

# Learning Objectives

- Write compelling listing descriptions that convert browsers into applicants
- Take professional-quality listing photos using only your smartphone
- Set competitive pricing and use strategic first-mover discounts to fill rooms fast
- Market your rooms across multiple channels: PadSplit, Furnished Finder, Craigslist, Facebook, and referrals
- Screen tenants effectively using background checks, income verification, and references
- Conduct efficient showings and tours that close interested applicants
- Execute smooth move-in day procedures that set the right tone
- Understand the dual-track approach: PadSplit-managed vs. self-managed tenant placement

## The Launch Mindset

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Your property is renovated, furnished, and ready. Now comes the moment of truth: filling those rooms with paying tenants. Every day a room sits empty is money out of your pocket. Your goal is **100% occupancy within 30 days of launch**.

The difference between properties that fill in two weeks and properties that sit vacant for months comes down to three things: **presentation, pricing, and**

**placement.** Get these right and you will have a waitlist. Get them wrong and you will be chasing leads for months.

#### KEY INSIGHT

The first 48 hours after listing are the most important. Platforms like PadSplit, Craigslist, and Facebook Marketplace prioritize new listings in search results. Your listing gets maximum visibility the moment it goes live, so make sure everything is polished before you hit publish.

## The Dual-Track Approach: PadSplit vs. Self-Managed

Before diving into the launch process, you need to understand the two primary paths for filling and managing your coliving rooms. Many operators use a combination of both.

### Track A: PadSplit-Managed

**PadSplit handles:** listing creation, tenant screening, placement, rent collection, and dispute resolution.

- You list your property on PadSplit's platform
- PadSplit screens all applicants (background, income, references)

### Track B: Self-Managed

**You handle everything:** listing, marketing, screening, lease signing, rent collection, and conflict resolution.

- You create and manage listings on multiple platforms

- Tenants pay weekly through PadSplit
- PadSplit takes a platform fee (typically 10-12% of rent)
- You handle maintenance and property upkeep
- Best for: hands-off operators, first-time coliving investors, out-of-state owners

#### **PADSPLIT ADVANTAGE**

PadSplit provides a steady pipeline of pre-screened tenants and handles the most time-consuming parts of management. The platform fee is worth it for many operators because it eliminates screening costs, reduces vacancy, and handles rent collection.

- You screen applicants yourself (or use a screening service)
- Tenants pay you directly (monthly or weekly)
- No platform fees -- you keep 100% of rent
- You handle all tenant communication and issues
- Best for: experienced landlords, local operators, those who want maximum control and profit

#### **SELF-MANAGED ADVANTAGE**

Higher profit margins since you keep all the rent. Full control over tenant selection, pricing, and rules. You build direct relationships with tenants, which can reduce turnover. However, it requires

more time, systems, and  
landlord experience.

### HYBRID STRATEGY

Many successful operators start with PadSplit for their first property to learn the business, then self-manage additional properties once they have systems in place. You can also use PadSplit for some rooms and self-manage others in the same house to compare results.

## Creating Compelling Listing Descriptions

Your listing description is your sales pitch. It needs to quickly communicate value, answer common questions, and motivate people to schedule a showing or apply.

### The Listing Formula

Every great coliving listing follows this structure:

1. **Attention-grabbing headline:** Lead with the biggest benefit (price, location, or amenity)
2. **Room details:** Size, furnishings, private or shared bathroom, closet, natural light

3. **What is included:** Utilities, WiFi, laundry, furnished, parking -- spell it all out
4. **House amenities:** Kitchen, living room, outdoor space, smart home features
5. **Location highlights:** Proximity to transit, employers, grocery stores, highways
6. **Terms and requirements:** Lease length, move-in cost, screening criteria
7. **Call to action:** Tell them exactly what to do next (apply, schedule a tour, message you)

### **Sample Listing Description**

**Headline:** "Fully Furnished Private Room - All Utilities Included - \$750/mo"

**Body:**

Move-in ready private room in a beautifully renovated shared home. Your room comes fully furnished with a queen bed, dresser, desk with chair, nightstand, and lamp. Private keyed entry with smart lock for your security.

