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MARCH 2026

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Tennessee Bill Will Prevent Landlords' Gun Bans

RENTAL HOUSING JOURNAL

A Tennessee bill, HB 496, would prevent landlords from banning guns and prohibit adding a clause to a lease that would ban tenants from "lawfully possessing, carrying, transporting, or storing a firearm, firearm components, or ammunition on leased premises."

The bill has passed the legislature and heads to the governor for signature.

The protection also extends to firearms kept in vehicles parked in tenant parking areas and in locations controlled by the landlord that tenants must use to enter or exit their residence or parking areas.

When signed, the new law would only apply to residential lease agreements and landlord rules that are entered into, amended, extended or renewed on or after Jan. 1, 2027.

Some properties are excluded from the proposal, including premises leased to state agencies or departments, facilities licensed or contracted with the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, school properties, or facilities connected to the Department of Children's Services.

Health care and elder-care facilities are also exempt.



Utah Legislative Session Ends With Few Wins for Landlords

RENTAL HOUSING JOURNAL

Utah's 2026 legislative session closed in early March with no major new pro-landlord laws, although a key federal change is now allowing faster eviction timelines in certain properties.

For rental housing operators, the takeaway is clear: State policy remains stable for now, but pressure for future regulation is building.

Lawmakers wrapped the session in the first week of March, finalizing bills that will set Utah housing policy for the rest of 2026.

Several landlord-related bills failed to advance or stalled late in the session. No sweeping changes to eviction law or rent regulation were enacted. Utah remains one of the more landlord-friendly states in the West.

A proposed measure that would have expanded landlord flexibility in certain eviction scenarios did not make it out of committee, signaling a more cautious approach from lawmakers.

One closely watched proposal — HB516 (Landlord Communication Amendments) — would have modified how landlords communicate with tenants during eviction and lease-enforcement actions. The bill did not advance before adjournment, and no new communication mandates are taking effect in 2026. While the bill failed, it highlights growing legislative interest in standardizing notice and communication practices, an issue likely to return in future sessions.

A separate proposal to create a dedicated Housing and Collections Court remains unsettled following the session. If revived, the concept could centralize eviction and debt cases statewide, streamline court processes, and potentially speed up case timelines. For now, eviction cases will continue moving through existing district court systems.

Federal Rule Change Speeds Evictions

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has rolled back a pandemic-era requirement that mandated a 30-day notice before eviction for nonpayment in certain federally assisted housing.

Notice periods can now return to shorter timelines, often 5–14 days depending on program rules.

This allows faster response to nonpayment, improved cash-flow protection, and reduced tenant grace periods in applicable units.

While no major laws changed this session, lawmakers are not expanding landlord powers in the near term. Interest is growing in tenant protections, transparency requirements, and standardized procedures.

Utah continues to avoid more aggressive policies seen in neighboring states, such as rent control or statewide eviction restrictions. No major new state regulations took effect in March. Several proposals suggest future tightening of rules is likely. The biggest operational change right now is federal — shorter eviction timelines in covered housing.

For Utah landlords, 2026 is shaping up as a stable but shifting environment where compliance and policy awareness remain critical.

When 'Trust-But-Verify' Becomes a Legal Headache

Mastering Reasonable-Accommodation Requests Fairly for Everyone

BY THE FAIR HOUSING INSTITUTE

The natural instinct for any good property manager is to double-check everything. You have a duty to protect the property and follow the rules fairly for everyone on the rent roll. However, in the world of fair housing, that "trust-but-verify" mindset can actually become a major legal headache. The real challenge is mastering the "calibration of inquiry"—knowing exactly when to stick to the standard playbook and when the law requires you to be flexible.

Professionalism today is about realizing that strict policy and great customer service are actually on the same team. Your policy keeps things consistent, while a service-first approach ensures those rules don't inadvertently lead to a discrimination claim. When you find that sweet spot, you keep your property high-performing and your legal risks low.

Knowing When to Stop Asking

One of the easiest ways to get into trouble is asking for proof when the answer is already right in front of you.

If a resident's disability and their request clearly go hand-in-hand—like someone in a wheelchair asking for a ramp—it's best that you stop the questions right there. In these cases, the need is obvious, and demanding a doctor's note is seen as an unnecessary hurdle.

A smart management team knows such moments require setting the paperwork aside. When a need is self-evident, your best move is to say "yes" and move forward. Forcing a resident to jump through hoops for a visible disability isn't just bad service; it's a policy failure that invites a lawsuit. By recognizing these off-ramps in your procedure, you show you're a pro who knows how to handle sensitive situations with common sense.

