



Apartment Association of Southeastern Wisconsin

Advocating for Sustainable Rental Housing

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Top 5 Emerging Multifamily Markets

By Lucia Morosanu, www.multihousingnews.com

These secondary and tertiary locations are showing significant growth.

In order to analyze population growth, we utilized U.S. Census data between April 2010 and April 2020. While the numbers pre-date the full brunt of the pandemic, the demographic trends were likely to have continued or accelerated in the interim. Utilizing primarily Yardi Matrix and publicly available data, here is our list of the top 5 emerging markets in the multifamily sector:

5. Reno, Nev.

The first entry on the list saw a 15.3 percent population increase between 2010 and 2020, according to U.S. census data. Growth could be attributed to Reno's proximity to overpriced metros, together with the area's affordable housing, business-friendly environment and high quality of life.

To meet the demand for space, construction activity was high, placing Reno second on the list in terms of units completed. Developers added 2,230 units to the inventory across eight properties in 2021 through November. Additionally, 3,661 units were under construction as of that time, placing Reno in fourth place in terms of projects underway. The average price-per-unit grew 26 percent to \$230,293 in the twelve months ending in November, above the national average of \$185,466.

4. Savannah – Hilton Head, Ga.

The metro attracted new residents due to its low cost of living, warm temperature year-round and sandy beaches. Census data showed significant increase over the past decade, as Savannah-Hilton Head's population recorded a 15.0 percent rise from 2010 to 2020.

With construction deemed essential in 2020, developers capitalized on these positive demographic trends and completed 2,564 units across 12 properties through November, topping the overall list. Construction activity has recorded a significant increase since 2016, with a dip in 2019, when only 1,084 units were added to the inventory.

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3. Pensacola, Fla.

Between 2010 and 2020, Census data shows the metro's population rose 13.6 percent. Developers capitalized on the positive demographic trend and added 2,140 units year-to-date through November—the third largest figure on our list and the highest of the past five years for the metro. An additional 3,164 units were underway as of November.

Pensacola experienced steady average multifamily rent increases over the past five years. In November 2021, the metro had an average rent of \$1,472, up 20.5 percent year-over-year.

Investment activity more than doubled through the first eleven months of 2021, compared to the same period of 2020. Multifamily rental assets worth \$606 million traded, up from the almost \$300 million a year before. This heightened interest in the metro drove the per-unit price up 48 percent from the same period in 2020, to \$206,830.

2. Omaha, Neb.

From 2010 to 2020, US Census data shows the metro grew by 11.8 percent. Heightened in the last year by remote work, new residents were attracted to Omaha because of the low cost of living, clean air and affordable housing.

Development activity in the metro cooled off in the first 11 months of 2021 with only 1,298 units added to the inventory. Because of limited new supply, occupancy rates in stabilized properties rose 110 basis points year-over-year, to 96 percent. While it recorded a 13 percent increase over 2020 levels, the metro's \$118,937 price-per-unit was the lowest among the top five. Also, transaction activity in Omaha was low, as only \$62.6 million in rental assets changed hands during the first 11 months of 2021, a 32.2 percent drop from the previous period.

1. Greenville, S.C

Topping the list is a new entry to our emerging markets analysis from 2021. The metro's population grew 10.8 percent from 2010 to 2020, U.S. Census data shows. The low cost of living, affordable housing and plenty of outdoor activities, as well as its relative proximity to both Atlanta and Charlotte, N.C., attracted new residents.

Roughly \$1.1 billion in rental assets traded in 2021 through November, a significant increase from the some \$261 million in properties sold in the same period of 2020. While rents rose 14.8 percent year-over-year as of November, the metro remained affordable with average rent at \$1,234, well below the \$1,590 national average. Occupancy rates reached 96 percent, up only 0.9 percent year-over-year.

Renters and landlord relationships see increased strain

By Brittany Slaughter, www.wqow.com

As inflation hits consumers throughout the county, housing costs are also affected. However, that doesn't mean that renters are seeing more on their paychecks, leaving them stretched thin.