**What is included in your rent:**

- All utilities (electric, water, gas, trash)
- High-speed WiFi
- Shared kitchen with all appliances and cookware
- Washer/dryer access
- Common living area with TV and streaming

- Driveway parking

**Location:** 10 minutes to [major employer], 5 minutes to grocery/shopping, direct bus line access.

**Requirements:** Background check, proof of income (2.5x rent), references. No smoking inside. Quiet hours 10PM-7AM weeknights.

**Ready to apply?** Message us to schedule a tour or apply directly at [link].

#### FAIR HOUSING COMPLIANCE

Never include language that discriminates based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, or disability. Do not say things like "perfect for young professionals" or "ideal for single males." Describe the property and amenities, not the type of person you want living there. Violations carry serious legal consequences.

## Professional Photography on a Smartphone

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Listings with high-quality photos get **3-5x more inquiries** than listings with poor photos or no photos. You do not need a professional photographer. Your smartphone is more than capable if you follow these techniques.

### Before You Shoot

- **Deep clean everything:** No dust, no clutter, no personal items visible

- **Stage each room:** Make beds perfectly, fluff pillows, add a small plant or decorative item
- **Open all blinds and curtains:** Maximize natural light
- **Turn on all lights:** Every lamp, overhead light, and under-cabinet light
- **Remove trash cans:** From photos (put them back after)
- **Close toilet lids:** Always

## Shooting Techniques

### Camera Settings

- Use your phone's **wide-angle lens** (0.5x) to make rooms look larger
- Turn on **grid lines** for straight, level shots
- Hold the phone in **landscape orientation** (horizontal)
- Tap to focus on the room, then **adjust exposure up slightly**
- Use **HDR mode** if available for balanced lighting

### Composition Tips

- Shoot from **doorways and corners** to show the full room
- Hold the camera at **chest height** (not eye level) for a natural perspective
- Include **2-3 walls** in each shot to show room depth
- Take **15-20 photos per room**, select the best 2-3
- Shoot **exterior photos** on a sunny day, ideally in the morning or late afternoon

## Photo Shot List

For a complete listing, capture these photos in this order:

1. Exterior front (curb appeal shot)
2. Each bedroom (2-3 angles per room)
3. Each bathroom
4. Kitchen (2 angles)
5. Living room / common area
6. Laundry area
7. Any outdoor space (porch, yard, patio)
8. Parking area
9. Neighborhood highlights (nearby transit, park, shopping)

### THE GOLDEN HOUR RULE

For exterior photos, shoot during the "golden hour" -- the first hour after sunrise or the last hour before sunset. The warm, soft light makes every property look its best. For interior photos, midday provides the most natural light through windows.

## Pricing Strategy

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Pricing is the single biggest lever you have for filling rooms quickly. Price too high and rooms sit empty for weeks, costing you far more than the "extra" rent you were trying to capture. Price too low and you leave money on the table every month.

## Competitive Market Research

Before setting your price, research what comparable rooms are renting for in your market:

- **Search PadSplit** for rooms in your zip code -- note prices, included amenities, and occupancy
- **Check Craigslist "rooms/shared"** section for your city
- **Browse Facebook Marketplace** for "rooms for rent"
- **Look at Furnished Finder** listings in your area
- **Note what is included:** Is utilities included standard? WiFi? Furniture? Factor this into your comparison.

## Setting Your Price

STRATEGY	PRICE POINT	WHEN TO USE
Market rate	Match top comparable listings	Your property is equal to or better than competition
Slight discount	5 - 10% below top comps	First property, want fast occupancy, building reviews
Premium pricing	10 - 15% above comps	Superior location, amenities, or finishes
Launch discount	\$50 - 100 off for first 3 months	

STRATEGY	PRICE POINT	WHEN TO USE
		Need to fill quickly, willing to trade short-term revenue for occupancy

#### **THE FIRST-MOVER DISCOUNT**

Offer your first 1-2 tenants a \$50-100/month discount for the first 3 months in exchange for moving in quickly. This reduces your vacancy loss, generates reviews on platforms like PadSplit, and creates social proof. A house with 2 happy tenants is much easier to fill than an empty house. After 3 months, raise to market rate.

