The 2025 Renter: What They Want and How to Retain Them

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In today's market, with new apartments coming online left and right, successful property managers aren't just filling vacancies: They're listening. Attracting and retaining great residents in the current environment requires understanding what truly matters to them: reducing stress, increasing value, and building trust.

In our annual survey of nearly 2,000 renters, respondents told us that they want more than just a place to live. They want a rental experience that feels convenient, responsive, and worth the price. From transparent rental listings to timely maintenance, renters are looking for a more human-centered approach to property management—the kind of service that smaller businesses are uniquely equipped to deliver.

These insights are particularly important in 2025, where elevated apartment supply has property managers focused on retaining their best residents. And it's working—our data shows that more renters plan on renewing their leases over the next year than we've seen since at least 2017—but don't take your foot off the gas just yet, because RealPage projects that 500,000 new units will come online this year.
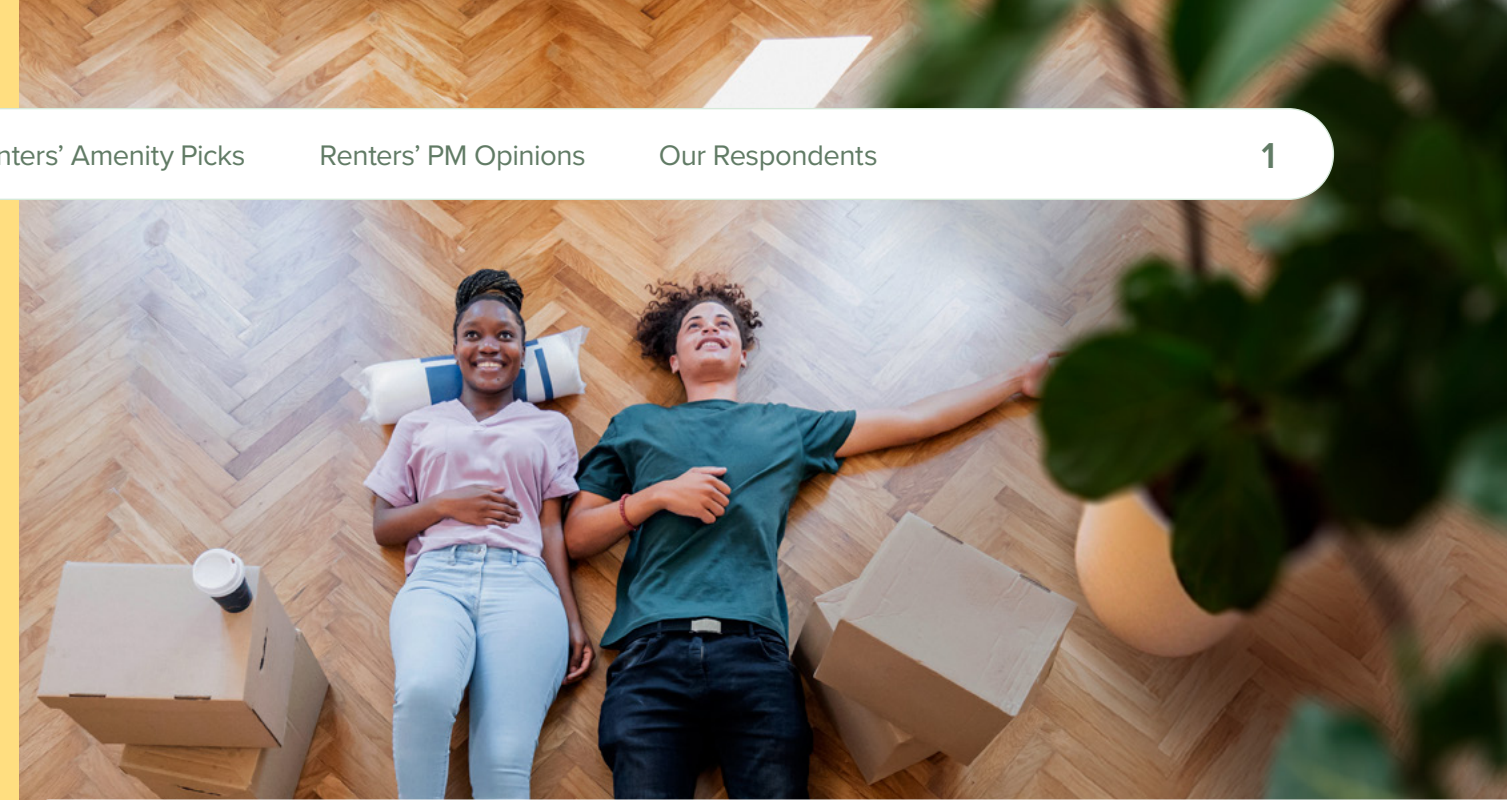
Keep reading to learn:

