKING ACCOUNT.....	10
APPLY FOR A DEBIT AND/OR CREDIT CARD.....	10
BUY HEALTH INSURANCE.....	11
GET YOUR TUBERCULOSIS TEST RESULTS AND IMMUNIZATIONS	11
GET ELECTRICITY, PHONE, INTERNET, & CABLE TV SERVICE.....	11
GET AROUND BETHLEHEM USING THE LOCAL BUS SERVICE	12

BEFORE LEAVING HOME

Get necessary documents, such as your I-20 (international students).

If you didn't get your I-20, your documents might have not reached Lehigh because there was a problem with the postal service. Mail does get displaced, even in the US. The best way to ensure receipt is to be in constant touch with the Graduate Coordinator of the department to which you are applying. The Graduate Coordinator first reviews your documents before forwarding them to the International Office. So first contact the Graduate Coordinator to check if s/he has reviewed and forwarded your documents. If so, contact the International Office to see if they have dispatched your I-20. This process takes weeks or even months, so plan your application process accordingly. Don't expect to have everything expedited at the last moment in the middle of a holiday season like Christmas or New Year. Many people are on vacation at these times.

Contact

Office of International Students and Scholars, Coxe Hall

<http://www.lehigh.edu/~intl/index.html>

Make Travel Plans for Arriving in Bethlehem

The Lehigh Valley has an international airport called LVI Airport (Lehigh Valley International). This is the best place to land since there are two buses that go from LVI airport to Bethlehem.

- The Lanta 'F' bus costs \$1.75 and takes about 45 minutes to get from LVI to 3rd & New Street in Southside Bethlehem (3 blocks from campus). Depending on the time of day, it runs once or twice an hour, so check the schedule at <http://www.lantabus.com>.
- The Transbridge Bus costs \$4 and takes about 15 minutes from the Industrial Park station to the Southside Bethlehem station, located at the intersection of Adams Street and Mechanic Street, three blocks from campus. However, you must take a cab or walk the one mile from the airport to the Industrial Park station. This bus runs on an irregular schedule, approximately every hour, so check the schedule at http://www.transbridgebus.com/sched_ny_west.htm
- You could also take a 10 minute taxi ride from LVI to Lehigh for about \$20, plus tip (usually 15%). The cabs are just outside the luggage area.

Apart from LVI airport, there are three main ports of entry into the U.S. near Bethlehem:

- Newark Airport (New Jersey), about 1 hour 30 minutes highway drive from campus
- New York Airport (JFK), about 2 hours, 30 minutes highway drive from campus
- Philadelphia Airport, about 1 hour, 30 minutes highway drive from campus

Ideally, fly in to Newark where you can easily catch a Transbridge bus for the Southside Bethlehem Bus Station as you exit the Newark airport. Buy the ticket at the airport. JFK airport should be your second option. If you arrive at JFK, keep in mind that the same buses pass through Newark airport on their way to Bethlehem. Arriving at Philadelphia Airport is the least convenient because you must take the SEPTA #R1 train from the airport to the 30th Street Train Station, walk one block to the outdoor bus shelter at 29th Street, then catch a Bieber bus to Southside Bethlehem.

If someone is going to pick you up by car, Newark is still the best option because Philadelphia and JFK airports have complicated roadways on which people easily get lost and almost always have traffic problems.

Look at the bus timings carefully before planning your flight. You don't want to be stuck at an odd hour with no bus in sight! The schedules can be found at:

- Newark – Bethlehem: **Transbridge Bus** (<http://www.transbridgebus.com>)
- New York – Bethlehem: **Transbridge Bus** (<http://www.transbridgebus.com>)
- Philadelphia – Bethlehem: **Bieber Tourways** (<http://www.biebertourways.com>)
- Philadelphia – Bethlehem: **SEPTA Trains** (<http://www.septa.com/>)

Arrange for Temporary Housing

Comfort Suites Bethlehem (5 mins.)
610-882-9700

120 W. Third Street, Bethlehem, 18018

<http://www4.choicehotels.com/ires/en-US/html/Search>

The Comfort Suites offers a 20% discount to Lehigh affiliated individuals and a free shuttle to campus and the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton (ABE) airport in Bethlehem. Mention your Lehigh affiliation when making a reservation. Each room has a microwave and mini-refrigerator.

