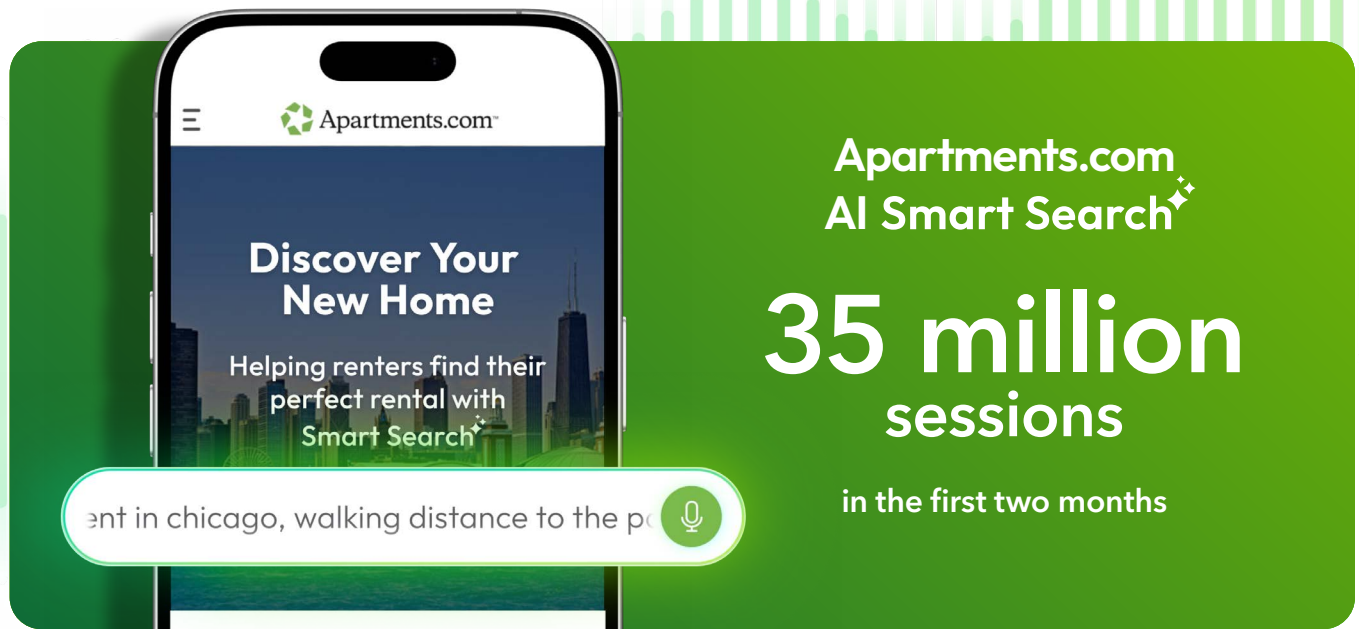




How Apartments.com AI Smart Search Is Improving Renter Search and Lead Quality

A data-backed look at how AI-powered search is revolutionizing apartment discovery



Innovation is only as powerful as the results it delivers

AI is becoming a bigger part of the multifamily conversation. For owners and operators, the real question is not whether AI matters. It is how it improves performance in ways that are measurable and meaningful.

That is what makes Apartments.com AI Smart Search notable. It reflects a broader shift in renter behavior, moving apartment search beyond rigid filters and toward a more natural, intent-driven experience. In that sense, Smart Search is not just a new feature. It represents a fundamental shift in how renter search happens in multifamily.

Apartments.com launched its proprietary sitewide Smart Search in January 2026 after running beta tests in late 2025, giving the industry an early look at how AI-powered search performs in a live multifamily environment. In the first two months after launch, renters completed 35 million Smart Search sessions. Early results suggest that when renters can search more naturally, it changes how they discover listings, engage with content, and move toward action.

1

Built around how renters actually search

Nearly all renters do not begin their search with a property name. They start their search broadly, looking for properties that fit their priorities, whether that is budget, neighborhood, pets, commute, space, amenities, or overall lifestyle.

That matters because traditional search often asks renters to translate those needs into rigid filters and fragmented steps.

Apartments.com research shows that 85% of renters start on rental-finding sites and networks, in part because 87% do not know community names when they begin.¹ At the same time, 70% of Apartments.com searches happen on mobile.² Smart Search was developed for that reality, helping renters search more naturally by voice or text, get to more relevant results faster, and refine their search with greater ease.

