



05

Finding a Tenant

Your tenant is the key to a cash-flow-positive rental investment - so you need to get your property in front of would-be renters.

Marketing Your Rental Online

When done well, advertising your vacant unit is an investment in your property. The better your rental listing, the better quality tenant you'll find.

So you can't afford to post a boring listing that doesn't tell the full story of what you're offering.

A listing has two parts:



**The written
description**



**Pictures and/
or videos**

Let's start with how to write a compelling rental property listing.



Writing Your First Listing

The key to a **good listing description** is brevity without sacrificing crucial details. Think about what you'd want to know as a renter.

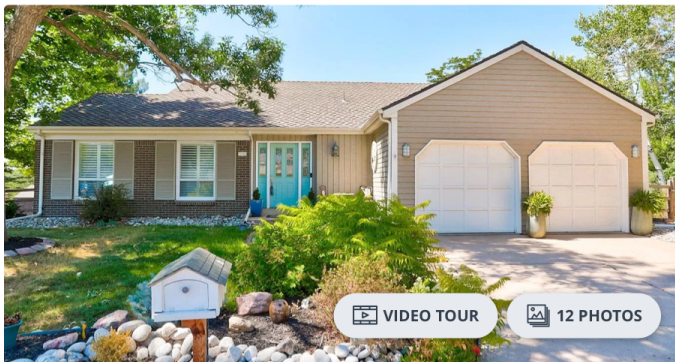
To that end make sure your listing includes:

- **A compelling headline:** Capture attention with a snappy intro, like 'Charming Downtown 1-Bd Available Now.'
- **Highlights:** Share what's great about your rental. *Updated kitchen? New appliances? Utilities or parking included?*
- **Location details:** Explain what your rental is close to and any nearby attractions like schools, restaurants, parks, or public transit.
- **Renter criteria:** Make sure renters know your rent-to-income ratio, credit score, and other important requirements.



Pro Tip: You don't have to be a wordsmith to write a great listing - TurboTenant's robots will do it for you! Welcome to the future with **AI-Generated Listing Descriptions**.

Example of a Listing Description



Stunning 3-BD/2-BA Ranch Near Hiking Trails

[511 E Briarwood Rd, Denver, CO 80122](#)



3 Bedrooms



2 Baths



Single Family



Built in 2001

Description

Welcome to your dream home at 511 E Briarwood Rd! This stunning 3-bed, 2-bath single-family oasis in Denver offers the perfect blend of comfort and convenience.

Enjoy modern amenities like:

A dishwasher

Central heating

Slate flooring

Radiant vibes

Situated near parks and hiking trails, indulge in outdoor activities or unwind in the inviting hot tub spa. Cozy up by the fireplace during chilly nights.

With off-street parking and utilities like satellite TV, water, and internet included, your worries are left behind. Cats and small dogs are welcome with \$50/mo pet rent. Don't miss out on this \$1000/mo sanctuary in beautiful CO!

Security deposit: \$1000

Smoking permitted outside only

[Click Here to Schedule a Viewing >>](#)

Rent **\$1,000** / MO

Deposit **\$1000**

Available **02/24/2024**

Lease Terms [Contact](#)

APPLY NOW

Contact Information

Krista R

Denver Rentals, LLC

[\(555\)111-5555](tel:(555)111-5555)

Contact the Landlord

Send a message to the landlord if you are interested in or have any questions about this property.

FIRST NAME

LAST NAME

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL

MESSAGE

SEND MESSAGE


The Fair Housing Act: What You Need to Know

The Fair Housing Act protects those seeking housing from facing undue discrimination based on specific characteristics. There are seven protected classes on a federal level:

- Race
- Religion
- National origin
- Color
- Familial status
- Sex
- Disability

That means you **cannot reference any of these features in your listing**, nor should you turn applicants away based on these characteristics. It's worth reading up on what you can and can't say in a listing description, as even seemingly-innocent phrases like "Perfect for a family!" or "Great bachelor pad" can be seen as discriminatory in the eyes of HUD, and could lead to a fine for your business.