See ACCOMMODATION on Page 3

Report Finds Pet Ownership and Rental Cooperation are Rising, but Challenges Exist

Rental Housing Journal

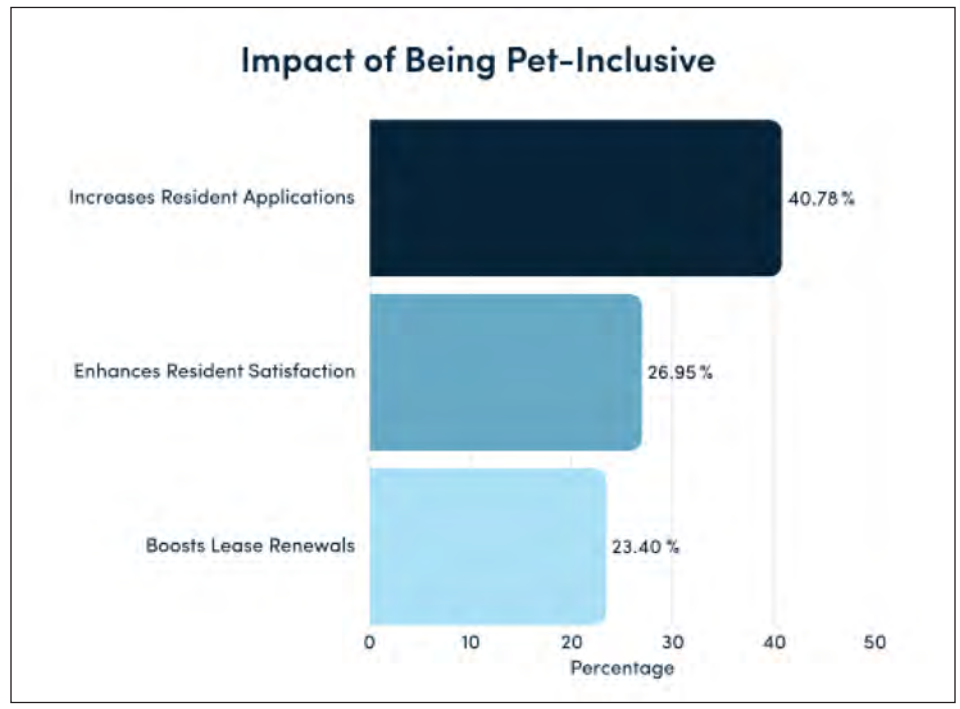
A new survey released by PetScreening reports that 81% of rental housing operators report growth in pet ownership, and 68% now consider themselves "pet-friendly," which means a variety of things ranging from more pets being allowed to more pet-focused amenities onsite.

The 2026 State of Pets in Rental Housing Report, based on feedback from 673 property managers and leasing professionals primarily within the multifamily and single-family sectors, details the effects of pet-inclusivity in the modern rental-housing world.

While 71% of U.S. households own a pet, according to the American Pet Products Association, PetScreening data shows that only 43% of renters report owning one. This figure is nearly 30 percentage points lower than the pet ownership rate reported by housing operators, suggesting that many pets in rentals may be unauthorized or underreported. The report aims to assess reasons for the disparity and ways operators can resolve related challenges.

While the rates of pet ownership in rentals continues to rise, operational challenges persist, as operators report that pet damage and unauthorized pets are among the primary issues they face at their properties.

"Despite any operational challenges, the survey underscores the clear benefits of welcoming pets at rental communities," said John Bradford, founder and CEO of PetScreening. "When pet strategies are optimized to embrace pet-inclusivity and reflect the desires of the modern renter, the advantages become more pronounced in the form of a wider resident pool, stronger retention and increased revenue. While the industry still can make significant headway, property managers are doing a commendable job of bridging the gap."

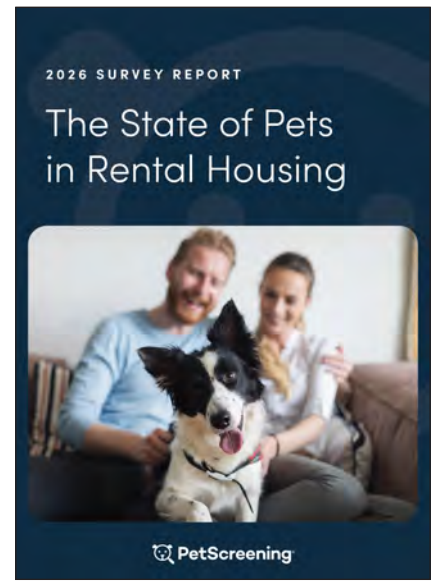


Some of the gap between the overall U.S. pet ownership rate and the percentage of renters who say they own pets may be attributable to unauthorized and underreported pets onsite. This highlights the importance of accurate tracking, which can help operators collect their rightful pet-related revenue and avoid potential risks associated with unauthorized pets.

Digging into the Data: Popular Amenities, Common Restrictions

The survey also noted that pets are an increasingly key driver in renter decision-making, as renter search data from Apartments.com showed that more than half of renters using pet filters search for dog-friendly communities. The most cited pet amenities offered by survey respondents included pet-waste stations (45%) and pet parks (35%)—functional offerings that were significantly more prevalent than experiential features such as dog-walking services (24.9%) or pet-focused events (11.2%).