Manual filters

- Price ▾
- Home Type ▾
- Beds/Baths ▾
- Specialty Housing ▾
- Move-In Date ▾

VS

Natural language

Smart Search

Pet-friendly two bedroom with in-unit washer and dryer in Denver, CO

📍 🔍

[📍 Current Location](#)

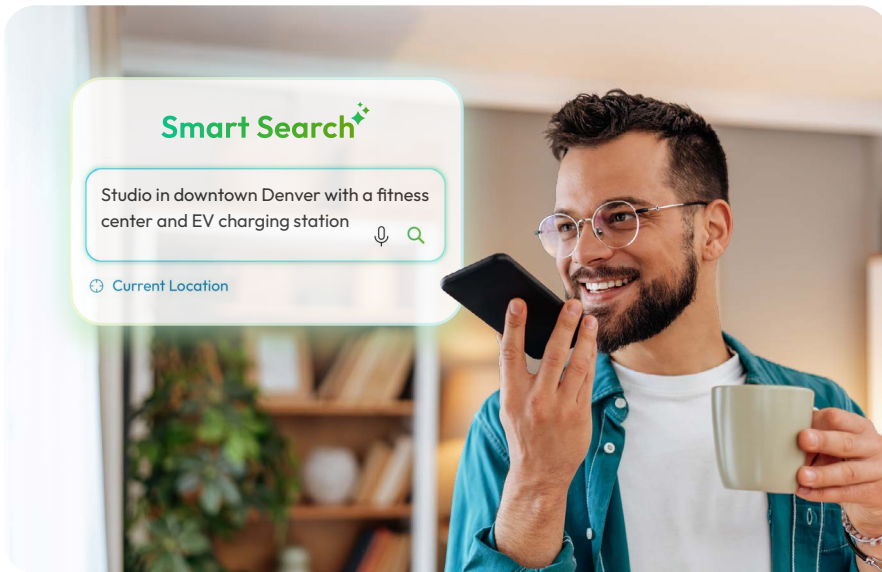
85%
start on rental sites
and networks¹

87%
do not know a
community name
when they begin¹

70%
of searches happen
on mobile²

¹ Q4 2025 Apartments.com renter survey

² Internal data, Q1 2026



Smart Search drives

Engagement



94%
more time spent
on listings³



61%
more listings
viewed per
session³



212%
more saved
properties³

Consideration



73%
more photo
views³



54%
more rent
calculator usage³



26%
more 3D Tour
views³

³ Smart Search lift vs. traditional search, Feb-Mar 2026

2

Smart Search users demonstrate stronger engagement and deeper consideration

In the first two months after launch, renters who used Smart Search on Apartments.com behaved differently from those using traditional search. They spent more time with listings, explored more properties, and saved more options for consideration.

They also went deeper into the content that helps them evaluate fit. Compared with traditional search users, Smart Search users viewed more photos, used the rent calculator more often, and explored more 3D Tours.

The point is not simply that activity increased. It is that the activity became more meaningful. These behaviors suggest Smart Search is helping renters discover listings they are more interested in evaluating and giving them more confidence as they move through the search process, and creating more informed engagement for advertisers.

3

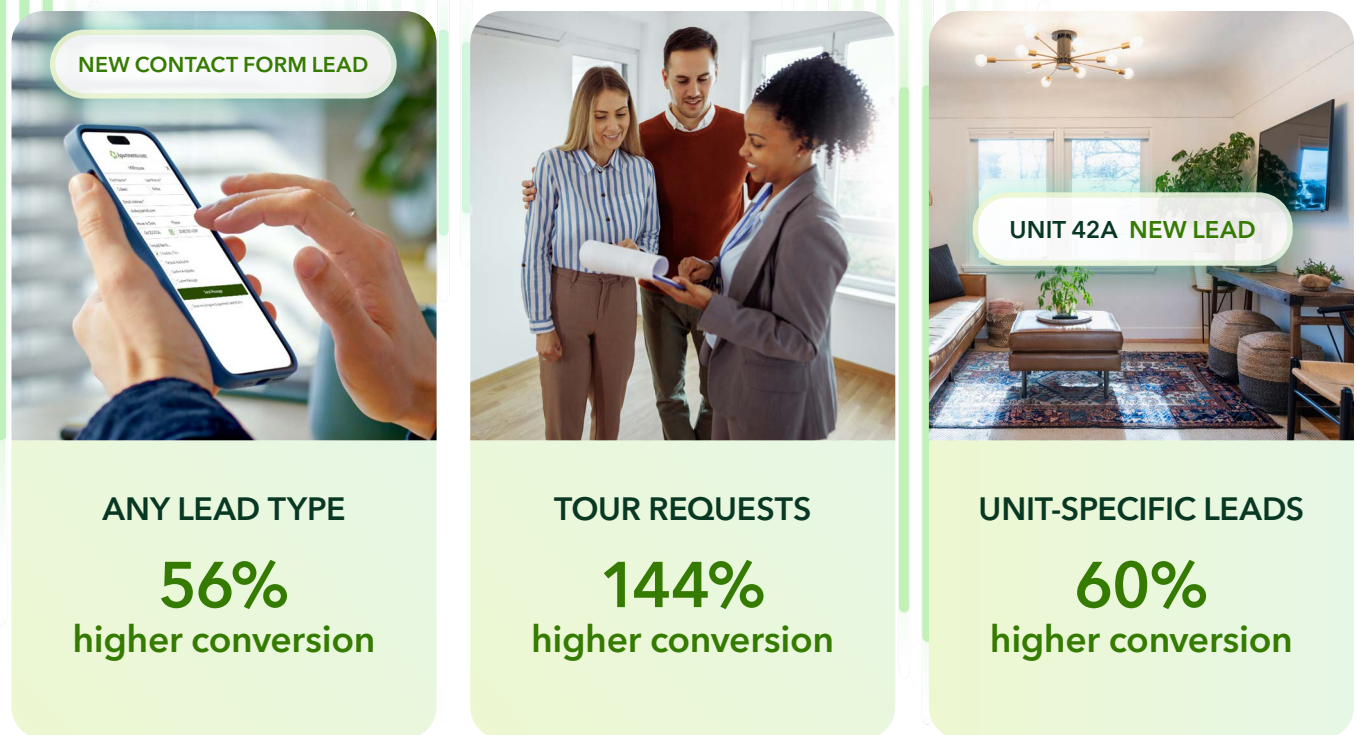
Stronger engagement is translating into stronger lead signals

