



# CRITICISM TO CREDIBILITY

## Building Renter Trust Through Transparency



# EXPECTATION





# REALITY





Laurel Zacher  
Founder + CEO  
LZ Strategic



Carla J. Alicea  
Director of Research  
and Performance  
SatisFacts



YES OR NO

Have you noticed the increasing  
regulatory pressure on rental fees  
and consumer protection laws?

# LAWS

**Colorado** - Owners are prohibited from designating any amount or fee (apart from the set monthly payment for occupying the premises) as “rent,” such as fees for utilities or services and any charge that is not explicitly classified as rent. Fee markups or charges for services for which the owner is billed by a third party are capped at two percent of the amount the owner was billed or a total of ten dollars per month. [C.R.S. 38-12-801](#)

**Maine** - Landlord may not require tenant to pay in excess of rent, security deposit, and disclosed mandatory recurring fees. Before charging an optional recurring fee, landlord must first provide notice and opt-in to tenant. Prior to entering lease, landlord must provide and obtain tenant’s signature on a written disclosure of total cost of rent, mandatory recurring fee, optional recurring fees, utility services costs, and any other cost tenant is responsible for paying. [Chap. 594](#), Eff. 1/1/25

**Virginia** - Residential landlords must provide descriptions of any rent and fees to be charged on the first page of the written lease, and the lease must state that no fee can be collected unless it is listed on the lease or incorporated later by a separate addendum. [HB 967](#) , Eff. 7/1/24

**Minnesota** - Landlord must disclose all nonoptional fees in the lease agreement. The sum total of rent and all nonoptional fees must be described as the Total Monthly Payment and be listed on the first page of the lease. A unit advertised for a residential tenancy must disclose the nonoptional fees included with the total amount for rent in any advertisement or posting. In a lease agreement disclosure or unit advertisement, the landlord must disclose whether utilities are included or not included in the rent. [Minn. Stat. 504B.120](#)

For all businesses, it is a deceptive trade practice to advertise, display, or offer a price for goods or services that does not include all mandatory fees or surcharges. If the person that disseminates an advertisement is independent of the advertiser, the person is not liable for the content of the advertisement. Exception for broadband Internet. [Minn. Stat. 325D.44](#), Eff. 1/1/25

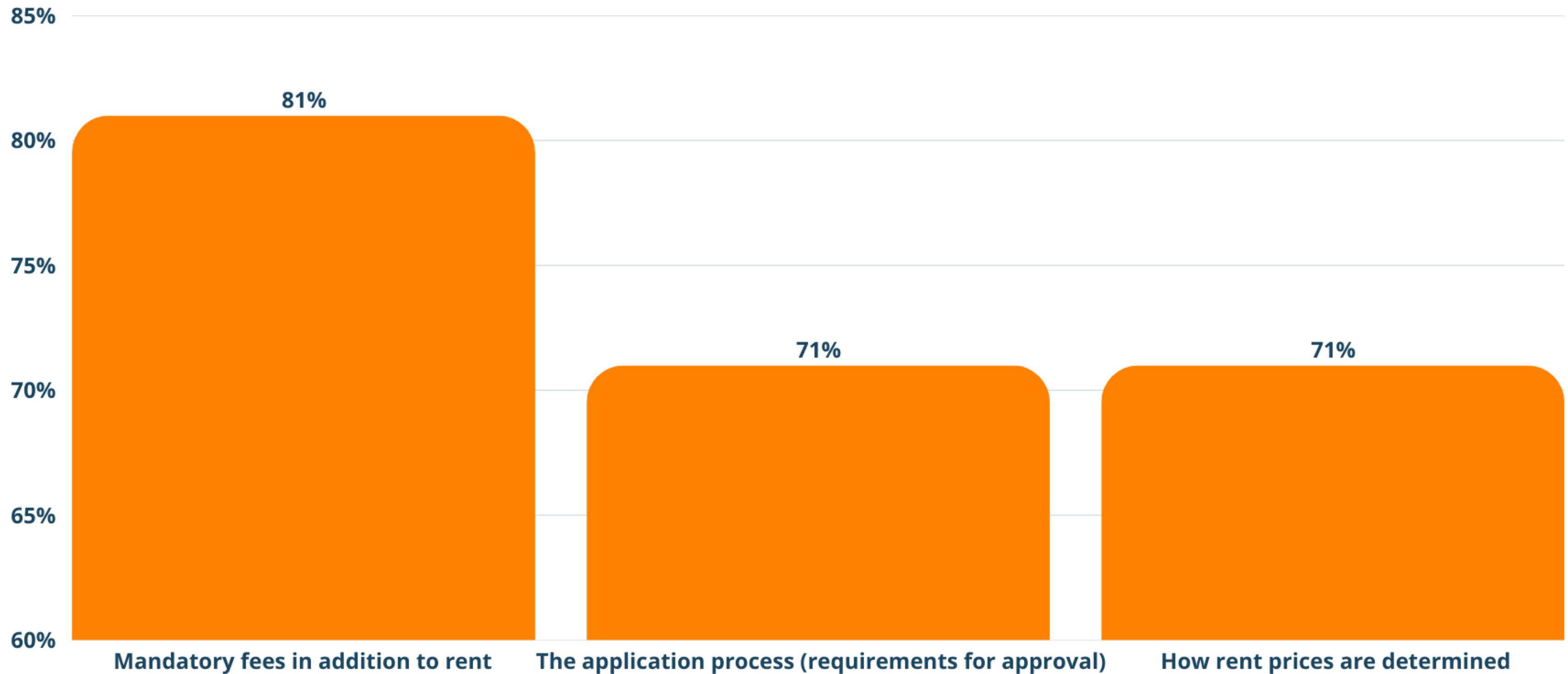
**Massachusetts** – Under a proposed general business [rule](#) under the state’s Consumer Protection Act for junk fees, covered businesses would have to: clearly disclose the total price of a product when it is presented to consumers, provide clear and accessible information on whether fees are optional or required, and simplify the process for cancelling trial offers and recurring charges. Proposed 11/30/23



