Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Vacancy Advertising and Tenant Screening Protocols

This SOP details the **vacancy advertising and tenant screening protocols**, covering strategies for effective vacancy promotion, advertising channels, application processes, tenant qualification criteria, background and credit checks, interview procedures, and decision-making guidelines. The aim is to attract qualified tenants, ensure compliance with fair housing laws, and select reliable occupants to maintain property value and community standards.

1. Vacancy Advertising Strategy

- Identify the target tenant demographic for each vacancy.
- Create compelling listing descriptions highlighting property features, amenities, and neighborhood benefits.
- Ensure all advertisements are compliant with fair housing laws (no discriminatory language, equal opportunity language included).
- Update listing information as needed to reflect unit availability or changes in rent or policy.

2. Advertising Channels

- Company website and property management portal.
- Online platforms (e.g., Zillow, Trulia, Apartments.com, Craigslist, Facebook Marketplace).
- Local newspapers and community bulletin boards.
- Signage at property (complying with HOA or city guidelines).
- Referral programs (current tenants, agents, relocation services).

3. Application Process

1. Provide a clear, easy-to-complete rental application (online or paper) with a list of required supporting documents.
2. Collect application fees (if applicable) and obtain applicant consent for background and credit checks.
3. Communicate application timelines and process expectations to all applicants.
4. Maintain a log of all inquiries and applications received, ensuring confidentiality and data security.

4. Tenant Qualification Criteria

Criteria	Minimum Standard	Verification Method
Income	At least 3x monthly rent	Pay stubs, tax returns, employment letter
Credit Score	600 or above (flexible based on other strong factors)	Credit report from approved provider
Rental History	No evictions or major lease violations within past 3 years	Landlord references, eviction database
Background Check	No violent crimes or recent felonies	Criminal background check
References	Positive responses from previous landlords/employers	Phone/email verification

5. Background and Credit Checks

- Obtain applicant consent before running any checks.
- Use reputable screening services for credit, criminal, and eviction checks.
- Document and file results with their relevant application.
- Review findings for any disqualifying factors or required clarifications.

6. Interview Procedures

- Contact qualified applicants to schedule interviews or property showings.
- Use a standard list of questions to ensure consistency and compliance with legal guidelines.
- Assess applicant compatibility with property rules and community culture.
- Document all interactions and decisions for audit purposes.

7. Decision-Making Guidelines

1. Review all gathered information objectively and without bias.
2. Ensure selections are based solely on disclosed qualification criteria.
3. Notify approved applicants in writing and provide lease agreement for review/signature.
4. Send timely, polite notices to declined applicants, stating limited reasons per fair housing regulations.
5. Retain records of all advertising, applications, screenings, and decisions as required by law.

8. Compliance and Review

- Adhere to all federal, state, and local fair housing and privacy laws.
- Train all staff on SOP protocols and legal requirements annually.
- Review and update this SOP on an annual basis or after any regulatory changes.