▶ How many renters plan to move out in the next year, and how this compares with the recent past

▶ Where renters' biggest pain points are in the rental process, and how property managers can alleviate them

▶ The technologies renters expect to be a part of their experience in 2025, from payments to communication

▶ How renters choose a property to live in, and which services they'd be willing to pay more for

Renters' Moving Plans for 2025–26 and What They Mean for You

Retention Efforts Are Working— More Residents Plan to Renew This Year

In 2025, we're seeing an increase in the number of residents who plan to remain in their current rental over the next year. 50% of residents say they plan to remain in their current property between June 2025 and June 2026—an increase of 2 percentage points over 2024, and 8 points over the long-term average. (An additional 33% are still on the fence about whether or not they'll move in the next year.)
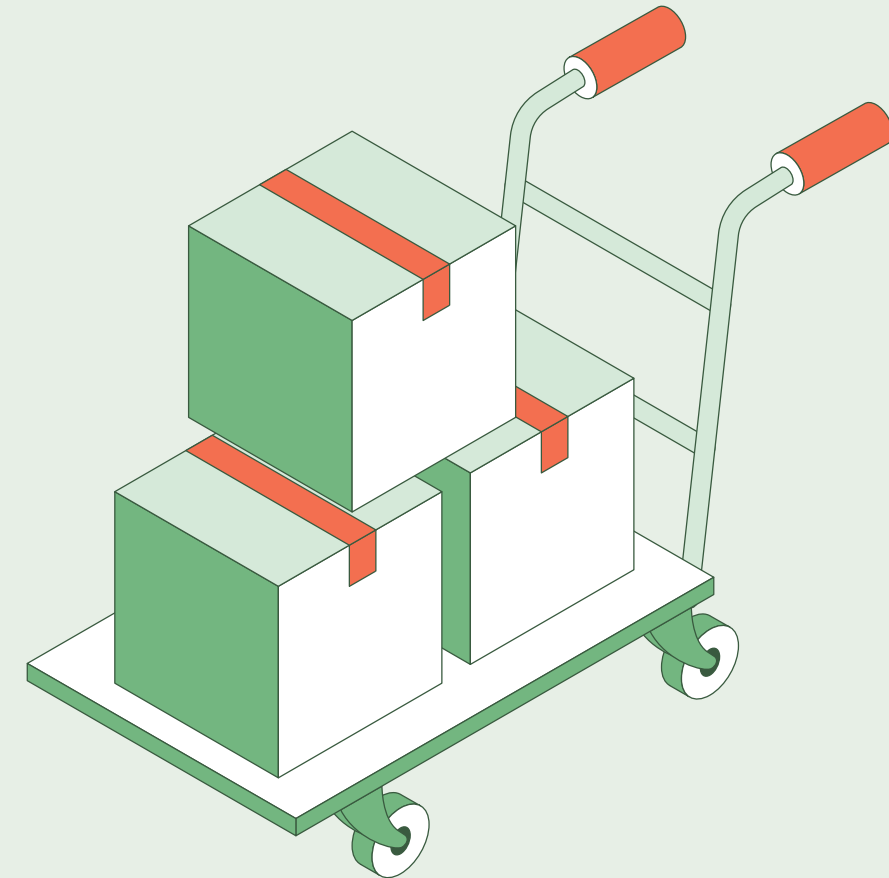
Why is this the case? There are a few different reasons why renters may be more willing to stay put in the current market:

▶ **Rent prices:** 51% of renters with plans to renew their lease say they'll do so because they'd have to pay higher rent if they were to move

▶ **Moving costs/inconvenience:** 41% plan to renew because they don't want to deal with the expense or hassle of moving

▶ **Home prices:** 34% plan to renew their lease because their finances won't allow them to purchase a home

But in addition, 35% of renters who plan to renew say they're staying put because they're satisfied with the experience provided by their property manager or landlord, showing that the retention efforts you've invested in over the past year are working.

