

The State of AI in Residential Property Management

Property Management (Residential) · Hampton Roads edition · v1.14 · September 2026 · Refreshed quarterly

A management company's economics depend on three things: accounts it keeps, properties that stay occupied, and the staff work it takes to serve them. Nearly six in ten surveyed property management companies said in 2025 that they use AI, mostly to write faster.¹ This paper connects it to those three: ten candidate jobs for a Hampton Roads firm, four demonstrated in full with the messages written out, the measures that show whether a job helped, and plain answers to the questions owners ask before switching anything on.

00 The short version

In this paper, **your firm** is the management company, **the property owner** is your client, and **the resident** pays the rent.

What this paper argues. First, the useful work is a specific job, not a tool: ten are described, each with a person who confirms it. Second, anything that prices, screens or serves a notice stays a decision a named person makes. Third, a credible trial compares the same measure before and during the work, counted net of the time spent checking and correcting.

THE SHORT VERSION

The useful work is narrower than the adoption number: a defined job, a person who confirms it, and a number your firm can record.

WHERE THINGS ARE

- 03 [The Hampton Roads market](#) — the local vacancy and rent picture.
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- 10 [What we do](#) — the audit and the first conversation.

Three fictional examples of operating delays, and where this paper follows each one.

The problem	How it shows up	Where to look
The maintenance request that sat.	A leak photo arrives by text at 6 a.m. It becomes a work order on Thursday, after two more texts and a call, and the property owner first learns of it as a line on the monthly statement.	Jobs 1 and 2, and demonstrations 1 and 2 , in section 04.
The inquiry nobody answered after 6 p.m.	A renter messages three listings at 8:40 p.m. Yours gets an answer at 9:15 the next morning.	Job 5 and demonstration 3 in section 04.
The renewal notice running late.	A lease ends in 50 days. The rent-increase notice has a legal deadline, and it has not gone out.	Job 4 and demonstration 4 in section 04; the Virginia deadlines in section 05.

Every job in this paper starts where someone is waiting: a resident for a repair, a property owner for an explanation, your staff for an approval. Each takes the same shape, a clear next step and one person responsible for finishing it; four of the ten are shown in full in section 04.

This is not a vendor comparison, a legal memo, or a case for more software.

What this changes: The starting point becomes the place where someone is waiting, not the tool that might help.

01 The national picture

58%

of surveyed property management companies said they use AI tools in the business, up from 20% a year earlier

Buildium/NARPM, n=1,060, May 2025¹

8%

of surveyed property-management professionals report having fully automated at least one workflow

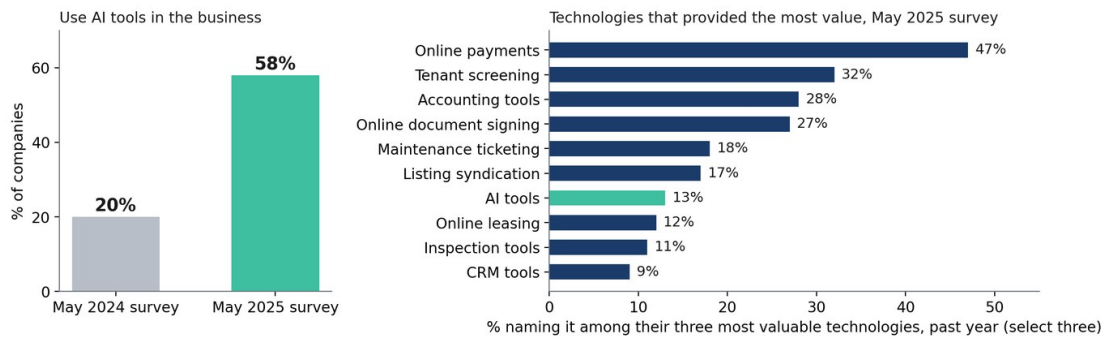
Buildium/NARPM, n=1,060, May 2025, pp. 3 and 51¹

74%

of surveyed property owners selected customer service as a priority when choosing a manager

Buildium/NARPM owner survey, n=263, May 2025¹

AI use has grown; established tools still rank ahead when firms name what helped most



Source: Buildium and NARPM, The 2026 State of the Property Management Industry Report (Oct 2025), pp. 8 and 14. Survey of 1,060 property management professionals, May 2025 (prior-year figure from the May 2024 survey), drawn from Buildium, NARPM, Propertyware and All Property Management databases. Two questions, same survey; vendor-sponsored, association co-branded.

Two questions from one survey of 1,060 property management professionals, 80 percent managing single-family homes and, separately, 76 percent managing 400 units or fewer, frame the national picture.¹ Fifty-eight percent said in May 2025 that they use AI tools in the business, up from 20 percent a year earlier. Asked separately which three technologies provided the most value in the past year, they chose online payments, tenant screening, accounting and e-signature ahead of AI, which came seventh at 13 percent. The second question is not a return-on-investment test and does not separate users from non-users; the supportable reading is that use has grown fast and established operating tools still rank ahead of it. AppFolio's separate survey of 1,617 residential professionals, fielded in fall 2025 with different wording, found 44 percent using AI in their roles.^{2,3}

The uses reported are mostly writing, and 8 percent of surveyed professionals report having fully automated at least one workflow.¹ The platforms have moved since that survey closed, from drafting toward features that create or close records; section 06 lists what has been announced, and what any one firm has switched on is an account question.

