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Certified-Mail Requirement For Eviction Notices is Cut

By Aaron Kirk Douglas

While Washington has removed the certified-mail requirement for eviction notices, local jurisdictions like Vancouver are moving forward with new compliance programs that owners need to act on immediately.

House Bill 2664, passed unanimously by the Legislature, eliminates the requirement that unlawful detainer notices be sent via certified mail. Instead, notices may be served through standard mail, simplifying a process that had created delays, returned mail, and administrative backlogs for housing providers.

The law is expected to take effect in early summer 2026, widely understood across the industry as June 11, 2026, providing near-term operational relief for property managers and owners.

At the same time, Vancouver's new rental-registration program is now live.

All rental housing units within Vancouver city limits—including apartments, duplexes, and single-family rentals—must be registered annually beginning in 2026. The $30 per unit annual fee applies immediately.

This is not a minor administrative detail. For larger portfolios, missing the deadline could translate into a meaningful, recurring operating expense across hundreds of units.

Beyond registration, Washington continues to offer a more predictable legal framework than Oregon in several key areas. Clark County courts have generally maintained consistent statutory interpretation, avoiding the procedural variability seen elsewhere.

In addition, Washington's approach to nonpayment cases still requires tenants to pay the full amount owed—including rent, costs, and fees—to cure a default, rather than allowing partial payments to restart the process.

Aaron Kirk Douglas is a storyteller and market analyst. His career spans journalism, creative nonfiction, filmmaking, and real estate research. He serves as director of market intelligence at HFO Investment Real Estate/GREA, the Pacific Northwest's leading multifamily brokerage.

National Median Rent Up for 2nd Month in March



Rental Housing Journal

The national median rent ticked up by 0.5 percent in March, increasing for the second consecutive month following six straight monthly rent declines, according to the April report from Apartment List.

"This turn represents the market creeping out of the off-season, and we'll likely see continued increases in the months ahead as moving activity ramps up, in line with typical seasonal patterns. Prices generally soften as fewer renters move during the fall and winter, and then gradually begin to increase as we get closer to the peak moving summer season. February marked the return to positive rent growth, and March is continuing that trend," the Apartment List research team writes in the report.

Highlights of the April report

- The national median rent increased by 0.5% in March, and now stands at $1,363.
- Rent prices nationally are down 1.7% compared to one year ago. Year-over-year rent growth is now at the lowest level in Apartment List estimates going back to 2017, surpassing a record set in the early months of the pandemic. The national median rent has now fallen from its 2022 peak by a total of 5.5%.
- The national multifamily vacancy rate held steady at 7.3% this month, a record high for our index going back to 2017. We're past the peak of a multifamily construction surge, but a healthy supply of new units are still hitting the market and colliding with sluggish demand, causing vacancies to remain elevated.
- Units are taking an average of 38 days to get leased after being listed, which is five days longer than one year ago, and more than twice as long as it took units to turn over when the market was at its hottest in mid-2021.
- The Austin, Texas, metro continues to have the softest conditions among the nation's laeasage rental markets, with the median rent there down by 6% over the past year. At the other end of the spectrum, the Virginia Beach, Va. metro now sits atop our rankings of fastest year-over-year rent growth at +5.5%.

For now, conditions remain soft, and if anything, the runway for these sluggish conditions is likely only lengthening. The latest data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed U.S. employers cutting jobs, and the war in Iran is pushing prices higher just as inflation was getting back under control. These factors have put many households in a state of heightened financial uncertainty, which consequently puts a damper on housing demand.

Despite the slight decline compared to last month, list-to-lease time remains notably elevated. This month's reading is the longest that we've seen in any March going back to 2019 when our tracking begins (January's 41 days set the overall record), and units are taking more than twice as long to turn over as they were in mid-2021 when the market was at its hottest. This lengthening of list-to-lease time is in line with negative rent growth, soft occupancy, and a generally cool rental market.







The wave of construction that has been driving these conditions is waning, but it now appears that weaker rental demand may keep rental conditions soft. A shaky labor market, renewed inflation concerns, and overall macroeconomic uncertainty are taking a toll on demand, meaning that it will take longer for the market to metabolize the recent growth in the rental stock, even if the construction industry slows in tandem.