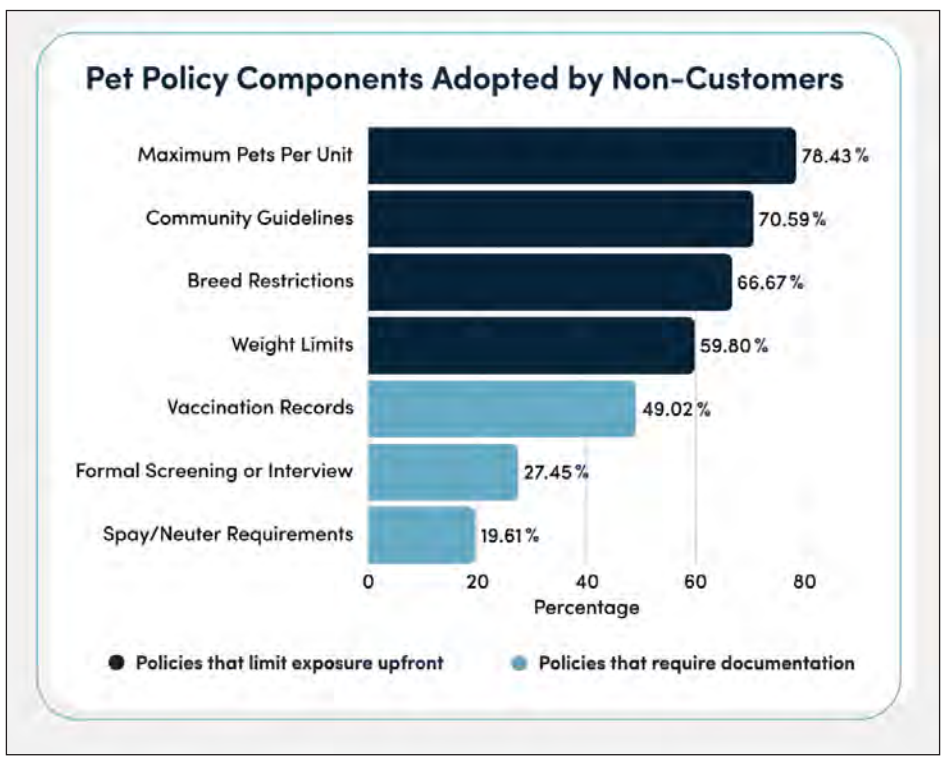
While some of the industry has shed blanket restrictions in favor of evaluating pets and their owners on an individual basis, most properties continue to have significant restrictions in place. Pet limits per household was the most cited by respondents (78.4%), while other traditional restrictions such as breed (66.7%) and weight limits (59.8%) continue to be prevalent as well.

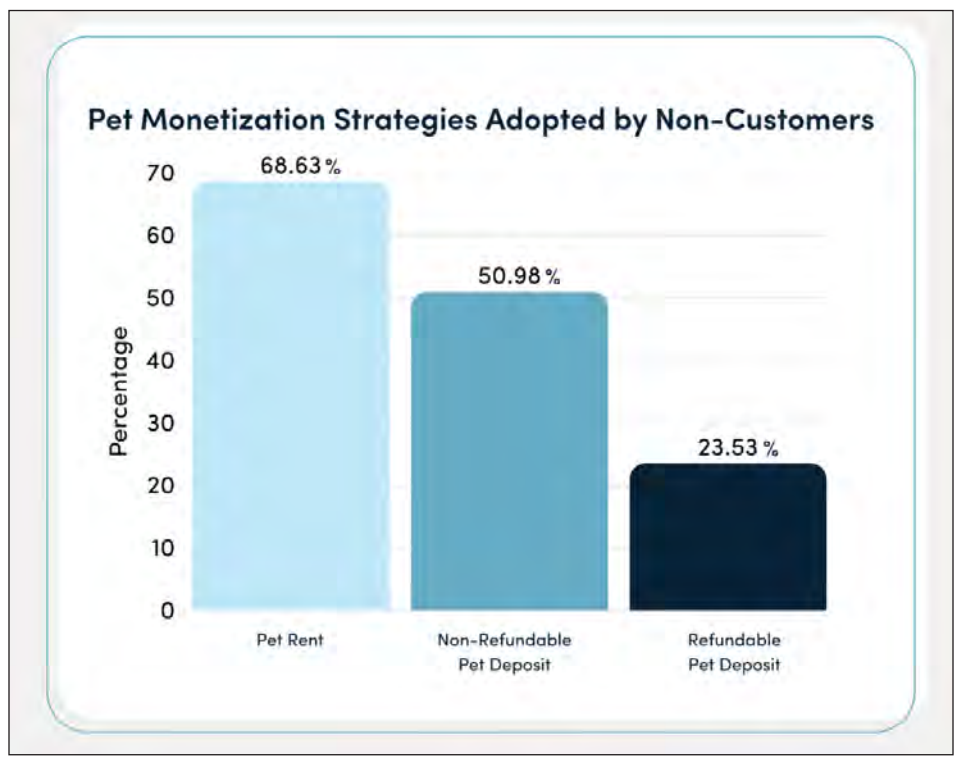


Metrics specific to PetScreening included that the company's clients experienced a 30.7% increase in revenue after implementing the platform, which underscored the impact of pet-friendly policies paired with formal tracking and screening tools. Additionally, PetScreening says its customers saved approximately 1.3 million administrative and legal hours reviewing assistance-animal accommodation requests, instead relying on the platform's expertise, which also helped to reduce risk of regulatory violations and potential litigation.

PetScreening is considered the rental housing industry's leading platform for managing pets and assistance animals. Offered at no cost to housing providers, the platform standardizes pet-risk assessment with digital pet profiles and FIDO Scores®, streamlines assistanc-animal reviews in compliance with HUD and Fair Housing guidelines, and helps identify unauthorized pets, all while supporting more pet-inclusive communities. Learn more at petscreening.com.

