

What do Your Employees Know About Discrimination & Retaliation?

Page 3



Phoenix Lands in List of Top 25 Most-Bed-Bug-Infested Cities

Page 4



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Circulated Monthly To Thousands Of Apartment Owners, Property Managers, On-Site & Maintenance Personnel



Making Properties Appealing for Seniors

KEEPE

Do you have a property that attracts multi-generational groups? If so, are your apartments senior-friendly?

You can win more bookings by making simple changes in your apartment with seniors in mind.

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What do seniors want out of your rental?

No. 1 – SAFETY

- Replace traditional locks with smart locks to help seniors enter the building without having to
- See ‘4 Ways’ on Page 9*

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Rents Continue Rising Across Greater Phoenix Metro Area

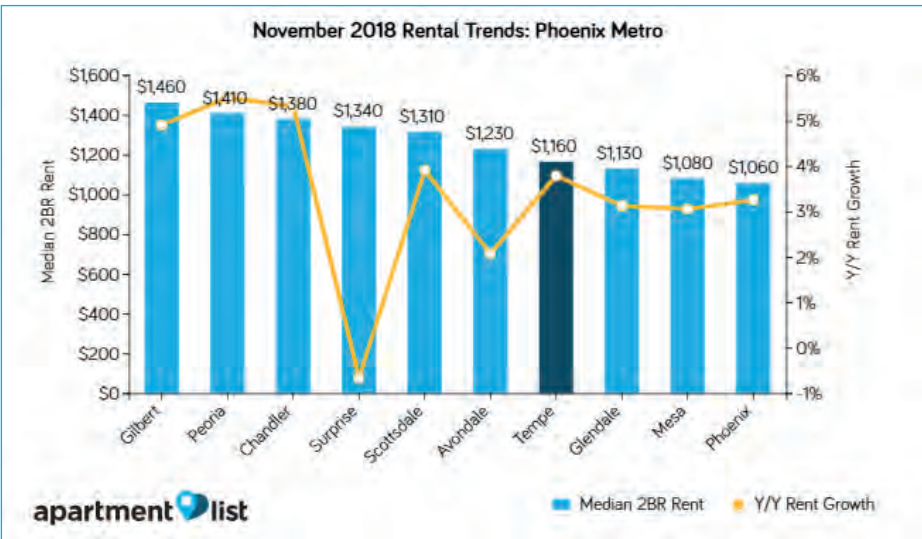
APARTMENT LIST

Throughout the past year rent increases have been occurring across the entire Phoenix metro area, according to a new report from Apartment List.

Of the largest 10 cities in the Phoenix metro, nine have seen prices rise.

Here’s a look at how rents compare across some of the largest cities in the metro:

- Gilbert has the most expensive rents in the Phoenix metro, with a two-bedroom median of \$1,460; the city has also seen rent growth of 1.2% over the past month, the fastest in the metro.
- Over the past year, Surprise is the only city in the metro that has seen rents fall, with a decline of 0.7%. Median two-bedrooms there cost \$1,340, while one-bedrooms go for \$1,070.
- Phoenix proper has the least



expensive rents in the Phoenix metro, with a two-bedroom median of \$1,060; rents grew 0.2% over the past month and 3.2% over the past year.

Many Arizona cities are still more

affordable than many other cities across the U.S., the report says.

- Rents increased marginally in other cities across the state, with Arizona
- See ‘Rents’ on Page 11*

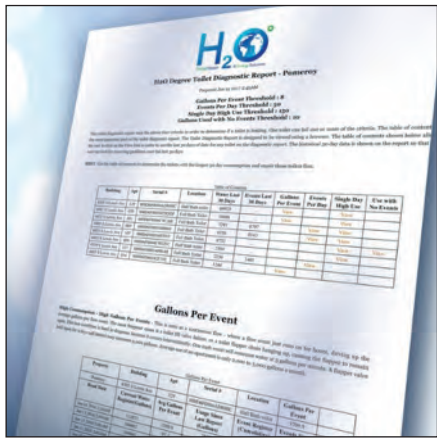
Advance Water-Leak Detection Offers Significant Savings for LIHTC Buildings

By DON MILLSTEIN

Virtually all owners and property managers of low-income-housing tax credit (LIHTC) multifamily buildings pay for their tenants’ water usage. Though naturally incentivized to increase water efficiency to save on overall water-utility costs, many LIHTC properties aren’t effectively addressing the biggest culprit of water consumption: water leaks.

Their typical solution of using low-flow devices offers them no control of water usage; plus, the devices themselves frequently leak. An added challenge is that traditional water-metering technology can’t pinpoint the true cause or specific location of water leaks in real time, which makes it difficult – if not impossible – to fix them in a timely manner.

An increasing number of LIHTC developers are installing advanced “smart” submetering with leak-detection systems in order to reap significant



Reports are emailed daily to property managers.

savings on water utility costs. Taking a more sophisticated approach to leak detection relies on wireless water meters that can collect granular data based on time and gallons. These systems also offer cloud-based reporting that delivers

daily reports to maintenance teams so they can find and fix water leaks.

Today, LIHTC properties are finding that systems combining water submetering and leak detection can dramatically decrease their buildings’ water consumption – sometimes cutting it in half.

ASSUMING THE COSTS

LIHTC (“lie-tech”) is a government program created in the 1980s to encourage developers to build low-income housing. To apply, property owners partner with enterprises (e.g., banks) which provide the investment. There are two types of LIHTC tax structures: 4% (non-competitive) and 9% (competitive), with most developers applying for the 4% tax credit since they’re easier to get approved. Although more expensive than market-rate properties, LIHTC developers like

See ‘Advance’ on Page 8

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Here’s How the Outdoor Furniture Market is Catering to Generation ‘Y’ in 2019

By JEANNIE FLYNN

“Y” is it so important to know how to cater to the Generation Y segment of our society? Simple; they make up a quarter of the total U.S. population, 30 percent of the voting-age population and almost two-fifths of the working-age population.



It’s not just a question of why, it’s also a matter of knowing how to communicate, design and fit into an age group with an entirely different level of taste and importance. It’s something to consider when designing products for today’s market.

STUNNING DESIGNS AND CLEAN LINES ARE THE RAGE FOR MILLENNIALS

Designing products with comfort and durability is a must. However, it’s equally important to offer gadgets. Modular, functional and fun are the three basic words to keep in mind when designing a product or an entire project. The less fluff and the techier, the better.

Clean, basic-designed frames allow you to change out slings, cushions and pillows as trends change. Fun little add-ons keep this generation connected. For example, they’ll appreciate a side tray attached to a chaise lounge to hold their most treasured possessions.

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Gen-Yers appreciate handy little add-ons like this chair side tray that allow them to keep their possessions close by and handy.



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Join AZREIA at Group’s January Meeting in Phoenix

The Arizona Real Estate Investors Association has monthly meetings in Phoenix, Tucson and Prescott, and you may be surprised what you can learn in a monthly meeting.

Guests are always welcome at the meeting in Phoenix the second Monday of the month, this time January 14, at the Celebrity Theatre in Phoenix.

“Our meetings are full of education and networking. Our workshop starts at 5:15 p.m. and features a local speaker or panel of experts on a specific topic of interest to real estate investors,” according to Alan Langston, executive director of AZREIA.

This is followed by an open networking session and tradeshow. Spend time meeting AZREIA business associates and other investors and build your team.

The Market Update gets you up-to-date on the trends in National, Regional and Local areas. Come find out where the local market is heading - valuable information no real estate investor should



do without. The meeting starts at 6:45 p.m.