Read the full report at:
https://www.apartmentlist.com/research/national-rent-data

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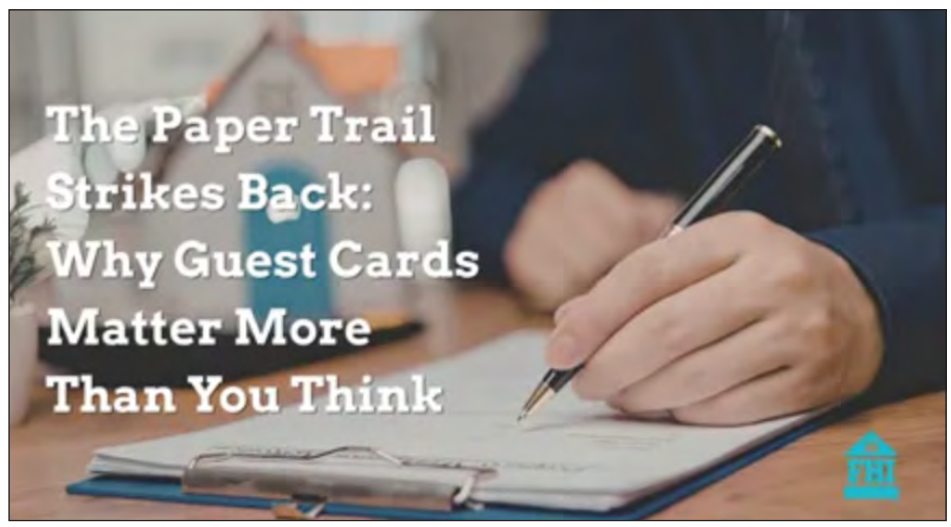
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Guest Cards Demonstrate Equal Treatment, Shape Prospect Experience and Property's Compliance

By The Fair Housing Institute



In property management, first impressions are often discussed in terms of curb appeal, amenities, or the professionalism of a leasing agent. However, one of the most overlooked elements of that first interaction is also one of the most important: the guest card. Long before a prospect submits an application or signs a lease, the way their initial visit is handled establishes the standard for everything that follows.

A guest card is not simply an administrative formality. It is the first indication that a property operates with structure, consistency, and professionalism. When every prospect is asked to complete the same process, it communicates that the community values fairness and organization. This initial step signals that all individuals will be treated equally, which is not only good customer service—it is a foundational principle of fair housing compliance.

Defining Professionalism Through Process

Consistency is one of the clearest markers of professionalism in leasing operations. When guest cards are used uniformly, they create a repeatable process that ensures every prospect receives the same experience. This includes the same questions, information, and follow-up procedures.

Without this structure, leasing interactions can quickly become informal and inconsistent. A familiar face might bypass the process. A busy moment might lead to shortcuts. A quick conversation might replace proper documentation. While these actions may seem harmless in the moment, they introduce variability that can be difficult to explain later.

Guest cards serve as a safeguard against this inconsistency. They reinforce that every interaction is intentional and documented, reducing the likelihood of uneven service. In doing so, they elevate the professionalism of the leasing team and create a more reliable experience for prospects.

Compliance Begins Before the Application

Fair housing compliance does not begin at the application stage—it starts with the very first point of contact. Guest cards play a critical role in demonstrating that all prospects are treated equally from the outset. They provide a clear record of who was assisted, what information was shared, and when the interaction took place.

In situations where questions or complaints arise, this documentation becomes invaluable. It allows housing providers to show that their process is consistent and non-discriminatory. Without it, even well-intentioned actions can be difficult to defend.

The key distinction is that compliance is not based on intent, but on outcomes and documentation. Guest cards help bridge that gap by creating a tangible record that supports fair and equal treatment across all interactions.

Creating a Standard That Extends Beyond the First Visit

The impact of a guest card does not end after the initial interaction. It sets the tone for follow-up communication, future visits, and the overall leasing journey. When used properly, it ensures that each prospect is entered into a system that supports timely, consistent outreach.

This level of organization benefits both the leasing team and the prospect. For the team, it provides clarity and structure. For the prospect, it creates a seamless and professional experience that reflects positively on the community.

