



HOW DO I FIND HOUSING?

Finding housing in our area can be challenging. Here are some tips and tricks to help you navigate the competitive rental market.

Where do I start?

Think about your strengths, barriers, and needs

1

Will you need a pet-friendly unit? An apartment complex with an elevator? Do you need to find a property that will work with a lower credit score or a criminal record?

Identify properties that fit your needs

2

Property management websites are often a great source of information--you can learn about pet policies, credit requirements, unit size, and more.

HRDC's Affordable Housing Guide lists many of these details for a wide range of properties in our area

Apply to as many properties as possible

3

The more applications you submit, the better chance you have of finding a property that will work for you.

Follow up with landlords

4

After you submit an application, check with the property to ensure no documents are missing and the application is complete.

If your contact information changes, let landlords know so they're able to contact you

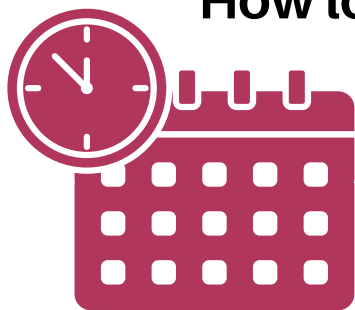
How do I apply?

Each property management company/landlord has their own application. There is no universal waitlist or application for housing. Many properties provide application information on their websites, and some have online applications. You can also call properties to learn more about the best way to apply.



Read and re-read all application instructions! They will likely tell you what documents must be included (like copies of IDs), where to submit the application, or how to check your status after you have applied.

How long will it take? What if there's a waitlist?



Due to high demand for housing, almost all properties in our area operate waitlists. Contact properties directly to learn more about unit availability and anticipated wait time.

While long waitlists can be discouraging, **don't let it stop you from applying!** Sometimes, waitlists can move faster than anticipated. Property managers will often call the next person on the waitlist and be unable to reach them or find that they've found housing elsewhere. Waitlists can start moving quickly when this happens.

WHAT IF...

I have a felony on my record?

I don't have rental history?

I don't have good credit?

I've been evicted before?



You are not alone! Here are some tools you can use to strengthen your housing applications.

Write a letter of explanation

Many landlords will evaluate your history on a case-by-case basis. Including a brief letter of explanation with your application can help you explain what happened, how you addressed it, and what you'll do moving forward to have a successful tenancy.

I am applying for (a position as an XXXXX with your company/an apartment in your complex). I anticipate that you may have some concerns about my criminal history, so I wanted to explain the report to you.

In (year) I was (charged/convicted) with (charge). (Here, you can describe what you pled in court, what the punishment was—probation, time in jail, etc). In the time since my involvement with the criminal justice system, I have taken steps to improve my life. I have (completed anger management treatment/sought counseling/paid restitution/joined AA/joined a church/etc). This change in behavior has helped me focus on fulfilling responsibilities to myself, others, and my community.

In the future, I will continue moving forward with my life in a positive manner. Thank you for your consideration. Should you require additional documentation or character references, please contact me (at the phone number listed on my application/at the email address listed below)

Address any debts in collections or money owed to past landlords

Collections or money owed to a landlord make it less likely for your application to be approved. Making payments on these debts—even small amounts—helps demonstrate that you're working on addressing the issue.

Include additional references

Letters of reference from people like employers, service providers, and case managers can make your application stronger by focusing on your strengths. For folks with limited rental history, poor credit, or criminal charges, additional references can help make up for gaps in your application.

If possible, offer a double deposit

Some landlords will accept a double deposit if your credit or rental history doesn't meet their application requirements.

Ask for details about how things like felonies or evictions are evaluated

Some properties won't accept felonies at all. Some will only look at felonies within the past 10 years. Some will consider the type of felony—was it non-violent? Have you fulfilled court-ordered treatment and paid fines? You are more than your criminal record and it's worth a shot to see if an exception can be made.