A tool can be used often and still contribute little to an operation. What separates the two is whether a specific task improved, and whether the improvement survived the time spent checking and correcting it.

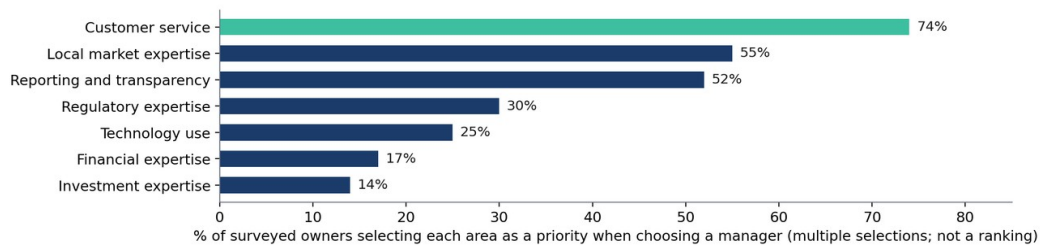
What this changes: The adoption figure stops being the measure. The task that changed, net of the time spent checking it, becomes the measure.

02 Where the money is

The case has to hold up for three parties at once, and the evidence differs for each.

Who benefits	What the work should improve	Evidence your firm can collect
Your firm	Staff capacity, consistent service, retained accounts, margin after tool and review costs	Handling minutes per completed job, repeat contacts, accounts lost and the reasons, tool and review cost
The property owner	Property condition, expenses they understand, occupancy, collected rent	Completed repairs, vacant days per turn, statement questions, decisions made on time
The resident	An acknowledgment, a reliable next step, a finished repair, access to a person	Time to a meaningful reply and to verified resolution, repeat requests, confirmed completion

What property owners say they look for in a manager



Source: Buildium and NARPM, The 2026 State of the Property Management Industry Report (Oct 2025), p. 31. National survey of 263 small-portfolio rental property owners, May 2025, recruited from the All Property Management and Buildium databases; vendor-sponsored, association co-branded. Read as: technology is valued where it improves a service the owner already values.

The question allowed multiple selections, so these are shares, not ranks; referrals from current clients were separately the growth method firms most often named as successful, at 30 percent.¹ On the resident side, renters who stayed put credited a good deal, quiet neighbors, a well-maintained property and liking their manager; among renters unsure about renewing, 67 percent would stay if the rent held and 31 percent if maintenance got a faster response.^{4,1} Whether faster maintenance changes renewals at your firm is a hypothesis to measure, not a result to assume.

On leasing speed: in Apartments.com's second-quarter 2024 survey of 30,000 current and prospective renters across all 50 states and D.C., 87 percent expected a response by the end of the following day, and Zillow's 2025 survey found a median of two applications and a typical one in-person tour among recent movers.^{5,4} That supports something plainer than a first-reply-wins rule: a useful next step is one the renter can book, and attended tours show more than acknowledgment speed alone.

Where a brokerage also manages property. Steady management fees can help carry a firm's costs through slower closing periods. That depends on the management side being profitable on its own, and a sale can end a management relationship as easily as it can start a listing.

Your firm's economics. Saved staff minutes are capacity first; they become cash only when spending changes, and vacancy arithmetic belongs to the property owner's rent and your fee basis under the management agreement. Section 08 sets out how to turn a trial's minutes into capacity without double-counting.

An accurate update about an unresolved repair can be the most useful message you send that day. The improvement that counts is the one visible in the service, a repair followed through, an expense explained, a next step that arrives when promised, delivered with less total work from your team.

What this changes: Saved minutes read as capacity, not cash. They become cash only when spending or fee revenue changes.

03 The Hampton Roads market

5.2%

apartment vacancy in Hampton Roads, Q2 2026, the lowest of Virginia's nine metros

Metropolitan series, not an estimate for any one city. Virginia REALTORS, Aug 26, 2026⁶

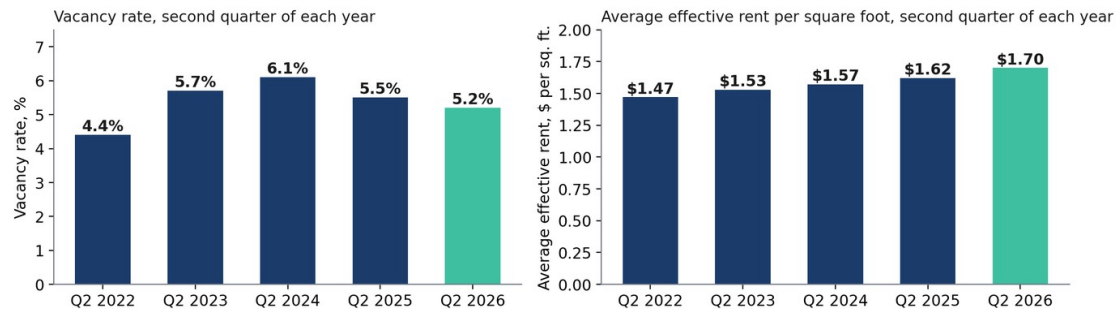
+5.1%

average effective rent on the year, to \$1,566 a unit, the largest increase in the state

Same series and boundary; Virginia overall rose 0.2%⁶

Hampton Roads apartment market: lower vacancy than a year earlier, fastest rent growth in Virginia

Metropolitan series, not an estimate for any one city. Single-family and small-building rentals are not in this series.



