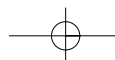
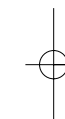
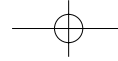


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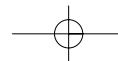
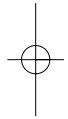
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## INTRODUCTION

**W**ELCOME TO WASHINGTON! “AMERICA’S HOMETOWN” IS NOW your hometown. Perhaps you’ve moved “inside the Beltway” where, according to legend, everyone is a policy analyst or a bureaucrat. Not true. Yes, although many people come here to work on “The Hill” or in the real-life West Wing, Washington isn’t just a government town. You’ll find America’s best and brightest coming here to work in academia, the information technology or biotech industries, national and international nonprofits, corporate law, and in the services and trades it takes to feed, shelter, transport, and entertain a city of three million people.

So, what’s it like here? Northerners consider Washington a southern city and Southerners consider it northeastern. Both have a point. Hot and steamy summer days, tree-lined avenues, and 19th-century mansions converted into offices give Washington the physical feel of a southern city, but the frenetic “type A” culture makes it seem more northern. Newcomers from Maine or Georgia are equally likely to find people here to be self-absorbed, hurried, and seemingly rude. It is President Kennedy who is credited with the observation, now a cliché, that Washington combines northern charm with southern efficiency.

Washington isn’t just one city. In addition to the District of Columbia, the Washington metropolitan area includes parts of two states, Virginia and Maryland. (In this book, “Washington” refers to the metropolitan area and “D.C.” refers to the city itself.) Northern Virginia, suburban Maryland, and “the District” have some things in common—most notably, high levels of income and education, congested roads and long commutes, and a high cost of living.

Virginia is generally more conservative and southern than Maryland and the District. Suburban subdivisions with names like Fox Mill Estates and Hunter’s Valley reflect Northern Virginia’s not-too-distant past as horse