



## **Management Company Guide: How to Rent to International Students**

### **OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CHICAGO & THE U.S.**

The United States hosts over 1 million international students because we are a world leader in higher education, and more than 55,000 of them are in Illinois – many of those, of course, in Chicago.

As we look ahead to the 2025-2026 academic year, many international students will be looking for off-campus housing in Chicago, and we at University of Illinois Chicago want to provide some resources to help you know how to handle common challenges you may face when renting to an international student because they don't always have a U.S. credit history or social security number. International students will also likely not book as far out in advance as some U.S. students, especially when they are first arriving, so they will often be looking for housing to start right away, and you will receive many inquiries in early spring/summer for leases starting in August.

### **WHY RENT TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?**

#### **1. Reliable Renters**

- Many international students have financial backing from family or scholarships.
- They also have access to Financial Preparation resources from the Office of International Services at UIC.

#### **2. Long-Term, Low-Turnover Tenants**

- Most stay for 2–4 years and attend school year-round, reducing vacancy risk and turnover costs.

#### **3. University Partnerships**

- Renting to international students can open doors to word of mouth referrals to incoming students.
- Staff from Student Legal Services can help mediate or provide support if needed.

#### **4. Easy Workarounds for Common Concerns**

- No credit history or SSN? Students can provide passport/visa info, proof of funds, or pay extra security deposits.
- Language barriers? Most are fluent in English and take an English Proficiency Exam when being admitted to UIC.
- Student Legal Services at UIC has staff who can help with lease questions or concerns for all students, including international students.

#### **5. Builds Community**

- Welcoming international students creates a diverse, vibrant living environment—and reflects positively on your property.

## **HOW DO YOU KNOW IF AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IS QUALIFIED AND ABLE TO AFFORD RENTING FROM YOU?**

The main document you will want to use to evaluate an international student applicant is their I-20. This is the document that certifies they are studying on a F-1 student visa in the U.S. This document will include their academic program, expected duration of study, and estimated financial expenses. This document also verifies that the student has gone through the admission process and has proven they have the academic and financial commitments to complete their course of study.

## **WHAT OTHER TOOLS CAN YOU USE TO EVALUATE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT APPLICANTS?**

In addition to the I-20, here are some other documents you can request from an international student applicant to help you verify their viability as a tenant:

- A completed rental application
- A copy of their passport/visa
- The acceptance/admission letter from the college/university
- A letter of employment stating if they will work on-campus (new students may not have this already)
- Scholarships or other funding documents
- A letter of recommendation from: a credit reference; a landlord reference; or a personal reference
- Recent bank statements or pay stubs (pay stubs and bank statements will be international if they are new students starting out)
- [Landlord's Guide for Renting to International Students](#) by Realtor