The only exception worth discussing here relates to house hacking. If you occupy a unit in a dwelling that has four or fewer units total, you're exempt from the Fair Housing Act - so a young woman who plans to share her duplex with a tenant could deny male applicants, for example.



Did You Know? Your first fair housing violation can cost up to \$16,000. Protect yourself by enrolling in TurboTenant's online **Fair Housing for Landlords course** today!

Time to Get Picture Perfect

Now that your listing description is squared away, it's time to give your visuals the same treatment.

Make your pictures pop by following these tips:

- ✓ Turn on all lights
- ✓ Align your vertical and horizontal lines
- ✓ Turn off the ceiling fans
- ✓ Avoid reflections (don't cameo in your pictures!)
- ✓ Use a wide-angle lens - but don't go fisheye
- ✓ Show off your amenities

Also, plan to take a photo of every room in the unit and yards (front and back as applicable). We recommend using **at least 10 pictures** in your listing.



Did You Know? A video tour of your rental lets potential tenants walk through your listing, no matter where they live.
Learn how to make your own >>

Leverage a Syndication Network

Now it's time to get as many eyes as possible on your listing - but that doesn't mean wasting an hour on a dozen sites yourself. Instead, let **TurboTenant do the lifting for you.**

Our landlords average **28 leads per listing** because we post rentals across a dozen of the most popular sites.

Get set up in less time than it takes to brew your morning coffee:



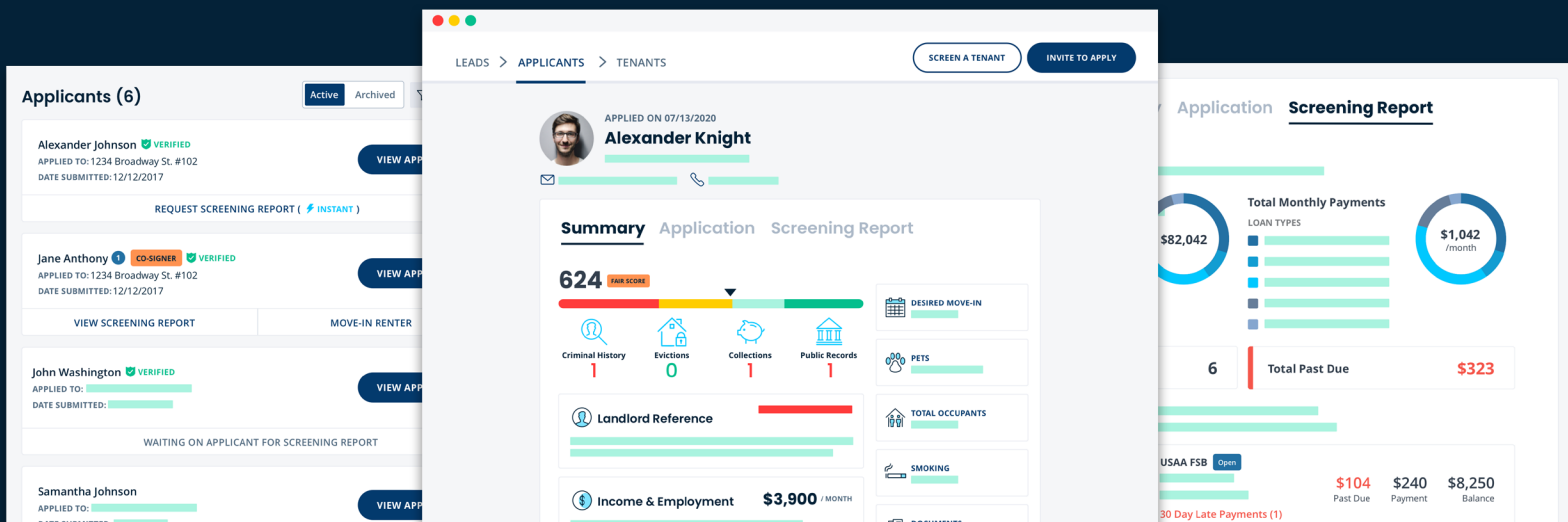


TurboTenant has brought me the most leads out of every site I'm on."
- Heidi A., two-door landlord



What is tenant screening?

