

junk fee foes: your multifamily checklist to avoid accusations!



Junk fees are hidden charges tacked onto rent or other housing costs, often for undisclosed services. These surprise expenses disrupt resident trust, inflate your costs, and make budgeting difficult. By staying informed and advocating for transparency, property teams can create a fairer and more predictable experience for everyone.

Multifamily life shouldn't feel like navigating a financial obstacle course. Ditch the questionable fees and create a transparent, trust-building environment for residents!

Here's your checklist for tackling junk fees to be as upfront as possible:

transparency is key

- Clear Communication:** Spell out all fees in your lease agreements, application documents, and on your website. No hidden surprises!
- Breakdown the Bling:** Don't just list a flat fee. Break it down into itemized costs so residents understand where their money goes.
- Regular Reviews:** Schedule time to review and update your fee structure regularly. Are charges still relevant? Can you streamline or eliminate any?

fee fairness matters

- Value for Value:** Ensure added fees reflect the actual cost of providing the service or amenity. No over-inflated prices or tacking on unnecessary charges.
- Market Mates:** Check what similar properties charge for comparable services. Are you within a reasonable range?
- Competitive Edge:** Consider offering optional fee-based services alongside standard amenities. Residents appreciate choices and flexibility.

communication cancels out confusion

- Open to Feedback:** Encourage your residents or prospective residents to ask questions and voice concerns about fees. Be open to constructive criticism and willing to adjust if needed.
- Proactive Updates:** Don't wait for complaints. Proactively explain any fee changes or new charges, emphasizing the value and necessity.
- Resident Education:** Host workshops or Q&A sessions to demystify fees and empower residents to understand their financial obligations.

bonus tip: embrace transparency tools

Fee disclosure templates: Services like [Buildium](#) and [AppFolio](#) offer pre-built templates for lease agreements and other documents that clearly outline all fees and their purposes.

Resident portals: These portals allow residents to easily view and understand all charges associated with their rent, including details and justifications for various fees.

Rental pricing platforms: Websites like [Zillow](#) and [Apartments.com](#) are implementing new policies requiring landlords to list total upfront costs, including rent and mandatory fees, promoting transparency for renters.

Fee analysis tools: Some property management software offers built-in analytics to help track and compare various fees across properties, helping you identify potential areas for reducing unnecessary costs.

Additional Resources:

[National Multifamily Housing Council \(NMHC\) Fees & Charges Guide](#)

[National Low Income Housing Coalition \(NLIHC\) Renters' Guide to Avoiding Junk Fees](#)

[Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\) Renters' Rights page](#)



beat the junk fee accusations

By following these simple steps, you can build trust, avoid those pesky junk fee accusations, and create a happy, financially savvy community for your residents.

Remember: Clear communication, fair pricing, and open dialogue are the keys to keeping your multifamily kingdom junk-fee-free and fabulous! Your residents will thank you (and their wallets will, too!).

Disclaimer: This checklist is not legal advice. Please consult with a qualified legal professional for specific guidance on fee structures and resident agreements.