The entire report can be accessed at:
https://info.petscreening.com/2026-state-of-pets





The two charts directly above reflect responses from non-customers only and are intended to provide a view into broader industry practices outside the PetScreening customer base.

To advertise, call Vice President/Sales Terry Hokenson at 480-720-4385 or email him at terry@rentalhousingjournal.com


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Missing Renters?

How Immigrant Departures May Be Fueling a Surge in Rental Vacancies

By Adaeze Wilson Johnson

FROM PAGE 1

ACCOMMODATION



The Trap of the Official Form

We all love our standardized forms because they make filing and auditing a breeze. But here's the catch: A resident isn't legally required to use your specific company document. If they walk in with a signed letter from their doctor that explains what they need and why, you generally have to accept it. Insisting that they go back to their doctor just to get it on your letterhead creates what the law calls "unreasonable friction."

Under HUD guidelines, if the information is there, you should process it. Forcing someone through a bureaucratic maze just for the sake of your internal filing system can lead to delays—and in the fair-housing world, a slow response is often viewed as a "no." Focus on the substance of the info, not the stationery it's printed on. This keeps your records straight without creating a timeline that invites litigation.

Keeping the Playbook Sharp and the Team Ready

Having a written policy is only half the battle; the real value comes from treating those procedures as a living document. Professional housing providers should regularly review their reasonable accommodation policies to ensure they align with the latest regulatory updates and industry best practices. Because the housing industry sees high turnover, a policy sitting in a dusty binder does no one any good. It is essential to treat fair-housing training as an ongoing conversation rather than a one-time orientation task.

Consistency in the field only happens when every staff member—from the leasing office to the maintenance crew—is on the same page. Effective training moves beyond "what to do" and teaches staff "how to be," helping them recognize requests that might be hidden in casual conversation. By investing in up-to-date training and designated authority roles, you ensure that decisions are made by people who truly understand the stakes. This proactive approach turns policy into a daily habit, making your team's response to residents both uniform and legally sound.

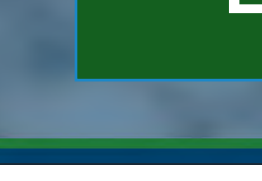
Service is Just as Important as Compliance

At the end of the day, most legal complaints don't start because a manager missed a tiny sub-clause in a manual; they start because a resident felt ignored or disrespected. By practicing active listening, your team can catch a request even if the resident doesn't use the official legal terms. They might just mention they're struggling with the stairs, and it's your job to hear that as a potential request for help.

Building a culture where your team is proactive changes the entire energy of the community. When you respond quickly—ideally within that 14- to 30-day window—you show residents that you take them seriously. This builds a foundation of trust that acts as one of many shields for the property. When people feel like you're on their side, they're much more likely to work with you than to file a complaint against you. Don't let reasonable accommodations in your community become a Mission: Impossible.



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.



Maintenance Tips and Management Guidance from 'Down in the Trenches'

Read 'Dear Landlord Hank' at www.Rentalhousingjournal.com

FTC Seeks Public Comment on Potentially Unfair Rental Housing-Fee Practices

Rental Housing Journal

The Federal Trade Commission is seeking written public comment on a notice of proposed rulemaking to address nationwide potentially unfair or deceptive fee practices in connection with rental housing.

As detailed in a Federal Register notice announcing an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the FTC is seeking written comments, including data, evidence, analyses and arguments, regarding rental housing fees and charges throughout a lease lifecycle, from application to moveout.

"Rental-pricing practices that are neither clear nor transparent undermine competition and harm consumers," said Christopher Mufarrige, director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection. "The Trump-Vance FTC is focused on addressing unlawful business conduct that obscures the actual cost of housing and undermines price competition."



The failure to advertise the true total rent can limit consumers' ability to make informed financial decisions, increasing their search costs and exposing them to other negative monetary consequences when they take on more rent than they can afford. These practices also may undermine competition by weakening the incentives of rental-housing providers who do advertise the true total rent.

The notice seeks comments on such topics as:

- **Total rent:** Do rental housing providers fail to clearly disclose or misrepresent the true total rent for a property, including all mandatory fees or charges?
- **Fees and Charges:** Do rental housing providers fail to clearly disclose or misrepresent the nature, purpose, amount, refundability, optionality and recurrence of fees or charges?
- **Application Fees:** What practices do rental housing providers engage in relating to application fees that harm consumers?
- **Security Deposits:** What practices do rental housing providers engage in relating to security deposits that harm consumers?
- **Billing Issues:** What practices do rental housing providers engage in relating to billing that harm consumers?
- **Consumer Choice:** What practices do rental housing providers engage in that harm consumers by impeding consumer choice?