#### **THE COST OF VACANCY**

An empty room at \$800/month costs you \$26.67 per day. If you price \$50/month too high and it takes 30 extra days to fill, you have lost \$800 in vacancy to "gain" \$50/month. It would take 16 months to recover that loss. Price competitively from day one and raise rents later once occupancy is stable.

# Marketing Channels

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Do not rely on a single platform. Cast a wide net across multiple channels to maximize your applicant pipeline. Here are the primary marketing channels ranked by effectiveness for coliving.

## 1. PadSplit

**Best for:** Operators who want a managed tenant pipeline

- Purpose-built for room rentals and coliving
- Pre-screened tenant pool actively looking for rooms
- Handles applications, screening, and weekly rent collection
- Provides reviews and ratings that build social proof
- Platform fee applies but is offset by reduced vacancy and management time

**Listing tip:** Complete every field on your PadSplit listing. Properties with complete profiles and professional photos rank higher in search results.

## 2. Furnished Finder

**Best for:** Attracting traveling nurses, professionals, and mid-term renters

- Popular with healthcare workers on travel assignments (13-week stays)

- Tenants expect furnished rooms with utilities included -- exactly what coliving offers
- Higher-quality tenant pool (steady income, background-checked by employers)
- Flat listing fee rather than percentage of rent
- Great for rooms near hospitals, medical centers, or large employers

**Listing tip:** Emphasize proximity to local hospitals and medical facilities. Mention flexible lease terms (month-to-month or 3-month minimum).

### 3. Facebook Marketplace & Facebook Groups

**Best for:** Free marketing with massive reach

- **Marketplace:** List under "Property Rentals" -- free and high-traffic
- **Local groups:** Search for "[Your City] rooms for rent" or "[Your City] housing" groups
- Post with your best photos and a compelling description
- Respond to inquiries quickly -- Facebook rewards fast response times with better visibility
- Repost every 5-7 days to stay at the top of feeds

**Listing tip:** Post in 5-10 relevant local groups. Join groups for local employees, new residents, and housing seekers. Always follow group posting rules.

## 4. Craigslist

**Best for:** High volume of leads (requires more screening)

- Post under "rooms/shared" in your city's housing section
- Free to post in most markets
- High traffic but lower lead quality -- be prepared to screen more
- Renew your post every 48 hours to stay visible
- Use a dedicated email or Google Voice number for Craigslist inquiries

**Listing tip:** Include your price in the title, mention "all utilities included," and add a clear call to action. Include 8-12 photos minimum.

## 5. Referrals

**Best for:** Highest-quality tenants with lowest acquisition cost

- Offer current tenants a **\$100-200 referral bonus** for each new tenant they bring
- Pay the bonus after the new tenant completes their first 30 days
- Referred tenants tend to stay longer and have fewer issues

- Your existing tenants pre-screen for compatibility since they will be living together
- Share referral details during move-in and post in common areas

**Pro tip:** Referrals become your best channel once you have happy tenants. Invest in tenant satisfaction and the referrals will follow.

#### MULTI-CHANNEL LAUNCH STRATEGY

**Week 1:** Go live on PadSplit + Furnished Finder + Craigslist + Facebook Marketplace simultaneously

**Week 1-2:** Post in 5-10 local Facebook groups, one per day

**Week 2+:** Renew Craigslist every 48 hours, repost Facebook Marketplace weekly

**Ongoing:** Activate referral program as soon as first tenant moves in

## Tenant Screening Best Practices

Good screening is the difference between tenants who pay on time and stay for a year, and tenants who cause problems and leave after a month. If you are using PadSplit, they handle screening for you. If you are self-managing, this section is critical.

# The Screening Process

1. **Pre-screening call/message:** Before scheduling a showing, ask basic qualifying questions
2. **In-person showing:** Meet the applicant, show the property, gauge compatibility
3. **Formal application:** Collect written application with consent to run checks
4. **Background and credit check:** Run through a tenant screening service
5. **Income verification:** Confirm they can afford the rent
6. **References:** Contact previous landlords and personal references
7. **Decision:** Approve, deny (with legally compliant adverse action notice), or conditionally approve

## Screening Criteria

### Background Check

- **Criminal background:** Check for violent offenses, property crimes, and sex offender registry
- **Eviction history:** Any prior evictions in the last 5-7 years
- **Credit check:** Look for patterns of non-payment rather than a specific