YES OR NO

Should property management companies  
be more open and transparent about  
mandatory fees in addition to rent?

# RENTERS BELIEVE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMPANIES SHOULD BE MORE OPEN AND TRANSPARENT ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:



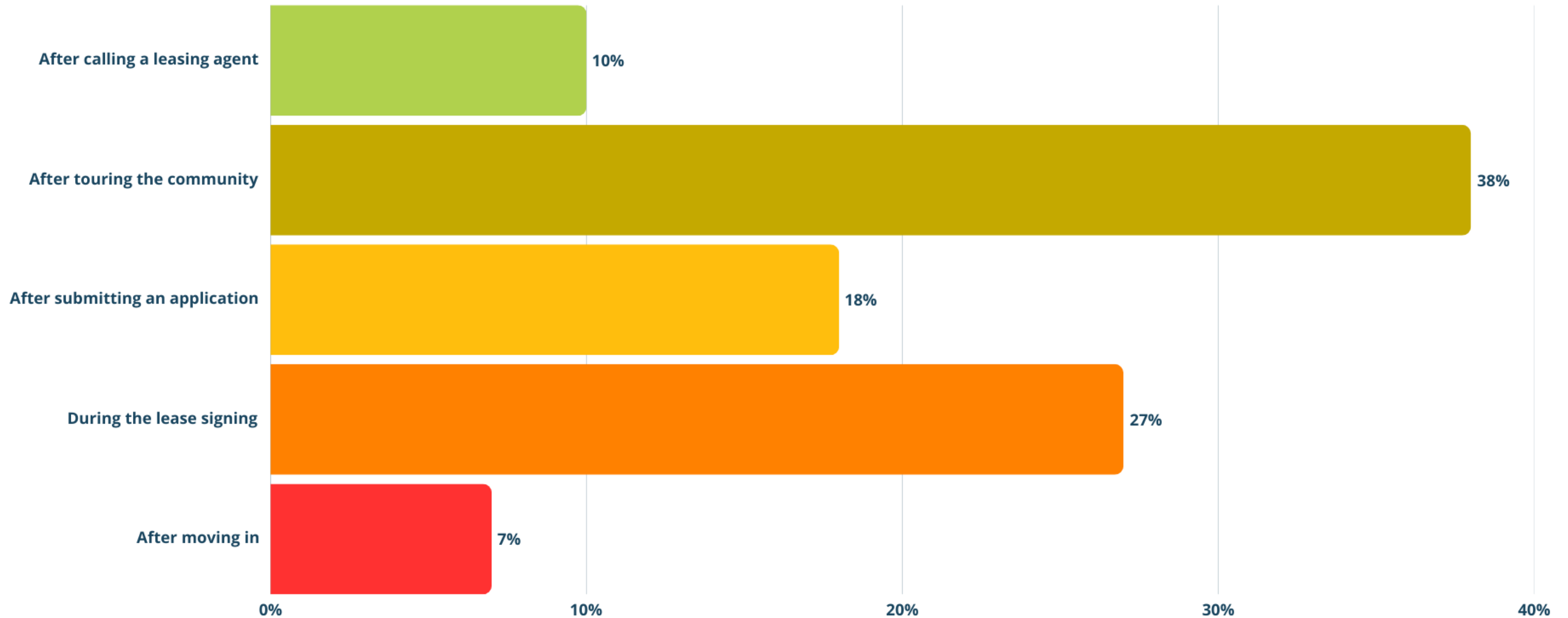
Source: SatisFacts Biennial Online Renter Study | **Sampling:** Residents of participating management companies and visitors to ApartmentRatings.com | n = 4687



# TRUE OR FALSE

Most renters are not made aware of additional fees and charges until after a community tour.