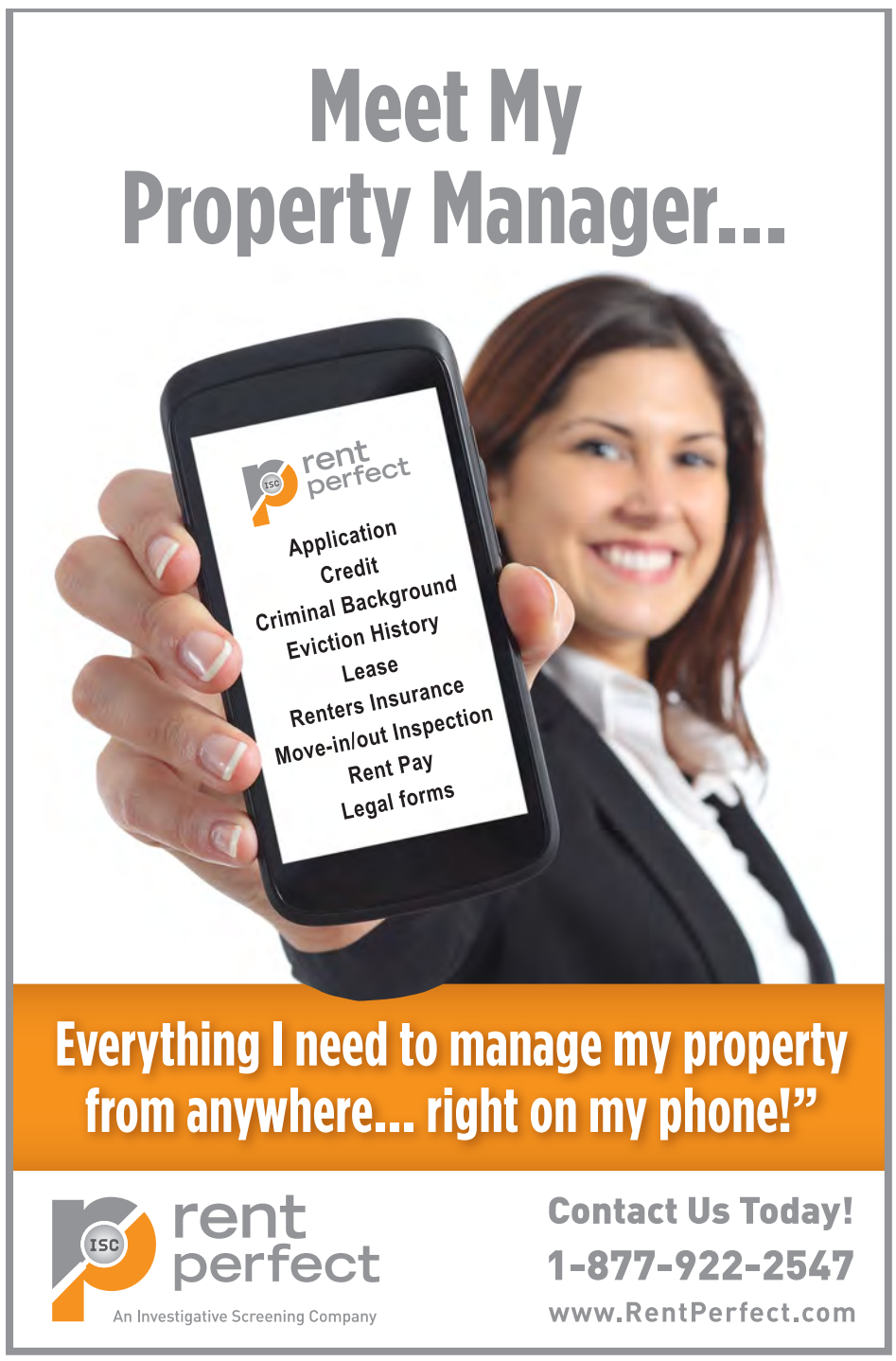
Unfair and deceptive rental housing fee practices violate federal law. In the past two years, the FTC has filed two cases challenging these fee practices by nationwide housing providers. Invitation Homes, the largest single-family home rental housing provider in the country, agreed to pay $48 million to settle FTC allegations that the company violated the FTC Act by, among other things, excluding mandatory monthly fees from the advertised rent.

Greystar Real Estate Partners, the largest residential rental property owner and manager in the nation, was ordered to change its fee disclosure practices and pay $23 million in consumer redress to settle a lawsuit by the FTC and the state of Colorado that alleged the company misrepresented the true cost of renting a property and excluded mandatory fees from the advertised rent.

Case-by-case enforcement, while essential, addresses only some aspects of the harmful fee practices in the rental housing industry. The notice announced this week explores whether a rule is needed to address hidden and misleading fees that inflate rent well beyond what is advertised and other problematic fee practices imposed throughout a lease lifecycle. It also would serve as a deterrent against those practices because it would allow the agency to seek civil penalties against violators and more easily obtain redress for harmed consumers.

Consumers can submit comments electronically for 30 days, ending April 11. Consumers also may submit comments in writing by following the instructions in the "Supplementary Information" section of the Federal Register notice.

The Federal Trade Commission works to promote competition and protect and educate consumers. The FTC will never demand money, make threats, tell you to transfer money, or promise you a prize. Learn more about consumer topics at consumer.ftc.gov, or report fraud, scams, and bad business practices at ReportFraud.ftc.gov. Follow the FTC on social media, read consumer alerts and the business blog, and sign up to get the latest FTC news and alerts.







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National Rents Return to Positive Rent Growth After 6 Months of Decline



Rental Housing Journal

National rents inched up in February after falling for six straight months, according to the March report from Apartment List.