Sayre Mansion Inn (B &B) (10 mins.)
610-882-2100

250 Wyandotte St., Bethlehem, 18015

<http://www.sayremansion.com>

The Sayre Mansion Inn has 19 antique filled rooms and serves complimentary breakfast for guests.

Bethlehem Inn (15 mins.)

610-867-4985

476 North New St., Bethlehem, 18018

http://welcome.to/The_Bethlehem_Inn

This Bed and Breakfast within the historic area of Bethlehem has three guest rooms and offers complimentary continental breakfast for guests.

Radisson Hotel (18 mins.)

610-625-5000

437 Main Street, Bethlehem, 18018

http://www.radisson.com/RAD/Hotel_Directory/HotelBio.jsp?brandCode=RAD&hotelCode=PA BETHLE&returnFlag=hotelDirectory&origin=originRes&locUni=65072

This historic hotel offers over 100 rooms, hosts evening Happy Hour, and provides a free shuttle to campus and the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton (ABE) airport in Bethlehem.

Morningstar Inn (20 mins.)

610-867-2300

72 East Market St., Bethlehem, 18018

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

This urban mansion in the heart of downtown Bethlehem's historic district has five guest rooms and serves a complimentary full breakfast for guests.

Bring Money for Initial Expenses

You should bring around \$3000 for general expenses during the first few months. This should see you through the first semester. This could be broken up into \$2500 in traveler's cheques and \$500 in cash.

You need to carry some cash because you might have to make payments for a bus (\$1.75), taxicab or at a restaurant when you first arrive.

The money you carry in cash should be broken into \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10, \$5 and \$1 bills. You could also carry some coins in the form of nickels (5 cents), dimes (10 cents) and quarters (25 cents). These will come in handy if you need to make a call from a public telephone booth when you exit the airport.

If you have an assistantship, beware that you will receive your first paycheck on September 15 even though you start work in August (or end of January if you enter during spring semester). Also, student loan checks are not available until two weeks after the 10th day of classes, which means you will receive your loan refund check in mid-September (or mid-February) at the earliest. If you have international government funding, please note that such checks are sometimes late due to troubles in that country.

Have Enough Money for Annual Expenses

Be aware that you may have large expenses upon your arrival. For example, you will need to purchase your textbooks, food, school and household supplies, furniture and other items. You might also have to buy different types of insurance and pay other fees. These items can easily cost at least \$1,000.

If you live off-campus, your initial costs will probably be high. When you sign a lease, a legal contract between you and the landlord, you may need to pay (1) a deposit (usually equal to one month's rent); (2) your first month's rent; and (3) your last month's rent. For instance, to rent an apartment that's \$500/month, you may have to give the landlord \$1,500 when you sign the lease. Whether you are on-campus or off, the good news is that your deposit is returned to you when you leave if you return the unit in good condition. In addition, a few people pay a "finder's fee" to a realtor who finds them an apartment.

Average Monthly Rent for an Individual in a:

- 1 bedroom: \$450 – \$650 + phone service + electricity + cable TV + heat + laundry
- 5 bedroom (share): \$300 + phone service + cable TV (utilities & laundry are usually included)

Be sure to budget extra money for a spouse and/or children. **In particular, health insurance for a spouse and children costs thousands of dollars and they must pay a deductible for every doctor's visit.** Information on free insurance for children is in the Graduate Life Guidebook available online at <http://www.lehigh.edu/gradlife>. University Health Plans, Lehigh's insurance broker also offers a dental discount program: click on "Insurance Products" at <http://www.universityhealthplans.com>.

