

William & Mary

International Family Welcome Book



Guide to Williamsburg:

Written by the International Family Network

Table of Contents	Page(s)
ISSP Services	3
About Williamsburg / About Gloucester	4
Housing in the U.S.	5
Schools & Childcare	5 – 7
Religious Centers	8
Driving & Local Transportation	9
Shopping	9 – 10
Opening bank account	11
U.S. Healthcare & Medical Providers	12 – 15
Getting a Library Card	15
English Language Resources	16
Things to Do	16 – 17

Welcome to Williamsburg!

Members of the International Family Network (IFN) wrote this handbook for international families. The handbook has a summary of resources and suggestions to help you transition to life in Virginia.

IFN members recommended all the information in this handbook. Current and past IFN members wanted to share their knowledge and experiences with you as you settle into your new life in Williamsburg. We hope that you will find this handbook helpful, and we wish you and your family all the best as you build your new life in Williamsburg.

We look forward to seeing you at upcoming ISSP and IFN events, as well as other university related activities!

With warm regards,

IFN members and the staff of the Office of International Students, Scholars & Programs (ISSP)



OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, SCHOLARS & PROGRAMS

WILLIAM & MARY

200 S. BOUNDARY STREET, WILLIAMSBURG, VA 23185 (physical address)

P.O. Box 8795, Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795 (mailing address)

PRIMARY PHONE: 757.221.3590

www.wm.edu/internationalstudents

The Office of International Students, Scholars & Programs (ISSP) helps with...

- ✓ Visa and immigration matters
- ✓ Understanding requirements for SSNs, driver's licenses, and Virginia State identification cards
- ✓ Information about campus resources
- ✓ Any problems you might have
- ✓ Making connections with W&M students, faculty, and staff
- ✓ Support for family members
- ✓ Getting involved with the local community

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About Williamsburg

Williamsburg, Virginia is approximately 240 km south of Washington, D.C. and located midway between Richmond and Norfolk. Adjacent to the campus is Colonial Williamsburg, which along with Jamestown and Yorktown comprise the Historic Triangle.

Other nearby attractions include outlet stores, an arts district, Busch Gardens amusement park, and convenient access to restaurants, shopping, and movie theaters. Next to campus at the corner of Prince George Street and Richmond Road are a cluster of popular delis, pubs and taverns.

Find your way around campus with this interactive [W&M Main Campus Map](#).



About Gloucester Point

Gloucester Point, Virginia is located 21 km east of Williamsburg and is home to the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). VIMS is located near the convergence of the York River and the Chesapeake Bay, with ready access to the Atlantic Ocean. Gloucester Point is also part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, a system of parks, wildlife refuges, and historic sites administered by the National Park Service.

Find your way around VIMS using this [VIMS Campus Map](#).



Housing in the U.S.

There are many U.S. housing resources and opportunities to explore. Some families arrange housing before arriving to the U.S. Others make [short-term housing arrangements](#) first and then look for rentals after arriving. Visit ISSP's [Off-Campus Housing](#) webpage for additional resources.

Before signing a lease, make sure that your potential apartment and neighborhood are safe. Pay attention to things like parking and street lighting. You can research the property management and the surrounding neighborhood to ensure that it is a safe area to live in.

Avoiding rental scams. Rental scams happen when a property owner misrepresent themselves. Below are some tips on how to avoid rental scams:

- Do not wire money as a deposit or payment of first and last month's rent. Wiring money is the same as giving cash; you cannot get a refund, even if you find out the offer was a fraud.
- Do not pay a security deposit, fee, or first month's rent before you have seen the property and signed a lease.
- Get a copy of the lease, signed by both you and the property owner/manager. The lease should have the terms of your rental, including fees, rent, and maintenance.
- More tips are available at [Avoiding Rental Scams](#) by USA.gov

Security deposits for utilities. Most utility companies (gas, electric, internet, etc.) require that you pay a deposit when initially starting them if you do not have a credit history or [social security number](#) in the U.S.

- After 1 year you should get this deposit back (typically in the form of a bill reduction).
- Deposits are typically \$200 or more for each utility that you set up, so make sure that you have enough money to get started (or arrange to split the costs of deposits with your roommates).