# AT WHICH POINT ARE RENTERS MADE AWARE OF ADDITIONAL FEES AND CHARGES?



**Source:** SatisFacts Fee Transparency Study | **Sampling:** 60 random renters who (1) had searched for an apartment within the last three years, (2) had rented at a community with 50 or more units, and (3) had experienced a difference between the initial advertised price and the Total Monthly Leasing Price (TMLP).

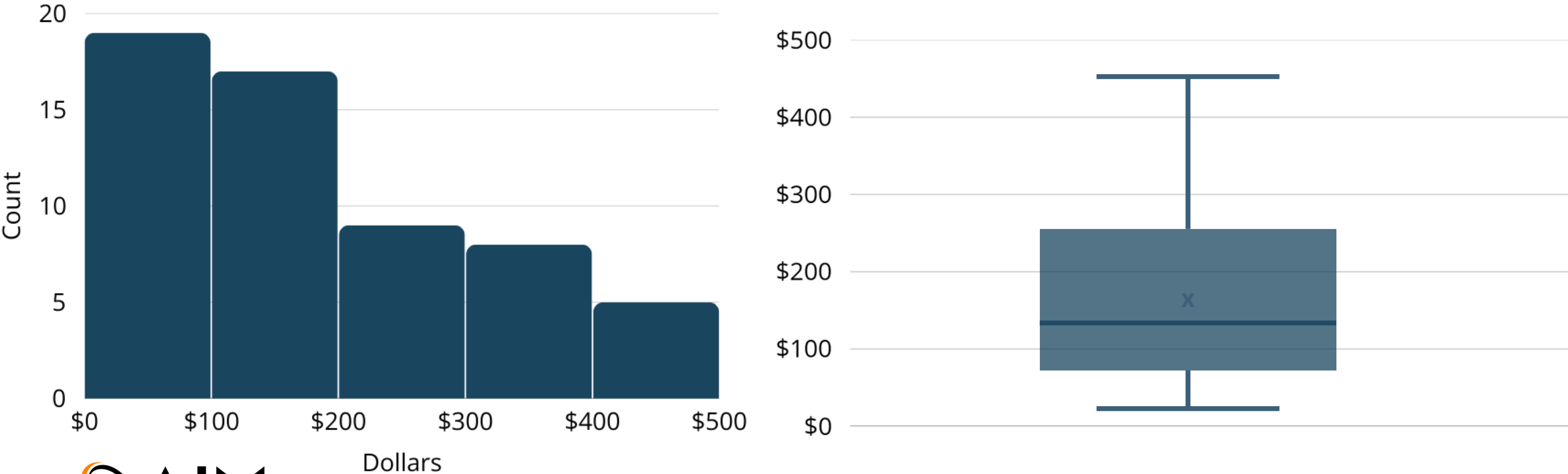


YES OR NO

Additional mandatory fees and charges increased the total monthly rent of our focus group participants by an average of \$169.

# HOW MUCH, IN DOLLARS, DID THE ADDITIONAL MANDATORY FEES AND CHARGES INCREASE YOUR TOTAL MONTHLY RENT BEYOND THE ADVERTISED PRICE?

Lowest	Median	Highest	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
\$20	\$125	\$450	\$169	\$100	\$123



**Source:** SatisFacts Fee Transparency Study | **Sampling:** 60 random renters who (1) had searched for an apartment within the last three years, (2) had rented at a community with 50 or more units, and (3) had experienced a difference between the initial advertised price and the Total Monthly Leasing Price (TMLP).

# THE COST OF TRANSPARENCY GAPS

## The Abandoner

"I loved the apartment...until I saw the fees."