Source: Virginia REALTORS, Q2 2026 Virginia Multifamily Market Report, Hampton Roads page (p. 10); published Aug 26, 2026; CoStar data accessed July 10, 2026. Q2 2026: vacancy 5.2% (lowest of nine Virginia metros); average effective rent \$1,566 per unit, up 5.1% on the year (stated separately from the per-square-foot series shown).

The recurring apartment-market source for Hampton Roads is Virginia REALTORS' quarterly CoStar multifamily series. It covers the metropolitan market as a whole rather than any one city, and its current property-size threshold was not confirmed for this edition.⁶ Hampton Roads ended the second quarter of 2026 with a 5.2 percent vacancy rate, down 0.3 percentage points on the year and the lowest of Virginia's nine metros against 6.7 percent statewide, and an average effective rent of \$1,566 a unit, up 5.1 percent, the largest increase in the state while Virginia as a whole rose 0.2 percent.⁶ Single-family and small-building rentals are not in this series, and no single-family series with a public release schedule was found for Hampton Roads: use it as context for your own turn times and renewal results, not as a description of your portfolio.

One step in a vacant period holds up the rent start: an approval, a repair, readiness, or securing the next tenancy. A firm's own records can show which one; a regional average cannot. Advertising and showings run alongside the work, so the step that sets the date is the one that matters.

What this changes: The regional vacancy rate becomes background. The days lost to the one step that sets the rent-start date in your own turns become the number.

04 What your firm could have running

Ten jobs, numbered for reference, not ranked; which matters most depends on where a firm's own records show the costliest delay. Each is buildable today from software that exists, your own records and fixed rules, with assisted drafting where judgment is not required. A manual export-and-review trial needs nothing new, though running anything unattended overnight also needs configured access, a schedule, failure alerts and a coverage plan. None is a product we sell, and none carries a time saving or a client result, because we have not measured one; the benefit and its size are hypotheses for your trial to test.

#	The job, and who confirms it	The number to watch
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1	Overnight intake. Organize available email and voicemail into a morning queue and alert the on-call person to anything that looks urgent, on a tested alert route with an escalation if nobody acknowledges; the duty manager confirms priority and assignment, and residents keep a direct emergency route that does not depend on software labeling the message.	Time to meaningful response; urgent cases checked separately
2	Maintenance follow-through. Turn the request, vendor updates and resident replies into a next-action list carrying each request ID, its latest status and who updates it, plus draft status messages; the maintenance coordinator confirms appointments, spend, and whether the repair is actually resolved.	Routine request-to-verified-resolution time
3	Turn coordination. Assemble move-out findings, approved scope and vendor commitments into a dated readiness plan; the turn coordinator confirms dependencies, responsibility and the actual rent-ready date.	Vacant days per turn, with open turns shown beside completed ones
4	Renewal preparation. Build the notice queue from manager-confirmed lease deadlines and draft from approved terms; the portfolio manager and responsible licensee confirm applicability, terms and delivery.	Share of notices due that are delivered on time
5	Leasing handoff. Acknowledge an inquiry from approved current listing facts and summarize the thread; the leasing agent confirms availability, any showing, and answers anything about terms.	Time to a meaningful reply; attended showings alongside it
6	Owner updates. Draft a short explanation of the statement, completed work, open issues and decisions needed; the portfolio manager checks every amount and commitment before it is sent.	Total preparation minutes per approved update
7	Weekly exception list. Combine leases approaching confirmed deadlines, work orders past your threshold and overdue owner-contact commitments into one linked list; the operations manager confirms each exception has a person and a next action.	Overdue exceptions still unresolved, their age, and whether each has a dated next action
8	Approved preventive work. Turn asset records and the approved seasonal schedule into due-work drafts; the maintenance lead and the property owner confirm scope, access and spend before anything is arranged.	Preventive jobs completed on time as a share of jobs due, original agreed dates visible
9	Vendor bill preparation. Extract invoice details into draft payables and flag missing or conflicting information; the bookkeeper checks invoice, property, work order, coding and duplicates before approval and payment. The first trial produces drafts only: it does not post to the ledger or initiate payment.	Total handling minutes per approved bill
10	Resident answer library. Retrieve the relevant answer from your approved, dated policy library and name its source; if no current answer fits the property and the question, it routes the question to a manager without supplying an answer.	Handling time and avoidable repeat contacts on routine questions

Jobs 3, 4, 7, 8 and 10 need very little AI for their core logic: dates, thresholds, assignments and approved answers belong in records and fixed rules, with AI summarizing notes or drafting the explanation. Platform documentation supports components of jobs 1, 2, 5, 6 and 9 as advertised capabilities; it does not establish that one platform ships this menu under one subscription, or that any of it produced a result.^{7,8,9} Not on the list, deliberately: automated applicant rejection, software-set rents, unsupervised legal notices, and emergency diagnosis without a person.

What this changes: The menu is a set of candidates, not a rollout order. Each job carries its own confirming person and its own measure.

Each demonstration shows the messages, then what you give the AI, what it drafts and who confirms. 'The AI' means the feature inside your platform (section 06) or a general assistant working from an export of your records. Stage tags mark where a proposal becomes a commitment: **[reported]**, **[draft]**, **[approved]** by a named person, **[sent]**. Demonstrations 1 and 2 follow one fictional property from the input ledger below; nothing here is a client or a measured outcome.

Close the loop on maintenance

AI drafts at every step; the named person below each step decides, authorizes and verifies.