9 Ways to Retain More Residents in 2025

Prioritize service:
Train staff in customer care, emergency response, and compliance to ensure a consistent resident experience.

Communicate clearly:
Use residents' preferred channels and always respond, even if just to acknowledge receipt of a request.

Maintain proactively:
Schedule regular inspections and maintenance to show you're invested and prevent issues from escalating.

Go digital:
Provide an online resident portal to streamline interactions and make paying rent and submitting requests convenient.

Listen and act:
Survey residents regularly, then follow up with visible actions based on their feedback.

Bundle benefits:
Offer packages with services like filter delivery, renters insurance, and utility management to enhance value.

Update strategically:
Invest in upgrades that align with local market demand and resident preferences.

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Foster connection:
Build rapport through proactive check-ins (and community events, if relevant) throughout the year.

Start early:
Begin building relationships and strong communication practices at move-in—not just at renewal time.

An Opportunity to Keep More Renters Within Your Network of Properties

Some reasons why renters decide to move would seem to fall outside of their property manager or landlord's control. Here are some of the most common explanations that renters with plans to move in the next year give for moving out:

▶ **Location:** 36% plan to move to a new rental in a different place

▶ **Affordability:** 31% plan to move to a rental with lower rents or better value

▶ **Homeownership:** 30% plan to move out to purchase a home

▶ **Space:** 27% plan to move due to changes in the amount/type of space they need

▶ **Amenities:** 21% plan to move to a rental with features that are newer, more desirable, or better suit their needs

▶ **Household:** 20% plan to move due to changes in who they live with

▶ **Experience:** 17% plan to move because they're dissatisfied with the service provided by their property manager or landlord

But this year, we asked renters an interesting question: How likely would they be to move to another property managed by their current manager or landlord, if one were available in a location that was convenient for them? We found that 36% say they'd be likely to move to a new rental under the same management.

This presents an opportunity for managers with properties in multiple locations throughout a metro area or region: Residents who need to move due to a change in where they work or go to school, in the type of space they need, or in the amenities they'd like access to could potentially stay within your network of properties. Find out why renters are thinking about moving early on in the lease renewal process, and consider whether it's worth giving renters a pathway to find new rentals through your company before you're left with just a vacancy.

6 Ways You Can Influence Renters' Decision to Renew

Among the 33% of renters who are still making a decision about whether or not they'll renew their lease in the next year, here are the actions they say you could take to encourage them to stay:

Keep the rent at the same level for another year:
67% say this would likely convince them to renew their lease

Invest more in maintaining/updating the property: **40%**

Be more responsive to maintenance requests: **31%**

Offer more amenities or services: **25%**

Enforce community rules more consistently: **17%**

Make rental processes easier through the use of technology: **16%**

Consider communicating upcoming property improvements during the lease renewal process to encourage residents to stick around.

Renters Feel the Most Strain During These Two Processes

Overall, 78% of the renters we surveyed found at least one aspect of their rental experience stressful over the past year. The two points at which they felt the most stressed were while searching for a rental property, and while waiting for a maintenance issue to be resolved.

When we asked renters what their property manager or landlord could do to make their experience less stressful, they had the following suggestions:

▶ **Increased transparency** about property conditions and rental costs during the leasing process

▶ **Improved communication**, including prompt responses to requests and clear updates on timelines and processes

▶ **Greater availability** for touring rental properties and getting in touch with your team

▶ **Timely maintenance**, including both preventative property upkeep and emergency repairs

▶ **More technology** to make processes like paying rent and submitting maintenance requests more convenient

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Renters' Top Sources of Stress

Searching for a rental property	**23%**
Waiting for a maintenance issue to be resolved	**13%**
Paying rent each month	**11%**
Moving into a rental property	**9%**
Applying for a rental property	**9%**
Putting down a security deposit	**8%**
Communicating with property manager/landlord	**6%**
Signing a lease	**5%**
Renewing a lease	**4%**
Touring a rental property	**3%**
Submitting a maintenance request	**3%**
Having the property inspected	**3%**
Moving out of a rental property	**3%**

Renters Now Expect These Technologies as Part of Their Experience

Resident Portal: Creating Convenience

66% of renters say it's important to them that their property management company or landlord gives them access to a resident portal or app where they can pay rent, submit maintenance requests, and complete other rental processes online. This includes 38% of renters who say that resident portal access is very important to their experience as a renter—meaning that if you aren't using a portal, your properties could be less competitive in the market.