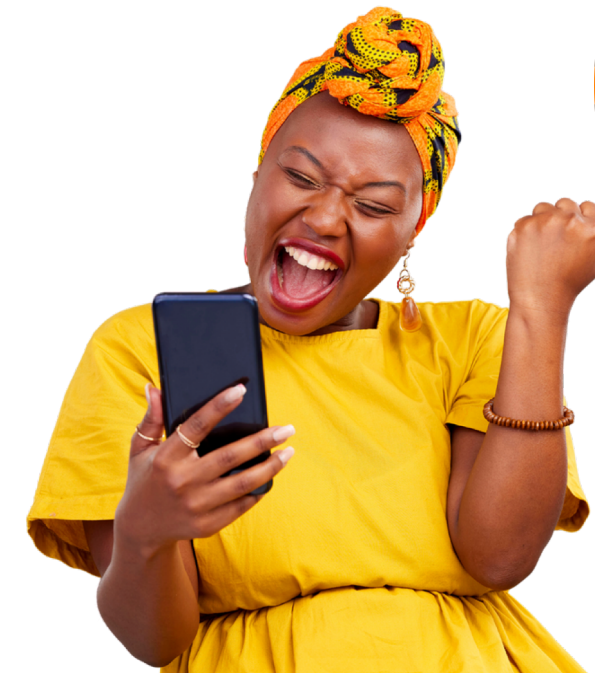
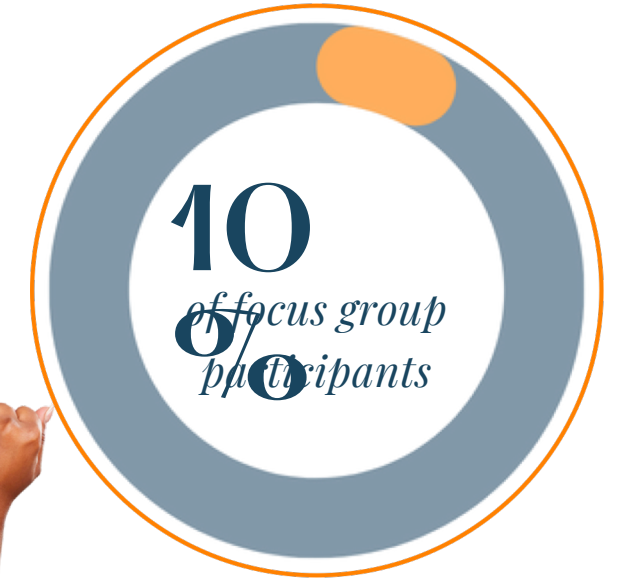
## The Reluctant Renter

"I had no choice but to sign...but I won't forget."



## The Confident Leasee

"I knew the costs and felt comfortable signing."



# RENTER EXPECTATIONS & INDUSTRY REALITIES

## Key Findings on Fee Transparency

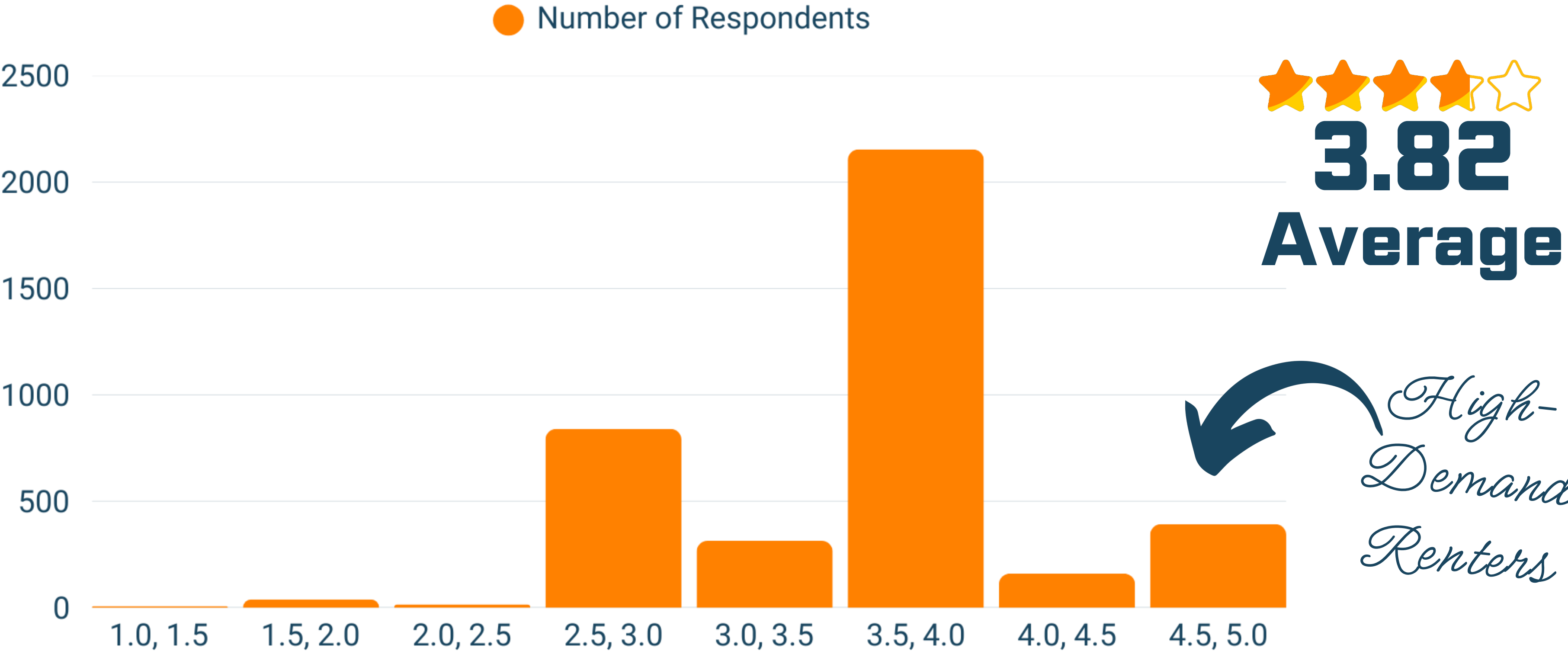
- **81%** of renters want greater transparency around fees.
- More than **30%** of renters were unaware of all charges before signing their lease.
- **Unclear fees negatively impact leasing** decisions and renewals.



