



An Expat's Guide

Moving to New York for tech

Pleased to meet you

We're Orange Quarter. We help companies hire the builders behind the future of tech and AI.

Our team operates across New York, London, Amsterdam and Berlin, working closely with early-stage companies building products, platforms and teams from Seed through Series C. New York remains one of the most influential tech ecosystems globally, particularly for companies operating at the intersection of technology, finance, media and AI.

Over the years, we've helped Product, Engineering and AI leaders relocate to New York to join high-growth companies across fintech, AI, marketplaces and platform businesses. Many of us have made the move ourselves, navigating visas, housing, cost of living and the realities of building a career in one of the world's most competitive cities.

If you're considering a role in New York, or planning a move to the US to join an early-stage tech company, this guide is designed to help you understand what to expect and how to prepare.

5 reasons we love living and working in New York

Proximity to opportunity

New York brings product, engineering, commercial teams and decision-makers into close proximity. For people who want their work to have visible impact, feedback loops are fast and ownership is tangible.

Depth of problem space

Many New York tech companies operate in complex, real-world industries like finance, healthcare, media and infrastructure. This creates technically challenging problems and long-term product depth.

Career acceleration

The pace of work is high and expectations are clear. For ambitious professionals, New York rewards ownership, execution and resilience with faster learning and responsibility.

Compensation and upside

Salaries are among the highest globally for tech and product roles, often combined with meaningful equity. While living costs are high, earning potential reflects the intensity of the market.

A city with energy beyond work

New York's neighbourhoods, food scene and late-night culture mean life doesn't stop after office hours. The city offers constant variety, movement and social opportunity outside of work.

Working

Before relocating to New York, it's important to understand how the US tech market operates and what this means for your career.

New York is one of the world's most influential tech ecosystems, particularly for early-stage and scaling companies operating across fintech, AI, marketplaces, media-tech and enterprise software. Many companies build products here with immediate access to global customers, capital and commercial partners.

For international candidates, New York offers scale and opportunity but it is also highly competitive. Understanding how hiring works, where roles are advertised, and how visa sponsorship fits into the process is essential to making a successful move.

In this section, we outline how to approach your job search, how hiring typically works in New York, and what to expect when relocating to the US for a tech role.

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Finding Work

New York's tech market is fast-moving and highly competitive. While there is a high volume of roles available, the most impactful early-stage positions are often filled through targeted outreach rather than open applications.

Job boards and platforms such as LinkedIn are useful for understanding the market, but senior and specialist roles, particularly within Seed-Series C companies, are frequently filled through headhunting and referrals.

Getting started

Be clear on company stage

New York's ecosystem spans everything from very early-stage startups to large venture-backed scale-ups. Knowing what stage you want to join will help focus your search and align expectations around pace, risk and ownership.

Optimise your LinkedIn profile

LinkedIn plays a central role in US hiring. Clear articulation of ownership, scope and impact is essential, particularly in a market where hiring managers scan profiles quickly and expect measurable outcomes.

Activate your network early

Referrals carry significant weight in New York. Let recruiters, former colleagues, founders and investors know you're open to opportunities, as many early-stage roles are filled through warm introductions.

Work with specialist recruiters

Recruiters embedded in New York's early-stage tech scene understand which companies hire internationally, how fast hiring moves, and where your profile is most likely to resonate.

Secure a role before relocating

Most international candidates secure a role before moving. This is particularly important in the US, where the right to work is directly tied to visa sponsorship and employer eligibility.

Choosing the right recruiter

New York is one of the most competitive tech hiring markets globally, which makes choosing the right recruiter especially important—particularly if you're relocating from outside the US.

Early-stage companies in New York often rely on headhunting rather than inbound applications for key Product, Engineering and AI roles. This means that many of the most interesting opportunities are never publicly advertised.

Work with a specialist

A strong recruiter will specialise in your function and understand New York's early-stage ecosystem. This includes knowing which companies:

- Hire internationally
- Have experience sponsoring visas
- Are building new teams rather than maintaining mature ones

Local market knowledge matters in New York, where hiring expectations, compensation and pace can vary significantly between startups and scale-ups.