More importantly, it reinforces a standard that extends beyond any single interaction. It becomes part of a larger operational framework where consistency is expected and maintained at every stage of the leasing process.

Elevating the Role of Guest Cards in Property Management

Guest cards are often viewed as a routine task—something to complete and move past. In reality, they are among the most important tools available for shaping both the prospect experience and a property's compliance posture.

By treating guest cards as a critical first step rather than a checkbox, property management professionals can strengthen their processes, reduce risk, and deliver a higher standard of service. The way this simple step is handled speaks volumes about how the property operates as a whole.

Ultimately, the first impression is not just about how a property looks or feels. It is about how it functions. And when guest cards are used consistently and intentionally, they define a leasing standard that is both professional and compliant from the very beginning.

In 2005, The Fair Housing Institute was founded as a company with one goal: to provide educational and entertaining fair-housing compliance training at an affordable price at the click of a button.

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Speed and Ease Matter Most in the Renting Experience

Rental Housing Journal

A new survey of renters shows speed and ease matter the most in the renting experience at the same time long-term renting is becoming a deliberate housing strategy for millions of Americans.

The Rently 2026 Renting by Generation Report explores the renting-versus-homeownership tipping point: the moment when renting stops being a temporary phase and starts being seen as a realistic long-term option, whether driven by flexibility, convenience, or financial tradeoffs.

High home prices, elevated mortgage rates, and persistent housing affordability challenges have made it harder for many households to justify or afford the leap from renting to owning. At the same time, expectations for the renting experience are rising. Speed, predictability, flexibility, and digital convenience now define what renters consider a worthwhile long-term option. The market is experiencing a broader shift in how Americans think about housing, stability, and what a successful adulthood looks like.

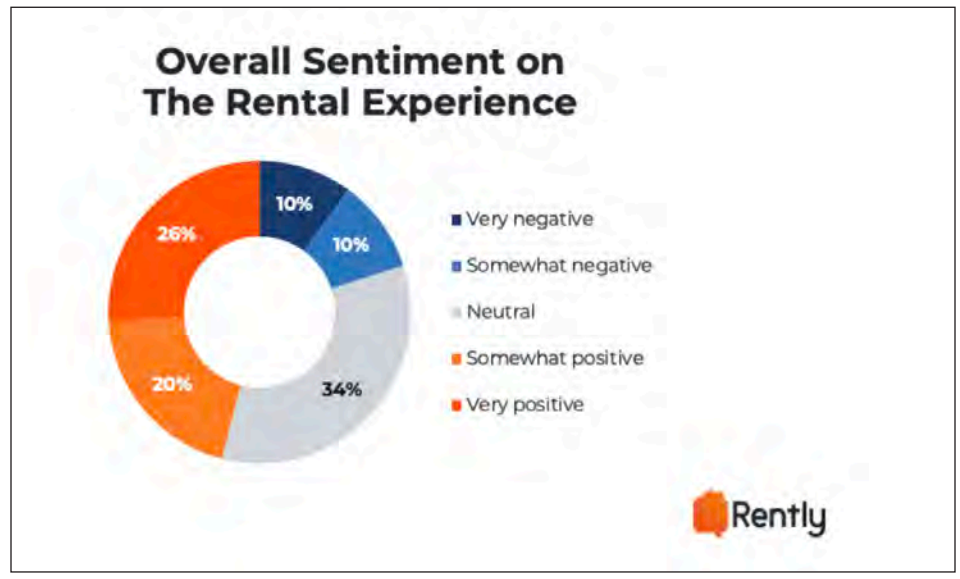
The survey was done by Pollfish in January 2026 of 800 U.S. adults aged 18+ who currently rent an apartment, condo, or house.