There are some processes that renters would like to be able to take care of on their smartphone, and others that they'd prefer to take care of on a computer—or, in certain cases, in person. So, it's important to make sure that your property management software offers renters a variety of options as to how they'd like to communicate with your team, pay rent, sign a lease, and complete other rental processes. In particular, if your property management software doesn't give access to a mobile app, you're creating friction for your residents in completing these common processes.

If you don't know where to start when it comes to determining your residents' preferences, consider asking them through simple, regular surveys that are a part of your leasing and maintenance workflows.

How Renters Prefer to Complete Rental Processes

	Smartphone	Computer	In person	N/A
Search & apply for rentals	45%	35%	16%	5%
Tour a rental property	18%	11%	67%	5%
Sign a lease	27%	26%	43%	4%
Pay rent	54%	28%	15%	3%
Communicate with PM/landlord	60%	14%	24%	2%

Communication: Residents Want More

In 2025, most residents would prefer to hear from you via text message, but email and phone call remain relatively popular communication methods as well. This shows the importance of finding out from your residents how they'd like to hear from you. The lease signing or renewal process presents the perfect opportunity to find out this information; be sure to store it in a digital location that's easily accessible to your team members.

When it comes to the amount of communication renters want, we found that 68% of renters are satisfied with their current property manager or landlord's communication, while 20% would like to hear from you more often. Just 8% say they'd prefer to hear from you less.

How Renters Prefer to Be Contacted

Text message	Email	Phone call	Resident portal	In-person visit	Paper notice/ mailed letter	Social media
59%	52%	43%	30%	20%	16%	5%
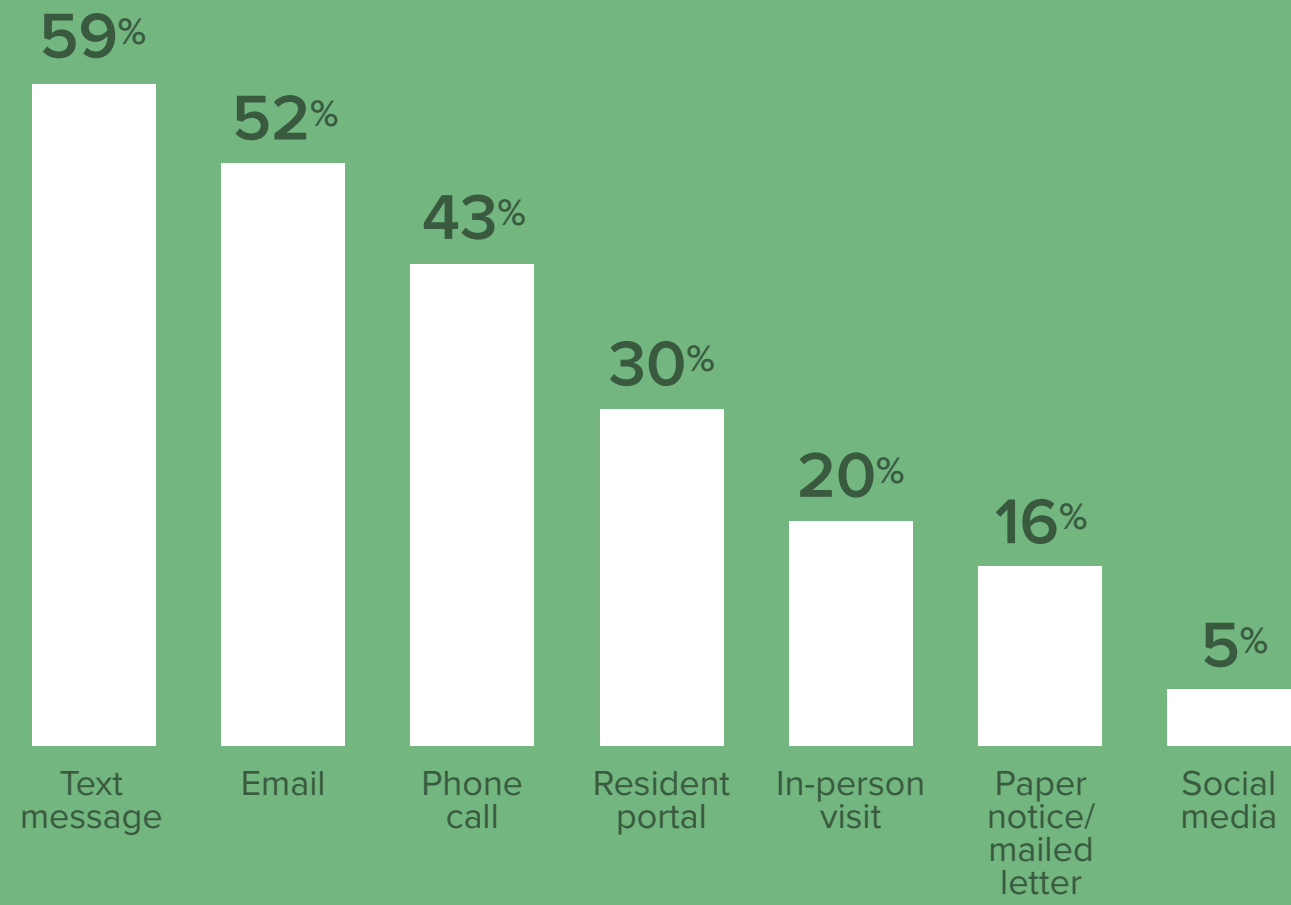
DIVE DEEPER: 8 Research-Backed Communication Tips to Improve Resident Retention ›