The main session starts at 7:30 p.m.

This presentation features a national, local or panel of experts on general topics such as Fix & Flip, Buying Notes, Private Money Lending, Marketing Strategies, Buying Land or Commercial/Multi-Family property. These are sessions that “you can’t afford to miss,” Langston says.

Event Location: Celebrity Theatre
Address: 440 N. 32nd St , Phoenix , AZ 85008

Directions: 32nd Street - Four blocks south of the 202.

Want to see what a meeting looks like? Go to this video on the web:

<https://azreia.org/walk-through/>

To advertise in Rental Housing Journal, call Sales Manager Terry Hokenson at 480-720-4385 or email him at:

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What Do Your Apartment Employees Know About Discrimination and Retaliation?

By ELLEN CLARK

If an employee complains to you about discrimination or harassment, you must treat that employee with care, because any action you take that the employee could view as punishment or retaliation for the complaint might be construed as illegal retaliation and result in legal action against you and your company.

Recently, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) announced preliminary sexual harassment data from the 2018 fiscal year.

Based on the preliminary data, in fiscal year 2018:

- The EEOC filed 66 harassment lawsuits, including 41 that included allegations of sexual harassment. That reflects more than a 50 percent increase in suits challenging sexual harassment over fiscal year 2017.
- In addition, charges filed with the EEOC alleging sexual harassment increased by more than 12 percent from fiscal year 2017.
- Overall, the EEOC recovered nearly \$70 million for the victims of sexual harassment through litigation and administrative enforcement in fiscal year 2018, up from \$47.5 million in fiscal year 2017.

ANTI-RETALIATION LAWS ENSURE THAT PEOPLE ARE NOT DISCOURAGED FROM SPEAKING OUT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION.

According to the EEOC, “Retaliation is the most frequently alleged basis of discrimination in the federal sector and the most common discrimination finding in federal sector cases.”

The increase in charges filed with the EEOC, along with the heightened awareness brought about by the #MeToo movement and the promotion of prevention strategies such as bystander intervention, make it more important than ever that employees and supervisors are aware of another illegal behavior: retaliation.

A PROPERTY MANAGER CANNOT ACT IN A WAY THAT APPEARS TO RETALIATE FOR A COMPLAINT.

A manager may not fire, demote, harass or otherwise retaliate against an individual for filing a complaint of discrimination, participating in a discrimination proceeding, or otherwise opposing discrimination. This type of behavior is called retaliation, and it is illegal.

Anti-retaliation laws serve important purposes. Not only do they protect employees from retaliatory behavior, but they also help ensure that people are not discouraged from speaking out against discrimination or participating in the EEOC’s administrative process or other employment discrimination proceedings.

To address retaliation, organizations must recognize the potential for retaliation and also make sure supervisors know the acceptable and unacceptable responses to protected activity under the law.

If you are in a multifamily supervisory role, here are some important things to know:

- Any employee who voices a concern about discrimination or

grace hill

TRAINING TIP OF THE MONTH

harassment must be treated equally.

- Make sure that no one is treated differently for voicing a concern, and don’t avoid an employee who has done so. This might create a retaliation claim instead of preventing one.
 - It is also important to have thorough and timely communications with your Human Resources department and document all supervisor actions involving employee counseling and discipline, complaints, or other possible situations which could be used to create a retaliation claim.
- While it may be difficult not to take an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) allegation personally, it is important, if you are involved in such a situation, to take a step back to consider your reactions.

A NEGATIVE CHANGE OF BEHAVIOR TOWARD AN EMPLOYEE AFTER AN EEO ALLEGATION CAN BE PERCEIVED AS RETALIATORY.

Here are some ways you, as a supervisor, can prevent retaliation:

- Avoid publicly discussing the allegation.
- Do not share information about the EEO activity with any other managers or subordinates.
- Be careful not to isolate the employee.
- Avoid reactive behavior such as denying the employee information, equipment, or benefits provided to other employees who are performing similar duties.
- Do not interfere with the EEO process.
- Provide clear and accurate information to the EEO staff, EEO Investigator, or judge.
- Do not threaten the employee, witnesses or anyone else involved in the processing of a complaint.

Ellen Clark is the Director of Assessment at Grace Hill. Her work has spanned the entire learner lifecycle, from elementary school through professional education. She spent more than 10 years working with K12 Inc.’s network of online charter schools. Later, at Kaplan Inc., she worked in the vocational education and job training divisions, improving online, blended and face-to-face training programs, and working directly with business leadership and trainers to improve learner outcomes and job performance. For nearly two decades, Grace Hill has been developing best-in-class online training courseware and administration solely for the Property Management Industry, designed to help people, teams and companies improve performance and reduce risk. Contact Grace Hill at 866-472-2344 to learn more.



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Top 25 Most-Bed-Bug-Infested Cities in U.S.

RENTAL HOUSING JOURNAL

With many people traveling in the new year, it’s an apt time to take a look at the annual list of the top 25 most bed-bug-infested cities. Cities in Ohio take four of the top 10 spots.

Cleveland crawled its way to the top of the list for a second consecutive year, followed by Philadelphia and Los Angeles, according to a release from Terminix.

Ohio had the most cities on the list, taking four of the top 10 spots. Texas, Tennessee and Pennsylvania each had two cities make the list.

Terminix based its rankings on the number of services rendered in each city from Oct. 1, 2017, to Sept. 30, 2018.

Top 25 most bed-bug infested cities

1. Cleveland
2. Philadelphia
3. Los Angeles
4. Indianapolis
5. Cincinnati
6. Dallas-Fort Worth
7. New York
8. Columbus, Ohio
9. Houston
10. Dayton, Ohio
11. St. Louis
12. Chicago
13. Detroit
14. Atlanta
15. San Francisco

16. Baltimore
17. Tampa
18. Washington, D.C.
19. Louisville
20. Phoenix
21. Nashville
22. Pittsburgh
23. Memphis
24. Boston
25. Denver

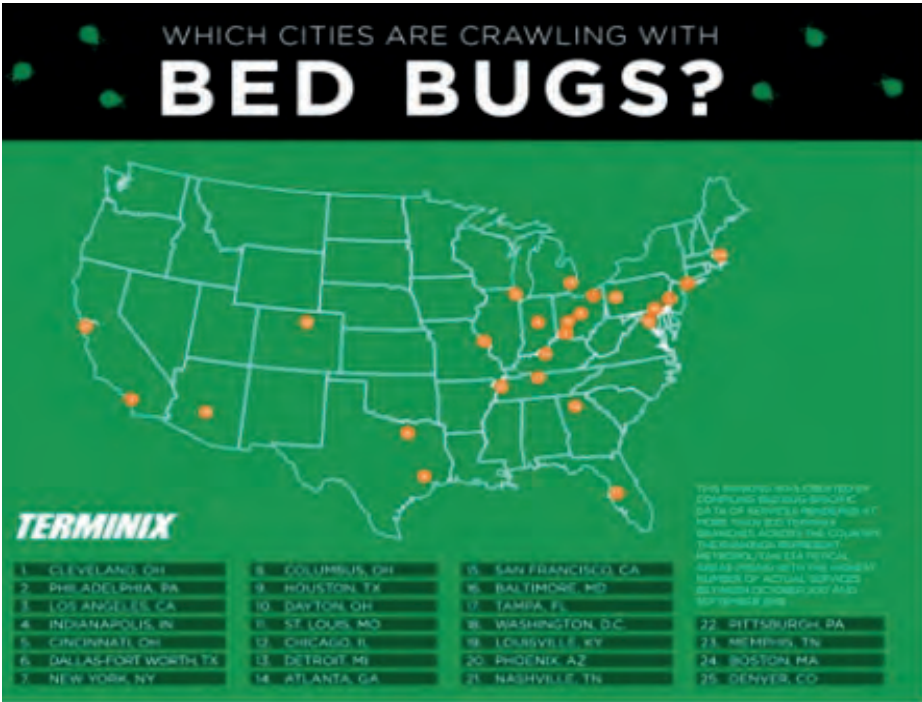
Contrary to their name, bed bugs can be found in many household places in addition to bedding, including upholstered furniture, in curtain rods or even behind baseboards.

