## First Advantage - DEI Communities

## ➕ DEI SAVES TIME, IMPROVES DATA AND REDUCES BAD DEBT WITH FIRST ADVANTAGE.

### Overview

DEI Communities, based in Omaha, Nebraska, manages apartment communities throughout the central United States. With a healthy portfolio of more than 9,400 units, the company has always placed a high priority on pre-lease applicant screening, which includes a basic criminal background check, eviction check and credit check on all applicants.

A few years ago, however, it learned a valuable lesson – that not all screening providers are created equal. After switching to a new provider– First Advantage Resident Screening–the company discovered some impressive benefits, including better data, more streamlined processes, greater reporting flexibility, reduced bad debt and higher efficiency overall.

### The Challenge

In 2007, DEI Communities already had a partner for applicant screening services, but unfortunately, wasn't completely satisfied with its results. As the property management company grew, it sought more in-depth information, increased guidance for decision-making, and a stronger technological platform that would enable integration between multiple software systems.

> "We're definitely a stronger company today because we're getting better information, which helps us make better decisions. The quantity and quality of information we can get from First Advantage Resident Screening really does help us run better properties."
>
> — Stacy Norgard, Regional Manager for DEI Communities

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INFORMATION YOU NEED. PEOPLE YOU CAN TRUST.

## The Solution

After scanning the market for potential new partners, DEI discovered a gold mine in First Advantage Resident Screening.

"Not only could First Advantage Resident Screening provide us with greater access to more information, the data itself was easier to read and decipher," said Stacy Norgard, regional manager. "The reports also offered specific recommendations per applicant – based on our own leasing criteria. An applicant could be approved, denied or approved with conditions, which would provide a new level of decision-making guidance for our team."

Another selling feature centered on software integration. Unlike the software from the previous provider, the First Advantage software could be fully integrated with DEI's YARDI property management software, which would net significant time and labor savings.

Once DEI Communities decided to make the switch in January 2008, First Advantage Resident Screening jumped in to help ensure a smooth transition at each of the 35 property sites.

"Throughout our entire transition, First Advantage was very helpful and responsive – and they have remained that way ever since," said Norgard. "They really care about their customers and are always willing to go above and beyond for us."

## The Result

After the switch, DEI Communities noticed one dramatic improvement immediately– namely, a more efficient data-entry process. Thanks to an expert interface between First Advantage Resident Screening and YARDI software, the company was able to eliminate a second software program, as well as a host of redundant processes.

"Now, we just have to input all of the tenant's personal information once into YARDI and it automatically imports all the data into First Advantage Resident Screening, which then runs the screens and delivers all the results back into YARDI," explained Norgard. "There's no more double-entry, and once all the data is entered, it's easily shared between the two programs."

She added, "This integration probably saves us between 5 and 10 minutes per application, which may not seem like a lot, but actually represents a huge time savings – especially in our larger properties that have 600-plus units and often process between 20-30 applications every week. It means a lot fewer steps for our leasing staff and fewer data-entry points, which are big advantages."

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### Better Data, Too

Aside from a faster, smoother application process, DEI Communities is also enjoying enhanced screening results and more comprehensive data.

"The nationwide criminal checks from First Advantage provide very comprehensive data – including details on any offenses – which helps us make informed decisions about applicant eligibility," said Norgard. "Not only are the results more widespread, they're also faster. In most cases, we get our results in less than five minutes. And if an applicant doesn't pass the background check, we don't pay to run the credit check, which is an important cost-saving measure, too."

For applicants who move on to get credit checks, DEI receives results equally fast – practically instantly. These reports have the added benefit of two extra features: an income calculation and a decision-guide summary. Both help take some of the guesswork out of the decision-making process, which provides an additional level of assurance for the leasing staff.

### Reduced Bad Debt

With the help of First Advantage Resident Screening solutions – specifically the better awareness of landlord debt – DEI Communities has witnessed a substantial reduction in bad debt. Since partnering with First Advantage Resident Screening, the portfolio's bad debt has averaged below 1 percent, which has made a real impact on the company's bottom line.

"From a property management standpoint, I know we're getting much better information than before," said Norgard. "The reporting that's coming from First Advantage Resident Screening is far superior to our previous provider's. We also have all the flexibility that we wanted – we can set different criteria for different properties to better suit that market, if necessary."

At the end of the day, it's the results that count. And when it comes to resident screening, knowledge is power.

"We're definitely a stronger company today because we're getting better information, which helps us make better decisions," said Norgard. "The quantity and quality of information we can get from First Advantage Resident Screening really does help us run better properties. Plus, all the special reports and additional data – it's all there for us, anytime we want it. Deciding to partner with First Advantage was a very good move – we're extremely happy."

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**We can help. For more information, contact First Advantage today:**

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As the trusted partner of over 35,000 organizations worldwide, we at First Advantage provide easy-to-understand background screening results so you can confidently make decisions about prospective employees, vendors and renters. Not only does this safeguard your brand, but you also arrive at dramatically better background insights – insights you can rely on.

It's time to partner with First Advantage. Now in 26 locations, 14 countries and conducting over 55 million international background screens on 17.2 million applicants annually. **Trusted Knowledge. Exceptional People.**

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