Payments: Providing Options

As of 2025, 80% of renters would like to pay their rent via electronic methods or cards, though the most popular payment methods vary: Electronic bank transfer, ACH, mobile banking apps, debit cards, credit cards, and digital wallets like PayPal and Venmo are all relatively well-liked. This emphasizes the importance of giving renters a variety of payment options so they can pay in the way that's most convenient to them.

This is also true for the 21% of renters who prefer to pay via check, cash, or another non-digital method: Even as you encourage the vast majority of renters to pay electronically, the handful of renters who get paid in cash or aren't comfortable paying online would appreciate having a non-digital option as well. PayNearMe retail store payments can be a great option to allow these residents to pay in cash without taxing your team.

DIVE DEEPER: Online Rent Payments: Overcoming Residents' Top 10 Sources of Confusion & Hesitation ❯

How Renters Prefer to Pay Rent

Electronic bank transfer/ACH	**22%**
Mobile banking app (e.g. Chase mobile app)	**17%**
Debit card	**17%**
Credit card	**12%**
Digital wallet (e.g. PayPal, Venmo)	**12%**
Check	**10%**
Cash	**5%**
Money order/cashier's check	**4%**
Retail store payment	**1%**

Listings: Rewarding Referrals

In 2025, most renters search for available rental properties online—either by using national rental listing sites like Zillow, or by visiting the websites of local rental communities and property management companies. In addition, though, 1 in 3 renters seek recommendations from people they know, emphasizing the importance of creating a resident experience that renters will rave about to their friends and family. Consider creating a referral program to reward residents for referring people they know–for example, a discount on rent or gift card.

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How Renters Prefer to Search for Rentals

National rental listing sites	**50%**
Local rental communities'/ PMs' websites	**48%**
Tips from people they know	**32%**
For Rent signs	**30%**
Community groups on social media	**25%**
Local paper/bulletin boards	**16%**
City-specific rental listing sites	**16%**
Real estate broker/ leasing agent	**13%**

Be sure that your website is up-to-date and working for you around the clock.

Consider putting out an appealing sign with a QR code for additional info.

How to Deliver the Features & Information Renters Want Without Slowing You Down

The right property management software will allow your residents to take care of all of their needs on their own schedule, without adding unnecessary tasks to your team's plate. Give renters access to all of the features they want in one central location, including:

- Online payments
- Renters insurance
- Maintenance request tracking
- Document signing, sharing and storage
- Text and email communications
- Online rental listings and applications

See how Buildium's all-in-one platform lets you control your operations, compete on experiences, and thrive.

