

# Landlords Offer Tenants Financial Incentives to Avoid Winter's Slow Market

January 4, 2013 7:07am | By [Meredith Hoffman](#), DNAinfo Reporter/Producer

WILLIAMSBURG — When real estate agent Eugene Litvak advises landlords in the winter months, he gives them a surprising tip — don't make the rent price your main concern.

"I say your No. 1 priority should be trying to get [the lease renewal] into the summer months, not to get the most rent," said Litvak, senior vice president at [Citi Habitats](#), who encourages landlords to strike 18-month lease agreements with tenants.

Litvak and other real estate agents said the slow winter market tempts landlords citywide to offer incentives like lower rents, waived broker fees and even a free month's rent to tenants willing to take 18-month leases. And while some brokers said the deal is still uncommon, others noted that the trend is growing as more landlords learn of its advantages.

"I'm seeing it more now, because as more information becomes available about the market, landlords and owners are becoming more aware," said Mark Menendez, executive vice president at [Douglas Elliman](#).

For renters, the option can provide an opportunity — or a future frustration.

"It's really good for the owner," said Vik Kukar, senior vice president at [Charles Rutenberg Realty](#), admitting that the lease timing has pros and cons for tenants.

Tenants should be prepared for more dramatic rent increases when their leases are up for renewal in the summer months, Kukar said, since demand for rentals always increases in the spring and summer.

"It can be good for the tenant, because if they're only going to be there for a short period of time, they can get lower rent," Kukar said. "But a lot of tenants know they'll be signing again in the summer months, so the rent will be higher and there will be a lot more competition to find a new apartment. So a lot say 'No.' "

For Tony Moon and his housemate, however, signing an 18-month lease for their new Williamsburg apartment made the most sense.

"We went with the 18-month lease because we didn't want the rent to be raised on us after one year," said Moon, 29, an architect who has lived in the city the past four years and moved this winter into a renovated apartment on Meserole Street.

Moon said that if he decided to move out in the spring of 2014, he imagined there would be more apartments on the market than in the winter.

"They wanted it back on the spring timeline," he said of his landlords, "and we felt more comfortable with that, too, because that's when there are more apartments available."

But Litvak said the winter offers the best deals for renters.

"At [The Edge](#), the prospective tenant we're trying to capture is for 18 months," he said of the high-end condo on the Williamsburg waterfront where he lives and handles leases.

Kukar said the throngs of new renters during the spring and summer include recent college graduates with new jobs, doctors entering their residencies and families trying to place their children in certain public schools.

Plus, the warmer weather encourages people to browse apartments, he said.

"The hotter it is," he noted, "the hotter the rental market is."