Top Five Training Tips
for Resident Screening

Tighten-Up Your Resident Screening Training!

By Mike Lapsley, president and CEO of RentGrow, Inc

When it comes to using your resident screening service effectively, the right training can make all the difference in the world. These are five key training tips to keep in mind when it comes to resident screening.

Top Five Training Tips:

1. Choose a screening provider that offers regular training.

From properly training new staff members to providing refresher "courses" for veteran employees, it's important that your screening provider offers regular and accessible training. Keep in mind that training isn't "one size fits all." In the Multifamily industry, there are many facets of the screening process, and some are going to be more relevant to your particular situation than others. Make sure your screening partner is aware of your specific needs.

2. Make sure your office keeps up with relevant laws.

In the Multifamily industry, there are important and relevant laws that every member of your leasing staff should know. Take an extra step to round out your training process by educating your office on important laws, such as the Fair Housing Act (FHA), Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) and the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act, (The FACT Act). All property managers and leasing staff should have working knowledge of each law. While your screening provider can help you in this area, you should still take that extra step and provide additional training classes focused on these laws. Make sure to stay on the lookout for new laws and provisions, such as the new sections of the FACT Act.

3. Teach best practices when it comes to security.

Since resident screening involves the evaluation of personal information, such as credit reports, it's important that employees understand how to protect tenants' privacy and sensitive information. Your staff should also be well versed on safe computing and security practices. For example, every employee should have his or her own password (which should be supplied by the screening company). Then, make sure employees not only keep those passwords private, but also change their passwords every 90 days (a Credit Bureau requirement). Finally, train your team to follow appropriate policies when disposing of consumer files—both virtual and hard copies. Posting these policies in an area where staff members congregate is one way to ensure awareness of proper disposal policies.

4. Remember the little things and focus on details.

Providing reminders about the "little things"—those simple, everyday procedures that may seem like no-brainers—can help your staff keep important practices top of mind. For example, it's important for users to be careful when entering data, reviewing data, and handling and storing applicants' confidential information. Simply entering data incorrectly can skew an applicant's results, so encourage your staff to take the time to double-check their work to avoid easy mistakes and setbacks.

5. Refresh your training yearly.

Take time to have an office-wide refresher training class once a year, this will improve compliance. If any questions arise about your screening service, call your screening provider for help.

Now's the perfect time to set up your annual "refresher" training. ■

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