Registering Your Child for School

1. Find out which school district your child is zoned for

- Children attending public school are assigned to different school districts depending on where your family lives
- By law, your child is required to go to the school designated in that district
- Find out where to enroll your child by looking up your school zone:
 - Williamsburg and James City County at <https://wjccschools.org/>
 - York County at <https://yorkcountyschools.org/>
 - Gloucester County at <http://gloucester.schooldesk.net/>

2. Register your child for school

- After determining which school your child is zoned for, visit the school's website for information about registration
- Download and complete the registration form
- You will also usually need **to bring the following documents for the registration:**
 - Child's birth certificate
 - Two documents showing proof of residence (e.g., documents showing your address)

- Medical and immunization record. The child must have the required immunization before beginning school (see <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/immunization/requirements/>)
- Photo ID of the parent doing the registration
- Bring the completed registration form and required documents to your child's school. The child does not need to be present at registration

3. Questions to Ask

- What time does school begin and ends?
- If your child will **ride the school bus**, ask information about the bus route (e.g., pick-up and drop-off times, location of bus stop)
- Ask about special programs such as English as a Second Language classes, tutoring, after school activities, etc.
- Ask for a school calendar – it will show vacation days, exam days, and half-days.

Pre-Schools & Childcare

PRESCHOOLS & CHILDCARE	ADDRESS	PHONE	TIP
Goddard School	4280 Casey Blvd. Williamsburg, VA 23188	(757) 220-1740	Spots fill up very quickly in most pre-schools. Therefore, we recommend that you contact your desired pre-school/childcare to be placed on the waiting list before coming to the US.
Kensington School	3435 John Tyler HWY, Williamsburg, VA 23188	(757) 645-2047	
La Petite Academy	3190 Lake Powell Road Williamsburg, 23185 5260 Olde Towne Road Williamsburg, 23185	(757) 253-1938 (757) 220-0121	
Walsingham Academy	1100 Jamestown Rd. Williamsburg, VA 23187	(757) 229-2642	
Williamsburg Campus Child Care	114 Grigsby Dr. Williamsburg, VA 23187	(757) 221-2136	
Williamsburg Montessori School	4200 Longhill Rd. Williamsburg, VA 23188	(757) 565-0977	
Williamsburg Parent Cooperative Preschool	1333 Jamestown Rd. Williamsburg, VA 23185	(757) 229-3407	
WISC Kid's Club	5700 Warhill Trail Williamsburg, VA 23188	(757) 253-1947	
St. Stephen's Lutheran Preschool	612 Jamestown Road, Williamsburg, VA 23185	757-229-6688	

How to Find Childcare

W&M Child Care Listserv

The W&M's Women's Network maintains a listserv of over 200 W&M students who are interested in providing childcare for W&M faculty, staff, students, and scholars.

To advertise a babysitting opportunity, send an email message with a description of your needs and your contact information to childcare@lists.wm.edu

As with any childcare opportunity, we urge you to ask the students for **references and background information** before you hire them. The university is providing this listserv as a means to connect possible babysitters with families and have not vetted the students on the list.

Payment for Child Care in your home:

- Suggested payment: \$10.00 to \$25.00 an hour.
- Payment will be more for children under one year old.

Questions to ask a potential Babysitter or Nanny

- How many years have you been working with children?
- How many families have you cared for and how old were the children?
- Do you know First Aid and CPR?
- How will you handle an emergency?
- How much will you charge?

For more information, please refer to the [babysitters' interview and checklist](#).



IFN Ferry Trip

Religious Centers

For family members interested in practicing their faith, there are several religious centers to explore in Williamsburg and the surrounding cities.

Williamsburg

- [Buddhist Sangha](#) | Williamsburg, VA
- [Christian Churches & denominations](#) | Williamsburg, VA
- [St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church](#) | Williamsburg, VA
- [Mosque of Williamsburg](#) | Williamsburg, VA
- [Temple Beth El](#) | Williamsburg, VA
- [Shenkman Jewish Center](#) | Williamsburg, VA

Outside of Williamsburg

- [Saints Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church](#) | Newport News, VA
- [Islamic Center of Hampton](#) | Hampton, VA
- [Hindu Center of Virginia](#) | Richmond, VA
- [Richmond Sikh Gurdwara](#) | Richmond, VA
- [Gurdwara Singh Sabha](#) | Richmond, VA
- [Hindu Temple of Hampton Roads](#) | Chesapeake, VA



ACC Club playing Dreidel

Walking & Local Transportation

Apps such as [Google Maps](#) provides walking directions and is a great tool to help you find your way around campus and in Williamsburg.

The Williamsburg Trolley and Bus Lines provide a low-cost or method of local transportation. For the most up to date information on trolley/bus routes and schedules, visit the [Williamsburg Transportation \(WATA\)](#) website or use [Google Maps](#) for directions and a route planner.

Driver's Licenses, Virginia ID Cards, and Driving in the US

For detailed information regarding driver's licenses, Virginia ID cards, and registering a car, visit the [Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles \(DMV\)](#) website or ISSP's [Driver's License & ID Cards](#) webpage.