"Whether it's the landlord angry at the lack of tenant payment or a tenant scared and mad at a landlord who they perceive is harassing them, our system is overloaded with people applying," said Andy Heidt, Wisconsin Community Action Program Association Housing Policy Program Manager.

Nearly two years since the start of the pandemic, tenant and landlord relationships are being tested as rent price increases outpace pay rises, leading to fear over evictions.

"The real issue here is keeping people in their homes, especially vulnerable households and households with children," Heidt said.

Though there is financial help available, for some, there isn't enough. "They may have used most or all of their benefit to date and that creates a whole other stress point amid a time of significantly rising rents and a lack of availability of affordable housing options," Heidt said.

The State Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection said they have received over 1,600 complaints related to landlord-tenant disputes in 2021, up 34 percent over 2020.

"We have a lot of informed people about your rights as landlords and tenants. Landlords and tenants both have rights and responsibilities under the law," said Lara Sutherlin, Administrator for the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection Division of Trade and Consumer Protection.

Experts and landlords alike recommended communication as the best way to keep the peace.

"We try to communicate with our residents on a regular basis and that has been very helpful in easing some of the stress on both our side as a landlord as well as our renters as well. Communication is crucial. I think it is one of the key factors in keeping good relationships with our renters," said Betty Noel, Assistant Director for the Wausau Community Development Authority.

Hope House is expanding its tools to combat homelessness

By PrincessSafiya Byers, www.milwaukeeenns.org

Many know Hope House of Milwaukee as a shelter for families facing homelessness, but as the organization expands its reach, it is doing more.

The organization, located at 209 W. Orchard St., houses a walk-in clinic, a youth center for children and a GED program available to both residents and people in the surrounding area.

But helping combat homelessness remains a core mission.

The organization houses about 10 families and provides them with personal space, communal space and a shared kitchen where families take turns cooking dinner for one another.

In fact, families of all types and backgrounds have spent time at Hope House.

“We don’t define family, you define family,” said Jim Farrell, the development director for Hope House.

While in the shelter, families are provided necessities and wraparound services to help them stay on their feet and move forward.

The organization helps from 50 to 150 families at risk of homelessness find stable housing.

The organization’s rapid rehousing program, for example, provides families in imminent danger of homelessness with emergency assistance to get a roof over their heads, said Wendy Weckler, the executive director of Hope House.

“Ninety-five percent of the families get permanently housed through the program,” she said. “Eighty-five percent have never been homeless again.”

Hope House has been serving families since 1987 but is continuing to extend its reach to serve more people.

Since Sept. 1, it has been managing the St. Catherine Residence, a building at 1032 E. Knapp St., that has provided women with stable, affordable housing for 125 years.

Mercy House Lakefront gifted the building to prevent it from closing and to carry on the mission of the Sisters of Mercy to provide a flexible housing option for women.

But it has passed the baton to Hope House.

“It’s a case of paying it forward, really,” said Mark Angelini, the president of Mercy Housing Lakefront. “Since we were given the building, and we think Hope House is better suited to run it, we want to allow them the chance to grow without the debt that purchasing a building would create.”

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Milwaukee Rental Housing Resource Center hopes to help those facing eviction

By Tajma Hall, www.cbs58.com

City leaders are highlighting available resources for people facing eviction. The Milwaukee Rental Housing Resource Center is working to combat housing insecurity in the city.

Housing insecurity is a huge issue, impacting families across the country. Studies show that households spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs are the most at risk.

The center is a collaboration between housing organizations, the city, and other officials hoping to help ease the burden for those in need.

"When you don't have home stability and all that pressure is coming down on you, the last thing you need to worry about is am I going to get evicted," said Chris Johnson, owner of Grace Properties and a partner at the center.

The resource center works with tenants and landlords, providing rental assistance, mediation, and legal guidance to resolve issues and keep people in their homes.

