

Your Complete Guide to Moving to Lake Forest

Welcome to Lake Forest

Lake Forest stands as one of Chicago's most prestigious North Shore communities, known for its tree-lined streets, historic estates, and strong sense of community. Located approximately 30 miles north of downtown Chicago along Lake Michigan's western shore, this affluent suburb combines natural beauty with refined living. The downtown area features charming brick-paved streets with boutique shops, acclaimed restaurants, and beautiful architecture that reflects the town's rich history dating back to the 1850s. With its expansive properties, mature trees, and commitment to preserving green space, Lake Forest offers a peaceful retreat while maintaining convenient access to urban amenities.

What truly sets Lake Forest apart is its blend of tradition and quality of life. The community is home to Lake Forest College, several country clubs, and the Chicago Bears' training facility at Halas Hall. Residents enjoy miles of lakefront parks, equestrian trails, and nature preserves, along with a highly regarded school system that attracts families from across the region. The town's careful planning has preserved its historic character while supporting modern conveniences, creating an environment where families settle for generations and professionals find an ideal balance between suburban tranquility and metropolitan accessibility.

Planning Your Move

Timing your move to Lake Forest requires strategic planning, especially if you have school-age children. June through August represents peak moving season as families align relocations with school schedules, making it essential to book 3-4 weeks in advance during summer months. If your timeline is flexible, consider moving during fall or spring when you'll find better availability and less competition for your preferred moving dates. Weather in Lake Forest is generally favorable from late spring through early fall, though winter moves are certainly manageable with proper preparation. Experienced [Lake Forest movers handle these logistics daily and can help you navigate scheduling around school transitions and seasonal considerations.](#)

The logistics of moving in Lake Forest differ significantly from urban relocations. Most properties feature spacious driveways and garage access, which streamlines the loading and unloading process compared to city apartments with limited parking. However, the prevalence of multi-level homes means basement moves and careful staircase navigation are common. Many Lake Forest estates have circular driveways and ample space for moving trucks, but it's still important to assess your specific property's access points. If you're moving from a Chicago high-rise to a Lake Forest home, the transition from elevator buildings to multi-level houses requires different equipment and techniques. Professional movers familiar with North Shore properties understand these nuances and come prepared with the right tools for efficient service.

Living Here

Lake Forest offers an exceptional quality of life centered around family, education, and community engagement. The town is served by highly regarded school districts that consistently rank among the state's best, which is why many families carefully time their moves around the academic calendar. Elementary through high school options include both public and private institutions, with Lake Forest High School and several private academies drawing students from throughout the North Shore. Beyond education, daily life revolves around the town's many amenities: residents frequent the downtown Market Square for shopping and dining, spend weekends at the beach or forest preserves, and participate in community events throughout the year. The Lake Forest Library, recreational facilities, and numerous parks provide gathering spaces that strengthen neighborhood connections.

Commuting from Lake Forest to Chicago is straightforward for professionals who work downtown. The Metra Union Pacific North Line offers regular service from two Lake Forest stations, with the journey to downtown Chicago taking approximately one hour. For drivers, access to I-94 and Route 41 provides direct routes to the city and connections to other North Shore suburbs. Many residents appreciate this commutability while enjoying spacious properties that would be unattainable closer to the city. Lake Forest's housing stock primarily consists of single-family homes ranging from stately historic estates to newer construction, along with townhomes and condominiums near the downtown area. The variety of housing options accommodates different life stages, from young professionals to growing families to retirees seeking a walkable community.

Moving Tips for Lake Forest

1. ****Assess your property access early****: Walk through your Lake Forest home before moving day to identify potential challenges like narrow doorways, tight staircase turns, or basement access that might require special equipment or techniques.
1. ****Plan for garage and basement organization****: Most Lake Forest homes have significant storage space—develop a system before move-in day so boxes go directly to their proper location rather than creating chaos in your garage or basement.
1. ****Check HOA requirements if applicable****: Some Lake Forest neighborhoods and condo associations have specific moving rules, including designated moving hours, elevator reservations, or requirements to protect common areas during moves.
1. ****Coordinate utility transfers in advance****: Schedule connections for ComEd (electricity), Nicor Gas, and Lake Forest's municipal water service at least one week before your move date to ensure everything is operational when you arrive.
1. ****Consider furniture placement for multi-level homes****: Lake Forest homes often feature formal living spaces, family rooms, and finished basements—plan furniture placement for

each level in advance to avoid unnecessary repositioning after move-in.

1. ****Prepare for potential long driveways****: If your property has an extended driveway, ensure it's clear and accessible for a large moving truck, and consider how distance from the street to your entrance might affect timing.

Getting Settled in Lake Forest

Once you've moved in, take advantage of Lake Forest's welcoming community resources to ease your transition. Register for a library card at the Lake Forest Library, which offers far more than books—it's a community hub with programs, meeting spaces, and local information. Update your driver's license and vehicle registration at the local DMV facility, and familiarize yourself with trash and recycling schedules through the City of Lake Forest's website. If you have children, connect with your school's administration office to complete enrollment and attend orientation sessions. Explore downtown Market Square to discover local businesses, introduce yourself to neighbors during a walk around your area, and consider joining community organizations or recreational programs to build connections. The Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Chamber of Commerce and the city's Parks and Recreation Department offer directories of local services, from healthcare providers to handyman services, making it easier to establish your new household routines.

FAQs About Moving to Lake Forest

Q: How much do movers cost in Lake Forest?

A: Moving costs in Lake Forest typically range from \$800-\$2,500 for local moves, depending on home size and distance. A standard 3-bedroom house move averages \$1,200-\$1,800. Factors affecting price include the number of stairs, amount of furniture, and whether you need packing services. Summer months and month-end dates command premium pricing due to high demand.

Q: Do I need a moving permit in Lake Forest?

A: Lake Forest doesn't require specific moving permits for residential relocations, but if you're in a condominium or HOA community, you may need to reserve elevators or notify management. Some neighborhoods request advance notice for large trucks. Always check with your property management or homeowners association about their specific requirements and any regulations about moving hours.

Q: When is the best time to move to Lake Forest?

A: The best time to move to Lake Forest is late May through June or late August through

September. These windows avoid peak summer competition (July-early August) when families move between school years, while still offering favorable weather. Fall moves provide excellent availability and comfortable temperatures, though you'll want to complete your move before winter weather arrives in November.

Q: What makes moving to Lake Forest challenging?

A: The primary challenges include navigating large multi-level homes with basements, coordinating moves during competitive summer months when availability is limited, and managing the logistics of longer driveways on estate properties. Additionally, the distance from Chicago means timing your move to avoid rush hour traffic on I-94, and some historic homes have narrow doorways or staircases requiring careful furniture maneuvering.

Q: Why do families choose Lake Forest over other North Shore suburbs?

A: Families choose Lake Forest for its exceptional school system, safe neighborhoods, abundant green space, and strong sense of community. The town offers more spacious properties than closer-in suburbs, extensive forest preserves and lakefront access, and a walkable downtown with local shops and restaurants. Despite being 30 miles from Chicago, excellent Metra service makes commuting viable while providing a quieter, more residential environment.

Q: What should I know about Lake Forest homes before moving?

A: Lake Forest homes typically feature multiple levels including finished basements, requiring more time and planning than single-story moves. Many properties have two-car or three-car garages, circular driveways, and separate service entrances that can facilitate efficient loading. Older historic homes may have narrow doorways, steep staircases, or unique architectural features needing special attention, while newer construction offers more standard layouts with easier furniture access.

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