### Income & References

- **Income requirement:** 2.5x monthly rent minimum (gross income)
- **Proof of income:** Last 2 pay stubs, offer letter, bank statements, or benefits documentation
- **Previous landlord:** Ask: "Would you rent to them again?" and "Did they pay on time?"

score (many room renters have lower credit)

- **Screening services:**  
RentPrep (\$21/report),  
TransUnion SmartMove, or  
MyRental

- **Employment verification:**  
Call employer to confirm  
employment status

## Pre-Screening Questions

Ask these before scheduling a showing to save time on unqualified leads:

- When are you looking to move in?
- Are you currently employed? What do you do for work?
- Have you ever been evicted or broken a lease early?
- Do you have any pets? (if applicable)
- Are you comfortable in a shared living environment?
- Can you provide references and consent to a background check?

### **FAIR HOUSING REMINDER**

Apply the same screening criteria to every applicant. Document your criteria in writing before you start screening and follow it consistently. Do not make exceptions for some applicants but not others. Inconsistent application of standards is one of the most common fair housing violations.

### **PADSPLIT TRACK: SCREENING IS DONE FOR YOU**

If you are using PadSplit, they handle background checks, income verification, and screening. This saves you significant time and reduces legal risk. PadSplit members must pass screening requirements before they can book any room on the platform.

## **The Showing & Tour Process**

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A well-run showing converts interested leads into signed leases. Treat every showing like a sales opportunity.

### **Before the Showing**

- **Confirm 2 hours before:** Send a text reminder with the address and your phone number
- **Clean the property:** Even if it was just cleaned yesterday, do a quick walkthrough
- **Turn on all lights and open blinds:** Bright spaces feel larger and more welcoming
- **Set the thermostat to a comfortable temperature**
- **Play light background music** in the common area (optional but effective)

### **During the Showing**

1. **Greet warmly and introduce yourself**
2. **Start with the available room:** This is what they are paying for, so lead with it

3. **Show the shared spaces:** Kitchen, living room, bathrooms, laundry
4. **Highlight key amenities:** "All utilities are included in your rent," "The smart lock means you never need a physical key"
5. **Show the exterior:** Parking, yard, neighborhood
6. **Ask if they have questions**
7. **Close:** "We have had a lot of interest. Would you like to apply today? I can send you the application right now."

#### GROUP SHOWINGS SAVE TIME

Instead of scheduling individual showings, set a "showing window" (e.g., Saturday 10AM-12PM) and invite all interested applicants at the same time. This creates urgency, saves you time, and communicates that the room is in demand. Book 3-4 applicants per slot knowing that 30-50% will no-show.

## Move-In Day Procedures

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Move-in day sets the tone for the entire tenancy. A smooth, professional move-in makes tenants feel welcome and establishes you as an organized, responsive landlord.

### Before Move-In Day

- **Collect all move-in funds:** First month's rent + security deposit (or first week's payment for PadSplit)

- **Sign the lease agreement:** Use electronic signing (DocuSign, HelloSign) for convenience
- **Prepare the welcome packet:** House rules, WiFi password, emergency contacts, maintenance request process, local area guide
- **Set up their smart lock code** or prepare keys
- **Complete move-in condition report:** Document the room's condition with photos and a checklist

## Move-In Day Checklist

1. **Meet the tenant at the property:** Be on time and welcoming
2. **Walk through the room together:** Note any pre-existing conditions on the move-in report. Both parties sign.
3. **Tour the shared spaces:** Show how appliances work, where supplies are, explain the cleaning expectations
4. **Review house rules:** Go through the key points in person, not just on paper
5. **Provide the welcome packet**
6. **Demonstrate the smart lock:** Show them how to set their code and lock/unlock
7. **Introduce to current roommates** if any are home
8. **Confirm communication channel:** "Text me for maintenance requests, I respond within 24 hours"

### Welcome Packet Contents

- House rules document (signed copy)
- WiFi network name and password

- Smart lock instructions
- Emergency contact numbers (yours, 911, poison control)
- How to submit maintenance requests
- Trash and recycling schedule
- Parking instructions
- Local area highlights (grocery stores, transit, restaurants)
- Referral program details (\$100-200 bonus for referring new tenants)

#### **THE SMALL TOUCH THAT MATTERS**

Leave a small welcome gift in the room on move-in day: a water bottle, a snack basket, or a handwritten welcome note. This costs \$5-10 and makes a powerful first impression. Tenants who feel welcome from day one stay longer and are easier to manage.

