

LeaseRunner Responds to Rising Demand for Portable Tenant Screening as Multiple Application Fee Strain Renter Nationwide

With application fees adding up fast, renters are increasingly turning to portable screening solutions that eliminate the need to pay for the same report twice.

DENVER, CO, UNITED STATES, June 15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With the average rental application fee ranging from \$25 to \$100 per property, a single housing search can cost a renter \$150 to \$500 or more before a lease is signed. As states respond with new legislation and the FTC advances federal rulemaking, renters are increasingly moving toward platforms that consolidate the application process.

Yes, You Can Apply to Multiple Apartments.

Applying to more than one apartment simultaneously is widely recommended in competitive markets, where available units can be leased within 48 hours. Most renters understand the strategy. What many do not anticipate is the cumulative cost.

According to a 2024 Zillow consumer survey, 79% of recent renters paid an application fee, with a typical cost of \$50 per application. In higher-cost markets where fees reach \$75 or more, that number climbs faster. Peak moving season - May through August - coincides with both higher fees and the most competitive rental conditions.

Every application comes with a credit check and background screening. Landlords run these independently, so you pay the same fee for the same process, over and over. Unlike a security deposit, none of it comes back.

Most landlords require every adult named on the lease to pay a separate application fee, not one fee per household. A couple applying to three apartments pays six fees. At \$50 each, that's \$300 before either of them has seen a lease.

The Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies (2025) noted that renters earning under \$30,000 had approximately \$250 per month remaining after housing costs, meaning a single \$50 application fee represents 20% of that remaining budget.



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Tenants often don't discover the true cost of an apartment until after they've paid application fees, which can cost hundreds of dollars, or committed to a one-year lease."

University of Texas law professor Heather Way

The 2024 American Community Survey found that more than 50% of renter households - 23.2 million families - are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of income on housing. As University of Texas law professor Heather Way has observed, tenants often do not discover the true cost of an apartment until after paying application fees or committing to a lease, at which point alternatives are limited.

California has a statutory cap on screening fees for a reason: fee abuse was real enough to warrant a legal ceiling. Under [California Civil Code §1950.6](#), landlords cannot charge more than \$65.86 per applicant in 2026, up

from \$64.90 in 2025. The cap adjusts annually for inflation.

The FTC's March 2026 proposed rule on rental housing fees would require all providers to disclose total monthly costs, including mandatory fees. A federal signal that the era of opaque application charges is closing.

At the state level, the response spans a wide spectrum: California AB 2493 requires fee refunds for rejected applicants; Massachusetts and Vermont ban application fees outright; Colorado's Rental Application Fairness Act mandates that landlords accept a Portable Tenant Screening Report from a verified Consumer Reporting Agency, with no additional fee allowed when one is provided.

The Portable Screening Model

What is emerging across these laws is a shared assumption: a renter's verified data should move with them. Data's checked once, shared across applications, and not re-purchased at every door.

A Portable Tenant Screening Report operates on that logic. A renter pays once for a report (credit history, background check, eviction records, income verification), issued by an accredited Consumer Reporting Agency and valid for 30 days. That same report is submitted to multiple landlords without triggering additional fees or new credit inquiries. For landlords, a CRA-sourced PTSR arrives pre-verified, addressing the fraud concerns that applicant-provided documents create. For the market, it represents the kind of data standardization that has already transformed other parts of the leasing process.

For renters, LeaseRunner's approach differs on one key point. The screening model pulls directly from bank transaction data, not just credit history. The result is a score with a stronger correlation to real rental default risk. That distinction matters: traditional credit reports measure general creditworthiness, but rent default follows different patterns. Bank data captures income consistency, spending behavior, and payment reliability in ways a standard credit score does not. The result is a more accurate signal for landlords and a fairer assessment for renters whose credit files are thin or non-traditional. The cost is also significantly lower than a standard credit report, reducing the financial friction that has historically made the application process harder for renters to navigate.

LeaseRunner's Portable Tenant Screening Report is FCRA-compliant, CRA-delivered, and

shareable across multiple applications within a 30-day window.

Learn more at leaserunner.com

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