Residents can get help accessing Milwaukee's Right to Counsel program, which is funded by the city with nearly \$2 million from the federal American Rescue Plan Act. There are also computers in the office where tenants can attend virtual court proceedings while fighting eviction.

Officials say there was a growing need for this kind of help long before the pandemic, and since, the need has only become more crucial.

"We're still averaging hundreds of referrals weekly, so much of the work we're doing right now relates to the need for financial rent assistance or energy assistance," said Deborah Heffner, housing strategy director for community advocates.

Heffner says addressing the root issues causing housing insecurity is top of mind.



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“Mistakes are the growing pains of wisdom”

- William Jordan

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To help spread the word, all Milwaukee public libraries will now distribute informational material about the housing resource center. "It's critical that residents in every corner of Milwaukee are aware that help and resources are available right here at the rental housing resource center," said Mayor Cavalier Johnson.

The Milwaukee Rental Housing Resource Center is located inside Community Advocates on N. James Lovell Street.

Wisconsin rent assistance providers say renters are still struggling. That could be putting a strain on relationships with landlords.

By Hope Kirwan, www.wpr.org

State consumer protection officials saw a 34 percent increase in the number of landlord-tenant complaints in 2021. Leaders at Wisconsin's poverty action network say renters are still struggling to get by almost two years into the pandemic. That could be adding strain to relationships with landlords in the state.

The state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection received 1,678 complaints related to landlord-tenant disputes in 2021, making it the second-highest complaint category for the year behind telemarketing. That's about 34 percent higher than the number of tenant complaints in 2020 and almost 49 percent higher than in 2019.

Lara Sutherlin, administrator of DATCP's Division of Trade and Consumer Protection, said tenant complaints are common for the agency and have often been the second-most common complaint. She said most involve problems with the return of rental deposits, unauthorized entry by landlords, damage to a property and evictions.

In the first half of 2021, Sutherlin said they received some complaints related to landlords entering rental properties without taking proper precautions, which was a requirement of some public health orders. She says the agency also answered questions and provided resources to both renters and property owners about eviction moratoriums. Sutherlin said DATCP wasn't charged with enforcing the moratoriums, but they received plenty of questions from renters and property owners. DATCP's webpage on pandemic-related Frequently Asked Questions received over 65,000 visits last year.

"Every complaint we get, we look into," Sutherlin said. "Simply because it was a complaint related to the eviction moratorium doesn't mean we wouldn't have had jurisdiction in another manner, because if there was a violation of one of our regulations that sort of was an overlay for that or if there was any misrepresentation."

She said the agency reaches out to landlords who are reported by tenants to try to resolve issues without punitive measures.

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But if mediation between the parties doesn't work and officials believe a violation of law is occurring, the department's investigative unit takes over a case and refers cases to the state Department of Justice.

Andy Heidt is housing program manager at Wisconsin Community Action Program Association, or WISCAP, a statewide network of poverty action agencies. He said tenant-landlord relationships vary widely and property owners' reactions to the pandemic-related issues have been just as varied, with some ending leases as soon as renters paid back rent while others have helped advocate for vulnerable tenants.

But Heidt said there is no question that renters are still struggling. He pointed to demand for the Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance, which was created in February 2021.

"In some ways, the demand is as high as ever," he said. "The federal guidance (for the Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance program) only provided 18 months of rent assistance and we are now in month 23 of the pandemic. It's been a long haul and we haven't come out of it. So people that were rent-burdened are still rent-burdened."

Heidt said the issue has been exacerbated in part by rental rates increasing significantly across the state, in some cases rising more than 10 percent in some communities.

As of Feb. 2, WISCAP has distributed more than \$109 million dollars in emergency rent assistance to 28,146 households across 68 counties in the state. Milwaukee, Dane, Waukesha and Brown counties are operating their own rental assistance programs, but Heidt estimates they've distributed another \$92 million.

Heidt said the landlord-tenant relationship can naturally be adversarial because of the unequal power dynamic.

