

The following are common suggestions for finding housing and applying for housing.

Getting ready to move

- If possible, have a place to move into before you give notice at your current place.
- Make sure you give notice in the time and manner explained in your lease.
- If possible, get a copy of your credit history and correct any mistakes
- Pay or make payment plans for any unpaid rent or charges
- Resolve any issue you may have with your current property manager.
- Get a good reference from your current property manager.
- Work with someone familiar with housing searches. This might be a social worker or a housing advocate. If you need help with this, try an information and referral service like United Way 2-1-1 or MinnesotaHelp.Info™.
- Determine what you can afford to pay for housing.
- Determine whether you are eligible for housing programs, including voucher programs, project-based housing, or public housing. These programs offer more affordable rents or may make rent payments more affordable.
- Identify resources to assist you in looking for housing. In the Twin Cities metropolitan area, HousingLink may provide some of these resources.

Visiting a Property

- If you have an appointment, show up on time.
- Try not to bring children along. Have a babysitter, friend or relative watch the children.
- Dress nice, perhaps like you would for a job interview.
- Be clear and honest about rental, credit, and criminal history problems. Explain how any of these problems were or are being resolved.

If you plan on applying for a unit:

- Bring documentation of your rental history with the names of properties, the address of the property where you lived, and when you lived there.
- Bring along a resume or documentation of your employment history.
- Bring along a pay stub and other salary information.
- Bring identification information, including a driver's license or state ID and your Social Security Card.

continued on next page

Filling out an application:

- Fill out the application neatly, clearly, and completely.
- Get a receipt for any money you give to a property manager. Some properties may require cash or a money order for an application fee.
- Ask how many people are being considered for the unit. If several people have applied and you are being asked to pay an application fee, you may want to consider other places.
- Ask what screening company the property uses. Record the screening company's name in case you are denied by the property. Some properties may even provide information about their screening criteria.
- If you are asked to pay a pre-lease deposit, get an agreement in writing that explains under what conditions the deposit will be returned.

Signing a lease

- Before you sign the lease, look at the actual unit you will be renting, not a model.
- Talk to future neighbors about the property manager.
- Read the entire lease. Make sure you understand what it says.
- Find out your responsibilities and the property owner's responsibilities, such as who pays for each utility and how to get your security deposit back at the end of the lease. Make sure that all the responsibilities are listed in the lease.
- Get everything in writing.
- Get a copy of the signed lease.

If denied housing

- Ask if anything in the rental or credit history can be clarified and may allow you to be reconsidered.
- You can obtain a free copy of the tenant screening report that is in question. (There is a time limit for doing this).
- If you did not get the information when you applied, get the screening company's name from the property.
- Contact the screening company directly to request a copy of your report. (You will need to contact the same company the property has used).
- If you suspect discrimination, consult the appropriate fair housing organization. (See HousingLink's Information on Fair Housing for more information).