The national median rent ticked up by 0.2 percent in February, flipping positive after six straight monthly rent declines.

This officially marks the start of the market creeping out of the off-season, and Apartment List researchers expect to see continued increases in the months ahead as moving activity ramps up.

The timing of February's return to positive rent growth is in line with typical seasonal patterns – prices soften as fewer renters move during the fall and winter, and then gradually begin to increase as the peak moving summer season nears. February has marked the return to positive rent growth in each of the last four years.

Highlights of the report:

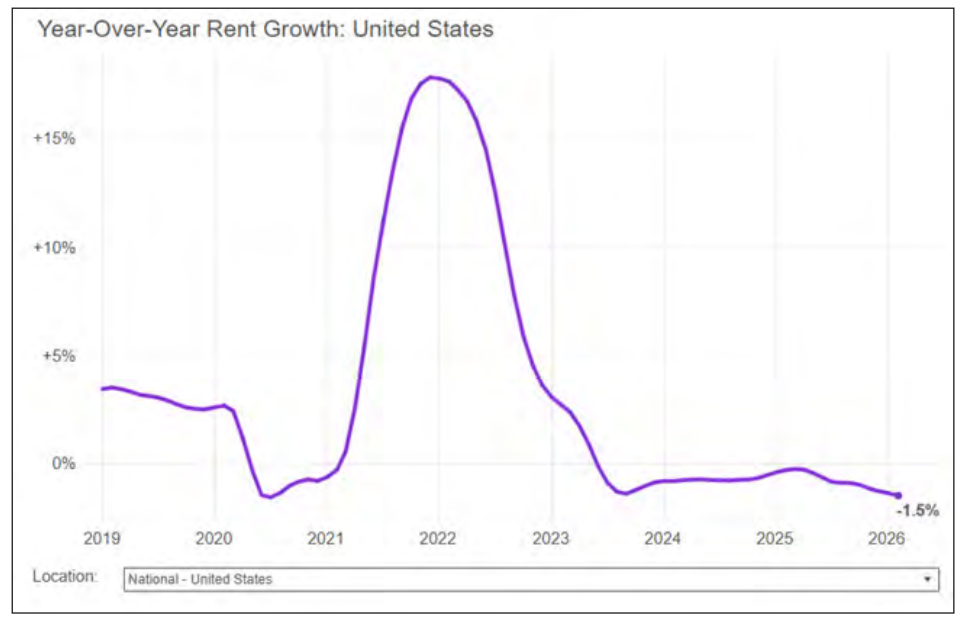
- The national median rent increased by 0.2% in February, and now stands at $1,357. This marks the first monthly increase since last July, as the market begins to pull out of its off-season pricing dip.
- Rent prices nationally are down 1.5% compared to one year ago. Year-over-year rent growth has been slightly negative for well over two years, and the national median rent has now fallen from its 2022 peak by a total of 5.9%.
- The national multifamily vacancy rate ticked up to 7.4% this month. The country is past the peak of a multifamily construction surge, but a healthy supply of new units is still hitting the market and colliding with sluggish demand, causing vacancies to continue trending up.
- Units are taking an average of 40 days to get leased after being listed, which is four days longer than a 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.

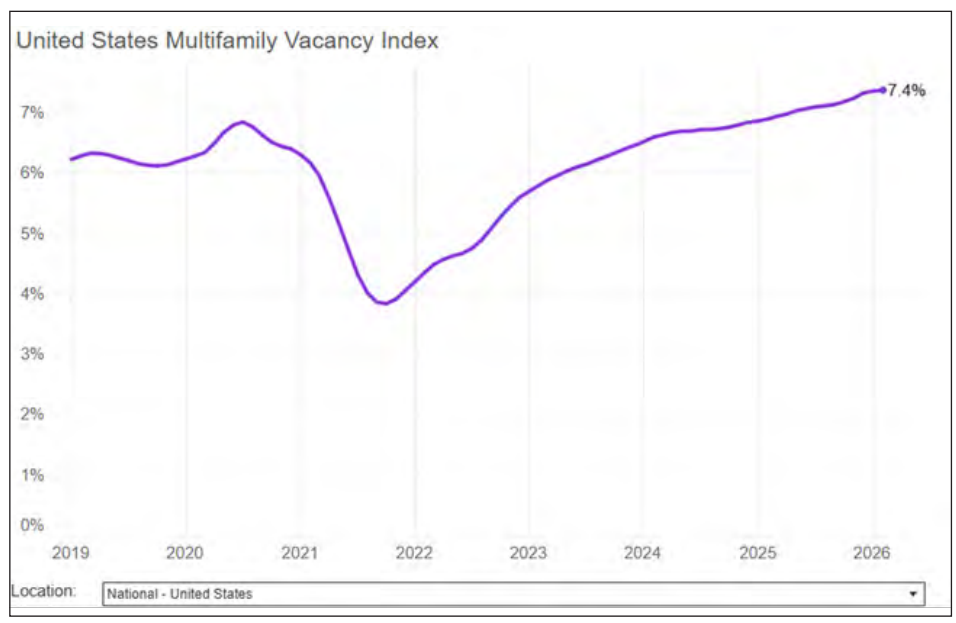
Vacancy index continues to climb

The Apartment List national vacancy index – which measures the average vacancy rate of stabilized properties in our marketplace – increased to 7.4 percent in February. This represents the highest level since at least 2017, which is when we started tracking occupancy.