"If the furnace isn't working and I'm complaining about a lack of heat, and the landlord's mad because of a lack of a full-length payment, now we have two things to fight about. And that just exacerbates the tensions," he said.

Tim Ballering from the **Apartment Association of Southeastern Wisconsin** said waiting for overdue payment from tenants or state assistance payments can put stress on landlords too.

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He said many property owners have been patient with renters because of the economic stress caused by the pandemic, especially for service industry jobs that saw significant declines in 2020.

But Ballering said it can take three to four months from when a tenant applies for rent assistance before a landlord receives a check.

"There are some situations where the renters have said that they've applied and were eligible for funding, when in fact they were not. I've spoken to a number of owners that waited and waited for the money to come and never came. So that puts a strain obviously," he said. "A lot of smaller owners were in a lot of financial trouble. I know owners that are members of our apartment association that just sold out because they couldn't hold on anymore."

With high property values, Ballering said some owners also found it was more profitable to sell a single-family home or duplex to a new owner-occupant rather than continue renting it.

Ballering said one new trend that's happened in the last year is more landlords looking to try working with a non-profit mediation group like Mediate Wisconsin before moving to file eviction.

"Often the mediators can find resources to help get people on track or work out a payment plan that will work for them. We find that mediation is so much more successful for us, with a greater number of renters that are able to stay in their unit after falling behind," Ballering said.

He said the apartment association has been working to educate property owners about the availability of these services.

“Luck is believing you’re lucky”

- Tennessee Williams

Milwaukee evictions, renter's assistance backlog complicates matters

By Bret Lemoine, www.fox6now.com

A backlog of cases for renter's assistance is leaving some Milwaukee families with an eviction notice. A mother of five says she applied for help, but her landlord got tired of waiting for the check.

There are thousands of people who have either applied or expressed interest in renter's assistance funds. The group distributing those funds says there isn't always enough cash on hand to cover the demand.

After renting a Milwaukee duplex for the last two years, Denais Buford, her husband and five kids are dealing with eviction.

"We gotta be gone. Everything. Packed up (snap) – goodbye," said Buford. "I point the finger at SDC. You all got these applications. There has to be a faster way to process them, to get in contact with people."

Buford is like thousands of Milwaukee residents who applied for financial assistance from the Social Development Commission to help cover rent.

"I think we are doing the best we can," said George Hinton, SDC CEO.

Early in the coronavirus pandemic, Hinton identified this problem as a crisis. By July 2020, 25,000 people signed up for funds. There was only money allotted for 2,500 households. In the last two years, the SDC has distributed more than \$44 million. That federal money is first funneled through the city, which Hinton says leads to delays.

"Sometimes, we have plenty of cash and we send those checks out as soon as they are done," said Hinton. "Other times, we need to hold. We hold those checks because the worst thing we can do is send it to a landlord and the check bounces."

For perspective, the Contact 6 inbox shows we've helped several renters waiting for SDC funds,

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including handwritten letters and even pleas from property owners who don't want to evict.

It might be too late for Buford's family.

"With an eviction – no one wants to rent to you in Milwaukee," said Buford. "No one even wants to accept the application."

Buford said her landlord won't wait any longer and she has to move out at the end of February.

A spokesman for the City of Milwaukee said Wednesday, Feb. 9 they got federal funds this week. A nearly \$14 million payment is set to be delivered to the SDC Thursday, which should help with some of the backlog.

Renters and landlord relationships see increased strain

By Brittany Slaughter, www.wqow.com

WISCONSIN (WAOW) - As inflation hits consumers throughout the county, housing costs are also affected. However, that doesn't mean that renters are seeing more on their paychecks, leaving them stretched thin.

"Whether it's the landlord angry at the lack of tenant payment or a tenant scared and mad at a landlord who they perceive is harassing them, our system is overloaded with people applying," said Andy Heidt, Wisconsin Community Action Program Association Housing Policy Program Manager.

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"The real issue here is keeping people in their homes, especially vulnerable households and households with children," Heidt said.