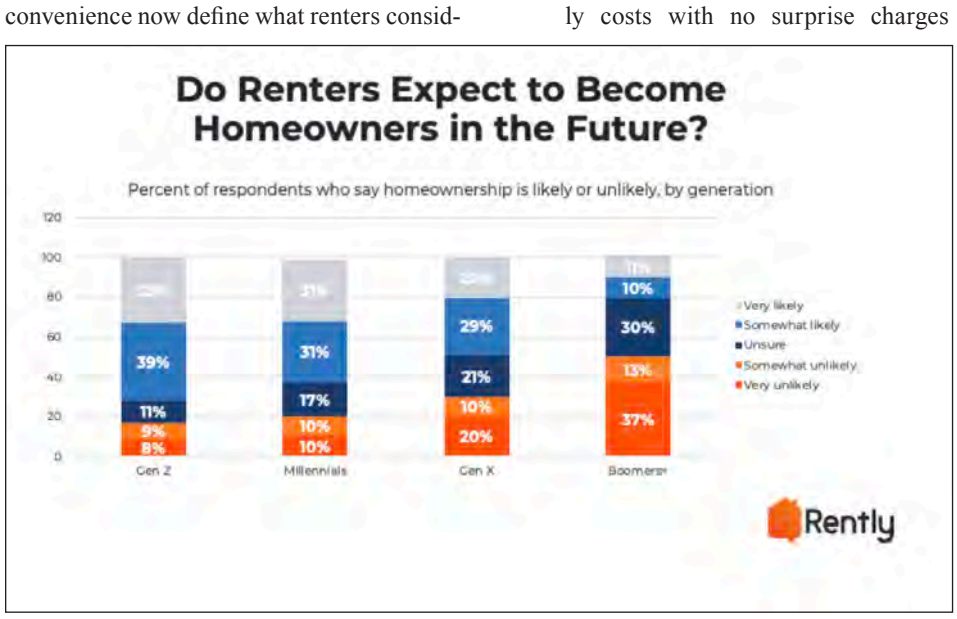
Key insights:

Renting experience and housing strategy survey

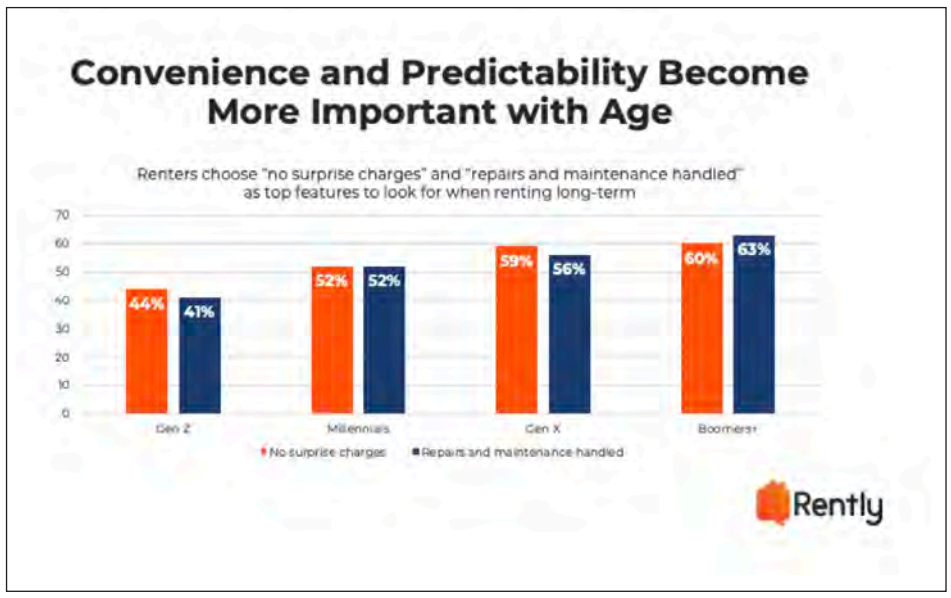
- 63% of Gen Z rate speed and ease as very or extremely important in the renting experience.
- 46% of renters describe renting as somewhat or very positive, compared with 20% who describe it as somewhat or very negative.
- 54% of renters say predictable monthly costs with no surprise charges make renting feel worthwhile long-term, and 53% say the same about having repairs and maintenance handled for them.
- 39% of millennials and 34% of Gen Z view renting as a temporary step before owning, compared with 20% of Gen X and 16% of older boomers.
- 49% of renters say long-term renting is more acceptable today than it was 10 years ago.
- 49% of older boomers feel no pressure at all to eventually own a home, while 33% of Gen Z say owning is very likely.