These pests can easily hitchhike from place to place by crawling into personal belongings such as jackets, purses and luggage.

As Americans travel for the upcoming holidays, they should be aware of the increased potential for bed bugs to join them on their journeys through airports, mass transit, hotels and rental vehicles, according to a release.

Travelers who believe they may have come into contact with bed bugs during their holiday vacations should take precautions to reduce their risk.

Bed bugs can be killed with heat, so travelers who suspect a bed bug infestation when arriving home should launder clothing and other belongings as recommended on the clothing label, or use a portable heat chamber for non-heat-sensitive items such as luggage as soon



as possible.

In addition, tenants as well as homeowners can place potentially compromised luggage in a plastic bag to prevent bed bugs from spreading among other belongings.

Bed bugs are most active at night, so infestations can be difficult to spot. The bloodsucking insects are oval-shaped, wingless and reddish-brown. In lieu of spotting the pests themselves, travelers can look for signs of an infestation, which can include shed bed bug skins and blood spots on mattresses or sheets. Anyone who suspects a bed bug infestation should schedule an inspection with a pest control company as soon as possible.

“At Terminix, our mission is to deliver

seamless experiences for our customers,” Matthew Stevenson, President of Terminix Residential, said in the release.

“When we do so, this allows our customers to focus on spending time with their families this holiday season, rather than worrying about combating bed bugs.”

Methodology of the survey: The ranking was created by compiling bed bug-specific data of services rendered at more than 300 Terminix branches across the country. The rankings represent Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) with the highest number of actual services between Oct. 1, 2017, and Sept. 30, 2018.

Don’t Fall for Scam Email Purporting to be from ‘Boss’

GRACE HILL

You may have read about, or been the victim of, an email scam that’s getting attention lately.

It goes like this: You get an email from your boss asking you to buy gift cards for clients. It’s urgent. The cards must be purchased right away. After you purchase the cards, you get instructions to email pictures of the codes on the backs of the cards to your boss. Eventually, you find out the email wasn’t from your boss at all. You’ve been scammed.

One of the best ways to avoid becoming the victim of a scam like this is to be vigilant and aware of things that don’t look or feel quite right. You and your common sense are your best defense.

Think about who is asking you to do something, or asking for information. Does this seem like something the “sender” would typically do? Does the wording seem like something that person would really say? Are there spelling or grammatical errors? If anything seems off, it probably is.

Pay attention to details like the sender’s email address and links in emails. Always be skeptical. It is often difficult, if not impossible, to know for certain who sent an email. If you have any doubts, call or talk to the “sender” in person to verify the email is legitimate. Don’t click on links in emails or attachments of which you are unsure.

Researchers have found that cybercriminals use the following tactics to get people to click on a link in an email.

- They address you by name in the

email.

- They craft the message in a way that is meant to make you curious.
- They spoof a known sender.
- They match message content to one of your recent experiences, such as shopping on a specific website.

Sometimes a link masks the actual website to which it links. If you hover over a link without clicking it, you’ll notice the full URL of the link’s destination in a lower corner of your browser. If this looks at all suspicious, don’t click it! Be extremely cautious in these situations, as cybercriminals can put any company name in a URL to make you think it is real. Only visit websites by typing a verified address directly into a new browser address bar. You can also use a free link scanner (such as URLVoid) to check links you think are suspicious. This service helps you identify websites involved in malware, criminal activities, and phishing websites.

Be sure to report anything suspicious to your supervisor and IT department immediately. Getting the word out about the scam will help ensure that none of your co-workers will fall victim.

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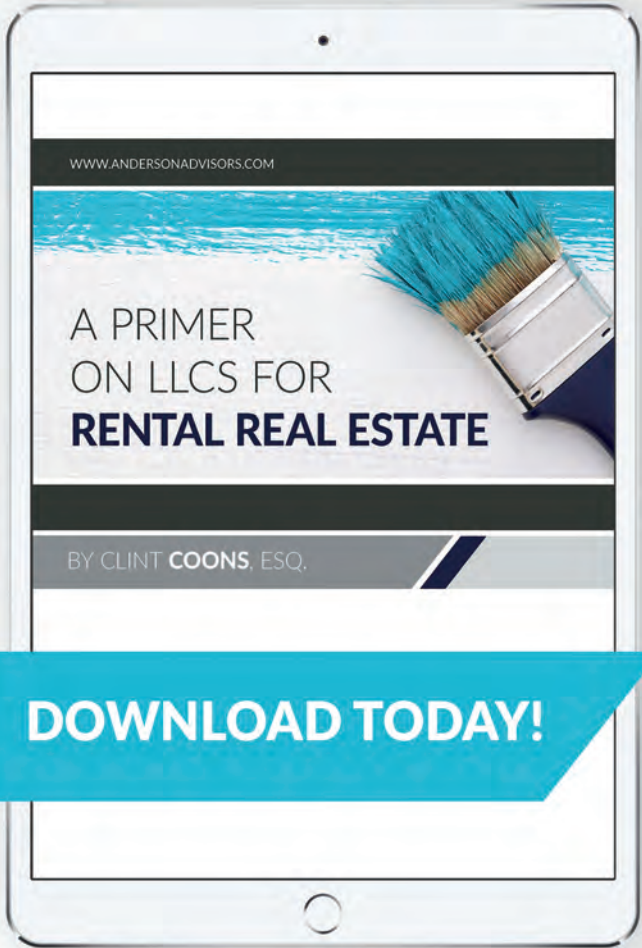
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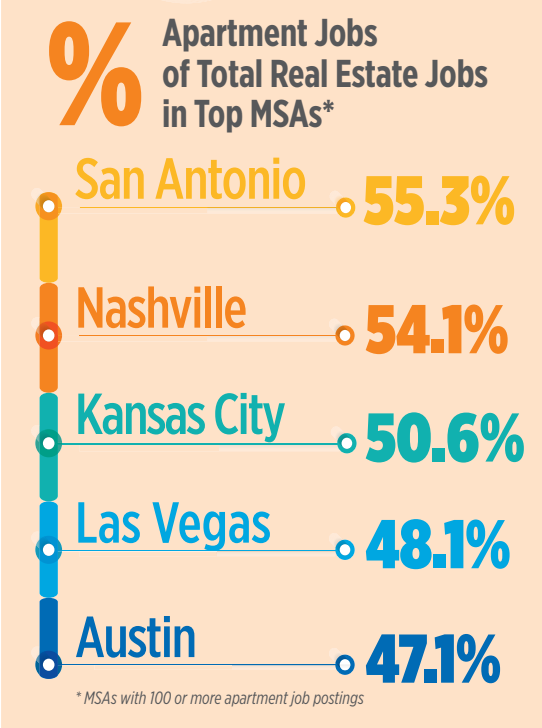
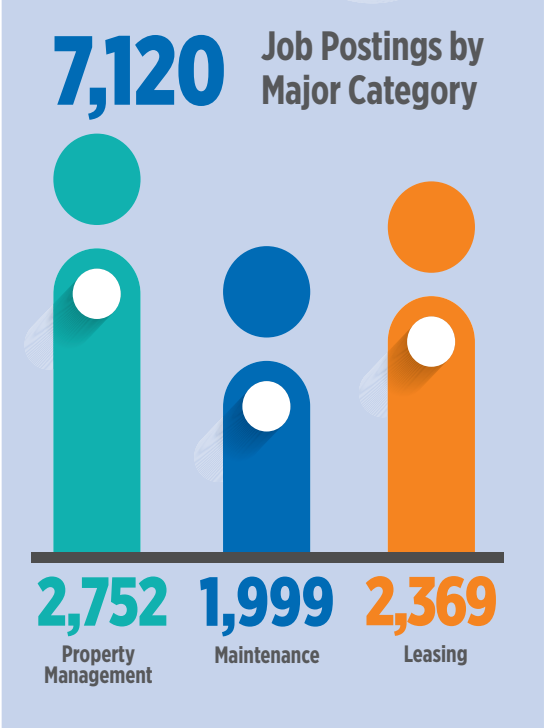
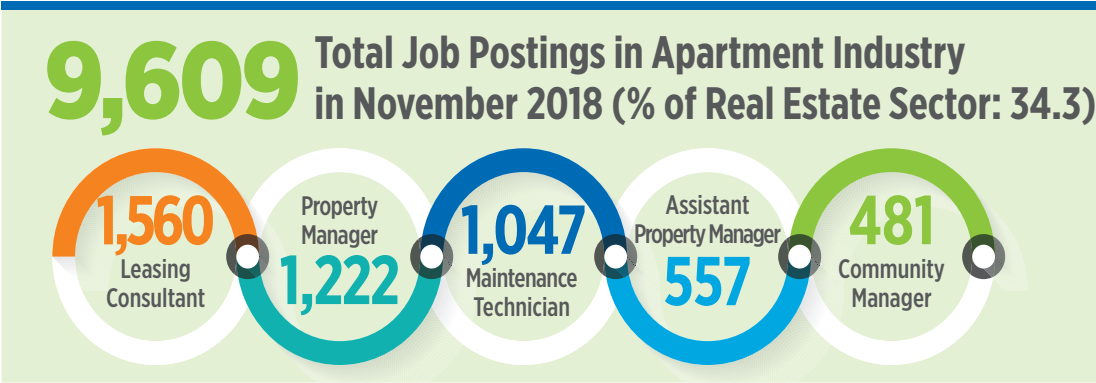


