

# How has our move been? Many people have been asking. Here's my answer.

by Annie Margarita Yang

Hi everyone,

I haven't written this newsletter in a while. For the past three months, Handrio and I have been on the road. We drove from Texas to New York to stay with my parents, and then went back and forth between NYC and Boston looking for an apartment and job. We never stayed in the one city for longer than a week at a time.

Once we finally moved in, I started my new job and spent my weekends cleaning the apartment, since it was filthy. We pay \$1,750 for rent and the property management company couldn't even spend \$200 on cleaning service. I felt upset because I spent three weekends cleaning shit (literally, mouse poop)!

Okay, I'm done complaining about this issue now. I'm not upset anymore because it's clean now, thanks to me and Handrio, and that's all that matters at this point.

With so much change, it has been difficult for me to sit down and write. But starting today, I will be resuming my bi-monthly newsletter, as I've created a new routine. I might even write weekly, depending on my schedule.

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Today, I want to share with you indirect expenses when moving. These are expenses that don't even come to mind at first but hear me out because I did not think about these beforehand. A few newsletters ago, I shared our moving budget, which included transportation and first-month expenses. We saved \$6,000 for this move, which we thought would be enough, but we were approximately \$1,500 short in the end.

The big reason we were short was because of Massachusetts landlord-tenant law and Boston norms. Landlords can ask for first month's rent, last month's rent, one-month security deposit, and one-month broker fee. Basically, quadruple the rent. My moving budget only included first month's rent and one-month security deposit—give or take \$3,500 total. That's how it was for us in Texas, so we assumed the same here.

No. That's not how many apartment buildings work here in Boston if you want your own place. We paid triple the rent to move in, so there went \$5,250. Technically, the last month rent and security deposit money are still ours, but we can't spend it. With little money left, I had to ask my mom for money, a resource I'm grateful to have.

There were things we never considered buying because our old apartment had a great design.

For instance, our old apartment had cabinets in the bedroom to store our folded clothes. This apartment has closets—no shelves—so we had to buy hangers.

The old apartment floor was carpet, so we only needed a vacuum cleaner. This apartment is hardwood, so we need a vacuum, a mop, and floor cleaning solution too.

The old apartment had a kitchen countertop that doubled as a table. For this apartment, we must buy a dining table.

The old apartment had central air conditioning. This apartment has no air conditioning, so we bought a window unit.

The old apartment had enough storage space in the bathroom. This apartment's bathroom is so small, we had to buy a storage rack for our toiletries.

The old apartment had a laundry washer and dryer in unit, so we had a hamper and paid for the electricity only. Now I have to bring our clothes to the laundromat. We had to buy a laundry bag, a dolly, and pay \$6.00 per load, making the laundromat owner happy and rich in the long run.

I didn't list everything. I'm sure you get the point and see how money here and there can add up to more than a thousand dollars.

Don't get me wrong. I like our new apartment. The location is ideal and the layout is open, making it feel spacious. But the cost of getting settled in was much higher than expected. We moved from a low cost-of-living area to the third most expensive city in the United States. It's been a real strain on us at first but we are doing okay now.

My advice now would be to make a budget for moving, and then save twice or triple that number! Think about these kinds of issues and plan even further beyond the cost of transporting your body and your stuff. You might have a different experience from mine, particularly if you move from an urban to a rural area. It's still better to have too much money than too little.

*[www.AnnieMargaritaYang.com](http://www.AnnieMargaritaYang.com)*