



Ensuring Only Top-Quality Hires: First Communities Finds Success with METSCheck

In the property management industry where the employee turnover rate can be high, securing top-flight employees can be a difficult task. Even in a struggling market economy, if companies take too long to evaluate applications and make an offer, they may find their first choice has accepted a position elsewhere.

For First Communities, a 900-employee firm that fee-manages apartment and condominium complexes for other property owners, that challenge is magnified. When it takes over property management from another firm – or from the property owner – there may be an entrenched group of employees already on-site. First Communities must evaluate those employees to ensure they meet First Communities' rigorous personnel standards and, if necessary, replace them. Making accurate, rapid-fire decisions is key, as First Communities' reputation rests on making the management transition as seamless as possible.

To accomplish these goals, First Communities has found a valued partner in METSCheck. "When we take over a property," says Leslie Robertson, human resources coordinator for First Communities, "we have to act as if any existing employees were new and run background checks and drug tests on them."

According to Robertson, METSCheck has been performing drug screens for First Communities since the company first began performing them more than

a decade ago. Last year, METSCheck began performing background checks for First Communities, as well.

Recently, First Communities experienced a particularly demanding transition, and Robertson says METSCheck helped them sail through the process beautifully. "We took over seven locations one week before payroll," says Robertson. "We needed to get the property's 40 employees paid. I was able to get all of their drug tests and background checks back from METSCheck within a day, so it didn't hold their payroll up."

"Our previous vendor was slow," Robertson continues. "It would take three to seven days for background checks. I kept getting calls from people [doing the hiring at the properties], wanting to know [when] they could make a decision. The wait made it harder for people on site to build a staff."

Since moving to METSCheck, the majority of her checks come back in three to five minutes. The longest it has ever taken was a day, because the applicant had a criminal history.

"As soon as the report arrives, I can download it and email it to the people who are waiting for it," says Robertson. "Now we can hire within three to four days - or less instead of the two weeks it used to take. [METSCheck] has helped us secure higher-quality candidates."

As a bonus, Robertson says METSCheck

has worked with First Communities to streamline the billing procedure. "Our previous company wanted to bill the property directly, and if the property didn't pay, they would cut them off. METSCheck let us consolidate the [charges for drug screens and background checks] with the payroll, so our properties make payments to METSCheck each month along with their payroll processing. We know that METSCheck is getting paid and our properties can continue to use their service."

METSCheck Score Card:

About the Client:

Founded in 1978, First Communities' mission is to provide clients with the highest level of regional property management and marketing expertise, combined with an intense, hands-on management philosophy.

Industry:

Property Management

Average hires per month:

30-40; 50-60 in summer

Years with METSCheck: 12

Why They Switched:

Great customer service, fast turnaround time and user-friendly, Web-based report delivery system.