Expect transparency

Hiring in New York moves quickly. A good recruiter will be transparent about:

- Role expectations and interview processes
- Compensation structures, including base, bonus and equity
- Visa sponsorship feasibility and timelines

They should also be direct about where your profile fits in the market and which opportunities are realistic.

Do your due diligence

Ask recruiters about their experience placing international candidates in the US, the types of companies they work with, and how they support candidates through offer, visa sponsorship and relocation stages. A recruiter's track record with sponsored hires is particularly important in New York, where visa eligibility, timing and employer readiness can vary significantly.

Choosing the right recruiter won't just help you secure a role—it can make the difference between a stressful relocation and a well-managed transition into life in New York.

See what our candidates say about us on [Google Reviews](#)

Or better yet, [contact us!](#)

New York Salaries

Salaries in New York's tech market vary widely depending on role, seniority and company stage. Early-stage startups often offer lower base salaries paired with equity, while later-stage scale-ups and well-funded companies typically provide higher fixed compensation, bonuses and more established benefits.

Compared to most global tech hubs, New York sits at the very top end of the salary spectrum for product, engineering and AI roles. While the cost of living—particularly housing—is high, compensation, career velocity and long-term earning potential often offset these costs for experienced professionals.

Salary expectations are usually aligned early in the hiring process. A strong recruiter will advise on realistic ranges for your background, benchmark offers against the current market, and support negotiations to secure the strongest overall package.

Right to work in the US

Your ability to live and work in the US depends on your nationality and visa status.

Understanding this early is critical, as it directly affects hiring timelines and which companies are able to engage with you.

If you're a US citizen or permanent resident (Green Card holder)...

You have the unrestricted right to live and work in the US. No visa sponsorship is required.

If you're coming from outside the US...

Most non-US nationals require employer-sponsored work authorisation. Common routes for tech professionals include the H-1B, O-1 or L-1 visa, depending on experience, background and employer eligibility.

Visa availability, processing times and success rates vary significantly by visa type. As a result, many early-stage companies will only consider candidates whose visa status aligns with their ability to sponsor.

Spouses and family members...

Partners and dependants may be eligible to join you under dependant visa routes linked to the main applicant's visa. Work rights for dependants vary by visa type, so it's important to review eligibility and timelines early in the process.

To apply for a US work residence permit, you'll need:

For most non-US candidates, the application process begins after securing a job offer and is sponsored by the hiring company. There is no single “standard” US work visa; instead, eligibility depends on your background, role and employer. Common routes for tech professionals relocating to New York include the H-1B, O-1 and L-1 visas.

While requirements vary slightly by visa type and individual circumstances, you will usually need to provide:

- A valid passport
- A signed employment contract or formal job offer from a US employer
- Proof that the role meets eligibility requirements for the relevant visa category
- Evidence that the role meets salary and labour condition requirements (where applicable)
- Proof of qualifications or professional experience relevant to the role
- Supporting documentation prepared by the employer’s immigration counsel
- Completed visa application forms and government filing fees

Depending on your nationality and visa type, you may also be required to:

- Attend a US embassy or consulate interview
- Provide a criminal background declaration
- Undergo a medical examination
- Submit certified translations of documents not issued in English

In most cases, your employer—often supported by an immigration lawyer—and your recruiter will guide you through the process, confirm which documents are required, and align timelines with your intended start date.



Annual leave and work–life balance in the US

The US does not have a statutory minimum for paid annual leave. Instead, time off is set by employers and outlined in employment contracts or company policies.

Most tech companies in New York offer paid time off (PTO) that typically ranges from 15–25 days per year, with some offering unlimited or flexible PTO models. Public holidays are usually granted in addition to this.

Working hours and expectations vary significantly by company and stage. Early-stage startups may expect higher intensity, while more established tech companies increasingly offer flexible or hybrid working arrangements. Performance is generally measured by output and impact rather than hours alone.

For many international candidates, New York offers a trade-off: a faster pace and higher expectations in exchange for strong compensation, accelerated career growth and exposure to complex, high-impact work—particularly in product, engineering and AI roles.

