

Successful Renting at a Glance

Know who you are

- What is your monthly income?
- What is your credit score?
- What is your rental history?
- What is your criminal background?
- How much you can truly afford each month and still have money for other expenses?
- What are your transportation needs?

Finding your place

- Go to www.housinglink.org.
- Select your criteria: bedrooms, rent, etc.
- Use the map! It's interactive.
- Click "show listings" to see results.

HousingLink 

Get the landlord's rental criteria in writing

- How much income do they require?
- What credit scores will they accept?
- What are their rental history requirements?
- What past criminal activity do they decline?

Note: Do not pay an application fee if you do not meet the landlord's rental criteria.

Additional fees you may have to pay

- Application fee: \$20-\$70
- Security deposit: varies, but anywhere from \$100 - one month's rent is common.
- Administrative fee: Not as common, but some properties charge this fee. The amount varies.
- Late fees: Up to 8% of your rent payment if you pay your rent late.

Move-in day

- Fill out a move in/move out form and make detailed notes about the unit's condition: Is the carpet worn in spots? Write it down. Is there a scratch on the wall? Write it down.
- Both you and landlord should sign this document and both keep a copy. That way you aren't blamed for wear and tear or damages you didn't create.

Living in the unit

- Obtain a copy of your lease. Read it carefully and note who is responsible for what. Keep it available for reference.
- Pay rent on time.
- Communicate maintenance issues right away.
- Know the rules in your lease; getting evicted because you have loud parties or are noisy will come back to haunt you.
- Keep your unit clean and be a good neighbor.

Moving out

- How far in advance do you have to notify the landlord that you are leaving? (It's in your lease!)
- Clean the unit thoroughly.
- Give the landlord your new address so he or she can send you the security deposit (The security deposit is refunded if the unit is left in good condition).

Is your background causing you trouble?

- Be open and honest about what happened and explain why things are better now.
- Do not pay an application fee if you don't meet the rental criteria.
- Offer solutions. Will the landlord accept you if you pay a higher security deposit or have a co-signer on the lease?