

Bad credit, prior eviction(s), bad references from prior landlords, past felony conviction, etc.

Tenants looking for a rental will face a tough time if they are dealing with credit issues, unpaid utility bills, prior eviction(s), bad references from past landlords and/or felony convictions. The simple truth is that just like you need to get paid from your employer in order to buy groceries, put gas in the car and pay bills, a landlord needs to get paid for the very same reasons. Rent money is how he makes his income. The landlord is also understandably concerned about the condition of his rental as well as the safety of his other tenants. Therefore if you fall under any of the above categories, you become a risk. This isn't to say no one will rent to you, but your options can become quite limited.

There is no magic key to finding a rental in this situation, but outlined below are a few things you can do to improve your chances.

Application fees: Most landlords require an application fee before renting to a potential tenant. Therefore before handing over a fee (typically \$30.00) for a landlord to check your credit, be upfront and tell him what he will find. Let him know if you have been evicted, have credit issues or possibly a felony conviction. Otherwise it may appear you are trying to be deceitful. Ask whether you will be denied due to the information you have given. If so, there is no reason to waste money on an application fee with that particular landlord.

Please note, tenants may have a difficult, if not, impossible time renting from owners of large apartment buildings or perhaps property management companies due to their strict screening policies. These types of property owners typically have rules that apply to everyone. They would not be able to make an exception for someone that does not meet their screening criteria as it may appear the owner is favoring one tenant over another.

A tenant with poor credit or a felony could attempt to rent from "mom and pop" landlords. These are landlords who own a few to many properties and can set their own rules. They may be more open to listening to your personal situation and giving you a chance.

You could offer to rent on a month to month basis in order to prove to the landlord you will make payments on time and/or take care of the property. This makes it a safer bet for the landlord because if things don't work out the landlord can give you a 30 day notice to vacate.

Present yourself to the landlord as you would for a job interview. Dress for success and be up front with the landlord regarding past credit problems. If you have any letters of reference from past landlords, case workers, ministers, employers, or even a probation officer, present them.

Finally, once you obtain a rental, while you are residing there, be the best tenant possible. Pay rent on time and in full, keep the place clean and be a good neighbor. Also give proper written notices. Once you get ready to vacate, request a letter of reference from the landlord. You'll soon be on your way to improving your rental history. Best of luck!