Williamsburg DMV: 5235 John Tyler Highway, Williamsburg, VA 23185. The **Jamestown Line** of the Williamsburg Bus System (WATA) will take you there.

Gloucester DMV: 6577 George Washington Memorial Highway, Gloucester, VA 23061

***You can drive with a valid foreign driver's license in Virginia.** However, it is advisable to apply for a VA driver's license if you plan to do a lot of driving in Virginia or other U.S. states. **It is required if you work or register a car in Virginia.**

Shopping

Grocery Stores

STORE	ADDRESS	TRANSPORTATION
WILLIAMSBURG		
Food Lion	1234 Richmond Road	Walking; Red bus line
	5251 John Tyler Hwy	Jamestown bus line
Trader Joe's	5224 Monticello Ave.	Red bus line
Aldi	1504 Richmond Road	Trolley
Plubix	4660 Monticello Ave.	Red bus line
Earth Fare	208 Monticello Ave, (757) 383-8890	Walking; Red bus line
GLOUCESTER		
Food Lion	2292 York Crossing Drive, Hayes	Driving
Aldi	549 Bland Blvd, Yorktown VA	Driving
Walmart	6819 Walton Ln., Gloucester Courthouse	Driving
Aldi	7176 George Washington Mem., Gloucester VA	

International Grocery Stores

STORE	TYPE	ADDRESS	NOTES
Aldi	Varies	1504 Richmond Road	Discounted grocery store (Europe)
Cost Plus World Market	Varies	5225 Settlers Market Blvd.	wide variety of international foods
Farm Fresh International Food	International Market	353 Chatham Dr. Newport News	Has a wide variety of international foods.
E-Mart	Asian/Latin/South Asian	13270 Warwick Blvd. Newport News	Has a wide variety of international foods.
Anand Bazaar	Indian Groceries	11745 Jefferson Ave Newport News, VA	Has a wide variety of Indian foods.
Kielbasa Euro Deli	Eastern European	113 Palace Lane, Suite P. Williamsburg	Polish food and more
La Tienda Tapas Bar & Market	Spanish	1325 Jamestown Road	La Tienda also has a restaurant.
Trader Joe's	Varies	5000 Settlers Market Blvd	wide variety of international foods
Royal Bazaar	Indian	2600 Tuckernuck Dr. Henrico, VA 23294	Located in Richmond VA, wide variety of Indian foods.
Ubbego African SuperMarket	African	12917 Jefferson Ave unit. Q Newport News, VA	Has a variety of African food, clothing, and skin care products
Mi Bendicion Latin Market	Latin American	820 Merrimac Trail Williamsburg, VA	
Sin Fronteras Latin Store 2	Latin Store		

Non-Grocery Items (home, clothes, bicycles, etc.)

STORE	ADDRESS	WEBSITE	TRANSPORTATION
WILLIAMSBURG			
Premium Outlets	5715-62A Richmond Rd.	www.premiumoutlets.com	Blue bus line
Target	4630 Monticello Ave.	www.target.com	Red bus line
Walmart	4670 Casey Blvd.	www.walmart.com	Red or Trolley
Habitat ReStore		www.visitwilliamsburg.com	

Opening a Bank Account

To open a bank account, apply in person at a local bank and bring these documents and information:

- Passport
- DS-2019
- I-94 information (print at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>)
- Your local address

Some banks require a Social Security Number (SSN) to open a bank account.

- This is a bank policy and not a federal regulation.
- Federal regulations allow opening a bank account without SSN if the customer completes form W-8BEN (form is available at the bank)

These banks will allow you to open a bank account **without an SSN**.

Most banks are open 9 am-5 pm (9:00-17:00), Monday – Friday. Some banks are open on Saturdays.

BANKS IN WILLIAMSBURG		
CHASE BANK	WELLS FARGO BANK	BANK OF AMERICA
202 North Henry Street 757-564-1040 <i>0.5 km from W&M</i> 4601 Monticello Ave 757-564-1055 <i>6.4 km from W&M</i>	1006 Richmond Rd 757-220-6200 <i>1.4 km from W&M</i>	4620 Monticello Ave 757-220-3250 <i>3.9 km from W&M</i> 1801 Richmond Rd 757-259-5481 <i>2.5 km from W&M</i>
BANKS NEAR VIMS		
TRUIST BANK	WELLS FARGO BANK	
7171 George Washington Memorial Hwy; Gloucester, VA 23061 (804) 693-0628 <i>17.7 km from VIMS</i>	2469 George Washington Memorial Hwy, Hayes (804) 642-2185 <i>3.5km from VIMS</i>	