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Spotlight
Last 6 Months

Assistant Property Manager

Markets With Highest Concentration

City	# of Apartment Job Postings	Location Quotient***
Dallas	190	2.6
Los Angeles	147	1.2
Washington, D.C.	146	2.2
Seattle	105	2.6
Atlanta	102	1.9

*** Location quotients display concentrations of demand within MSAs. U.S.-wide average demand equals 1.0; a location quotient of 1.5 indicates 50% higher demand than the US average.

Top Skills Required

Specialized	Baseline
Property Management	Communication Skills
Yardi Software	Microsoft Office
Customer Service	Organizational Skills

Educational Requirements

0 to 2 Years **83.3%**

3 to 5 Years **16.4%**

Projected National Change in Employment

8.1%

2016-2026

Source: NAA Research; Burning Glass Technologies; Bureau of Labor Statistics
Data as of November 30, 2018; Not Seasonally Adjusted

Apartment Jobs Snapshot

November 2018

Asst. Property Manager Jobs in Demand, Report Says

RENTAL HOUSING JOURNAL

The latest National Apartment Association jobs report spotlights the need for the assistant property manager position.

Over 9,600 rental housing jobs were available during November, accounting for 34 percent of the broader real estate sector, just slightly below the monthly average for the year, according to the latest jobs report from the National Apartment Association.

The jobs report focuses on jobs that are being advertised in the apartment industry as being available, according to Paula Munger, Director, Industry Research and Analysis, for the National Apartment Association’s Education Institute.

Las Vegas entered the top 5 for apartment job demand for the first time this year, while Nashville marked its fifth month in the rankings.

As expected, experience required was at the entry level, but 78 percent of employers were seeking candidates who already had property management skills.

EVOLVING ROLE OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER

The role is becoming more than just a property manager, Munger said earlier this year.

“The hiring manager gets to a point where they say, ‘I need more than one whole person to do this job.’ So we are seeing more and more event coordinators in apartment communities,” she said.

“Getting residents together, planning events, maybe dealing with outside vendors more than they have,” she said. And not in terms of vendors like a landscaper — “They’ve been doing that forever,” she said.

But more like a celebrity chef or “someone who comes into the building to do a quickie demo. That kind of stuff. I think in general they are having to think a little bit more about, I won’t say event planning, but something along those lines,” Munger said.

NATIONAL APARTMENT ASSOCIATION JOBS REPORT BACKGROUND

“Our education institute is a credentialing body for the apartment industry. They hear often that one of the biggest problems keeping our industry leaders up at night is the difficulty in finding talent, attracting talent and retaining talent,” Munger said.

“Labor-market issues are happening in a lot of industries, certainly with the tight labor market we have.”

So NAA partnered with Burning Glass Technologies. “They have a labor-job posting database that is proprietary,” she said, and they can “layer on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

“We looked at that and thought we could do something that is really going to help the industry and help benchmark job titles and trends as we go forward.”

Landlords, Tenants in Seattle Join Forces to Fight Mandatory Property Inspections

By John R. Triplett

Landlords and tenants in Seattle have filed a class action lawsuit challenging the city’s use of warrantless mandatory rental inspections, according to a release from the Institute for Justice.

The lawsuit, which was filed in King County Superior Court, argues that the city’s program is a clear violation of the Washington state constitution’s mandate that “no person shall be disturbed in his private affairs, or his home invaded, without authority of law.” Yet, in Seattle, that is exactly what happens when the city forces landlords and tenants to submit to a warrantless search, according to the release.

“By subjecting tenants to random, government-mandated inspections that would not occur if that same person owned their home, Seattle is treating renters like second-class citizens,” William Maurer, the managing attorney of the Institute for Justice’s Washington state office, said in the release.

“Your home is your castle, regardless of whether you rent or own it. It is plainly unconstitutional for Seattle to force renters to open up their homes to government inspectors when nothing is wrong inside,” Maurer said. “The lawsuit seeks to do one simple, but important, thing—allow tenants to exercise their constitutional rights and say ‘no’ when an inspector shows up without a warrant.”

“It should be up to tenants to decide whether they want a stranger entering their home,” Institute of Justice attorney Rob Peccola said in the release. “The fact that someone rents, rather than owns, their home should not give the government the right to disrupt their life, invade their privacy and search their homes even when there is no evidence that anything is wrong.”

“The law makes landlords do the city’s dirty work when a tenant says no to an inspection,” Peccola said in the release.

“The city has never attempted to get a warrant—that would mean forcibly entering over the objections of people the law was meant to help—so instead it fines landlords upwards of \$500 per day until they can coerce their tenants to allow the inspection. The city is essentially fining landlords for refusing to violate their tenants’ privacy.”

This lawsuit does not seek to stop the city from inspecting rental units where the tenants agree to the inspection or keep the city from addressing problem properties. Rather, the suit seeks to stop the city from entering the private homes of Seattle’s renters unless the city gets the tenant’s consent or obtains a warrant based on evidence of a specific problem, according to the release.

