

Rapid Re-Housing Components

Rapid Re-Housing: Housing Identification

Overview: Housing Identification

Two primary activities:

1. Developing and sustaining **landlord partnerships**
2. Assisting program participants to **find and secure permanent housing**

Why?

- Many landlords screen tenants through background checks of housing, income, credit and criminal histories.
- Almost by definition, many extremely low-income persons/households have Tenant Screening Barriers that would cause landlords to reject them as tenants.

1. Landlord Partnerships

- RRH programs offer “incentives” to rent to households with Tenant Screening Barriers
- Incentives are designed to mitigate the perceived risks of renting to people with such barriers-- so landlords can modify screening
- Landlords know that their **screening** is only partially successful in reducing evictions, late rent, property damage, police calls, conflict, etc.

Program Planning/Design

- **Staffing issues:** what credentials, experience and/or training do staff need to “sell” the program, understand the landlord perspective, and negotiate successfully?
- **Incentives:** what can the program offer as a baseline and as add-ons? What sources of funding can be used for unit “holding,” damages and/or other financial incentives?

Note: Certain activities and incentives might not be eligible for different funding sources (e.g., ESG, HSP). Providers should look at funding limitations and consider braiding different funding streams as necessary.

Recruiting Landlords

1. **Define** the “package” of supports
2. **Locate** target landlords by word of mouth, classified ads, Craig’s List, associations, “driving around,” etc.
3. **Screen** landlords with data on buildings/ performance – avoid slumlords
4. **Make the pitch**
5. **First match** is critical: respect landlord “boundaries”

Retaining Landlord Partners

- Your landlords are also your “clients”– they are the key to accessing decent housing
- Deliver promptly on your promises: pay them on time, quickly return their calls, etc.
- Create win-wins for landlords and tenants
- Do what’s right – find a way
- Offer appreciation – whenever and wherever

2. Housing Search: Finding and Securing Housing

- People experiencing homelessness have varying tenant screening barriers and incomes
- The greater their obstacles to securing housing, the more creative staff must be in negotiating with landlords
- While a basic level of landlord supports will be adequate for *most landlords* to accept *most tenants*, it may be necessary in some cases to offer more

Housing Search

- Many program participants have been successfully renting for many years and need little assistance
- Some with less successful experience may need and want help understanding lease requirements and preparing for the landlord interview
- The severe (and sometimes prolonged) stress of homelessness can often temporarily reduce a person's efficacy; they may need more direct help

Housing Search

- Help person/household define their housing preferences and <realistic> options
- Balance the level of assistance with the level of the person's knowledge, abilities and stress
- Track housing vacancies and characteristics of partner landlords' properties
- Program participants have the same lease and the same rights/responsibilities as all tenants

QUESTIONS?