Practicalities

You've decided that the US is where you want to be. You've begun your job search (or secured a role) and now it's time to think about the practical side of relocating.

Moving to New York involves a number of administrative and logistical steps, from securing the right visa and housing to setting up healthcare, banking and essential services. In this section, we cover the key things you'll need to organise to ensure a smooth transition into life and work in the city.



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Language

New York is one of the most international cities in the world, and English is the primary working language across all industries. International professionals can integrate quickly without language barriers, particularly in tech, product, engineering and AI roles.

That said, New York's diversity means you'll hear dozens of languages spoken every day. Cultural awareness and direct communication are valued, and being comfortable working across different backgrounds and perspectives is essential in such a global environment.

Weather

New York experiences four distinct seasons. Winters can be cold, with snow and freezing temperatures, while summers are hot and often humid. Spring and autumn are generally mild and popular times to explore the city.

Weather can change quickly, particularly in winter, so layers and appropriate seasonal clothing are important. Daylight hours also vary noticeably across the year, with long summer evenings and shorter winter days.

Moving

How you relocate your belongings to New York will depend on where you're moving from and how much you plan to bring. Most expats take one of the following approaches.

International removals company

Hiring an international removals company is the most hands-off option. These providers manage packing, shipping, customs clearance and delivery, which can be especially useful if you're relocating furniture or moving with family. This is typically the most expensive option, but also the least stressful.

Shipping container or air freight

Shipping belongings by sea or air freight is common for international moves. Air freight is much faster but significantly more expensive, while shipping containers are more cost-effective for larger volumes but take longer to arrive.

If you choose this option, confirm whether door-to-door delivery is included, as port-to-home transport can sometimes be charged separately.

Travelling light

Many professionals relocating to New York — particularly for tech roles — choose to bring only essentials and rent furnished accommodation initially. This approach reduces upfront costs, simplifies the move and allows flexibility while you get to know the city and its neighbourhoods.

Finding a rental

New York's rental market is highly competitive, particularly in well-connected and desirable neighbourhoods. Demand consistently exceeds supply, and well-priced apartments often receive multiple applications within days—or even hours—of being listed.

Rents in New York are among the highest globally and vary significantly by neighbourhood, building type and proximity to public transport. Many newcomers choose to live in shared apartments when they first arrive, especially if relocating alone. This can help manage costs and provide flexibility while you get to know the city.

Most rental leases are issued for 12 months, though shorter terms are sometimes available at a premium. Given the commitment, it's important to choose an area you'd be comfortable living in for at least a year.

Tips when searching for a place to live

- Choose a neighbourhood based on commute, lifestyle and budget
- Start your search as early as possible
- Prepare key documents in advance (ID, proof of income, references)
- Ask colleagues, recruiters or friends for local recommendations
- Be cautious of scams and never transfer money without a signed lease

Landlords commonly request:

- A security deposit, typically equal to one month's rent
- First month's rent in advance
- Proof of income (often 40x monthly rent annually) or savings
- References and a credit check (or guarantor for new arrivals)

Property rental websites to check out

- StreetEasy – The most widely used rental platform in New York
- Zillow Rentals – Broad coverage across boroughs
- Apartments.com – Useful for managed buildings
- SpareRoom – Popular for flatshares and room rentals

If you're searching from abroad, many agents and landlords offer virtual viewings. However, some expats prefer to secure short-term accommodation first and then attend viewings in person once they arrive, as competition can be intense—particularly in peak rental seasons.

Where to live in the city?

New York is made up of five boroughs, each containing dozens of distinct neighbourhoods with their own character, pace and communities. Thanks to the city's extensive subway network, living outside Manhattan doesn't necessarily mean a long or difficult commute.

