



A Decade of Resident Screening: 4 Points of Progress

By Mike Lapsley, General Manager and Vice President, RentGrow, Inc.

What a decade it has been! A lot has changed and everyone has adapted to keep their business thriving. Let's take a look at four major points of progress in resident screening that have impacted both your business and ours.

1. Criminal Background Checks

Resident screening used to be credit-centric, with less than 15% of RentGrow clients running criminal background checks in 2000. Today, criminal data is accepted industry-wide as a critical component of applicant screening with over 95% of RentGrow clients using criminal data as a part of their resident screening process!

So, what contributed to this dramatic increase?

To start, technological advances changed the data landscape. Criminal data became more accessible and affordable as court houses and data providers began consolidating court records online. As the renter population became increasingly mobile, these online databases helped overcome data challenges with screening out-of-state applicants. Additionally, state courts began ruling that property managers would risk potential liability if they failed to use available resources to identify and reject criminal applicants, such as sex offenders or terrorists, which may threaten the safety of other residents. All of these factors increased the value of criminal screening and led the multifamily industry to embrace it.

2. Streamlining the User Experience

The multifamily trend to simplify and consolidate systems has changed how we all do business. People wanted fewer databases for better analytics and a streamlined user experience to minimize logins, platforms, data entry and training. Founded in 2002, Multifamily Information and Transactions Standards (MITS) initiated a coordinated effort to create shared data standards among multifamily vendors so that different software programs can "talk to each other."

3. More to Screening than Just Background Checks

Years ago, screening analytics were limited because of higher costs and technological limitations. Today's much improved data

infrastructure and visualization tools make it possible to generate executive screening analytics more frequently, with faster delivery and better quality. Ask your screening provider how you can apply screening analytics to improve your business.

4. Consumer Awareness & Dispute Resolution

Today, credit monitoring services and the high exposure of digital identity theft has caused prospective renters to become much more aware of their personal data and its potential implications. As a result, they are more likely to challenge property managers and data providers if they suspect inaccuracies or discrimination. Consequently, it is invaluable to handle applicant disputes in a responsive way because you never want to wrongly reject a qualified applicant! Talk to your resident screening provider about their applicant dispute resolution process.

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