Though there is financial help available, for some, there isn't enough.

"They may have used most or all of their benefit to date and that creates a whole other stress point amid a time of significantly rising rents and a lack of availability of affordable housing options," Heidt said.

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Experts and landlords alike recommended communication as the best way to keep the peace.

"We try to communicate with our residents on a regular basis and that has been very helpful in easing some of the stress on both our side as a landlord as well as our renters as well. Communication is crucial. I think it is one of the key factors in keeping good relationships with our renters," said Betty Noel, Assistant Director for the Wausau Community Development Authority.



How Squatters Rights Affect Landlords

By Remen Okoruwa, *BiggerPockets.com*



It can be a shock to realize that unauthorized persons are living on your property. However, learning that squatters who take over your property may also have rights can fill you with rage. After all, they're not paying rent, not looking after the unit, and they live there without any lease or verbal agreement—so why would they have any rights to your property?

Unfortunately, the issue regarding squatters' rights can be quite complicated—and it became even more so during the pandemic as the issue of squatters' rights came to the forefront. That's because the COVID-19 ban on evictions made it impossible to evict a non-paying tenant—but the eviction moratorium didn't entirely ban evictions. It was still possible to evict someone for violating local regulations, and in some cases, this included squatting.

So what can you do about “unexpected tenants” taking over your property? Can you turn off utilities and change the locks to get rid of them? Or are there other ways to effectively get rid of squatters from your property that won't violate state laws?

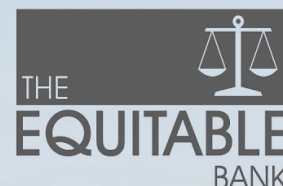
What is a squatter?

A squatter is someone who has entered a property that they have no legal right to—but have taken up residence at the property anyway. By definition, a squatter doesn't pay rent to the owner of the property and lives there without the property owner's permission. In these cases, the squatter generally gains unlawful access to the property and sets up a home there.

That isn't always the case, though. In some cases, a squatter could mistakenly believe they have a right to live there because of a fraudulent lease agreement. This happens from time to time when savvy criminals lease out your empty property without permission to someone else and then steal the rental deposit and rent payments. It's a common scam—especially in areas with high rental demands or limited rental properties—and in these cases, the squatter isn't purposefully acting in a criminal manner.

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AASEW OWNER Article Guidelines

Would you like to submit an article for publication in the AASEW newsletter?

Here are the current submission guidelines:

Deadline for all submissions is the first of each month.

The newsletter will be delivered electronically to the membership around the 10th of the month.

Limited print copies of the newsletter may be available at the General Membership Meeting following its publication.

We are happy to accept one article per author per newsletter.

Please keep the article to approximately 500 words in length.

Any edits made to an article (generally for length) will be approved by the contributor before it is published.

All articles must be properly attributed.

The Editorial Staff reserves the right to select articles that serve the membership, are timely, and are appropriate.

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What are squatters rights?

There is a set of laws dating back to the late 1800s that protects squatters' rights. The rights were originally created to protect the pioneers who moved into vacant land, built a homestead, and started working the land. At the time, the protection provided by these rights was intended to allow pioneers to expand land owned by the government.

Fast-forward about 160 years and these laws mean that squatters still have rights under the same legislation in the Homestead Act of 1862.

So what does this mean for landlords? In legal terms, there is protection for squatters — called "adverse possession" — and it means that if a squatter has been living on the property for a specific length of time and you haven't tried to evict them, they may have legal claim to the property.

Squatter vs. trespasser: What's the difference?

If you are a landlord, it is extremely important to realize the difference between trespassing and squatting. A trespasser is someone who breaks into a property that they have no right to.

For example, a trespasser may gain entrance by breaking a window or smashing a lock to gain access. Trespassing is a criminal offense and you can call the police over the issue.