How the Seattle Inspection Law Works

Under Seattle’s program, each year the city randomly chooses roughly 10% of the rental units in Seattle for a mandatory inspection. Owners of buildings with more than one rental unit may choose to have a sample of at least 20 percent of the units in a building inspected (up to 50 total units), with the city choosing which units to inspect.

Anyone renting an apartment or home chosen by the city must allow inspectors into their home to inspect it for housing



code violations, even if they do not consent and the city does not have a warrant. The law offers no options for tenants or their landlords to object to the search.

For many years, Seattle addressed housing code violations in rental housing using a complaint-based system. But in 2013, Seattle, like an increasing number of municipalities, switched to a proactive rental-inspection system, the Rental Registration and Inspection Ordinance, or RRIO, which took effect in 2015.

What Tenants Have to Say

Earlier this year the city informed the landlord for renters Matthew Bentley, Wesley Williams, and Joseph Briere, that their home needed to be inspected. Bentley, Williams, and Briere, along with their three other roommates, have nothing to hide. But because their home is in great shape and they all value their privacy, they informed the city that they did not want their home inspected. The city responded by threatening fines upwards of \$500 per day if their landlords did not somehow coerce the housemates to allow the unconstitutional inspection.

“For me, it’s not only a matter of privacy but also of security,” Keena Bean, one of the tenants who filed suit, said in the release. “I’m a young woman living alone in the city, and I take my personal safety very seriously.

“Deciding whether or not to let a stranger into my home is something that should be left 100 percent up to me. Just because I rent doesn’t mean the government can force its way into my bedroom and through all of my personal belongings,” she said in the release.

Bean’s landlords, plaintiffs John B. Heiderich and Gwendolyn A. Lee, have owned and operated rental properties in Seattle for more than forty years.

“They care deeply about their tenants and cultivate long-term relationships with their renters. They are unwilling to act as the vehicle by which the city will intrude into Ms. Bean’s home without her consent and are committed to helping their tenant protect her constitutional rights,” according to the release.

The Institute for Justice, which has

an office in Seattle, is a nationwide, public interest law firm that stands up for citizens’ constitutional rights and liberties. It has filed three previous lawsuits challenging rental inspection laws in Redwing, Minn., Golden Valley, Minn., and Pottstown, Penn. Through strategic litigation, training, communication, activism and research, the Institute for Justice

advances a rule of law under which individuals can control their destinies as free and responsible members of society. IJ litigates to secure economic liberty, educational choice, private property rights, freedom of speech and other vital individual liberties, and to restore constitutional limits on the power of government.

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Advance Water-Leak Detection Offers Savings

Continued from Page 1

not having to provide up-front money to build their projects, while investors enjoy the tax breaks of the low-fee structure.

LIHTC application criteria is stringent and is different for each state agency. Developers must remain in compliance for 15 years, showing that their properties remain affordable. When creating their proposals, property owners must factor in the estimated utility costs they will charge their tenants. Although tenants almost always pay their own gas and electric bills, the owner, not the tenant, is responsible for the water-utility bill.

One approach to water-utility billing is for LIHTC landlords to calculate how much tenants will pay for utilities based on each tenant’s income. The tenants use a portion of their salaries to pay rent and another to pay utilities. A tenant, for instance, might be expected to pay a total of \$1,000 per month based on his/her salary. If the utility allocation is deemed to be \$100, then \$900 will go toward rent. Of course, it’s in the landlord’s interest to allocate more for rent than utilities; so, if the property owner can reduce water usage by 25%, the utility allocation would go down to \$75, increasing the rent portion to \$925.

Furthermore, utility allocations for LIHTC properties can be set based on the most efficient users, who represent 30% of the tenants.

For this reason, reducing water bills is – or should be – a primary objective for LIHTC building owners. A submetering system can help the landlord set the utility allocation accurately based on meter data rather than estimates. Through extremely accurate water usage monitoring and leak detection, the most advanced systems have proven to be the most effective way to reduce a building’s water consumption.

IDENTIFYING THE CULPRIT

Sometimes LIHTC developers correctly suspect a water leak when they notice their building’s water utility bills suddenly increasing. But they often incorrectly blame the source of the leaks on either underground leaks or pin-hole leaks located in the pipes behind a wall. In point of fact, however, the vast majority of leaks are the ones that they don’t see. These in-unit leaks originate from toilets, hot-water heaters, showers/tubs and sinks. Toilets, which account for about 40% of all water consumption in a multifamily building, represent the biggest cause – a whopping 70 percent – of water leaks.

Water heaters are the second highest cause of leaks. Sophisticated submetering systems are able to leverage the wireless network not only to do submetering and down-the-drain leak detection, they also integrate floor-leak sensors with remote water shut-off capabilities at the water heater or at the point of entry for the

apartment.

Even a moderate-sized leak in a multi-unit facility can add up to significant amounts of wasted water – and money. Consider, for example, that a moderate-sized leak is about 1,000 gallons a day. Now, imagine a 100-unit building with 90 of those units consuming 100 gallons a day per unit, which is about the average amount for a two-bedroom apartment. The water consumption for the 90 rooms would be 9,000 gallons for the entire building. Next, let’s say that the other 10 units each have a moderate water leak of 1,000 gallons day, per unit. The 10 units would add up to 10,000 gallons of the building’s daily water consumption. In other words, just 10 units with a moderate-size leak would represent 10,000 gallons of the 19,000 Gal / Day total – or over 50 percent! (Figure 1.)

COLLECTING THE DATA

Collecting individual water-usage metering data is an obvious tool for LIHTC property managers to employ when setting out to increase water efficiency. However, not all water meters are alike.

In a conventional water-metering scenario, a multi-unit LIHTC property will have a master water meter provided by the utility collecting water-usage data for the entire building. These point-of-entry meters consist of one water meter at the street and another at the building. As pulse-output meters, they count pulses per gallon. For instance, a master meter will count one pulse per gallon for cold only, or one pulse per 10 gallons for hot and cold water.

Since these conventional water meters offer very little information about water usage, they are unable to detect water leaks. This means that the only way for building owners to improve a building’s water efficiency is to install low-flow devices, such as water-efficient toilets and showerheads. The problem with conventional low-flow devices is that low flow does not mean low leak. They can – and often do – leak. Nor do they offer any type of management or control of water consumption.

To address this issue, the latest advances in submetering allow owners of LIHTC properties to “see” water-usage data at a granular level. Extrapolating vast amounts of data can be used to find water leaks that need to be repaired, which, in turn, can lead to a 30 percent to 70 percent reduction in water utility costs.

The most advanced wireless water meters consist of individual (“sub”) meters installed in one of two ways to collect water usage data:

1. at individual point of use (POU) metering sites where water is used, such as toilets and showers, or



Figure 2. Battery-powered wireless water meter measures water consumption at point-of-use entry locations like toilets and showers. The meters can track granular data to evaluate “events” (flushes, etc.) for each toilet in a multi-unit apartment to detect leaks.

2. at each point of entry (POE) where water enters the apartment

Advanced two-way mesh submetering systems are designed to detect and report water leaks at a single apartment down to individual point-of-use (toilets, showers, etc.) throughout the property. Unlike typical water meters installed in apartments to track water by gallons-only, battery-powered wireless water meters employ sophisticated flow sensors to collect metering data at granular levels (Figure 2). This allows them to monitor not only gallons but “events,” such as stops/starts and flushes, along with the time duration of the water flow.