YES OR NO

A community must have a 4.0-star rating  
or higher for renters to consider living  
there.

THE MINIMUM AVERAGE STAR RATING A COMMUNITY MUST HAVE FOR CONSIDERATION AS A PLACE TO LIVE IS 3.82 OUT OF 5 STARS.



Source: SatisFacts Biennial Online Renter Study | Sampling: Residents of participating management companies and visitors to ApartmentRatings.com | n = 3920



## TRUE OR FALSE

Less than 20% of renters reported that the positive reviews they read were inflated compared to their current resident experience.

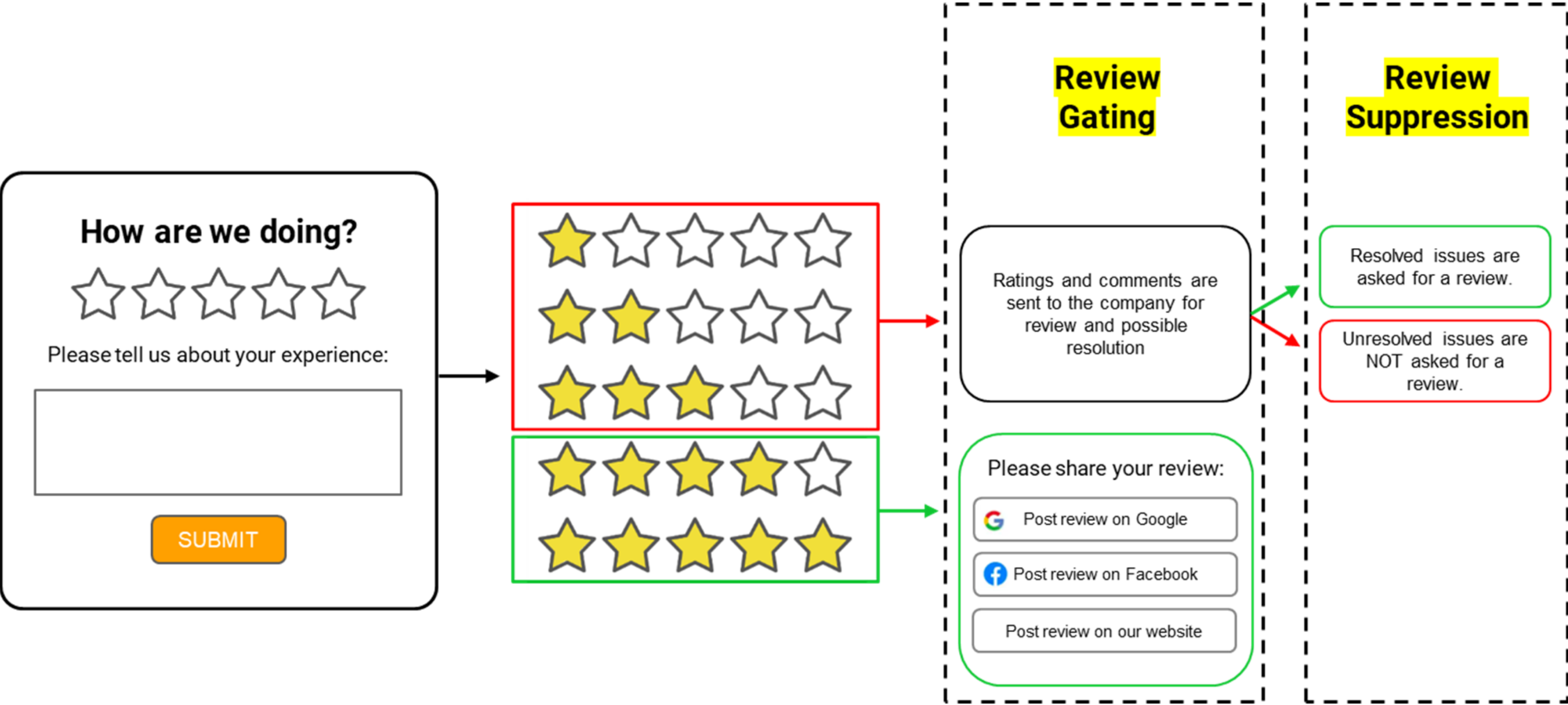
22% OF RENTERS REPORTED THAT THE POSITIVE REVIEWS THEY READ WERE INFLATED COMPARED TO THEIR CURRENT RESIDENT EXPERIENCE.