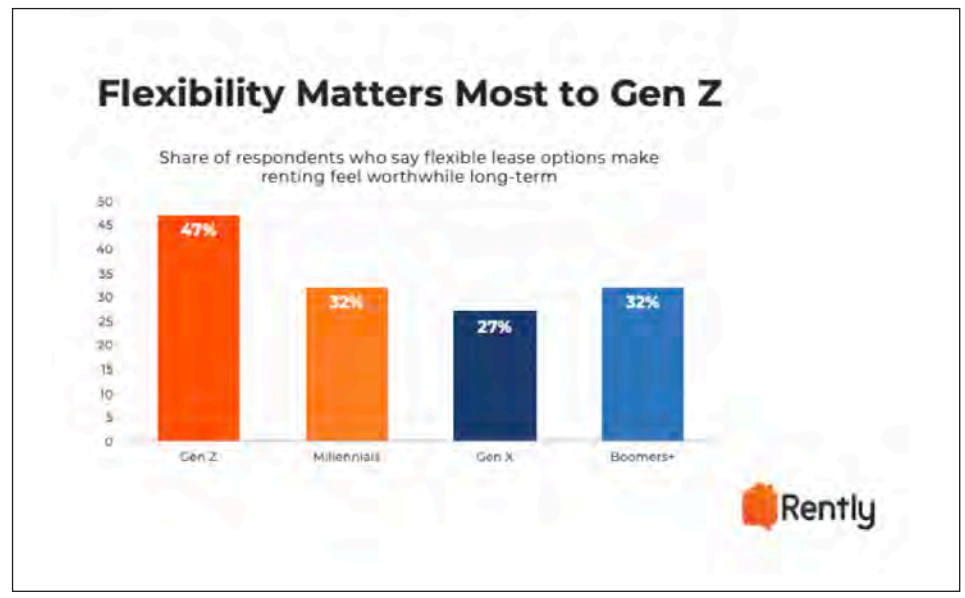
"Renting is no longer just a stepping stone to homeownership. For a growing share of Americans, it is a deliberate choice," said Merrick Lackner, CEO at Rently. "In a market where buying can feel out of reach and flexibility matters more than ever, renters want speed, predictability, and real support. The rental experience should feel simple and responsive because for many households, renting truly feels like home."

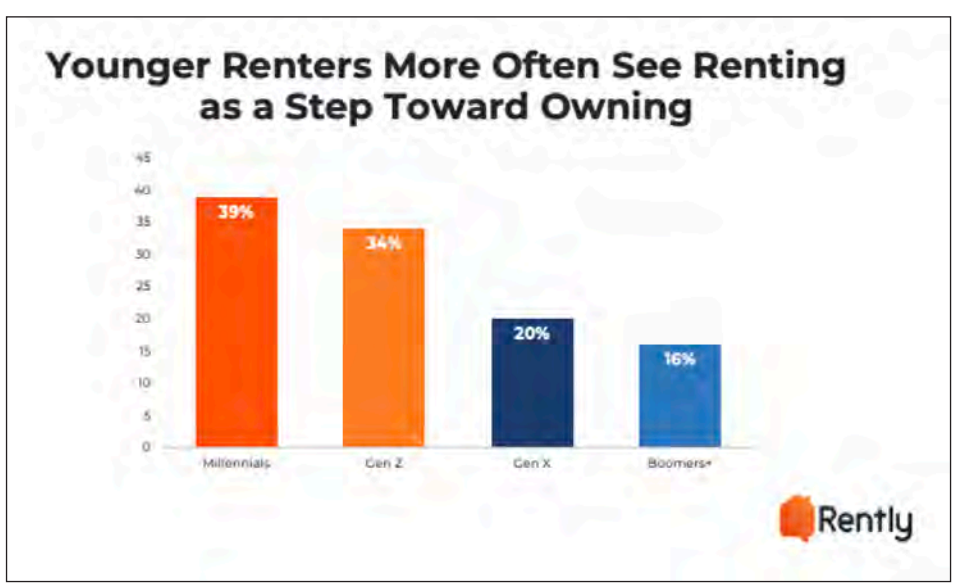














Read the full report at:
https://use.rently.com/blog/rently-2026-renting-by-generation-report

Fraud: Multifamily's Rising Threat

How Can the Industry Fight Back?