Where you choose to live will usually come down to a balance between budget, commute, lifestyle and space. Some popular areas to consider when house hunting include Williamsburg, Brooklyn Heights, Lower East Side and Long Island City. Read a bit about each below.



a. Williamsburg (Brooklyn)

One of New York's best-known creative and tech-adjacent neighbourhoods. Williamsburg is lively, well connected to Manhattan and packed with cafés, restaurants and nightlife. Popular with tech professionals, though increasingly expensive.

b. Brooklyn Heights

More traditional and residential, with historic brownstones and quieter streets. Brooklyn Heights offers easy access to Manhattan and is popular with professionals and families looking for calm without sacrificing location.

c. Lower East Side (Manhattan)

Energetic and dense, known for nightlife, food and culture. The Lower East Side attracts younger professionals who want to be close to the action and central offices.

d. East Village (Manhattan)

Lively, social and compact. East Village is known for bars, restaurants and a strong neighbourhood feel, appealing to renters who prioritise nightlife and walkability.

e. Upper West Side (Manhattan)

A more residential area with classic apartment buildings, parks and schools. Popular with families and professionals seeking space while remaining central.

f. Long Island City (Queens)

Rapidly developed with modern apartment buildings and strong transport links into Manhattan. Offers better value for space and is increasingly popular with renters priced out of Brooklyn or Midtown.

g. Astoria (Queens)

Known for its food scene, community feel and comparatively lower rents. Astoria attracts a mix of creatives, professionals and families and offers a slightly slower pace than Manhattan.

h. Bushwick (Brooklyn)

Less polished and more affordable, Bushwick has a strong creative and nightlife scene. Popular with younger renters and those prioritising space and value.

i. Park Slope (Brooklyn)

Leafy, family-friendly and close to Prospect Park. Park Slope is popular with professionals looking for space, schools and a quieter environment.

j. Harlem (Manhattan)

Culturally rich and increasingly popular, Harlem offers more space and comparatively better value than Midtown or Downtown, with good subway connections.

k. Financial District (Manhattan)

Well connected and increasingly residential. The Financial District offers modern apartments and proximity to offices, though it can feel quieter outside working hours.

l. Jersey City (New Jersey)

Technically outside NYC but well connected via PATH trains. Jersey City offers newer buildings, more space and lower rents, making it popular with commuters.

m. Downtown Brooklyn

A growing residential and commercial hub with excellent transport links. Downtown Brooklyn appeals to those wanting connectivity and newer developments.



Buying property

Buying property in the US is possible for international buyers, and many expats choose to purchase once they feel settled in New York. Property prices in New York are high by global standards and vary significantly by borough, neighbourhood and building type. While buying can offer long-term stability, the market is competitive and the process can feel complex if you're unfamiliar with the US system.

For this reason, many international professionals choose to rent first. Renting allows time to understand neighbourhoods, commute patterns, pricing and long-term suitability before committing to a purchase.

Buying a property in New York and getting a mortgage

US lenders assess both the property and the buyer's financial profile. In addition to the purchase price, buyers should budget for closing costs such as legal fees, lender fees, inspections and taxes.

Typically:

- Buyers are expected to contribute a deposit of 10–20% (often higher for international buyers)
- Closing costs can add 2–5% of the purchase price

Mortgage availability depends on income, employment status, visa type and US credit history. International buyers and recent arrivals often face stricter criteria, though larger deposits and strong income can improve approval chances.

Getting around

New York has one of the world's most extensive public transport systems, and most residents do not own a car.

Transport options include:

- Subway
- Buses
- Commuter rail (LIRR, Metro-North, NJ Transit)
- Walking and cycling

Most people travel using contactless payment or a MetroCard. Cycling infrastructure has improved significantly, and bike-share schemes are widely used.

Driving within the city is often impractical due to traffic, parking costs and tolls. US driving licences are valid nationwide, while international licence holders may need to obtain a New York State licence after a set period.

Healthcare

The US does not have a public healthcare system equivalent to the NHS. Healthcare is provided through private insurance.

Most tech employees receive employer-sponsored health insurance, which is a critical part of total compensation. Coverage varies by employer and plan, and employees typically contribute monthly premiums.

Healthcare quality is high, but costs without insurance can be significant, making employer-provided coverage essential.

