

Tenant Screening Checklist

Action Checklist — ClearLegalTips.com (2026)

Set Up

- ☐ Chose a screening service and confirmed its 2026 price
- ☐ Matched the report package to the decision (credit / criminal / eviction)
- ☐ Decided who pays the fee (you or the applicant)
- ☐ Prepared a written rental application Confirm Your State's Fee Rule
- ☐ Looked up your state's application/screening-fee cap and statute
- ☐ Confirmed the current dollar figure on the official source (caps like CA's adjust yearly)
- ☐ Set the applicant fee at or below the cap — never over it
- ☐ In an "actual cost only" state, charged no markup on the screening
- ☐ Checked whether your state requires you to accept a portable report
- ☐ Kept the receipt showing the actual screening cost Comply (FCRA & Fair Housing)
- ☐ Got the applicant's written consent before running the report
- ☐ Applied your screening criteria consistently to all applicants
- ☐ Weighed criminal records by nature, severity, and age — no blanket rejection
- ☐ Sent a proper FCRA adverse-action notice if you declined based on a report
- ☐ Gave a receipt where your state requires one

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

Work top to bottom: set up, confirm your state's fee rule, then comply. The fee cap and the adverse-action notice are where landlords get caught — charging over the cap can force a full refund, and skipping the notice can turn a \$35 report into a \$100–\$1,000-per-violation problem under the FCRA. This resource is general information, not legal advice; laws vary by state and change over time. Consult a licensed attorney for advice specific to your situation.