Prepare for the Weather in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

The summers run from May-August and are rather warm and humid with temperatures usually around 25-30°C (approx 75-90°F). A T-shirt and shorts will do just fine. Fall precedes winter and is a transition from warm to cold weather. It runs from September-November. Temperatures gradually drop to around 2°C (35°F). You will need a jacket for Fall. Winters are quite cold with temperatures below 0°C (approx 32°F) most of the time. There will be snow from December-March, and since Lehigh is on a hill, you need shoes with good soles to walk on the slippery sidewalks and stairways. Sometimes there is heavy snow, but most of the time it's quite bearable. You will need proper winter clothing like a winter coat, sweater, gloves and a winter cap. Thermal underwear is required if you're especially sensitive to the cold, but not essential. No special snow boots are required unless you tend to have cold feet, in which case you should bring waterproof, insulated boots. Spring, which lasts about one month from March-April, has the most pleasant weather, with temperatures around 20°C (approx 70°F). You will need a light sweater at the most. For current weather reports go to: <http://www.weather.com/weather/local/18015>

Bring the Right Clothes (International Students)

Bring your regular wardrobe of T-shirts, shirts, jeans and trousers. Americans don't dress very differently than anyone else. You should definitely have a light sweater and a light jacket in case it gets cold on the flight. You should carry a set of formal clothes (suit, blazer and trousers, tie) for formal functions, such as a concert or an important meeting. Bring a pair of dark, formal shoes in addition to the ones you wear daily. A set of your ethnic clothes is also a good idea in case you attend a cultural gathering. International students are appreciated for attending cultural functions in their ethnic dress

FIRST DAYS ON CAMPUS

Find and Furnish a Place to Live

Be cautious of having people in Pennsylvania find an apartment for you. This might seem like a convenient option, but you may find yourself legally stuck with an apartment that you hate. It's much wiser to choose your housing yourself. Below are some tips for finding a place:

- The best time to look is in April for a lease that begins June 1. Most leases turnover on June 1 and last for 12 months. If you cannot come to look for an apartment in April, you will have fewer choices.
- Contact the graduate clubs. Links to the club websites are at <http://www.lehigh.edu/gradlife>
- Contact other students, such as those in your department or friends-of-friends
- Read the Before You Sign booklet, available online at <http://www.lehigh.edu/gradlife> under the "Housing" section. It contains information about leases, landlords, and other valuable information regarding renting a place.
- Use the housing links at <http://www.lehigh.edu/gradlife>. Click on the "Housing" link in the upper right hand box.
- Use the Residential Services' landlord listings, located at: <http://www3.lehigh.edu/studentlife/slhousingervices.asp>
- Consider the Lehigh owned Saucon Village apartment complex which has 134 units and is 3.5 miles from campus or Warren Square D, one block from campus. Contact Maria Hernandez at mh01@lehigh.edu or 610-758-5053.

Once you have a place to live, you will know what you need to buy. NOTE: Many apartments are unfurnished or only partially furnished, but tenants sometimes leave their furniture when they move out.

- Check the Graduate Life Guidebook at <http://www.lehigh.edu/gradlife>, for a list of stores that sell inexpensive and used furniture.
- International Students are provided a shopping trip during orientation by the International Office.
- Check Lehigh University's electronic "For Sale" bulletin board for inexpensive furnishings at <http://luna1.cc.lehigh.edu:83/SALE> (login and password are "guest" if prompted). These are mostly used items sold by students, faculty and staff.

Visit Local Grocery Stores

There are various grocery stores around Bethlehem/Allentown. The ones close to Lehigh are:

- **Ahart's Market** (at the corner of Montclair Avenue and Broadway, one block from Packer Avenue). Full service grocery store, including a small bakery and deli.
- **Price-Rite** (on Fourth between Taylor and Webster Streets). Specializes in Latin food and also offers pots and pans.
- **Giant Food Store and Pharmacy** (<http://www.giantpa.com>). Large grocery store.
- **Wegmans** (<http://www.wegmans.com/about/storeLocator/results.asp?region=6>). Huge grocery store with large gourmet section.
- **CVS Pharmacy**: for medicines and basic supplies
(<http://cvsstore.geoserve.com/scripts/esrimap.dll?Name=L&Com=fo&Db=DLRCvs&Ds>)

Attend Orientation Programs the Week before Classes Begin

There are **THREE** different orientations provided by three different offices, **plus one** TA/Lab RA training program. All of these sessions cover different information and are on different days so you can attend all of them. However, please make sure you are pre-registered for all of them!