These water meters can monitor up to 8 gallons per minute at an extremely high accuracy rate of +/- 1.5%, which meets and/or exceeds current accuracy standards set by the American Water Works Association (AWWA). Through algorithms in the cloud-based reporting system, the combination of gallons, events and time data can lead to the identification of leaks and excessive usage.

The key advantage of this type of granular monitoring is that monitoring gallons alone does not account for leaks or wasted water. Monitoring needs to be done for each event (or every time water stops and starts) – in addition to monitoring how long the water has been running.

For example, a toilet in an apartment might be expected to record about 10 events, or flushes, a day using 1.2 gallons. But if daily tracking shows 100 events a day at 0.3 gallons, there could be a problem with a flapper valve opening and closing. The property manager alerted to this water usage anomaly can investigate to see if each flush produces a “swoosh” noise and the flapper valve can be replaced to stop the leak.

A common way to find leaks due to equipment problems is for one or two events to use a large volume of water. In this case, a toilet chain might be stuck or a fill valve might be cracked, causing water from the tank to continually flow into the toilet and down the drain. In this case, the chain can be jigged or replaced, or the fill valve can be replaced to stop the water from being wasted.

TAKING ACTION

Many water meters on the market collect ongoing water-usage data. But the most sophisticated submetering and leak detection systems offer “actionable reporting” of the data as it is collected in real time. This monitoring of hourly data to detect leaks and wasted water offers obvious advantages compared to waiting 45-60 days to analyze an end-of-month water bill. Even more unique to collecting actionable data is that these water meters do not just provide the data, they detect and report sporadic anomalies, or stop-start events, on an hourly or daily basis. This is important since leaks start and stop constantly.

Using the granular event data provided by the water meter, property managers

can drill down to specific causes and then can deduce if a water leak is being caused by a broken flapper, broken chain or a cracked fill valve. The property manager can then alert maintenance staff to repair the equipment.

These advanced systems also have an alarm feature that instantaneously alerts the property manager to severe leaks that need immediate attention. Two types of alarms can be triggered by data using the following criteria: a High Gallon Alarm, based on X gallons used per hour for N hours; and a Constant Flow Alarm, based on water use exceeding that expected for 60 minutes of flow.

Leak-detection reports can be sorted by serial number, property, apartment, point-of-use and leak size. Emailed daily, the reports are pushed through an automated system where the building manager can assign them to as many as 10 recipients. The reports are stored on a secure server in near real time. An easy-to-use dashboard shows a variety of user selections, including billing data, exception reports, a configurable reporting function and alarms. Additionally, asset managers also can use this ongoing data to track the building’s historical water-consumption information, as well as evaluate maintenance response times and other information.

Besides leaks, another major cause of water consumption, particularly for LIHTC properties, is “over-occupancy.” In addition to safety concerns and lease violations, over-occupancy leads to higher utility costs. Advanced metering systems offer LIHTC property managers an important tool for detecting and reporting this problem so they can take corrective action.

For instance, each toilet in a single-bedroom apartment assigned to two people might have 10 events a day at 1.2 gallons per event. However, if each toilet increases to 25 events a day – still using 1.2 gallons – the property manager can assume the events are 25 flushes, rather a leak, and that more than two people are living in the apartment.

Ongoing water consumption monitoring also tracks the average daily usage, or ADC, for each apartment. If an apartment with an ADC of 70 gallons/day is suddenly using 300 gallons a day with no indication of leaks, over-occupancy may be the cause.

In the case of either leaks or over-occupancy, the critical advantage of using advanced submetering systems is the ability to make minute, accurate assessments of water usage in real time. The manager doesn’t have to take immediate action if consumption data shows that an apartment is experiencing a higher-than-normal level of consumption of, say, 25 events at 1.2 gallons in one day. Since the increase may be due to a party or other one-time situation, the manager can wait to see if the high-consumption data persists over a week or more.

100-Unit Building	Water Consumption	Total for Building
In 90 Units	100 Gal / Day (Typical)	9,000 Gal / Day
In 10 Units	1,000 Gal / Day Leak	10,000 Gal / Day
Total Gal / Day		19,000
From Leaks Only		10,000

Fig. 1. If 10-units of a 100-unit building have a moderate-sized leak, the water consumption from the leaks alone can use more than half of the building’s daily water consumption.

See ‘Advance’ on Page 9

4 Ways to Make Rentals Senior-Friendly

Continued from Page 1

struggle with small keys. Some smart locks can unlock when a key fob is simply tapped on the device—no need to push buttons to enter a code.

- A simple change you can make to increase safety for senior tenants is lowering the water-heater temperature to 120 degrees to reduce the chance of burns.
- Other safety measures such as security cameras and panic buttons are features that can easily attract older tenants to your apartments.

No. 2 – LIGHTING

- Install lights across your property outdoors. In entry areas, use motion-activated lights to ensure tenants can safely get inside the building.
- In the building, consider adding motion-activated lights in areas like entryways or kitchens to reduce risk of falls or bumps.
- In general, lighting in the building should be enhanced for all areas. Increased lighting will allow seniors to see obstacles and allow for optimal safety.



No. 3 – ACCESSIBILITY MEANS ELEVATORS

- Make sure your building and apartments are accessible for seniors with mobility restrictions such as wheelchairs. Ramps outdoors and elevators in multi-story buildings are a must for elderly living.
- Bathrooms must have the ability to be easily converted to

handicapped-friendly options with grab bars and sturdy tub flooring when needed.

No. 4 – COMMUNITY AND AMENITIES

- Organize special events for tenants to get to know one another and foster a sense of community.
- Consider keeping the apartment pet-friendly. Older adults

enjoy companionship, and pets provide emotional comfort for the elderly. Allowing small cats and dogs in your property can make your property much more appealing for those who already have pets.

- Amenities such as a pool, on-site laundry facilities, fitness center and outdoor areas are great amenities to have when attracting seniors. Tenants will be happiest if there are fun activities to do and plenty of places to meet up with friends.

Your apartment should be a safe and easy place to live in for all tenants, especially seniors.

Keepe is an on-demand maintenance solution for property managers and independent landlords. The company makes a network of hundreds of independent contractors and handy-men available for maintenance projects at rental properties. Keepe is available in the Greater Seattle area, Greater Phoenix area, San Francisco Bay area, Portland, San Diego and is coming soon to an area near you. Learn more about Keepe at <https://www.keepe.com>.

Holes in Advertiser’s Story, Holes in Property’s Walls

By HANK ROSSI

I am a real estate broker dealing in rental properties.

A woman called saying she saw a property that had been listed for rent, but it had since been removed from advertising. After she provided me with the address, I informed her that the property had in fact been removed from advertising because it had been rented.

She then told me that she was the one who had rented it.

This was confounding to me, since I am the broker in charge of this property, and I know she is not the person who rented it.

I asked her to provide me with all the details of this transaction.

The woman said she saw an ad on a very popular website for a sub-let situation. She called the number provided in the ad and spoke to an “agent,” who told her that he represented this property.

He told her that a tenant had to leave her lease early and was going to sublet her rented condo. He further stated that she could capitalize on the annual rental rate, even though this condo would normally have rented for double that rate during the time she wanted it.

The woman verified this information with the “tenant,” and the available rental period corresponded to the time she



wanted.

So, the woman mailed the security deposit and first and last month’s rent, totaling \$5,000.

Even though the woman lives in the area, she paid these funds without having seen the unit or having signed a lease.

I soon realized that she had been the victim of a scam and had lost her money.

Scammers are alive and well and making money because they are believable liars who present skilled sales pitches and promise huge discounts.