On the other hand, a squatter can "legally" gain access if they can enter the property without committing a criminal act. For example, they could "legally" get in by entering through a broken window that they didn't break, by sliding open a window, or by walking through an open door. In many circumstances, a squatter could simply be a tenant who stops paying rent at the end of the lease but refuses to leave a rental property.

Which states have squatters rights?

All states recognize the rights of squatters in some form or fashion. However, the adverse possession laws differ from state to state.

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Squatter rights: How landlords can remove squatters legally

Given that squatters may have a legal claim to your property after a certain amount of years, the burning question for landlords is how to remove a squatter legally.

It is essential that you keep yourself on the right side of the law when removing a squatter, even though they are living on your property without permission. Here are some steps you can take to do that:

1. Start by preventing squatters

As the adage goes: prevention is better than the cure. As such, preventing squatters from entering your property is the first step. There are a few simple ways you can do this.

For example, it's a good idea to secure the property by ensuring all doors and windows are locked and can't be opened without your authorization. You could also install alarms and motion detectors that send notifications to your mobile phone.

You should also visit your property regularly to check for broken windows and ensure no one is living there. If you visit your property regularly, you will ensure that a squatter never gets to spend enough time on your property to claim any legal right to it.

2. Call the police

If you discover squatters living on your property, you should immediately call the police. Squatting is a civil matter, but the police can determine if the people on your property are trespassers or squatters. The police report will also help with the next step: starting the eviction process.

Remember, though, that if the unlawful tenants refuse to leave, you can't take matters into your own hands. Although it may seem reasonable to forcibly remove them, the truth is that they have rights. As such, you need to follow the same eviction procedures that you would follow when removing a tenant for nonpayment of rent.

3. Serve an eviction notice

The next step is to serve a formal eviction notice. Depending on your state, you must usually give the squatters three to five days to vacate the property.

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After that, you can file an Unlawful Detainer action. To do this, you will need to prove the following:

- The tenant is living there without permission.
- The squatter doesn't pay rent.
- You have given the required notice.
- The squatter is still living in the property after the notice period has expired.

But what happens if the squatter refuses to leave despite the court order? In that case, you need to proceed to the next step.

4. File a civil lawsuit to get rid of the squatter

If the squatter refuses to leave the property, you may need to file a lawsuit to remove them from the premises.

The judge will typically rule in favor of the landlord if all of the proper procedures have been followed—which is why you need to follow the letter of the law completely.

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Once the judge has ruled in your favor, you can present the ruling to the local police, who will remove the squatters.

5. Get rid of a squatter's possessions

Unfortunately, your issue with the squatter doesn't always end there. If they have left any of their possessions behind on your property, you can't always just discard them.

In many cases, you may need to give them time to collect their possessions from your property before you get rid of them. However, it's important to note that the laws differ from state to state, so be sure to get solid legal advice before making any decisions about their items or trashing their stuff.

Final thoughts on squatters rights and landlords

Finding squatters living on your property is frustrating. However, you must remember to act in line with the law. After all, squatters have rights in a lot of cases, and you don't want to violate the law.

And, while you may want the squatters off your property, it's important to understand that you can not threaten them or carry out a self-help or illegal eviction. If you follow the required steps for this type of eviction, however, you can get your property back in a timely manner in most cases.



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Applicant Scams to Watch Out For

By Dawn Anastasi, AASEW Board Member



Recently on social media, I saw someone asking about renting an apartment. Someone else replied:

Hello my friend. Getting an apartment is easy. All you need to do is spend \$50 on PDF editor software. Download your paystub, increase your income, submit to landlord for income verification, apartment time. This is a victimless crime that's impossible to get in trouble for.

Yes, tenant applicants are out there trying to scam landlords. This has been happening for a long time, but with every year, technology gets better and better, and it may lead to people using technology to create more realistic-looking scam documents to try to fool landlords.

This is especially true in recent months. When I ask other rental property owners about their vacancy rate, everyone tells me that they are at very low vacancy. When they do have a vacancy, they get multiple applications in a short period of time.