Design proposal for discussion; no client result, time saving or service-level promise is implied.
The AI and person split for each step is set out in the demonstration table that follows.

FICTIONAL INPUT LEDGER — 1187 Sandbridge Rd, Virginia Beach · Unit: single-family · Work order WO-4412 · September 2026

From the platform: rent \$2,300 received in full September 3, 2026. Charges posted: \$185 supply-valve replacement (WO-4412), \$60 filter delivery. Lease term ends January 31, 2027. Resident of record since 2024.

From the manager's own memo: back-door lock adjusted by the locksmith at no charge September 12; water heater installed 2014; recommendation — replace the heater before winter; agreed next owner contact — November 3, 2026.

From the manager, separately confirmed: the applicable renewal notice deadline for this lease is December 2, 2026; the firm's internal target for sending the approved notice is early November.

Demonstration 1 — maintenance, from the resident's text to a verified repair (job 2)

One leak, followed from a 6:05 a.m. text to a repair the resident confirms, and into the owner's note.

Illustration, not a real exchange. Written September 2026.

[reported] Resident text, 6:05 a.m., September 3: [photo] water dripping from under the kitchen sink, towel is soaked, valve looks wet.

[draft] Structured request, 6:06 a.m., to on-call: 1187 Sandbridge Rd, WO-4412. Plumbing. Urgency flag: active water leak. Resident reports dripping under the kitchen sink; photo shows moisture near the shutoff. Missing: whether water can be shut at the fixture. Suggested next step for a person: contact the resident now. No instruction has been given to the resident.

[approved] On-call manager, 6:14 a.m.: urgency confirmed by a person; calls the resident, walks through the firm's approved shutoff step, books the plumber from the firm's list for 10 a.m. to noon, and authorizes the spend under the owner's limit.

[sent] To resident, 6:22 a.m., sent by the on-call manager: Thanks, we have it. A plumber is confirmed today between 10 and noon. Reply here if anything changes before then.

[approved] Status, 12:40 p.m.: vendor reports the supply valve replaced, \$185; resident confirms by text that the drip has stopped; the coordinator marks WO-4412 resolved. Had the resident not replied, the record would read 'vendor complete; resident confirmation pending,' with a named person and a follow-up date, rather than resolved.

What you give the AI	What the AI drafts	What a person confirms
The resident's text and photo; the property and work-order record; your priority rules and emergency procedure; your vendor list; the property owner's approval limits.	A structured request matched to the property record (unit, category, urgency flag, what was reported, what is missing), a draft vendor handoff, and draft status messages. The AI sends and dispatches nothing.	Anything flagged urgent goes to the on-call person at once, and residents also have a direct emergency number that does not depend on the flag. The coordinator sets priority, picks the vendor, confirms appointment and spend, and marks the job resolved only on vendor and resident confirmation.

AI: reading a message and photo into a structured request against the property record, drafting the handoff and the updates, summarizing the closed job for the owner note. Ordinary automation: routing on the urgency flag, and recording 'vendor complete' when the vendor confirms; the coordinator confirms resolution separately. A person: the urgency call, the vendor, the spend, the message to the resident, and the decision that the repair is finished.

Measures in this example: request-to-verified-resolution time for routine requests, with urgent tracked separately; repeat contacts per request; reopened requests; staff handling minutes. Accountable: the maintenance coordinator. In this example, the first review covers the twenty most recent routine requests after a full month; an illustrative choice, not a validated sample size.

Demonstration 2 — the property owner's monthly note (job 6)

The same property a month later: the note an owner reads, built only from what the ledger and the manager supply.

Illustration, not a real exchange. Written September 2026.

[draft] To the owner, October 1, 2026: September at 1187 Sandbridge: rent of \$2,300 received in full on the 3rd. Two charges: \$185 to replace a supply valve under the kitchen sink after an active leak on the 3rd, repaired the same day and confirmed by the resident, and \$60 for filter delivery; both are on your statement. The back-door lock was adjusted on the 12th at no charge. The leak repair is closed out; please let me know whether you want a replacement quote for the water heater, which was installed in 2014 — I recommend replacing it before winter. The lease ends January 31, 2027; our target is to send the approved renewal notice in early November, and the manager has confirmed the applicable deadline separately. I will be in touch on November 3.

[approved] the manager checks \$2,300, \$185 and \$60 against the statement, confirms the lease and notice dates against the ledger, and sends. **[sent]** as the firm's note.

What you give the AI	What the AI drafts	What a person confirms
The input ledger above: statement figures, the manager's memo, the lease end date, the manager's recommendation, the agreed next-contact date, and the manager-confirmed notice deadline and sending target.	A short owner update: what came in, what went out, what happened including WO-4412, what remains open according to the inputs, one recommendation, next contact. Any input not supplied is flagged, not invented. The pastable prompt follows.	The manager checks every figure against the statement and reviews any reference to a resident for unnecessary disclosure.

The water-heater recommendation comes from the manager's memo; every sentence traces to the supplied inputs. AI: turning a ledger and a memo into a readable draft. A person: the recommendation, the dates, the check, the send.

Measures in this example: total preparation minutes per approved update, counting inputs, checking, corrections and sending; material corrections per draft; owner-contact commitments met. Accountable: the portfolio manager. In this example, the review follows the second monthly cycle.

