

Things To Have: References

Why do I need references for housing?

Landlords want to know:

1. You are reliable,
2. You will pay rent on time,
3. You won't cause any trouble.

Two references and a credit check are what most landlords ask for, but some landlords might ask for more/less.

Who can I use as a reference? What if I've never rented before?

References from your previous landlords are the best, but if you have never rented before, need multiple references, or don't have a landlord that will give you with a positive reference, there are other people you could ask.

Great	Good	Okay	Try to Avoid
- Previous landlords	- Employers - Religious Leaders - Community or Volunteer Leaders - Sports Coaches	- Co-workers - Teachers	- Family - Friends

If you're asking someone besides your previous landlord, you'll want to pick someone who you have worked, volunteered, or interacted with before. They should be able to vouch for things like your responsibility, reliability, and work ethic. People in positions of influence tend to look better as references. If possible, try to avoid people who might look like they're giving you a reference just because of your personal connection, like friends or family.

When collecting your references, remember to get contact information. Some people may want to write you a letter of reference, but some might ask you to pass along their name and phone number/email instead.

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Preparing your references

Be sure to talk to anyone you plan to use as a reference to make sure that you have their permission to give their contact information to landlords, and so that they know that landlords will be calling them.

It's also a good idea to make sure your references will say good things about you. In fact, you can tell your references which of your positive attributes you want them to talk to landlord about. Each person you ask to be a reference will know you in a different way, and will be able to say different things to a landlord who is considering renting to you.

For example, you might ask your previous landlord to be a reference because they can speak to your ability to pay rent on time.

You may choose to ask a previous roommate to be a reference because they can speak to your excellent housekeeping skills.

A supervisor at a volunteer activity may be able to speak to your reliability.