YOUR RENTAL GAME PLAN

Find the fit for right now.

A rental search works better when the timing, total cost and must-haves are clear before you apply.

Start with your move

List your preferred areas, move-in window, bedrooms, accessibility needs, parking, pets and commute requirements. You choose the priorities and locations. Ask Anthony about the assistance available for the property and area.

Price the whole month

Look beyond advertised rent. Ask who pays utilities, parking, internet, insurance, pet charges and other recurring costs. Clarify which advertised concessions expire and the price after they end.

Plan the move-in cash

Request a written breakdown of application, screening, deposit, move-in and other charges. Ask which amounts are refundable, when they are due, and what happens if the application is not approved. Requirements and lawful charges vary by location.

Move-in window / preferred areas

Must-haves / flexible preferences

Comfortable total monthly cost / move-in funds

Lake, McHenry and Cook Counties, Illinois. Kenosha, Racine and Walworth Counties, Wisconsin. Somewhere else? Ask me.

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Verify the place and the person.

A polished listing or urgent message does not establish that someone has authority to rent a property.

Before you pay

Tour the property or arrange a trusted representative to view it. Independently verify the owner or authorized manager and compare listing contact details. Search the property address for inconsistent ads and ask questions about conflicting information.

Watch the payment request

Pressure to act immediately, an unusually low price, refusal to show the property, or demands for gift cards, cryptocurrency or wire-transfer services deserve scrutiny. Independently verify payment instructions using a trusted contact route.

Protect your application

Ask for written screening criteria and the authorized secure application process. Do not email identity documents or account details to an unverified contact. Review consent, fees and privacy information before submitting sensitive information.

Keep a record

Retain the listing, written fee schedule, messages and receipts. If you suspect fraud after paying, contact your financial institution promptly and report through appropriate official channels.

Source: FTC, Rental Scams Explained:
consumer.gov/scams-identity-theft/rental-scams-explained

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Read the lease. Ask the questions.

Get important promises in writing. An application, proposed date or verbal conversation is not confirmation that the lease is executed or keys are available.

The terms

Confirm the people signing, property, lease dates, rent, payment method, deposits and fees. Review renewals, notice requirements, early termination, guests, pets and parking. Seek qualified advice when a clause is unclear.

The responsibilities

Clarify utilities, lawn and snow work, repairs, maintenance reporting, emergency contacts and access procedures. Ask about the actual condition and agreed work, including who handles it and when.

The move-in handoff

Confirm the signed lease, payments, access appointment and key or entry-code arrangements through the authorized contact. Arrange utilities and insurance as required. Do not assume a requested move-in date is accepted.

Document the condition

Walk through, take dated photos and use the required condition-report process. Record existing concerns and send the report through the agreed channel. Retain a copy and proof of submission; confirm applicable local requirements.

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One clear next step.

Bring a property you?re considering and your questions. Keep sensitive application records out of ordinary email and text.

Verify who handles the rental
Confirm the listing contact and who is authorized to take applications or receive money.

Compare the full monthly and move-in costs
Review rent, fees, utilities, deposits and which payments may be refundable.

Resolve the lease and timing questions
Confirm the requested move-in date and who can answer questions about the lease.

Decide what to do next
Talk through whether to apply, ask for more information, or keep looking.

Talk it through with Anthony

Call or text 815.388.3355. We can clarify your priorities and identify the next question to answer. Rental inventory, application decisions and available services vary. No approval or availability is guaranteed.

Prepared November 3, 2026. This renter-focused conversation guide is not a lease, legal opinion or a statement of every state or local tenant right. For disputes, notices, accommodations or legal deadlines, obtain qualified local advice.
Equal Housing Opportunity. Source for fraud prevention: consumer.gov/scams-identity-theft/rental-scams-explained