The pastable prompt (demonstration 2)

Write a monthly update to a rental property owner in a plain, direct voice, under 150 words. Use only the facts I paste below: the month's income and charges, my notes on what happened, the lease end date, the notice deadline and sending target I have confirmed, my recommendation, and the agreed next-contact date. Do not invent any figure, event, recommendation or date, and do not calculate legal deadlines or infer any future action — use only the deadline and commitments I supply. If an input is missing, write [MISSING: input] where it belongs. Do not describe the resident beyond what the owner needs to know about the property.

Facts: [paste the ledger — statement figures, your memo, lease end date, confirmed notice deadline and target, your recommendation, next-contact date]

After drafting, list every figure, date, commitment and factual assertion in the draft next to the input that supports it, and flag anything unsupported. A statement such as 'nothing is open' is a factual assertion and needs an input behind it. Separately flag any sentence referring to a resident's family status, national origin, disability, religion, race, sex or source of income so I can review whether it is necessary. This is a drafting check, not compliance clearance.

Demonstration 3 — the after-hours inquiry (job 5)

A renter writes at 8:41 p.m. An automatic reply follows one minute later and says it is automatic; the answers that need a person wait for one.

Illustration, not a real exchange. Written September 2026.

[reported] Inquiry, 8:41 p.m.: Hi, is the 3-bedroom on Kempsville still available and does it allow dogs?

[sent, automatic] 8:42 p.m.: Thanks for asking about 4412 Kempsville Rd. This is an automatic reply built from our listing. As listed: available October 1, \$2,150 a month, \$2,150 deposit, one dog under 40 lb with pet rent. Showings are offered Thursday 5:30 or Saturday 10:00; reply with one and we will pass it to our leasing agent, who will confirm it and answer anything else by 9 a.m. tomorrow, weekends included.

[reported] Inquiry, 8:44 p.m.: Saturday works. Could I do only six months instead of a year?

[routed] 8:44 p.m.: the thread moves to the leasing agent's queue; no further automatic reply is sent. **[approved] Leasing agent, 8:15 a.m. Saturday:** confirms the 10:00 showing in the calendar and answers the lease-term question personally.

What you give the AI	What the AI drafts	What a person confirms
Approved, current listing facts (rent, deposit, pets, available date, showing windows); a broker-approved acknowledgment; a written route to a person that covers weekends.	One acknowledgment within a minute, from approved facts only. Every first inquiry enters the leasing agent's queue at the same time, whether or not the renter writes again; a second inbound message transfers the continuing conversation to the agent, with no further automatic reply.	The licensee answers every routed thread by the committed time, takes anything touching terms, and confirms or declines the showing. Listing facts refresh when the listing changes; the template and routing are reviewed quarterly.

AI: little or none to start. The acknowledgment and the routing are ordinary automation your listing platform or texting line may already do; AI can summarize the overnight threads for the agent. Minimum setup: the auto-reply, a record of who approved its text, a tested route to a person that covers weekends, and one service commitment you can actually keep, printed in the acknowledgment.

Measures in this example: time to the first meaningful human reply, with acknowledgment time kept as a separate delivery check; attended showings alongside confirmed ones. Accountable: the leasing lead. In this example, the review comes 30 days after switch-on.

Demonstration 4 — the renewal notice, by its confirmed deadline (job 4)

A rent-increase notice prepared from approved terms, sent ahead of its confirmed deadline, with evidence it was delivered.

Illustration, not a real exchange. Written September 2026.

[reported] Queue line: 719 Bay Colony, lease ends January 31, 2027; owner holds more than four units; manager-confirmed rent-increase notice deadline December 2, 2026. Owner-approved terms received November 10, 2026.

[draft] Notice from approved terms, November 12, 2026: Your lease at 719 Bay Colony ends January 31, 2027. We would like you to stay. For a new 12-month term the rent will be \$2,195; a 6-month term is available at \$2,275; pet terms are unchanged. Please let us know by December 15 whether you will renew or plan to move. Reply here or call the office; your property manager will handle the paperwork.

[approved] the licensee checks the terms against the owner's approval and the date against the confirmed deadline. **[sent]** November 14, 2026, by the approved delivery method, with delivery evidence retained in the file and confirmed by the portfolio manager, 18 days ahead of the confirmed December 2 deadline.

What you give the AI	What the AI drafts	What a person confirms
Each lease's notice deadline as confirmed by the manager from the lease, the statute and firm policy; the property owner's approved terms; comparable rents the manager supplies; the approved delivery method.	A dated queue of notices due, a draft notice per lease from approved terms only, and a log of what went out, when, and how. Proposed terms stay labeled proposed until the owner approves them.	The manager sets every rent figure by hand; no software sets rent from competitors' nonpublic data. The licensee approves terms, the owner approves the increase, and a named person confirms delivery by the approved method and retains the evidence.

AI: drafting from approved terms and the manager's comparables. Ordinary automation: the deadline queue and its reminders. A person: the rent figure, the applicability of the rule, the approvals, and the confirmation that the notice was actually delivered.

Measures in this example: applicable notices delivered on time as a share of notices due in the period, not of all expirations, with rent-increase and nonrenewal requirements kept distinct; rework per notice. Accountable: the portfolio manager. In this example, the timeliness review comes at quarter-end; renewal acceptance needs the full group of leases eligible to renew during the period, and longer.