Understanding the US Healthcare System

1. **Healthcare is expensive in the US.** Due to the very high cost of health care, insurance is **required** for all international students, J-1 scholars, and family members in J-2 status.
 - Insurance is not required for family members in F-2 status; however, we highly recommend that all family members have insurance coverage.
2. **Always carry your insurance card with you.** If you go to a hospital or see a doctor, you will need to show your insurance card when you arrive.
 - Ask if the doctor is covered by your insurance
 - Ask for the cost of the treatment and prescriptions (e.g., medication) and if it is covered by your insurance
3. The words “**Doctor**” and “**Physician**” mean the same thing. “**Primary Care Physician**” is a doctor you would visit if you were feeling ill or needed a routine check-up.
4. **Need to see a specialist?** To see a specialist (e.g., allergist), you usually need a referral from your Primary Care Physician (or the insurance will not cover it).
5. **Need medication?** You can go to a pharmacy or drugstore (e.g., CVS, Walgreens, and Rite Aid).
6. **Where to go for medical care**

Hospitals (Emergencies)

Only for serious emergencies such as severe bleeding, head injury, loss of consciousness, etc. **Call 911** for ambulance transport, if necessary.

Williamsburg

- **Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center** - 100 Sentara Cir., Williamsburg 757-984-6000
- **Riverside Doctors’ Hospital Williamsburg** - 1500 Commonwealth Ave., Williamsburg 757-585-2200

Gloucester

- **Riverside Walter Reed Hospital** - 7519 Hospital Drive, Gloucester, VA, 23061 804-693-8899

Urgent Care Clinics (Non-emergencies)

If you need medical care, and you cannot or are unwilling to wait for an appointment at your doctor’s office, but you are not sick enough to visit the hospital, then you should seek care at an Urgent Care Clinic.

Williamsburg

- **M.D. Express Urgent Care** - 120 Monticello Ave., Williamsburg 757-564-3627
- **Velocity Urgent Care** - 4374 Newtown Ave., Williamsburg 757-772-6124

Gloucester

- **Velocity Urgent Care Gloucester** - 5659 Parkway Drive, Gloucester 804-381-4361

- M.D. Express Urgent Care Gloucester - 6567 George Washington Memorial Hwy, Gloucester, 804-824-9962

7. Non-Emergency Transportation Options

- **Historic Taxi** - 757-258-7755 **Williamsburg Taxi** - 757-221-0004
- **Williamsburg Area Transit (WAT)** - Visit www.williamsburgtransport.com for more information.
- **Lyft** (rideshare service) - Access through smartphone app at <http://www.lyft.com>
- **Uber** (rideshare service) - Access through smartphone app at <http://www.uber.com>

Health Care Providers

Doctors and Physicians

PROVIDERS	ADDRESS	PHONE
Olde Towne Medical & Dental Center (will accept patients without insurance and patients can pay on a sliding scale)	5249 Olde Towne Road, Suite D Williamsburg, VA 23188	(757) 259-3258
Riverside Williamsburg Family Medicine	120 Kings Way, Suite 1400 Williamsburg, VA 23185	(757) 345-2555
Sentara Family Medicine Physicians	4374 New Town Avenue, Suite 200 Williamsburg, VA 23188	(757)-220-2795
Tidewater Physicians Multispecialty Group Williamsburg Family Medicine	132 Professional Circle Williamsburg, VA 23185	(757) 345-6491
Tidewater Physicians Multispecialty Group Colonial Family Medicine	4125 Ironbound Road, Suite 200 Williamsburg, VA 23188	(757) 345-2829

Women's Health Care (OBGYN)

OBGYNs are doctors who provide care during pregnancy, as well as women's health, and yearly wellness exams.

PROVIDERS	ADDRESS	PHONE
Olde Towne Medical & Dental Center (will accept patients without insurance and patients can pay on a sliding scale)	5249 Olde Towne Road, Suite D Williamsburg, VA 23188	(757) 259-3258
Riverside Partners in Women's Health	120 Kings Way, Suite 3400 Williamsburg, VA 23185	(757) 253-5600
Williamsburg Obstetrics & Gynecology	500 Sentara Cir Suite 105, Williamsburg, VA 23188	(757) 253-5653

Pediatrics (Children's Doctor)

