

# RED FLAGS

## HELP YOU IDENTIFY IMPOSTER LANDLORDS



- Listing is too Good to be True:** The advertised unit is substantially better in price, location, size, or quality than other available units on the market.
- Inability to Meet Prospective Tenant:** Impostor landlords will make excuses that they are out of town or agree to meet at the property but never show up.
- Upfront Payment Demand:** Impostor landlord will require an upfront payment in exchange for a promise that they will send the keys to the prospective tenant by mail and leave them in a locked drop box.
- Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Payment Method:** Impostor landlords are known to exploit P2P payment methods like Cash App, Venmo, and PayPal. In order to get the keys, prospective tenants are told to pay an application fee, deposit, and first month's rent using P2P. The P2P profiles used by the impostor landlords are stolen identities or victims of other scams. The impostor landlord may claim this stolen P2P profile is their attorney or business associate.
- Cryptocurrency:** Tenants should be cautious if a landlord requests initial payment via cryptocurrency, such as Bitcoin.
- Gift Cards:** Landlords requesting tenants to make payments by gift card is likely a scam. In this instance, a tenant may be told to put money on a gift card, take a picture of the gift card, and send it to the impostor landlord.
- Fraudulent Use of Official-Looking Email Address:** Impostor landlords may send emails from fraudulent email addresses that are designed to appear as they come from official sources. By using official sounding titles or words like “Section 8” or “HUD” or “Housing Authority,” fraudsters deceive people into corresponding with them—and eventually sending them money.

“The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under an award with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government.”