After the eviction moratorium, many landlords seem to have increased their screening criteria, to weed out applicants who will potentially stop paying rent in the future.

If you've taken the **AASEW Landlord Boot Camp** offered by Tristan Pettit, you will remember that setting well-defined screening criteria is a must. That screening criteria must not violate Fair Housing, and must be applied to everyone equally.

Because the process is now harder for those tenants who received evictions in the past, it appears that some people are turning to scams to try to fool landlords.

The person on social media I saw mentioned using a PDF editor to falsify pay stubs. Some people might be tech-savvy enough to do this.

I've also had a personal experience of someone trying to fake a pay stub. They seem to have taken someone else's pay stub and edited it to display their information.

If that wasn't bad enough, there are websites and Facebook groups that sell fake paystubs!

So what is a landlord to do to try to figure out what's legitimate and what's not?

Here are some tips:

Let your applicants know that you do thorough screenings.

The would-be scammer might be looking for a quick, easy mark to run their con on. They don't want someone who will dissect their verification documents. Put your screening criteria right in your ad.

Don't be swayed by an applicant who waves around a pile of cash or offers to put up several months up front. It could be the last money you ever see before you have to evict.

Call the applicant's employer to see if they are even employed there.

Some HR departments won't release wage information or even disclose if an employee works there. If the business lists their hours online, call during working hours (using the address from the business, not from the application) and ask, "Can I speak to Joe Smith?" If they reply, "We don't have anyone by that name" you'll know the applicant is lying about working there.

Ask for multiple pay stubs.

You can calculate the figures on the pay stub to ensure that all the math is correct. If someone is editing a paystub, they might not get all the figures to come out correctly -- they may only focus on editing the salary/hourly wage amounts.

Asking for multiple pay stubs helps because an applicant may get the figures correct on one pay stub, but when you ask for multiple, they may get tripped up and make a mistake on another, leading you to know that the applicant is lying about their wages.

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Furthermore you can also compare multiple pay stubs to see that the fonts and font sizes are the same between different pay stubs. In the case I had, the person made edits to the pay stub but the fonts didn't line up!

Look at the pay stubs (and other documents) generated from pay stub generator websites online.

You want to become familiar with these sites because they typically have a particular template for generating pay stubs. I've had someone try to pass off a pay stub from one of these sites as their own, and I immediately knew it to be a fake.

When I Google "pay stub generator", I get no less than 6 websites to choose from. This doesn't even include Facebook, where a group called "Whole Milwaukee" operates and includes ads from people offering to sell fake pay stubs to people.

Because these fake pay stubs often cost around \$5-\$9, it makes sense to ask for multiple pay stubs. A would-be scammer might not want to pay that much to perpetuate their scam.

And if someone is foolish enough to pay for multiple pay stubs, they will just be out quite a bit of money when you deny them for falsifying information.

Make a copy of the applicant's photo ID

Don't rely on your memory of the applicant's photo ID. It may come in handy when doing a background check on the individual. There are many people who have similar names and different ways of spelling the same name. Be sure to have the accurate spelling for the person's name.

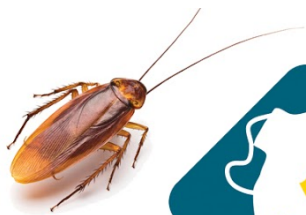
I had this issue come up a few years back. The applicant "forgot" her ID. I told her I needed it to process her application. When I was finally able to make a copy of it, I saw that the way she spelled her name on her application and the way it was spelled on her ID were different.

When I checked CCAP for the spelling of her name on her application, it came back clean. However, when I checked CCAP based on the spelling of her name from her ID, it showed 6 prior evictions.

Don't let an applicant intimidate you

An applicant may tell you a sob story about why they have to move right away. They may be hiding several prior evictions, or may owe prior landlords several thousands or even tens of thousands of dollars in judgments.

Take your time with the screening process and be fair, but thorough. Remember that applicants who want to scam someone want an easy mark, not someone who makes them jump through hoops.



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