REQUEST A DEMO

What Renters Consider When Choosing a Property

When choosing a rental property, a number of factors influence renters' decision, from the descriptiveness of the rental listing to reviews of the property from past residents. However, you might be surprised to hear that the interactions they have with your team throughout the application process are even more influential than the property's amenities: 92% say that the speed with which you respond to them influences their decision of where to live, while 90% say the quality of interactions they have with your team are a major factor in their decision.
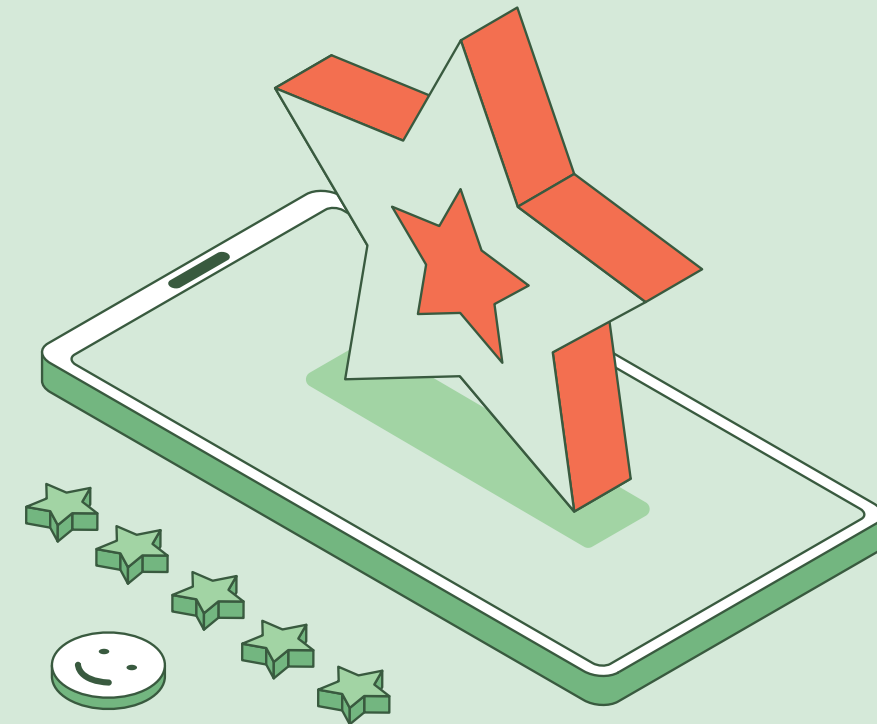
This makes clear the importance of getting back to prospective residents as quickly as possible—and in a way that creates a memorable customer service experience, helping to differentiate your properties from the competition.

Which Factors Influence Renters' Choice of a Property

	Very influential	Somewhat influential	Not very influential	Not at all influential	N/A
Descriptiveness of rental listing/ availability of photos	49%	39%	5%	3%	4%
Online reviews from residents	43%	41%	8%	2%	5%
Quality of interactions with PM/landlord	54%	35%	6%	1%	4%
Speed of response from PM/landlord	53%	38%	5%	1%	3%
Amenities/services provided by property	46%	42%	6%	2%	4%
Use of technology for rental processes	33%	46%	13%	5%	4%

Neighborhood Characteristics

97% of residents say that the qualities of the neighborhood where a rental property is located are influential in their decision of where to live. Here are the neighborhood characteristics that renters look for—be sure to highlight them within your rental listings:

