

How do I quickly and effectively find a place to lease?

Finding a place to rent in Austin, the city voted the best place to live in the United States, can run from challenging to downright difficult. How do you know you've found the best home for your money, the best neighborhood to fit your needs, the best way to avoid the Austin traffic but yet still have access to amenities?

Your Austin Realtor is here to help. They have answers to these questions and more but before you get started there are a few things you need to know if you want to lock away the perfect home to lease.

1. How much will this cost you?

The good news is that the expert services you'll receive from your realtor are almost always free to you as a tenant. In our marketplace properties that are listed for lease typically have a commission attached to help compensate your agent for the services they provide to you. Keep in mind that your agent is investing their time, gas and sweat to find you the right place to live. They may only make 30% of one month's rent for doing all of this work. So why do they do it? They help renters to build relationships. If you appreciate their work please stay loyal to them. They will be the expert you turn to when it's time to purchase a home or an investment property. They are investing in your future so when you're out searching for homes, bring information back to them so they can best assist you. If they show you 15 homes then you apply for a home without them not only will they not get paid but you now don't have anyone who legally represents you who can help you look over the lease or negotiate the terms. Some will have you sign renters representation agreements. This is a good business practice and done by the most professional agents. Stick by your agent and list them as your agent if you look at any rentals. They will stick by you.

2. What do I need to do in order to solidify a rental and avoid being outbid?

First, get all of your documentation ready before you drive around. This includes a valid government issued ID, a copy of 2 months pay stubs or 2 years tax returns if self employed and a wallet. You may be able to pay online or you may have to obtain money orders to pay for the application fees. You'll also need the contact information for your current landlord and past landlord as well as the addresses. You'll need the information for your employer and if you're starting a new job a letter showing you have accepted the job, the start date and salary. Make sure you qualify! Discuss your history, income and credit with your agent before you get started. There are some basic disqualifying things that you need to know. Evictions, felony convictions and large or aggressive breeds of dogs are a no-go for most properties managed by professionals. Professional property managers may be more strict. They also may provide better and faster service than an out of state or out of touch owner.

Second, strategize your search. Most of this can be done either online or by driving the neighborhoods. Your agent can't do it all without your input. So ask them to set up a search for you online so that you can review options that fit your price point. Then I recommend you drive those neighborhoods to ensure they are to your liking. Keep in mind location, accessibility, schools, work, play, etc...I'll be willing to be that from your drive by's you'll be able to narrow your search down to only a handful of properties. Share that list or feedback with your agent. They will need to set up appointments to see some of the properties. I recommend scheduling this in the a.m. Monday - Friday so that if you find a property you want you can act that day. In the competitive market we're in, if you wait to think it over you'll miss out. Yes even within minutes. If you see one that stands out so does everyone else looking for a rental. There are about 110 people moving here per day. It's a competition. If you're not first you may be last.

3. How do I seal the deal with all the competition out there?

Lastly, consider your application, it's your "offer" and may be competing with others. The faster you're willing to move in, the lower the possibility of risk from things such as pets, the higher your offer in monthly rent and the higher your deposit all factor into whether or not you'll get your dream home. While you may not want to pay more than the listed lease price if you offered \$10/month in additional rent that may just be the thing that moves you from second to first place. \$120 over the course of a year to be in a place you love vs. a place you had to get isn't worth another day on the road searching.

We hope you found these tips helpful and you grab the home of your dreams. Austin, Texas is the best place on the planet so welcome to your new hometown. Ya'll will love it here!



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