Bank account

Opening a US bank account is one of the first practical steps after arrival. You'll need one to receive your salary, pay rent and manage daily expenses.

Banks typically require:

- A valid passport
- Visa or work authorisation
- Proof of US address (in some cases)

Many expats begin with digital or expat-friendly banks, then transition to a traditional US bank once fully settled.

Mobile phone

To get a US SIM card, you'll need valid ID.

Contract plans often require a US credit check.

- Prepaid plans are flexible and easy to set up
- Contract plans offer better value but usually require a credit history

Some employers provide a work phone or reimburse mobile costs, so it's worth checking before committing.

Internet & TV

Internet availability and speed vary by building and provider. High-speed broadband is common, particularly in newer buildings, but service quality can vary.

If internet is not included in your rent, you'll need to arrange a contract directly. Installation timelines vary, so organising this early is recommended.

Many providers bundle internet, TV and mobile services.

Utilities

Utilities in New York are often billed separately from rent.

Tenants are typically responsible for:

- Electricity and gas
- Internet and cable TV
- In some cases, heating or air conditioning

Before signing a lease, make sure you understand:

- What utilities are included in your rent
- Which services you need to set up yourself
- How and when bills are paid

Understanding these costs upfront will help you budget accurately and avoid surprises once you move in.

Community & Lifestyle

Your new city won't truly feel like home until you start building a community. While many people make their first connections through work, New York offers countless ways to meet people beyond the office.

With one of the most international populations in the world and a highly social, outward-facing culture, New York is relatively easy to settle into—whether you're looking to build professional connections, a social circle, or both.



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Meetup's, groups and clubs

New York has a strong culture of community-led events, particularly across tech, product, startups and creative industries.

Popular ways to get involved include:

- Instagram & WhatsApp groups — Increasingly popular for organising social meetups and interest-based communities
- LinkedIn & Slack communities — Widely used for industry-specific networking and events
- Sports clubs and fitness classes — One of the most reliable ways to meet people outside of work

Given New York's international makeup, most groups are welcoming to newcomers and used to integrating people from overseas.

New York tech events

New York hosts a constant stream of tech events throughout the year, ranging from small, community-led meetups to large international conferences.

Events commonly focus on:

- Software engineering and product development
- AI, data and emerging technologies
- Startups, founders and scaling businesses

Events are promoted through newsletters, event platforms and community channels, with many offering free or low-cost entry. Regular attendance is one of the easiest ways to stay connected to the local tech ecosystem.

Bar, Restaurants and cafes to check out

New York's food and drink scene is fast-paced, diverse and deeply neighbourhood-driven. Below are a few popular spots across the city.

Breakfast & brunch

- Russ & Daughters Café
- Clinton St. Baking Company
- Jack's Wife Freda

Lunch

- Chelsea Market
- Sweetgreen
- Katz's Delicatessen

Dinner

- Lilia
- COTE Korean Steakhouse
- Carbone

Drinks

- The Dead Rabbit
- Employees Only
- 230 Fifth

Exploring neighbourhood cafés, bars and late-night spots is one of the best ways to experience New York's character and build connections naturally outside of work.



Your Relocation Checklist

Before you leave

- Ensure you have a valid passport and any required documents for your visa
- Secure a job offer with a US employer (required for most work visas)
- Confirm whether your employer offers visa sponsorship or relocation support
- Complete your visa application and attend any required embassy appointments
- Arrange temporary or long-term accommodation
- Gather key documents (employment contract, qualifications, certificates)
- Plan your move and shipment of belongings

Mandatory on arrival

- Apply for a Social Security Number (SSN)
- Complete right-to-work verification with your employer
- Enrol in employer-sponsored health insurance
- Obtain state ID or driving licence if required

Optional on arrival

- Apply for a Social Security Number (SSN)
- Complete right-to-work verification with your employer
- Enrol in employer-sponsored health insurance
- Obtain state ID or driving licence if required

Get settled

- Join local meetups, professional groups or sports clubs
- Attend New York tech and startup events
- Explore neighbourhood cafés, parks and cultural venues
- Build a routine and give yourself time to settle in