Where it goes wrong

Application fraud is a separate, measurable problem: in AppFolio's survey, 56 percent reported it in the previous year, and 78 percent remained confident in checking documents by hand, though the survey does not say whether those checks caught anything.² In one small survey, 74 percent of renters said undisclosed AI in leasing made them less comfortable.¹⁰

A polished message can hide an unfinished job. The underlying record is the test: who owns the next step, what has actually happened, and whether the person waiting has been told. That test applies to all four demonstrations, and to anything a vendor shows you.

What this changes: A finished-sounding message stops counting as a finished job. The record behind it shows whether the work is done.

05 The rules, in plain terms

What changed in Virginia's rules

The licensed line, effective April 1, 2026. The Real Estate Board's revised regulations list what requires a license (showing property, answering questions on lease terms, discussing or negotiating a lease or management agreement, agreeing to a management fee) and what an unlicensed person may do (answer the phone, respond by electronic media with information shown on the listing, submit listings, clerical work).¹¹ Under the Code, a qualifying employee of a broker may perform specified residential-rental tasks, including exhibiting units when employed on the premises, but may not negotiate the rental agreement or its

payments; discussing, interpreting or negotiating the listed agreements with people outside the firm stays within the licensed-activity rule.¹² The regulation does not classify software. The boundary this paper uses is our recommended operating scope inside that rule: approved listing facts and scheduling on the unlicensed side, interpretation and negotiation to a licensee. The same revision requires reasonable steps to verify the identity of an owner or authorized representative before a property is offered for lease,¹³ and the supervising broker retains the statutory oversight duties for unlicensed assistants and residential fair-housing procedures.^{11,14}

Payments and fees, effective July 1, 2026. Landlords must accept rent and security deposits by check and money order, and provide a written receipt for rent paid in cash or by money order; at least one fee-free payment method must remain available; payment-processing fees may not exceed actual third-party cost; and a landlord may not charge a tenant a maintenance or repair fee unless the work is necessitated by the tenant's violation of the chapter.^{15,16} For the nonpayment circumstances in §55.1-1245(F), the current rule gives the tenant 14 days after the specified written notice to pay before the landlord may terminate and pursue possession through the statutory process.¹⁷

Renewal deadlines, now and from July 1, 2027. For landlords owning more than four Virginia rental units, or more than a 10 percent interest in more than four, the Code currently requires 60 days' written notice of a next-term rent increase for leases with a renewal option or automatic renewal, and 60 days' notice of nonrenewal. From July 1, 2027 the rent-increase period becomes 90 days, with a tenant-response deadline at least 30 days after delivery; nonrenewal remains 60 days.¹⁸ Periodic tenancies are excluded. A separate up-front application-disclosure requirement also takes effect July 1, 2027.¹⁹ The deadline that applies is the one in each lease, which is why the manager confirms it before anything is queued; a future rule does not apply today.

Existing housing requirements still apply to work a tool helps produce, and any pricing-software rule has to be checked for the jurisdiction where the property sits. Four things are settled enough to plan around.

- Applicable fair-housing duties still govern rental advertising, screening and services when software assists the work, and withdrawal of guidance does not repeal the Act.^{20,21}
- When screening uses a consumer report, the Fair Credit Reporting Act's permissible-purpose requirements and applicable adverse-action notices still apply, including when software helps interpret the report.²²
- Virginia's licensed line is written down (above); the broker supervises both sides of it, and this paper's software boundary is our recommended scope inside that rule.^{11,14}
- Virginia's renewal deadlines are in the Code: 60 days today for covered landlords, 90 days for rent increases from July 1, 2027, with the conditions noted above.¹⁸

Moving. HUD's April 6, 2026 notice reports eight fair-housing guidance withdrawals effective September 17, 2025, including the 2024 guidance on algorithm-driven digital advertising, and its July 17, 2026 notice reports thirteen more effective September 25, 2025; the 2024 tenant-screening guidance is on neither list, and these notices do not repeal the statutes.^{21,23} In the federal case against the largest rent-recommendation vendor, the court entered a Final Judgment on May 19, 2026 that bars nonpublic competitor data from live rent recommendations.²⁴ Final dispositions of Virginia's 2026 algorithmic rent-pricing bills were not established by this edition's research cutoff; no claim about their enactment or effective status is made here. The fuller chronology sits in our evidence companion.

Software prepares the decision; it does not make it. The record, the approved terms and the confirmed deadline are assembled so the responsible person can act, and renewal preparation is the clearest example in this paper.

What this changes: The rules question moves from the software to the decision: anything that prices, screens or serves a notice stays a decision a named person makes.

06 Capabilities to check in your current platform

Dated where a date was found; a page read in September is not proof of a September release. Posted prices are starting subscription figures, and AI capabilities may carry separate account pricing. Advertised availability is not entitlement on your plan, nor evidence that a feature works as described in your account. No release was located in this review for

Propertyware or Yardi Breeze. A platform-native job and an assistant working from an export have different setup and upkeep; ask which one any demonstration you are shown actually uses.