# More than 1 in 5 Renters



**Source:** SatisFacts Biennial Online Renter Study | **Sampling:** Residents of participating management companies and visitors to ApartmentRatings.com | n = 2578

# HOW REVIEW GATING SOFTWARE CONTRIBUTES TO UNREALISTIC RENTER EXPECTATIONS



# RENTER EXPECTATIONS & INDUSTRY REALITIES

## Key Findings on Reputation Risk Management

- **22%** of renters believe online reviews are inflated.
- Most renters are comfortable with ratings of **3.5 to 4.0**.
- **Review-gating** software **contributes to unrealistic renter expectations** and operational misalignment.

# TRANSPARENCY IN ACTION

How do we shift focus to address the  
gaps & build trust?

# CLOSING THE TRUST GAP IN PRICING

## **Action Plan:**

- **Be proactive with fee disclosures**
- **Standardize communication procedures**
- **Align technology with transparency goals**
- **Train leasing teams on total monthly leasing price**

# TOTAL MONTHLY LEASING PRICE (TMLP)

The complete monthly cost, including rent and all mandatory fees and charges.

## **Ads, website, phone calls, and offers (before the tour):**

- Display or disclose the **TMLP (not base rent) = Rent + Mandatory Fees** more prominently than any other pricing information
- When displaying additional fees/charges, clearly and conspicuously disclose the nature/purpose, amount, and whether mandatory

# REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

STUDIOS

1-BEDROOMS

1 BEDROOM + DENS

2-BEDROOMS

2-BEDROOMS + DENS

302

384

382

380

378

376

374

372

370

368

366

364

362

360

358

356

345

347

348

346

DISTRICT AVENUE

TOUHY AVENUE

UNIT 318

2 Bed E

2 Bed / 2 Ba  
1,170 sq.  
\$3,684 - \$3,844 / mo  
12 Months  
AVAILABLE JUN 71

Move-in Date

6/7/25

Lease Term

12 Months (\$3,339) Base Rent

Total Monthly Leasing Price\*

\$3,684 - \$3,844

Est. Application Cost

\$15

Est. Move-In Cost

\$4,037 - \$4,197

Calculate My Cost

Apply

\*Total Monthly Leasing Price includes base rent, all monthly mandatory and any user-selected optional fees. Excludes variable, usage-based, and required charges due at or prior to move-in or at move-out. Security Deposit may change based on screening results, but total will not exceed legal maximums. Some items may be taxed under applicable law. Some fees may not apply to rental homes subject to an affordable program. All fees are subject to application and/or lease terms. Prices and availability subject to change. Resident is responsible for damages beyond ordinary wear and tear. Resident may need to maintain insurance and to activate and maintain utility services.

Floor plans are artist's rendering. Dimensions are approximate. Actual product and specifications may vary in dimension or detail. Not all features are available in every rental home.

302

384

382

380

378

376

374

372

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368

366

364

362

360

358

356

345

347

348

346

DISTRICT AVENUE

TOUHY AVENUE

UNIT 318

2 Bed E

2 Bed

2 Bath

1,170 sq. ft.

Applicants

Applicants

\$15 at application

1

Lease Options

Move-in Date

6/7/25

Lease Term

12 Months (\$3,339) Base ...

Move-In Date and Lease Term affect your monthly cost.

Pets

Pets

\$35/mo

\$353 at move-in

1

Breed and other restrictions may apply. See Leasing Agent for details.

Parking

Parking - Garage

\$150 - \$225/mo

1

All items subject to availability. Final pricing and availability will be determined during lease agreement.

Storage

Storage Space Rental

\$35 - \$45/mo

1

Storage Space - Bicycle

\$10/mo

0

All items subject to availability. Final pricing and availability will be determined during lease agreement.