By Paul Willis

Fraud remains prevalent in the multifamily industry and shows no signs of dissipating. Bad actors are constantly finding new ways to circumvent systems, particularly through the use of generative AI and other bleeding-edge technologies, aiming to remain one step ahead of the industry's fraud-prevention and cybersecurity initiatives.

The industry, naturally, has no choice but to fight back.

A panel on the recent Entrata webinar "Fraud: Multifamily's Rising Threat" discussed ways multifamily can short-circuit the fast-evolving fraud tactics, including the use of traditional methods, innovative AI-powered solutions and the intense monitoring of social media-driven scams, such as fraud kits.

While fraud has been a perpetual concern in the digital multifamily landscape, the numbers are telling. A recent survey from the National Multifamily Housing Council showed 71% of respondents indicated fraud has increased significantly over the past 12 months. A staggering 93% of respondents have experienced it firsthand.

Forms of fraud in multifamily

Multifamily operators witness fraud in a number of ways. The NMHC survey indicated that 84% of those experiencing fraud encountered falsified income information, while 80% said applicants were misrepresenting their personal information on applications and 70% have dealt with some form of identity theft.

Other forms of fraud not as prominent in the industry include illegal subletting, unauthorized inhabitants and various types of payment fraud.

Social media and generative AI (GenAI) are further blurring the lines. They are helping organized fraud rings sell fraudulent rental kits at scale—kits that contain a collection of forged or stolen documents used by individuals to misrepresent their identity, income and creditworthiness to secure a rental property.

The rental-kit threat is genuine and fairly prevalent, according to Keir Breitenfeld, senior vice president of product management and portfolio marketing for Experian. It is social media-driven, he said, as perpetrators are learning online and sometimes using the practice as a side hustle.

Tools to combat the rising trend

Traditional multifamily fraud tools are holding up well, according to Kathleen Maley, VP of fraud analytics and commercialization at Experian. That's with one caveat—the tools perform well when they are used consistently and strategically.

While it's difficult to think of eyeballs as a tool anymore—in the form of scouring paystubs for inconsistent fonts and uncovering inaccuracies in bank statements—tried-and-true digital tools such as ID verification, income verification, document analysis and behavioral analysis still serve as powerful complements to traditional screening and background checks.

One of the reasons that fraud is on the rise, she said, is because GenAI has made it so much easier and quicker to produce false documentation. Tools that can detect falsified documents are available, but the vast increase in fraud attempts makes it more difficult to pinpoint each instance. This is where the orchestration of the tools is important, she said. It's about layering the tools in an intelligent, linear fashion to optimize fraud prevention and preserve the customer experience—all at a reasonable price point.



How multifamily fraud compares to other industries

While fraud tactics possess a commonality — whether it's within ecommerce, financial services, multifamily or any other vertical—the primary differences are the specific types that affect each industry. In multifamily, of course, most fraud is rooted in rental-related scams.

The type of loss derived from fraud is also unique to the sector, including loss of rental income, the cost of eviction actions, unpaid damages and the overall high cost per incident. Potential auxiliary effects can include high resident turnover and lower property valuations.

The commonality across industries is fraudsters' underlying act of creating synthetic identities, manipulating real identities and documents and bot attacks. Whether the fraud is to lease an apartment, open a credit card or gain access to healthcare, all are taking advantage of a process.

With GenAI and agentic AI (an advanced form of AI focused upon autonomous decision-making and action) entering the fray, an ability exists to perpetrate fraud at scale. Large-scale fraud undertakings have the potential to overwhelm typical capabilities and operational workflows.

The double-edged nature of AI

As with virtually every facet of the rental-housing industry, talk of AI-based solutions is prominent regarding fraud prevention. The presence of AI, however, has multitiered consequences. On the positive side, it serves as a valuable tool for providers to build better analytics and iterate more quickly. AI can help better orchestrate workflows and next-best actions using a host of different types of signals, such as digital signals, identity signals and many others. Overall, it's a substantial tool.

The flipside is that it's also a tool for fraudsters. With the massive rise of digital engagement since 2020, an operator's ability to track digital signals—such as device intelligence, network intelligence or behavioral intelligence— is even more paramount. For optimal results, operators should combine tracking solutions with traditional ID and document verification as part of a layered solution to short-circuit any AI-related fraud attempts. Together, these tools help positively link the person to the type of document they're presenting and the channel they are utilizing.