PROVIDERS	ADDRESS	PHONE
Olde Towne Medical & Dental Center (will accept patients without insurance and patients can pay on a sliding scale)	5249 Olde Towne Road, Suite D Williamsburg, VA 23188	(757) 259-3258
Sentara Pediatric Physicians - Williamsburg	4374 New Town Ave, Suite 202 Williamsburg, VA 23188	(757) 253-5757
Sentara Pediatric Physicians - Gloucester	5659 Parkway Dr., Suite 230 Gloucester, VA 23061	(804) 210-1055
Pediatrics Associates of Williamsburg (PAW)	119 Bulifants Blvd. Williamsburg, VA 23188	(757) 564-7337

Dentists

Dental care is typically not covered under health insurance policies. It is usually necessary to have a separate insurance policy for dental care. If your insurance policy does not cover dental care, you should call the dentist's office directly, and ask how much they charge for non-insured patients, so you have an idea of how much it will cost. Some international families have used the **Olde Towne Medical & Dental Center** for their dental needs: 5249 Olde Towne Road, Suite D; Williamsburg, VA 23188 (757) 259-325



IFN Picnic

Pharmacies (medications and other items)

WILLIAMSBURG			
Walgreens (757) 229-0962	1309 Richmond Rd, Williamsburg, VA 23185	walgreens.com	Blue, Red, Green bus lines
CVS Pharmacy (757) 229-0015	1600 Richmond Rd, Williamsburg, VA 23185	cvs.com	Blue bus line
GLOUCESTER			
Walgreens	2418 George Washington Memorial Hwy, Hayes	walgreens.com	Driving
Rite Aid (804) 642-2115	2460 George Washington Memorial Hwy, Hayes, VA 23072	locations.riteaid.com	Driving

Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug laws

- Must be age 21+ to purchase and drink alcohol in U.S.
- Must be age 21+ to purchase and consume tobacco products in VA
- Open container law
- Drinking alcohol and driving
- Controlled substances; Cannabis – Federally NOT legal

How to Get a Library Card

The [Williamsburg Regional Library](#) offers free library cards for Williamsburg, James City County and York County residents. You can apply for a library card for free by showing a picture identification and proof of your current address (utility bill, lease agreement, driver's license, etc.). Children can also apply for library cards.

These public libraries have sections for children's books and DVDs. They also hold many activities for children such as story time for toddlers and babies.

The Williamsburg Library 515 Scotland Street Williamsburg, VA 23185 Phone: (757) 259-4040	James City County Library 7770 Croaker Road Williamsburg, VA 23188 Phone: (757) 259-7770
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English Language Resources

RESOURCE	PROGRAMS	CONTACT INFORMATION
W&M American Culture & Conversation Club (ACC club)	Conversation club run by ISSP for international families and scholars. The ACC club meets on Tuesdays from 10:00 am-12:00 pm at BCM. Information will be sent at beginning of each semester.	Mona David-Starman mstarman@wm.edu
College Partnership for Adult Learners (CPALs)	CPALs is a William & Mary student-run organization that offers free English language classes for the local community. Classes meet every Tuesday and Thursday evenings.	cpalearners@gmail.com
Literacy For Life	Classes and tutoring for international families: Literacy for Life provides individualized tutoring for adults in reading, writing, math, and English for speakers of other languages.	W&M School of Education 301 Monticello Avenue Williamsburg, VA 23187 (757) 221-3325 https://literacyforlife.org/

Things to Do

Need some inspiration on what to do outside of class? Check out some of our recommendations below! Don't forget to check your W&M email regularly for upcoming ISSP trips and events.

Things to Do in Williamsburg

- Visit [Colonial Williamsburg](#)
- [2nd Sundays Art & Music Festival](#) - Outdoor festival with live music and arts & crafts for purchase
- [Jamestown Beach](#) - Play in the sand, have a picnic, and watch an amazing sunset at this family-friendly park.
- [Williamsburg Premium Outlets](#) – Outdoor shopping complex
- Visit [Williamsburg Parks](#)
- [Busch Gardens](#) - Amusement park. Offers special deals for W&M students in October
- [New Town](#) - Shopping, restaurants, and a movie Theater

Things to Do near Gloucester

- [Yorktown Beach](#) - Rent kayaks, paddleboards and bikes to explore the area
- [Yorktown Riverwalk Landing](#) - Shopping and dining along the York River
- [YRC Cinema](#) - Movie theater
- [Machicomoco State Park](#) - Includes paved trails for walking or biking, campgrounds, and picnic areas
- [Gloucester Events](#)
- [Yorktown Events](#)

Places to Visit Outside of W&M and VIMS

- Places to visit outside of W&M and VIMS
- [Newport News, VA](#), 32 km from W&M
- [Hampton, VA](#), 47 km from W&M
- [Richmond, VA](#), 82 km from W&M
- [Virginia Beach, VA](#), 95 km from W&M
- [Washington, D.C.](#), 240 km from W&M