1. **FREE** General Orientation by the **Office of Graduate Student Life**: information on university resources, a campus tour, and opportunities to meet colleagues.
2. **NOT FREE** International Student Orientation by the **Office of International Students and Scholars**. This program is for newly arrived international students and scholars and includes presentations, question-and-answer sessions, and the opportunity to meet Lehigh officials who can assist you in many ways.
3. **FREE Departmental orientation** by individual departments.
4. **FREE** TA/Lab RA Training (plus Lab Safety training for TAs and RAs working in laboratories) by the Office of Graduate Student Life: required for new Teaching Assistants. TAs and Lab RAs who fail to complete the required training and testing will not be allowed to continue with their assignments. Lab Safety training is federally mandated for anyone working in a laboratory. Check with your advisor/supervisor on your training and testing requirements. All new graduate students are welcome to attend the TA/Lab RA Training, which could be useful to you if you are offered an assistantship at the last minute.

Familiarize Yourself with the Layout of Lehigh

You can find the Lehigh University campus map at: <http://www3.lehigh.edu/about/lumapsdirections.asp>

Get Around Lehigh

Lehigh has its own bus service that serves Lehigh's three campuses which are spread over a large area:

- Main campus is relatively flat and is easy to navigate by foot or bicycle.
- The Goodman Campus, which has some of the athletic facilities, is 3 miles over a steep hill and most commonly reached by car or bus.
- Mt Top campus, home to Biology, Chemical Engineering, some programs in Civil Engineering and the College of Education, is on the top of a steep hill. Some people bike or walk there, but most people take the bus or drive.
- The bus stops are strategically placed for convenience, and one can get to any place on campus using this bus. The bus routes and schedules are at: <http://www.lehigh.edu/~intransp/routes.html>

Register for Classes

Registration usually takes place during orientation week. Please contact your department to get more information about how and when to register for classes. You will need to obtain a Personal Identification Number (PIN) from your department before you can register online.

1. Select your courses from the current class schedule.
2. Visit your faculty advisor to get your course selection approved and submit it online to the Registrar.
3. If selection of courses is done in writing, then submit your course selection to the Registrar.
4. Pay your Bursar's bill
5. Don't miss any deadlines; you will have to pay a fine if you do!

Contact:

Registrar's Office, Alumni Memorial Building
610-758-3200
<http://www.lehigh.edu/~inrgs/index.htm>

Bursar's Office, Alumni Memorial Building
610-758-3160
<http://www.lehigh.edu/~inburs/>

Get an Identification Card (Must be registered for classes first)

Lehigh University issues full-time students an identification (ID) card. It is a small card with a personal photograph, a student number, and other important information on it. A Lehigh student ID card is required to borrow materials from the libraries, to use the University meal plan, to charge items at the Bookstore, to participate in the South Mountain GOLD Plus program, and to be admitted to athletic facilities and events. You must register for classes before you can get an ID card.

Contact:

Student ID Office, Ulrich Student Center – 1st Floor
610-758-5843
<http://www.lehigh.edu/~inluid>

Set Up an Email Account and LAN Account

When you receive your picture ID, you will be given instructions on how to get a network ID and password. These instructions are designed to help you independently login to the campus system. You must first get the ID card. Twenty-four hours after your ID card has been activated you will be able to get your network ID and password.

Contact:

Computing Center (Entrance is below Maginnes Hall)
610-738-3830
<http://www.lehigh.edu/ir/new/index.html>

Complete English Language Testing (international students)

English language testing is required for all incoming (new) students whose first language is not English. Testing is used for placing new students in appropriate classes.

The law:

To retain high standards for all of its students and faculty, Lehigh complies with the Pennsylvania fluency law to which other top universities comply:

PA Act 76 requires that universities test instructional faculty (for whom English is a second language) in the use of the English language and requires universities to certify that those individuals are fluent.