Tenant screening means collecting information from applicants to determine if they qualify for your rental property.



The typical tenant screening process includes (where legally permitted):



A criminal background check



A credit check



An eviction history report

Pro Tip: A successful landlord-tenant relationship starts by asking the right questions, and you should be asking the same questions of every tenant to avoid discrimination.

Setting Tenant Criteria

What makes a good tenant? Someone who is reliable, communicative, and respectful.

To evaluate potential tenants against these characteristics, you'll need to make rules surrounding their:

- 1 Financial history
- 2 Background and eviction* checks
- 3 Reference requirements



Some localities don't allow criminal or eviction checks as part of the tenant screening process, including New York. Check your **local landlord-tenant laws for more information.*

Check the Financials



You want to find someone who will reliably pay rent, on time and in full. That's why seasoned landlords pay special attention to applicants' credit scores.

Most landlords accept tenants with a credit score of **560-850** - but you get to make the final decision. The higher the credit score, the more reliable the tenant may be. *But that doesn't mean someone with a low credit score is automatically a bad renter.*

It's possible that someone has:

- **No credit history**, particularly if they're young since it takes at least six months to calculate a starting score
- **A low score with other financials looking healthy**, since the impact of missing payments or situations beyond the person's control can take a long time to reflect in their score

What do you do then?

How to Rent to Someone With a Low Credit Score

So an applicant has no credit history or a low credit score - but they're otherwise a great fit for your property and have the financial means to pay rent.

Build a safety net in four steps:

- 1 Mandate a **co-signer** or **guarantor** to be included on the lease
- 2 Charge a larger security deposit – *make sure to **check local and state laws** on security deposit limits*
- 3 Get **references from past landlords** to discuss their tenancy
- 4 Require **Rent Reporting**, a TurboTenant credit-building service, to incentivize on-time rent payments



Income and Collections: A Look

You can't rely *solely* on an applicant's credit score to assess their financial health. You also need to consider their income and whether they'd be able to make monthly rent payments.

Typically, landlords look for a 30% rent-to-gross-income ratio - however, 30-50% may be more realistic depending on where the rental is. Verify the applicant's income by reviewing two months of pay stubs, along with W2 or 1099 tax forms. Know the **signs of a fake pay stub** to avoid getting bamboozled.

When it comes to collections, no news is good news. If a renter has no debt and has been consistently paying their obligations, they won't have collections on their account. However, collections stay on a person's credit report for seven years, *even after they're paid off*.

Be sure to talk to the applicant and ask questions so you can assess if they're currently willing and able to make monthly rent payments, having learned from their financial history.



Pro Tip: Find the rent-to-gross-income ratio in seconds with **our free calculator**.

Setting Background Check Criteria

A background and eviction history report includes thorough information regarding an applicant's criminal background, public records, and more.

Eviction histories are particularly compelling. A tenant is typically evicted due to nonpayment of rent or repeated lease violations, which gives seasoned landlords pause. It's possible that an applicant will have a great income and credit history but an eviction record.

According to the **Eviction Lab**, "there are often large racial/ethnic and gender disparities in the threat of eviction - for example, 59% of people facing eviction (over the last year) were women, a count that is disproportionately made up of more Black and Latinx women."

That's why it's important to contact the applicant's former landlord(s) and talk through what you're seeing with the applicant. You can learn more about the situation, then decide if you'd like to move forward.





When you judge another, you do not define them - you define yourself."

- Wayne Dyer, American author and motivational speaker

Pre-screening: Your New Favorite Timesaver

When you list your property with TurboTenant, you can use our free pre-screening tool to ask potential renters for information about their:

- Employment
- Monthly income
- Estimated credit score
- Intended number of occupants
- Pets
- Smoking habits

When a lead says they're interested in your listing, we automatically send them this questionnaire. You can then review their responses and narrow down your tenant search to those who most closely match your screening criteria.

You can even customize the pre-screening questions we send!

Have you (or any person you have named on this application) ever been evicted from a tenancy or left owing money?

Ask

Don't Ask

Custom App Questions

Are you a student?



