

Rental Application Screening Checklist

This checklist helps landlords follow a consistent, legal, and thorough process for screening rental applicants. It ensures you collect all necessary information, verify details, and make informed decisions while complying with fair housing and privacy laws.

1. Pre-Screening Questions

Before showing the property, confirm:

- Move-in date matches your availability.
- Number of occupants complies with occupancy limits.
- Pets (if any) comply with your pet policy.
- Smoking policy is understood and accepted.
- Monthly income meets your income-to-rent ratio.
- Applicant understands application fee and process.

2. Rental Application Form

Ensure each adult applicant completes and signs the form, including:

- Full name, date of birth, Social Security number.
- Current and previous addresses, landlord contact info.
- Employment history and current income.
- References (personal and professional).
- Authorization to run background and credit checks.

3. Collect Supporting Documents

- Government-issued photo ID.
- Proof of income (pay stubs, bank statements, tax returns).
- Proof of employment (letter from employer, work ID).
- Additional documents for self-employed applicants (business license, profit & loss statement).

4. Conduct Screening Checks

- Credit report (check for score, payment history, collections).
- Criminal background check (where legally permissible).
- Eviction history search.
- Verify rental history with previous landlords.
- Confirm employment and income sources.

5. Evaluate & Decide

- Compare results to your written rental criteria.
- Apply the same standards to all applicants.
- Document reasons for approval or denial.
- If denying based on a consumer report, issue an Adverse Action Letter.

6. Final Steps After Approval

- Notify applicant and schedule lease signing.
- Collect security deposit and first month's rent.
- Provide keys and move-in instructions.
- Complete move-in inspection with tenant.

Compliance Reminder

Always comply with the Fair Housing Act, state/local housing laws, and the Fair Credit Reporting Act when screening tenants.