Platform	Capability, as announced or advertised	Posted cost for a small firm	What to ask your vendor
Local row: Virginia REALTORS / RentSpree²⁵	Application and screening suite advertised as free to the member; applicant charges apply (undated member-benefits and partner pages, checked September 23, 2026).	Advertised as no cost to the member; applicant fees apply.	Confirm the entitlement, who pays, what the report includes, and whether results feed your platform.
AppFolio²⁶	Realm-X connector to Anthropic's Claude (announced June 9, 2026); assistant and messaging features announced earlier.	Quote-based. Core lists a minimum spend and a 50-unit minimum; Plus and Max carry separate minimums. ²⁷	Your tier and what is entitled; whether each feature can be limited to the draft-and-review behavior shown here.
Buildium⁸	Lumina AI: Write with AI, AI Bill Scan, summarization, AI Leasing Agent, Workforce agents that close work orders and change application status.	Essential from \$62, Growth from \$192, Premium from \$400 a month, 'starting at'; AI Workforce pricing is account-specific, ²⁸ and the feature page separately describes Premium inclusion. ⁸	Which features your plan carries, what the AI capabilities add to the bill, and where staff review the output.
Rent Manager⁷	Orion Smart Voicemails through its own phone service (transcribe, summarize, prioritize), audit-trail analysis, Workflow Projects (release notes recap, May–July 2026).	Not posted; quote.	Whether Orion is on your plan, and what activating its phone service would cost and require in your account. This paper does not recommend recording residents.
Rentvine^{9,29,30}	Fixie maintenance agent advertised as included for every customer at no extra cost; AI Assistant; RentFinder.ai; bill reading into trust accounting. A June 24, 2026 release note, updated June 26, describes mobile access to Fixie diagnostic summaries.	\$2.50 per unit published alongside a 30-unit minimum, a separate platform fee and other charges; a complete quote is required, and the minimum bill is not 30 × \$2.50.	Whether Fixie is enabled on the resident portal, who approves its work orders, and what data RentFinder uses.

For any job in this paper, the current plan sets the starting point: what it already includes, what costs extra, and where staff review the result before it goes out.

What this changes: The plan your firm already pays for becomes the baseline. A new tool is weighed only against the gap it leaves.

07 Governing it

Two questions settle most of the setup: what the tool may see, and what it may send without a person. Agree who can send or act; separately check who can access the records and how the vendor handles them. A named approver does not secure credentials, limit access, or control what a connected service does with your data.

Four questions	The operating rule to agree
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What sends without a person?	Approved listing facts and verified maintenance updates, following templates you have tested and approved. Questions that interpret or negotiate lease terms go to a licensee; spending and other exceptions go to the responsible person under your own authority rules. A person approves the reusable message and its trigger, which is not the same as clicking every identical acknowledgment.
What decides?	Nothing that screens, prices or notices. It drafts; a person decides and can show why.
Who can reach the records, and how does the vendor handle them?	Ask for the vendor's data-processing and connector terms before enabling anything that reads your records, and check how the service provider handles access and security. ³¹ Use only the firm's approved account and data rules, and remove resident identifiers from an initial drafting trial.
Who confirms, and when?	One named person per job, with the time, the access to the source record, and a way to pause the workflow. Without those three, the approval step is only a name on a page.

The day a job's usual reviewer is away is where an approval rule becomes a service plan rather than a name on a page: who covers the review, what waits, and what the resident or owner is told in the meantime.

An approval holds only until the workflow's permissions, actions or data change, and a vendor update can change any of them.

What this changes: Approval stops meaning a name on a page. It means a person with the time, the record and the power to pause.

08 Six numbers worth keeping

A trial needs one primary measure and the quality check beside it, not all six: handling time with material corrections, say, or repair resolution with reopened requests. The locations below are typical record sources, not a promise that every platform has a ready-made report; a timestamp is not staff effort, a closed ticket is not a verified repair, and a sent message is not a delivered notice.

The measure	Where the number lives	What it does not prove on its own
1. Staff handling minutes per completed job , counting inputs, checking, corrections and rework; setup and upkeep tracked separately.	Task time entries, or a short staff time log beside the platform's job count.	That a fast draft saved money. Effort often moves into checking; freed capacity is not reduced payroll until spending changes.
2. Time from the resident's original request to verified resolution , median, with unresolved requests and their age shown alongside.	The inbound request timestamp from email, voicemail or the portal, linked to the work order; then completion and reopen history, vendor evidence, resident confirmation. If the inbound timestamp is unavailable, label the narrower measure 'work-order creation to verified resolution.'	That a quick close means a good repair. The clock has to start when the resident asked, not when someone opened a ticket; check reopened and unresolved cases, and keep emergencies separate.
3. Vacant days per completed turn , move-out to the next tenancy's rent-start date, with the rent-ready date marked and ongoing vacancies shown beside completed turns.	Lease dates, availability, inspection and turn records, advertising history; readiness may need a manual entry.	That every vacant day is a coordination failure, or that recovered rental income is automatically your firm's revenue — the management agreement sets your fee basis. Do not mix calendar vacancy with uncollected-rent days; paid-through dates and concessions change the financial reading.

4. Applicable notices delivered on time , over notices due in the period, showing the count due; when none are due, report 'not applicable' rather than 100 percent.	Lease and renewal reports, confirmed deadline fields, delivery evidence.	Compliance, or causation. This is a timeliness measure, not a compliance certificate; content, method, applicability and the resident's own choice are separate questions.
5. Recurring management fees retained from one opening group of accounts , held fixed, showing departures, additions, rate changes and changes in the rent or collection basis separately.	Management-agreement records, fee billing, termination dates; exit reasons need a staff-kept field rather than a guess.	That owners are happier. A sale, a rent change, a vacancy or a fee concession moves this number without a relationship being lost.
6. Time to the first meaningful reply from a person , with unanswered inquiries counted and aged alongside it, and automatic acknowledgment tracked separately.	Prospect records, message and call history, showing calendar.	That fast replies win leases, or that the queue is clear — quick answers to easy inquiries can hide ignored ones. Check attended showings and signed leases alongside it.