Does your current landlord know you are thinking of moving?



+ Add

Tenant Screening Made Easy

Having to track down decades of documentation sounds daunting - so don't! With TurboTenant, you can screen applicants for free in just three quick steps:

- 1 Enter the applicant's email:** Great, you've done the hardest part! Screen potential renters by entering their email or phone number - we'll take care of the rest. You don't need to collect their SSN or any sensitive personal information since they'll enter this info themselves.
- 2 We verify their identity:** We automatically reach out to the applicant on your behalf and ask them a few questions to verify their identity.
- 3 You receive the screening report.** As soon as the potential tenant verifies their identity, you'll get a notification telling you the screening report is ready to review.

[Watch the process >>](#)



What's on a tenant screening report?

Having to track down decades of documentation sounds daunting - so don't! TurboTenant's screening report includes an applicant's:

Credit Score - See if they meet your criteria with a full credit report from TransUnion

Past Evictions* - Stress less knowing we check over 27 million eviction records covering all 50 states and D.C.

Criminal Record* - Rest assured knowing we check over 300 million records for any criminal history

Screening Report [PRINT](#) [GET HELP READING A REPORT](#)

624 FAIR SCORE

350 520 640 720 850

Score Factors

- ▶ Serious delinquency, and derogatory public record or collection filed
- ▶ Lack of recent retail account information
- ▶ Proportion of loan balances to loan amounts is too high
- ▶ Too many inquiries last 12 months

Criminal History
1 RECORDS FOUND

Evictions
1 RECORDS FOUND

Collections
1 ACCOUNTS

Public Records
1 RECORDS FOUND

Eviction Records

COLORADO

Alexander Knight
ACTION DATE: 9/12/2015
PLAINTIFF: Acme Corp, LLC
7800 Linden St. Fort Collins, CO 80525