Utilities

Cable TV Services

Varies

1

Reset All

Total Monthly Leasing Price\*

\$3,684 - \$3,844

Est. Application Cost

\$15

Est. Move-In Cost

\$4,037 - \$4,197

Apply

Total Monthly Leasing Price\*

\$3,684 - \$3,844

Base Rent

\$3,339

Administrative

Renters Liability Insurance - Third Party

Varies

Services

Utility - Electric - Third Party

Usage-Based

Utility Billing Bundle

\$125 - \$200

Cable TV Services

Varies

Pets

Pet Rent

\$35

Rentable Items

Parking - Garage

\$150 - \$225

Storage Space Rental

\$35 - \$45

Est. Application Cost

\$15

Administrative

Application Fee

\$15

Est. Move-In Cost

\$4,037 - \$4,197

Total Monthly Leasing Price\*

\$3,684 - \$3,844

Pets

Pet Fee

\$353

\*Total Monthly Leasing Price includes base rent, all monthly mandatory and any user-selected optional fees. Excludes variable, usage-based, and required charges due at or prior to move-in or at move-out. Security Deposit may change based on screening results, but total will not exceed legal maximums. Some items may be taxed under applicable law. Some fees may not apply to rental homes subject to an affordable program. All fees are subject to application and/or lease terms. Prices and availability subject to change. Resident is responsible for damages beyond ordinary wear and tear. Resident may need to maintain insurance and to activate and maintain utility services, including but not limited to electricity, water, gas, and internet, per the lease. Additional fees may apply as detailed in the application and/or lease agreement, which can be requested prior to applying.

# REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

## Easy-to-Use Guide

To make things simple and clear, we have put together a list of potential fees you might encounter as a current or future resident. This way, you can easily see what your initial and monthly costs might be in addition to base rent.

### HOME STARTS HERE FEE GUIDE FOR DISTRICT 1860

Welcome! We're excited to have you here! To make things simple and clear, we've put together a list of potential fees you might encounter as a current or future resident. This way, you can easily see what your initial and monthly costs might be. To help budget your monthly fixed costs, add your base rent to the Essentials and any Personalized Add-Ons you will be selecting. Our goal is to help you plan your budget with ease, enhancing your rental home experience.



#### MOVE-IN BASICS

Application Fee	\$15.00	per applicant/once	required
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#### ESSENTIALS

Renters Liability Insurance - Third Party	varies	per leaseholder/month	required
Utility - Electric - Third Party	usage-based	per unit/month	required
Utility Billing Bundle	\$125.00-\$200.00	per unit type/month	required



#### PERSONALIZED ADD-ONS

Cable TV Services	varies	per unit/month	optional
Parking - Garage	\$125.00-\$225.00	per rentable item/month	optional
Pet Fee	\$300.00	per pet/once	optional
Pet Rent	\$35.00	per pet/month	optional
Storage Space - Bicycle	\$10.00	per rentable item/month	optional
Storage Space Rental	\$35.00-\$45.00	per rentable item/month	optional



#### SITUATIONAL FEES

Access Device - Replacement	\$10.00	per occurrence
Common Area/Clubhouse Rental	\$400.00	per occurrence
Insufficient Move-Out Notice Fee	varies	per occurrence
Intra-Community Transfer Fee	\$750.00	per occurrence
Late Fee	varies	per occurrence
Lease Buy Out	200.00%	per occurrence
Lease Violation	varies	per occurrence
Returned Payment Fee (NSF)	\$25.00	per occurrence
Utility - Vacant Cost Recovery	usage-based	per occurrence
Utility - Vacant Processing Fee	\$50.00	per occurrence

# CLOSING THE CREDIBILITY GAP IN REVIEWS

## Action Plan:

1. Set realistic, achievable goals that align with operations
2. Annually train on the FTC trade rules (like fair housing)
3. Cultivate recent reviews with meaningful details
4. Maintain consistent sentiment across 3-4 trusted platforms
5. Prioritize at least one platform with verified resident reviews



