

# Tips on Filling out Rental Applications

Filling out a rental application accurately and professionally is one way to make a positive first impression with a landlord. It is also an opportunity to show the landlord you will be a great tenant at their property. Here are some tips on standing out from other applicants when applying to a rental home.

## Have your rental portfolio ready and organized

Make sure you have all the documents in your rental portfolio ready and organized. Here are the documents you should have for every adult in the household as you apply for your new home:

- Social Security number
- Driver's license or Photo ID
- Income Source for at least 2 months (i.e. paystubs and/or social security award letter)
- Rental history for the past 5 years
- Employment history
- Housing Choice Voucher

Most properties will need to see copies of your rental documents, so it is not a bad idea to attach the documents to your rental application or email them to the property manager as soon as you apply.

## Include your Housing Choice Voucher and Additional Income Sources

Properties will need to know about your Housing Choice Voucher and the amount the voucher pays at the time you apply for the home. Properties also need to know if you receive income from sources other than employment.

Rental applications vary from property to property however, all applications allow you to include income from sources other than employment. Typically, you can include your voucher income under "other income" or "additional income". If the application allows you to add a description for the income source describe the income as "Section 8 voucher from King County or Seattle Housing Authority."

EMPLOYMENT & INCOME INFORMATION			
1. OCCUPATION	EMPLOYER/COMPANY		MONTHLY SALARY
SUPERVISOR NAME	SUPERVISOR PHONE	START DATE	END DATE
2. OCCUPATION	EMPLOYER/COMPANY		MONTHLY SALARY

SUPERVISOR NAME	SUPERVISOR PHONE	START DATE	END DATE
1. OTHER INCOME DESCRIPTION <b>Section 8 voucher</b>			MONTHLY INCOME <b>\$1800.00</b>
2. OTHER INCOME DESCRIPTION			MONTHLY INCOME

If you receive income from TANF, Social Security, or other sources than employment be sure to include this income under “other income” or “additional income” as well.

Check if the income asked for on the application is monthly or annual. If the application asks for the annual income, follow this formula for calculating the annual amount: monthly voucher payment x 12 months = annual income. For example: voucher payment is \$2,000 per month x 12 months = \$24,000 for annual income.

### Check for Grammar and Spelling

Your rental application is your opportunity to stand out amongst other applicants, so pay attention to spelling and grammar. Capitalize proper nouns and street names. This will show the property you put in some effort to make your application professional and organized.

For example, this application looks professional and neat:

#### Rental Application

Notice: All adult applicants (18 years or older) must complete a separate application.

APPLICANT INFORMATION			
LAST NAME <b>Doe</b>	FIRST NAME <b>Jane</b>	M.I.	SSN
DRIVER'S LICENSE #			
BIRTH DATE	HOME PHONE	MOBILE PHONE	EMAIL
CURRENT ADDRESS			
STREET ADDRESS <b>1234 North Street</b>		CITY <b>Seattle</b>	STATE <b>WA</b>
		ZIPCODE <b>98106</b>	

Versus this application which comes across as unprofessional:

#### Rental Application

Notice: All adult applicants (18 years or older) must complete a separate application.

APPLICANT INFORMATION			
LAST NAME <b>doe</b>	FIRST NAME <b>jane</b>	M.I.	SSN
DRIVER'S LICENSE #			
BIRTH DATE	HOME PHONE	MOBILE PHONE	EMAIL
CURRENT ADDRESS			
STREET ADDRESS <b>1234 north street</b>		CITY <b>sEatTLe</b>	STATE <b>wa</b>
		ZIPCODE <b>98106</b>	

## Include References

A great way to stand out amongst other applicants is including rental references that can vouch for your character and speak about how you will be a great tenant.

It's best to include landlords or past housemates as rental references. But anyone who can say positive things about you can be used a reference including family, friends, coworkers, or neighbors.

If you have been living at your current or a past home for many years and you have a positive relationship with the landlord, it could make a huge impact on your rental application to have a letter of reference from your landlord. Ask your landlord if they would be willing to write a short letter explaining you were a great tenant. Try to have the landlord include specific details like how you always paid rent on time or were always kind to your neighbors.

## Include a Rental Resume

A rental resume is a great way to stand out from other applicants and show the landlord you are serious about their property. Refer to the rental resume section at the beginning of your packet or online at the [creatingmoves.org](https://www.creatingmoves.org) website.

## Addressing Gaps in Information

If you have gaps in information such as employment or rental history explain why that is. For example, if you are not currently employed, state that you are unemployed but plan on going back to school or finding a job once you move.

If you have never rented your own home or been on a lease explain this on your application. If you have untraditional rental history such as living with family explain this on your application. Put down your family member as your landlord and report the amount you pay for rent to them if any. To further clarify this you can ask your family member to write a letter of reference for you explaining you have been a great tenant and the amount you pay for rent if any.