For owners and operators, the most important question is whether stronger search and listing engagement lead to stronger outcomes.

Early results suggest they do.

Compared with traditional search users, Smart Search users were more likely to convert across multiple lead types, including the lead signals that often matter most in multifamily. Tour requests and unit-specific leads indicate stronger renter intent than general inquiries, which makes these increases especially meaningful for leasing performance.

Not all activity has equal value. What matters most is the kind of behavior that gets a renter closer to lease-ready action.



4

The next version of AI-powered search is coming soon

The launch of Smart Search was just the beginning. After going live sitewide in January, Apartments.com is continuing to test the next wave of AI-powered search capabilities. Early beta results of our next-gen AI search suggest that as the experience becomes more helpful and more refined, renter engagement and lead activity will grow even further.

The next evolution of Smart Search-powered search will launch in June. While the experience may continue to evolve, the direction is clear: use data and renter behavior insights to make search even more relevant, transparent, and useful.

Areas of focus include faster access to media, deeper property detail, upfront fee visibility, and stronger recommendations based on renter criteria.

The broader story is not simply that new capabilities are coming. It is that Apartments.com is refining Smart Search based on how renters actually engage.

Early results from 2.0 Beta



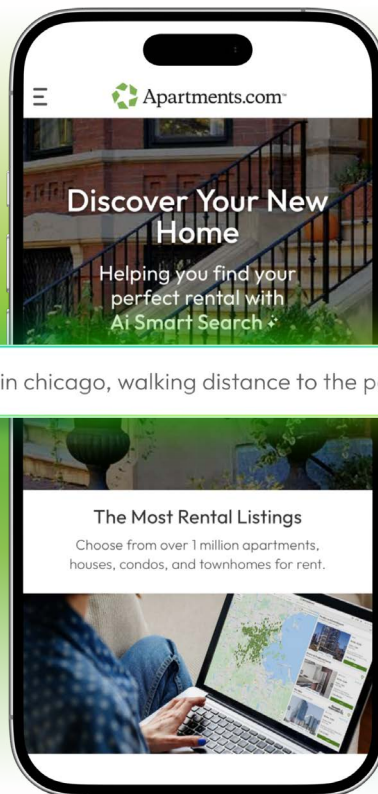
268%
more time
with listings



500%
more 3D Tour
views



602%
more leads
submitted



Next wave of AI-powered search



Faster access
to media



Deeper property
detail



Stronger
recommendations



Start the tour and
application process

What owners and operators should take away

So far, Smart Search on Apartments.com is showing meaningful progress in the areas that matter most to multifamily advertisers: helping renters find more relevant listings, driving deeper listing engagement, and generating stronger lead signals.

That makes this more than a technology story. It is a performance story.

It also reinforces why category focus matters. Multifamily advertisers do not need generic search innovation. They need tools built around how apartment renters search, how listings are evaluated, and what kinds of leads are most likely to support leasing outcomes.

For advertisers, the implication is straightforward: as search becomes more conversational and more tailored, the quality of listing content and the relevance of the search experience will matter even more.

Why Apartments.com AI Smart Search?



More relevant
renter discovery



Deeper listing
engagement



Stronger lead
signals

Are your listings ready for where search is going?

As apartment search becomes more conversational, more visual, and more personalized, listing quality becomes even more important.

The communities best positioned to benefit are the ones that make it easy for renters to evaluate fit and act with confidence. That means complete unit-level detail, strong visuals, immersive media, and pricing information that is easy to understand.

Smart Search is already showing what better search can do when it is built specifically for multifamily. As Apartments.com continues to refine the experience, owners and operators have an opportunity to benefit from a platform designed around renter behavior and leasing outcomes.



Smart Search readiness checklist

- Are your listings rich with high-quality media?
- Are pricing details and fees easy to understand?
- Are unit-specific details complete and current?
- Are Tour Scheduling and Apply Now enabled on your listing?

Get the full checklist:



apartments.com/unleash

Connect with your Apartments.com representative

to learn how Apartments.com's proprietary Smart Search can support your property's visibility, engagement, and leasing performance.