If you are renting a property, do so through a reliable company that can prove it represents the desired property or a landlord who can prove he or she is indeed the property owner.

Property ownership can be found in tax records, which are public records.

It is also important that you tour a property you are interested in to make certain it has been accurately represented

in the advertising.

A real landlord normally requires the prospective tenant to undergo an application process.

Additionally, you can talk to the property’s neighbors for information about the landlord and/or property. Be savvy and protect yourself.

Dear Landlord Hank: We hired a contractor to fix big holes in the sheetrock of one of our rentals after tenant damage. It is an older house. The contractor said he found two layers of sheetrock underneath when he started repairs, so it is going to cost more. Does this sound right, that previous owners had layers of sheetrock? And that it will cost more? — **Sam**

Dear Landlord Sam: It seems like everyone these days has a camera built into their cell phones.

Maybe your contractor could take some photos of the problem so you can see what he is encountering.

If your property is older, built in the 1950s or earlier, the walls could originally have been covered with lath (wooden strips) covered with plaster, usually three coats.

This means of finishing interior walls is much thicker, over an inch compared to 3/8 or 5/8 drywall. The plaster walls were

tougher but much more labor-intensive to make.

Also, if plaster walls were damaged with picture hanging, etc., they are more expensive to repair.

It could be possible that an earlier owner of your property applied sheet rock over the plaster walls to make surface repairs easier. If your contractor can’t take a photo of the area and show you what he is talking about, can you check it out for yourself?

Older properties can be more expensive to repair, but I’d want to see the situation first-hand, if possible.

“Landlord Hank” Rossi started in real estate as a child watching his father take care of their family rentals — maintenance, tenant relations, etc, in small-town Ohio. As he grew, Hank was occasionally his dad’s assistant. In the mid-’90s he decided to get into the rental business on his own, as a sideline. In 2001, Hank retired from his profession and only managed his own investments, for the next 10 years. Six years ago, his sister, working as a rental agent/property manager in Sarasota, Fla., convinced him to try the Florida lifestyle. He gave it a try and never looked back. A few years ago they started their own real estate brokerage, focusing on property management and leasing.

Advance Water-Leak Detection Can Offer Significant Savings

Continued from Page 8

THE VERDICT

An advanced submetering system equipped with leak detection and reporting capabilities is an essential tool for LIHTC property managers and prospective developers alike. The most sophisticated two-way wireless mesh metering system pinpoints the location of the leak at its source, offers clues to the cause, and then delivers the information, via instant alarms and daily reports, so

that the problem can be fixed.

The control and management of data sets wireless submetering apart from other conventional systems. After installation, managers typically see a 24-month payback in water savings costs. It also offers them an “insurance policy” of knowing they will meet the 15-year affordability requirement mandated by the tax credit.

The bottom line: LIHTC property owners can’t afford to ignore water leaks

and only the most sophisticated water meters offer an effective tool for finding and fixing them.

Don Millstein is president of H2O Degree, which manufactures a broad line of wireless radio-based submetering and leak detection systems that measure individual apartment or condo use of water, domestic hot water energy, boiler and chiller energy, electricity, gas and BTUs. The systems are ideal for tenant billing, leak detection reporting down to the toilet

level and energy analytics. The company also offers Green Thermostats, which track energy use and apartment temperature while allowing tenants and property owners to set temperature set-points and schedules, adjust set-back temperatures when tenants are away or asleep, report HVAC maintenance issues, and provide control for vacant utility cost. For more information, please go to: www.h2odegree.com.



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City	Median 1BR price	Median 2BR price	M/M price change	Y/Y price change
Phoenix	\$850	\$1,060	0.2%	3.2%
Mesa	\$870	\$1,080	0.1%	3.1%
Chandler	\$1,110	\$1,380	0.7%	5.3%
Glendale	\$910	\$1,130	-0.1%	3.1%
Scottsdale	\$1,050	\$1,310	0.5%	3.9%
Gilbert	\$1,170	\$1,460	1.2%	4.9%
Tempe	\$930	\$1,160	0.1%	3.8%
Peoria	\$1,130	\$1,410	0.1%	5.5%
Surprise	\$1,070	\$1,340	-0.7%	-0.7%
Avondale	\$990	\$1,230	0.1%	2.1%
Goodyear	\$1,140	\$1,420	0.4%	2.4%
Fountain Hills	\$1,040	\$1,300	1.3%	3.6%

Rents Increasing Across Valley

Continued from Page 1

as a whole logging rent growth of 2.9% over the past year. For example, rents have grown by 1.0% in Tucson.

• Renters will find more reasonable prices in Arizona than in most large cities. For example, San Francisco has a median 2BR rent of \$3,100, which is more than two-and-a-half times the price in many Arizona cities.

CHANDLER RENTS INCREASE SHARPLY OVER THE PAST MONTH

Chandler rents have increased 0.7% over the past month, and are up significantly by 5.3% in comparison to the same time last year. Currently, median rents in Chandler stand at \$1,110 for a one-bedroom apartment and \$1,380 for a two-bedroom. This is the ninth straight month that the city has seen rent increases after a decline in February. Chandler’s year-over-year rent growth leads the state average of 2.9%, as well as the national average of 1.3%.

GILBERT RENTS INCREASE SHARPLY OVER THE PAST MONTH

Gilbert rents have increased 1.2% over the past month, and have increased significantly by 4.9% in comparison to the same time last year. Currently, median rents in Gilbert stand at \$1,170 for a one-bedroom apartment and \$1,460 for a two-bedroom. This is the second straight month that the city has seen rent increases after a decline in September. Gilbert’s year-over-year rent growth leads the state average of 2.9%, as well as the national average of 1.3%.

GLENDALE RENT TRENDS WERE FLAT OVER THE PAST MONTH

Glendale rents have remained flat over the past month, however, they have increased moderately by 3.1% year-over-year. Currently, median rents in Glendale stand at \$910 for a one-bedroom apartment and \$1,130 for a two-bedroom. Glendale’s year-over-year rent growth leads the state average of 2.9%, as well as the national average of 1.3%.

MESA RENTS HELD STEADY OVER THE PAST MONTH

Mesa rents have increased 0.1% over the past month, and are up moderately by 3.1% in comparison to the same time last year. Currently, median rents in Mesa stand at \$870 for a one-bedroom apartment and \$1,080 for a two-bedroom. Mesa’s year-over-year rent growth leads the state average of 2.9%, as well as the national average of 1.3%.

PEORIA RENT TRENDS WERE FLAT OVER THE PAST MONTH

Peoria rents have increased 0.1% over the past month, and have increased significantly

by 5.5% in comparison to the same time last year. Currently, median rents in Peoria stand at \$1,130 for a one-bedroom apartment and \$1,410 for a two-bedroom. Peoria’s year-over-year rent growth leads the state average of 2.9%, as well as the national average of 1.3%.

PHOENIX RENTS INCREASED SLIGHTLY OVER THE PAST MONTH

Phoenix rents have increased 0.2% over the past month, and are up moderately by 3.2% in comparison to the same time last year. Currently, median rents in Phoenix stand at \$850 for a one-bedroom apartment and \$1,060 for a two-bedroom. This is the twelfth straight month that the city has seen rent increases after a decline in November of last year. Phoenix’s year-over-year rent growth leads the state average of 2.9%, as well as the national average of 1.3%.