70% Safe neighborhood

55% Quiet neighborhood

50% Close to stores & restaurants

41% Close to work, school & transportation

35% Family-friendly neighborhood

28% Scenic neighborhood

27% Spacious, low-density neighborhood

24% Strong community

19% Fun or lively neighborhood
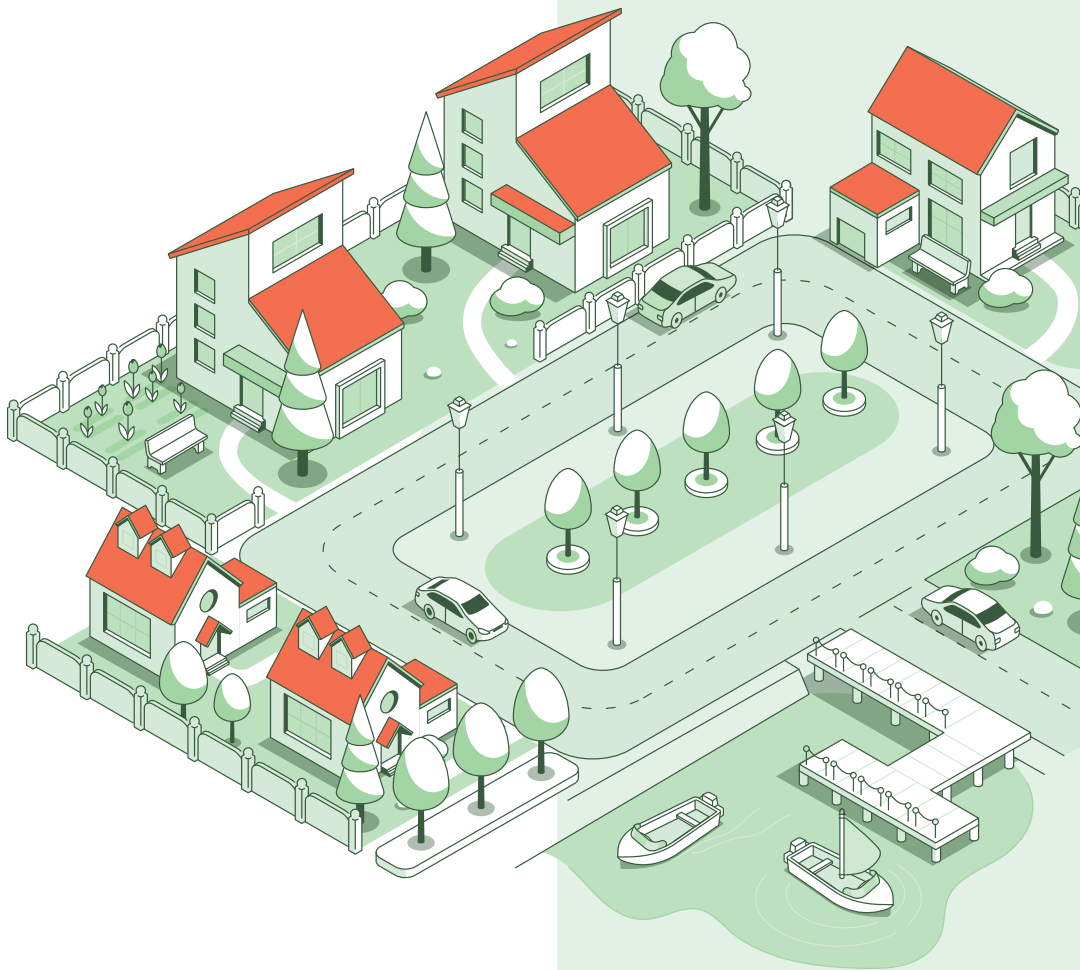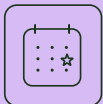
In-Unit Amenities

Virtually all renters (97%) consider the amenities available in the unit where they'll live when choosing a rental property.
Here are the in-unit amenities that are most in demand:

69% Air conditioning

62% In-unit washer & dryer

50% Ability to have a pet

49% Dishwasher

46% Private outdoor space

44% Sound-proofed walls

34% Security system

33% Fenced-in yard

33% Ability to personalize rental

22% Home office/ space for remote work & learning

20% Smart home technology

17% ADA-accessible or senior-friendly rental

16% Child-friendly rental

11% Fully furnished rental

Community Amenities

When choosing where to live, 94% of renters take building or community amenities into consideration.
Here are the amenities that are most likely to win renters over in 2025:

55% High-speed internet	**54%** Parking spaces	**37%** Pool	**35%** Fitness center	**35%** Storage units
34% Laundry room	**29%** Energy-efficient property	**27%** Secure package lockers/area	**18%** Dog park	**18%** Community garden
16% Doorman/ security guard	**16%** Resident events	**15%** Shared spaces (outdoors)	**14%** Playground	
10% Electric vehicle charging	**10%** Shared spaces (indoors)	**8%** Coworking space/ conference rooms		

Resident Services

Overall, 71% of renters would be willing to pay for at least one service in addition to their monthly rent. Here are the services that renters want most—consider whether you can partner with vendors in your area to bring these to your residents (and generate some revenue for your business):

24% Garbage pick-up

23% House cleaning

23% Pest control

18% Delivery of packages to door

18% Lawn care/landscaping

17% 24/7 maintenance phone line

15% Recycling/composting

14% Laundry/dry cleaning

13% Pet services

12% HVAC filter delivery & maintenance

10% Set up utilities upon move-in through concierge service

8% Book amenities through concierge service

How Renters Really Feel About Their Property Manager

When it comes down to it, renters want to feel like they're receiving good value in return for the rent and fees they pay each month—especially with rents having increased for 55% of renters over the past year.