What International Teaching Assistants must know:

Students who wish to be TAs must prove English fluency before they begin working as a TA by either taking a SPEAK test or TSE (Test of Spoken English). Classes and tutoring are available to those students who do not pass the test. However, please note a couple of important facts:

1. Students who pass the SPEAK with a conditional score (200- 225) must attend a class (ESLP 12) concurrently with their teaching assignment, then retake and pass the test to retain their TA position for the following semester.
2. Students who do not reach the minimum score before their TA position begins cannot teach and will lose their Teaching Assistantship and its funding.
3. Students who do not pass are NOT eligible to teach, and they must wait 8 weeks before re-taking the tests, **so it is wise to study and practice before taking the test the first time.**

The Test of Spoken English (TSE), administered by ETS, is acceptable in place of the SPEAK test - students must have a score of 55 - 60 to be fully eligible for a TA position.

Please contact the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program to schedule a testing date and time.

Contact:

ESL Program, Coxe Hall

610-758-6099

<http://www.lehigh.edu/~inesl>

Get a Social Security Number (SSN)

You must be in the United States for at least ten days before applying for your Social Security Number (SSN).

If you will be receiving paychecks or want to open a checking account, you must have a Social Security number. If you apply in person at the Social Security Office, you will need a letter from OISS and an application form. Bring all your immigration documents with you.

Social Security Administration Office

555 Main Street

Bethlehem, PA 18015

Mon-Friday: 9:00am - 4:00 pm

1-800-772-1213 or 610-691-5117

<http://www.ssa.gov>

FIRST WEEKS ON CAMPUS

Open a Checking Account

To open a checking account at the on-campus bank, you need a Lehigh ID card and a valid passport or a Social Security number.

Contact:

Wachovia Bank, University Center (second floor)

610-758-2265

<http://www.wachovia.com>

Apply for a Debit and/or Credit Card

You can ask for a debit card when you open a bank account. The use of a debit card is usually accompanied by a PIN number that you must keep secret. Whenever you use your debit card, you will be asked to enter your PIN. This is to ensure the security of your transaction.

Debit cards are directly linked to your bank account. Money is deducted from your account every time you use your debit card to make a payment. Thus, you are limited to spending the amount that is in your bank account.

Although debit cards seem to function like credit cards, there are important differences. With a debit card, the money is deducted immediately from your bank account the day you use it, and the amount you can spend is limited by your bank account balance. With a credit card, the money is added to a monthly bill and you can spend up to the credit limit that the credit card company stated in the contract with you. Also, you never pay interest with a debit card, but you might have to pay lots of interest with a credit card, especially if you do not pay the entire bill for several months. As a result, credit cards lead some people into terrible debt and “bad credit history”.

Visit these links for more information on debit cards and their advantages and disadvantages:

<http://www.aarp.org/money/creditanddebt/Articles/a2002-08-14-ManagingMoneyDebitCards.html>

<http://www.thebeehive.org/money/debit-cards.asp>

<http://www.uga.edu/isl/adjust/adjbankca.html>

Every time you properly use credit you add to your credit history. When you buy products or services today and pay for them at a later date you are using credit. If you pay your bills on time, you will establish a “good credit history”. Thus, a credit card, but not a debit card, can help you establish a “good credit history”. For instance, paying your monthly rent, phone bill, or credit card bill on time helps establish a “good credit history”. A good credit history is important to have if you are planning to rent an apartment, get a mobile phone, or finance any purchases. Without such a history you might have to pay large cash deposits in advance. You might also be rejected when you apply for a credit card, personal loan or home mortgage.

You can obtain your first credit card by searching for offers from credit card companies online or through brochures available on the university bulletin boards, and through postcards given out by the Lehigh Bookstore during the first week of classes. Most credit card companies have special offers for students. Look for credit cards with lower credit limits to start with, like \$300-\$1,000, low interest rates, and no hidden fees. Don’t bother applying for a card with a limit of \$10,000 – you will probably be rejected!

