

On average, we find it usually takes about 7-10 business days from the time a tenant begins formally advertising to the time paperwork is completed. However, we have seen it take as little as 24 hours to as many as 6-8 weeks. There are a variety of factors but a large majority of them depends on you. This is actually great, because it means you can really take control and find someone fast! The following recommendations are simply advice designed to help you quickly and efficiently find someone to take over your lease. It is not to be construed as a guarantee in anyway, but rather as helpful tips to get you started.

Don't worry--while this list is exhaustive, it really is a simple (and often, fast) process that boils down to:

planning, communication and negotiation.

PLANNING

- We recommend beginning the process as soon as you know that you will be leaving and your ideal timeframe for doing so. The Lease & Novation Agreement will include an "effective date" that can be in the future.
- Remember to leave time for the entire process: finding an interested party is only the first step. They also have to submit a rental application and be approved before any paperwork can be completed.

On average, the application process takes 1-3 business days, but in rare cases may take longer. Keep in mind that we will not be able to expedite the processing of applications—every tenant must be thoroughly vetted before approval. Also remember that, unfortunately, not everyone who applies gets approved.

ADVERTISING, COMMUNICATION AND SHOWING THE APARTMENT

1. ADVERTISE

The best place to advertise is Craigslist! Also consider your friends and family or other community message boards (Facebook can be a great asset here as well).

- Be thorough and descriptive
 - Choose a succinct but descriptive title for your ad, such as:
"Avail 6/6 – Spacious and 1 Bd/1 Ba in a great location!"
 - The body of the ad is the most important and should be informative and, most importantly, accurate. For example, to which advertisement would you be more inclined to respond?

\$950 one bedroom for lease takeover in June. Must apply through management.

or

1 Bd/1 Ba – Available 6/6 - \$950/mo : This modern and cozy 600 sq. ft. apartment features one spacious bathroom, full appliance set including washer and dryer, and a patio overlooking downtown Bellingham. Great location near shopping, the farmer's market, restaurants and public transportation. Rent includes water/sewer/garbage and one parking space in a secured lot. You must pay for electricity and maintain renter's insurance throughout the lease. Sorry, no dogs allowed.

I'm searching for someone to take over the remainder of my lease, beginning June 6 through the lease expiration of August 14. You would take ownership of my security deposit of \$950, so I am asking for \$900. Please email or text me to view the apartment! You must be approved through Westview Real Estate—you can review their screening criteria at westviewrentals.com.

- Include good photos!
 - In addition to posting thorough and accurate information, good photos are an absolute MUST.
 - Ask us for our photos and floor plans, as empty apartments catch more eyes and allow the potential renter to visualize their own furniture and personal items in the space. We will also provide the floor plan and exterior building photos if available.
 - If you choose to post your own photos, remember to clean your apartment first! Dirty, messy or overcrowded apartments are a big turn off to potential renters.
- Renew your ad frequently
 - Craigslist will allow you to “renew” your ad to the top of the advertisements every 48 hours. If you have trouble with that, repost the advertisement.

2. COMMUNICATE

Once you post your ad, you will begin to receive responses from interested parties. It is imperative that you respond in a timely fashion to these inquiries.

- Most people are excited when apartment hunting, and sometimes they’ll skip over key information in the ad when they find a particular thing they like. Therefore, repeat all of the information again in your direct communication.
 - If you gloss over important information (such as our no dog policy) both parties may lose valuable time in the process. You’ll exchange emails before setting time aside to show them the apartment. If they like it, you’ll spend time discussing the move-in date and security deposit reimbursement. Then they’ll take time filling out the application and bringing it in—only to find out we don’t allow dogs. In the meantime, they’ve stopped looking for other places because they’re so excited about your place! And you’ve spent quite a bit of time speaking with them.
 - We also recommend that you encourage them to review the application and screening criteria before showing the apartment, but there will be some that choose not to.

3. SHOW THE APARTMENT

Once you find some interested parties, it’s time to show the apartment! Showings usually take between 5-10 min.

- Remember, clean!
- Be prompt, welcoming and kind.
- Be safe: *while we’ve never had any reports to cause alarm, it’s best to exercise caution.*
 - If possible, have a friend or relative home with you during the showing. If that’s not possible, then let a friend know who you’re meeting and that you’ll contact them within 30 minutes.
- Have some rental applications on hand to give to interested parties.
- Some people will want to apply before you show them the apartment—that’s ok.

NEGOTIATING

While it is wise to discuss specifics during the advertising/showing process – such as the date you’ll hand them the keys, and the rough amount you are requesting for the security deposit – we strongly recommend holding off on the exchange of funds or any sort of promises until the application has been approved.

- While negotiating, remember that they are taking a bit of a risk, too. They are assuming liability for any damage you may have caused in the apartment since move-in—and are trusting that you will not further damage the apartment between the time the agreement is signed and the time you hand them the keys.
 - If you know there’s some damage, or have lost a key or parking pass, consider knocking some money off the deposit. You may even be able to pay to take care of some of these items ahead of time so that the new tenant is off the hook and you won’t need to negotiate with them on those points.
 - Consider paying to have the carpets and/or apartment cleaned as a goodwill gesture.
- Be fair and flexible, but don’t give away the farm! Most times, you can find a renter who is willing to come to terms with you in a manner that works out for both parties.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Do NOT promise the apartment to anyone until you confirm with us that they have submitted a completed rental application and that it is being processed.

You may find that 50% of people say they will apply, when in reality, only 50% of those people actually will attempt to do so. Don’t worry—if one person doesn’t work out, someone else will.
- For fairness and expediency, we do recommend a first-come, first-served policy based on completed applications.
 - Once someone has applied, update your advertisements to reflect that an application is pending, and hold off on additional showings for a day or two.
 - We will usually take only one application at a time unless you inform us otherwise.
 - For instance, if you are not able to come to terms on the deposit or an effective date, you may choose to let us know that you are not interested in moving forward with a particular applicant, whether they are approved or not. We would caution against doing this unless you are very certain you cannot come to term with them.
- Once the application is approved, we will send the applicant a copy of your Lease Agreement and the Move-In Condition Checklist, and will encourage them to read through both items thoroughly. By doing so, they’ll have a better idea of how much (if any) damage has been done since you moved in. This is the time to come to terms on the security deposit, and confirm the date of key exchange. Once you have settled those two items, it’s time to sign the agreement and receive the security deposit.

You’re now set to find a renter! Good luck and remember to reach out if you have questions.