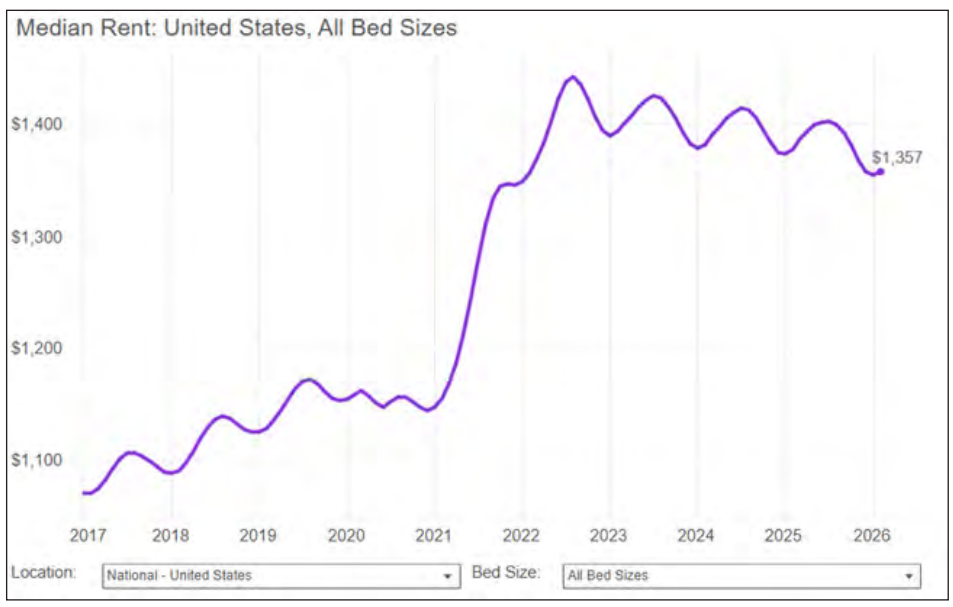
Eventually, the market will absorb the swell of new units, and occupancy and pricing trends should begin to gradually tighten. But for now, conditions remain soft, and the runway for these sluggish conditions seems to have lengthened as a shaky labor market has put a damper on housing demand.

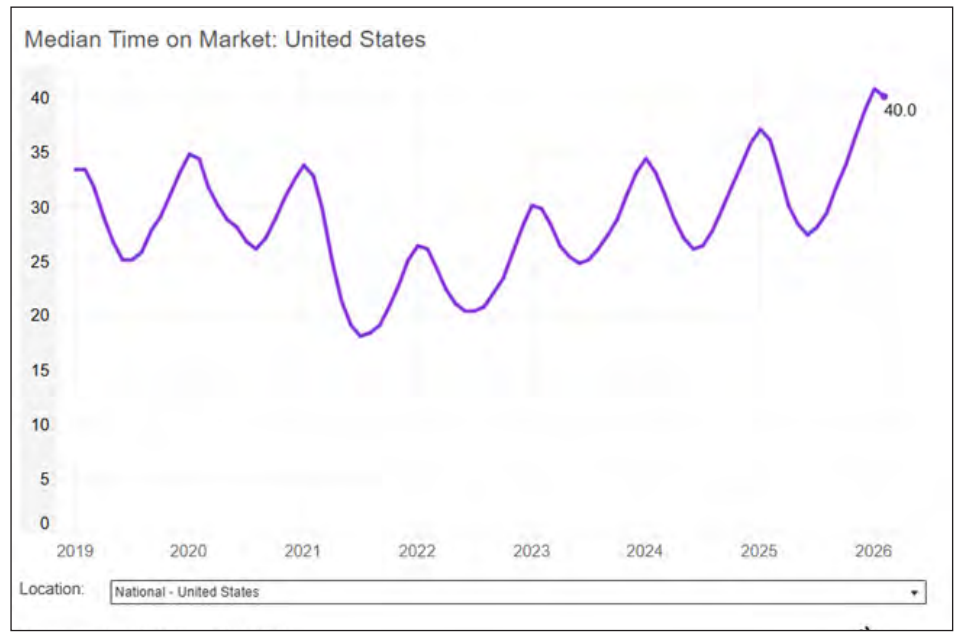
As more vacant units have come onto the market, those units have also been sitting vacant for somewhat longer. The Apartment List time-on-market index tells how long it takes for units to get leased after they are first listed on the platform. This "list-to-lease" time is a highly-seasonal measure, and ticked down slightly this month, in line with month-over-month rent growth flipping positive. Units leased in February had been sitting on the market for an average of 40 days, down from 41 days last month.