## **The First 30 Days Timeline**

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Here is your week-by-week plan from listing to full occupancy. Follow this timeline to maximize your speed to full revenue.

### **2 Weeks Before Launch**

- Final property walkthrough and punch list completion

- Professional photography (smartphone is fine)
- Write listing descriptions for each platform
- Research comparable room pricing in your market
- Set up screening tools (RentPrep, TransUnion SmartMove, etc.)
- Prepare lease agreement and move-in documents
- Create your welcome packet

## 1 Week Before Launch

- Create accounts on all marketing platforms (PadSplit, Furnished Finder, Craigslist, Facebook)
- Draft all listings but do not publish yet
- Set up a Google Voice number for tenant inquiries
- Prepare showing scripts and pre-screening questions
- Schedule your launch day (Tuesday or Wednesday is ideal for maximum visibility)
- Confirm all utilities are on and working

## Launch Day (Day 1)

- Publish all listings simultaneously across every platform
- Post in 3-5 Facebook housing groups
- Respond to all inquiries within 1 hour (speed matters)
- Schedule showings for the coming weekend

- Begin pre-screening applicants

## **Week 1 (Days 2-7)**

- Conduct showings (aim for 6-10 total across the week)
- Collect applications from interested candidates
- Run background/credit checks
- Approve first tenants and sign leases
- Collect move-in funds
- Schedule first move-ins
- Renew Craigslist ad, post in additional Facebook groups

## **Weeks 2-4 (Days 8-30)**

- Execute first move-ins (ideally 1-2 tenants by end of week 2)
- Continue marketing remaining rooms
- Activate referral program with moved-in tenants
- Adjust pricing if inquiry volume is low (reduce by \$25-50 and repost)
- Follow up with all leads who showed interest but did not apply
- Fill remaining rooms
- Check in with all tenants at the end of their first week

- Target: 100% occupancy by day 30

#### IF ROOMS ARE NOT FILLING

If you have not received at least 10 inquiries in the first 7 days, something is off. In order of likelihood: **1) Price is too high** -- lower by \$50 and repost. **2) Photos are poor** -- retake with better lighting and staging. **3) Listing description is weak** -- rewrite using the formula above. **4) Wrong platforms** -- expand to additional channels. Do not wait and hope. Diagnose and adjust immediately.

## Action Steps

1. **Decide your management track:** PadSplit, self-managed, or hybrid
2. **Research comparable room prices** in your market across PadSplit, Craigslist, and Facebook
3. **Write your listing description** using the formula in this lesson
4. **Take professional photos** of every room and common area using the smartphone techniques covered
5. **Set up accounts** on PadSplit, Furnished Finder, Craigslist, and Facebook Marketplace
6. **Prepare your lease agreement, welcome packet, and move-in documents**
7. **Set your screening criteria** in writing before you receive your first application

8. **Complete the Launch Day Action Plan** to organize your launch timeline

## Key Takeaways

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- **Speed to occupancy is everything** -- every vacant day costs you money. Target 100% occupancy within 30 days.
- **PadSplit vs. self-managed** is not either/or. Many operators use a hybrid approach depending on the property.
- **Professional photos are the #1 driver** of listing inquiries. Your smartphone is all you need if you follow the techniques.
- **Price competitively from day one** and use first-mover discounts to build occupancy and reviews quickly.
- **Market across multiple channels simultaneously** -- PadSplit, Furnished Finder, Craigslist, Facebook, and referrals.
- **Consistent screening criteria** protect you legally and ensure quality tenants. Document your standards in writing.
- **Move-in day sets the tone** for the entire tenancy. Be professional, welcoming, and organized.
- **The first 48 hours of your listing** get the most visibility. Launch only when everything is polished and ready.

# Your Deliverable

Plan your launch from start to full occupancy with a structured timeline and checklist.