Visit these links for more information about what credit is and how you can establish a credit history:

<http://www.creditinfoweb.com/credit-report/credit-basics.htm>

<http://www.studentmarket.com/studentmarket/student-credit-card-basics.html>

<http://credit.about.com/library/howto/htbuild.htm>

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/credit/bbcr.htm>

Buy Health Insurance

Details about Lehigh's student insurance are online at <http://www.universityhealthplans.com>. You may purchase the insurance by submitting a completed enrollment form and the fee (called a "premium") to the Bursar's office up until the tenth day of class. If you miss the deadline, you will have to buy other insurance. Full-time students who are (1) receiving assistantships through Lehigh's payroll system, (2) getting paychecks on December 15 and May 15, and (3) up-to-date on their Bursar's bill (including the premium payment), are eligible for a subsidy to help pay for Lehigh's insurance premium.

International students and scholars are required to have health insurance. They are also strongly encouraged to purchase health insurance for their families. Even if you buy the Lehigh insurance, you should still obtain eyeglasses, basic medication, medical checkups, vaccinations and dental work from your home country before coming to the United States because it will be cheaper to do so than to use the insurance. US graduate students are strongly urged to purchase health insurance.

Note: If you do not have a Social Security number when you are applying for health insurance, please use code number 999-99-9999.

Get Your Tuberculosis Test Results and Immunizations

Lehigh requires meningitis immunizations of students who live in university owned housing. In addition, all international students **must** either (1) show proof of a recent tuberculosis skin test taken within ten days of arrival on campus or (2) take the free test given during International Student Orientation. Once you have taken the test, you must return to the Health Center 72 hours later to have the test read. **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GET YOUR RESULTS READ.** Those not complying might be excluded from attending class. If you miss these dates, then contact the health center. Though the TB test is free, there is a fee for the required treatment for individuals who test positive for TB.

In addition, students should be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, and rubella. Some vaccines are available at the Health Center. There is a fee charged for this service.

Contact:

Health Center, Johnson Hall

610-758-3870

<http://www.lehigh.edu/~inluhc/inluhc.html>

Get Electricity, Phone, Internet, & Cable TV Service

Electric Connection: Contact a local utility company for installation and connection:

PPL - 1-800-342-5775

UGI - 610-867-0571

Information can be found at <http://www.universitymovecenter.com>

Name, address, and date for service needed. A security deposit may be required.

Local Phone Connection:

Verizon - 1-800-464-0820 (<http://www.verizon.com>)

Information needed for your order:

- Complete street address with apartment number/floor
- Appearance of listing for the directory
- Information concerning previous telephone service
- Credit information, including employment

Contact the telephone company for installation and connection of services you would like. Information can be found at <http://www.universitymovecenter.com>

A deposit may be required if you have never had telephone service established in your name. If a deposit is requested for residential service, a written explanation will be provided stating the interest to be paid, and the terms and conditions for return of the deposit.

Internet: Contact a local internet provider for installation and connection. Refer to the phone book or <http://www.universitymovecenter.com> for resources or contact one of the following companies:

RCN - 1-800-746-4786

Service Electric Cable TV & Communications - 1-800-232-9100

Verizon Online - 1-888-587-7333

Information regarding Lehigh off-campus networking can be found at <http://www.lehigh.edu/helpdesk/offcampus> or by contacting 610-758-4357.

There is a free CD available at the Lehigh Bookstore which contains:

- Email client setup
- Antivirus software
- Spyware detection tool
- Off-campus dialup setup software
- On-campus wired connection software

The CD can be picked up during orientation week at the LTS Fair's Wired Station if you live on campus. If you live off-campus, It can be picked up at the Computing Center's Accounts Office Room 394.

Cable TV:

Service Electric Cable TV & Communications - 610-865-9100

RCN - 1-800-746-4726

Contact the local cable television company for installation and connection of services you would like.

Three months advance payment plus installation charge is usually required. Additional information can be found at <http://www.universitymovecenter.com>

Get Around Bethlehem Using the Local Bus Service

Yes, Bethlehem has a local bus service called **Lanta Metro**. One-way rides are \$1.75 and round-trip rides are \$2. Students use this service to move around Bethlehem and the local area including Allentown and Easton. The bus schedules can be found at: <http://www.lantabus.com>