

Resident Screening as a Sales Tool

Most property managers charge a non-refundable application fee to their residency applicants. This fee is typically in the \$25 to \$45 range, and is used to offset the cost of reviewing the application and conducting resident screening. Applicants sometimes question property managers as to *why* they have to pay this application fee, and the answers can vary from “we charge it to everybody” to “the boss says I have to charge it”. We propose an answer to this question that not only answers the question in a positive manner, but can actually become a selling tool.

When responding to the question of why you are charging an application fee, state to the applicant that this fee covers resident screening efforts. Then go on to explain why resident screening benefits *them*. Explain that all residents of the building they will be occupying have been screened not only for credit histories, but also for criminal histories and problem renter records, in an effort to make everybody’s experience in their new rental community a better one. Explain that your company has set standards for their residents, so that everyone can feel more secure. Once you are done explaining this to the applicant, ask them how they would feel about moving in to an apartment complex that didn’t screen their residents, or simply looked at a credit file and ignored possible criminal histories.

If you are using our online resident screening tool, the **Instant Inquiry**, you can also mention to your applicant that all of your residents have been screened through a large multi-state (44 states) sex offender database. You will have impressed your applicant that you are serious about protecting both your rental community and their future home.