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





SOURCE: Apartment List Time on Market Data

Rental Housing Association of Utah - Upcoming Events

MARCH 24	GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING / SANDY: 2026 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
APRIL 3	GOOD LANDLORD MEETING	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
APRIL 7-8	APRIL CPO CLASS	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
APRIL 15	2026 EDUCATION CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW	8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
MAY 26	GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING / SANDY: MAINTENANCE, HVAC & PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
JUNE 3	ASSOCIATE MEMBER 2ND QUARTER LUNCHEON	12:00 PM - 1:30 PM
JUNE 23	GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING / SANDY: FAIR HOUSING	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.rhautah.org/events

Oregon Tenant-Confidentiality Bill Goes to Governor for Signature

Rental Housing Journal

Oregon's 2026 tenant-confidentiality bill (HB 4123) restricts landlords from disclosing sensitive tenant information—such as SSNs, immigration status, or medical records—without written consent.

It now awaits Gov. Tina Kotek's signature, and she is expected to sign.

The bill imposes penalties of up to twice the monthly rent for "knowingly" violating these privacy protections, which includes personal details such as Social Security numbers, contact information, income details, immigration/citizenship status, and medical or disability records.

The bill includes exceptions for situations involving legal or administrative proceedings, such as court orders, mandatory background checks, insurance claims, or necessary maintenance services.

Clackamas Women's Services told kgw.com that the tenant-confidentiality bill would help protect women trying to escape their abusers.

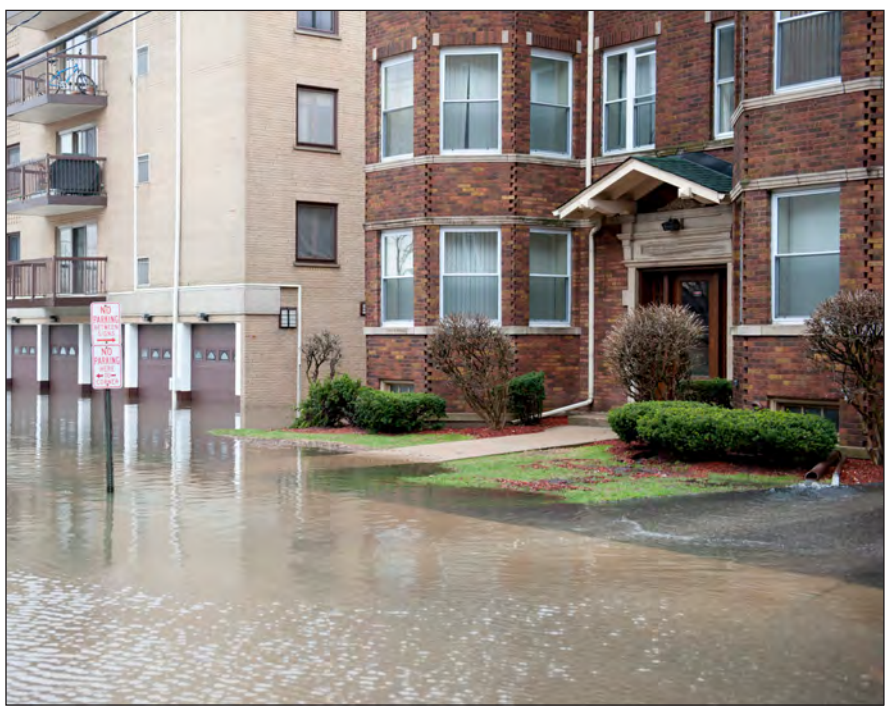
CWS supports survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, trafficking and other crimes. All too often, a woman's whereabouts get back to her abuser, said Melissa Erlbaum, executive director.

"We know how important it is for survivors when they are finally able to leave a violent situation and get into a safe and secure housing situation — that they're able to keep that," Erlbaum said.

If their personal information gets out, survivors may have to start the process of finding safe housing all over again. Because often, "victims' information is shared and their abuser shows up at their place of employment or sometimes even at that housing unit itself," she explained.



"It's actually fairly common, and I think it's because information is just shared in the course of conversation," Erlbaum said. "Again, maybe very well-meaning, but that can create a really high-risk situation for survivors."



Washington Passes Flood-Risk Disclosure Requirement for Rentals

By Aaron Kirk Douglas

Washington lawmakers approved legislation requiring landlords to disclose when rental units are in areas at risk of flooding and to inform tenants that standard renters' insurance does not cover flood damage.

The bill, prompted by flooding in Western Washington that displaced renters, would apply to leases signed after Dec. 31, 2026, and recommends tenants consider purchasing flood insurance, according to the Seattle Times.

Disclosure requirements for rental housing continue to expand nationwide.

While the new Washington rule is relatively narrow, it reflects a broader regulatory trend toward increasing landlord disclosure obligations related to climate risks, insurance coverage, and property conditions.

Aaron Kirk Douglas is a real estate research analyst and is director of market intelligence for HFO, a real estate brokerage firm in Portland.

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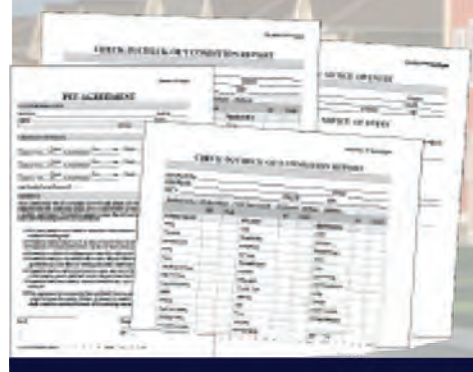
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