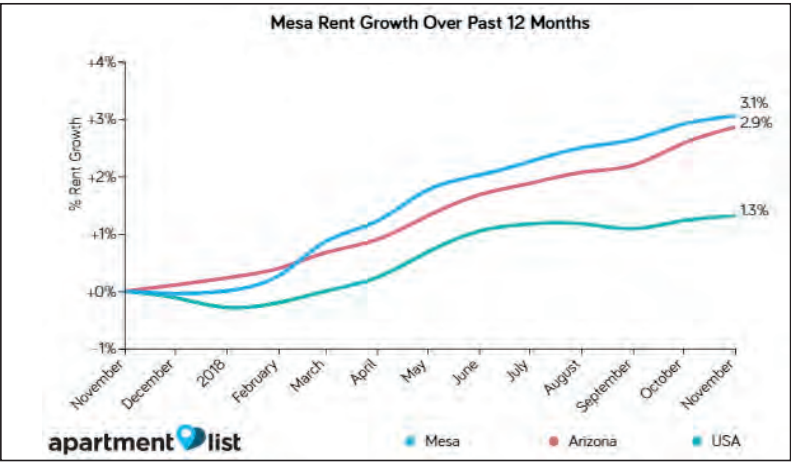
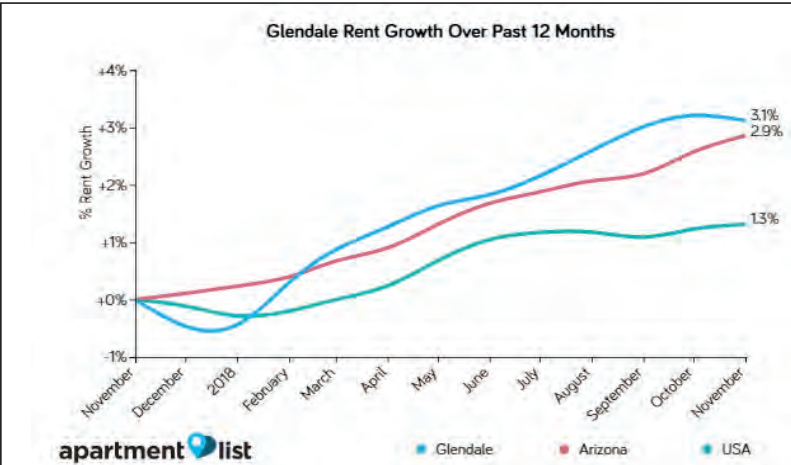
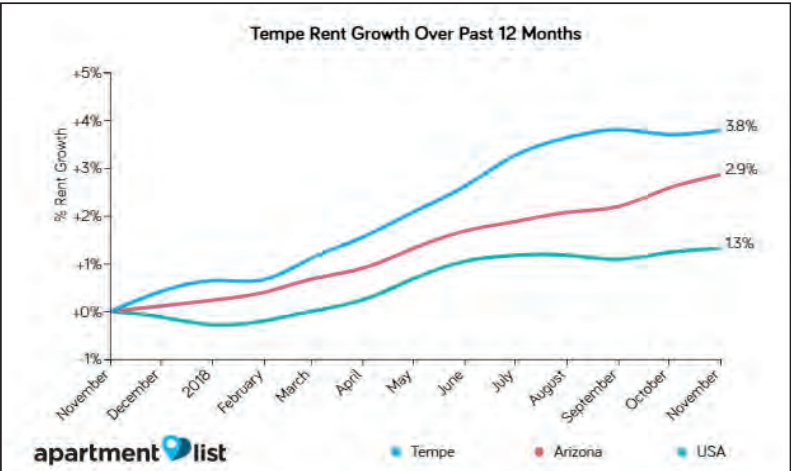
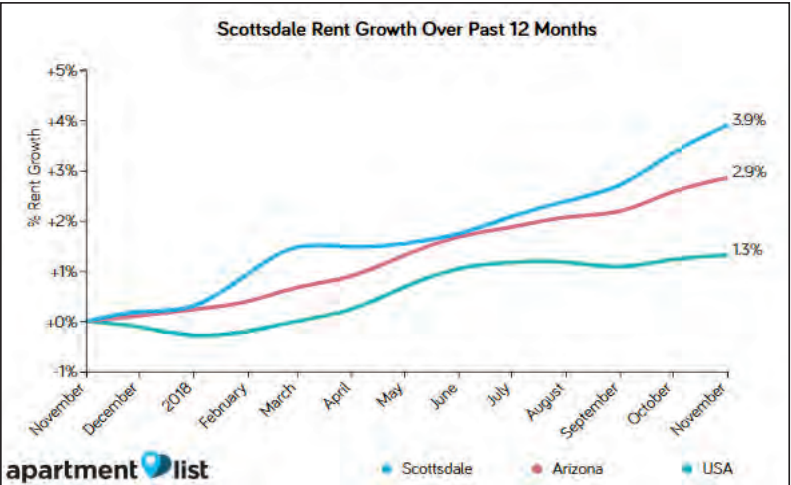
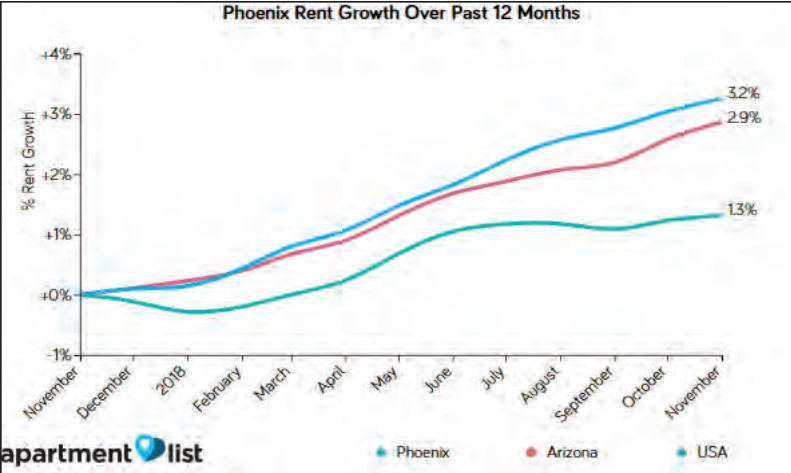
SCOTTSDALE RENTS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY OVER PAST MONTH

Scottsdale rents have increased 0.5% over the past month, and are up moderately by 3.9% in comparison to the same time last year. Currently, median rents in Scottsdale stand at \$1,050 for a one-bedroom apartment and \$1,310 for a two-bedroom. This is the twelfth straight month that the city has seen rent increases after a decline in November of last year. Scottsdale’s year-over-year rent growth leads the state average of 2.9%, as well as the national average of 1.3%.

TEMPE RENT TRENDS WERE FLAT OVER THE PAST MONTH

Tempe rents have remained flat over the past month, however, they have increased moderately by 3.8% year-over-year. Currently, median rents in Tempe stand at \$930 for a one-bedroom apartment and \$1,160 for a two-bedroom. Tempe’s year-over-year rent growth leads the state average of 2.9%, as well as the national average of 1.3%.

Apartment List is committed to making our rent estimates the best and most accurate available. To do this, we start with reliable median rent statistics from the Census Bureau, then extrapolate them forward to the current month using a growth rate calculated from our listing data. In doing so, we use a same-unit analysis similar to Case-Shiller’s approach, comparing only units that are available across both time periods to provide an accurate picture of rent growth in cities across the country. Our approach corrects for the sample bias inherent in other private sources, producing results that are much closer to statistics published by the Census Bureau and HUD. Our methodology also allows us to construct a picture of rent growth over an extended period of time, with estimates that are updated each month.





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