# YOU BE THE JUDGE

## Which looks more trustworthy to you?

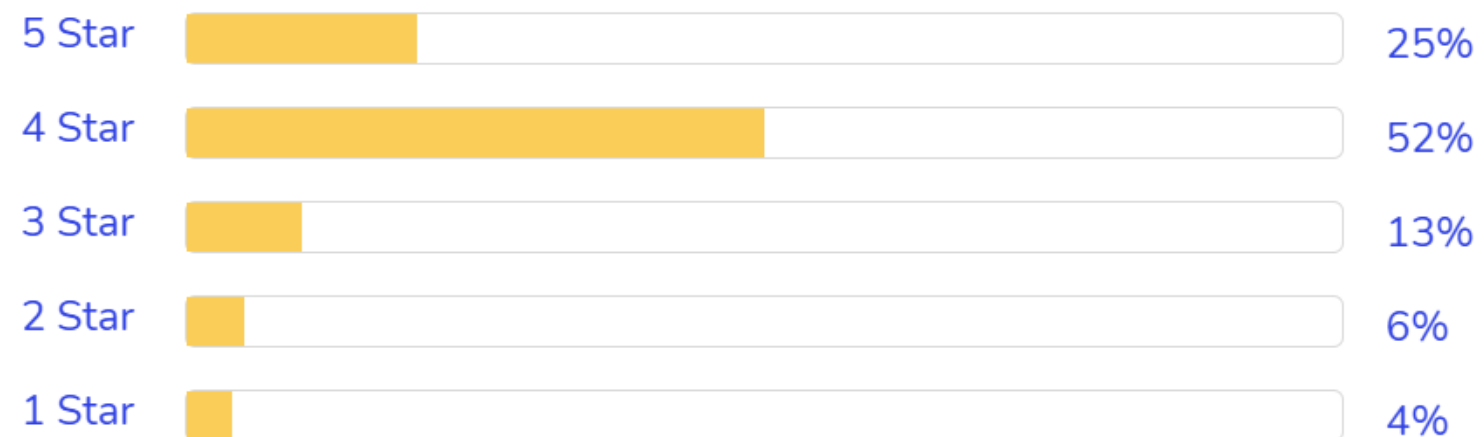
### Community A



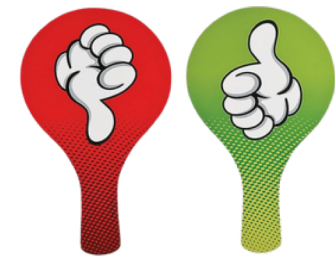
★★★★☆ 4.3 rating

95 total reviews (79 Verified ✓)

All Verified



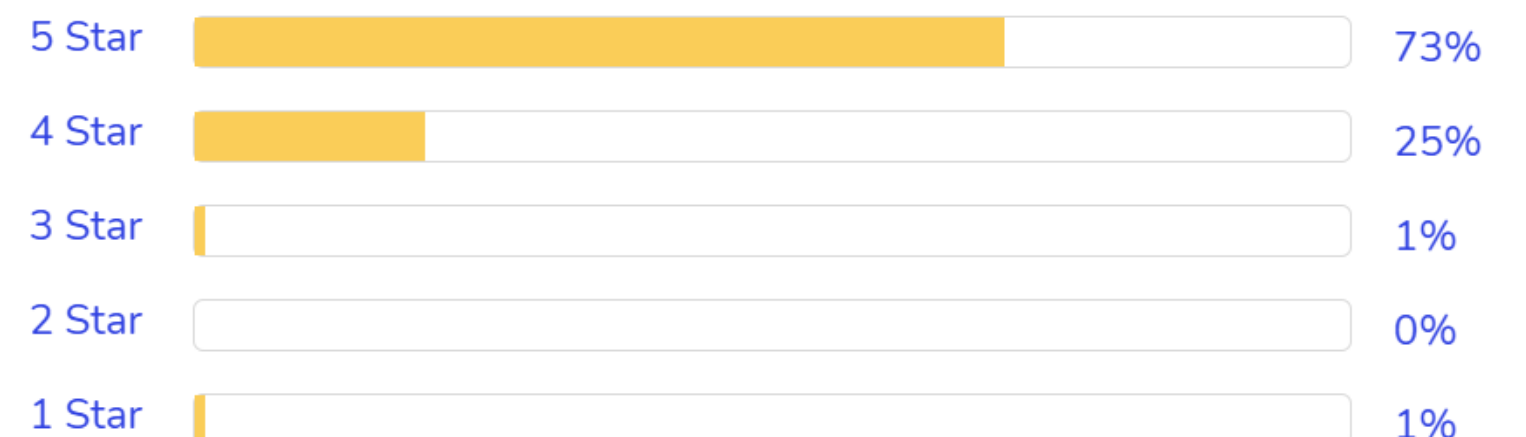
### Community B



★★★★★ 4.9 rating

81 total reviews (0 Verified ✓)

All Verified



DOWNLOAD THE REPORTS

# Fee Transparency & Reputation Risk Management


(available via conference app)



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

Accurate pricing and authentic, detailed reviews:

 Reduce renter friction

 Improve renter trust and experience

 Increase closing ratios

NOW YOU KNOW

Transparency  
is the new  
Competitive Advantage

# PARTICIPATE!

## Be Part of the Benchmark Join the 2025 Biennial Online Renter Study

A lot has changed in two years—are you keeping up?

Opt in now to receive your **FREE company-level data** file and gain insights on what renters really think about:

- Rental Decision Drivers
- Ratings & Reviews
- Living & Renewal Experience
- Tech & Fee Transparency



The deadline to sign up is May 31, 2025.



Laurel Zacher  
CEO + Founder  
at LZ Strategic  
[laurel@lzstrategic.com](mailto:laurel@lzstrategic.com)  
[linkedin.com/in/laurelzacher](https://www.linkedin.com/in/laurelzacher)



Carla J. Alicea  
Director of Research and Performance  
at SatisFacts and ApartmentRatings  
[calicea@satisFacts.com](mailto:calicea@satisFacts.com)  
[linkedin.com/in/carlaalicea](https://www.linkedin.com/in/carlaalicea)

# THANK YOU!