According to Maley, fraudsters have an initial advantage when new forms of AI are unveiled, because they operate in an unregulated environment. Their sole goal is to get through the process as quickly and easily as possible. Conversely, operators want to follow the law when combating fraud but without causing friction to everyday applicants and residents.

Primary takeaways

The panel, which included Entrata industry principal Virginia Love, emphasized the importance of keeping current practices in place. Properties should continue to use ID verification, fraud risk scores, stepped-up authentication, one-time passcodes, document verification, behavioral analytics and device analytics. If necessary, they can work with a combination of providers to elevate efforts and ensure the components are working in complementary fashion.

Operators who recognize signs of fraud early in the process better position themselves to thwart any disingenuous efforts. The first step is to determine whether an applicant is a bot or who they claim to be. Are they filling out the application manually, autofilling or copying and pasting from elsewhere? Technology can help detect those types of fraudulent activities, so operators can discontinue the application process if those behaviors are detected. Technology can also uncover whether a phone number is associated with numerous locations, which also can be a red flag.

Actions on the property side, the panel said, should be driven by the type of fraud encountered, whether it's first-party, synthetic ID or an identity theft. Logic should be utilized, as well, such as refraining from sending a one-time passcode to a synthetic identity.

The panel encouraged operators to monitor social media for increasing fraud schemes, more of which will be borne out of agentic AI. Additionally, constant review and fine-tuning of fraud-prevention measures can keep properties ahead of the game.

Lastly, panelists urged operators to maintain the perspective that a heavy majority of applicants, up to 99%, are well-intentioned. Educating customers on why the checks are needed—namely, to protect their identities, as well—will help them understand the reasons for any robust measures. Effectively communicating these intentions helps to maintain trust. Just as consumers are OK with multifactor authentication from a bank, they'll appreciate the fraud-prevention efforts if they know you have their best interests in mind.

Paul Willis is content director at LinnellTaylor Marketing in Denver.

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Gridlock Adding Inventory, Holding Down Rental Rates

Rental Housing Journal

When homes fail to sell and the owners decide to rent, it can affect the local rent supply and lower rental prices due to the increased inventory of rentals available.

Redfin economist Chen Zhao said in a recent Yahoo interview that housing gridlock—driven by high rates and locked-in homeowners—is forcing would-be sellers to rent out properties instead, creating a surge in sellers becoming landlords. "Those homes are adding supply to the rental market," she said.

So, this new supply is coming into the rental market where there may already be new apartment construction that is also adding new rentals. This explains why rents are stabilizing in some areas and even declining.

When homes fail to sell and become rentals, that increases rental inventory, especially in single-family homes. More supply leads to less upward pressure on rents in some markets, leading to flat or slightly declining rents.

This is happening especially in markets in Florida and Texas, including Houston, Austin, San Antonio, Dallas and Tampa and Orlando / Jacksonville.

In the West, Portland, Denver and Phoenix have large numbers of accidental landlords and a rising rental supply.

For example, Portland's rent declines are being driven by a surge in supply—from both new construction and homeowners turning unsold properties into rentals—pushing vacancy above 7% and giving renters the upper hand. Portland isn't just "flattening"—it's been in a multi-year rent correction.

So, in Portland there is new multifamily construction, accidental landlords adding to single-family rental inventory, and a softening local economy. This has led Portland landlords to provide more concessions (free rent, discounts), longer lease-up times and rent negotiations becoming common.

Zhao leads the economics team at Redfin, where she produces research on the housing market for public and internal audiences. Previously, she was an executive director leading housing finance and financial markets research at the JPMorgan Chase Institute.

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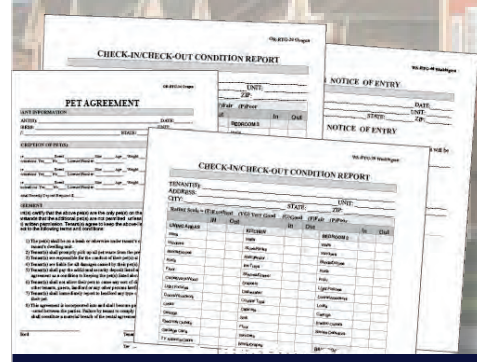
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