ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

So you found an apartment that you really like, but before you decide to apply it’s important to know everything you can. Here are some questions you may consider asking:

- Is there an application fee?
- What’s the monthly rent? This will help you determine if your housing will be affordable.
- Are any utilities included (electricity, heat water, sewer, garbage, cable and internet are all possible)? What is the average utility cost in a unit?
- How much is the security deposit? How do I get it back?
- Do you have any leasing specials?

- What lease terms are available (month to month, 6 months, 12 months)? What happens if I have to terminate my lease early?
- What is your rental application criteria (minimum credit score, prior rental history)? Examples can be found in the Preparing Your Rental Resume section of this guide.
- Do I need a co-signer?

- I have a disability, how can you accommodate me?
  Fair housing laws require providers to make reasonable accommodations in their rules, policies, and practices to give a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling unit or common space. Examples include: allowing a service or companion animal, designating a reserved parking space closer to the door, visual alarm systems, or moving a tenant to a ground floor for easier mobility. Be mindful that it is unusual to be charged a fee to provide reasonable accommodations. More information can be found at High Plains Fair Housing, www.highplainsfhc.org or 1-866-380-2738.

- Is there a garage, assigned or unassigned parking lot or off street parking?
- Am I responsible for any repairs? How do I request them?
- What are the security features of the building?
- Is there an onsite manager?
- What is your pet policy?

While this list doesn’t cover everything, it’s a good start. The North Dakota Apartment Association’s Landlord and Tenant Rights booklet found at www.ndaa.net is a great resource.