RENT VALUE
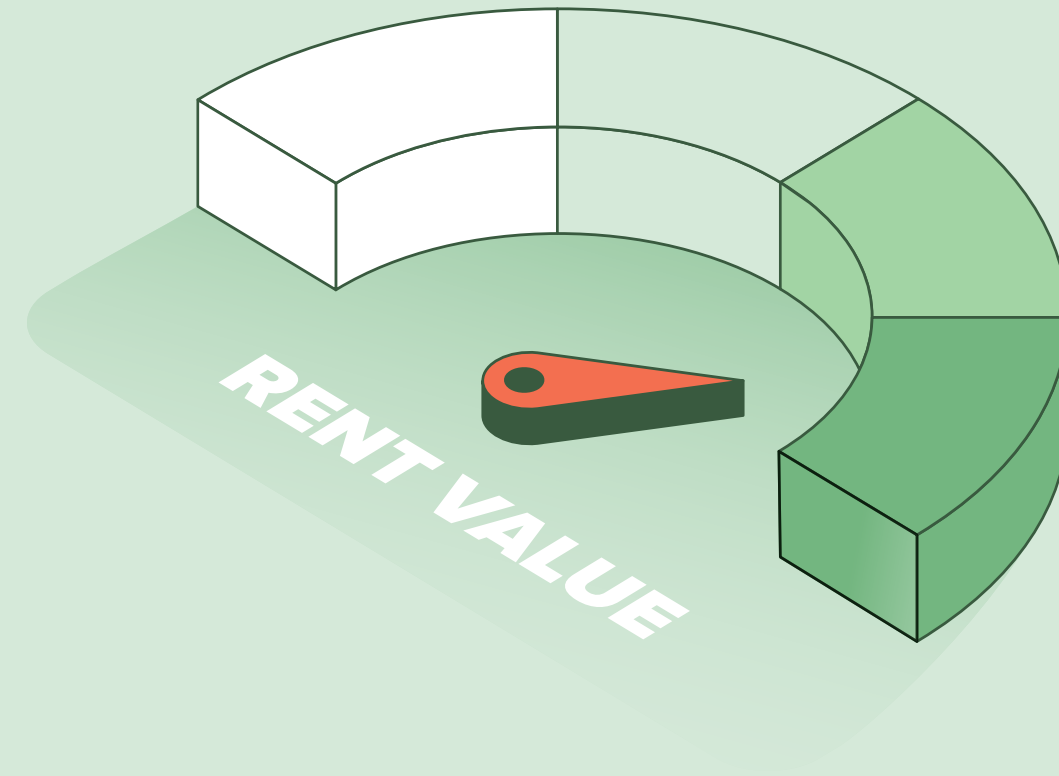
In all, 71% of renters do feel that they're receiving good value in their current property, and 67% of renters would recommend their current property manager or landlord to a friend. But they also had some suggestions for property managers looking to improve the resident experience in the rentals they manage:

▶ Be more proactive in maintaining and renovating the property, and follow up after work has been completed

▶ Respond quickly to requests, even just to acknowledge receipt of their message if you don't yet have a solution

▶ Make completing rental processes more convenient with online payments, maintenance requests, and leases

▶ Screen rental applicants well and ensure that the lease is enforced consistently across the property or community

▶ Consider incentives for residents who consistently pay rent on time or have lived in the property for a long time

▶ Offer add-on services like lawncare and snow removal for eligible properties

About Our 1,928 Survey Respondents

Renters' Property Type

Single-family rental:	**34%**
Multifamily rental:	**19%**
Small apartment building (<11 units):	**11%**
Mid-sized apartment building (11-50 units):	**18%**
Large apartment building (>50 units):	**18%**
Mobile home:	**5%**

Renters' Age

Generation Z (born in 1997 or later):	**14%**
Millennials (born in 1981–1996):	**31%**
Generation X (born in 1965–1980):	**32%**
Baby Boomers (born in 1946–1964):	**20%**
Silent Generation (born in 1945 or earlier):	**4%**

Buildium, a RealPage company, is property management software made for business growth. Our team empowers managers of rental and association properties to sharpen their operations, stand out from the competition, and take on more doors. Backed by experienced support, Buildium outfits property management businesses with an intuitive, all-in-one platform (and top-rated mobile apps) that are purpose-built for their success.

For more information, visit buildium.com.

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