Larimer County 28th District-Civil (CO1278941)
FILE NUMBER: KN129N9XOP1

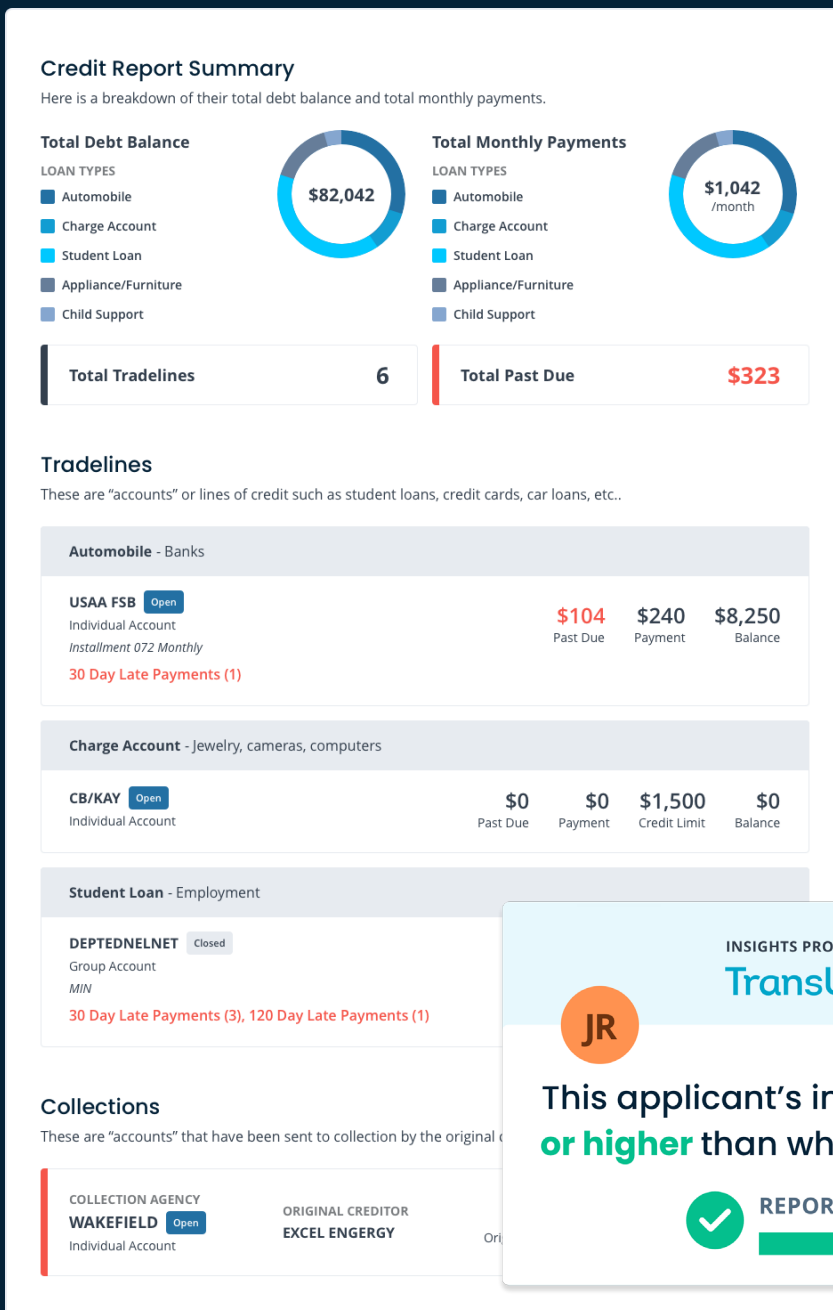
Criminal History

TEXAS COURT - TX05205000
2981-DUI/DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE, .09, 2ND OFFENSE
CASE NUMBER: 0234919
CHARGE FILED: 12/27/2018
Misdemeanor Class B - PLED GUILTY

Fraud Indicators

Current address mismatch - Input does not match file.
Input address is a hotel/motel or temporary residence.

***Where legally permitted**



INSIGHTS PROVIDED BY **TransUnion**

This applicant's income is **close to or higher** than what they reported.

REPORTED INCOME

Debt in Collections - View their debt payment history, including any late payments in their rental history

Lines of Credit - Learn if they might be stretched too thin by looking at their credit history

Credit Inquiries - Gain insights into new loans and any history of bankruptcies

Income verification - Premium landlords unlock our Income Insights tool to double-check the income reported by applicants against data from TransUnion

Interviewing Former Landlords

To get the best sense of an applicant, request contact details for their former landlords - then reach out for a quick interview.

Ask questions like:

- How long did the tenant rent from you?
- What condition was the unit in post-move out?
- Did the tenant have any animals?
- Were there any issues between the tenant and their neighbors?
- Would you rent to them again?

But be sure to avoid questions that violate the Fair Housing Act, like whether or not the tenant practices a certain religion or what credit score they previously reported.

Learn more about what not to do (and score a free email template to reach former landlords) in [our blog](#) >>



Denying Applicants

When screening tenants, you must move forward with the first person who best aligns with your criteria - which means you'll likely have to turn down at least a few folks. Though you may be tempted to ghost applicants who don't fit, we recommend you let them know - and in some cases, you're legally required to do so.

If you haven't run their screening report, simply reach out to the applicant and let them know you won't be moving forward with them.

If you ran their screening report, you must send a message that complies with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) that tells the applicant they've been turned down and underscores their right to review their credit report. *Another perk of TurboTenant? We handle this email for you - [learn how!](#)*



About Us

Built by landlords for landlords, TurboTenant's intuitive platform helps half a million landlords streamline their entire rental process for free – whether they have one door or 1,000. More than **600,000** independent landlords nationwide enjoy TurboTenant's free, all-in-one online property management software.

Features offered by TurboTenant include rental applications, tenant screening, property marketing, rent payments, lease agreements, and maintenance management.

[Sign Up Today >>](#)

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There's always more to learn! TurboTenant offers free ebooks to support every phase of your landlording journey, from setting your investor goals to moving out your first tenant.

[Check Out the Full Library >>](#)

Get \$25 Give \$25

The best landlords know the value of community - that's why TurboTenant rewards you AND your friends with each referral! When you refer landlords to our site, we'll pay you and your friend \$25 each.

[Cash In >>](#)



Sign Up

