

Using a rental agent in New York City can save you a lot of time, stress, and guesswork—especially in a market that moves as fast as NYC. A good agent helps you understand real pricing across neighborhoods, alerts you to listings before they hit the major sites, and guides you through competitive situations so you don't waste time on apartments that will be gone before you have a chance to act. They also help with paperwork, negotiation, and navigating building requirements (co-ops, condos, guarantors, income rules), which can be confusing, and overwhelming.

Ultimately, an agent is your advocate: they help you spot red flags, avoid scams, and make sure you're seeing the best options for your budget and lifestyle, so you can focus on finding a home.

Founded in 1873, Brown Harris Stevens (BHS) is the #1 privately held real estate firm in New York City. We cover the city itself, and the entire metro region (including Long Island, Westchester County, New Jersey and Connecticut) – so please feel free to reach out should your search criteria extend beyond the city limits. Our talented and tested agents would be thrilled to assist you with your home search.

Email us at nyusearch@bhsusa.com to get started!

Whether or not you decide to work with a BHS agent, here are some notes and guidelines to get you started on your rental search.

1. Preparation – What you should start thinking about ahead of time to make the most of your search.

- Define price range, apartment size, amenities, and preferred neighborhoods.
- What are your “must haves” and the things you are a little more flexible about?
- Plan to start your search 4–8 weeks before your desired move-in date.

2. Working With Your BHS Agent

- Share clear feedback on what you like and don't like.
- The agent will arrange viewings, typically these happen during business hours, but can vary by property. The agent will make all appointments based on your availability and work with you to make the most of your time.
- The agent will let you know what is needed to apply for an apartment and assist you in compiling everything.

3. Application & Lease Process

- Be prepared to act quickly once you find an apartment.
- Typical documents requested by landlords (these can vary by property): rental application, employment letter, previous landlord reference letter, bank statements (or proof of funds), pay stubs (a few months' worth), the previous year's tax form, and

credit report (agent can help you with this one).

- At lease signing, you typically pay first month's rent, security deposit, and the brokerage commission if you utilized an agent's services (as a longtime partner, BHS is happy to offer the NYU Langone community a special rate of one month's rent – agents usually charge as much as 15% of the annual rent). You are only responsible for compensating the agent you are working with, not the landlord's agent.
- Some landlords require certified checks for all expenses, others allow wires or even personal checks.
- Review lease and riders carefully (the agent can answer any questions you have about this).
- In certain circumstances a landlord may request that you have a guarantor (someone to ensure that you will pay the rent every month). If you do not have a person who can do this in the New York City metro area then you will either have to use an online guarantor program (insurant.com or theguarantors.com are two examples) or the lease guarantor program that NYU offers.

4. Planning for Move-In Day

- Keys and a final lease copy hand-off are coordinated with landlord/management. An agent will assist with this as well.
- Some buildings require a mover's Certificate of Insurance (COI) and/or a refundable move-in deposit to cover any potential damage to the building.
- Please keep in mind that buildings often have rules about when move-ins can happen (day of the week, and time) so definitely keep that in mind when you schedule your movers.

To work with a Brown Harris Stevens agent, send an email to nyusearch@bhsusa.com and someone from our team will reach out to get you connected with one of our rental specialists.

We look forward to working with you on your home search!