Converting to capacity: released capacity is the difference in total handling minutes per comparable job, multiplied by actual trial volume, less ongoing upkeep not already counted. Setup is separate, and checking and corrections already inside measure 1 count once. A negative value means the workflow added work. The reading depends on comparable periods, the case count and anything else that changed during the trial, and capacity stays distinct from any change in spending or fee revenue.

Checks to keep beside the main number. Acknowledgment time is a delivery check, not a business outcome; an instant unhelpful reply improves it. Confirmed showings are a step toward attendance, not success. 'Owners who heard from you before they asked' becomes owner-contact commitments met, since a broadcast is not service. Fewer owner questions can mean clarity, disengagement or a missing fact. Corrections per draft is a quality check, with material errors distinguished from style. Renewal acceptance needs the full group of leases eligible to renew in the period, plus follow-up; it is not a thirty-day AI result.

A shorter average can hide the requests still waiting. Reading completed jobs beside open cases, and total handling time rather than a single timestamp, shows whether the work got smaller or simply moved to someone else.

What this changes: A one-month number stops reading as a verdict. Handling time shows early; retention and renewals show only once the leases due in the period have come up.

09 Questions management-company owners ask

1. What does this actually cost?

Start with the job and the plan you already have. Get written external charges from the vendor — extra features, usage, connections, setup — then add your own estimate of staff time for checking and upkeep, which no vendor can quote for you. A platform's starting subscription price is not the cost of the workflow, and nothing in this paper quotes a fee from us.

2. Will this replace my staff?

These jobs change parts of the work; they are not a staffing plan. Find out first whether the same work takes less total effort without more mistakes or unfinished requests. If capacity is released, you decide where it goes — owner contact, leasing, backlog, growth — before assuming a position disappears.

3. What happens when it sends something wrong?

Keep generated resident and owner messages in draft during the first trial, and agree who can pause sending. If something incorrect does go out, a named person checks who received it, corrects the message, records what failed, and tests the fix before the responsible person authorizes sending to resume. An approval step reduces one kind of exposure; it does not make mistakes impossible. A security incident needs its own, fuller procedure.

4. Who owns the data, and can I take it with me?

The answer is in your agreements with the platform and any connected service: what they may use, who else processes it, how long they keep it, and what you can export when you leave. Ask to see an export of the records and instructions you would actually need. A promise that the data is yours does not by itself prove a usable handover. Start with the agreements, knowing they will not settle every obligation that comes with the records you hold.

5. Doesn't my platform already do this?

It may already do parts of it; platforms advertise message drafting, maintenance intake, voicemail summaries and invoice extraction. Ask your vendor to show your chosen job in your account, including the review step and the extra cost. Use the feature you have if it meets the need, and add a tool only for a gap you can describe.^{8,7}

6. What if my residents hate it?

Tell residents when a reply is automatic and make the route to a person obvious. Keep a practical alternative for people who cannot or will not use the automated channel. Watch repeat contacts, requests for a person, and complaints during the trial; a quiet inbox is not evidence that they like it.

7. How do I know it worked?

Choose the result before switching it on: less total handling time, an earlier useful reply, fewer overdue notices, or a repair reaching verified resolution sooner. Compare similar work before and during the trial, count the cases, and include checking and corrections. Review after the first month, and allow longer for low-volume work, retention and renewals.

8. What do I tell my property owners?

Something like: 'We are testing a tool that helps our team prepare updates from the property record. Your manager checks the figures, handles decisions, and remains your contact. We will review whether it makes the service more useful before we expand it.' Describe only the job you have actually enabled, and discuss any proposed new owner charge separately.

9. What does a small first trial look like?

A narrow trial starts with existing records and keeps the current operating process in place. One firm might take a few completed maintenance records, with names, addresses, contact details and other identifying information removed, and have its approved assistant draft a short owner update from them, which a named person then checks against the record before anything is sent. Comparing that draft with what the firm would have written, and how long each took, shows whether the job is worth a longer look.

10. What if the tool stops working, or we decide to stop?

Keep the source records and a manual route for the job inside your existing system. Make sure a named person is alerted when a run fails or does not happen, and practice the manual fallback before you need it. Before launch, confirm how to pause the workflow, remove its access, and export the instructions and records you would need to carry on.

10 What we do

Salt Marsh Growth AI runs a fixed-scope, fixed-fee AI Audit for owner-led property management, real estate and trades firms in coastal Virginia and coastal South Carolina. It looks at how the work actually moves through your firm and hands you a prioritized plan, with us or without us. We do not sell platforms or take referral fees, and at the end of an engagement you keep the written instructions, the configurations we set up in your own accounts, and the records they produced.

The first step is a thirty-minute conversation at no charge. It is for owner-led firms weighing where AI might fit. It covers the jobs in section 04, what your current platform already does, and what a first trial would need. It is not the AI Audit, and nothing needs preparing.

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AI fitted to your business, not the other way around.

Property Management (Residential) · Hampton Roads edition · v1.14 · October 5, 2026 · Refreshed quarterly · Research cutoff September 11, 2026, with the September 2026 structural revision; RealPage case status updated October 5, 2026 · Information about a market and its tools, not legal advice; confirm any rule with your own counsel before relying on it. The four demonstration exchanges, properties, ledger inputs and timings in section 04 are fictional, written for this paper, and are not client results; survey figures elsewhere in the section are attributed to their sources.

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