


# How to Spot and Avoid Rental Scams




Protect yourself when searching for affordable housing.

Finding housing can be stressful—don't let scammers take advantage. Here are some common red flags  and how to stay safe when finding your next home.

## When Searching for a Rental

### 1 Copycat Listings

Scammers copy real listings from sites like AffordableHousing.com and post them on Craigslist or Facebook.

 If someone says "DM me" or "Drop your ZIP code," be careful. They may be trying to move the conversation off of a trusted site.



### 2 Prices That Seem Too Good


If the rent looks much lower than others in the area, it might be fake.



Use the Free Rent Estimator on AffordableHousing.com to compare similar listings.

### 3 "Landlords" Who Are Out of Town

Scammers often claim to be out of town, overseas, or in the military. They may send you a fake lockbox code, offer a self-tour, or ask for money before you've seen the home.

 Never pay before seeing the property in person.



### 4 Requests for Upfront Payments

Be careful if someone asks you to pay before you sign a lease or view the property.

 Real landlords don't ask for money through Zelle, Cash App, Venmo, Bitcoin, or gift cards.

### 5 Pressure to Act Fast

If someone says "Act fast!", "You're the first approved!", or "We have others waiting," don't rush.




Take time to confirm the details and make sure the listing is legitimate.



### 6 Strange Communication Channels

Legit landlords use professional emails or site messaging, not random texts or social media DMs.

 Never send personal info (like your SSN or ID) through DMs or text.

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## 7 Fake or Spoofed Websites

Some scammers pretend to be real companies or property managers. They may copy logos, use similar names, or send messages from fake emails like

[affordablehousing@outlook.com](mailto:affordablehousing@outlook.com)

- Always check the website's spelling, creation date, and contact details to make sure it's a legitimate website and email address.



## 8 Fake Leases or Documents

If the "lease" doesn't list a real property address or owner's name, it's likely fake. Beware of "landlords" who rush you to sign or pay without reading the terms.

- You should only get keys from a verified landlord or property manager. Never from an unknown third party.



## 9 After You Move In

Watch out for fake maintenance requests or emails that pretend to be from your landlord or Housing Authority.



- Don't send payments for repairs or share personal info unless you confirm it's from the real contact.

# How to Spot and Avoid Rental Scams When Applying for Housing Assistance

## 1 Fake "Section 8" Websites

Some sites pretend to help with applications but only collect your personal info.

- Real programs are **free** and usually end in **.gov** or trusted domains like [AffordableHousing.com](https://www.affordablehousing.com). Legit sites always name the Housing Authority managing the program and never promise "instant approval" or "guaranteed placement" or ask for a fee to get on a waiting list.

## 2 People Selling Vouchers or Guaranteed Placement

It's illegal to buy or sell housing vouchers. Anyone offering that is scamming you.



- Ignore anyone with offers of preferred waiting list placement, voucher transfers, or fake documents (such as pay stubs or income forms).

## 3

### Impersonators Claiming to Work for a Housing Authority

No Housing Authority employee will ever charge a fee to "get you approved."

Report anyone who claims to work for a Housing Authority and offers to sell a voucher to you for a price—this is illegal. Getting a voucher is free and no Housing Authority employee can legally guarantee your placement.



## How to Stay Safe

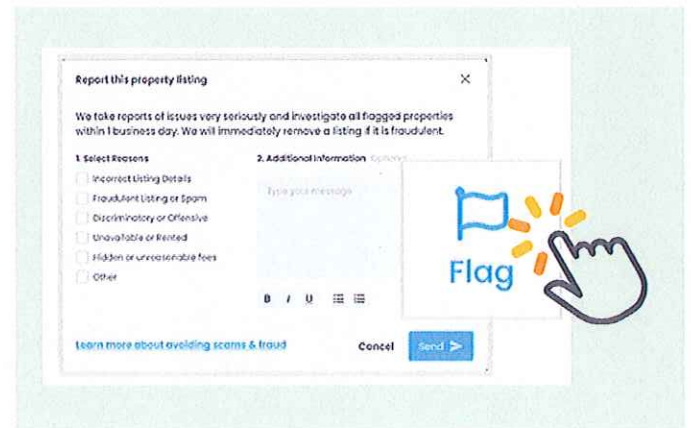
- Never pay before seeing the home in person.
- Check the "Member Since" date on AffordableHousing.com and look for the Trusted Owner badge.
- Avoid payments by wire, Zelle, Cash App, or gift cards.
- If it feels off, pause and contact AffordableHousing.com Customer Support



## Report Suspicious Listings

If you see something that doesn't look right, flag it on AffordableHousing.com.

Our team reviews every report to help keep renters safe.



## Reminder

AffordableHousing.com. We'll **never** message you privately or ask you to send money.

Visit AffordableHousing.com for trusted listings and verified owners.



## Got Questions? We're here to help.

If something doesn't feel right or you're unsure about a listing, contact our support team before taking the next step.

📞 Call: (866) 466-7328

✉ Email: [support@affordablehousing.com](mailto:support@affordablehousing.com)

💬 Chat: Click "Chat With US" to start a chat on AffordableHousing.com

